



Bio information: **ART ZOYD**

Title: **44 ½: LIVE AND UNRELEASED WORKS** (Cuneiform Rune 450-463)

Format: BOX SET (12xCD + 2xDVD + 2xBOOK + 2xPOSTER) / DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Cuneiform Promotion Dept: (301) 589-8894 / Fax (301) 589-1819

Press and world radio: joyce@cuneiformrecords.com | North American radio: radio@cuneiformrecords.com

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER:

ROCK / POST-ROCK / AVANT-PROGRESSIVE / ROCK IN OPPOSITION / ELECTRONIC / CLASSICAL / AVANT-CLASSICAL / NEW MUSIC / ART MUSIC

**Celebrating 44 ½ Years of Smashing Genre Walls and Spanning
Myriad Disciplines (Music/Film/Theatre/Dance),
French Avant Music Ensemble and Post-Genre Pioneers
ART ZOYD**

**Open Their Treasure Chest of Rare Gems to the Public with
44 ½: LIVE AND UNRELEASED WORKS**

a 12-CD / 2-DVD / 2-Book / 2-Poster Collection

The First-Ever Box Set Released by Art Zoyd and by Cuneiform Records

Trying to make France's **Art Zoyd** fit into a single neat description is an exercise in futility. Sometimes they're fiendish sonic saboteurs bent on destroying listener's preconceptions about the way music works. Sometimes they're musical sorcerers conjuring strange but bewitching moments of lyrical beauty.

You could call them the original post-rock band, moving on from the dark, stormy sounds of prog legends like **Magma** and **King Crimson** to something that makes even those fearless explorers sound conventional by comparison. You'd be equally accurate in dubbing them avant-classical composers, whose experimental visions are influenced by **Stravinsky** and **Schoenberg**.

They were members of the notorious **Rock In Opposition (RIO)** movement alongside the likes of **Henry Cow** and **Univers Zero**. They're impressionistic soundtrack composers. They're a band. They're a multimedia collective. Ultimately they're simply Art Zoyd. And it takes a document as massive and monumental as the 12-CD/2-DVD/2-Book/2-Poster set **44 ½** to even come close to offering a comprehensive picture of what they're all about.

Containing hours of live and unreleased material from the vast Art Zoyd archives, **44 ½** delves into the dense jungle of wildly diverse periods in a story that goes all the way back to the '70s. But it also provides many of the missing links in their long, knotty discography, filling in the gaps between their official releases and weaving together all of Art Zoyd's disparate stylistic strands into a majestic, multicolored, even imposing tapestry.

The tale told by **44 ½** incorporates everything from decades-old demos for brilliant but abandoned pieces to live recordings of multimedia extravaganzas involving film, theater, and more. It encompasses intimate trio performances as well as full orchestral assaults featuring dozens of musicians in full flight. It offers explosive industrial soundscapes and sweeping symphonic surges, quiet dread and monumental wallop, delicate acoustic chamber pieces and bustling electronic outbursts.

Art Zoyd has always been a band in flux, not only stylistically but in terms of personnel as well. Countless musicians have come and gone through the band's ranks over the years, but most of them can be heard here, with core players like bassist/cellist **Thierry Zaboitzeff**, trumpeter **Jean-Pierre Soarez**, keyboardist **Patricia Dallio**, and violinist/keyboardist **Gérard Hourbette** providing the through-line.

On recordings that go all the way back to 1975, this sprawling set—you can't capture the gist of an ensemble like this without going heroically deep—spotlights the multitude of ways in which Art Zoyd blazed a trail unquestionably their own. Their constantly shifting sound was even a million miles from that of their aforementioned RIO comrades, let alone anything even minutely more conventional. They've always been left field of the left field, the maverick's mavericks, and if anything, this set underlines just how diligently they've pursued that grand idiosyncrasy decade after decade, offering new views of their evolution in the bargain.

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In a 1996 live performance from **Copenhagen**, we hear the sinister but subtle, foreboding atmospheres and nuanced textures of Art Zoyd's accompaniment for the classic 1921 silent film *Häxan (Witchcraft Through the Ages)*. A 2000 concert recording from **Maubeuge**, France, finds the group joined by a 43-strong ensemble for the dense, brass-heavy orchestrations and pile-driving avant-industrial percussion barrages of the symphonic poem "**u.B.I.Q.u.e.**"

"**Final**," from a 1975 show in **Nancy**, wrings an orchestra's worth of dark, gothic-flavored sounds from just guitar, violin, trumpet, and bass, while the 2000 live reading of the wildly diverse "**La Nuit Du Jabberwock**" from **Armentieres** with **Belgian** ensemble **Musiques Nouvelles** features everything from neo-classical movements to electronic minimalism and mutated funk grooves.

In **44 ½** we also get glimpses of glories that were nearly lost to the ravages of time, like the previously unreleased 1990 demo for "**Theopanie (Eloge de la Variete)**," a piece where Art Zoyd comes off like '80s **Tangerine Dream** or **Kraftwerk** amid metronomic beats and a surprisingly linear latticework of synth riffs that would seem anomalous if the group wasn't so tough to pigeonhole to begin with. Then there's the demo for "**Alabanje Kalabanza**," where Eastern riffs and an urban framework come together for what could almost be the soundtrack to some bizarre crime drama.

Whether they were warping centuries-old classical styles with their sonic funhouse mirror in a piece for the 1989 bicentennial of the French revolution, transforming themselves into an alternate-universe jazz trio in their 1983 accompaniment to **Didier Fusillier's** play *L'Etrangleur est Derriere Vous*, or indulging in the unabashed beauty of the piano and choral voices on "**Debut**" three years later for another of Fusillier's works, *Terra Terra!*, **Art Zoyd** has consistently flouted expectation at every juncture throughout a long, prolific career. And now, with the arrival of **44 ½**, we can finally get a long view of all their most compelling twists and turns along the way.

For more information on Art Zoyd:

Twitter: [@ArtZoyd_3](https://twitter.com/ArtZoyd_3) and [@Artzoydstudios](https://twitter.com/Artzoydstudios)

<http://www.artzoyd.net>

<http://www.facebook.com/Art-Zoyd-267913070365> - <http://www.cuneiformrecords.com/bandshtml/artzoyd.html>

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] images are available on the **Art Zoyd** page @ www.cuneiformrecords.com



ART ZOYD BIOGRAPHY

France's **Art Zoyd** are a fearlessly experimental ensemble who have always operated in a sphere entirely their own. Heroes of the **Rock In Opposition** movement, they've been around for so long and seen so many changes that even just a few years into their career they weren't the same band as when they started out.

The band's first iteration began in **Valenciennes** in Northern France in 1969. At that time, though they were already operating far outside of the mainstream, they were at least nominally a rock band, making progressive music influenced by the likes of **Frank Zappa** and **Captain Beefheart**.

But both their personnel and their style began shifting quickly, as they would do for the rest of the band's lifetime. In 1971 a major turnaround in membership saw charter members depart while violinist/keyboardist **Gérard Hourbette** and bassist/cellist **Thierry Zaboitzeff** come aboard. By 1975, Hourbette and Zaboitzeff were leading the charge towards a new approach.

The first version of Art Zoyd that resembled the group we know today jettisoned the trappings of rock, eschewing guitars, drums, and conventional rock-oriented song structures, in favor of an uncompromisingly forward-looking agenda and a lineup based around violins, trumpet, and bass for a sort of avant-chamber feel, still bearing traces of inspiration from the most experimental end of progressive rock, a la **King Crimson** and **Magma**, but much more influenced by modern classical composers and sui generis sound artists.

In 1976 the first Art Zoyd album, *Symphonie Pour Le Jour Ou Bruleront Les Cites*, was released by the label **AZ Production Michel Besset**, and soon the band was performing across France, opening up for their countrymen **Magma**. By the time they put out their second LP, 1979's *Musique Pour L'Odysee*, Art Zoyd had become participants in the **Rock In Opposition** (RIO) movement alongside England's **Henry Cow**, Italy's **Stormy Six**, fellow Frenchmen **Etron Fou Leloublan**, Belgium's **Univers Zero**, and Swedes **Zamlas Mammamanna**. Founded the previous year, RIO was a cooperative whose members were linked by a fierce commitment to making left-of-center music and subverting the traditional methods of operation within the music business. By design it would remain staunchly underground, but would become a hugely respected and globally influential movement.

In the '80s, Art Zoyd performed all over Europe, increasing its reputation as one of the premier progressive ensembles. In 1983 a turning point arrived when they were tapped to provide music for choreographer **Roland Petit**'s ballet *Le mariage du ciel et de l'enfer*. The ballet debuted in June 1984 at Milan's **La Scala Festival**, and in 1985 it was presented at Paris's **Theatre des Champs-Élysées** and Marseille's **Opera de Marseille**, with a stage curtain painted by New York avant-garde artist **Keith Haring**, one of the art world's most celebrated young stars. *Le mariage du ciel et de l'enfer* was the group's introduction to multimedia art events, which would become a significant part of Art Zoyd's work for the rest of their career as they scored silent films, theater pieces, dance performances and more, all across Europe, gaining new audiences all the while.

As the group's lineup continued its constant state of flux in the following years, Art Zoyd also expanded its reach, performing everywhere from Hong Kong and Japan to Australia and America. They became renowned for their film music, providing scores for silent films such as *Nosferatu*, *Faust*, and *Häxan (Witchcraft Through the Ages)*.

Thierry Zaboitzeff's departure in 1997 marked the end of an era for the group, but scarcely diminished their momentum. A major development came when Art Zoyd opened up their studio and their creative process to outside artists. This resulted in a flood of new collaborations and directions. One of the first was *Dangereuses Visions*, created in partnership with the **Orchestre National de Lille** and incorporating music, video, and more. Performed everywhere from Maubeuge to Mexico, the piece was seen by more than 20,000.

In the new millennium, collaborations of this kind continued to dominate Art Zoyd activity, including *Experiences de Vol (Flight Experiences)*. The project with Belgium's **Musiques Nouvelles** precipitated the creation of the **Cross-Border Center for the Production and Creation of New Music**, creating artist residency opportunities and birthing dozens upon dozens of works. 2001 saw the premiere of Art Zoyd's music for **Fritz Lang**'s legendary film *Metropolis*, as well as **Gérard Hourbette**'s score for *Schrodinger's Cat*, U.S. choreographer **Karole Armitage**'s project with the **Ballet National de Nancy**.

All the while, Art Zoyd's discography has grown, with their film soundtracks becoming some of their most celebrated recordings. But in 2005, the group ventured into unknown territory even for them with *Armageddon*. Testing the boundaries of technology as well as art, the project involved not only **Musiques Nouvelles** but **Louse-Philippe Demers**, a robotics technician who aided Art Zoyd in the creation of the first-ever robot operetta.

Subsequent years saw the group premiering their music for the film *The Fall of the House of Usher* at the **Louvre Museum**, creating the "spoken opera" *Kairo* based on **Kiyoshi Kurosawa**'s novel, and even mounting a performance for young audiences with *A demi endormi déjà*, based on a story by **Celia Houdart** and illustrations by **Francois Olislaeger**.

Things came full circle with Art Zoyd's *44 ½ Birthday Concert* at 2015's **Rock In Opposition Festival** at **Cap'Découverte, Le Garric**, France. That landmark event, the festival's headliner, brought together a multitude of musicians from Art Zoyd's many lineups to perform an ambitious program of musical highlights from throughout the band's 44 ½ year career. It also brought Art Zoyd together with the American record label, **Cuneiform Records**. The RIO Festival, organized by Festival Director **Michel Besset** (whose former label released Art Zoyd's first album), provided an ideal setting for Art Zoyd and Cuneiform's **Steve Feigenbaum** to discuss in person releasing a permanent tribute to Art Zoyd's stellar run: a box set assembling the band's live and previously unreleased material, Art Zoyd's rarest gems.

The resulting Art Zoyd box set is **44 ½: *Live and Unreleased Works***, released in 2017. It is a landmark release: the first box set of Art Zoyd recordings and the first box set ever released by Cuneiform Records. Containing 12 CDs, 2 DVDs, 2 posters and 2 books with interviews and archival photographs, all artistically assembled in a beautifully designed box by UK graphic artist **Max Franosch**, **44 ½** is an impressive and monumental work. It is also an *important* work - musically, historically and artistically: a treasure chest that collects previously unreleased music, live performances/videos and other archival materials from throughout this legendary European ensemble's rich and lengthy history, making it available to the public at large for the very first time. Celebrating an ensemble that captivated audiences world-wide for nearly a half-century and pioneered breaking down walls between musical genres and artistic disciplines, **44 ½** is essential not only for Art Zoyd fans, but for all music lovers and for historians interested in European New Music of the 20th/early 21st Century. **44 ½** is an eye-opening treasure chest, revealing that key roots of the 21st Century's genre-defying music - post-rock, post-classical, post-jazz and "beyond" - may stem from the Francophone world: from Art Zoyd and its associates (Magma, Univers Zero, **Present**), offshoots, and followers.

BOXING THE UNBOXABLE: THE OBJET D'ART THAT IS ART ZOYD'S 44 ½



Conventional music is presented through conventional methods. But when it came to the career chronicle that is **Art Zoyd's 44 ½** box set, the band's iconoclastic approach required an equally forward-looking approach that brings a new meaning to the term "thinking outside the box."

Even beyond the boundary-smashing work that's presented on the set's staggering twelve CDs, two DVDs, and two booklets, the physical package of **44 ½** in and of itself is an impressive enough achievement to be an objet d'art. A tour de force of graphic design, it was hatched by the expansive mind of the London-based designer **Max Franosch**.

Franosch is a man who wears many hats—he's a font creator, photographer, and painter as well as a graphic design artist, and he brought his gifts in all of these disciplines to bear in packaging this deep dive into Art Zoyd's heavy-duty history. Franosch's paintings have been seen at galleries all over London; he has published five photo books; his photographs have been featured on album covers for **ECM Records**, a label renowned for its uncompromising design aesthetic.

In approaching the project, Franosch took as idiosyncratic an approach to his work as the band does to their music. He conceived an ambitious package that incorporates more than fifty pieces of custom-made artwork and utilizes two information-packed booklets to tell Art Zoyd's long, eternally twisting and turning tale. And in case that wasn't enough, he made sure the box for **44 ½** hosted two eye-catching posters as well.

In keeping with the spirit of the music, the color components Franosch chose for the box alternate between dark and brooding on one end of the visual mood spectrum and fiery and explosive on the other. And while there are photos of the group, **44 ½** isn't the kind of box set that uses the traditional pictorial paths to get its point across. Instead, Franosch has created his own meta-universe of original graphic elements that strike just the right balance between echoing the spirit of Art Zoyd and providing a potent contrast. And if ever a band crafted a musical universe of their own it's Art Zoyd, so the marriage between band and designer couldn't have been more sympathetically conceived.

Gorgeously designed and conscientiously compiled, Art Zoyd's **44 ½** is a treasure chest of rare gems that dazzles the senses with both contents and container. As a **Boxed/Special Limited Edition Package**, it is worthy of widespread recognition, equal in quality and vision to today's best-designed box sets, including **Grammy** winners. Art Zoyd fans will assuredly cherish this treasure box. But even those with the most conventional music and design sensibilities may be inspired to think "outside the box" and embrace this visionary Art Zoyd artifact, the multi-media objet d'art known simply as **44 ½**.

44 1/2: LIVE AND UNRELEASED WORKS - BOX SET CONTENTS

12 CDs

- **LIVE IN WEST BERLIN THE LOFT** 1986
- **HÄXAN** LIVE IN COPENHAGEN, EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 1996
- **U.B.I.Q.U.E** LIVE IN MAUBEUGE, LA LUNA 2000
- **LINDBERGH** c.1990
- **LE MARIAGE DU CIEL ET DE L'ENFER** LIVE IN PARIS, WITH THE BALLET NATIONAL DE MARSEILLE (ROLAND PETIT), THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES 1985
- **VARIOUS MUSICAL WORKS FOR DANCE, THEATRE & LIVE PERFORMANCE IN FRANCE** 1975–1987
- **LA VILLE** LIVE ON RADIO TONKRAFT (EXCERPT), STOCKHOLM 1979
- **SYMPHONIE POUR LE JOUR OÙ BRÛLERONT LES CITÉS: BRIGADES SPÉCIALES** LIVE IN PARIS, THÉÂTRE DE LA RENAISSANCE 1976
- **DANSES MÉCANIQUES** LIVE IN MONS, WITH MUSIQUES NOUVELLES 2000
- **LA NUIT DU JABBERWOCK** LIVE IN ARMENTIÈRES, WITH MEMBERS OF MUSIQUES NOUVELLES, LE VIVAT 2002
- **MARATHONNÈRE** LIVE IN GRENOBLE, 38ÈMES RUGISSANTS FESTIVAL 1990
- **NOSFERATU** LIVE IN GRENOBLE, 38ÈMES RUGISSANTS FESTIVAL 1990
- **SYMPHONIE POUR LE JOUR OÙ BRÛLERONT LES CITÉS** LIVE IN MAUBEUGE, WITH THE ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE LILLE 2000
- **NOCES ACCIDENTELLES** LIVE IN MEXICO, WITH THE ORQUESTA SINFÓNICA DEL ESTADO DE MÉXICO 1999
- **ARMAGEDDON ACTES 2 & 3**, LIVE IN LILLE 2004
- **UNRELEASED WORKS** *FAUST, LES PRÉSIDENTS, KORBES, CITIES, DON QUICHOTE, LES ESCALATORS MYSTÉRIEUX, THÉOPHANIE (ÉLOGE DE LA VARIÉTÉ), L'AVENIR DE LA MUSIQUE & VARIOUS OTHER WORKS* 1985–2005
- **GLOBE ARENA** (MUSIC FOR INAUGURATION OF GLOBE ARENA, STOCKHOLM) 1989
- **MUSIQUE POUR LE SIX-CENTENAIRE DU BEFFROI DE BETHUNE** 1988
- **BETHUNE 1789** 1989
- **LES INATTENDUS DE MAUBEUGE, SPOUTNIK** 1993
- **LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES**
- **FLIXECOURT TISSERANDS** 1990s
- **LA GUERRE DE MARGUERITE**
- **AU NOM DU PÈRE** 1991
- **MALBODIUM** 1987
- **L'ÉTRANGLEUR EST DERRIÈRE VOUS** 1983
- **TERRA TERRA!** 1986
- **LIVE IN NANCY** 1975
- **MINIATURE IV** LIVE IN REIMS, MAISON DE LA CULTURE 1980
- **BRUIT SILENCE, BRUIT REPOS** LIVE ON RADIO TONKRAFT, STOCKHOLM 1979
- **MARCO POLO** 1984

2 DVDs

- **44 1/2: THE BIRTHDAY CONCERT** LIVE IN FRANCE, ROCK IN OPPOSITION FESTIVAL, MAISON DE LA MUSIQUE, CAP'DÉCOUVERTE, LE GARRIC 2015
- **LIVE IN EAST BERLIN** CENTRE CULTUREL FRANÇAIS DE BERLIN 1986
- **LIVE ON PHASE IV / FR3 TV** HÔTEL DE VILLE DE MAUBEUGE 1982
- **NOSFERATU** TEASER 1988
- **MUSIQUE POUR L'ODYSSÉE** FR3 NORD PICARDIE TV EXCERPT 1979
- **LE MARIAGE DU CIEL ET DE L'ENFER** EXCERPTS / ANTENNE 2 TV 1985

2 BOOKS

- **PHOTOS** COLOR AND BLACK & WHITE ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS, AND CONCERT POSTERS
- **TEXTS** BAND HISTORY, INTERVIEWS FROM 2008 / 2011 / 2015, DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL CD AND DVD TRACKLISTINGS, INCLUDING PERSONNEL

2 POSTERS

- ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY MAX FRANOSCH INSPIRED BY THE ART ZOYD LOGO