

A PROPOS DE FOR A WHILE

At a time when the art of commentary has assumed greater importance than the artistic object itself, in the same way as there are soldiers who no longer know why they're fighting, I think it's necessary to give listeners back their personal right to be affected by and like (or dislike) a piece of music in complete freedom, and I will therefore refrain from describing the pieces presented on this album, a selection from the eleven years I've spent with naïve. On the other hand, I am keen to underline once more how happy I've been over that period to be able to create and offer the public different facets of my musical loves, from the first trio to the quartet co-led with David El Malek by way of the lone odyssey on solo piano, then the 'American' adventures. Listening to these recordings again, I realise that I have done nothing other than try to bring to light a number of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic obsessions, since the way a note becomes brighter or darker according to what is heard around it has always fascinated me. A sort of miniature musical humanism perhaps, for men and women and their energies also grow brighter or darker in contact with one another. More generally, there is also my fascination with the fact that art is one of the rare human manifestations in which violence can be clothed in elegance.

The concert presented on the DVD is something very special, and I had my heart set on releasing it despite some imperfections I'm quite happy to live with (the fragilities of a 'premiere', recording problems on the day of the concert, and the fearsome temperature for the strings under the canopy!).

For several decades now, the language of jazz and Afro-American music has contained within it a broad palette of colours derived from European music (a term which seems to me more accurate than 'classical' music), and my work as an improviser and composer is naturally nourished by these two cultures. Even if it means that this delightful schizophrenia generates ambiguities as to which sphere of influence the music belongs to, I can't stop myself loving both these worlds, distinct not only in the various degrees of sophistication of language they have developed but also in their totally different conceptions of space, time, and sound.

The composition and creation at Jazz in Marciac 2010 of this 'Suite for Quintet and Orchestra' (for which I used as 'raw material' the Suite written a year previously for quintet) was thus a very exciting project, a new stage for me in a process I'm keen to develop further, which makes room for expanded forms. I wanted to conceive it as a sort of concerto in which the two protagonists, the 'classical' orchestra and the 'jazz' quintet, could dialogue in counterpoint with one another, while trying to respect with maximum clarity the rules of written composition for the former and improvisation for the latter.

I hope you'll enjoy listening to this music as much as I did playing it. For a while !

Translation: Charles Johnston