

Stéphan Oliva ::: the musician

Pianist Stephan Oliva began confirming his reputation in the late eighties, in trio, duo and solo; his style and highly sensitive touch did not go unnoticed.

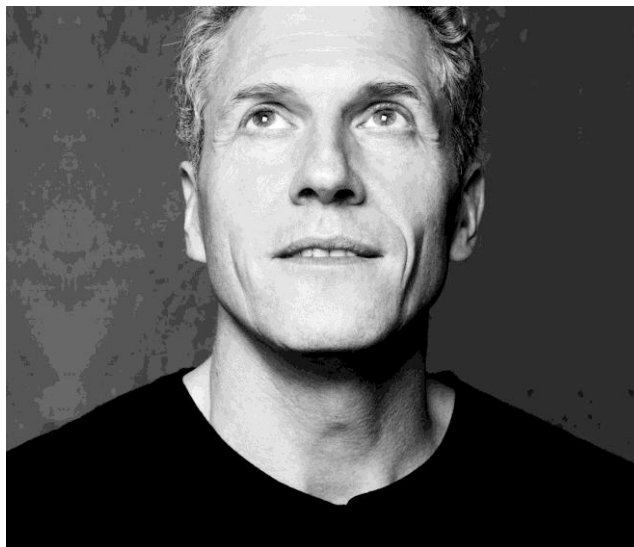
A true original, he confidently assumes his eclectic taste which ranges from his own compositions to tributes to a wide variety of personalities including Bill Evans, Lennie Tristano, Paul Motian, Giacinto Scelsi, Paul Auster, Bernard Herrmann and more recently, his new reading of the pioneers of Harlem Stride.

His discography has been acclaimed by the press in the form of awards such as a "Golden Django – Revelation" (1992), Jazzman magazine's "Shock of the Year" (4 times, in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), the Boris Vian Award from the French Academy of Jazz (2002), "Favourite Record" from the Charles Cros Academy (2002), listed in the Top 20 of Les Inrockuptibles magazine...

Stephan Oliva is a passionate film fan, and was one of those who collaborated on the Jazz 'n (e)motion CD set (1997), a collection of piano improvisations on film music. He composes or improvises directly in front of the screen for silent films, including G.W. Pabst's Lulu, J. Feyder's Crainquebille [Bill]... He's written the score for several short films e.g. La Vie par volutes, and recorded a whole programme devoted to the famous composer of film scores, Bernard Herrmann, and has given many concerts around these themes. He also composed and played the soundtrack for Jacques Maillot's Les Liens du Sang [Blood Ties] and Froid comme l'été, awarded the Italia Prize in 2003.

Among Stephan Oliva's most significant groups: a trio with Bruno Chevillon and Paul Motian, another with Bruno Chevillon and François Merville, yet another with Claude Tchamitchian and Jean-Pierre Jullian, a quintet with Matthieu Donarier, Jean-Marc Foltz, Bruno Chevillon and Nicolas Larmignat, a sextet with François Raulin, Marc Ducret, Laurent Dehors, Christophe Monniot and Paul Rodgers, a quartet with Rémi Charmasson, Jari Hongisto and Claude Tchamitchian, a duo with Linda Sharrock, another with Joey Baron, and another with Susanne Abbuehl, the Echoes of Spring Quintet, the Soffio di Scelsi Trio...

Since 2006, he has worked regularly with the actress and singer Hanna Schygulla (Kerstin Specht's Marielise and Jean-Claude Carrière's Par Coeur).



Stéphan Oliva ::: The musician

STEPHAN OLIVA • Pianist, composer, arranger.

Pianist and composer known for the delicate subtlety of his style, his extremely sensitive fingering, originality and eclecticism. He is recognised and appreciated for his creative work in several fields:

* His own compositions and free improvisations:

On record: Souen (1988) - Novembre (1991) - Clair Obscur (1993) - Itinéraire Imaginaire (2004) - Stéréoscope (2009) Pandore (2008) - Miroirs (2006) - Aquarian Forest (2008)

* Tributes to various personalities

Bill Evans: *Jade Visions* (1996)

Lennie Tristano: *Tristano* (1999) - *Sept variations sur Lennie Tristano* (2002)

Paul Motian: *Fantasm* (2000) - *Intérieur Nuit* (2002)

Paul Auster: *Coïncidences* (2005)

Giacinto Scelsi: *Soffio di Scelsi* (2007)

Bernard Herrmann: *Ghosts of Bernard Herrmann* (2007) - *Lives of Bernard Herrmann* (2010)

The pioneers of "Harlem piano stride": *Echoes of Spring* (2008)

Winsor Mc Cay: "Little Nemo" *Slumberland Band* (2010)

* New approaches to the cinema

Jazz'n'(e) motion (1998) - *Ghost of Bernard Herrmann* (2007) - *Lives of Bernard Herrmann* (2010) *Film noir* (2011) - *After noir piano gone* (2011)

* Film Music

Froid comme l'Été (2003) - *Les liens du Sang* (2008) - *Un Singe Sur Le Dos* (2010)

* Ciné-concerts

Lulu by Pabst, *The Stranger* by Tod Browning, *La Guerra ed il sogno di momi* by Segundo De Chomon, *Crainquebille* by Feyder, *Happiness* by Medvekin, *Safety Last!* with Harold Lloyd, *The Lodger* by Alfred Hitchcock and some of the silent films of Jean Painlevé, Jean Durand, Emile Cohl...

* Live appearances: theatre, dance...

With Hanna Schygulla, Jean-Claude Carrière, Kerstin Specht, Melissa Von Vepy...

* Lectures and masterclasses

The History of the piano in Jazz", "Music and Films", "Bernard Herrmann", "Jazz and the cinema". Teaching in the Conservatoires of Montreuil and Strasbourg from 1995 to 2008

* Present on the international scene in

Germany, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland, Poland, Finland, England, Luxembourg, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Guyana, Canada, Israel, Palestine, Burma, Korea...

* A much acclaimed career on record

- Biennale of young creative artists of Europe and the Mediterranean (1989)

- Django d'or/ Most Promising Artist (1992)

- Disc of the Year 1999 Jazz Magazine

- 4 times "Sensation of the Year" from Jazzman Magazine (1998 - 2000 - 2002 - 2004)

- 4 times Top "Choice of the Year" of the daily paper *Le Monde* (1996 - 1998 - 2000 - 2007)

- Boris Vian Award from the Academy of Jazz in 2002

- "Special Favourite" of the Charles Cros Academy 2004

- Top 20 in the "Best of 2007" of *Les Inrockuptibles* magazine

- 4 ffff in *Télérama* TV magazine (1996 - 2000 - 2006)

- H. Koller Award "Best CD of the Year" 2004

- 4**** Jazzman (1992 - 1999 - 2002 - 2008 - 2010)

- Disc of the Month in "So Jazz" Novembre 2010

- Selected by France Musique 2010

Stéphan Oliva ::: Seen in the Press

Two keyboards for some exceptional jazz

Le Monde

"Stephan Oliva's proposal is a suite based on some peak moments of the *film noir*. His relationship with the cinema, already proven in other circumstances (records, live performances) remains pivotal in his work. His touch, sense of harmony, everything a festival could harm by its very nature, becomes absolutely obvious here. Hence the portrait of Gene Tierney for the welcome encore: respect, celebration, finesse, reflection."

Francis Marmande

Article from the issue of 12.09.10



Jazz à la Villette

Stephan Oliva, Paul Bley. Cité de la Musique, 10 September 2010.

"After some in-depth examination of Bernard Herrmann's soundtracks so as to reach behind what is actually expressed and capture the silent resonances and buried contrasts, but also – and above all – the inspiration behind each and every one of them, Oliva has just taken us, even let us get lost in what he announced as another musical film – where it's up to us to create our own tide of images, more or less dream-like according to the sense of the allusions, references, hints, and digital flushes dictated or suggested by his superbly skilful handling of suspense."

Philippe Carles (Jazz magazine)



"In the magnificent concert hall at La Villette of Paris's Cité de la Musique where, for better or worse, even the tiniest sigh is audible, the first artist was quick to show his admiration and debt of gratitude to the second via the journey he proposed through *film noir* music. Hitchcock, Mankiewicz, De Palma... For the space of an hour, we revisited music we know or have heard here or there or now had the chance to rediscover. It was neither a sombre nor sinister experience; it was black, like the clothes the pianist was wearing and the instrument he was playing. It was haunted too, by two loves, that of films and of the piano. Oliva never stopped; the notes formed and deformed the soundscape, arranging a suitable space for silence, carving their shapes in the black and white of the hall. His touch was delicate, measured, The arrow reached its target. He ended with an encore in the form of a tribute to Gene Tierney, the Queen of the *film noir*, unforgettable in Otto Preminger's *Laura*. Nothing was faked or forced, it was a portrait of sheer beauty."

Article by Raphaëlle T.



Le Monde – CD Selection

In his recordings and concerts, pianist Stephan Oliva has regularly delved into film music to find material for his improvisations or a new version of an old theme. In his 1995 album *Jade Visions*, he played Alex North's theme for *Spartacus*; in 1998, in the *Jazz 'n (e)motion* series conceived by producer Jean-Jacques Pussiau, there are some ten film themes – *India Song*, *Touch of Evil*, *Contempt*... – that Stephan Oliva plays solo; in 2007, he pays tribute to Bernard Herrmann, in *Ghosts of Bernard Herrmann*, on the Illusions label, starting with the music from *Mrs Muir's Ghost* through to that of *Taxi Driver* with a stopover for Hitchcock (*Vertigo*, *Psycho*). This time, again for the Illusions label, Oliva takes us into the universe of the *film noir*, again in the form of piano solos. The film noir was a Hollywood genre whose best examples date from the mid-forties through to the late sixties. The atmosphere in this kind of film prefers to investigate the duplicity and fatalism of its characters rather than the straightforward police investigation of the thriller. Dream and nightmare are intertwined, the mystery is not always solved, The dark and light of chiaroscuro is favoured. Stephan Oliva draws sketches of the original themes but keeps the heart of the melody. This impressionistic approach recalls the images from films such as Otto Preminger's *The Mysterious Dr. Korvo* with the marvellous Gene Tierney, John Huston's *Asphalt Jungle*, Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* once again, and Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*. A dense anthology that provides a lovely musical "plot" to be completed in *After noir*, portraits of the actors and actresses who brought grandeur to the genre: Robert Ryan, Humphrey Bogart, Gloria Grahame and of course, Gene Tierney.

S.Si.