



Conrad Schnitzler & Frank Bretschneider

Con-Struct



CD / LP / Digital
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About Conrad Schnitzler

Conrad Schnitzler is one of the great pioneers of electronic music. There was a particular type of artist who could only have emerged in the legendary early 1970s. Few musicians fit the bill better than Conrad Schnitzler. Revolution, pop art and Fluxus created a climate which engendered unbridled artistic and social development. Radical utopias, excessive experimentation with drugs, ruthless (in a positive way) transgression of aesthetic frontiers were characteristic of the period. The magic words were "subculture", "progressivity" and "avant-gardism". As an acolyte of action and object artist Joseph Beuys, Schnitzler embraced the former's "extended definition of art", in which controlled randomness assumed an important role. Schnitzler actually extended the concept of "music". Or to put it another way: he cared not one iota for existing rules of music, preferring to create his own or conceptualizing a certain degree of lawlessness.

In the first half of the 80s young pop musicians discovered the true potential of Schnitzler's radical musical concept. Henceforth, his name was quoted with increasing regularity in the same breath as industrial, new wave and other experimental music genres of the 1980s. Schnitzler's style was really too idiosyncratic ever to set a precedent, but he was, and still is, one of the most significant inspirations for pop music in more recent times. Already a figure of prominence, perhaps he will one day be elevated to the status of a legend.

About Frank Bretschneider

Frank Bretschneider is a musician, composer and video artist in Berlin. His work is known for precise sound placement, complex, interwoven rhythm structures and its minimal, flowing approach. Bretschneider's subtle and detailed music is echoed by his visuals: perfect translated realizations of the qualities found in music within visual phenomena. He is releasing his music and performing at music/new media festivals worldwide.

Bretschneider was raised in Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz since 1990), where his aesthetic developed as he listened to pirate radio and smuggled Beastie Boys tapes in the former East Germany. After studying fine arts and inspired by science fiction radio plays and films he began experimenting with tape machines, synthesizers, and modified guitars in 1984, as well as exploring the possibilities of exchange between visual art and music by various means such as film, video and computer graphics.

In 1986 Bretschneider founded AG Geige, a successful and influential East German underground band. After three albums and splitting in 1993, Bretschneider and fellow AG Geige member Olaf Bender founded the Rastermusic record label in 1995, which eventually merged with Carsten Nicolai's noton to form raster-noton (now raster media) in 1999. Since then Bretschneider has released more than 30 albums on various labels including 12k, Line, Mille Plateaux, exploring the possibilities and boundaries of electronic music, from beat driven, almost club suitable music, to the more adventurous and abstract side of the genre.

About the Con-Struct series

Conrad Schnitzler liked to embark on daily excursions through the sonic diversity of his synthesizers. Finding exceptional sounds with great regularity, he preserved them for use in combination with each other in subsequent live performances. He thus amassed a vast sound archive of his discoveries over time. When the minimal label in Berlin reissued two Conrad Schnitzler albums at the outset of the 2010 decade, label honcho Jens Strüver was granted access to this audio library.

Strüver came up with the idea of constructing new compositions, not remixes, from the archived material. On completion of the first Con-Struct album, he decided to develop the concept into a series, with different electronic musicians invited into Schnitzler's unique world of sound.

Bretschneider on his Con-Structures

I read the name Conrad Schnitzler for the first time in the article about Tangerine Dream in the Rowohlt Rock Lexicon from 1973 (back then, at 17 in the GDR, an indispensable guide). The first time I heard his music was only in 1980, when his wave track "Auf dem Schwarzen Kanal" was played on the radio, an RCA 12" Super Sound Single in disco remix. Then the man was gone and stayed under the radar again, in spite of his almost inflationary number of releases. Maybe his material was too obscure or his approach too radical to be noticed by the general public. It wasn't until 1988 that I heard from Schnitzler again, a tape on Jörg Thomasius' East Berlin Kröten Kassetten label. And again almost 10 years later his Plate Lunch CDs "Rot" and "00/106". But it was all too rough and raw for me, both in terms of sound and organization, kind of mechanically and not really cool. Only after I heard Wolfgang Seidel at the NBI around 2002 with one of his tape concerts, I came slowly closer.

Schnitzler's early role as co-founder of two influential bands is one reason for the ongoing reception. Another is his consequence as an artist. "I'm not interested in having publicity or a public feedback" he declared in an 1996 interview. It remains an open question whether one has to completely refuse to do so. But I was always fascinated by this almost extinct way of being an artist in its full independence. Just as I feel connected, as a self-taught person and as someone who prefers to look forward instead of looking back: "I don't want nostalgia." After all it was Jens Strüver who inspired me to work with Conrad Schnitzler's material.

I had the idea of flowing music in which patterns develop, shift, dissolve and finally reorganize. A modular system seemed the most suitable to connect Schnitzler's world with my own by triggering and modulating his sounds via a sampling module and supplementing them with my own. Perhaps I have not always succeeded in merging both worlds congenially, sometimes they orbit, sometimes they collide, but they never stand still. As Conrad Schnitzler says in his „Context“ manifesto: "The sounds don't come to stay."

Tracklisting

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Klirrfaktor | 7. Hysterese |
| 2. Schwingkreis | 8. Grenzfrequenz |
| 3. Gegenkopplung | 9. Ruhestrom |
| 4. Emitterfolger | 10. Vierpol |
| 5. Gegentakt | 11. Monoflop |
| 6. Phasenschieber | |

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