



ROEDELIOUS: JARDIN AU FOU

CD and Vinyl

Release date: March 27th 2009

Cat No BB23 CD 927892/LP 927891

The essentials:

- ▶ Hans-Joachim Roedelius: born 1934; first record release in 1969 with Cluster (with Dieter Moebius and Konrad Schnitzler), and active ever since as a solo artist and in various collaborations (amongst others with Moebius/Cluster, Moebius and Michael Rother/Harmonia, as well as with Brian Eno). One of the most prolific musicians of the German avant-garde and a key figure in the birth of Krautrock, synthesizer pop and ambient music.
- ▶ *Jardin au Fou* was first released on the French EGG label in 1979
- ▶ produced by Peter Baumann (Tangerine Dream)
- ▶ liner notes by Asmus Tietchens
- ▶ CD features six bonus tracks: three remixes, three new tracks

One of the most remarkable albums of the so-called Krautrock scene has to be *Jardin au Fou* by Hans-Joachim Roedelius (Cluster, Harmonia), issued in 1979. All the more noteworthy as it bore no resemblance whatsoever to what was expected of avant-garde electronica and displayed none of the typical Krautrock characteristics. Rhythm machine, sequencer and abstract sounds are conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, listeners were stunned by one of the most beautiful, charming, ethereal and peaceful albums in the history of German rock music.

It was produced by Peter Baumann at his own Paragon Studios in 1978, a year after he left Tangerine Dream to concentrate on a solo career and production work. At the time, he was charged by the French label EGG with delivering three productions from the German electro/avant-garde/Krautrock cosmos. He thus recorded three long-playing records by Konrad Schnitzler, Asmus Tietchens and Roedelius – the *Jardin au Fou* album.

None other than Asmus Tietchens, friend and artistic companion to Roedelius, has written the following in the liner notes for the reissue:

*"Jardin au Fou (fools' garden) is a thoroughly romantic album, bursting with joie de vivre and unadulterated joy. With the greatest of pleasure, Roedelius cranks up a carousel of fairground organs, popping corks, waltzes and sweet melodies. Musical ideas come thick and fast. If you listen carefully and immerse yourself in *Jardin au Fou*, you might hear traces of the baroque in this romantic music."*

Roedelius concentrates on keyboards, in particular the acoustic grand piano. He played most of the tracks by hand exploiting his virtuosity to the full. The sweet disposition of the album as a whole borders on the naive, bearing none of the Krautrock hallmarks one might expect. Sweetness and light it may be, yet the music of Roedelius is less naive than it first appears. It carries a certain, gentle gravitas borne of maturity, reflecting the ongoing quest of a musician for new paths and forms. *Jardin au Fou* confronts the listener with the unfiltered, open perspective on how Roedelius sees things. Today, some thirty years after it was created, this music has lost none of its shine."

If that says it all, perhaps we can just add that the CD features six bonus tracks: three remixes of compositions from the LP and three new tracks which Roedelius recorded for the 1998 CD re-release on the Japanese Captain Trip label. The vinyl edition only includes the original album works.

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