



Lucian Ban & Mat Maneri

present

OEDIPE REDUX

based on

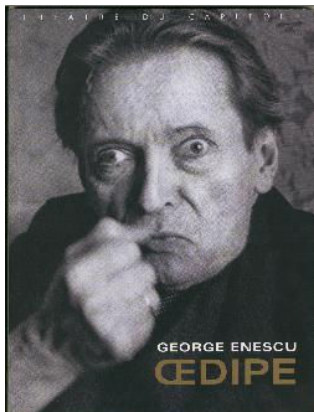
George Enescu **OEDIPE** Opera

Jen Shyu & Theo Bleckmann (vocals / multiple characters)

Lucian Ban (piano & arranging) **Mat Maneri** (viola & arranging)

Louis Sclavis (bass cl & cl) **Ralph Alessi** (trumpet)

John Hebert (double bass) **Tom Rainey** (drums)



Transylvanian expat pianist Lucian Ban and American violist Mat Maneri present a radical re-imagining of George Enescu's famous OEDIPE opera. More than 80 years after its opening in Paris in 1936, the two NYC based musicians, renowned for their work at the cross-border of jazz, improvisation and chamber music, are presenting their take on one of 20th century towering works of musical theater featuring an international cast of jazz iconoclasts: trumpet player Ralph Alessi, cutting edge singers Jen Shyu and Theo Bleckmann, bassist John Hebert, drummer Tom Rainey and French virtuoso clarinetist Louis Sclavis.

"Enesco's Oedipe is a monumental, complex and difficult piece of music, pianist Lucian Ban says in discussing the work, and it's one of the reasons for being rarely staged, but its profound synthesis of ancient and modern of late romanticism and sheer individualism on the part of its composer is unparalleled among XX century operas. It is why Mat Maneri and myself, after previously working with his instrumental music, wanted to approach Oedipe"



But even as the last century saw few productions of the opera (after the 1936 Paris premiere it was staged at La Monnaie in Brussels in 1956, in Bucharest with a Romanian translation in 1958, and decades will pass till the Vienna State Opera staging IN 1997), Enesco's Oedipe is finally getting recognized in the new millennium, taking its rightful place as one of the greatest works in the operatic repertoire. Prestigious productions take at place at Royal Opera House in London (2016), Dutch National Opera (2018), finally at Salzburg Festival (2019), and a much talked pandemic production by Wajdi Mouawad that opens in 2021 at Opera Bastille in Paris (United States sees only a semi-staged production in 2005 at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

To compound on the difficulty, to this day there is no authoritative print version of Enesco score; for OEDIPE REDUX, Lucian Ban and Mat Maneri worked from a facsimile of the original score at The Enesco Museum in Bucharest. Enesco's Oedipe occupies a singular place in 20th-century music history: the score seamlessly combines the melismatic woodwinds of Romanian folk music, the blaring brass of Wagnerian music drama, and the transparent neo-classicism of Stravinsky with elements of pan-tonalism and heterophony.



The libretto by French Jewish writer **Edmond Fleg** is based on the two Sophocles plays, **Oedipus King** and **Oedipus at Colonos** but transforms the Oedipus myth into an epic narrative that begins with the title character's birth and – in a twist to the original – ends with his disappearance in a flash of light. Although Oedipe still gouged out his eyes in shame upon having learned that he committed patricide and entered into an incestuous relationship with his mother, Enescu and Fleg bring a major departure on the idea of destiny: Man is stronger than fate, as Oedipe tells the Sphinx in the second act.



Maneri and Ban follow closely the narrative and dramaturgy of the libretto but do a radical rewriting of the Enescu score to bring their jazz credo of improvisation into foreground – they compose interludes to tie the numbers, they feature intense soloing from all of the instrumentalists in various groupings, they keep the original score motives, themes and melodies, but combine Enescu's music with the freedom of downtown NYC ethos. And on top of all this the soaring voices of Jen Shyu and Theo Bleckmann are singing Enescu's parts with the visceral and cutting edginess they are both renown for. They were encouraged to improvise, and improvise they did, to make Enescu's lines their own and by the end of the 2019 tour when the music was recorded live at Bimhuis in Amsterdam for a 2023 release they have added acting and movement to their performance.

*Photographs by Marc Lazzarini & Serge Heimlich from performances in
Lyon, Brussels and Luxembourg, 2018/2019*





OEDIPE REDUX

Synopsis

1. **PRELUDE / Overture** – (Slow/Faster/ Slow)
Intro, Theme, Solo Tpt (add B.Cl), Theme Out, Coda tag
2. **Tiresias & Laios** (Rubato/Time/Rubato) – *announcing the Curse!*
Vocal – Bass Cl SOLO – Vocal - Coda Twice
3. **HELAS** – (Slow / Faster)
Intro (P/Vla/Dr) – THEME – Bass Cl & Vla Duo – Vamp OUT (Vocal)
4. **Adonis Prelude & Choir** – Medium Slow
Intro TRIO (Tpt/Vla/Bass Cl) - THEME (A - Interlude - B)
Tpt SOLO
THEME OUT (A2-B2) – CODA
5. **The Shepherd / Le Berger** – Slow + Medium 6/8
Slow A drone (Tpt SOLO + Bass Cl) ... B Voice + Drums DUET
Medium 6/8 part (Tpt Solo – Vocal – ALL Solo) + letter D Freely OUT
6. **Ou Sui Je / Where Am I?**
THEO - Rubato INTRO – THEME (medium slow VOCAL Song)
Viola SOLO THEME OUT CODA Twice Bass Cl & Vla TAG
7. **The CRIME** – Slow/ Free / Medium Up / Slow – *Oedipe kills Laios*
INTRO Bass SOLO - VOCAL over Groove – ALL Freely
TPT alone + ALL SOLO
Medium UP GROOVE in 5/8 – Vocal over – ALL SOLO OVER (the killing)
HEAD OUT : Piano & Drums & Voce SPACIOUS
8. **OEDIPE & the Guard (BLUES)** – Slow Call & Response BLUES PEDAL
INTRO Tpt & Vla over 5/4 slow ... THEME (Call & response Vocal & Instr.)
SOLO ALL – Expand the motive
THEME OUT + short CODA
9. **The SPHYNX** – Slow - *Oedipe kills the Sphinx* (JEN)
RUBATO follow JEN – short SOLO INTERLUDES – letter C (time-ish)
HEME OUT (D) – play twice ... *crescendo*
10. **CORONATION + Oedipe Fall** – FAST / Slow – *Oedipe becomes King then Truth*
Fast VOCAL THEME – bass walks / Time
TPT SOLO over – then ALL SOLO FREE break time
OEDIPE Recitative over SLOW VAMP
11. **LAST SONG** – END Song – *Oedipe dies at peace with himself*
SHORT INTRO followed by THEME– 1st time Piano & Jen / 2nd time both JEN & THEO
–end on DMaj

This is not the first time pianist Lucian Ban and violist Mat Maneri have worked with the music of George Enescu – they first collaborated in 2009 on **Enesco Re-Imagined**, a commission of Enescu Festival in Bucharest. The project was conceived as a celebration and a contemporary jazz *re-imagination* of the works of the great Romanian composer George Enescu. Featuring an A list of New York most celebrated jazz musicians – *Ralph Alessi, Tony Malaby, John Hebert Gerald Cleaver, Mat Maneri, Albrecht Maurer* and the legendary *Badal Roy* – the album was recorded live at the 2009 Enescu International Festival in Bucharest and was released to critical acclaim by Sunnyside Records. The CD wins multiple **Best Album of the Year Awards** from Jazz Journalist Association, worldwide press coverage, including concerts in major venues and festivals in United States and Europe.



Four years later, when violist Mat Maneri joined up Lucian Ban for a concert in an opera house in Targu Mures in the middle of Romania's Transylvania region, the music was, as Jazz Times puts it, "**as close as it gets to Goth jazz.**" Released in 2013 by ECM Records, **Transylvanian Concert** album features a program of self-penned ballads, blues, hymns and abstract improvisations, the whole informed by the twin traditions of jazz and European chamber music. The album has won critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic, including Best Album of The Year Awards, and has spawned continuous touring throughout US, Europe, and South America. In 2018 Lucian Ban & Mat Maneri team with renowned British reed player **John Surman** to investigate the **Béla Bartók Field Recordings** of Romanian folk music in Transylvania – the subsequent **Transylvanian Folk Songs** album ascended to Billboard Classical Crossover Charts, Balkan World Music Charts, and was a 2020 NYC Jazz Record and NPR Album of The Year.

PRESS on "Enesco Re-Imagined"

The New York Times

"Sparkling new album"

JazzTimes

"Enesco Re-Imagined is visionary third-stream music . . . this recording places Ban and Hébert among the great 21st-century interpreters"



"A spectacular, dreamy affair, rooted, in the celebrated musical reality of the celebrated 20th Century composer, George Enesco . . . Masterful writing!"



*"Recorded at the 2009 Enesco International Festival, the performances here have a lot to offer most listeners. Even purists who aren't big fans of altering original compositions will notice that reorchestrators Lucian Ban and John Hébert do so in a highly respectful manner; perhaps most surprisingly, Enesco's music truly lends itself well to this type of performance" **Mike D. Brownell***

theguardian

"It's a rare combination of uninhibited but coherent solo and collective improvisation, shrewd arrangement and dazzling thematic writing"

London Evening Standard

4* Stars! *"Romanian jazz can swing like the clappers one minute and break your heart the next. Inspired by late composer George Enesco, this East-meets-West suite by pianist Ban and bassist John Hébert adds violin and viola to the usual jazz mix. Their Mingus-like arrangements draw melodious solos from tenorist Tony Malaby and trumpeter Ralph Alessi"*



"A scary-good group . . . Both orchestrators look far afield . . . Indian percussionist Badal Roy shifts momentum even farther east"

NEW YORK

"Pianist Lucian Ban and bassist John Hébert have elegantly rearranged the compositions of famed Romanian violinist George Enesco, maintaining their spirit while breathing into them a driving jazz force..."



"Trust us; this kind of night only happens once every three centuries"



*"A colossal work of re-writing the music of George Enesco . . . the group sounds like a 40 piece orchestra!" **LES DERNIERS NOUVELLES DU JAZZ, France***













Described by All About Jazz as someone “*breaking the song barrier*” singer, dancer & instrumentalist **Jen Shyu** is an American of Taiwanese and East Timorese parents. Jen Shyu has established herself as a pioneering and original voice in the improvisational, avant-garde jazz and creative music worlds. Shyu has sung a featured role in Anthony Braxton’s pending recording of his opera Trillium E, and has a duo project called Synastry with bassist Mark Dresser, and has also worked with such innovators as Dave Burrell, Pheeroan Aklaflaff, Ben Monder, and currently records and tours with saxophonist/composer Steve Coleman and Five Elements, singing on his latest albums Harvesting Semblances and Affinities (Pi Recordings 2010), and Lucidarium and Weaving Symbolics (Label Bleu 2005 & 2006). Aside from being a MacDowell Colony National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in 2008-2009, she has been awarded fellowships from the Asian Cultural Council and the Bronx Council on the Arts, as well as premiered full-length chamber works for voice, ensemble, and dance in collaboration with choreographer Satoshi Haga. She has performed solo and with her band at such places as Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Stone, and many venues throughout the US, Asia and Europe. More info www.jenshyu.com



THEO BLECKMANN (voice)

is considered one of the most original singers to be working today – a frequent collaborator of Phillip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Uri Caine, Meredith Monk and Bang on a Can All Stars – he has been described by the press as: “*from another planet*” (New York Times), as “*magical, futuristic,*” (All About Jazz), “*limitless*” (Citypaper, Philadelphia) “*transcendent*” (Village Voice) and “*brilliant*” (New York Magazine). He was nominated for a Grammy Award for his rendition of Charles Ives Song Cycles with Kneebody, and has recorded for the prestigious Winter & Winter label albums dedicated to Kurt Weill and the German Cabaret of between the wars, Solos for Voice & Toys. In January 2012 he performed at Koln Philharmonie the Music of Offenbach and Gershwin under Uri Caine. His latest project “Hello Earth – The music of Kate Bush” has propelled him to a crossover audience. More info at www.thebleckmann.com



LOUIS SCLAVIS (bass cl & clarinet)

One of the finest clarinetists in free jazz and avant-garde, Louis Sclavis plays improvised music with unusual clarity and precision. And while his technique is huge, it doesn't overshadow his musicality; Sclavis is a most expressive player. Sclavis began studying clarinet at the age of nine. He played in a local brass band before entering the Lyons Conservatory of Music. From 1975-1982, he played with a variety of ensembles, including most notably the Henri Texier Quartet and Chris MacGregor's Brotherhood of Breath. He formed his own band in 1982, Le Tour de France, comprised of six musicians from different regions of France. He also played and recorded with a number of prominent free jazz musicians, including Evan Parker, Lol Coxhill, Tony Oxley, and Peter Brotzmann for the FMP and NATO labels. In 1984, he recorded Clarinettes, a solo album for the Ida label. That year, he also formed a new quartet; the band would record a pair of albums: Chine (1987) for Ida and Rouge (1991) for ECM. In 1987, he founded a septet, which would also record for Ida. In 1988, he was awarded the Prix Django Reinhardt as French jazzman of the year. That year, he founded the Trio de Clarinettes with Jacques di Donato and Armand Angster; in addition to playing improvised pieces, the group also played works written by its members and such classical composers as Brian Ferneyhough and Pierre Boulez. Around that time, he met choreographer and dancer Mathilde Monnier and they collaborated on several performances. Sclavis' renown grew during the next decade; he won a British Jazz Award in 1991, and recorded often for FMP and ECM. Projects included a trio with Aldo Romano and Henri Texier; also, recordings and performances with his clarinet trio, septet, percussionist Trilok Gurtu, and a Cecil Taylor large ensemble. Besides his jazz-related activities, Sclavis has also composed for theater and film.



Called "A name to watch" by The Guardian and "one of the most gifted pianists to move to New York" (B. Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery), **LUCIAN BAN** is a Romanian born, NYC based pianist & composer known for his amalgamations of Transylvanian folk with improvisation, for his mining of 20th Century European classical music with jazz, and for his pursue of a modern chamber jazz ideal. His music has been described as "emotionally ravishing" (Nate Chinen, New York Times/WBGO), a "triumph of emotional and musical communication" (All About Jazz), "Unorthodox but mesmerizingly beautiful" (The Guardian) and as holding an "alluring timelessness and strong life-force" (Downbeat Magazine). Ban was raised in a small village in northwest Transylvania, in "the region where Bartok did his most extensive research and collecting of folk songs" and studied composition at the Bucharest Music Academy while simultaneously leading his own jazz groups. Desire to get closer to the source of jazz brought him to the US, and since moving from Romania to New York in 1999 his ensembles have included many of New York's finest players. www.lucianban.com

The 2020 **Transylvanian Folk Songs** reimagining the Béla Bartók Field Recordings with **Mat Maneri** and legendary **John Surman** stays one month on Billboard Top Twenty and becomes an NPR Album of The Year, and a Balkan World Music Chart winner. His 2nd album with **ELEVATION** quartet "**Songs from Afar**" featuring Abraham Burton, John Hebert and Eric McPherson gets a 5* review in Downbeat and BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR in 2016. **Enesco Re-Imagined** octet celebrated the music of the great Romanian composer George Enesco and won several BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR Awards in 2010. His duet **Transylvanian Concert** with Mat Maneri was released by ECM Records in 2013 and won critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. His albums investigating the Romanian folk songs, or re-imagining the music of famed Romanian classical composer George Enescu, conversing with the classic jazz quartet in his **ELEVATION** group or freely improvising with **Evan Parker** and again, Mat Maneri (Clean Feed) and his various duets with Mat Maneri (ECM), **Alex Harding** and **Abraham Burton** (Sunnyside), have won critical praise and awards but, more importantly, they have revealed a singular focus to strand the worlds of American jazz and European chamber music with the freedom of improvisation. Lucian Ban has performed/recorded with among others: Abraham Burton, Nasheet Waits, John Surman, Mat Maneri, Billy Hart, Alex Harding, Barry Altschul, Louis Slavis, Gerald Cleaver, Tony Malaby, Mark Helias, Sam Newsome, Ralph Alessi, Pheeroan AkLaff, Reggie Nicholson, Drew Gress, Brad Jones, Jen Shyu, John Hebert, Eric McPherson, Theo Bleckmann, Bob Stewart, Badal Roy, etc. He recorded 20 albums as a leader for labels such as Sunnyside, ECM, Jazzaway, etc, all the while maintaining a worldwide touring schedule.



RALPH ALESSI (trumpet)

Since 1991, trumpeter/composer/educator Ralph Alessi has been an active member of the New York jazz and improvised music scene as both sideman and leader. Called "...a highly-in-demand, adventurous virtuoso who can handle just about anything" (*L.A. Weekly*), Alessi has performed and recorded with the likes of **Steve Coleman**, **Uri Caine**, **Don Byron**, **Ravi Coltrane**, **Sam Rivers**, **Drew Gress**, **Fred Hersch** and many other of the great innovators in improvised music.

As a leader, Alessi has four recordings to his name: **Hissy Fit**, **Vice Virtue**, **This Against That** (voted one of **the top ten records of 2002 by Jazz Times**) and the recently released, **Look** featuring his band, This Against That. In the coming year he will release 2 more recordings, one being a quartet project featuring Jason Moran. As an educator, Alessi has been a member of the faculties at Five Towns College and the Eastman School of Music. He is currently the founder and director of the School for Improvisational Music (www.schoolforimprov.org), a non-profit entity currently holding improvisational music workshops in Brooklyn. Since 2002, he has been on the jazz faculty at New York University.



JOHN HEBERT (bass)

One of the most in demand bass players in New York. He was voted twice in 2006 and 2007 in DownBeat Critics Poll as a *“Rising Star Acoustic Bassist”*. He worked also with the late Andrew Hill Trio, Nonet and Quintet appearing on his latest Blue Note Records album *“Time Lines”* album voted *“Album of the Year”* in 2006 by Downbeat Magazine. He has worked alongside such world famous artists such as Andrew Hill, Lee Konitz, Paul Bley, John Abercrombie, Kenny Wheeler, Paul Motian, David Liebman, Uri Caine, Greg Osby, Bill Stewart, Marc Copland, Fred Hersch, Maria Schneider, and many others. He also leads his own group, Byzantine Monkey, and has received high praise for his compositions and individual playing style. He is also mentioned in Downbeat's 2006, 2007 and 2008 Critics Poll as a *“Rising Star Acoustic Bassist”*. From 2001 until Andrew Hill's passing in 2007, John worked with Mr. Hill in various ensembles. John is also featured on Andrew Hill's latest Blue Note release, *“Time Lines”* which was awarded *“Record of the Year”* by Downbeat's Jazz Critics Poll in 2006. John has also performed around the world at festivals such as the North Sea Jazz Festival, Tampere Jazz Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival, Moers Jazz Festival, Ear Shot Jazz Festival, San Francisco Jazz Festival and many others. He can also be heard in some of New York City's most established venues such as The Village Vanguard, Blue Note, The Jazz Standard, Birdland.



TOM RAINEY (drums)

Tom Rainey was born in Los Angeles, California in 1957. *“Tom Rainey is a player who swerves between avant-garde notions and a mainstream sensibility and when he plays the smell of invention is in the air”* Joseph Woodard, L.A. Times. Since moving to New York City in 1979 he has performed at festivals and clubs throughout North America and Europe with a wide range of artists, including John Abercrombie, Ray Anderson, Tim Berne, Jane Ira Bloom, Ted Curson, Marc Ducret, George Gruntz, David Torn, Mark Helias, Fred Hersch, Andy Laster, Joe Lovano, Carmen McRae, Mike Nock, Simon Nabatov, New and Used, Matthias Schubert, Tom Varner, WDR Big Band, Ken Werner and Denny Zeitlin. Tom Rainey received an National Endowment for the Arts grant to compose and perform a concert of music for percussion and drums featuring Dave Samuels and Arto Tunçboyacı. Rainey's voluminous recording credits and the artistic caliber of the musicians he's supported would easily place him on the A-list of drummers closely identified with the New York City modern creative jazz scene roughly from the late '80s onward. Tom Rainey recorded his debut album as a leader, *“Pool School”* for Cleanfeed Records in May 2010. The CD also features Mary Halvorson on guitar and Ingrid Laubrock on saxophone. The trio's follow-up CD *“Camino Cielo Echo”* was just released on Intakt Records.



MAT MANERI (viola)

A 2006 Grammy Nominee for *“Best Alternative Album”* MAT MANERI over the course of a twenty-five year career, Mat Maneri has defined the voice of the viola and violin in jazz and improvised music. Born in Brooklyn in 1969, Maneri has established an international reputation as one of the most original and compelling artists of his generation, praised for his high degree of individualism, a distinctive marriage of jazz and microtonal music, and his work with 20th century icons of improvised music. As a young musician, Maneri was influenced by the sounds of his childhood home. His father, saxophonist and composer Joe Maneri, was on faculty at the New England Conservatory, and colleagues like Ran Blake and Gunther Schuller were frequent visitors. In 1990, Mat co-founded the legendary Joe Maneri Quartet with his father, drummer Randy Peterson and bassists Ed Schuller and John Lockwood. The quartet's recordings for ECM Records, Hatology and Leo Records were widely acknowledged by critics and fellow musicians as among the most important developments in 20th century improvised music. Pianist Matt Shipp called him *“one of the five greatest improvisers on the planet”*, reflecting a growing consensus of Maneri as a central figure in American creative music. Since then, the long list of musicians with whom he has worked includes icons such as Cecil Taylor, Paul Bley, Paul Motian and William Parker, as well as influential bandleaders such as Joe Morris, Vijay Iyer, Matthew Shipp, Marilyn Crispell, Joelle Leandre, Kris Davis, Tim Berne and Craig Taborn. Maneri's recordings as a leader (trio, quartet and quintet) have been documented on Hatology, Aum Fidelity, Leo Records and Thirsty Ear.