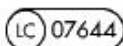




Gwilym Simcock

Good Days at Schloss Elmau

ACT 9501-2



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ACT



Release date: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Gwilym Simcock will launch *Good Days At Schloss Elmau* at The Forge, Camden,  
Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 - [www.forgevenue.org](http://www.forgevenue.org)

**The BBC has been very impressed by pianist Gwilym Simcock since early on in his career.** In 2005, when Simcock was just 24 years old, he won the Rising Star Award at the BBC Jazz Awards. A year later he became the first BBC Radio 3 New Generation Jazz Artist, a position he held for two years. By 2007 he was awarded the title of Jazz Musician of the Year at the British Parliamentary Jazz Awards, and his 2008 debut album *Perception* was widely acclaimed in the international press. But it is the praise of his colleagues that is really telling - Chick Corea calls him “*an original, a creative genius*” whilst Jamie Cullum proudly states that “*He is our best young pianist.*”

**The young Welshman** is clearly on a par with new ACT stars such as Vijay Iyer, Yaron Herman and Michael Wollny, and he now joins them in a series of impressive piano solo albums on the label. *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* features eight pieces, all Simcock’s own compositions, inspired by the unique ‘cultural hideaway’ in the Bavarian Alps. As one might expect from a pianist so closely associated with classical music, the spirit of this special place is reflected throughout this recording.

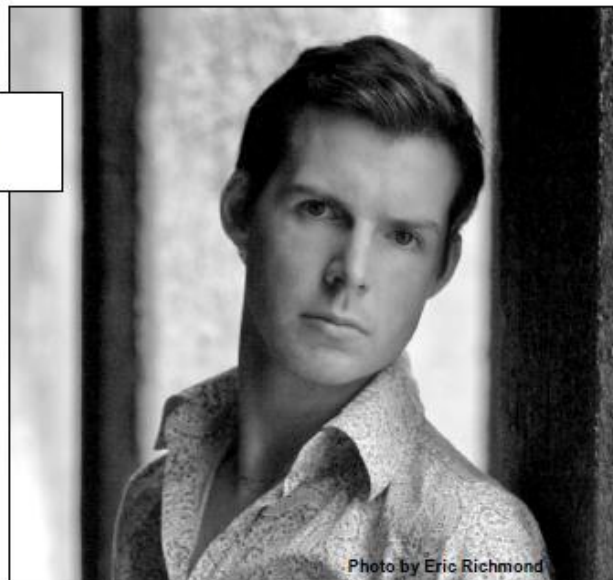
**Gwilym did, after all, start out as a classical pianist.** At the age of just three his mother and father (a church organist) recognised their son’s talent and very much encouraged it. By the age of seven Simcock started lessons at London’s renowned Trinity College of Music and then went on to Chetham’s School in Manchester. The effects of this early education can still be heard in Simcock’s music today – with his technique and ability to interpret, he could easily have become a successful classical pianist. But at the age of 15 he was given a cassette of jazz music by his improvisation teacher Steve Berry. This included tracks by Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny that were to change his musical direction and inspire him to study jazz at the Royal Academy of Music, where he graduated with distinction and won the coveted Principal’s prize.

**Simcock’s prodigious talent soon became well known in jazz circles** and he played with greats such as Dave Holland, Lee Konitz and Bob Mintzer, and was also a regular member of Bill Bruford’s Earthworks group even before recording his first CD. The wide-reaching appeal of his work to his musical colleagues and his fans is apparent on *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* after only a few bars. Simcock has devoured his way through the seas of musical history like a shark - those who listen closely will detect sounds reminiscent of Mozart, Bach, Chopin, Ravel, Gershwin or Ligeti, as well as George Shearing, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson, and Keith Jarrett, one of the artists who triggered Simcock’s passion for jazz in the first place and to whom he pays brilliant homage on *Northern Smiles* (a play on Jarrett’s own *Southern Smiles*). Simcock is an eclectic pianist and a true craftsman, capable of creating a huge range of textures and sonorities with his instrument. He is one of the few brilliant players who has succeeded in finding his own style. “*When you are young, you think the most important thing is to achieve technical control of your instrument,*” explains Gwilym. “*You later realise that this only works if you find the right approach and drive your music with inspiration and energy.*”

**His rhythmic feel is very strong**, which becomes clear right from the beginning with the intense syncopation of the rousing opening track *These Are The Good Days*, and his harmony is extravagant, as can be heard in the chromatic runs of *Gripper*. But the most distinctive thing about his music is its special sound. “*I want to hear the piano sing,*” he says. “*I have to hear melodies in my head when I improvise.*”



Gwilym Simcock



**This is how a Neo Romantic is**, creating soaring and swirling tunes like the 13-minute *Can We Still Be Friends?*, using every influence from classical music to Sixties pop to jazz standards. Tunes which simply burst with exciting ideas and character travel to a myriad of places, and yet, as if steered by their own navigation system, always find their way back to the main theme.

**An concert promoter recently described Simcock** as a member of the “new generation of jazz musicians who dare to try everything.” Listeners of *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* will no doubt agree.

**The CD:**

Good Days at Schloss Elmau – Gwilym Simcock – ACT 9501-2 – LC 07644

**Line Up:**

Gwilym Simcock - piano

**Tracks:**

- 01 - These Are The Good Days
- 02 - Mezzotint
- 03 - Gripper
- 04 - Plain Song
- 05 - Northern Smiles
- 06 - Can We Still Be Friends
- 07 - Wake Up Call
- 08 - Elmau Tage

All compositions by Gwilym Simcock. Produced by Siggı Loch with the artist. Recorded at Schloss Elmau by Florian Oestreicher, September 2, 2010, Mixed and mastered by Curtis Schwartz with the artist.

**ACT - The Art in Music:**

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