



Fantas Schimun - Golden Balls

The Golden Ball is a symbol of absolute perfection and beauty; in one sense the Golden Ball is a toy for spoiled princesses and in another the golden balls represent disembodied yet cherished genital jewelry. This ambiguously titled album embodies the multi-dimensional themes of body and identity, beauty and mortality, individual and society, deconstruction and post-mediality.

Fantas Schimun's second solo album took four years to complete and one would be remised not to sense the care that went into each song. Here the artist acts not on only as a songwriter, musician, and producer, but also as label owner.

Golden Balls impresses the listener with its sovereignty, clarity, and consistency as well as in the selection of the motifs, the musical arrangements, and the choice of the musicians. Only a small fraction of the music relies on electronic samples: the entire album is largely recorded with analogue instruments. Schimun's aim was to make an album, "where the music stands in the foreground", reaching far beyond simple analogness. Moreover, it is about digging "the music"—as a medium of cultural and political codes—out of the "popular music" swamp and making the code audible and readable in a new way.

Fantas Schimun wrote most of the lyrics herself. Her approach gives the album a complexity that defies quick consumption by taking from the history of music, film, literature, and philosophy. With every reference posted either as a comment, signpost, bait, or scent, Golden Balls guides the listener into a strangely familiar present which Schimun stirs up in a new, disturbing way. Similar to the pictures of a *laterna magica*, the songs take on a cinematic quality the more intensely and the more often they are heard.

The surprising instrument, tempi, or style changes are not the sole cause for the listener to be moved: the inexplicit texts and their immanent deconstructions give the impression that here goes something beyond the framework directly into the brain. Golden Balls does not waste the opportunity for a reality check at all.

Although we have had decades of waves of protest movements, it is more important to be aware of diversity and its multipliers rather than to conspire in simplicity against each other, whether that be against Web 2.0 or the next nuclear disaster. "How every truth easily becomes a lie" calls for nothing less than this disillusionment to become the impetus for taking action—in the here and now. Thus, the song seamlessly connects back to the first track of the album, "Back to the Present".

This is a good reason, but it is definitely not the only reason to press "replay" on Golden Balls. It is not an album for the "silent majority" and it is nothing for complacent, egotistical, or easily satisfied people. It may reject world improvement and we may have to look at ourselves in the mirror to answer uncomfortable questions.

It is good to keep many balls in the air rather than dropping most of them in various fountains. You may be surprised who it is that returns the ball.