



THE MARBLE MAN

Later, Phoenix...

K&F Records / broken silence

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In summer 2007 "Sugar Rails" came out, the debut album by then high-school student Josef Wirnshofer from Traunstein in Chiemgau (Bavaria, south Germany). Supplements, music press and public service broadcasters acknowledged the young singer, song-writer and multi-instrumentalist as an extraordinary talent. Even the first virtually improvised 4 track demo got radio plays on Bayrischen Rundfunk (main Bavarian station). Interview requests and invitations to play concerts were soon to follow.

No 3 years later, The Marble Man is still very young, his songs on the other hand, have reached full maturity. And these songs speak of a life's experience and fatalism that is inversely proportional to their writers young years. He still writes in his bedroom and caravan, although in the meantime he has moved to the city of Munich. However, for this album Wirnshofer took the production to a professional recording studio. Concerns that the charm of his earlier bedroom productions might be lost proved unfounded. The songs on „Later, Phoenix...“ still have the greatness that made „Sugar Rails“ such a special album. The main difference being that almost every song on „Later, Phoenix...“ could be held up as a blueprint for a song-writing workshop. With the production on all its glorious quality, we hear sides of Marble Man never before seen. From fragile and sparse arrangements to an acoustic widescreen format, it all fits together here. And even in the most mighty crescendos you can hear a pin drop - the transparent sound lives!

Josef Wirnshofer is a master of the art of omitting that which is superfluous. For him each sound has a function, every chord leads to something or brings an idea to completion. His songs stand like ancient Greek statues: perfect, but without make-up. And at the same time the pieces on „Later, Phoenix...“ have a rich instrumentation throughout. Even the sweetest harmonies are subordinate to clear arrangements. Vocals, guitar, organ, piano and drums all serve the song, never merely themselves. That said, Wirnshofer is not afraid of bold gestures, but he makes them simple, clear and honestly. Hymnal immensity and the abyss of depression lie closely side by side.

With virtuosity Josef Wirnshofer plays on the keyboard, those elements that make a good song. With somnambulist confidence he always plays just the right part at the right moment. And he comes good on all his promises. And we never doubt for a second a string section that sounds like it might be from a tradition cajun number. Indeed, Wirnshofer doesn't find it necessary to conceal supposed stereotypes. Without reservation he uses elements which, of course, have already been built into countless songs. That, which in other contexts immediately sounds cliched, we welcome in The Marble Man's music like an old friend. What he delivers here is classical song-writing. The balance between pure opulence and minimal beauty ensures that every piece on this album stands effortlessly in its own right. „Later, Phoenix...“ is already a classic record.