



ALL MUSIC GUIDE Review by Thom Jurek - January 19, 2005

Chicago blues legend and innovator Corky Siegel took his fine Chamber Blues ensemble on the road throughout the Midwest in 2004, and the result is in this exquisitely recorded, excitingly performed set on Alligator. Despite being recorded in half a dozen locations, precise editing provides the feel of a single live gig. Siegel, accompanied by a string quartet and percussionist Frank Donaldson (a mean tabla player for an American), roars through a series of new and familiar compositions. The live version of "Opus 17.2" is far more playful and fiery than its studio-recorded predecessor. Likewise, the set's closer, "Opus 4" (which really is half of "Opus 8") is a wild and woolly ride through all the labyrinthine twists and turns of the original composition in overdrive. The addition of Rollo Radford on bass and vocals on "Train" brings a certain grittiness to these sophisticated proceedings (sophisticated - not sterile). Since his mighty contribution with the Siegel-Schwall Band Siegel has been a blues visionary. There isn't anything remotely precious about his approach to melding the finest elements of blues and classical music together. This outing is thoroughly provocative as well as enjoyable. Solid.