

vienna art
orchestra

plays for

Jean Cocteau



529 290-2

vienna art orchestra

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amadeo

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The program "Vienna Art Orchestra plays for Jean Cocteau" was co-produced under the original title "La belle et la bete" in 1992 by the Banlieues Bleues Festival Paris, by the Donaufestival St. Pölten, and by Jazz à Trento. It was also performed in Vienna, Salzburg, Klagenfurt, at the Israel Festival in Jerusalem (1993), in Zürich, Bordeaux and at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (1994).

Backwards, silence goes faster

For the intervals in between, rüegg has written eleven longer instrumental compositions for his fifteen-member Vienna Art Orchestra. These pieces are complex constructions which outdistance conventional Big Band numbers in terms of form, without appearing contrived. As opposed to other Big Band projects derived from stories, such as George Gruntz's jazz operas, these compositions, though set down on paper, maintain their spontaneity; they never cudgel the improvisational moment to death. rüegg's approach involves creating swift and sophisticated interweavings of written passages with many shorter or longer solo improvisations. He composes with his soloists, so to speak—gives them a lot of room, for duets as well as for duels.

This is Big-Band Jazz, granted, but European through and through. rüegg pens unsentimental passages, sidestepping the mellow tones of the con-

ventional Big Band sound and favoring higher pitches that tend towards the shrill. Added to this is a precise and hard-driving rhythm section led by two superlative percussionists (Thomas Alkier and Marc Halbheer), the bassist Heiri Känzig, pianist Uli Scherer and Woody Schabata on the vibraphone.

The soloists carry off their difficult parts with brilliance and virtuosity: Michel Matthieu and Bumi Fian on trumpet; Claudio Pontiggia, horn; Danilo Terenzi, trombone; and Co Streiff, Klaus Dickbauer, Andy Scherrer and Florian Bramböck on reeds.

The music is one aspect...for some years now, rüegg has been experimenting intensively with visual elements as well. After "Sens" and "Fe & Males," "La belle et la bête" is the third production in which increased emphasis has been placed on the visual side. Christoph Marthaler, the new star



among Swiss directors, assisted with the staging of this homage to Cocteau, which premiered in Paris in 1992. Special features include unconventional positioning of the musicians and interesting use of two ramps and various spotlights. In projections by Catherine Dressler, stylized hands, masks, mirrors, gloves and animals (motifs from the film) appear and disappear, and aphorisms or puns shrink into balls, stretch out again and tumble around together before blinking off the wall. Center stage stands a grey statue—the poet from Cocteau's "Orpheus." But nothing remains as it is. Suddenly the plaster statue starts to inch sideways. He opens his eyes and fixes them on the lovely Beauty who is passing in front of him, back and forth, lost in thought. He reaches out and tries to grab her rear; he pants and waggles his tongue at her until a projection on the wall warns: "Statue, enough!"... The poet as dirty old man.

Mirrors would do well to reflect more thoroughly

A fine poetic tribute to the poet, jazzman, Dadaist and surrealist who finds curious ideas hard to resist. rüegg interprets the story of "Beauty and the Beast" in his own way: Whereas in the film, Beauty and the Beast-in-human-form find heaven, rüegg's music becomes machine-like in the end, signaling that the adventure is over. The "happy ending" is nothing but triste boredom. The men leave the stage and Co Streiff remains alone to play a last solo on her saxophone. The only thing that still breathes a bit of life, is woman.

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the program



1. **Prologue** by J. Cocteau
2. **Say good evening to everyone** by m. rüegg
3. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
4. **I burn the silence** by m. rüegg
5. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
6. **The sky is a hedge in may** by m. rüegg
7. **The rose knows no age** by m. rüegg
8. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
9. **Enough, statue!** by m. rüegg
10. **The secret of blue is well-guarded** by m. rüegg
11. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
12. **Backwards, silence goes faster** by m. rüegg
13. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
14. **A single glass of water lights the world** by m. rüegg
15. **Misfortune has glove size seven** by J. Cocteau
16. **The landscape changes three times** by m. rüegg
17. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau
18. **If you break statues,
you risk becoming one yourself** by m. rüegg

credits

in the background:

lights: reto schubiger & martin walitza

visual effects: catherine dressler

live sound: ronald matky

director: christoph marthaler

idea & music: mathias rüegg

All titles recorded at Austrophon Studios (June 4 - 6, 1994) by Jürg Peterhans

Remixed at Studio Powerplay by Jürg Peterhans and mathias rüegg

Photos: Wolfgang Grossebner & Oliver Kunz

Liner Notes: Christian Rentsch, Translation: Karin Kaminker,

Art Direction: Leroy at O/R/E/L, Design: Andy at O/R/E/L

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in the foreground:

corin curschellas: **voice**

jon sass: **tuba**

rremi brandner: **actor**

(not to be heard on this CD)

matthieu michel: **trumpet**

bumi fian: **trumpet**

danilo terenzi: **trombone**

claudio pontiggia: **frenchhorn**

co streiff: **reeds**

klaus dickbauer: **reeds**

florian bramböck: **reeds**

andy scherrer: **reeds**

woody schabata: **mallets**

heiri kaenzig: **bass**

uli scherer: **keyboards**

marc halbheer: **drums**

thomas alkier: **drums**

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1. **Prologue** by J. Cocteau 1:50
2. **Say good evening to everyone** by m. rüegg 3:57
3. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 1:06
4. **I burn the silence** by m. rüegg 3:57
5. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 1:46
6. **The sky is a hedge in may** by m. rüegg 4:38
7. **The rose knows no age** by m. rüegg 4:58
8. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 1:26
9. **Enough, statue!** by m. rüegg 5:05
10. **The secret of blue is well-guarded** by m. rüegg 5:24
11. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 1:30
12. **Backwards, silence goes faster** by m. rüegg 5:33
13. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 2:02
14. **A single glass of water lights the world** by m. rüegg 4:06
15. **Misfortune has glove size seven** by J. Cocteau 3:08
16. **The landscape changes three times** by m. rüegg 2:54
17. **Interlude** by J. Cocteau 0:56
18. **If you break statues,
you risk becoming one yourself** by m. rüegg 8:08

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