

TOUCHING EXTREMES

Collected Writings By Massimo Ricci

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HANNES LOESCHEL – Songs Of Innocence

Col Legno

Austrian composer Hannes Loeschel owns a special place in this writer's heart: he was in fact one of the first artists sending records my way back in 2001, trusting this very website as soon as it started. A diversified musical persona that comes out conspicuously in a work based on the namesake cycle by William Blake, an influential poet on many levels of art and literature. Heavily informed by the typically theatrical interpretations of Phil Minton – who sings everywhere except “The Lamb” and “Infant Joy”, rendered by Theresa Eipeldauer – the set is basically an attempt to depict the contrast between childish purity and darkness typical of Blake's verses on an acoustic point of view. Loeschel tries to achieve the objective by juxtaposing styles and orchestrations, leaving to Minton the duty of attaching states of mind to the different songs. The music is executed by an ensemble comprising, in assorted combinations, Michael Bruckner-Weinhuber, Clayton Thomas, Mathias Koch, Burkhard Stangl and Thomas Berghammer besides the leader on keyboards and the above mentioned vocalists. Minton's personality ultimately prevails; hearing him sing in such a type of context is not so frequent, and the multifarious shapes of irony and pathos through which he expresses his talent are a constant treat. Yet the record as a whole is still compact and homogeneous, not containing episodes of truly memorable intensity but also never descending into the realms of mediocrity and cheap trickery. An album respectful of its addressees, deserving a number of attentive listens.