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ELECTRONIC

AMANDA HANDEL AND G.L. SEILER

Ghosts and Angels
(Feral Media /Fuse)



Darken the room, light some candles and be prepared for the goose bumps. The odd pairing of

classical composer Amanda Handel and eccentric electronic artist G.L. Seiler is guaranteed to spook.

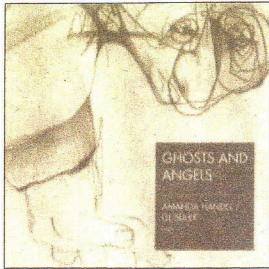
Lonely piano has always had a home in haunted houses, but backed by layers of electronica the atmospherics are even more pronounced.

With *The Passing*, an undead army is called to march. Military drums are joined by field recordings of hard-to-hear voices;

children in a playground? Handel and Seiler strike a wonderful balance between the musical and experimental and the 12-minute *The Haunting* is one of the album's more intriguing moments.

Opening with seductive whispers, the soundscape includes distorted French vocals and synthesizers that bounce off the muted roars of monsters.
Chloe Sasson

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AMANDA HANDEL / GL SEILER

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This befittingly titled LP from Australian electronic producer Greg Seiler (Comatone), and classical composer/pianist, Amanda Handel, reminds me of visual artist MC Escher's work; an unnerving inversion of darkness and light. Escher's angels and devils seem to circle the album's amorphous introduction, *Bewitchment*. Here piano picks out stepping stones in a recording of water, the sluice later stained by underworld rumblings and sinister tower bells. Who's leading? Handel's piano, or Seiler's treatments? Escher tendered the same enigma in his drawing of two hands sketching each other. Apparently Handel made the field recordings in Spain - Seiler later manipulating them. The two then embellished Handel's minimalist compositions.

Spanish echoes are heard throughout. In *The Passing*, a village procession ushers in bittersweet, conquistadorian trumpet. In *iGuapo!* the ambience snaps with the bass licks of a fork-tongued King Crimson dancing to rhythms masterfully constructed from swords and Andalusian hooves. The pair prove adept at naming tracks too; *Dust and Silver* descends a mineshaft with a rhythmically industrial clamber, while *The Lure* is exactly that. Still, questions remain. Is *The Lure* drawing us up or down? Below, bass piano notes reverberate like hell's iron door. Above, sonic swirls beckon heavenward, beyond cloudbursts. Then, *Earthly Remains* suggests the dreaded answer, with its reverse centrifuge drain of horror scoring.

Sound-art? Partly. Gothic-electro-classical? God forbid! The CD is darkly cinematic though, balancing spooky soundscapes with beautiful playing. It's akin to wandering into a ghost town where past occupants have left a flickering film loop of their turbulent history.

PARIS POMPOR

18 **metro** december 8-14, 2006

music

★★★★ better than sex ★★★★★ hot stuff ★★★ solid ★★



amanda handel/ g.l. seiler

GHOSTS AND ANGELS
(Feral Media)

★★★★★

From their artistic coven in the Blue Mountains comes this startling collaboration between classical composer Amanda Handel and electronics whiz G.L. Seiler. Underpinning the album are field recordings Handel made in Spain that Seiler has stretched, compressed and generally bullied to create a dozen eerie soundscapes, marginally earthed by Handel's piano and other "real" instruments. Spooky.
John Shand