

**Le Monde.** ( 7 October 2006 )

“François Couturier sublimates Tarkovsky”

There are two ways to overlook the album by pianist François Couturier, "Nostalghia – Song for Tarkovsky": by looking for jazz in it, or else Tarkovsky – that's how impressive the album is. Bergman had this to say of Tarkovsky, the Russian filmmaker who died in 1987 (Andrei Rublev, The Sacrifice, etc.), "He is the greatest because he strolls through the land of dreams, with nothing to explain". At 55, François Couturier could have easily added an effortless album to his plethora of career. But he signs his second personal album today, after having contributed to over fifty collective works (with Celea, his bass player alter-ego, Pifarély, violin, award-winning guitarist John McLaughlin, and some thirty other leading musicians). Couturier's recognition of Tarkovsky in his dream dimension shows this both personal and proffered taste for the strangely obvious. Tarkovsky's films, which he has seen hundreds of times, are what drive and inspire him.

Jazz and someplace else

On October 5, 2006, along with his recording partners, he gave the subtlest performance of this, in the most fitting setting – a disaffected chapel with acoustics worthy of a lute maker (the former Récollets convent, in Paris' 10<sup>th</sup> district). There is almost no need to mention the carefully crafted sound, silences and lighting, which all contributed to sweeping us into the music and the land of dreams.

This music is not jazz. Yet, only a jazz musician could have thought of it and proposed to share it. It is from someplace else. It does not illustrate Tarkovsky anymore than it decorates him. It enters him. It blends into him by connected disconnections, by sudden rumblings that scamper over the melody, theme or modal. It recalls the filmmaker's violence, the apparent spontaneity of his editing, his own special world, "Less of a mystic, for me," says Couturier, "than a visionary". It belongs to him like the world of images he preserves. There is no point in seeking what it evokes, it invites us to think about what musicians think about when they think. The concert received a rare ovation for this performance, which the album reflects with the same precision – something that cannot be achieved to this extent by accident or necessity.

By Francis Marmande

**Nouvel Observateur** "a slow-paced, melancholic world, that radiates spirituality...a moment of pure beauty in a world of brutes..."

**L' Express** "FC has composed 12 poems of hypnotic slowness and meditative serenity..."

**Jazzman** "a very personal world...a demanding, imperious quest..."

**Vibrations** "a superb look into the abyss of nostalgia...time extends all the way to the euphoria of quasi-silence"

**Classica** "...if Andrei Tarkovski was a great artist , then so is François Couturier..."

**Jazzwize** "...This a mood music of a highly sophisticated kind, sad, somber, elegiac and without closure suggesting instead something infinite and pure ..."

**Irish Times** “...Mixing classical rigour with improvisation, both formal and free, what emerges is austere beautiful, etched in somber blues and redolent of an unslakeable thirst to connect with a deeper well of the spirit, one that may be felt but never quite known....  
The really matter is the unity of playing and beauty of the music.

**Die Zeit** ( 28 September 2006 )

“ Twelve Ways to Enjoy Solitude “

...The French pianist composes elegies and songs without words, creating soundscapes...  
Couturier strikes a single note on the piano, and it fades away with such seductive slowness  
That no second note is necessary. Then a second note comes anyway, and a third, forming a  
minor-mode soundscape, the ideal place for people who want be alone but can't.  
The accordion enters, yearningly, abrasively, a second voice that transforms solitude into  
melancholy....