



Semuin – Circles and Elephants

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Tracklist:

1. Greeting prelude 2. Wilma 3. Elefanz 4. Circles
5. Circles(weiter) 6. + - 7. Zombie 8. Neve 9. stem (I) 10.
stem (II) Total: 42:50

The first album by *Semuin* (Jochen Briesen) »Province« was released in 2005 on the Portland/Oregon based label Audio Dregs. The record was critically acclaimed and loved by fellow musicians: The WIRE spoke of delicate musical structures and strong passions. And Greg Davis simply wrote in the press info »It's a really fucking great record. I love it.« After this well received debut, Ahornfelder is proud to announce the second full-length album by Semuin: »Circles and Elephants«.

In contrast to the debut the new record is not merely focused on the organic mixture of acoustic instruments, field recordings and digital manipulations of the material. »Circles and Elephants« is more concentrated on composing interesting and sometimes experimental pop music with the use of midi-instruments. The results of Jochen Briesen's midi-experiments have nothing to do with Gameboy-Aesthetics or midi-pop-songs like the music of Max Tundra. The mostly instrumental music rather reminds one of Frank Zappa's Synclavier compositions or some of the electronic tracks by Nobukazu Takemura or – with respect to some melody-lines – Igor Stravinsky. Especially the first track, which is even named after a Stravinsky miniature-piece »Greeting Prelude« shows a rich and wonderful melodic interplay of midi-oboe, -clarinet, - strings, and electronics.

The sounds on the album reach from very »real« sounding midi-instruments, e.g. midi- wind instruments, -drum-sets, -vibraphone, etc. to more trashy sounding elements, like a midi- choir or a midi-electric-guitar-solo. This tension and the mixture with »natural« sounds of field recordings, hand claps, human voice or whistling, etc. creates an intense and unusual sound experience. Some instruments sound impersonal and digitalized others sound natural at first sight but after a while you realize that you do hear a clarinet but you never hear anybody breathe. And as soon as you realized that you are confronted with field recordings of kids and animals. The same sort of diversity can be found with regard to the musical structures on the album. You can hear polyphone settings of melodies over straight drum beats with rhythmical complexities hidden in detail, rhythmical free developments captured in close circles which are variable enough to bundle the listeners attention, or very loose musical forms of noise and field recordings. The careful and sensitive combination of all these elements amounts to a very rich and unique record that grows each time you listen to it.

Semuin is Jochen Briesen, who was born in Heidelberg and has been living in Berlin since 1998, where he studied musicology and philosophy. In 2009 he is finishing his ph.d. thesis in philosophy. Besides Semuin Jochen Briesen is working as a musician/composer and released records with different projects (*Semuin*, *Gaston*, *Taunus*). The latest *Taunus* record »Harriet« was released on Ahornfelder in 2008.