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Fluxus

Works of the 1960s by Sylvano Bussotti, Toru Takemitsu, John Cage, Yoko Ono, György Ligeti and others

Steffen Schleiermacher, Klavier

1 CD

MDG 613 1911-2

UPC-Code:



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Taboo Breakers

"The piano is a taboo. It must be destroyed." Nam June Paik issued this demand during the early 1960s. Such violent treatment of the instrument representing middle-class music culture like no other is indeed rooted very deeply in collective memory; this is what the mild-mannered music lover first recalls with great concern when the term "Fluxus" is heard. However, as Steffen Schleiermacher shows with a couple of friends on his latest CD, there is much more to Fluxus. With great seriousness the Fluxists seek and find highly individual forms of expression, even on the piano. Along with reminiscences of Dada, miniatures are produced surprising us even fifty years later with their unconventional view of music and sound.

Joy of the Public

George Maciunas was the initiator of this group of artists whose members sought to distinguish their work from happenings aiming at the greatest possible one-time effect. Fluxus concerts could be repeated, but what was included in the repertoire remained in flux. Steffen Schleiermacher's selection contains some works by composers such as John Cage, Yoko Ono, and György Ligeti that were performed at the International Festival of the Newest Music held in Wiesbaden in 1962. Ligeti's *Bagatelles* formed the conclusion of the program, very much to the joy of the public – as is very much in audible evidence.

Fascinating Sounds

The Fluxus composers offered the performing musicians a great deal of freedom for making their own decisions. Whether the composition was limited to more or less specific playing instructions, as in Yoko Ono's "Overtone Piece" and Philip Corner's "Piano Activities," or had a difficult-to-interpret graphic score, as with Toshi Ichianagi or the master calligrapher Sylvano Bussotti, Steffen Schleiermacher has no equals when it comes to transforming cryptic sources into fascinating sounds. Fluxus first revealed how ants could contribute to the healing process when Ben Patterson's "Ants" met Maciunas' "Solo for Sick Man." However, imitation of this work interpreted by Stefan Fricke is not something we would recommend!

In Flux

"Litany Piano Piece" by Dick Higgins develops an atmosphere endowed with an absolutely spiritual dimension by the speech artist Harald Muenz in its simultaneous presentation with "Litany and Response" by Emmet Williams. And then – completely unexpectedly – music of the spheres of the greatest tenderness dominates with captivating simplicity in the "Piano Piece" by Terry Jennings – this too is Fluxus!