



Günter Schickert Samtvogel

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CD / limited LP / LP



It's hardly a secret that there was a lot of movement in German pop music during the late 60s and early 70s of the last century, and that many new things emerged then. Countless books have already been published on the subject of 'Krautrock', and many LPs from this period have been re-released. Günter Schickert only released two LPs in the 70s: "Überfällig" (Sky Records, 1979 / Bureau B, 2012) and "Samtvogel" (Brain, 1976). Now, exactly 50 years after its original release, "Samtvogel" has returned.

Günter Schickert used only guitars, echo devices and a modest recording technique for "Samtvogel". The album is a genuine DIY production – radical in every respect and not at all in keeping with the zeitgeist of the time. It was perhaps this radicalism that made it difficult to find a suitable record label to release the album. In any case, Schickert initially self-released "Samtvogel" in 1974 in an edition of 500 copies. It wasn't until two years later that the album was released in a much larger edition on the Brain label.

I am sure that Schickert was familiar with the minimal music of Steve Reich, Terry Riley and Philip Glass. I don't know whether he had also heard "Die grüne Reise" (1971) by Achim Reichel. "Inventions for Electric Guitar" by Manuel Göttsching would not appear until 1976. With his version of minimal music, Schickert completely dispenses with electronic sound generators; neither synthesizers, sequencers nor rhythm machines can be heard on "Samtvogel". Instead, he enters into a dialogue with the echo device and uses it and his electric guitar to create seemingly simple, almost rudimentary repetitive patterns that only reveal their minimalist nuances on closer listening. What sounds so simple requires a high level of concentration from the player, as he has to react to the relentless echo once it has been set up. If attention wavers for even a second, the piece immediately goes off the rails and chaos ensues. In the studio, you simply start all over again; in a live situation, it's a worst case scenario. However, Schickert remains absolutely precise on "Samtvogel", and yet his music does not have the coolness and/or artificiality found in the electronically produced music of other German musicians. In addition, Schickert enriches his music with occasional elements of speech, which remain incomprehensible even with the utmost attention.

"Samtvogel" is a particularly important album because it makes it clear what was musically possible in the 70s. There is no doubt that the album is extreme, even though it is of high quality musically and technically. Yet it doesn't conform to any of the trends of the time; and that is probably also the reason why it was never commercially successful. With his two albums "Samtvogel" and "Überfällig", which were unjustly undervalued at the time, Günter Schickert was a remarkable exception in the broad scope of experimental German pop music during the 70s. "Samtvogel" was a venture that succeeded, but can perhaps only be truly appreciated today, 50 years after its first release.

Asmus Tietchens, 2024

Tracklisting

A1 Apricot Brandy

A2 Kriegsmaschinen, fahrt zur Hölle

B1 Wald

BB475

CD 263332

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LP 263331

4015698409161

LTD LP 263341

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