

# ACT

## Christian Muthspiel 4

feat. Steve Swallow

### Seaven Teares

ACT 9551-2

**German Release Date: 22.03.2013**

**Classical music versus jazz.** A rigid distinction between composed and improvised music is not only wrong, but also pointless. Improvisation has always been a part of classical music – from baroque to Mozart, although the high esteem of the interpretation in romantic tradition distorted this fact. Similarly, composition and arrangement have always been parts of jazz. Fortunately, in recent years this artificial gap has been overcome by several musicians of both genres. Austrian trombonist, pianist, composer and conductor Christian Muthspiel, who converts the master of English Renaissance music John Dowland (1563-1626) to jazz on his ACT debut “Seaven Teares”, also confirms this fact: “The parallels that become apparent between both styles and eras indicate how significant improvisation is for Dowland’s music.”

**Christian Muthspiel is the ideal man to bridge the 450-year gap** between Dowland and the present day. The 50-year-old has always been a wanderer and a mediator between classical and jazz, it runs in the family: he and his younger brother, the star guitarist Wolfgang, grew up with a wide spectrum of music and their father, Kurt Muthspiel, was a choir leader, music educator and composer. In addition to Alpine folk music, Christian’s passion was Renaissance choir music. Christian started playing the piano and trombone and continued studying the instruments at the University for Music Graz, however the atmosphere was not what the multitalented musician was looking for and he decided to drop out. In the mid-eighties he felt more at home in crossover projects such as “Orchesterforum Graz”, which he co-founded. From then on he was renowned in European jazz as a solo artist, in a duo with his brother, with his own trio and as a member of the Vienna Art Orchestra (from 1995 to 2004). At the same time, he composed for classical orchestras and for theatre as well as exploring genres from Jandl interpretations to contemporary classical music, also as a composer, and in recent years, a painter.

**Muthspiel's field of work is wide** - he works with small jazz bands and symphony orchestras, from solo performances to multimedia music theatre, with different ensembles and musicians who interpret his musical inventions. In 2007 he was awarded the most prestigious Austrian jazz prize, the Hans-Koller-Preis, and has most recently excited audiences with his Yodel Group.

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### Seaven Teares

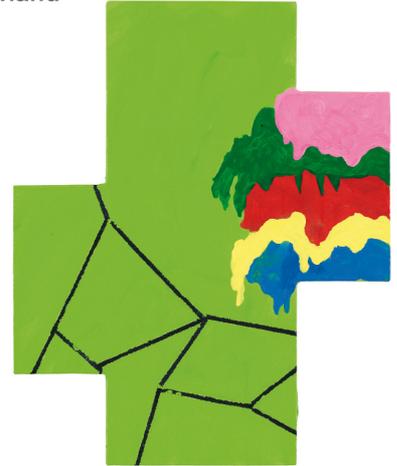
Tribute to John Dowland

Matthieu Michel

Franck Tortiller

Steve Swallow

ACT



**With a top-class international sextet** he converted the folk songs his father had collected into new symphonic music. Frankfurt Allgemeine Newspaper gave the project its “highest respect”, whereas the British Magazine Jazzwise wrote that “gems like this don’t come around that often”.

Two of his colleagues from that sextet, who Muthspiel knows from the Vienna Art Orchestra, have joined in on “Seven Teares”. His wish was to find musicians who “are at home in the worlds of both composed music as well as improvisation and jazz.” This is true for the Swiss trumpeter Matthieu Michel as well as for the French vibraphonist Franck Tortiller who, amongst other things, became famous as the director of the Orchestre National du Jazz. And naturally also for the fourth man in the team, Steve Swallow, who is not only the grand old man of electric bass and has played with almost all US jazz stars, but also an acclaimed composer.

**Together they start a fascinating journey along ten songs** of Dowland’s ingenious instrumental cycle “Lachrimae, or Seven Teares”. The compositional metamorphoses of the compendium of tears from “Tears of Love” and “Bitter Tears” to “Crocodile Tears” are thematically similar to the original. According to Muthspiel the challenge is “to modify the very specific form of melody and harmony resulting from it, interpret it and transfer it into another context”. The result, however, is much more fun: “Happy Tears” begins with a flute theme before electric piano, vibraphone and muted trumpet join in, the bebop ballad “Endless Tears” or the brass driven “Dancing Tears” with New Orleans Growl. The material, despite being over 400 years old, proves to be remarkably adaptable and can be turned into contemporary music with fantastic results.

**With “Seaven Teares” Christian Muthspiel joins the group of ACT** artists who combine different sounds and make music for listeners who are not interested in dividing music in genres and categories, but are rather fascinated by intelligent, contemporary and unique music.

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Photo by Claudio Casanova / AAJ Italia

- 01 Tears of Love 7:30
- 02 Happy Tears 7:53
- 03 Tears of Joy 4:39
- 04 Bitter Tears 6:23
- 05 Dancing Tears 2:16
- 06 Crocodile Tears 3:31
- 07 Tears of a Clown 4:28
- 08 Frozen Tears 7:56
- 09 Tears of Laughter 3:12
- 10 Endless Tears 8:56

Total time: 56:48

All music by Christian Muthspiel

Recorded August 26/27, 2012  
by Roland Baumann at TSB, A-Steinakirchen  
Mixed by Roland Baumann and Christian Muthspiel at TSB  
Mastered by Roland Baumann at TSB

Produced by Christian Muthspiel

Cover art by Mary Heilmann, Fracture and Spill, 2010, courtesy of the artist

**Christian Muthspiel** / trombone, piano, e-piano, recorder  
**Matthieu Michel** / trumpet, flugelhorn  
**Franck Tortiller** / vibraphone  
**Steve Swallow** / electric bass

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