

The Wire 277 March 2007

Konrad Sprenger

Miniaturen

CHOOSE CD LP

One of the recorded highlights of 2004 was **Ort**, long-string player Ellen Fullman's wonderful song project with Berlin musician Konrad Sprenger (aka Jörg Hiller).

The 32 tracks on **Miniaturen**, Sprenger's solo debut, confirm his singular slant on composing, arranging and performing. The unorthodox list of instruments of used is indicative: mandolin, harmonium, synthesizer, guitars, sinewave generator, piano, steel drum, accordion, trombone, acoustic guitar, siren and mechanical bird organs.

Miniaturen is stylistically expansive too, taking in elements of folk, pop, slow minimalism, noise, Renaissance courtliness and motorik rock.

There are fleeting evocations of numerous kinds of music and regular shades of Neu! and The Velvet Underground.

Yet overall it sounds like nothing else.

The constituent recordings were actually made between 1997 and 2003.

Since then Sprenger has been searching for ways to make it all cohere to his satisfaction.

Now he's found the form: a montage with all the richly suggestive appeal of

one of surrealist Joseph Cornell's boxed assemblages, paradoxically allusive yet original, familiar things made strange, a waking dreamwork. In part pastiche, in larger part enigma,

Sprenger gets the proportions, the movement and variations of mood in this music just right.

Like **Ort**, it hooks you immediately, draws you in and just 36 minutes later it ends, leaving you wanting more.

The curious magic of **Miniaturen** will surely be one of the enduring recorded highlights of 2007.

written by Julian Cowley