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## ON SCREEN



### CHILE • NEW YORK • AfghanIRAQ William Parker/Jeff Schlanger (Witnessimo) by John Sharpe

Artist Jeff Schlanger is a familiar adjunct to avant jazz shows around New York City but, as made clear in *CHILE • NEW YORK • AfghanIRAQ*, that only constitutes one facet of his work. The main thrust of the DVD is a 30-minute documentary concerning the genesis and ongoing development of a sculptural piece titled "Faces", which consists of an increasing assemblage of clay visages representing people affected by war, starvation and displacement. As told through interviews with Schlanger and bassist William Parker, the piece began as a response to the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Chile in 1973 with the connivance of the US government and the subsequent torture and death of the poet Victor Jara. Since then Schlanger has continued to add to the work in response to events in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Schlanger states, "inspiration for living in the US for me comes from live improvised music by musicians who are committed to expressing the way it feels to be alive now." And indeed the film includes several extracts from improvisations by a group comprising Parker, late trumpeter Roy Campbell, drummer Michael Wimberly and didgeridoo player Bill Cole as well as a solo Parker recital. Also included are the full interviews with Schlanger and Parker excerpted in the main film. This allows more explication of the connection between Schlanger's art—both sculpture and his live drawings—and the music. Schlanger says, "all along there are musicians who have helped me understand what I'm trying to do." Parker goes so far as to say that when Schlanger is drawing he is another member of the band. Later he described that when he plays he feels he is dipping into a constant wellspring of sound. That's a feeling well illustrated by 23 minutes of solo bass, which allows for study of Parker's techniques, including use of two bows and nimble two-handed manipulation on the fretboard. Unfortunately picture and sound go out of synch briefly at one point, but that is the only blemish on an expansive and informative project.

*For more information, visit [musicwitness.com](http://musicwitness.com). This film will be screened at Roulette Jun. 12th as part of Vision Festival. See Calendar.*