



Live in Vienna

Barre Phillips

Review

by Joe Viglione

This wonderful DVD of Barre Phillips performing live on February 19, 2005, at Porgy & Bess in Vienna gives new meaning to "space age bachelor pad music." Phillips takes the bow and plucks at his bass with percussive slaps that sound like an ultrasound machine in search of the lost tracks from Jerry Goldsmith's landmark *Planet of the Apes* soundtrack score. The audience begins to chuckle at his Zappa-esque explorations of the instrument, the timing keeping it musical while the mind of the maestro goes into some meditative swim through the possibilities of a stringed instrument as an extension of a man's mind. To say that it is captivating underscores the genius at work. With Phillips' left hand on the strings, his right hand works over the body of the instrument in addition to strumming and plucking. It's music as performance art all rolled into one. Add the keys and percussive musings of John Hollenbeck and you have an improvisational delight. Why people are intrigued by tape loops alongside a punk band like Mission of Burma when this unique and stunning material is available is the real question. Perhaps it's in the marketing. Producer/editor Barbara Weissenbeck and musical director Wayne Darling have captured a truly magical engagement. There are some nice bonus features, too, including material on the Thomastik-Infeld handmade string company of Vienna, a biography, a discography, and a fascinating seven-minute interview with Phillips. A real treasure for the ages.

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