

Michael Gees

Vita – Long Version

“Gees’ playing throughout the evening seemed as if he were the creator of these compositions and kept watch hence everything might fall into place as imagined by him before his inner ear. His eyes were not those of an artist intent on reproduction, but rather shone in the lambent look of passion, so like our idea of the composer as creator.”

N. Campogrande

Michael Gees’ biography certainly justifies the term: exceptional. Few others can claim to have a career already behind them at the tender age of fifteen: Born in 1953 into a world of sound and music, both parents are singers, the piano is his favourite toy at age three. Formal piano lessons follow at age five, and the young musician subsequently goes on to win the Steinway Competition at age eight and receives a scholarship at the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

The child prodigy is hailed as “Westphalian Mozart”, takes up studies at the conservatories in Detmold and Vienna and it seems as if he is fast on his way to become an internationally acclaimed pianist. Were it not for the gifted child’s longing to explore the world of sound on his own terms, to playfully experience his self like the great masters’ music, to invent their music all over again, note for note instead of limiting himself to a technical practice regimen. Michael Gees flees the pressure of a pre-determined competition career at the age of fifteen, leaves school, conservatory and home behind, supports himself through odd jobs, works as archeological assistant and, in the process, for the duration of two full years, becomes a sailor.

Chance leads him back to the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover, where he resumes his compositional studies and eventually graduates. He now develops first rate pianistic chops on his own, composes a number of works, gains international renown as lied accompanist of extraordinary proportions with Christoph Prégardien and also appears in concerts globally; in Paris, London, New York and Tokio. All the while, he nurses and feeds his preference for combining the performance of music of past masters with living inspiration, thereby creating remarkable performances with his instrument.

In 1989, Gees founds **forum kunstvereint** in his adopted hometown of Gelsenkirchen; the **Consol Theater**, also installed by him, opens its doors in 2001 on the confines of the former mining area Consolidation. There, music, dance and theatre projects take shape, where children, youths and adults alike are incited and encouraged to discover and realize their own artistic impulses. A steady number of CDs have been released from 1996 onward on **forum kunstvereint**, **CPO** and **EMI**, showcasing Michael Gees’ range.

Since 2008 Michael Gees is associated to the Netherlands label **Challenge Classics**. The 2009 release of the *Schöne Müllerin* with Christoph Prégardien won the **MIDEM Classical Award** and became **Recording of the Year**.

Michael Gees works on solo-recitals beyond tradition, on modernized lied-renditions, melodramas and stage music.