



LLOYD COLE / HANS-JOACHIM ROEDELIOUS

SELECTED STUDIES Vol. 1

CD / vinyl (180g) + CD / download

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How curious it is that this collaboration should come about so late in the day and how marvellous that it transpired at all. Lloyd Cole, this most ingenious of British singer-songwriters, and Hans-Joachim Roedelius, a patriarch of German electronic music, did not actually meet in the studio, choosing instead a mode of material exchange more in keeping with the age, sending files across the ether for the other to complement.

How did they come to work together? Lloyd Cole released "Plastic Wood" in 2001, an instrumental, electronic album, most unusual by his standards. Listening to "Plastic Wood", one can clearly hear that Cluster's "Sowiesoso" album (1976) is one of Cole's all-time favourites. A friend of Cole's who also knew Roedelius, sent the latter a copy of the Englishman's album. Roedelius liked it so much that he immediately set about remixing the whole LP, or rather he added overdubs to the existing tracks – without asking and without having been asked! On receiving the results, Cole was not only flattered, he was also very impressed with the Roedelius remixes. "Plastic Wood" had already been released and Cole felt that the project had run its course, so the Roedelius reworks were consigned to the archives. Nevertheless, the idea of collaborating appealed to the pair of them, and they did write to one another from time to time. A good ten years later, the two finally met in person, when Lloyd-Cole passed through Vienna on tour. Now things could begin in earnest.

The first results of their endeavours, now released, are modestly entitled "Selected Studies Vol. 1". Studies, strictly speaking, represent incomplete explorations of compositional and tonal possibilities. And yet this album reveals mature, carefully composed music, as if Cole and Roedelius had been working together for years already. Both artists focus on electronic sounds in a selection of succinct, direct pieces, free of musical garrulousness. Cole neither sings nor plays guitar and Roedelius rarely touches the keys of his grand piano. Instead, both musicians have developed a subtle soundscape which only drifts towards pure noise on one track, "Wandelbar". All of the other "studies" on the album move within a vast spectrum of harmonic wonder and rhythmic stepping stones.

However paradoxical it may sound, "Selected Studies Vol. 1" is reminiscent of the music of Claude Debussy, if electronic instrumentation had been available to him 120 years earlier. Highly impressionistic images flicker around the listener, airy, transparent, lost in time, each its own window on a bright, yet mysterious world. Far removed from kitsch, ambient and feel-good music, "Selected Studies Vol. 1" demands to be listened to attentively if the serious artistic expression of these two musicians / composers is to be appreciated fully. This opens up the album's beauty and depth.

Cole and Roedelius seek to present fantastic, aural topographies in opposition to the dullness of the real world, inviting us to enter a friendly labyrinth of constant surprise, a place one can still leave at any time, without fear of getting hopelessly lost.

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- 1 Pastoral
- 2 Selbstportrait-Reich
- 3 Wandelbar
- 4 Still Life with Kannyu
- 5 TangoLargo
- 6 Orschel
- 7 HIQS
- 8 Fehmarn F/O
- 9 Virginie L
- 10 Lullerby

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