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Documentary, 30 min., High Definition

Bonus: Olafur Eliasson in conversation with Adrian Searle, 60 min., High Definition

Director: Jan Schmidt-Garre

DOP: Thomas Bresinsky

Film Editor: Gaby Kull-Neujahr

A coproduction with ZDF/3sat

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A portrait of the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson. The film introduces Eliasson's work and aesthetic theories as it documents one of his largest exhibitions ever, "Notion Motion" at the Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam. An excursus examines Hans Richter and his abstract film "Rhythm 21" made in 1921. A one-hour interview with Adrian Searle, the art critic of the Guardian, is included as a bonus feature.

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pars media is a Munich production company, established in 1988, and has produced a large number of prize-winning documentary and feature films on the subjects of classical music, dance and the fine arts. pars media's work could be characterized as taking a more original and cinematic approach that sets it apart from most TV programming on cultural subjects. pars media is one of the world's leading producers of art and music films.

pars media films have been broadcast in Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Estonia, China, Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America, Canada and the United States. They have appeared on VHS, Laser Disc and DVD and many have had theatrical releases.

pars media films have been shown at film and TV festivals in Berlin (berlinale), Vienna, Prague, Riccione, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Ohio, Minnesota/St. Paul, Munich, Leipzig, Paris, Monte-Carlo and Melbourne.

pars media films have received awards at such festivals as Chicago (Silver medal), Prague ("Czech Crystal"), Paris, Ohio, Monte Carlo, Munich and Berlin (nomination for the German Film Prize).

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My life in music: Jan Schmidt-Garre interviewed by Nicky Hirsch

[Music in the Media, July, 2002]

Jan Schmidt-Garre is a producer/director working with his own company, Pars Media, in Munich. His films include portraits of Sergiu Celibidache, a 13-part series about tenors of the 78 rpm recording era, and a feature film, "Bruckner's Decision". He started his career working as an assistant to opera directors including Rudolf Noelte and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle.

From my early youth I knew I wanted to do something with music. I loved opera and played the piano. At the age of 14, in my hometown of Munich, I sat in on the rehearsals of Rudolf Noelte's production of "Eugene Onegin". Noelte opened my eyes to the world of opera and directing. I learned so much from him about working with actors and singers. He knew 100 ways on sitting on a chair. I wasn't sure if I should try to be a conductor or an opera director. What drove me was a wish to find the visual equivalent to music. Working as an assistant with directors such as Noelte and Jean-Pierre Ponelle, I saw them produce music that was provoked by the action on stage. When this happens, the staging and the music melt together and there's no question of who's serving whom.

I wanted to study music at university but I thought that this would be an easy option and that I wouldn't really train my brain. There was a lot I didn't understand, so I studied philosophy instead. I remember being introduced to the work of C. S. Lewis and being told how he had drawn inspiration from seeing specks of dust dancing in the sunlight. He realised that he could either analyse the image and keep his distance from it or get to the heart of the image to understand what had produced it. This is an important concept for me when I make films. I am not interested in analysing the person as a patient but rather at looking at what interests him; looking through his eyes. I try not to lose touch with philosophy. I'm currently organising a series of lectures on aesthetics. The philosopher I am closest today is Hegel. I'm also influenced by Zen.

I've always been more interested in the process than the result. In my first long film about Sergiu Celibidache (1989-92) - which I started while at film school - I was interested in his rehearsals and how he worked with musicians and not in the final concerts. He was fantastic at explaining what he wanted. Although he was famous for being a dictator, he actually sought the opposite. He wanted to disappear totally as a conductor, to stimulate the musicians to listen to themselves and find the right balance. Sometimes, in rehearsals rather than during concerts, he reached what he

called "transcendence" - he went beyond the sound. I attended some of his classes at university, and I remember him asking someone to write a 12-tone row on the blackboard - the most desolate phrase one could imagine. And then the process of humanisation began; the search for its innate order. How is it divided? How can it be phrased? How can it be conducted? One student after another would go to the piano and try his luck. Finally someone succeeded in giving life and a shape to this amorphous material. And then during the break I found myself whistling something as easily as if it were by Schubert: the 12-tone row.

I also had private conducting lessons with him and remember studying beating technique at the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. He was sitting in front of me, very close, beating the opening bars with such enormous energy that I was almost frightened. I understood how he could reign over 100 musicians and force them into a unit.

Leonard Bernstein was another conductor important for me. At the end of the Seventies, he worked a lot in Munich and I had the chance to attend his rehearsals and concerts. I also met him many times and visited him in New York. He didn't theorise much, although he was one of the brightest guys I've ever met. His presence made the musicians play ten times better than before.

I remember hearing the voice of Richard Tauber for the first time while driving through Vienna. I was fascinated by the directness of his voice. This led me to make a 13-part series "Belcanto - The Tenors of the 19th Century". Today, people seem to have lost this direct touch to the musical material. Singers then had moments which make you think that there's no interpretation, nothing in the way. I made some other wonderful discoveries such as John McCormack. His way of singing is very unfashionable today. It's an acquired taste, but I discovered what enormous sensibility, distinction and discretion he sings with. He had a hit which sold 4.5 million copies: "I hear you Calling me". It's a simple ballad, with no big emphasis, no muscle, just pure music.

While making the tenors series I met Stefan Zucker - a fascinating person who also drives you crazy. He has a catalogue of videos and, as I found out later, he's also quite famous as a writer on the history of singing. When I arranged to interview him he insisted we rent a concert hall so that he could sing during the interview. In the end he couldn't sing because it had rained the day before. He never sings the day after it rains.

I haven't had time yet, but I do have a wish to produce opera on stage. I'd like to do some Mozart: "Così fan tutte" or "Die Zauberflöte". Or I'd like to do some Janáček: "Katyá Kabanová".

I've always been interested in how to bring music and something extra-musical together and an obvious way to do this is through dance. I am inspired by the work of Saburo Teshigahara, a Japanese choreographer who has developed an individual mixture of Japanese traditions and modern dance. His piece "Absolute Zero", was the purest and, at the same time, most virtuosic dance that I've seen for a long time. There were moments when he danced with his back to the audience for minutes doing nothing. There was such a tension in the hall that the audience seemed to stop breathing. I feel so privileged to be working on two projects with him at the moment.

I am a keen collector of contemporary art. When I decide to buy an artist's work, I like to know about the background of the piece and the concepts behind it. I have pieces by the Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, by the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, of the photographer Wolfgang Tillmans,

and have recently acquired a work by Matthew Barney.

One of the most important film-makers for me is Hitchcock. I especially like his movies from the Fifties such as "North by Northwest". I am drawn to the precision, the sense of humour and the ease of construction. Everything is so simple and so clear. It's about letting the material evolve as it has to.

pars media // past

// 2006

Celibidache Rehearses Bruckner, documentary

// 2005

This Not That - The Artist John Baldessari, documentary

art now: Olafur Eliasson, first episode of the documentary series

21.11.2005 - 13:04 Uhr

Mainz (ots) - Olafur Eliasson ist ein Zauberer. Er zeigt uns einen Regenbogen, einen Wasserfall, einen grügefärbten Fluss, einen Sonnenuntergang. Er holt Naturphänomene ins Museum und legt zugleich die einfachen technischen Mittel offen, mit denen er seinen Zauber inszeniert. Jan Schmidt-Garre zeichnet mit „Art Now. Olafur Eliasson“ ein Porträt des dänischen Künstlers.

Für seine Installationen und Land Art nutzt Eliasson Materialien, die natürlich und flüchtig sind: Licht, Hitze, Feuchtigkeit, Dampf und Eis. Sie werden vom Künstler ästhetisch manipuliert. Eliassons Arbeit definiert einen Bereich zwischen Natur und Technologie, zwischen dem Organischen und Industriellen. Stahlgerüste, künstlich erzeugter Dampf und Wasserbehälter erzeugen eine Erfahrung, die sinnlich, emotional und intellektuell zugleich ist. Eliassons Kunst lässt an Natur- Erfahrungen in Island denken, aber genauso an Experimente aus dem Physikunterricht.

Olafur Eliasson wurde 1967 in Kopenhagen geboren. Von 1989 bis 1995 studierte er an der Royal Academy of Arts in Kopenhagen. Eliassons Installationen wurden seit 1989 in vielen internationalen Ausstellungen gezeigt, unter anderem in der Londoner Tate Gallery, auf der Biennale in Venedig und im Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Olafur Eliasson formulierte seine Kunstkonzeption in den Sätzen: „Man zeigt die Konstruktion, um die Betrachter daran zu erinnern, dass sie Betrachter sind. Im Kino ist man manchmal so mitgerissen, dass man sich quasi auf die Erzählebene begibt. Aber im nächsten Moment steigt man wieder aus. Ich glaube, die Fähigkeit, in das Kunstwerk ein- und auszusteigen – die Konstruktion offen zu legen – ist heute wichtig. Meine Arbeit handelt viel von der Stellung des Betrachters.“

Quelle: news aktuell GmbH