

Choose Rec. Ellen Fullman & Konrad Sprenger (US, 2004)*'**

While Ellen Fullman is most known having for her large “long string instrument” (21 meter long), with dozens of metallic strings producing overtones and interweaving waves, strangely enough she has now made this release with a combination of singer-songwriter’s art-poprock and experimental music. It’s a good idea, because both worlds work well together. This is a sound-driven accompanying world combined with an accessible and recognisable song pattern.

The first song’s instrumental background, “*Glittering Glass*” sounds almost exactly like Velvet Underground area White Heat (as 2 chord music with something that sounds like repetitive violin scratching). The difference is the addition of an American female alternative-pop voice. While the songs are flavoured with American singer-introspective songwriting the accompaniment thus always is unusual and experimental. Of course Ellen used the longstring instrument here too. Konrad Sprenger's contribution is like a cross between minimal music (with repetitive themes that change simultaneously over the composition) and avant-garde (as strange combinations of sounds) and experimental music (semi-directed in sound/ composition by Ellen). Most songs are quiet and relaxed and as (art-pop) songs easy to appreciate. “*Simple Words*” is a bit more rhythmical and with more narrative singing; here the performer Laurie Anderson comes to mind as a reference. “*John Hardy*” (by A.P. Carter, 1930) is a bit different. This sounds like a country song, sung by an avant garde theatre artist duo (-I see them in a vision performing this, hung with strings on the ceiling-), somewhat surreal, humoristic and easily appealing. Also “*Bottle Glass*” is different, as an avant-garde song suiting with the strange sounds of the longstrings ; you can imagine this song as a poetry performance driven by a musical description, with the strange instrument itself on the lead, moving like driftwood-on-waves. Beside songs, there’s also, “*Train*”, a 6 minutes instrumental with long strings played by ..more hands. This track sounds like music as heard by a spider stuck in a harmonium, only through experiencing the sound that is produced by the webs vibrations.

I consider this a very good release for those who want to hear something more than casual artpop-rock driven song music, and for those who find experimental music too avant-garde, or still too inaccessible and prefer a more direct human presence in music, because this is a very good compromise between these worlds.

Info : www.ellenfullman.com & <http://www.ps1.org/cut/volume/fullman.html> & <http://www.otherminds.org/shtml/Fullman.shtml> & <http://kalvos.org/fullman.html>

This release : <http://www.choose-records.de/ellen.html>

Info on the longstring instrument release :

<http://www.epitonic.com/artists/ellenfullman.html>

Soundfile of long string instrument :

http://www.epitonic.com/files/reg/songs/mp3/Ellen_Fullman-Harmonic_Cross_Sweep_-_Overtone_Series_Of_C_Chord_Progression.mp3

Soundfile of longstring-instrument with Kronos Quartet :

<http://www.otherminds.org/SOUNDS/Stratified.ram>

<http://psychevanhetfolk.homestead.com/expmu.html>