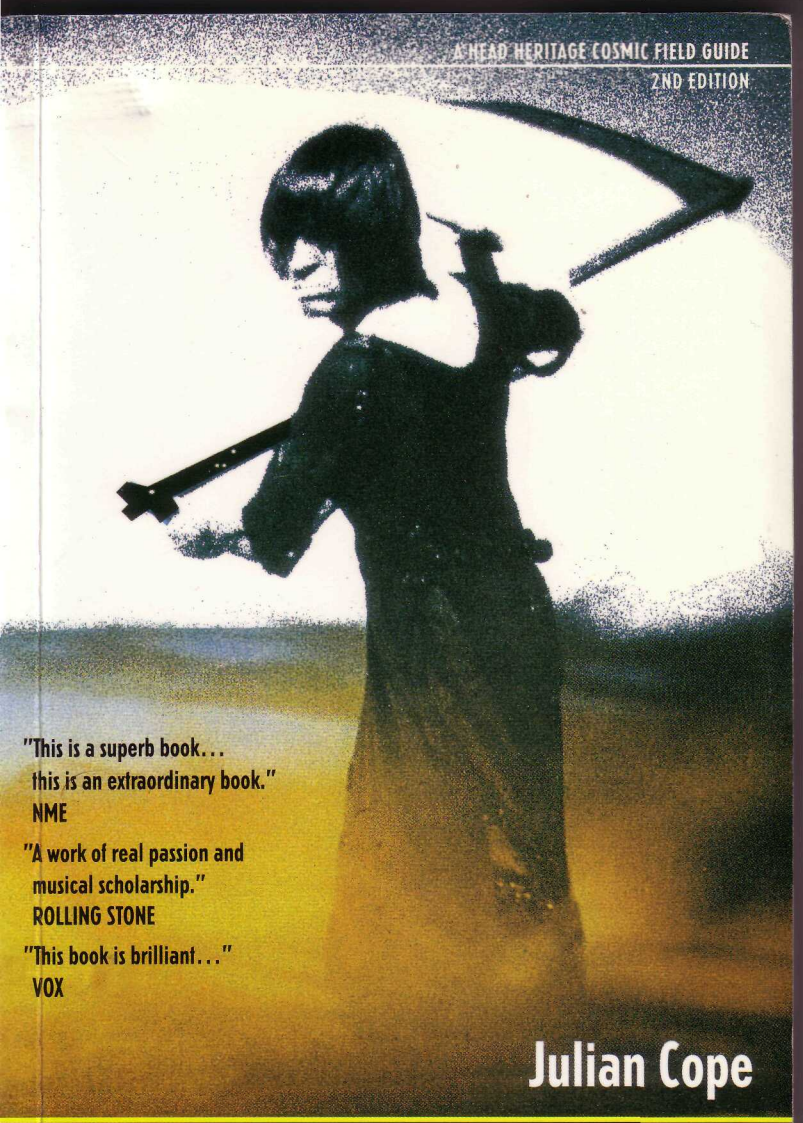
A HEAD HERITAGE COSMIC FIELD GUIDE

2ND EDITION



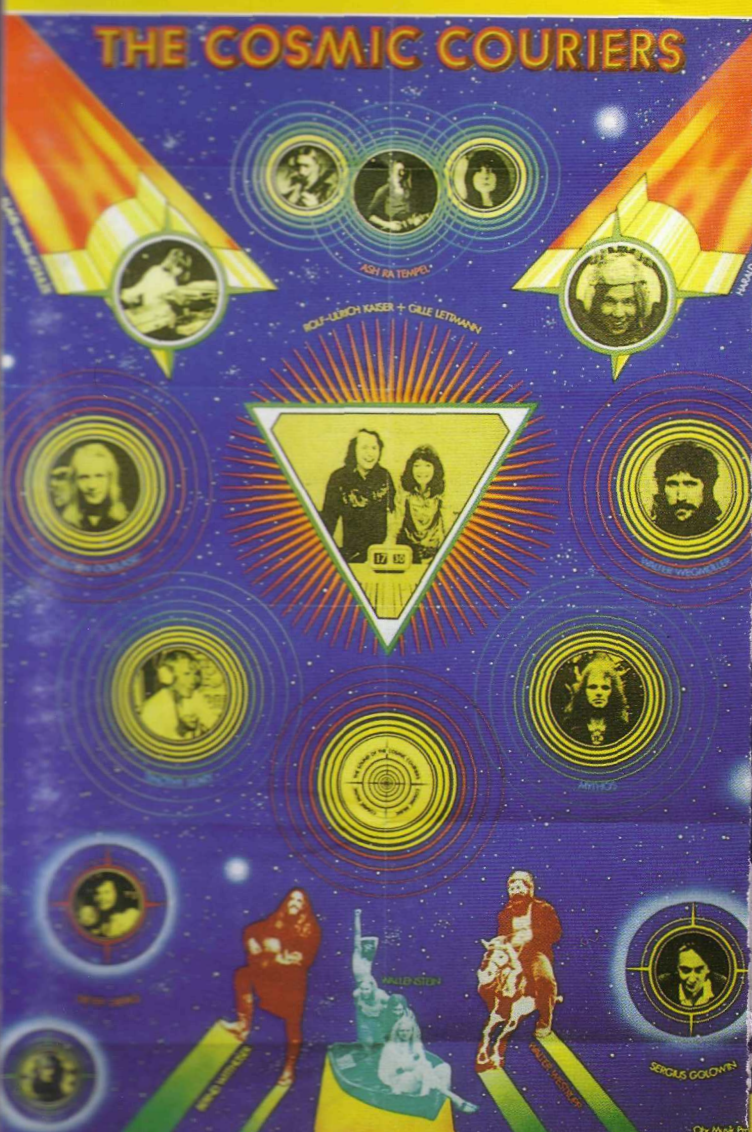
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Julian Cope

KRAUTROCKSAMPLER



Above: original **Cosmic Couriers** poster taken from the LP *Gilles Zeitschiff*.
Opposite: detail from the **Cosmic Jokers** LP *Planeten Sit-in*.


For all the Musicians of the original Krautrock-scene: this book is my opportunity to thank all of you visionaries, fuck-ups, gurus & magicians of the W. German Krautrock-scene who created a blaze of white lightning in the early '70s when all around us was the artless drywank of ELP, the spiritual airbrushing of Yes and, by far the worst of all, the formica-mantras of Dark Side of the Moon-period Pink Floyd. Thank you for keeping me sane, and for the music of True-genius which becomes more whole and more Holy every day.
KRAUTROCKSAMPLER
"Brilliantly researched, *Krautrocksampler* abounds with relevations. And Cope's enthusiasm is contagious verging on lethal . . . you get the feeling Cope missed his true vocation – a sort of lysergic Lester Bangs. Roll on the next Head Heritage Cosmic Field Guide."
MOJO



Amon Düül II circa *Carnival in Babylon* LP 1972.

Amon Düül circa *Disaster* Double LP (recorded 1969).





"What a great book!" JOHN PEEL

KRAUTROCKSAMPLER

One Head's Guide to the Great Kosmische Musik – 1968 Onwards

Julian Cope

HEAD HERITAGE · 1996 C.E.
2ND EDITION

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Photographs
Front cover: the image of Shrat is a detail from the LP *Yeti* by **Amon Düül II**. Other photographs are taken from LP jackets from the author's library.

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"A Little History of Krautrock Rising" also appeared in translated form in the German magazine *Spex*, Spring 1995 CE, under the title "Kosmische Echos".

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Introduction

I was a teenage Krautrocker. I wrote this short history because of the way I feel about the music, that its supreme Magic & Power has lain Unrecognised for too long. Krautrock was not played by just any old early '70s German rock band. It was a Powerful Pre-punk attitude achieved by the Pioneering few – the Ur-punk, those at the very beginning. Krautrock is what Punk would have been if Johnny Rotten alone had been in charge – a kind of Pagan Freakout LSD Explore-the-god-in-you-by-working-the-animal-in-you Gnostic Odyssey. A sort of very fit Hawkwind without the Doomsday Science-Fiction. Krautrock has been obscured in the eyes of the public, who may be unaware that it was as Holy as the Stooges, Sun Ra and the MC5 all on one stage. Or that it was transcendental Cosmic Fuck-rock played by Superfit amphetamine Visionary Poet-druids and always had an attitude-to-the-Moooon!

I did not have to dig through the musty corners of my record library for this information – my Krautrock all sits together, a huge wad of it, next to the Psychedelia, the Sly and Funkadelic LPs, the Scott Walker LPs – the stuff that is now accepted as classic music, but got me labelled a queer, a freak, or just plain fucking mad. I'm not a completist, but I have only written about records that I have in my own library. And writing this book inevitably caused me to fill necessary holes in my collection, so a brand new Krautrock revival has taken place. I'd had many before: in 1977, on meeting the Liverpool punkscene; in 1984, when I met my then new manager Cally, a Krautrock disciple

supreme; and most recently since 1991, when my guitar tech Rizla Deutsche put *Neu 2* on in the tour bus. Here we go again, I thought, and here we surely have.

When I decided to write this *Krautrocksampler* in September 1994 (CE), it was surprising but not bewildering to discover that here was one of *thee* Great Untold Visionary Stories. I read of those beautiful German post-war artists and I cried my heart out. If I had been a young German in the 1960s I would have played Krautrock or died. No way could I have lived with the knowledge that my parents' generation had had dealings in a crime beyond Biblical proportions. I'd have been on a Rock-it to Mars – which is precisely the path that the best German rock-'n'roll artists followed. As I researched behind this High-magick musick, I discovered the obvious. Krautrock was borne on the high East wind that soared above the rage of the 1960s British and American scenes.

Krautrock transcended all this and more.

Because it had to.

In this mini-history, I've tried to explain who *were* these German underground heroes, spoken of in hushed tones, but unheard by most. Faust, Can, Neu!, Amon Düül I and II, Ash Ra Tempel, Tangerine Dream, Cluster, La Dusseldorf, Harmonia, Popol Vuh, etc., etc. Why did the whole West German rock scene continue to make LPs of acid freakout music in wild op-art sleeves long into the '70s? And why was a standard album by any of the above far more extreme than even thee Most extreme British and American equivalents, excluding only such legends as the Velvet Underground's "Sister Ray" (which some Krautrock fans would consider tame in comparison with certain tracks that could be mentioned, e.g. Ash Ra Tempel/"Amboss".) This little history attempts to explain the reasons, but it can never truly explain the music of a whole Youth-nation working out their blues. There was a fire burning in the souls of post-war German youth that somehow needed to be, not fanned, not put out, nor added to with petrol – but rather that fire needed to be allowed to burn. And burn it did. With an intensity that could have changed the very fabric of the West had it taken place in Britain or the USA. But that was not the

nature of the fire, so it was never to be. Instead, we are left with the legacy of the daring German Youth-dance away from their recent past. And Krautrock is it – some of the most astonishing, evocative, heroic glimpses of Man at his Peak of Artistic Magic.

CHAPTER 1

Prehistoric Underground

W. Germany in the early '60s

In the early 1960s, whilst fashion and pop music danced together across the skies of Britain and the USA, the rest of Europe merely watched. The French affected not to give a damn. They had already adopted Le '50s rock'n'roll style which would sustain them along their chic way, whilst the Scandinavians went mad in their own quiet but psychotic manner, and adopted a love for American cars, streetgangs and the most primitive music available. But in West Germany, there were British and American airforce bases. As the scene of the Allies' victory, West Germany was a home to thousands of U.S. and British troops so German radio was very quick to pick up on rock-'n'roll from the start. The post-war West German kids learned their English from the radio and the TV; they all had American accents. But they also saw the huge American cars driven by the troops on leave, and they learned to love the whole style. They learned to love chewing-gum, Coca-Cola, jeans and everything else they saw as good from the USA. Like Japan, West Germany after the war was showered with so much aid that the culture of the aid-bringers inevitably left some pretty hefty thumb-prints on the people. If West Germany was to not sink under the weight of imported foreign culture, then the people had to act quickly.

But there were still heroes to inspire West German youth. Germany was the centre of all the most important modern

experimental music – and in Karlheinz Stockhausen, they already had the greatest modern composer living right there amongst them. Born in 1928, Stockhausen was part of an ancient, ever-changing tradition. He had studied under the French mystic, Olivier Messiaen, and grown up with the coming new influx of experimental composers, such as Pierre Boulez, Karel Goeyvaerts and John Cage. Stockhausen was a visionary in every way. His mind saw and his ears heard things quite differently to other people. By 1958, he was positioning musicians and audiences in strange formations. Sometimes audiences encircled the musicians, sometimes banks of loudspeakers blasted the music away from the listeners, but always a great deal of experiment and always the possibility that this was it – a new way. By 1960, he had performed the outrageous sonic klang called *Kontakte*, an electronic piece that sounds overtly modern even today. Still seven years away from the first synthesizer, Stockhausen achieved a sound that was violent, percussive, dizzying – it even had his cohort and contemporary Pierre Boulez dumbfounded. And as the '60s progressed, Stockhausen became an icon to all aspiring new West German artists. His wild music was taking him to New York, London, Paris, and proved that being himself could still earn the German artist a place in the international sphere.

But though Stockhausen was a huge influence to young artists, they still had the problem of Right Now! Experimental music was fine, but everyone continued to return to rock'n'roll for its instant gratification, its instant achievement, and its instant entertainment at dances every Saturday night. And once the West Germans had learned how to play pop music, they would next have to learn how to truly assimilate it into their culture, rather than merely aping the British and American groups.

But the jump from fans of rock'n'roll to rock'n'roll artists is a very big one. And for most of the 1960s, it was a jump that West Germans were unable to make. By 1965, Edgar Froese, later to lead Tangerine Dream, was playing standards such as "In the Midnight Hour" three times a night in Johnny Halliday's Paris club, "because it was the best song in our repertoire." But Froese was not at that time a prototype Krautrocker Rising. He was not yet looking for a true German sound. He

was a working musician in a rock'n'roll band at a time when most of the future German stars were not even involved in popular music. Also in 1965, future Can leader, Holger Czukay, was playing dance music in his spare time, as guitarist and accordionist (!) for the Jetliners, and studying under Karlheinz Stockhausen during the day. Yet at this stage, no attempt was casually made to reconcile the black-based voodoo-dance of rock'n'roll and the remedial candy melodies of pop with the white intellectualism of post-war West Germany. The German art scene was quite a law unto itself and many of West Germany's future stars had already dismissed pop & rock'n'roll as kids' music – entertaining but ultimately disposable compared to real art. So the West Germans pursued all the ex-patriot American and British rock'n'rollers in their own country and made them play right out on the edge of their capabilities. They needed their entertainment to be Hot!

The Monks as Missing Link

It was the West German demand for the real thing that made the Beatles get so good performing at Hamburg's Star Club. If they hadn't been great or at least extremely entertaining, then they would have been out on their collective asses. But there is one much greater proof of Germany's Out-there-ness in the mid-'60s, in the form of a 1965 album called *Black Monk Time**. Recorded by The Monks, an out-there collaboration of five young American ground crew from a U.S. airbase in West Germany, their album is one of the most chilling electrifying freak-outs of all time. It still has its feet in the early '60s, with vocal styles as bizarre as Doris Day or the Four Seasons, and archaic song titles like "Drunken Maria", "Higgle-Dy-Piggle-Dy" and The Ventures-style "Blast Off!". Ha ha ha. But the straight names belie the truly underground perversity of the Monks' songwriting. High falsetto shrieks tell of lost love, confident agreeing college-boy backing vocals scold the singer for being too wimpy, but always over a backing track of insanity so intense and simultaneously such speedball entertainment, that no British pop group of the '60s ever got close to rivalling their

** Now available on CD on Israphon Records' ISR003, the Monks' LP is a lost classic.*

sound. Only certain US garage rock B-sides of the mid-'60s perhaps equalled the Monks' sound. But even these had commercial considerations to think of, so the Monks' sound wipes the floor with all but the most savage. And NO-ONE ever came up with a whole album of such dementia. The Monks' *Black Monk Time* is a gem born of isolation and the horrible deep-down knowledge that no-one is really listening to what your saying. And the Monks took full artistic advantage of their lucky/unlucky position as American rockers in a country that was desperate for the real thing. They wrote songs that would have been horribly mutilated by arrangers and producers had they been back in America. But there was no need for them to clean up their act, as the Beatles and others had had to do on returning home, for there were no artistic constraints in a country that liked the sound of beat music but had no idea about its lyrical content. On "Complication", the singer howls the word "Complication!" over a savage fuzz guitar, over & over, finally rhyming it with "Constipation!", before the backing vocalists join in a furore of how:

"People die, People die for you,
People kill, Yes, they will for you.
People go to their deaths for you."

Each lyric is spat out with the true contempt of forces personnel who know that their songs will not be listened to, merely heard as part of a Saturday night's drunken entertainment. But for all their listeners' lack of a need for meaning, the Monks themselves sure as hell put in as much as they, as songwriters, needed. On the opening song, "Monk Time", the singer Gary Burger introduces the members of the group then launches into a violent diatribe:

"We don't like the army,
What army, Who cares what army?
Why do you kill all those kids in Vietnam?
My brother died in Vietnam.
James Bond? Who's he?
Stop it, Stop it, I don't like it
Pussy Galore is coming down
We like that,
We don't like the atomic bomb,

Stop it, stop it,
I don't like it."

Any audience seeing a performance of this intensity would have changed their lifestyles immediately. And of utmost importance to the explanation of Krautrock is the Monks' odd ability to cross from one musical style to another, at a time when this was a heinous crime in Britain or America. In 1964, no beat groups played the lame jangle of yesteryear. By 1965, Merseybeat was so old as to be extinct, doo-wop was prehistoric, and folk-rock was a year old and therefore old news. But the Monks were able to collect all these styles, assimilate them and synthesise them together *because* they were in West Germany, not in spite of it. This is very important. West Germany was a late developer. In West Germany, style was far more important than fashion. Things moved so fast in Britain and the big American cities that a look could arrive, be adopted and then jettisoned by everyone on the scene in a matter of months. It was the same on the pop music scene. When Paul Rothschild produced the first Doors' LP, he refused to let the musicians use any wah-wah pedals, fuzz-boxes or distortion pedals. He wanted to keep out gimmicks which would sound old-fashioned in 18 months' time. This was an over-cautious approach but it worked. It made the Doors' music timeless. Yet by the '90s The Monks' music is just as timeless precisely because it *does* adopt the gimmicks of the moment. The Monks win through, because they adopt *every* gimmick of *every* moment and somehow reconcile the lot in a sheer joyful abandonment of brilliant songwriting and arrangements, and a neurotic obsession with recording everything with the VU meters on red. The Monks were born of the same insane clubs as the Beatles, only three years later, and such mayhem and insanity seeps through every pore of their music. Wild call and answer arias like an acid *West Side Story* are yelped, hollered and yodelled in unison – the whole group. Impeccable. Utter machine gun guitar freakouts with endless descending organ, drum clatters of the First Tribe, and all because the combination of rock'n'roll and the Germans created an entrancing mania akin to Wagner's operas. Yes, the Germans needed their rock'n'roll.

CHAPTER 2

A Little History of Krautrock Rising

John and Yoko & the Paris Riots

By 1967, the Federal Republic of Germany was rocking. The Rattles had even produced West Germany's first international hit, "The Witch", but the groups still sounded like everyone else. They had taken a while to embrace the whole trip, but that had always been the German way. Even the Roman historians had been prompted to comment that, whilst the German tribes were the hardest to Christianise, God help the tribes north of the Rhine when the newly-Christianised Germans went on their born-again kick. And the newly-rocking West Germans were born-again for shitdamn-sure. Briefly, during 1967, West Germany seemed to become a province of British and American culture. Psychedelia came six months late but stayed forever. Like Detroit's Stooges, who were so provincial that they were still wearing grown-out Troggs haircuts in 1969, West German groups were slow to pick up on a trend but even slower to put it down. The phasing which could be heard as a fashionable extra on early 1967 British pop hits would still be heard on 1974 West German Krautrock epics, fully assimilated into the style of the band. The op-art, pop-art and psychedelic light show images which had defined British and American record-covers in the 1967/8 period would come to dominate the whole of the 1970s West German underground.

Certain events all over the world had caused this musical gearchange into overdrive.

When Yoko Ono got together with John Lennon, the combined populations of Britain and America frowned in disapproval. In West Germany, this was not the case at all. The hip artistic community knew all about Yoko Ono. She was visible and she was a fine and inspiring artist. And, most of all, by picking John Lennon, she gave her high artistic approval to the Beatles' kids music right then and there. For many artists in W. Germany, that was reason enough to form a rock'n'roll group. Also in 1968, the riots in Paris saw students hurling Molotov cocktails at the police and Situationists spraying "Save petrol, Burn Cars", whilst the Russians sent tanks into Alexander Dubchek's Czechoslovakia, re-enforcing the ideal of freedom in any wavering young West German hippies. Copycat riots in Berlin took place over a musical backdrop of the new freakout music by road veteran Edgar Froese's new acid freeform group, Tangerine Dream, and Psy Free, a very young bass-less trio led by the drummer, Klaus Schultze. The music was somersaulting, trippy and deeply out there. Schultze and Psy Free guitarist, Alex Conti, were vehemently opposed to all capitalism – playing for hours for free, night after night. West German pop festivals followed in the wake of Monterey and the first great event was the 1968 Essener Sontag Festival, which featured two of the groups most inspiring to the German Underground, Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention and Ed Sanders' Fugs. One of the German groups invited to play at the festival was a politico/musical commune called Amon Düül. Hours before the show, it was announced that their short lived peace was at an end, and two different groups actually played that night, known forever after as Amon Düül I and Amon Düül II. Groups were all co-operatives now, and non-playing managers were illegal. The new scene continued to develop across wide age ranges. One day, Holger Czukay was talking to one of his students about his own former teacher, Karlheinz Stockhausen. The young student, a violinist/guitarist called Michael Karoli, was not impressed. He played his teacher the Beatles' "I am the Walrus", and Holger Czukay was astounded that rock-'n'roll had come so far. He phoned his friend, Irmin Schmidt,

another student of Stockhausen, and suggested they form a group with Michael Karoli, 10 years their junior. This weird combination of Stockhausen and psychedelia would soon be called The Can. And it was a show that would run and run…

Stockhausen Sees the Jefferson Airplane

Karlheinz Stockhausen is central to the entire history of Krautrock. And one massive piece of work, 1966's *Hymnen*, is pivotal to that whole unconscious movement. Because Stockhausen is also the most important living composer and has inspired so many different movements and musicians, it's easy to understate this fact. But the release of *Hymnen* had repercussions throughout all of W. Germany, and not least in the heads of the young artists. It was a huge 113 minute piece, subtitled "Anthems for Electronic and Concrete Sounds". *Hymnen* was divided up into four long LP sides, entitled Region I, Region II, Region III, and Region IV. But why was it so important to the Germans? In short, because it took "Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles" and screwed it up, screwed it down, played it through weird electronic gizmos, distorted it horribly and basically treated it pretty badly. The German public ALL furry-freaked. The left-wing didn't see the funny side at all and accused him of appealing to the basest German feelings, whilst the right wing hated him for vilifying their pride and joy, and letting the Europeans laugh at them. Stockhausen had just returned from six months at the University of California, where he had lectured on experimental music. Among those at his seminars were the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia and Phil Lesh, Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane, and many other psychedelic musicians. Far from snubbing the new music, Stockhausen was seen at a Jefferson Airplane show at the Filmore West, and was quoted as saying that the music "…really blows my mind." So whilst the young German artists loved Stockhausen for embracing their own rock'n'roll culture, they doubly loved him for what they recognised as the beginning of a freeing of all German symbols. By reducing "Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles" to its minimum possible length, Stockhausen had codified it. It had much the same effect as a British man or

woman hearing an ice-cream van outside – some kind of response is triggered whether they want ice-cream or not. Stockhausen had unconsciously diffused a symbol of oppression, and so enabled the people to have it back.*

Mama Düül & her Sauerkrautband...

But the new rock'n'roll in W. Germany was not rock'n'roll at all. It was a meltdown music-form which defied all categories but that which the W. German musicians called it – Kosmische music. The term has been credited to Edgar Froese, future leader of Tangerine Dream, but in 1969 all the young idealistic W. German musicians talked about Kosmische music with a great reverence, a great idealism, as though they knew that it was their way to the stars. Beethoven, their tragic hero, had said that music was far greater than philosophy, and the communes and collectives of Beautiful & Dutiful young idealists came alive all over W. Germany, determined to rid themselves of all memories of their parents' despicable recent history – to lose all these pent up feelings in a Great Rush To The New Kosmische Music.

All the 'real' musicians had left Amon Düül I to join Amon Düül II, a process that would continue over the years. But the drain on Amon Düül I was so great that they were soon reduced to one strumming drumming chanting male/female mass, like the greatest Plastic Ono Band session ever. It was the time of communal Freakout albums, inspired specifically by the 1967 *Hapshash & The Coloured Coat* LP, a London recording almost a year old, which had been led by the designers Nigel Weymouth and Michael English, and the producer Guy Stevens. One extremely psychedelic weekend, Amon Düül I recorded (or *over*-recorded, to be more precise) one enormous session, which lasted so long that three of their LPs – *Psyche-*

** During all this fighting, it was casually overlooked that the German national anthem was only one of over 10 national anthems on Hymnen, and the mistreatment only appears on Side 2, along with the Russian anthem and a whole group of African anthems. But the effect was still the same. Stockhausen had explained his use of national anthems as symbolic – "identification signs for the nation... a pop-art gesture... comparable to the banal, everyday pictorial motifs of the American pop-artists, whose work Stockhausen knew so well," wrote his biographer, Michael Kurtz.*

delic Underground, *Collapsing* and the double-album *Disaster* – all came from it. Some claim that they split from music altogether to continue in a purely political way, but kept up the illusion for years with seemingly new LPs. The first Amon Düül records are extraordinary classics and extremely raw, like stoned Orcs playing neverending versions of The Mothers' "Return of the Son of Monster Magnet" and the Stooges "L.A.Blues". But they are dosed with a higher level of vibe than any other freakout records – relentless, uplifting and full of the crudest gimmicks that all work perfectly. Amon Düül did not stay long, but they laid the beginnings of Krautrock with their music, and with one particular song on *Psychedelic Underground*. The name of the song translated as "Mama Düül and her Sauerkraut band Start Up!" With that title, the lazy British rock press at last had something to latch on to. Aha, we'll call it Krautrock...

The First Rumblings of Kosmische Music

W. Germany was full of supposed 'head' groups by now. But many of them still did not sound remotely German, slavishly trying to be Hard Rach!!! Others, like Embryo, Emergency and Birth Control, mixed obvious Teutonics into unsuccessful fusions with British/American rock and jazz. But in the meantime, Amon Düül II, the musical half of the commune, had recorded an amazing free-flowing LP called *Phallus Dei*, for the British Liberty label. Its overtly mysterious sleeve first confronted me when I was 13 and standing in Tamworth Woolworth's. I was with my Welsh grandfather, whom I asked about the meaning of Phallus Dei. "Bloody Hell, Don't tell your mother," he snorted. "That means God's cock!" And with the release of that 20 minute title track, both branches of Amon Düül had proved their commitment to the new cosmic political commune scene. This record was very extreme, both the chiming sound and dizzy two-colour sleeve like something from the 13th Floor Elevators' International Artists label in Texas.

And something else again was stirring in Cologne. The Stockhausen/Psychedelia-inspired Can were now a five-piece recording at Schloss Norvenich, the castle home of their patron,

Mani Lohe. All except one was in his 30s and they were a frightening combination of exuberance and great experience. These were exceptional people with an exceptional musical vision: "an anarchist community," said their organist, Irmin Schmidt. Though Can's first pieces were situations more like performance art, their new singer, a black ex-teacher called Malcolm Mooney, continually pushed them further into the severest most restrictive rock'n'roll, "...towards the Velvet Underground," as Holger Czukay later said. The shows were fantastic, though Malcolm Mooney had a tendency to freak out, collapse, or attack the audience. But it was the release of their first album that opened up the whole scene. *Monster Movie* is a stone classic. There was still no visionary in any big record-company willing to put money into the new W. German sound. But when *Monster Movie* was released on Music Factory Records in August 1969, the tiny 500 pressing sold out immediately and changed the whole W. German rock scene. It was the first album of the scene that sounded as powerful and as well recorded as standard American and British records, yet it retained the brooding German Velvets-inspired sound. Some idea of the attitude of the *Kosmische* music brigade at this time can be gained by merely reading the credits on the first Can album:

Irmin Schmidt – Adminaspace co-ordinator & organ laser, Jaki Leibezeit – propulsion engineer & mystic space chart reader, Holger Czukay – hot from Vietnam; technical laboratory chief & red-armed bass, Michael Karoli – sonar & radared guitar pilot, Malcolm Mooney – linguistic space communicator.

The Rise of Ohr Records & The Birth of Kraftwerk

In Berlin, the crazed young trio Psy Free split. Edgar Froese, frustrated with his current situation, persuaded drummer Klaus Schultze to collaborate in a new Tangerine Dream. The arch-experimentalist Conrad Schnitzler completed the T. Dream line-up to create the awesome and freeform acid-blitz LP *Electronic Meditation*. This was truly the Kosmische music they had dreamed off. If "A Saucerful of Secrets" had been played

by trippy multi-dimensional space beings instead of the appallingly insipid Waters, Wright, Gilmour & Mason, then it would surely have sounded as real as this. And *Electronic Meditation* was given special treatment, too. Some genius at the huge W. German record-company Metronome had finally caught on to the new sound. They asked the record producer, Peter Meisel, to put together an especially different Heavy label, with the accent on Germanic-sounding groups and special packaging. Meisel called the label Ohr (German for 'ear'), and asked Reinhard Hippen, the acclaimed young industrial artist, to design the first five LP sleeves with a uniformity that would make the label instantly aligned with Right Now. The results were brutal and crudely finished, but delightfully so. Hippen's recurring theme used the broken bodies of dolls, and on the cover of *Electronic Meditation*, a headless doll is trapped by the wires of an early synthesizer patch-bay.

All the early Ohr records were interesting and all of them weird. On the LP *Fliesbandbabys Beatshow*, Floh de Cologne played an impenetrable wordy structured garage music, like an incapable Mothers of Invention, a bierkeller Fugs. Lots of shouting and urgent socialist messages breaking up the already ramshackle sound. Much better, and occasionally incredible, were Guru Guru, a heavy rock trio with its heart in the free-rock that the MC5 were never allowed to record. No vocals except affected 'thing' voices: scary, repeated and not very often at all. Mainly just huge epic instrumentals, LPs of two or three tracks a side. Their debut album *UFO* was a spaced *menage a trois* of Joy Division, Deep Purple and a more Kosmische version of Neil Young's experimental feedback frenzies on *Arc*. They could be faster than anyone, but their greatest songs were Glenn Branca symphonies eight years ahead of time. And their titles alone, man. Shit! "Stone In", "Der LSD-Marsch", "Spaceship", "Oxymoron", "Der Ekectrolurch".

The Ohr experiment was a tremendous success, and opened up the way for more conservative companies to take risks. In a country as big as West Germany, there was a place for many many groups and Polydor, Metronome, BASF & Phillips, German industry equivalents of Britain's EMI and America's CBS, began to take more risks. Though most of the early efforts

would be tame British/American copyists, the uncertainty amongst German businessmen about what constituted the Hip New Sound ensured that certain experimentalists inevitably sneaked through. And one of the most bizarre releases of early 1970 was RCA Records' *Tonefloat* LP by the quintet Organisation. Though delivered in a typically colourful 'heavy' sleeve of the period, that is as far as Organisation's alignment with contemporary rock went. Led by Ralf Hutter & Florian Schneider, later leaders of the huge international group Kraftwerk, the group's roots began at the Renschied Kunstakadamie where the duo had studied Karlheinz Stockhausen. With flute-based musical pieces such as "Milk Rock", "Rhythm Salad" and the creaky percussive grooveless bossanova title-track, *Tonefloat* was a major-label anachronism from the moment it was released. And, like the ingenuous German corporation Phillips who released the equally bizarre *Cluster* LP soon afterwards, we can only presume that the signing of Organisation was quickly filed away in RCA's box called 'Interesting Corporate Mistakes'.

Soon after this, Organisation became Kraftwerk and released their self-titled first LP. But despite the name-change and shift to the Polygram label, the group was still a ramshackle flute and percussion-driven experimental unit. Whilst including wa-guitar and a drummer, *Kraftwerk* was a bizarre though mainly successful attempt to make an entirely German record. On the album opener, "Ruckzack", Kraftwerk sped up at will, slowed down at will, and had no groove at all. On the last track of the album, a 10 minute freakout called "Vom Himmel Hoch", synthesizers emulated dive-bombing raids and actual recordings of explosions punctuated the music in a shattering way. "Kraftwerk" is a strictly German word which translates as both "Men at Work" and "Powerplant", and Ralf Hutter and Florian Schneider were both insistent experimentalists with a particular Vision. Unreleased recordings from that time reveal them to have been in a constant state of flux. *Kraftwerk 2* would open with "Klingklang", an ever changing 17-minute experimental mantra with a Stockhausen-inspired beginning. And the group was to change beyond all recognition after their huge 1974 hit album *Autobahn*. But always Kraftwerk returned to

driving fixations, gearchanges included. Perhaps it is the autobahn psyche of the post-war West Germans – unconsciously linked to the USA through its thousands of miles of easily driven, straight roads. Certainly, the grey metronomic driving unchangingness of the Velvet Underground manifested in most West German bands, though of all the British bands of that time there's maybe only Roxy Music who could ever claim a true Velvets influence.

The driving mentality in West German music was forged on the autobahn that travels south in a great arc from the far-westerly city of Cologne to Munich in the south, taking in the cities of Bonn, Coblenz, Frankfurt, Mainz, Mannheim, Stuttgart, Ulm and Ausburg. The thirst for music on this circuit alone was equal in size to the entire British scene. West Germany was by far the biggest market in Europe. But the autobahn was only one of three major conurbations that the rock'n'roll live circuit began to supply, and it soon became clear that West German music could sustain itself without ever looking out to the international scene again. But it was just then that one of the most spectacular contributors of all appeared on the Krautrock scene...

The Kaiser on the Warpath – Rolf-Ulrich's Grand Design

A Dutch folk journalist is the last thing the scene expected. But Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser was a progressive in everything, and notorious throughout the W. German Underground for being a man with a mission. He blew into Ohr Records and riled everyone up immediately. Kaiser had already written about Tangerine Dream in his book *Das Buch Der Neuen Pop-musik*. Now he argued with Edgar Froese over the definition of Kosmische Musik and said that it could be applied to all forms of music. And even more outrageously, he proved it. On being asked by the businessmen at Metronome to take over the running of Ohr Records, R-U Kaiser immediately signed Amon Düül I and gave them a 'head' producer, the wondrously named Julius Schittenhelm. As organiser of the now legendary Essener Sontag Festival, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser knew the members of Amon Düül I and had Kosmische plans for them. And their first Ohr

album *Paradieswarts Düül* was an amazingly beautiful freefolk epic, somewhere midway between an acoustic "White Light/White Heat" and a Teutonic 1968 Red Crayola playing the 13th Floor Elevators. Its three long fuzz-acoustic songs, "Love is Peace", "Snow Your Thirst, Sun Your Open Mouth" and "Paramechanische Welt", were Amon Düül I's glorious swansongs before they rode off heroically into the sunset. And the artistic success of Paradieswarts Düül confirmed Kaiser's suspicion that many forms of the Kosmische music were out there waiting to be found. He took the far-out buskers Witthuser and Westrupp and turned them into an absolutely inspiring Gothic chamber space-folk thing like mixing Neil Young's *On the Beach* with Frank Zappa's Straight records releases, Tim Buckley's free-form album *Starsailor*, and also his earlier *Happy Sad and Goodbye* and *Hello* LPs. In America, they would certainly have recorded for ESP-Disk!

Impressed by Kaiser's success at Ohr, the industry giant BASF asked him to take over the Pilz label, their hip subsidiary. In true Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser style, he kept control of Ohr and annexed Pilz as a cosmic folk label. Pilz is German for 'mush-room', and that record-company's logo was a fabulous pop art Flyagaric...just about as *Kosmische* as they came. Rolf-Ulrich transferred Witthuser and Westrupp to Pilz as a symbolic gesture, then proceeded to sign and influence his next big thing. Of course, he dropped the entire roster overnight in the great road to the ultimate *Kosmische* folk label.

Popol Vuh were Rolf-Ulrich's next obsession, a group as big as their name. The Popol Vuh is the Mayan Book of the Dead, a terrifying mythology of a prehistoric Meso-American people who survived until the 9th Century AD. But whilst R-U Kaiser could perhaps influence this group, the real vision was in the head and hands of its leader, the wonderful Florian Fricke. Fricke had not chosen the name Popol Vuh lightly. He was here to do magic and that's a fact. The first album had already been released by Liberty Records by the time Kaiser became involved, and that album *Affenstunde* ("Monkey Hour") was already sending shockwaves throughout the German Music-scene with its use of Moog synthesizer in a (gasp!) non-classical setting. *Affenstunde*'s peculiarly environmental form-

album *Paradieswarts Düül* was an amazingly beautiful freefolk epic, somewhere midway between an acoustic "White Light/White Heat" and a Teutonic 1968 Red Crayola playing the 13th Floor Elevators. Its three long fuzz-acoustic songs, "Love is Peace", "Snow Your Thirst, Sun Your Open Mouth" and "Paramechanische Welt", were Amon Düül I's glorious swansongs before they rode off heroically into the sunset. And the artistic success of Paradieswarts Düül confirmed Kaiser's suspicion that many forms of the Kosmische music were out there waiting to be found. He took the far-out buskers Witthuser and Westrupp and turned them into an absolutely inspiring Gothic chamber space-folk thing like mixing Neil Young's *On the Beach* with Frank Zappa's Straight records releases, Tim Buckley's free-form album *Starsailor*, and also his earlier *Happy Sad and Goodbye* and *Hello* LPs. In America, they would certainly have recorded for ESP-Disk!

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lessness was huge news in 1971, and the German Sounds magazine Readers' Poll nominated them "Best Newcomer of the Year". Popol Vuh were on Beat Club, and Fricke played his Moog synthesizer as a guest on T. Dream's *Kosmische* classic double-album *Zeit*.

But for all this, the meeting of Florian Fricke with Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser in late summer of 1971 reverberated all across the *Kosmische* music scene. For *Affenstunde*'s follow-up kicked its predecessor's dick into the dirt. Everything about *In Den Garten Pharoas* feels right. It is trance music, and Florian Fricke was a master composer and quite capable of taking the listener into dimensions unheard of by the other *Kosmische* musicians. The whole of Side 2 of *In Den Garten Pharoas* was the high magic of "Vuh". And I do not say high magic lightly. For "Vuh" tunes the listener into the heavens like no other piece I have ever heard. It maintains an incredible hold on the listener and, such is the intensity of the piece, that "Vuh" actually can be too much to listen to in the wrong frame of mind, and dizzying is the freedom of feeling the music engages. And R-U Kaiser's new wonder boy, Florian Fricke, was on the way to a long and inspiring career…

Birth of the Brain label – Enter Cluster and Neu!

But by the middle of 1971, Rolf Ulrich Kaiser was driving his employees mad. He stood over them whilst they worked. He stormed into their offices and balled them out whilst they were talking to their bands, freaking out everyone concerned. His trip was powerful, but you needed him on your side. Two A&R men called Bruno Wendel and Gunter Korber decided they couldn't take any more, and started a record company of their own. It was to be known as Brain, and was to become synonymous with some of the greatest Krautrock of all. Wendel & Korber brought Guru Guru with them from Ohr, and immediately signed the extremely experimental Cluster. This duo was the schizophrenic mixture that had recorded one bizarre LP for poor Phillips Records. Prior to that, they had been the even weirder trio Kluster, their third member being Conrad Schnitzler, hero-in-exile of T. Dream's *Electronic Meditation*. Now

Schnitzler had left the group to pursue what would become a career of hilarious over-achievement leaving Cluster as a duo – just the poetically named Dieter Moebius & Hans-Joachim Roedelius. Cluster were (and still are) a rare collaboration. Like some bizarre husband and wife team, they let their machine-generated muse fire up, and they would sit there in front of it, like a hot stove, and play until it didn't feel good anymore. Early Cluster has a raging peace in it, a huge beating heart, planet-sized and awesome. But clothed in a skinny body which contrives to keep you from hearing all of the unearthly power.

For their first Brain album, *Cluster II*, Moebius & Roedelius were joined by the producer/engineer Conrad Plank. Though involved on the earlier Phillips LP as engineer, here Plank co-wrote the music and produced the whole thing, creating an incessant nightscape: a helicopter ride over miles of countryside, but the lights of the city ever present, and even occasionally flying right into the city itself and almost burning up in the glare. Along with Dieter Dierks, Plank was the mainstay of all the greatest Krautrock on record. Over the years, those two engineers alone would be responsible for the combined sound of Tangerine Dream, Neu!, Guru Guru, Kraftwerk, and Ash Ra Tempel, a formidable weight to carry around.

Like all other heavy labels of the early '70s, Brain had a fair share of dreadful and contrived American/British copycat rubbish, like The Scorpions and Jane. They also saw the demise of Guru Guru. From free-rock to free jazz to free gift that you can't give away. One of Brain's greatest releases was undoubtedly number 1004, the soon-to-be-legendary *Neu!* But that's a whole other can of worms, in fact a whole other chapter (See Neu! history.) Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser will appear again many times throughout this book. But after Kaiser, Krautrock's First Great Conceptualist, there came another Second Great Conceptualist. And again he was from the world of the media. But this man was to make Krautrock international, and his name was Uwe Nettlebeck...

CHAPTER 3

Faust

The Greatest Gimmick of All

"The idea was not to copy anything going on in the Anglo-Saxon rock scene – and it worked... "

Uwe Nettlebeck, 1973

The Sound of Yourself Listening

There is no group more mythical than Faust. I bought my first Faust record over 22 years ago, but I could not tell you the names of the group members off the top of my head. And I could not tell you the names of all their songs, though I know them all better than almost everything else in my record library. I saw them live on their legendary 1973 tour, but you could show me 10 photos of Krautrock musicians, and I could not pick out the five members of Faust.

Faust worked under a conscious veil of secrecy akin to, and inspiring to, San Francisco's The Residents. They were a conceptual band, and *in isolation* is how they were conceived. By the end of 1970, it became clear to Kurt Enders, an A&R man for German Polydor, that there was a place for the extreme new West German rock music in the international rock'n'roll sphere. But no-one had yet attempted an entirely new sound that broke all of the imported rules of the British and American scenes. He told this to the music journalist, Uwe Nettlebeck, who was extremely impressed and wanted to lead just such a project.

And so Faust was born – as cold and antiseptically as that. No, not really. It was a fabulous challenge and showed how, very occasionally, visionaries in record companies have been seen to get it absolutely right. Faust means 'fist', and a fist they were. Who the hell knows what their rehearsals were like in the Spring/Summer of 1971. Uwe Nettlebeck had spent Faust's large advance on building a studio at Wumme. This old converted schoolhouse, between Hamburg and Bremen, beçame their place of learning (and de-learning) a style which was fuzzy, funny and extremely uncommercial, yet busted out with weird hooklines and extraordinary sounds. But when they made their debut at the Musikhalle in Hamburg, the press hated it. The audience didn't know what to make of it, and so the whole public thing started very badly for them in their home country. And when the LP was released in late 1971, the sales were so poor as to be as legendary as the group would some day become. Some sources quote under one thousand records sold in the first months of *Faust* being released.

But Faust were good. In fact, they had made a very special first album. It just took time to get it. And when Polydor released *Faust* in Britain, the strongest appeal of their LP was that it was produced in clear vinyl, with a clear lyric sheet and a clear jacket, emblazoned with a fist in X-ray. The effect was dramatic. And at a time when a hype could kill a new band stone-dead, even John Peel wrote that when he first saw the album "... regardless of the music within, I had to acquire one." Peel played the album all the time, and my Krautrock mates and I would all bore ourselves stupid, re-enacting the beginning of it, whenever we hung out together or took the train into Birmingham. It was such a *catchy* bizarre sound. It sounded like music from some parallel universe suspended in time and played through the oldest radio...

Extremely overloaded over-recorded synthesizers and radio static begin the album as fractions of "All you Need is Love" and "Satisfaction" burst in, followed by a vocal calling from another room, then a pretty schoolhouse piano (of course!), into a very arranged Zappa-esque horn piece which comes over a bit Teutonic, a bit *Lumpy Gravy*-ish. And in two minutes of music, Faust has taken you into the most inventive editing territory

rock'n'roll has seen. Faust's unexpected success in Britain prompted them to focus themselves here, and the second LP, *Faust So Far*, was actually released here first. Again, it was a gimmick record – all black this time, with a black inner sleeve, raised black lettering on the record-label, and a set of 12"x12" prints that illustrated each song. But this album was somehow far more confident that the first one. *So Far* opens with my favourite ever Faust song. "It's A Rainy Day (Sunshine Girl)" is a Temptations call and answer chorus over a boom-boom-boom-boom Mo Tucker one-chord trance-out. The rhythm guitar is on the same level as the Velvet Underground's *Live 1969*, and the sax solo is my favourite on record. The production is clean and wants to be heard. It's the same throughout the album, and proved that Faust cut it as an un-straight pop band, the same way early Roxy Music did. Polydor also thought so, and released "So Far" as a single. The B-side, "It's a bit of a Pain" reminds me of something from the third Velvet's album. So where were Faust coming from? Though their influences are ultimately unimportant, when a group is as original as Faust, it's impossible not to be overtly inquisitive as to how they came to this fabulous sound. And so to catch certain glimpses of other people's attitude in their music is to heave a sigh of relief that, yes, they were human after all.

Outside The Dream Syndicate – The Roots of Faust

But if Faust ever ripped-off something, then they did it the way all the greatest artists rip-off – that is, Directly. They took the Soft Machine's "We did it Again" (which is just The Kinks' "You Really Got Me" in any case) and called it "Baby". Faust even used the Mothers of Invention's own archetypes, to the point of copying Zappa's most annoying habit of playing "Louie Louis" on distorted organ a la Uncle Meat. It made sense to Zappa & the Mothers. By 1966, they were already old gits who'd come through endless bar bands playing "Louie Louie" every night for 25 years. When the Mothers played "Louie Louie", they were laughing at the sheer boring ridiculousness oh-ha-ha-ha-I-can-play-this-with-no-hands-I'm-so-fucking-jazz. But when Faust played it, they loved it. When they heard

the Mothers' crap slack double-album *Uncle Meat*, they heard "Louis Louis" and vibed on it for real... They loved rock'n'roll to death. There was no irony at all. The Western Music scene was a mythical and ancient currency to be plundered. And they were certainly music fans of a very high order. The last part of "Miss Fortune" is very similar to the Velvet Underground's "The Murder Mystery", sonically and also in the way that the song is achieved. But then they were clearly so in love with all things Warhol that their 1972 collaboration was with Tony Conrad. In the very early '60s, Conrad had been John Cale's cohort in the Lamonte Young New York ensemble, The Dream Syndicate. They played epic unchanging chamber dirges with intellectual perfection combined with lots of pre-Hippy Fuckoff. *Outside the Dream Syndicate* was a heavenly marriage. The LP was recorded at Wumme, now a successful recording studio in its own right, in October 1972, and released on Virgin's budget price Caroline label for £1.49 in early '73. This long unchanging mantra was epic, dignified and strung out. Like the huge grey and white photo of him on the LP jacket, Tony Conrad was a ghost upon his own record. His violin hung like a spectre over the whole album, but never did it even dip or sway. Much more minimal even than John Cale, here was a musician with a quest from the beyond.

It was ironic, then, that the next Faust LP, *The Faust Tapes*, was one whole pound cheaper than the collaboration with Conrad, sold 10 times more than all their other records, and was their best album – an unconditional stone-classic! But Virgin Records had licensed the LP from Uwe Nettlebeck, as part of the new recording deal now that the Polydor contract had run out. Steve Lewis at Virgin had worked out that they could sell *The Faust Tapes* for 49p, and not lose money. It would continue the heavy Faust trip in fine style, whilst simultaneously boosting the credentials of the very young record company. With a Bridgit Riley op-art painting on one side, and a bunch of reviews picked by Uwe Nettlebeck on the other, *The Faust Tapes* was an overnight phenomenon. Everybody bought it. Not everybody loved it. When a record is so cheap, it's sometimes hard to see the real value. But I dug it to death. It was their best by far.

Not only because of the songs, or even the editing (which is the finest in rock'n'roll – heavily influenced by, but streets ahead of, Zappa's hung-up eavesdropping little muse), but because a true rock'n'roll Moment was Created, and the music still utterly cuts it 22 years later. Faust were really out and about by now. The music press was full of them and, in March 1973, Uwe Nettlebeck explained the basic Faust intentions to the N.M.E. thus:

"They're not professional in that sense... We've always liked the idea of releasing records which lacked conventional 'finish' in terms of production... the music should sound like bootlegs, as if recorded by someone who passed a group rehearsing or jamming and then cut the recorded material wildly together."

Uwe Nettlebeck is clearly over-stating his case here, but then he can never have foreseen explaining the workings of such a bizarre Musical-unit to the popular press. Now was the right time for Faust, and they decided at last to tour Britain...

The Faust Tour

"In the midst of Faust-mouzik time ticks like a bomb."

From Faust's free 1973 Tour-handout.

It's hard to explain the excitement that the Faust tour brought. In mid-1973, nobody had a clue who they were, or even if they existed at all. The name Uwe Nettlebeck was constantly heard, and rumours in the press abounded. The tour took on a sort of 'underground event of the year' vibe and even some of my hard-rock mates came to Birmingham Town Hall to see them. In the foyer were free Faust manifestos handed to everyone, and free Henry Cow posters. It was ironic, but perfect really, that Virgin had chosen such a lame bunch as Henry Cow to support. They played their wacky Cambridge University Degree music on bassoons and time-changes galore, and the guitarist ran to the side of the stage and put headphones on, and pretended to listen to the band in a jolly way. Ho-hum...

But then it was all change as the road drills and hand-painted upright piano came on stage. And the two pinball-machines,

one on each side of the stage, facing outwards and connected to synthesizers. And the lights were all intense white, with extremely directional strobes that lit up the high high ceiling of the Town Hall. It was 1973, and musicians usually soloed and looked to the audience for applause, and great ugly guys nanced around in cheese-cloth singing about fucking nothing at all. And then Faust walked on – longhairs without flares, wearing those pale European straight-legs you'd see on hip German students over here in the early '70s. I couldn't believe it – they opened with "It's a Rainy Day (Sunshine Girl)". One played the drums, one played the piano and sung, one played acoustic guitar and sung, and the two others played pinball machines that triggered synthesizers – backs to each other on either side of the stage, as strobes caught the strings of the finest rhythm guitarist since Lou Reed. It was epic, it was brilliant, it had attitude enough to raze cities and it ruined every show I went to for at least two years after. At times they caught snatches of their songs and flung them about a bit, but they had concrete on stage and big road drills and their very Stooges' Ur-punk presence awed me and shocked me.

Faust IV and the End of the Line

After that, Faust were inevitably in a corner. They had become a part of mid-teenage British culture and *The Faust Tapes* was subjected to Monty Python-like rituals in the schoolyard, to see how much of it we knew and sort out the real Heads. When *Faust IV* came out it was an enormous letdown. I can't think of anyone who bought it. The packaging was weak. The songs had real riffs, and there was a reggae song on it! That song, "The Sad Skinhead" is now one of their best, but I couldn't see it at the time. And neither could anyone else. *Faust IV*, certainly as great as all but *The Faust Tapes*, was given the thumbs down. In truth, "Krautrock", the classic 12-minute epic that opened the album, is really just a continuation of their whole trip. They followed it with amazing songs; "Jennifer" and "Giggy Smile" are Krautrock classics. But I suppose *Faust IV* didn't have the innate sense of Moment that all their previous events/releases had. With hindsight, the sleeve *was* vastly inferior to all the oth-

ers, and maybe they should have stayed in Wumme instead of recording it in the Manor, in Oxfordshire. But hindsight does no-one any good, and when *Faust 5* was rejected by Virgin, Uwe Nettlebeck lost interest and Faust disappeared just as mysteriously as they had first arrived.

But the story did not end there. Faust were guaranteed immediate legend status for what they had achieved and, like Neu! and Can, were highly inspirational to the soon-coming British punk-scene. New albums of old songs have surfaced from time to time, *Munic & Elsewhere*, *The Last LP*, and *71 Minute of Faust* all contain unreleased songs in various configurations. But, greater than all their records, Faust tell of an heroic time when *reaching for the stars* did not have to include *getting the stars* in order to be successful.

CHAPTER 4

Tangerine Dream

From *Electronic Meditation to Atem*

"...dedicated to all people who feel obliged to space."
T. Dream note from *Alpha Centauri* 1971

The Making of *Electronic Meditation*

In October 1969, three intensely powerful and Visionary experimental musicians entered the Mixed Media Studio, in West Berlin, a walled city surrounded by miles of grey Eastern European nothingness and only connected to the outside Western world by a 96 mile 'corridor'. Using an un-standard musical configuration of lead guitarist/organist, a cellist who doubled on violin and 2nd guitar, plus the fittest drummer in music, Tangerine Dream there recorded an album of such intense freedom and Vision as was seldom recorded in the Western world. *Electronic Meditation* is an album of undeniable genius, born of the frustrations of one who has had visions of truth, and needs to project them to others Right Now! The three Visionaries* were

** I do not use the term Visionary lightly. Indeed, the Tangerine Dream line-up for ELECTRONIC MEDITATION is, in Krautrock terms, a little like having Syd Barrett, Robert Wyatt & Eddie Phillips all in the same group. And never have the musicians ALL continued in music at a pace as crazily achieving as Froese, Schultze & Schnitzler. Edgar Froese's T. Dream catalogue is enormous, whilst Klaus Schultze has release way over 50 LPs since this first LP. Unbelievably, Schnitzler surpasses even this incredible output – one year in the late '80s he produced 14 solo LPs and two collaborations. Like them all or not, this compulsion to produce & produce is quite awe-inspiring.*

Schultze, Edgar Froese & Conrad Schnitzler, all formidable in their own unorthodox musical fields, but brought here temporarily by Edgar Froese's desperate need to capture at least some semblance of the Tangerine Dream live musical 'moment'. Once a player of Top 40 music but now a re-formed workaholic with a quest, Froese had led T. Dream since the end of 1967 in at least three other line-ups and he was, by now, desperate to make a brand new musical statement. And when the three musicians entered Mixed Media Studio (actually just a factory floor space owned by local Heads), they put together an experimental tape that transcended all those of their contemporaries. In different musical configurations, a bizarre netherworldly concoction of magic and ritual was quickly built, using the techniques that Froese, Schultze & Schnitzler had learned from their long educations in Experimental Music. They put a contact mike on to a cash register, smashed glasses, and used backing hellish edits as Luddite as the early Amon Düül recordings. At times during the recording, the musical truth of these individuals dwelt in a low low Earthbound Realm, grubbing about in their primeval cello and percussion swamps, whilst across the marshlands floated the low-church ugly-duckling organ of Edgar Froese's Swan Rising. But more than all this, at times on *Electronic Meditation*, T. Dream took off into outer-space-land. And on the guitar/drums Burn-outs of both "Cold Smoke" and "Journey Through A Burning Brain", Tangerine Dream sizzled with a ferocity of True Renaissance Man. Klaus Schultze's drumming was like a religion-fuelled feedback-soaked army of Ottoman Mo Tuckers beating at the Gates of Vienna. It was the sound of Germany's entire collective psyche rearing up on its hindlegs and screaming, "To The Mooooooon!!!" With Klaus Schultze's drums liberated from the non-existent bass guitar, a free-rock was created with its feet in many musical camps at the same time. It was a musical form that united youth's Rock'n'roll sounds with the Classical, and the traditional with the most extreme forms of novelty. And the result was as timeless as is nearly all the very greatest art...

Edgar Froese Meets Salvador Dali – Northern Spain 1965

But how had Tangerine Dream come to this musical place? T understand this, we must first return to 1965 when Edgar Froes was lead guitarist in a quite standard beat group called The One

"The first time I heard the Rolling Stones was in the middl of a rehearsal with a rock'n'roll group (The Ones.) I was first o all attracted by their looks. Their faces were absolutely dam aged. They were the absolute opposite of The Beatles."

The success of The Stones was most inspiring of all to th sullen-looking and unglamorous Froese. He had turned to th guitar only after discovering that he could not sing as he saw th new Pop Culture embracing all kinds of very different types o Beauty in art. Later the same year, The Ones travelled to Nort Eastern Spain to play a summer season in the Catalonian tow of Cadaques, an artistic and exclusive seaside resort 30 mile from Barcelona. Here Edgar Froese's life and its meaning wer entirely changed by a chance meeting of some clarity with Sal vador Dali. The Ones played a show at Dali's villa and nothin for Froese was ever the same again:

"This was the biggest change I ever had in music. By seein the way he was talking and thinking, I found that *everythin* was possible. I thought that I would do the same thing as he di in painting, in music."

Edgar Froese had come to rock'n'roll through the now stan dard Art School route. Like Salvador Dali, his schooling had al been in sculpture and painting. Now, Froese was euphoric an saw countless strands reaching out into the future – ways i which he could paint, record, write, tour... all these thing inside a fabulous new kind of art package. With his psychi hackles up, Froese took The Ones back to West Berlin, wher he submerged himself and his group in the work of the ne Experimental Composers.

Berlin was at the centre of this radical discovery and had, fo many years, been the home of people who cut up tapes, ra music backwards, placed speaker systems in strange configura tions, and tried to weird their audiences out in each and ever way. Seminars by Karlheinz Stockhausen and Italy's Luciano Berio even questioned what music was. John Cage arrive

from New York, where he had been creating 24-hour piano marathons. Another American, Morton Subotnick, advocated the fabulous possibilities of the brand new Bucla synthesizer. Invented by the lateral-thinking technical Visionary Don Bucla, this new instrument had no keyboard at all, but was controlled by a set of push pads which created a chain of different possible musical 'happenings'. Other foreign composers like Milton Babbit, Xenakis and Toshi Ichyanagi gave seminars, whilst the hub of the West German Experimental scene orbited around the audio-workshops of Roland Kayn, Thomas Kessler and Stockhausen himself.

But though Froese immersed himself in the new, he was still a Road Veteran not completely in synch with the revolutionary free-spirit of young Berlin – not to mention the many new and educated idealists, much younger than Froese, who were untouched by the beat music of the early and mid-'60s.

Scared to change things too much, Edgar Froese dragged The Ones back to Cadaques for one final show at Salvador Dali's villa. The French film producer J.C. Avery was at the villa making a film about Dali's famous Christ Statue and he asked The Ones to record the film's soundtrack. But it was a temporary elation. The Ones struggled into the early months of 1967, reduced to playing "In the Midnight Hour" three times a night at Johnny Halliday's club in Paris. As they became poorer and poorer, all five of them slept in one room and ate the cheapest horsemeat, which they cooked on an open fire along the Bois de Boulogne. And all the beautiful young people flocking to Paris only reminded the depressed Froese of his lost plot. He finally split The Ones, packed up his things and returned to Berlin.

Live '68 – Tangerine Dream & Psy-Free at the Zodiac Club

"The biggest shock I ever got as a guitarist was to listen to Jimi Hendrix."

Edgar Froese, 1976

The Berlin Underground had by now sucked up and assimilated the music of The Grateful Dead, The Mothers, The Fugs, The Velvet Underground and The Doors. Still bemoaning his lack of a singing voice and in love with "the special modulation in Morrison's voice," Edgar Froese attempted to re-arrange instrumental versions of Doors' songs(!) for his new free-rock quartet Tangerine Dream. A Berlin drummer called Lanse Hapshash contacted Froese who invited Hapsash to join Tangerine Dream on the hipness of his name alone. The source of that name was a British free-rock freakout LP *Hapshash & the Coloured Coat* *, which had been released just that summer to enormous acclaim from the British, U.S. and German underground. Featuring side-long one-chord psychedelic grooves and chants, it was far more extreme than any of the American music thus far released – American record companies so far keeping such a tight rein of discipline over their supposed psychedelic groups that the first Grateful Dead LP made them sound like a frisky country band.

Throughout the autumn of 1967, Froese and Hapshash rehearsed with Kurt Kerkenberg on bass and Volker Hombach on flute and violin. And by January 1968, T. Dream played their first show at Berlin Technical University amidst an orgy of riots, free-thought and anarchy. This led to a huge Berlin cult following, as T. Dream took on an enormous residency at the Zodiac Club, playing free-form freakout music to Berliners for 5 or 6 hours per night. This new Berlin idealism totally rejected

** Though central to the formative moments of recorded Free-form psychedelic rock, HAPSHASH & THE COLOURED COAT as a statement is not one which sustains its muse into the '90s. Like Klaus Schultze's CYBORG, it created a genre which quickly turned around and kicked its creator's dick into the dirt. HAPSHASH & THE COLOURED COAT is now available on CD. For comparisons with all Amon Düül I recordings, search out "A Mind Blown Is A Mind Shown" and "The New Messiah Coming 1985".*

the cheap Carnaby St. capitalism on which much of the American and British scenes thrived, and musicians were happy to live on a pittance so long as they could play without the police on their backs.

But the schedule and policing of such events was punishing and musicians left constantly, through lack of recording deals or money. Gradually, people began to leave. Lanse Hapshash was replaced by a Swedish jazz drummer called Sven Johannson, whilst Volker Hombach left to become a cameraman for the German film director Jurgen Fassbinder. A new Dutch bass player, a Liverpool drummer called Paul, a small commission for a TV soundtrack, and Edgar Froese's new vision ground to a halt. His head was caned, brutalised and battered. Where were the individuals that could sustain the intensity of the Trip he saw in his Burning and Dali-magnified Brain?

Okay, It's Got No Commercial Chance But We'll Take You

Also in West Berlin lived the ultra-left wing psychedelic freak-out trio called Psy-Free. They were about three to four years younger than Edgar Froese, and had that amazing free-form drummer called Klaus Schultze in their organ/guitar/drums line-up. Then, soon after the break-up of the second version of Tangerine Dream, Psy-Free split right out of the blue. Edgar Froese asked Klaus Schultze to play drums in a new Tangerine Dream. An undergraduate at the Technical University of Berlin, majoring in psychology and experimental composition, Klaus Schultze, was a student of Thomas Kessler. Since 1968, he had been making experimental tapes and had insight into the seemingly impenetrable electronic music from his work at Kessler's studio. Edgar Froese had also attended many of Kessler's lectures and felt compelled to continue with an unorthodox instrumentation. He asked Conrad Schnitzler, a Mature student several years older than himself, to complete the line-up. Once called the "untameable experimentalist" by musicologist A. Freeman, Schnitzler proved to be the bizarre and atonal Sonic-anchor on which Edgar Froese & Klaus Schultze would be able to hang their unearthly Pre-verbal

muse. The results were wild to say the very least. *Electronic Meditation* is ancient, modern and futuristic all at once, though it is really neither electronic nor meditative. Though played by electric and acoustic instruments, *Electronic Meditation*'s unorthodoxy makes it no more technologically equipped than a man in a dungeon playing music with his bare hands and feet. It's highly likely that the use of the word 'Electronic' in the LP title was more for symbolic reasons, part of Tangerine Dream's collective attitude towards experimental music, and Edgar Froese's desire to be Seen to have Embraced this culture. And more than embrace it, with Schultze and Schnitzler he had transcended it. When the head of Ohr Records Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser heard *Electronic Meditation*, he said:

"Okay, it's got no commercial chance but we'll take you."

Destruction, Resurrection & *Alpha Centauri*

R-U Kaiser had already written about T. Dream in his 1969 rock'n'roll book *Das Buch Der Neuen Pop Music*. He was a huge fan of the group and was determined to have as much input as possible. It's difficult to truly understand Edgar Froese's headspace at this time. He was constantly asking extreme individuals into T. Dream, then freaking out when they acted like themselves. As early as October '69, Froese had freaked out at the Essen Pop & Blues Festival, because Klaus Schultze was using "strange organ tapes" on stage! Maybe it was just a control trip he was on. Whatever, Schultze left soon after *Electronic Mediation's* release, joining another raw and shatteringly cosmic group – Ash Ra Tempel. But T. Dream had found a fan in the young jazz drummer, Christophe Franke. From one of the earliest and most inspiring of all the early German free-rock groups, Agitation Free, Franke had been intrigued by the visual experiments that accompanied T. Dream's performances. He quickly integrated into the group and, for a while, Froese, Schnitzler & Franke recorded music for TV and played at the Vienna Arts Lab. Then Conrad Schnitzler left. With the arrival of Chris Franke, the musical scales had tipped too far away for Schnitzler, who left to form a

rhythmless ultra-experimental group called Kluster*. With pressure from R-U Kaiser, Edgar Froese asked the young organist Steve Schroyder to join T. Dream and Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser booked the group into Dieter Dierks' studio at Stommelm, near Cologne.

Alpha Centauri was the name of the second LP and it was just as cosmically garage and pagan as *Electronic Meditation.* On the 13-minute epic, "Fly & Collision of Comas Sola", the song begins with a screeching stellar synthesizer that wheels across the sky before slipping into an unholy union of beautiful lotos flute, light and elfin, against a grey low-church chord organ that is unashamedly shackled to the earth. As the flute takes on a more and more atmospheric vitality, so the organ becomes intrusive and stubborn, cantankerously shifting from minor to major chords at will. And then it all takes off. Huge low-tuned shaking synthesizers threaten to obliterate the whole track until, Phoenix-like and utterly at odds with everything else, great de-tuned kettledrums rise out of the mix to jam with the crazy beautiful flute. The flute picks up, dances even crazier than before and lifts the drums to a new plateau until the drummer suddenly blasts into a brand new space and... explodes around his drumkit in a way unlike all other rock'n'roll, yet uncannily like the inspirational freakbeats of Klaus Schultze on *Electronic Meditation.* Chris Franke had obviously felt the threatening psychic storm that Klaus Schultze had left on the first LP. And it was with awe-inspiring thoroughness that he equalled Schultze's performance on *Alpha Centauri.* Again, the unorthodox instrumentation had conjured a magic totally beyond anything heard before. But this time, Tangerine Dream had struck a deep chord in its German audience, and *Alpha Centauri* sold an unprecedented 20,000 copies, pushing the

** IMPORTANT CONRAD SCHNITZLER NOTE: Kluster was formed by Conrad Schnitzler, Dieter Moebius & Hans-Joachim Roedelius to create vast weather-like cosmic music. In early 1971, they recorded the album ZWEI OSTEREI, a vast thing consisting of two 20-minute pieces. Both tracks "Electronic Music Und Text" and "Electronic Music (Kluster 4)" bear far more resemblance to ELECTRONIC MEDITATION than to the later Schnitzler-less group who changed their name to Cluster. Even the duo's first & massive CLUSTER LP on the Phillips label lacks that spine-chilling cello that coursed through the Kluster recordings and irrigated the very soul of ELECTRONIC MEDITATION.*

group and Kosmische music into a far greater sphere of influence than had before been considered possible.

With great expectations from the German underground, the 1972 follow-up was *Zeit*; a huge sprawling double-album. *Zeit* means 'time' and that is precisely what this unexpected 80 minute monster was missing. I have listened to *Zeit* well over a thousand times, and still it hangs outside any formal time-zone. Gone was the confrontation of the previous LPs, replaced by epic rhythmless motionless ambient tracts of deep space. Here the Orb is the fastest of speed metal, I shit you not. Four pieces, all around 20 minutes long, fused together to create a Krautrock equivalent of the films *2001* or *Dark Star*. Again, the epic opaque titles served only to enforce the idea that all T. Dream pieces were performed on some unearthly Pacific atoll, surrounded not by the ocean, but by the stars. Before the *Zeit* recording sessions, Edgar Froese had replaced Steve Schroyder with Hanspeter Baumann, accusing Schroyder of "freaking totally out." Again, Froese may have been merely powertripping. For when the amazing and free-form Ash Ra Tempel, also an Ohr Records band, welcomed Steve Schroyder with open arms, Froese was moved to invite the young organist back to play as a guest on the *Zeit* sessions.

Pete Baumann, a great-looking rock organist from a group called The Ants, was an altogether more Traditionally capable musician than had previously inhabited T. Dream. By the recording of *Zeit*, he was not fully integrated into the group, and a hole appeared in the music which proved to be very positive. The spaces stretched out into huge silencescapes, and the magnificent drumming of older times was dismissed to some distant horizon. Popol Vuh's Moog mantra, *Affenstunde*, had enchanted Edgar Froese who invited Popol Vuh's leader, Florian Fricke, to play his outrageously fabulous and expensive big Moog on *Zeit*'s daunting opening track, "The Birth of Liquid Plejades". Four deep sonorous and fractious cellos led by Jochen Von Grumbcow, of the German Medieval folk-group Holderlin, held sway as Fricke's unutterably beautiful phased woman-tone cuts through the melancholy. With Kosmische music a widely discussed phenomenon throughout the West German scene, *Zeit* was only the second electronic example to

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released. It must, then, have infuriated Edgar Froese that his former partner, Klaus Schultze, had, one full month before *Zeit*, produced the modern epic *Irrlicht*. With hindsight, the two albums are extremely different – *Irrlicht* is far more cacophonous, its string arrangements far headier, and the space it occupies far more action-packed than *Zeit*. But in the cold moment of achievement, the two records were constantly compared with each other.

The "Ultima Thule" 45 & *Atem*

At the same time as *Zeit*, Tangerine Dream recorded an outrageous Garage-Prog. single called "Ultima Thule (Teils 1 & 2)". Pete Baumann's rock attitude reared up on Side 1, which is a huge monolithic slab of Barrett Floydian instrumental mania. The track kicks off with a hilarious madly strummed bar-chord intro from Froese, which loses its way a little before picking up into the RSJ Slab-funk riff which Pete Baumann's keyboards dominate. "Teil 2" was an entirely different piece, less punky, more like the soundtrack to some famous Ancient Egyptian myth.

In the summer of 1972, Tangerine Dream played at the Ossiach Festival, their last show with a conventional organ/drums/guitar line-up. The show was recorded for a BASF live album, the band contributing a track called "Oscillator Planet Concert". This and the recording of "Ultima Thule" had quickly integrated Pete Baumann into T. Dream, who suddenly found themselves in their stride and produced the mighty epic that is *Atem*. Arguments about the next direction the group would take were caused by Ohr boss R-U Kaiser. Rolf-Ulrich was on a Vision-trip similar in power to Edgar Froese and the two men did not see eye-to-eye. Kaiser's new Cosmic Couriers/Kosmische Musik label was doing extremely well and he desperately wanted Tangerine Dream to jump ship from Ohr to the hip new label.

But Froese would not be swayed and his Vision remained intact. The title track of *Atem*, over 20 minutes long, is big like "Ultima Thule (Teil 2)" and it is quite clear that T. Dream were inspired to new heights by the recording of their one 45. The

title-track of *Atem* is big like the driest desert. It opens like Side 2 of Joy Division's *Closer*, mellotron fanfares salute Atlantis as it slips into the ocean, then back to those beautiful drums so absent from *Zeit*. This all gives way to a long long *Zeit*-like time-suspension section, rhythmless but randomly pulsating. The last track on the LP, a short piece called "Wahn", is the furthest out there. T. Dream get all feral and start barking and chimping it up – three shaman synthesists that have finally betrayed their instruments to dance together in a circle and harmonise only through each others' breathing. It is a beautiful, funny and moving sound, for it shows masters of Experimental Music reaching their Muse in any way that they can.

Phaedra Goes International

In Britain, John Peel made *Atem* his Import LP of the Year and Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser secured the album's release on Polydor. Tangerine Dream were so big now that most Germans thought they must be British. But Edgar Froese was furious to discover a Kosmische Musik logo on all the Polydor copies of *Atem*. He furry-freaked at R-U Kaiser for the last time and successfully got out of the Ohr Records contract. The synchronicity was perfect. With such enormous interest in Britain, Tangerine Dream were signed to the brand new and (then) ultra-hip Virgin Records. The John Peel Show and the constant British press had prepared the way for T. Dream's first simultaneous German/British release and *Phaedra* was a Top 10 album in Britain. It was a good, even occasionally exhilarating piece of sequenced pulsing easy-listening trip-out music, and would soon become a staple diet of the early '70s British student. But the essential moment of their early Muse was clearly gone, as if evaporated in an instant. Perhaps it was the combination of changes which precipitated Tangerine Dream's sudden shift of direction. From their constant sessions at Dieter Dierks' studio, the group was suddenly recording in Virgin's Manor in Oxfordshire. At the same time that the conventional and often a-rhythmically-used percussion instruments were finally ditched, a large Virgin advance enabled Froese, Franke & Baumann to buy banks & banks of sequential whatsoevers whenever they

need it. It was late 1973 and 1967 felt a long time ago to Froese. Perhaps it was time to move on. The days of contact-mikes on cash registers were obviously over.

T. Dream quickly sussed that this was their way to cosmic stardom. There was certainly no sell-out but, almost overnight, away went the True experiment. Away went the broken busted fingers. And gone forever was the snarling-in-the-dust intensity of those first four classic LPs, replaced, instead, by short 33 minute LPs of programmed pre-New age sequenced automaton synthesizer music. Yes, without knowing their older siblings, T. Dream's later 1970s albums *Phaedra*, *Rubicon*, even *Stratosfear* are quite a good listen in the cold light of the '90s. But at the time, they seemed an unforgivable tragedy after that blazing four LP birth and gestation.

CHAPTER 5

Neu!

From Kraftwerk to La Dusseldorf via Cluster & Harmonia...

An attempted Brief Un-ravelment of Neu!

"We make no premature fixing of style, as we are very dependent on situations and circumstances."

Klaus Dinger & Michael Rother, 1971

Neu! with Florian (Kraftwerk without Ralf)

Neu! was born in a royal shitstorm, live on German TV, on a bizarre night in August 1971. And in true keeping with their convoluted history soon to come, that incredible 11 minute performance on Beatclub, including delicate and chillingly beautiful snatches of their forthcoming classics "Im Gluck" and "Weissensee", was not even played under the banner of Neu!, but of Kraftwerk. That truly incredible Klang they called "Truckstop Gondolero" was played by a Neu! phoenix rising out of the Kraftwerk funeral pyre.

Ralf Hutter and Florian Schneider were, at that time, pioneers of the very fiercest sounding experimental music. Ardent followers of Karlheinz Stockhausen, they had begun life as leaders of Organisation, a five piece experimental group which had recorded the Out-there Noise-rock LP for RCA called *Tonefloat*. Re-cast and re-named as the ultra-German Kraftwerk, Hutter & Schneider had thus far recorded two LPs

Kraftwerk and *Kraftwerk 2*, which were barely less un-hinged than their first record. The same lopsided skanks prevailed and the beat was never really less than the hard flamming Crunch of experimental musicians attempting the most basic rock'n'roll.

But now Kraftwerk were breaking, or trying to break, into a new thing and it was taking a long while. Temporarily reduced to a duo, Ralf Hutter & Florian Schneider asked Michael Rother (pronounced 'rota') to play guitar and Klaus Dinger to drum for them. Rother & Dinger were good friends and extremely confident musicians, and they very quickly carved a path within Kraftwerk that was both Impressionist & Meditational one moment, and Expressionist & Ur-punk the next – taking the sound in a direction that neither Ralf Hutter nor Florian Schneider had intended. But the live TV appearance on Beatclub was already booked, and a frantic Ralf Hutter freaked out and left the group. 'Kraftwerk without Ralf' played Beatclub amidst huge orange German traffic cones, though it would be more correct to call the group 'Neu! with Florian'. "Truckstop Gondolero" encapsulates the entire Neu! career in its 11 minutes length. This curiously drawn time-piece swerved from the free-form bass-less noise-rock Neu! would become so well known for, to the tiny eked-out wa-guitar swamp they inhabited, taking in the classic motorik *Hallogallo*-style they always found so hard to avoid. It was a stupendous piece of music that left everyone, including the musicians, gasping.

Neu! & The Rise of Neu!

And so Neu! was born – the epitome of Krautrock. Neu! (pronounced 'Noy') means 'new' and this group was just that. Whilst Kraftwerk re-formed as the remedial synthesizer duo that would record the cult LP *Ralf & Florian*, Klaus Dinger & Michael Rother borrowed enough money to buy them four nights at Windrose Studios, in Hamburg, with the inspirational producer Conrad Plank, whom they already knew through Kraftwerk. The recordings created a mightily successful first LP that outshone everything around it. *Neu!* was a mini-masterpiece, and quite a move on from the duo's Kraftwerk roots. The sound that replaced the hectic stop/start of the Kraftwerk

trip was an ambient bassless White-light Pop-rock mantra that steadied itself directly between the two extremes of Bubblegum music and the extreme German experimental music. *Neu!* was the product of two young Master-magicians who had so grabbed hold of the creative 'moment' in the studio as to create a true jewel of an LP. The recording's success was heightened by Dinger & Rother's natural inclination to introduce intriguing and beautiful sounds alongside the clanking and Cut-up prevalent in so much contemporary experimental music. Both had a flair for melody that was straight out of Disneyland, and no hang-ups at all about sounding pretty as well as fierce. Neu! was quickly signed to Bruno Wendel & Gunter Korber's new Brain label, whereupon the duo designed themselves a record-sleeve of Washing Powder attention-grabbing simplicity. On an all white gloss 12"x12" background, the only other presence was the word "Neu!" shouting enormous and red.

The album was an instant hit and it seemed that everybody found out about them right from the beginning. I bought the first album when it was released in Britain by UA in 1972. The 10 minute E major guitar mantra "Hallogallo" which opened the first LP was a radio hit in 1972. Its mid-tempo unchanging stoner vibe penetrated all of Britain via John Peel who dug it to death. As I wrote earlier, Neu! was the epitome of Krautrock, and they have defined it more clearly and fundamentally than any other group. Their LP had an even more vivid jacket in Britain and it screamed off the record shop shelves, its bright dayglo pink sleeve with Neu! in white and underlined like a Daz container. At a time of Roger Dean's Yes sleeves and their ilk cluttered full of Space junk, mythical animals and members of ugly groups cast as supermen in some prehistoric void, Neu! artwork was speedfreak clean. And they clung on to that annoying Pop-art exclamation mark at the end of their name at all costs.

Neu 2 & The Death of Neu!

The unexpected success of Neu! sent the group out on the road with another ex-Kraftwerker, Eberhard Krahnemann, on bass

that it was too early and not right. Dinger & Rother were under severe pressure to get bigger after the unexpected success of the first LP, so Neu! recorded their first single for Brain, the double-A side "Neuschnee"/"Super". "Neuschnee" is a fairly standard but very pretty mid-tempo Neu! instrumental groove. "Super" is an extremely buzzsaw-punky bassless hoot'n'holler dance chant which DAF copped completely for their classic "Der Mussolini", in 1981. But the single was not a big hit. Andrew Lauder at UA was having big success in Britain with Amon Düül II and Can, and German music, the weirder and more German the better, was suddenly being given lots of space in the press. The success of the first album began to weigh heavily on the pair.

Bowing to outside pressure, Neu! went straight back into the studio and began to record *Neu 2*. They worked hard on the mantric "Fur Immer", a greener richer 11-minute "Hallogallo", and were almost done recording Side 1 when they were told that their recording budget was screwed and they were almost out of money. Furious and distraught and in a total mess, they freaked out at the size of their problem. Then, in a moment of artistic vision cut with dubious clarity, one of them (and I'll bet it was Klaus Dinger) suggested making Side 2 a pop-art cut-up statement, using their single tracks "Neuschnee" and "Super" as the basis. As these two very cool songs combined only added up to seven minutes, drastic action was needed. So they played "Neuschnee" at 78 rpm and recorded some of that. And then they played some of "Super" at 78 and 16 and recorded some of that. They even recorded "Neuschnee" with Klaus Dinger putting his fingers on the machine to slow it down.

And so the LP became a sort of weird rip-off Krautrock standard. It's hard to feel spiritually satisfied by *Neu 2* but it is truly pretty fucking good. However, Michael Rother was totally freaked by the whole experience, causing Neu! to split up. Four months after the split, he was in the studio with a brand new band called Harmonia, making some of the greatest music of his career and of the whole Krautrock trip. *Musik Von Harmonia* was co-written and produced by Michael Rother & Cluster...

Enter Cluster – Moebius, Roedelius & Musik Von Harmonia

Having begun their career with one similarly poetically named duo, Hutter & Schneider, it seems only artistically correct for Neu! that there next should have been contact with the other great poetically named duo, Moebius & Roedelius, better known as Cluster. And Cluster, who also recorded for Brain Records, were looking for an entire change of direction. They had not released a record for almost two years and that last LP *Cluster II* was in a style that now belonged to a different age.

But the relationship between Dieter Moebius & Hans-Joachim Roedelius was a strong one. As a duo also, Cluster had successfully avoided friction between each other thus far by working with other musicians. They had started out as the trio Kluster with the arch-experimentalist Connie Schnitzler, releasing epic and spacey records that sounded unearthly and hollow but always listenable. Schnitzler's influence was extreme, though, and his compulsive and phenomenal output of work was too wild for Moebius & Roedelius. When Schnitzler left to pursue what would become an outrageous solo career, they continued as a duo, releasing the vast weather balloon of sound called *Cluster* on Phillips Records. It was soon after this point that they signed with the much hipper Brain label. For *Cluster II*, Conrad Plank was placed in the Schnitzler role and received full writing and production credits for it all. But then came the long lay-off and the need for change. Cluster and Neu! shared record companies and the same co-producer/engineer, so when the Neu! split occurred, Michael Rother looked for temporary asylum in the arms of Cluster.

The trio of Rother, Moebius & Roedelius created a wonderful sound and the recording sessions were astonishing – and so trippily beautiful that the trio felt compelled to call themselves Harmonia. Each piece was a short vignette of sound which faded in, filled the room with its unearthly beauty, then left just as quickly. The driving force musically was Michael Rother, who invested every moment with the candy melody and simplicity of guitar licks that had made all Neu! songs so austere and Joe Meek-ian. Yet Moebius & Roedelius also showed enor-

mous freedom as artists, particularly in their sheer bravery of abandoning the vast Aircraft-hangar structures of their recent past *for a whole new thing (see Review 30 of Top 50 section.)* The *Musik Von Harmonia* LP sleeve was a retarded super-realist painting of a towering blue ammonia bottle, with artlessly placed announcements proclaiming: "Mit; m.rother (Neu!), d.moebius (Cluster), j.roedelius (Cluster)" – they were a true Krautrock supergroup.

Whilst all this went on, Klaus Dinger had been working quietly on his proto-punk band La Dusseldorf with his brother Thomas and Hans Lampe, Conny Plank's tape-op from all the Neu! sessions. As ever unorthodox, Klaus Dinger's La Dusseldorf was going to be another bass-less tom-tom heavy Krautpunk controlled freakout. And the strange Glam Dinger image was turned full blast on to his younger cohorts, as Klaus prepared for a Trip that was entirely integrated. Soon, everything was ready…

Neu 75 & The Return of Neu!

Then Klaus Dinger met Michael Rother. They talked about the way everything had gone wrong and felt as though it had all been thrown away stupidly. In one refreshing and, as usual, fairly inspiring act, Neu! was reborn for a farewell pre-La Dusseldorf LP. The album was called *Neu 75* and it was a classic. Not a great album like the Harmonia, Cluster or even other Neu! albums were, but a classic. A future-shaping moment of righteous vision. Punk as eating the snot off your mates face, spiritual as dawn on any clear day. It was a moving fucking Zone-out, geddit?

Neu 75 came together at Conny Plank's studio in December 1974. The album was to be divided in half, a trippy spiritual side followed by a long minimalist Pagan wig-out. Side 1 belonged to Michael Rother, its three long pieces opening with "Isi"; as elegant as Harmonia, but driven by that unmistakable dry bass-less Dinger drumming, low down in the mix and meditational in effect. Thereafter followed two of Neu!'s most beautiful suspended seascapes, "Seeland" and "Leb Wohl". It was as if the first Neu! LP had returned from a long heavy jour-

ney, and was much changed and grown introverted by the experience. It was beautiful dewy-eyed music; backward looking to childhood, and to the safety of not knowing the world... Then Zippeeeeee! In comes Dinger and his Dusseldorf cronies to kick your head off on Side 2 with music that was surely the most radical version of rock'n'roll since Eddie Cochran. With the music pivoting entirely around the double-drumming and the School- playground Boy-chants, the musical backing such as it was could afford to be weak and thin. That it was not weak and thin is a nice bonus, but the point I'm trying to make is that *Neu 75* thrived on Im-balance. It was Im-balance that gave the epic side opener "Hero" its mesmerising power. For over six minutes, those crunching guitars never let up. They start at Full-on and they Maintain. No guitar solos at all, but a constant barrage of Johnny Thunders-"Frankenstein" Ernie Ernie Ernie-ing On & On & Fucking on. And they had key changes. That was pop. No-one did that except the Sex Pistols two years later – and it uplifts the slavering hound in each us in such an Obvious but Glorious Way.

A Summary of Neu!

That was the end of the Neu! story. But the fall-out and repercussions from those three albums was (and is) immense and it is only now that the implications are being understood. In keeping with the spirit of the other most famous German duos – Cluster and Kraftwerk – Neu! was made of two extremely powerful personalities. Michael Rother and Klaus Dinger argued, they fought, they each surrounded themselves with separate scenes, and they split up twice and had to have time away from each other.

Of the two, I do consider that Klaus Dinger was the greater because his contributions most affected the future of music. It was his influence on the transitional *Neu 75* and its follow-up *La Dusseldorf* which, in 1976, directly caused David Bowie to take his *Low* direction. And, as I must re-state, Klaus Dinger's direct effect on the Sex Pistols, via Johnny Rotten, can be discovered merely by playing *Neu 75*'s "Hero" or "After Eight" next to any Sex Pistols singles. As a huge fan of Johnny Rotten,

I'd always suspected those riotous key-changes into the Pistols' guitar solos to be the inspiration of some sharp Krautrock- or rather than the addled mind of some mild and boogie Faces fan. But it still felt good to have it semi-confirmed by the pre-Pistols Rotten attitude, long green hair and Hawkwind fixation as revealed in the recent autobiography, *Rotten.** You know, I can say this over & over till I'm a boring old git but Side 2 is punk as fuck and two years ahead. Not the Stooges, not the Dolls, not American at ALL. You hear "Hero" and "After Eight" and British punk suddenly makes sense. For a few beautiful months before old-prick Johnny Thunders brought heroin-injecting into the punk scene, it was really the Neu!-driven sound of the Sex Pistols that turned on the young punks. And it was Klaus Dinger & Michael Rother who deserved the credit and never really got it.

And everything about Neu! was punk, and pre-empted punk. Neu! was extremely drum-led, yet Klaus Dinger was the greatest non-drummer ever. He had one drum fill and one drum beat, which he played at many different tempos. Dinger was a keyboard player/guitarist first, but could find no drummer nearly simple enough for what Neu! required. So he did it himself. Like the photos, the sleeves, everything that Neu! did, it was proto-punk and years ahead. Klaus Dinger was also an exquisitely glam tart, who cut it in thee most fabulous of ways. His Ziggy-Pop-in-the-Photo-Booth image, which shifted around from time to time but always surrounded him, was one of his most successful and endearing traits in the whole of his 10 year long career. That Dinger's name is not standard currency amongst the majority of Heads is one of the great tragedies of Rock'n'roll – because the guy deserved to be a fucking big star. But perhaps time will tell...

Neu! R.I.P. – Viva La Dusseldorf & Harmonia's *Deluxe*

In the early post-Neu! years, both Dinger & Rother had considerable success in the art that they created. La Dusseldorf quick-

**Johnny Rotten did give it away on a radio show sometime in July 1977, even playing Peter Hammill's 1975 "Institute of Mental Health, Burning" from the NADIR'S BIG CHANCE LP, another massive influence on pre-punk.*

ly had a big hit with "Silver Cloud", the attitude of which David Bowie again copped in a big way for "A New Career in a New Town" on Low. Happily, Klaus Dinger had good artistic and commercial success with La Dusseldorf, who recorded three very cool LPs between 1976–81. The first, *La Dusseldorf*, is the greatest of the three. It opens with the 13 minute two-chord ramalama of "Dusseldorf", a soft-frantic synth-mantra that repeats the word "Dusseldorf" over & over & over again as though it is a story. When the song finally comes to an end, cheering soccer stadium crowds chorus "Dusseldorf. Dusseldorf. Dusseldorf." Then its off into the next song, another fast pre-77 bass-less buzzsaw guitar trip repeating (yet again) the single word "Dusseldorf" over & over. This song is called, of course, "La Dusseldorf". Perhaps it is the female partner of the first song. Or maybe it doesn't matter at all when you're Klaus Dinger and on-one with your mates. The following two albums, *Viva* and *Individuellos* were both crazed Bavarian cosmic knees-ups of the first order, mainly because Klaus Dinger had an uncanny ability to sing about serious subjects in a way that had you both rolling in the aisles and caring at the same time. His melodies were simple but incredibly moving, as well as maddeningly catchy.

After the Neu! split, Michael Rother ran to the role of Cluster's producer for their forthcoming album *Zuckerzeit*. This was the first Cluster album in years and it was hugely Rother-influenced. *Zuckerzeit* means 'Sugartime'. And the exquisitely unhinged toytown Velvets melodies were superimposed over Moebius & Roedelius' utterly catchy but crazy idea of what Pop-music was. Cyclical synthesizer riffs over archaic drum-boxes and dumbfounding insistent melodies as stupid as the titles ("Caramel", "Marzipan", "Hollywood", "Rote Riki", etc.)

Then Rother, Moebius & Roedelius reformed Harmonia for one final LP, the stunning beauty called *Deluxe*. The British writer Biba Kopf recently wrote:

"Of all the great German groups of the mid-70s, Harmonia must rank among the most mysteriously overlooked."

And it is true. *Deluxe* is a magnificent album that everyone should own. It is melodic in a most melancholic way. Weeping synthesizers and weeping guitars over electric percussion and

reedy early polytone keyboards. They were joined on drums by Guru Guru's Mani Neumeier, who lifted the Harmonia sound far beyond that of the first LP. *Deluxe* has a tragic magic to it that is reminiscent of epic poems like Longfellow's *Hiawatha* or the short stories of Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*. And one song on *Deluxe* stands out to utterly confound my belief that Klaus Dinger was the driving force of Neu! The song is "Monza", and it pre-empted the clatter beats of *La Dusseldorf* by some months. Was this a combative stance on the part of Michael Rother? He knew full well that the La Dusseldorf LP was going to sound the same way. Perhaps it was the fallout from a truly symbiotic relationship. Certainly, when Michael Rother went solo, the first few LPs (*Sterntaler*, *Flammende Herzen*) were recorded with Can's Jaki Leibezeit, who could offer Rother that steady unfussy non-drumming and the same rudimentary Dinger drum-fills that he had obviously grown addicted to. Whatever, the music and story of Neu! is a legend with a great canon of work attached to it. And its influence until the '90s is minuscule compared to its future position in Rock-'n'roll.

CHAPTER 6

Can

Any Colour is Bad (1968–73)

"Inability is often the mother of restriction, and restriction is the great mother of inventive performance."

Holger Czukay of Can

Can was formed in the exhilarating revelation of seasoned musicians discovering rock'n'roll. Whilst most rock musicians play only what they are capable of, most members of Can were over 30 and music veterans when the group formed. And such was the effect of psychedelic rock on all of them that they had to radically change their style in order to even play the music.

Since 1965, two students of Stockhausen, Holger Czukay and Irmin Schmidt, had talked of forming a group together, a group that would both utilise and transcend ethnic, electronic experimental, and modern classical music. But now it was 1967 and Czukay was a music teacher. One of his students, Michael Karoli, had recently blown Czukay's mind by playing him the Beatles' "I am the Walrus". And it was soon after this, whilst listening to Jimi Hendrix, The Mothers of Invention and the Velvet Underground's *Banana* LP one night, that Irmin Schmidt and Holger Czukay finally decided to take the plunge and include rock'n'roll elements in their group. Like Kraftwerk later, they were from an extremely academic background, and were uncomfortable yet fascinated by every aspect of rock-'n'roll. But it was rock'n'roll's sense of moment that thrilled them most of all.

Irmin Schmidt was 31 years old, and a life-long fan of exper-

mentalist Olivier Messiaen. At the famous Darmstadt Kurse für Neue Musik, he had studied under Stockhausen, Luciano Berio, John Cage and Pierre Boulez; four of the greatest composers of the 20th Century. Schmidt had been a conductor, a singing teacher, a theatre-critic, and a writer for both theatre and films before his move to rock'n'roll.

With Schmidt on organ and piano, and Czukay's student, the 19 year old Michael Karoli on guitar, Holger Czukay chose to play bass. He claims that this was initially because "no-one really listened to the bass," but Czukay also required freedom to operate the tape-machine, and it was as editor of the group's musical visions that he would come to be known. Calling themselves Inner Space, the group found a free-jazz drummer, again over 30 years old, and again on a new musical quest.

Jaki Liebezeit had been playing free-jazz in Spain for five years. But recently, he had had a moment of immense life-changing clarity at a show he'd played. Leibezeit had been touched and changed by the words of, what he called, "some kind of freak." The "freak" had slagged Leibezeit for playing free-jazz, and said: "Why do you play that shit? You must play monotonously." Those words stayed with him forever. Jaki Leibezeit had never heard the word 'monotonously' used in a positive way before, and the pealing bells of truth shot through him. Leibezeit changed his drum style immediately. And it was with this concept of monotony that the drummer entered Inner Space. He, in turn, chided Holger Czukay for playing too much bass, and insisted that he try to play bass with "only one tone." Irmin Schmidt was later to claim that he himself often played nothing on early tracks, so trained as he was for standard musical achievement. So Inner Space was forged on restriction, and they were still talking obsessively about it when Hildegard Schmidt, Irmin's wife, found their first singer.

Malcolm Mooney was a black American, a sculptor and teacher. He had never sung before but threw himself into the role with such fervour that the others readily followed him. Mooney suggested that they became known as The Can, a positive name that had many meanings. In Turkish, 'can' (pro-

nounced "chan") means both 'life' and 'soul'. In Japanese 'kan' means both 'feeling' and 'emotion', whilst 'chan' means love when used in salutation. (Later on, Irmin Schmidt would playfully claim that Can stood for Communism Anarchism Nihilism.) On becoming The Can, the presence of Malcolm Mooney forced the group into even greater musical restrictions, until late 1968 saw them as an experimental rock band. It was now that their friend, Mani Lohe, owner of the castle Schloss Norvenich, suggested they build a rehearsal studio in his home. Can organised a show at Norvenich, a happening to be recorded, in which they would play two long performances of a song called "You Doo Right". In keeping with Can's truly restrictive style, the whole thing was recorded on two reel-to-reel tape recorders and parts were later used on their first album.

The early recordings that Can made were a disparate cross between early Captain Beefheart (*Safe as Milk* period up to *Mirror Man*), *Freak Out*-period Mothers of Invention, startlingly like The Fall, and specifically like the Velvet Underground. Yet the sound of late '68 Can is still very much its own. A brutally simple intuitive trip, repetitive to the extreme, and rarely a note-for-note cop of any other band. It is, perhaps, ironic then that Can's classic debut LP *Monster Movie* began their career on record desperately trying not to play the Velvet Underground's "European Son". But try as they did, still the album opener, "Father Cannot Yell", would return again and again to its roots, only to transcend similarities and shake out yet another classic song from the same form.

"Father Cannot Yell" was a fascinating and fruitful exercise that T.S. Eliot would have been proud of. In his essay "The Metaphysical Poets", Eliot chided the establishment for always seeing similarities between artists as negative. Why, he asked, was it not possible to return to the ancient bardic perspective that happily accepted the apprentice's use of his master's blueprint? Only in acceptance of what had gone before could he himself truly move on. Can certainly proved this on *Monster Movie*. It's an incredible record in terms of both original invention and also Rip-off invention. Can's brazenness with "Father Cannot Yell" gave the world a great song that lesser artists

would have shied away from attempting, and so placed them on the international stage immediately.*

On its release in August 1969, Can's *Monster Movie*, was greatly acclaimed. One of the recordings of "You Doo Right" from the Schloss Norvenich show now covered the whole of Side 2, and was a moving epic masterpiece. And it was on the raw punk holler of "Outside Your Door" that Malcolm Mooney consciously defined their musical stance with the repeated chorus, "Any colour is bad." Unlike the *Kosmische* music of most of the other great German bands, Can had stylised themselves from the beginning as raw and expressionist, with clearly defined boundaries. But Mooney was having problems. The second show at Schloss Norvenich clashed with an exhibition above the performers. The constant movement of the audience, who saw the event more as a multi-media piece than the group's own show, caused Mooney to start singing "Upstairs, Downstairs, Upstairs, Downstairs" over and over until he was repeating the words on his own and the rest of the group had finished. He continued through the intermission and into Can's second performance, eventually collapsing from exhaustion. The rest of Can accepted this as part of the 'whatever' that happens at such events, Michael Karoli even saying: "It was quite nice really. Malcolm lost his head, which happens sometimes. The atmosphere was really good."

But Mooney found life in West Germany increasingly difficult. He was totally out there and he was black, too. A Jewish friend of Mooney told him that he was on the wrong path. This greatly affected the singer, and he began to visit a psychiatrist for treatment. But soon after the five-hour happening they called "Can-action-rock-incitement-playground", Malcolm Mooney's psychiatrist advised him to return to the United States and, in December 1969, Can's 'linguistic space communicator' did just that.

Mooney's departure devastated Can. He had named them.

**Listen to Can's DELAY 1968 LP, released in 1982. These recordings were made just after, and some just before, the MONSTER MOVIE sessions. All are very original, Velvets. With this weight of material to chose from for MONSTER MOVIE, we [illegible] that Can knew precisely which kind of music they wished to be aligned opening the album with "Father Cannot Yell".*

And he had forged their new direction. Though he often missed whole shows, the group was not prepared for his departure and, from December '69 to May 1970, they recorded only one new piece of music. But in May, they played a four night residency at Munich's new discotheque The Blowup, and it was during afternoon coffee on a Munich sidewalk that Holger Czukay discovered Can's new singer.

The meeting was typically Can. Whilst Jaki Liebezeit was still screaming "No, no, it can't be true," about Malcolm Mooney to anyone who would listen, Holger Czukay was calmly asking the young Japanese busker who had been plaguing them all afternoon if he would sing at the show tonight. It was to be an inspired choice. And this quote from Holger Czukay encapsulates the aims of Can in mid-1970:

"It was a furious concert, first Damo was singing very dramatically, it was very peaceful, he was very concentrated. And then like a Samurai warrior he sprang up, he took the microphone in his hands and he screamed at the audience. The audience got so nervous, people began to hit each other, there was a fight and almost everybody left. At the end there were only some diehard fans left, 30 Germans, 30 Americans, very enthusiastic, and the rest of the concert was just played for them. It was beautiful, a very good concert."

Damo Suzuki's erotic careless Devotional at the microphone was to completely change Can, and soon. In less than a month, Damo was singing "Don't Turn the Light on, Leave Me Alone" at Inner Space, feeling freaked out and uncomfortable. It's interesting to note that this song predates what would become the standard Damo groove by a year at least, echoing later classics "I'm so Green" and "Moonshake". But first, Can recorded one of their greatest ever songs. And though it was Damo's, the Can sound was still writing for Malcolm Mooney. "Mother Sky" is a 14 minute trance-driving "L.A.Woman" through the streets of Cologne at 4 a.m. The group are driving in a large pre-war American convertible, and Damo is hovering above them singing. "Mother Sky" brought Michael Karoli's guitar blasting out with a hitherto unseen force. It just scythes down all around it and is psychedelic as all hell. A sexy Japanese geisha one minute, a twang blues beyond Robby Kreiger

the next. And 14 and a half minutes is a long time to really trance out.

In Damo Suzuki, Can had found their bubblegum hero. For Damo possessed a wistfulness in his voice which was a very touching pop delivery, like David Cassidy's, a thrilling teenage lilt that made me understand why my girlfriends needed their Donnys, Davids and Marcs. I had a huge crush on Damo Suzuki, and still do. I stood in my bedroom aged 15 ripping off the pose he's pulling on the back of *Ege Bamyasi*. That pose and the Jim Morrison shot on the front of *Absolutely Live* are still my two favourite all-time images of rock'n'roll singers.

September 1970 saw the release of an interim album *The Can Soundtracks** containing some old Malcolm Mooney songs but with a majority of recent Damo stuff. "Mother Sky" took up the first three quarters of Side 2, and eclipsed everything on the record. Irmin Schmidt's passion for recording film music had ensured that Can had been made available for all German filmwork. Now this was all brought together on a very good record, but one which did not play like a complete album.

But at the end of 1970, Can were back and ready. And with an attitude a mile high, they stormed into Schloss Norvenich studio, now re-named Inner Space and, in three months, recorded the epic masterpiece *Tago Mago*. But even in 1970, Melody Maker was saying, "If the Velvets play in a junkyard, the Can are somewhere more sinister still."

Yes, Can had descended to a deeper place than the Velvet Underground had ever attempted, far deeper than the street, below into the Unconscious. It was more like France's ridiculous but nevertheless sensational Magma, another group of practising high magicians.

Tago Mago opened with "Paperhouse", "Mushroom Head" and "Oh, Yeah" on Side 1. It's as good as they ever got. The music sounds only like itself, like no-one before or after, including Can themselves. It's pointless to describe the music, but it's huge free-rock, as though each member of Can has a

Like THE FAUST TAPES, Can did not think of THE CAN SOUNDTRACKS as an official follow-up to MONSTER MOVIE at the time, but it was so well received that over time it has been accepted as such.

field to play in. On "Aumgn", Irmin Schmidt intones for 17 minutes, rising and falling and sailing truly out there. At times the track takes on a dizziness that is too much. Chanting with such concentrated breathing takes the musician far out of himself, similar were the states in which the 13th Floor Elevators' Tommy Hall found himself. The magic of the records made it a wonderful double-album, an esoteric rock classic. But even as early as *Tago Mago*, it can be seen that there was a schism between Damo and the rest of the group, which was more than just his being new. Whereas Malcolm Mooney had practically defined the music by the stance of his raging vocals, Damo Suzuki had far less control. And later, his sleepwalking sexiness would eventually lose all control as the sound steered ever inchingly more towards a steaming jazz. Malcolm Mooney just never shut up for long enough for the Schmidt/Leibezeit axis to speed up into their inevitable frenzy of extremely educated playing.

But all this was perplexingly part of Can. The group psyche of Can was an entirely different beast to the five individuals themselves. Like many true stars, all their foibles were as obnoxious as their music was great. But Can were beginning to signify the *most* of everything in music. They were the most psychic, the most quotable, the most inspiringly simple, the most horrendously flash, and the most smug intellectual endless drywanks, though this is not so bothersome when the music is such successful To-the-Moon experimentation.

But there was also this recurring sexiness in Can's music *with* Damo that it should have been dragged out more often. It's the hotelroom whisper of female soul singers, the abandon of Maria Muldaur's "Midnight at the Oasis" and the teen whisper of David Cassidy's "How Can I Be Sure?" And *Tago Mago*'s 1972 follow-up was virtually that record. There were five classic Can pop songs on *Ege Bamyasi* – "Sing Swan Song", "One More Night", "Vitamin C", "I'm so Green", and "Spoon". Each one had the above ingredients, and each one had a chorus, a verse and a masterful groove. And the opening "Pinch" was Damo at the controls, grabbing hold of the music and filling the track with his fantasia. Unfortunately, it was to be the only true Damo Suzuki/Can album. He would lose control to the jams

later on, but for *Ege Bamyasi* they struck gold. And even the single, "Spoon", could do no wrong – in early 1972, Can went to number one in the West German Top 30, selling over 200,000 copies.

As a bass player, Holger Czukay is comparable only to John Cale. But as an editor, he is surely second to none. Though epics like "You Doo Right" had been recorded live, many of Can's greatest songs started out as free-form jams. It was Holger Czukay's mind that created verses, choruses and a structure for them. The early Can LPs all relied heavily of Czukay's brutal editing blade, and it's a deficiency of the later records that he allowed certain sections of music to remain. But now was a difficult time for Can. The British press lauded them as saviours of rock, and made a big deal about the Stockhausen connection. With shit like Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman all over the news, it was hard for Can to limit themselves – especially as they could really play up a storm if they wanted to. Nick Kent was driven to write:

"Only Can have motivated themselves out of the Krautrock zone to really merit superlatives as such."

Sunday papers, art magazines, even the likes of the *Spectator* (who knew truly fucking zilch about rock'n'roll) wrote:

"If you consider yourself in any sense involved with modern music, you cannot overlook them."

And then the horrific *Sunday Times* rock critic, Derek Jewell, wrote:

"No band in the world illustrates the inadequacies of today's musical terminology more so than Can."

It was the start of the deification and de-mystification of Can, and the end of their rocking freakout trip. The next LP *Future Days* was a schizophrenic stalemate. Opening with the title track, one of Can's most wistful, epic and exquisitely beautiful songs, *Future Days* promised everything but did not deliver. Side 2 was a shambles. The other great song, another David Cassidy-voiced monster called "Moonshake", could have come from *Ege Bamyasi*. But Damo Suzuki was very unhappy and knew that the balance within the group had gone. They were now very separated from the West German scene and had become an international band, subject to the eulogising of more

average artists who used their name like a by-word. And after a show at the Edinburgh Festival, on August 25th 1972, Damo Suzuki left Can. The group continued as a four-piece for many more years, producing very patchy, flawed LPs which still occasionally contained songs of a stunning quality. At times, they even transcended their old sound. But this was never for more than a couple of songs per album. Like most teenage Can fans, I lost interest when Damo left, and I cringed when I saw them on the Old Grey Whistle Test. Holger Czukay was wearing extremely crap white gloves and the whole thing came over as a muso trip. Of course, it wasn't meant to be, and many fans love all their albums right to the end. I just had it in my head that ANY COLOUR IS BAD. Or as Jaki Leibezeit later said:

"When we began it was great, everybody just had a few notes he could play so it stayed simple. But later our technical abilities increased, Holger could play very fast on his bass, Irmin could play a lot of technical things, and Micky could play very difficult things. It began with TAGO MAGO. I mean "Hallelujah" is monotonous, but not in the best way. And it really went off with FUTURE DAYS, I think, it became too symphonic."

But Can will be remembered as one of the great 20th Century bands. I've listened to their music for over 23 years, and I still freak out at their staying power. All of them continued in music after Can's split in 1978, and all have made great music at some time since then. Every one of Can's members is a hero, a Wizard and a True-star.

CHAPTER 7

Amon Düül II

The Grimreaper is a Krautrocker & Other Stories

"A crazed Gothic-Germanic teenage horror movie fan refraction of the whole early murky psychedelic fuzztone feedback modal music fad."

Lester Bangs on Amon Düül II:
Psychotic Reactions & Carburettor Dung

An Introduction

Of all the great Krautrock groups, Amon Düül II were surely the most true to the trail. Starting as an ill-fated politico/musical commune, the group at all times maintained the aspirations and original vision of the great Kosmische music first defined in 1969, and which we've come to call Krautrock. They were the group whose music continued to feel the pain of post-war Europe, and the ones who retained the Krautrock elements long after all the other bands had been assimilated into the regular German Rock-scene or become internationalised like Can and Tangerine Dream. As late as their 1975 LP *Hijack*, Amon Düül II were still playing "Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles" with a glitterguitar over a glitterbeat (on "Da Guadaloup"), after which their bass player Lothar Meid left to form Jackboot! The Amon Düül story extends outside music and into lifestyle and, in that way, the music was sometimes secondary. Tours would feature very different line-ups to the then current album,

side-projects abounded, and collaborations with Popol Vuh at one point made the two bands seem interchangeable. And Amon Düül II's music was definitely badly affected by the constant comings and goings in the band – they've certainly recorded their fair share of shit. Later albums like *Made In Germany* and *Hijack* oftentimes fell into a dreaded Euro-sound but, even at their worst, Amon Düül II always displayed more than just vestiges of their former outrage. And, more than that, they were a Yoko Ono-inspired punk commune band with considerable stamina...

Phallus Dei & The Munich Commune-scene

Munich in the late '60s was a hip scene. And in 1967, amidst the free-jazz, the politics and the idealism, a commune called Amon Düül sprang up. A floating group of 10/12 musicians, political activists, and psychedelic artists came together in a large house in the city for the specific purpose of creating all kinds of political art. But the house fell through and Amon Düül tried for several months to re-locate, in the interim all staying in a mutual friend's apartment with just two large rooms. But, as the Munich writer Felix Scorpio wrote, in article No.52 of the now-legendary *International Times*: "...the experience of really uptight community living sorted them out somewhat, with the result that they split ."

And so, in October 1968, the peace commune played their first big show, the Essenner Sontag pop festival, as two separate bands, Amon Düül I and Amon Düül II. Most of the Amon Düül I story has been told earlier in this book, but such was the charm of the original commune that both groups would intertwine from time to time, and there was a constant trickle of improving musicians moving from Mark I to Mark II throughout the early '70s. As time passed, Amon Düül I would spend more time involved in projects like the Berlin Kommune Eins, using their music only to promote their activities.

The leader of the split was Chris Karrer, one of the commune's founders. As a free-jazz violinist and guitarist of some experience, he couldn't bear to see the commune's music falling into a free-form freakout of bongos and acoustic guitars

In the hippy atmosphere, there was no way to exclude anyone with a spliff and a set of maracas.

Over at the Amon Düül I commune at this time, the line-up was particularly percussion-based. Get this 1969 sleeve credit from their *Psychedelic Underground* debut: Rainer-12-string, vocals/Ulrich – bass & doublebass/Helge – conga/Krische – *drum & piano/Ella – drum & vocals/Angelika – drum &* vocals/Uschi – maracas!!!

Chris Karrer set up Amon Düül II with the guitarist John Weinzierl and Renate Knaup, a former teacher with an exquisite Gothic Yoko inflection. Another founder-member of the Amon Düül commune, the free-jazz drummer Peter Leopold, soon followed. Their artist friend Falk-Ulrich Rogner joined on organ and keyboard bass, attempting a Ray Manzarek role within the group. But the pleasures of keyboard bass soon evaporated for Rogner, and Amon Düül were joined on bass guitar by Dave Anderson, a British roadie for the unknown Kippington Lodge (later the pub-rock band Brinsley Schwartz.) Amon Düül II's first album was 1969's *Phallus Dei*. It was hard, bizarre and very innovative. Chris Karrer's violin and Falk-U. Rogner's synthesizer conspired to create some very pre-Roxy Music soundscapes. And the opening "Kanaan" was an exotic hybrid of *Da Capo*-period Love played by an Iron Curtain Mothers of Invention. The middle European harmonies and brilliant rhythms created a hurried matt of percussion, springy like moorland bog, undulating and very cool. Like their commune sister group, on *Phallus Dei*, Amon Düül II were also beset by percussion. They were joined on vibes by Embryo's Christian Burchard, on congas by Holger Trulzsch from Popol Vuh, and Amon Düül's other violinist Shrat was now solely playing the bongos. With two drummers as well, the sound was unlike any other rock'n'roll band. It was a swirling meltdown of Teutonic San Francisco *Kosmische* psychedelia with absolutely no commercial restraints. The result was quite incredible. On one LP, Amon Düül II had combined the strident organised memorable Dervish rock weirdness of Side 1 with the title track on Side 2, a wild 20 minute improvised, cut-up dreamscape of *Kosmische* music that at times organised itself into a pure hillbilly speedball rush. And, as I wrote earlier, the whole thing

came in a two colour red/blue freakout sleeve any real Head would kill for.

Yeti

But whilst Amon Düül II were immediately big in West Germany, *Phallus Dei* was ignored in Britain. Still, the group had big allies at Liberty/UA, their London record-company which, despite the M.O.R. image of its U.S. parent company, was run here in Britain by total Heads. Andrew Lauder was their extremely young boss – hanging with the Notting Hill freaks and getting out of control. Through Abi Ofarim, the entrepreneur who sung the huge '60s hit "Cinderella/Rockerfella", Lauder had already brought Can to his new label, and his association with the Notting Hill-based Clearwater collective soon brought the first Hawkwind album to Liberty Records. Dave Brock, leader of Hawkwind, soon heard a similarity in attitude in Amon Düül II's already released *Phallus Dei*. The two groups became big friends and Hawkwind's loud proclamations on all things Amon Düül made the group at least an interesting enigma until they could start to sell records. And in Klaus Doldinger, they now had a capable manager and a real inspiration. So the group returned to the studios to record their second and most legendary album, *Yeti*.

This epic double-album was to change everything for them. And in Britain, they were soon to become heroes of the underground. The John Peel Show, already champion of so much German music, embraced *Yeti* with real love and blasted Amon Düül II's long epics across the British night into every young Head's pad (or bedroom if you were 13 as I was then). Even the sleeve of *Yeti* showed that it was a confident ground-breaking record. This was the first of Falk-Ulrich Rogner's slide projection covers, and the star was Shrat the bongo-player, with his weird low forehead and a strange peasant dress, wielding a huge scythe across a field of bright yellow ground fog; the Grimreaper as a Krautrocker. It was a mesmerising image, and one which would stay with them throughout their career, though Shrat would quit soon after. Indeed Amon Düül themselves understood the power of the Shrat image because it

became their future logo. Though their sound was pared down to just one drummer and one bongo player, still the ancient Egyptian mystery was achieved in the magical swirl of the music. *Yeti* was a fabulous double-album – 68 minutes of some of the greatest Krautrock ever. The first record was filled with terrifying mini-epics: "Soap Shop Rock", the wiry medley, with the ridiculously named "Flesh-Coloured Anti-Aircraft Alarm"; six minutes of mythical fear-inducing magic tales. What the hell is going on in that song? Something scary is implied but the precise meaning always eludes me. But the greatest of all their punk songs is "Archangel's Thunderbird", the car that Renate implores everyone to drive over a "Louie Louie" Boeing 747 riff that has them come in late on the break-down, kind of like Jim Morrison's famous live TV fluff on "Touch Me". I love that they kept it in. It shows such of-the-moment confidence. The drumming is not rock'n'roll at all, though who knows what it is. It crashes in and out of the beat, sometimes sounding like a musician playing a different song, only for the beat to inexorably return. And *Yeti* is Amon Düül II's greatest improvisation LP of all. The three very long tracks are organic and sensational, the side long title-track is an epic piece of turbulent out-there *Kosmische Musik*. But my favourite piece is easily "Sandoz in the Rain", on which both Amon Düül II and members of Amon Düül I were re-united. This beautiful song is very reminiscent of the sound of Amon Düül I's then current *Paradieswarts Düül* LP. It may be because of the eerie-beautiful rock'n'roll fake English that Rainer Bauer sings.

Communal Upheaval & Fragmentation as the Hits Keep Coming...

But the Amon Düül II community was changing constantly. And the group suffered considerable psychic damage from all the upheaval. Shrat left to form his own bongo-based group Sameti. Their British bass player, Dave Anderson, left to join Hawkwind, Falk-Ulrich Rogner left but continued to guest on organ and design their record-sleeves. And Renate Knaup left for the first of many times. Unfortunately, this all conspired to

give the next LP a very stop-start feel to it. *Dance of the Lemmings* (Tanz der Lemminge) was extremely disappointing, and even making it a double-album did not hide the fact. The epic *freakout "Marilyn Monroe Memorial Church" was the* sole highlight, but even this drum-led frenzy-piece was inorganic and stilted compared to their other improvisations. But the Falk-U Rogner sleeve was another mystifying classic, and the impenetrability of *Dance of the Lemmings* meant that it took quite a while to suss that, by Amon Düül's standards, this record was a pile of pedestrian shit.*

But such was life in the commune. And finally the tense people packed up and left so that Amon Düül II could get good again. The fog visibly lifted around the group, and so sonic improvements were immediately forthcoming. Back came dear Renate to sing some of her best ever Amon Düül. And out of nowhere came the most beautiful Teutonic folkrock album, *Carnival In Babylon*. No wonder Amon Düül II announced their rebirth on the record label, where they wrote:

"THANKS TO ALL THE PARANOID PEOPLE WHO MEANWHILE MOVED OUT."

Carnival In Babylon was a mystical masterpiece which existed entirely on its own. In some ways, Amon Düül II were getting closer to an orthodox rock sound, but their bizarre attitude to mixing records put a strange emptiness into the fullest of music. Lothar Meid's bass is pumped full up, xylophones beat out melodies, whilst the drums,

though clattery and powerful, are by the nature of the mix reduced to a papery pitter-patter. And all clothed in that Falk-U Rogner sleeve; another of the type that would in future make *Amon Düül II legendary merely for their LP covers. And* with songs such as "All the Years Round", "Tables are Turned", "C.I.D. in Uruk" and "Shimmering Sand", they delivered an unearthly folk album to the world. Britain was listening to

** I've seen this album referred to as TANZ DER LEMMINGE in magazines over the past few years, as though the British name is not the original. This may work as a kind of Hindsight Purity, but the album was a big underground hit in Britain, in 1971, as DANCE OF THE LEMMINGS and not in its German-titled form. As Krautrock is a subjective British phenomenon, then DANCE OF THE LEMMINGS should remain the name.*

Düül II a great deal now. *Carnival In Babylon* was much easier listening than the previous albums, and John Peel played "All the Years Round" constantly. By the middle of 1972, the album was a standard feature of many a Head's bedroom, and Amon Düül II at last toured Britain. Liberty/UA celebrated the tour with the low-price re-release of *Phallus Dei* on their 99p Sunset label. Of course, certain commune members did not get into music to tour, so they were temporarily replaced, but even the nucleus of John Weinzierl, Chris Karrer, Peter Leopold, Renate Knaup and Falk-Ulrich Rogner would still fall to pieces from time to time. Perhaps it was the tour, or the sudden outburst of concentrated activity. Whatever, Amon Düül II hit a patch of structured songwriting that was to be a mixed blessing. The loose semi-structures of *Carnival In Babylon* were fine after the No-structure-at-all of much of their previous albums. But unfortunately, hereafter Amon Düül II really got into 'proper' songwriting.

The negative aspect of the new songier Amon Düül II was not immediately apparent. Indeed, only seven months after their previous LP, *Wolf City* was a revelation. It was a huge album recorded by a transitional group, but somehow in a state of very inspiring flux. Only John Weinzierl, Lothar Meid and Danny Fichelscher played on every track, but the wealth of sound was dramatic and different in every way. It was progressive rock like Van Der Graaf Generator is progressive – huge and structured but in an unglamorous way, and ultimately pagan *and* punk in its execution. Their sense of time was urgent and vital, their alchemical time changes beyond the mere intellectualism of shit like Genesis or Yes. And from the opening bars of "Surrounded By The Stars", *Wolf City* emitted a grand majesty that they had hinted at since the first track of their *Phallus Dei* debut, exhibiting a curious Detroit intensity towards playing structured progressive rock.

And so 1972/73 became the most successful but also most pivotal of times for Amon Düül II. The huge influx of guest musicians, and the disruptions within the commune, continued to create gruelling recording sessions that increasingly fragmented the band. Even as *Wolf City* was being recorded, a simultaneous sister project called *Utopia* was being formulated

within the same sessions, by bassist Lothar Meid, along with Amon Düül producer Olaf Kubler, and guest organist Embryo's Jimmy Jackson. Using these much straighter musicians who aspired to be as 'good' as the British or American was later to be a particularly negative influence on the group's songwriting and direction. The resulting LP *Utopia* was a wonderful mystery but confusing to British audiences, who recognised the Falk-U. Rogner sleeve, noted the similar line-up of musicians, and even a re-recording of *Wolf City*'s "Deutsch Nepal". And confusion clearly reigned over the Amon Düül II camp. *Utopia* was only partially Krautrock, but aspired to be international, veering into true Traffic/Stones grooves at times.

With enormous amounts of songs to chose from, the group was beginning to lose its way. Amon Düül II chose to re-group. In late 1972, their 'classic' line-up went out on tour and hoped to gain some objective overview of their situation. They played only old songs from their first three LPs, which British audiences knew best in any case, and the tour was a roaring success. But United Artists released an average cheapo £1.99 concert LP called "Live in London" (really recorded at the Croydon Greyhound), whose improvisations and multiple titled space-rock pieces were quite at odds with current Düül songwriting. For the young fan it was a confusing time, and I can well remember having no idea what to spend my minuscule resources on in the Amon Düül II department. Too many mid-price records dissipates the fan's pride in his favourite artists, and the sheer volume of LPs to chose from was mindblowing. Between July 1972 and August '73, there were five albums to chose from! *Wolf City*, the re-issued *Phallus Dei*, *Utopia*, *Live in London*... And then, just one month later came their glam-pop album *Viva La Trance*! It was all too much.

The inevitable had happened. Amon Düül II had burned the weirdness out of themselves with too many guest musicians diluting the stew. Whilst they played the most mind-blowing head music, Amon Düül's pop was often formulaic and trite in a nasty 'Euro' way. The following albums were quite enjoyable but patchy, and even included some of their best overt Krautrock references. "Mr. Kraut's Jinx" and "La Krautoma" both appeared on the sprawling 1975 double-album *Made In*

Germany. It was a long time since the first 'kraut' reference on Amon Düül I's 1969 "Mama Düül and her Sauerkrautband Speak out!" But still the group was at it – their music changed but the stance remained.

I never saw Amon Düül II. By the time they toured, I was going out with Jane Smith, a Krautrock fan who was jealous as hell of Renate Knaup, even though her entire image was ripped off Renate's look from the inside gatefold of *Carnival In Babylon*. But I bought that average *Live In London* LP and still have it just for the sleeve. It is Amon Düül's finest Krautrock moment... A gigantic German-helmeted Stormtrooper insect claws the London Post-Office tower from its foundations as flying-saucers lay the city to waste overhead – the greatest funniest Krautrock image of all.

CHAPTER 8

Timothy Leary & Ash Ra Tempel

Kosmische Musik Meets Sci-fi

N.B. When I started writing this KRAUTROCKSAMPLER in September 1994 (CE), I had no idea that the book would end like a soap opera. I knew that the Cosmic Couriers' scene was the only one to retain its true Kosmische side beyond 1974, but I knew nothing of the inspired Vision behind it. And as I dug deeper, a Beautiful & Dutiful Enlightenment was unearthed glowing red hot in Berlin and Cologne. And one that had begun in the white mountains of Switzerland. It's a short thrilling story with a tragic ending for some of the main participants. And the music created from this scene soared like Nothing Else...

Timothy Leary Escapes

By 1972, Dr. Timothy Leary was on the run from pretty much every authority. Now effectively banned from the West, Leary had been called "the most dangerous man in the world" by President Richard Nixon for his advocation of enlightenment through LSD. And Dr. Leary had served a small part of a 10 year jail sentence for his official 'crimes' – possession of half an ounce of marijuana and some roaches found in his car. But everybody knew that this was just a smokescreen, a diversion by the authorities who had been out to get the good doctor since he had begun to shout his mouth off about acid, with his statements

such as "Tune In, Turn On, Drop-out" and "Deal for Real". But Leary, an accepted hero of most of the '60s Underground, had convinced the authorities that he would be a 'soft' prisoner and was soon sprung from his Minimum Security jail at San Luis Obisbo by The Weathermen, one of the most extreme of the militant Yippie political action groups of the '60s. The Weathermen delivered Dr. Leary and his wife, Rosemary, into the guardianship of Eldridge Cleaver's Black Panther Party, who promptly kidnapped them and took them to their new embassy in the north African city of Algiers. This embassy, The FLN Headquarters, had been set up soon after Algeria had gained independence from the French – now all Underground parties who had helped the new government in its revolutionary days were welcomed as brothers. Outlawed groups and governments-in-exile flocked to Algiers to begin again. But here in the echoing opulent domed building of the FLN Headquarters, with its blue and white mosaics, its pillars and balustrade, the mood changed from minute to minute. Eldridge Cleaver told Leary that he must give the Black Panthers $10,000 of the $20,000 advance due to arrive for his forthcoming book *Escapades*.

Soon, the British psychedelic guru and poet Brian Barritt arrived in Algiers to see Timothy Leary, hoping to get a foreword written by Leary for his new book *Whisper*. Barritt was also just out of jail, having served four years for smuggling seven and a quarter pounds of hash into Britain. He and his companion, Liz Elliott, got along fabulously with the Learys, who suggested that they all throw a communal I Ching. The hexagram that Brian Barritt and Liz Elliott threw was The Wanderer, the same hexagram that Rosemary and Tim Leary had thrown in San Luis Obisbo prison just before Tim had escaped. Spurred on by the synchronicity, the two couples read this as a confirmation of their Trip together.

With his $10,000 dollar share of the book advance promised but not yet forthcoming, Eldridge Cleaver relaxed his paranoid grip on Timothy Leary for the time being. And it was during this time that both Leary & Barritt discovered that they had been working independently on similar Neurologic Mind-map Systems.

In Algiers, they discovered that the two systems were sim-

ilar enough to be interwoven. They began to talk of "Psy-Phi": of the Psychic and of the Physical. They shared psychedelic visions at the dry river-bed near Bou Saada that unconsciously re-enacted the rituals of Aleister Crowley & Victor Neuburg in 1909. Magic fused and sparked all around as the spectre of Eldridge Cleaver hung over them at all times. Cleaver had had Leary dose him with acid at the FLN Headquarters, but throughout the trip Eldridge had visions of his black activist brother, Bobby Seale, in jail and he emerged from the trip even more opposed to what he saw as a white cop-out. Cleaver had horrendous flashes of intense rage where he saw LSD as a counter-revolutionary drug, sapping the will to *change* the real world by replacing it with a false new one.

It was in this environment that Brian Barritt & Timothy Leary's trip co-agulated into one. Barritt's bywords had become Time and Space. Now Leary renamed his forthcoming book *It's about Time*. As Barritt writes the formula in *The Road of Excess*:

"Time + Space = Tim-ESP-ace."

They were on-one and they knew it. And things were getting spaced and scary. The Black Panthers were laying claim to all Americans entering Algeria. Their trip moved from the politics of International Black Power into an arena of Detroit Hoodlums Replanted. And it was at this time, whilst the Panthers had their fingers in too many pies, that Brian Barritt, Liz Elliott and the Learys fled to Switzerland, the only country which would be too haphazard to kick them out.

Switzerland is comprised of many fiercely independent mini-states called cantons. Only by allying together expressly for the purpose of signing a collective treaty to expel Timothy Leary could Switzerland eject him. By never staying long in one place, the canton-hopping Leary could remain in Switzerland for years, though he had to remain underground at all times as the CIA were still under orders to return him to America. In Switzerland, the fugitives were received almost as family. There is a mage on every hill and many of the mystics, even today, never make the long descent into the cities. A disillusioned ex-MP called Sergius Golowin took the two couples to his mountain retreat. Golowin was a poet, a mystic and

a disenfranchised Gypsy leader. His people had come from Eastern Europe and been scattered in the West, but he often addressed many of them in the Swiss Alps at times of particular importance. As a poet, the works of Sergius Golowin were read by all Swiss children with imagination. Now he was a middle-aged man with three wives, offering long term hospitality to the Leary Mob. He and his friends, an art dealer called Carl Laszlo and Walter Wegmuller the folk artist, directed their guests to a Swiss hideout fuelled by the acid of the Swiss Sandoz company, creators of LSD-25, the very drug that Leary was so in trouble for advocating. Golowin took them to dinner with Albert Hoffman, synthesist of the first acid in 1938, and got them high with H.R. Giger, later the super-realist Visionary creator of the Alien. And it was in this environment that Timothy Leary and Brian Barritt's 7-tier system was developing and flourishing, when Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser came calling...

The Kaiser & Ash Ra Tempel land in Switzerland...

As the most successful cult Record Company Producer in the German Underground, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser came to Switzerland looking for more than another hip record. He had the major German corporations at his beck and call. He had reshaped the way the industry was run. And now he wanted answers – Spiritual Enlightenment. And most of all a Means of Navigation.

Like Timothy Leary, Kaiser was directing a huge scene of artists and musicians, guiding his Kosmische groups with the same cosmic-aplomb as George Gurdjieff had controlled his dervish-dances at the beginning of the 20th century, but also driving many of the participants crazy, just as Gurdjieff had been prone to do. With his wife and co-producer Gille Letmann, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser was constructing an outlandish and brutally simple Device for Enlightenment: find the Freaks, love them, inspire them with confidence, record them and stand well back. In 1969, Eric Clapton had said that his life-wish was to find the true note that would so touch people to the core that they would instantly Understand. By late 1972, the musicians

around Kaiser were creating pieces that lifted the soul out of the body – a healing feeling white light sound that made Clapton's remarks seem as trite as the licks he was playing. Not so the group that the Kaiser had brought with him to Switzerland. Ash Ra Tempel were *thee* most exciting, inspired and fucking crazy Kosmische rock'n'roll group in all Germany. Their two LPs thus far released had taken the metal of Detroit to heights not even considered by the MC5 or the Stooges or even Funkadelic. Sure those groups had got close on stage. But Ash Ra Tempel got it on record. While the collective Detroit obsession with the Outer-spacings of Sun Ra and the free-jazz innervisions of John Coltrane had been tamed beyond recognition by the American record industry, Ash Ra Tempel suffered no such disappointment. And those searching for the fulfilment of the Detroit promise need have looked no further than Ash Ra Tempel in 1971. There's a part of Iggy Pop's autobiographical *I Need More* in which he writes (p17) about the early Stooges sound thus:

"...I'd play this sort of wild Hawaiian guitar with a pick-up that I invented, which meant that I made two sounds at one time, like an airplane...using 55-gallon oil cans which I got from a junkyard and rigged up as bass drums, I homemade a drumset. For drum sticks I designed these semi-plastic molded hammers. Scotty beat the shit out of these cans; it sounded like an earthquake – thunderous... It was entirely instrumental at this time, like jazz gone wild. It was very North African, a very tribal sound: very electronic. We would play like that for about 10 minutes. Then everybody would have to get really stoned again... But what we had put into 10 minutes was so total and so very savage – the earth shook, then cracked, and SWALLOWED ALL MISERY WHOLE." *(my capitals)*

Music that Swallowed All Misery Whole...

In the first two Ash Ra Tempel LPs, *Ash Ra Tempel* and *Schwingungen*, they had captured on record All that Iggy Pop had promised Could-be but, because of Record Industry Hang-ups, had been unable to deliver. And this music which could Swallow All Misery Whole reached into the core of each musician who played in Ash Ra Tempel and pulled out, still wrig-

ging, the cosmic conger eel of white light which so few artists ever capture in the Moment of Recording.*

For years I had drooled over that description in *I Need More*. I'd shown many friends that passage – I had bored them with it. And all the time Ash Ra Tempel had already done it in 1971... But it was not all without a price. The first LP was by a Kosmische power-rock trio of gargantuan size. The 20 minute opening track "Amboss (Anvil)" was all of Iggy Pop's above description and more. Sure it was a fucking cosmic freakout. But it was played by Renaissance Man *and* Cosmic Man at the same time.

Fuck Jim Morrison's ridiculous "Renaissance Man of the Mind" description.

That was just an excuse to be a fat slob.

That was just an existentialist knee-jerk.

No. No. No.

These freaks were fit. Superhuman. Superman.

They were here to go. But all in good time. And they had staying power over 20 minute tracks. On "Amboss", Klaus Schultze plays drums like a hundred drummers. He's not twice as powerful, he's a hundred times as powerful. Hartmut Enke, the spiritual leader of the band, hits his Gibson bass the way only a giant could: the huge extra-longnecked she-bass was courted, cajoled and ultimately goosed into action by this huge handsome freak they all called *The Hawk*. And Manuel Göttsching plays blues like Clapton, but right alongside preemptive Keith Levene white noise and egoless as Lou Reed's *Live 1969* rhythm guitar freakouts. The interplay is so intuitive that frequently it's impossible to hear the instruments – you just hear the Music. And the LP was housed in yet another of Ohr Records' extravagant packages – a centrally opening gatefold with an Ancient Egyptian exterior, a freaky occult gematriac interior, and a tragically beautiful Head-poem that began: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness staring hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the Negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix."

** The first four Ash Ra Tempel LPs are so brimming over with high magic that to hear them now on their recent CD re-issues is almost too much.*

By the second LP *Schwingungen* (Vibrations), Klaus Schultze had temporarily left the band to record his mighty epic solo album *Irrlicht*, an album which begins like a night-rally in some unknown stadium then continues into the very heart of cosmic-dom, Klaus accompanied only by his synthesizers and an orchestra which he said later "possibly thought I was mad." In the meantime, *Schwingungen* saw Ash Ra Tempel going through its cosmic Stooges' *Funhouse* stage, complete with Mathias Wehler on wailing alto sax, in the Steve McKay tradition. The line-up was augmented by their road-manager Uli Pop on congas and Wolfgang Muller on drums, and came on like an organic freerock blitz. Side 1 featured ultrafreaky singer John L., recently sacked from Agitation Free for being just too much of everything. And on the awesomely tragic 12-minute "Flowers Must Die", John L. pre-empted John Lydon's PiL wail with a Seering death's head drama that Never has failed to bring tears to my eyes. The words, like so many translated rock 'n'roll lyrics, have a vivid and dignified poetic truth in their delivery that transcends the hippyspeak in which they are written:

"I see when I come back,
From my lysergic-day-dream
Standing in the middle
Of the glass and neon forest
With an unhappy name: City
Flowers must die...
I want to be a stone, Not living, not Thinking,
A thing without warm blood in the city."

And so it was that Ash Ra Tempel arrived with Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser in Switzerland for the great meeting of the minds. There was an enormous sense of expectation in the Kaiser camp. Gille Letmann was with them to co-produce the project and to give the Kaiser a little space for his Navigation. Dieter Dierks was there, recording engineer of so many of the Ohr LPs, now on hand with his synthesizers, echo-units, reverbs and, above all, his attitude. Steve Schroyder was there to play organ, recently sacked from Tangerine Dream for what Edgar Froese had called "freaking totally out." And if there was any worry of a

it was not to be. For when the Leary Mob met the Gang, the sparks flew ever Up-wards…

Bern 'Festival' – The Kaiser meets Doctor 7Up

was really good at leading the whole thing…Everyone who to Switzerland went with a different impression. To some thought he was a guru, he was a guru. To someone who of him as a friend, he was a friend. If you wanted him to be he could be a star. It was no problem for Tim!"

Manuel Göttsching

is a stone classic in every way. Yes, it is unlikely to find Leary singing lead vocal in a cosmic group, but even that he chose to sing a wild yelping freaked out blues! the Kaiser gang had come for Enlightenment, Leary and Barritt were all ready to play the rock stars, coming on Jim Morrison and Mick Jagger. As both were already in 40s, they had put together the *7Up* lyrics around a traditional rock'n'roll construction which was totally at odds with Kosmische sound of Ash Ra Tempel. But Manuel Göttsching and Hartmut Enke had begun their careers in The Steeplechase Blues Band back in the mid-'60s, and they quickly felt their way through what Barritt & Leary were aiming for. They reconciled it all as a kind of West Coast chordless psychedelia, where blues riffs sparkle out of nowhere and the sheer weight of synthesizers renders everything with an unreal Pere Ubu/early Roxy Music quality. The *7Up* image was a hard Warholian statement by Leary, who spiked a large bottle of 7Up, especially for the recording, and then watched as the world outside disappeared.

7Up was recorded live at Sinus Studios in Munstergasse, Bern, a subterranean horror-chapel that could only be exited from double cellar doors in the middle of a mainstreet, giving the appearance of emerging from a crypt. A proper Bern Festival had been suggested, but this was never a real possibility given Leary's dubious circumstances. Instead, the Leary Mob, with all its assortments of freaks and hangers-on, and the Kaiser Gang, less crazy but out of its natural environment, struggled to

achieve what had seemed so easy on the numerous international phonecalls. It was a huge group, 12 people actually contributing to the sound on tape. Four other singers – Micky Duwe, Portia Nkomo, Bettina Hols and Liz Elliott – joined Timothy Leary & Brian Barritt on vocals. But by the end of the recording session, no-one knew if there were even enough songs recorded to complete an album and Dieter Dierks fled to Berlin with the master tapes, which he desperately edited and re-mixed before anyone could get near them.

Using Barritt's cosmic equation (Time + Space = Tim-ESPace), the album was divided in two parts – Side 1 was "Space", Side 2 "Time". They were both extremely different, but each was a trip. "Time" is a classic *Kosmische Musik* astral plane freakout, utilising the chords of *Schwingungen*'s title-track because Manuel Göttsching and Hartmut Enke were convinced that they had discovered The Sound of Heaven in that chord-sequence. The music of Side 1's "Space" is unlike anything ever recorded before or after. But that's probably because the very idea is just too ridiculous, the whole side being filled with wild muscular cosmic blues boogies, with fizzing Dieter Dierks synthesizers rattling over the heads of the musicians, impregnating ever pore of the music and liberating every worn-out riff, invigorating every lousy blues holler, and turning the whole thing into a cosmic Cresta Run of such ferocity that when the side is over, the listener has laughed his head off, felt affronted, shouted "Amen" a few times, and been simultaneously sent to La-la-land.

Sci-Fi Rising

But though the album's heart belonged to Timothy Leary and Brian Barritt, *7Up* was a Gotterdammerung for Dieter Dierks, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser and Ash Ra Tempel's guitarist, Manuel Göttsching. The LP became a blueprint for the way to the future. After the maelstrom of the Bern Festival, everyone had adjourned to a farm owned by Leary's friend Mindy, where they tripped for days and got involved in long drawn-out sex orgies. It was during this time that Timothy Leary explained to Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser his theory of Psy-Phi. This image remained

with the Kaiser, who saw it more clearly with the eyes of a cosmic salesman. Psy-phi. Sci-Fi. The psychic and the physical could easily mix to become Science-Fiction. It was almost too good to be true. By realising that the double-play on words would be lost in translation, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser played the pop-artist and went for the jugular. From now on Kaiser's byword would be 'Sci-Fi…'

CHAPTER 9

Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser & The Cosmic Couriers

Sci-Fi Musik to the End of a Dream

"It happened during the acid-trip at Mindy's farm. Rolf and Gille were standing at the junction of two footpaths in the middle of a field... I happened to be looking from a nearby hilltop just as Tim passed by the crossed paths, and tarried to say a word or two. At that moment I saw Gille's face shining with adoration for Tim, and saw Rolf see it, too. I believe that Rolf's actions after that experience were an attempt to try and get Gille to see him as she had seen Tim that day. For that I forgive him, and make him a hero; he did it all FOR A LOOK FROM THE GODDESS (my capitals)."

Brian Barritt, *The Road of Excess*

Rolf's Dream

One night, during the chaotic aftermath of the *7Up* session, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser had a Dream, a Vision. As he lay tripping in the loft at Mindy's farm, a huge avalanche of sweat brimmed over his eyelids and threatened to deluge him. But there was no sweat at all. And above his head, a dazzling beam of light cascaded over him and irradiated his soul – fried it up so sweetly that he recognised his Mission at once. To enlighten the Heads once and for-all with a music so free, so profound, so full of light that every great mind would be drawn to rock'n'roll and every great rock'n'roller would become enlightened. It was a

perfect mass barter system that could shore up the world with a combination of rock heroes and enlightenment.

For Rolf, today was a new beginning. He had come to record the masters, but he now remained in Switzerland, himself a master. And his quickly rising spirit looked to his wife, Gille, and truly he did see the Goddess. For Rolf, Gille Letmann had become his Sternmadchen, or Starmaiden. And in his new state the world had never looked so odd nor so beautiful as the way he viewed it now. He could see forever. The thrill of creativity shot through him like 10,000 watts of clear white light. To be an artist. To create in this constant bath of light. This was everything. He thought of Tim, on the run from everyone. Brian, four years in prison yet still uncorrupted, Sergius' poetic idealism in his mountain home, the fabulous Moebius strip that Walti had painted for the *7Up* album. Man, he should stay and record the whole scene... Rolf lay and watched the idea take shape in his room. It was just as Brian had said earlier: they were *all* Cosmic Couriers. Rolf shivered with a delight that all-enveloped him and pushed him clear through the roof. He saw a new record label called Kosmische Musik. It would be the record-label of the Cosmic Couriers – purveyors of all-things pioneeringly spiritual: an Enlightening rock'n'roll Trance-trip.

As he lay Delighted in his room, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's mind linked great lights above all of his artist and musician friends. He alone knew what was the Best way. He alone would Do It. And Do It Right. Ha. Bern had been far too chaotic. He had given Tim Leary too much leeway and it had interfered with the whole trip. He must learn from this for next time. Shit, Brian Burritt had come to Berlin on three different occasions to try to muscle in on the mix. Rolf had even had to spike Brian's coffee to keep him away from his beloved *7Up*. But not any more. From now on, the Kaiser would always be in Complete Control. And as the dawn sun peered over the window sill, It shone upon a changed man...

Lord Krishna Von Goloka & Wegmuller's *Tarot*

The new R-U Kaiser was soon hard at work recording the work of Sergius Golowin & Walter Wegmuller. In his new Kosmis-

che Empire, Kaiser saw Leary's *7Up* as the first release of this brand new Visionary Record-label. But the Kaiser would record every mage on every hill if necessary. Golowin's *Lord Krishna Von Goloka* and Wegmuller's epic *Tarot* would be the second and third releases respectively. Everyone in Germany was intrigued by this weird temporary Swiss scene. But Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser had decided that there should be no more gallivanting around the Swiss hills trying to record elusive mystics. From Timothy Leary, he had learned that Control of the situation was everything. And from now on, all Kosmische Musik would be made in the safe hands of Dieter Dierks, at his studio in Stommeln near Cologne in W. Germany.

At first, Ash Ra Tempel began the project with Walter Wegmuller in Switzerland, whilst Sergius Golowin flew to Dieter Dierks' studio where he was backed by Kaiser's cosmic Ohr supergroup: Wallenstein's Jurgen Dollase & Jerry Berkers, the cosmic folk duo Witthuser & Westrupp, and Klaus Schultze, who was involved (as usual) in all of the projects. The sessions for *Lord Krishna Von Goloka* were incredible. And soon a middle-aged ex-MP had made one of the finest Cosmic rock LPs of all time, and with only three tracks on the whole album. Klaus Schultze had been persuaded back on to the drums at last, and for the whole of Side 2, the mystical 19-minute dance called "Die Hoch-zeit (High-time)", there is a middle-European Ur-pagan rumble that sounds as though Klaus is missing his beloved synthesizers, so he has attempted to copy their sound using his drums.

But back in Switzerland, the Wegmuller/Ash Ra Tempel *Tarot* project had got extremely large and unwieldy. It was now a double album in length after Walter Wegmuller had suddenly decided, in a fever of activity, to write lyrics concerning all 22 major arcana of the Tarot. The Kaiser was delighted by the idea and suggested that *Tarot* should come in a lavish package in the spirit of the early Ohr releases. But Wegmuller was way ahead of him, years ahead in fact. For the previous five years, since 1968, Walter Wegmuller had been painstakingly painting a brand new set of 78 Tarot cards. He was a gypsy like Golowin, a street trader, a diviner, and an artist who lived by his wits and his daily output.

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oughness, he decided, must become the Cosmic Couriers' norm. He was used to his idealistic drug-fuelled rock'n'rollers, but here was something brand new. Knowledge and truth. Certainly, there was deep Intuitive wisdom, but here it was all backed up by scholarly learning and years of thorough practice in the Occult. Golowin and Wegmuller had spent much of the '60s on an Odyssey around Switzerland, Southern Germany and the South of France, collecting the myths, legends and traditions of other gypsies they had met. Their adventures and discoveries had all been published in one of Golowin's books *Die Welt des Tarot* (The World of Tarot).

The Golowin sessions finished, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser had Walter Wegmuller and Ash Ra Tempel flown to Germany to begin new work for the *Tarot* project at Dieter Dierks' studio. The new double-LP format would require far more light and shade if it was to work over two full albums, so Kaiser augmented the three-piece Ash Ra Tempel with many of the musicians from the recent success of the Golowin sessions. Hartmut Enke, Klaus Schultze and Manuel Göttsching were now joined by Walter Westrupp, playing his usual 10 or so different instruments, plus Wallenstein's Jurgen Dollase and Jerry Berkers. But this time, they brought their drummer Harald Grosskopf in order to give Klaus Schultze more time for his beloved synthesizers.

Tarot was an enormous artistic success. Introduced by Dieter Dierks in a high vaudeville style, the music ranged so far and so wide that it is impossible to grasp a description in words. From the Lou Reed street riffing of "Der Herrscher (The Emperor)" to the Kosmische frenzy that covers all of Side 4, *Tarot* is the funkiest record ever played by white boys. And it's a funk that transcends the way early Funkadelic does – great slashing wa-riffs, multiple percussion, howling guitars and a density of sound that is a jungle of rhythms. And all of this in its beautiful box, with detailed information and the full colour set of all 78 brand new Tarot cards as painted by Walter Wegmuller.

The Coming of Kosmische Musik

In his vision, The Kaiser had the Kosmische Musik trip all sorted out. This new label was only for the mages, and that was the

way it must be. But the exciting and freaky Ash Ra Tempel were disappointed. During the *Tarot* sessions, they had recorded a brand new album called *Join Inn* and wanted to release it on the Cosmic Couriers label. The music was like old times with Klaus Schultze playing wild drums on the 20 minute freeform freakout they called "Freak'n'Roll". Its wild undulating riffing was unlike any previous Ash Ra Tempel piece – dry and audible yet barely more understandable for all that. On Side 2, "Jenseits (The Other World)" was a typically low-key meditation, but this time with Manuel Göttsching's girlfriend, Rosi Muller, relating the story of *7Up* and just how affected they had all been by the experience. But Kaiser wanted the *rock* records to remain as Ohr releases – he had re-shaped both Pilz Records and Ohr Records so much by now that they were in danger of becoming merely vehicles of what outsiders saw as his spectacular whimsy. And so *Join Inn* got its Ohr release.

But Ash Ra Tempel was not in any way an average group. They had been buffeted all over the place by the enormity of this mythical saga. They had followed Kaiser on his dream mission and if he was back home and all in one piece now, they certainly were Not. One night in concert, as the hurricane of sound unfolded before them on stage, Klaus Schultze and Manuel Göttsching were slowly aware that Hartmut Enke was in a truly *far-out state. He had stopped playing his mighty Gibson bass* and was just standing on the stage with his arms outstretched in an attitude of sheer bliss. When they came off stage that night Enke told them that the music was so wonderful he felt no more need to play. Many years later, Manuel Göttsching would explain this by saying simply: "He got very involved in the Timothy Leary philosophy."

Now Ash Ra Tempel fell to pieces completely. When Klaus Schultze and Hartmut Enke decided upon solo careers, Manuel Göttsching found himself adrift with no rudder. He immersed himself in the then current LSD-fuelled weekend freakouts at the Dierks Studio – hours and hours of music was recorded under the direction of R-U Kaiser and Gille Letmann, until Göttsching finally decided that the only way to maintain his sanity was to quit this lifestyle and to continue as Ash Ra Tempel with Rosi Muller. With no new finished projects, Rolf

Ulrich Kaiser bided his time and filled the void of Cosmic Courier releases with an extremely Un-cosmic live LP from Witthuser & Westrupp.

Klaus Schultze's *Cyborg* – An Oasis amidst Chaos

As the Cosmic Couriers trip accelerated, R-U Kaiser's vision very soon appeared to become out of control. Already disliked by many of his musicians for being too manipulative, and even described by an old friend as being like the 1930s screen baddie Peter Lorre, Kaiser was now so sure of the Righteousness of his trip that he began to act as though he were invincible. With an air of awesome presumptuousness, he invited Brian Barritt to move to Berlin as a paid Psy-Phi Advisor for the Cosmic Couriers label.*

In Berlin, Barritt was told to swing Tangerine Dream away from Edgar Froese's obsession with Surrealism and angle their sound towards Psy-Phi. Kaiser also told Barritt that Wallenstein were not cosmic enough, and they too would have to change. Ash Ra Tempel was the third band on the Kaiser/Barritt list, but with Hartmut Enke already too out of his mind with Leary-isms and LSD, this proved impossible.

And so it was left to Klaus Schultze to hold up the Kosmische flag. Like Florian Fricke, Schultze could not be manipulated by Kaiser and was all the more respected for this. Though his first solo LP *Irrlicht* had been a disastrous commercial flop, Klaus Schultze retained in his trip such personal Clarity & Vision that R-U Kaiser suggested that Schultze's first solo release for the Cosmic Couriers label should be a double-LP.

So *Cyborg* was born – a pulsing undulating landscape of drum-machines and synthesizers. Four epic barely changing pieces covered the sides of this huge 90 minute album,

** There is a chapter entitled "The Kaiser" in Brian Barritt's forthcoming LSD journal THE ROAD OF EXCESS. It describes in great personal detail the psychological aspects of the Cosmic Courier trip as applied to rock'n'roll by Leary through Barritt. In Berlin, with T. Dream and Wallenstein, Brian Barritt appears to have taken on a P.D. Ouspensky type of role, interpreting Leary better than Leary himself and working on the field therefore gaining a better overview of the system and how it worked on the scene.*

"Synphara", "Conphara", "Chromengel" and "Neuronengesang". Suddenly, a whole new kind of music had appeared as if from nowhere. It was not atonal, neither was it cacophonous. And this unutterably simple space music was topped by a neat little cosmic conceit from Kaiser: on the front sleeve of *Cyborg* stood the pretty hippy Klaus Schultze, his face looking up into the middle distance, and framed in a dazzling and cascading white light mirroring perfectly Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's Vision back at Mindy's farm.

Of Desperation, The Cosmic Jokers are Born...

The dissolution of Ash Ra Tempel proved too much for poor Hartmut Enke. Their former leader never got any other projects together and nothing would be heard of him afterwards. Meanwhile, the weekend acid raves at Stommeln continued in top gear, and the Dierks studio was an incessant orgified Learyan X-perience. With Brian Barritt and his partner Liz Elliott on full patrol, Kaiser and Gille Letmann put all their bands through their cosmic paces. Wallenstein were by now far better than their recent and ultra stodgy *Mother Universe* LP on Philips Records. But compared to the other Cosmic Couriers releases, they would always remain an extremely stuffy proposition however cosmic they got. Brian Barritt attempted to add psy-phi to Tangerine Dream, who were naturally extending their boundaries from the first three Ohr LPs. But really, no-one could add More Psy-Phi to T. Dream.

Control. It was close to the end of 1972 and R-U Kaiser had wrestled control of almost everything. But it was still not enough. After those first three Cosmic Couriers releases, the Trip had been diminished, compromised. His Tangerine Dream plans had soon lain in ruins when Edgar Froese refused to let The Kaiser release their forthcoming LP *Atem* on the Kosmische Musik label. Not surprisingly, T. Dream begrudged having Kaiser's ideas thrust upon them, and reacted furiously, insisting that they remain on the Ohr label. To add further insult, Kaiser had licensed *Atem* to the British Polydor label without even asking the group.

But R-U Kaiser kept dreaming. If only he could construct a

group from the players already involved – those contributors to the first three classic LPs. Kaiser never doubted their musicianship, their allegiance to the Trip Itself, or their integrity.

BUT, as the man with the Vision, was he really getting the full mileage out of the Cosmic Couriers that it deserved?

No. He thought not…

And then, as Johnny Rotten would later write of the Sex Pistols:

"Out of all shambolic glory, something lent itself to chaos."

In a Divine instant, born more out of necessity and desperation than true vision, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser decided to sell his musicians out and formed The Cosmic Jokers…

The first Cosmic Jokers album is sheer genius But…

It was a puppet Krautrock supergroup – the first and only one of its kind. This was clear from the day Manuel Göttsching walked into a Berlin record store and heard a cosmic jam-session that he had played on only one month before blasting over the speakers.

"What record is this?" he asked. Oh, it's *The Cosmic Jokers* LP. Manuel looked at his own photograph on the back sleeve, a well-known standard publicity pic., and got very pissed off. He'd been paid only a session fee for the recording, yet here was Rolf Kaiser getting free mileage out of his credibility and integrity as Ash Ra Tempel's guitarist. There were also pictures of Jurgen & Harald from Wallenstein, and a shot of Dieter Dierks, who probably wouldn't mind. But when Manuel saw the photo of Klaus Schultze on the sleeve, he knew there was going to be trouble. Klaus already barely tolerated Rolf Kaiser – now he was gonna get him for sure. Manuel wondered about how to approach the situation. After all, the LP *was* fucking fantastic – two side long phasetone freakouts that sounded like augmented Ash Ra Tempel. It had all their contemporaries utterly beaten. Like a whole album of Funkadelic's cosmic freeform "Maggot Brain" – it went all the way and just didn't back off. No vocals apart from one Brian Barritt spoken cosmic interjection, "Galaxy Of Fallon to Telepath 1". Manuel Göttsching was almost broke and felt very used. But he decid-

ed to wait and see how it all unfolded before taking further action…

The Cosmic Jokers was the ultimate cosmic trip with Rolf Kaiser as the Dhiagilev, the choreographer, the Ur-McLaren of the band. Now in complete control, he would edit the hours of Kosmische freakouts into semi-coherent tracts of sound, add vocals, or use vocals already found on the tracks. He would release these albums in a coherent package, a ridiculous and crass marriage of the Spiritual and the supermarket. And he would no longer have to listen to these musicians' complaints. It was his Trip. Well, his and the Starmaiden's. They could, with Dieter Dierks' consent, put loads of stuff together – the fall-out from the Leary scene had been one long beautiful orgy of Creation & Magic. If it was created on a higher plane, then they were just the people to rationalise it into palatable listenable Sonic Wisdom…

Jamming Good with Rolf & Gille

But with the success of *The Cosmic Jokers*, Rolf & Gille soon realised that they had a fabulous trip within their grasp, and they began to release more of the acid-jams that had come out of Dierks' studio. A second Cosmic Jokers' LP was released called *Galactic Supermarket*, and it was another funky 2 x 20 minute Kosmische mother-fucking wa-phase classic, and this time full of Jurgen Dollase's great Mellotron swirls. The sleeve of the first LP had been in Peter Geitner's Ad-man Enlightenment style, very much like Todd Rundgren's first Utopia sleeve. For *Galactic Supermarket*, Geitner outdid himself with a pyramid and mandala affair that could have been selling washing powder. It was a classic artform that mirrored the whole Kaiser & Letmann Cheap New-age Fix.

Sci-Fi Party * soon followed – a Kosmische Musik sampler with tracks from previous releases combined and re-edited with new pieces like Brian Barritt's spoken word "The Electronic Scene", in which he explained how the Leary Mob's greatest discovery of all during the *7Up* sessions was the synthesizer, and how he was drawn to Berlin by the promise of working in this field. On the front sleeve, Planet Rolf & Star-

Gille beamed out like cosmic game show hosts whilst underneath, their star team of satellites also emitted generic publicity pic. stares in varying stages of grinning intensity: Tim Leary with his headphones, cutesy Klaus in his headphones and (the silver headphones became standard Cosmic Courier uniform after a while), Dieter *Smiling* Dierks, the two Wallenstein geezers, Rosi *I'm with Manuel* Muller, and Manuel *What's 'Kosmische' for totally Skint?* Göttsching.

And the torture never stopped. The Kaiser did a deal with Hobby magazine and out came The Cosmic Jokers' fourth album *Planeten Sit-In* as a quadrophonic demonstration record! This was an album of shape-shifting collage, achieving a less organic but similar effect as the first two LPs. This time they shared the credit with the Starmaiden and still there appeared those psychotically twee smiling photographs on the back of the sleeve. The records were all wildly uplifting and spectacularly trippy, but the musicians were getting hungrier and hungrier and more pissed off every day. Manuel Göttsching had been a Kaiser apologist at first, but when the *Gilles Zeitschiff* LP appeared, it finally broke the musician's enormous dam of patience. Here was the final indignity – the Cosmic Jokers were now backing band on the Starmaiden's audio-guide! *Gilles Zeitschiff (Gille's Timeship)* was yet another brilliant LP in a brilliant career now in freefall. The musicians had all looked the other way when Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser had bought a hundred blow-up armchairs to support the army of foreign journalists whom he flew in for the *7Up* release. And they had given up food for the free LSD and shelter of Dieter Dierks' studio. But now they realised that Rolf & Gille were

Note how Rolf & Gille had, by this time, dumped all attempts to translate the Leary club's "Psy-Phi", going for the synonym "Sci-fi" rather than articulately & coherently attempting to provide a catchy German equivalent. Throughout the Krautrock phenomenon, the Germans failed to slangify their own language, preferring to use the already encoded English forms such as "Love is Peace" and "Make Love Not War", and even using expletives such as "Fuck", "Motherfucker", "Cool", etc. But this is not a failure on the part of the German artists, merely a reflection of just how strong the Innate Meaning in rock'n'roll is discovered not in the words, but only in the juxtaposition of those words with the music AND the balance of effects and studio trickery within the track. This is so important in rock'n'roll that words of an almost offensively bland nature can be elevated to the status of a devotional hymn by giving that song to a Joe Meek!

way off the rails and had forgotten about them. Some of the musicians attempted to get their contracts with Kaiser nullified, and there soon appeared articles in *Der Spiegel* and *Der Welt-woch* claiming that members of the Timothy Leary Mob were in cahoots with R-U Kaiser to pervert the lives of young musicians with LSD and orgiastic goings-on.

Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's scene came crashing immediately down. His Kosmische Musik label had been a huge artistic success so far, and groups such as Mythos and Popol Vuh had made spectacular albums for the label. But the axis which centred around the Cosmic Couriers was no longer firm, in fact it was in ruins. And in *The Road of Excess*, Brian Barritt writes: "... the last thing I heard of Rolf & Gille they were on the run."

With the Leary Mob's involvement, the German courts immediately voided all of Kaiser's contracts and Kosmische Musik came to an end. Though the Cosmic Jokers' soap opera had eclipsed the other LPs in the catalogue, 17 albums had been released on the label and almost all of them were classics of their kind. Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's dream had been correct, despite his lopsided way of pursuing its realisation. And within the Great Scheme of the Krautrock Dream, 20 years later in April 1995 (Common Era) as I write this final chapter of the *KRAUTROCKSAMPLER*, Kaiser should be forgiven and even made a hero for his misguided but Visionary zeal, for he (temporarily) forced music beyond the Canopy of Earth and far far out into the Stars.

Appendix: A Krautrock Top 50

Most of these records are currently available on CD, and all are on the list to be re-issued. Of course, this list is not exhaustive and is based on the records that I personally know and love. Asterisks denote the easiest to get into if you are starting from scratch with Krautrock. And if I missed your favourite one out, well excuse me.

1. **AMON DUUL I – *Paradieswarts Düül*** (Ohr)
   Re-issued on Captain Trip Records adding the Ohr 45 PARAMECHANICAL WORLD/ETERNAL FLOW.
2. **AMON DUUL II – *Phallus Dei*** (Liberty/UA)
   Re-issued on Mantra Records
3. **AMON DUUL II – *Yeti*** (Liberty/UA)*
   Re-issued on Mantra Records
4. **AMON DUUL II – *Carnival In Babylon*** (UA)
   Re-issued on Mantra Records
5. **AMON DUUL II – *Wolf City*** (UA)
   Re-issued on Mantra Records
6. **ASH RA TEMPEL – *Ash Ra Tempel*** (Ohr)*
   Re-issued on Spalax Records
7. **ASH RA TEMPEL – *Schwingungen*** (Ohr)
   Re-issued on Spalax Records
8. **ASH RA TEMPEL & TIMOTHY LEARY – *7Up*** (Kosmische Musik)
   Re-issued on Spalax Records

9. **ASH RA TEMPEL – *Join Inn*** (Ohr)
   Re-issued on Spalax Records

10. **CAN – *Monster Movie*** (UA)*
    Re-issued on Spoon Records

11. **CAN – *Soundtracks*** (UA)
    Re-issued on Spoon Records

12. **CAN – *Tago Mago*** (UA)
    Re-issued on Spoon Records

13. **CAN – *Ege Bamyasi*** (UA)
    Re-issued on Spoon Records

14. **CAN – *Delay*** (Spoon)
    Originally issued and still available on Spoon Records

15. **CLUSTER II** (Brain)
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

16. **CLUSTER – *Zuckerzeit*** (Brain)*
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

17. **CLUSTER – *Sowiesoso*** (Sky)
    Re-issued on Sky Records

18. **TONY CONRAD w/ FAUST – *Outside the Dream Syndicate*** (Caroline)
    Re-issued by Table of the Elements Records

19. **COSMIC JOKERS** (Kosmische Musik)*
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

20. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Galactic Supermarket*** (Kosmische Musik)
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

21. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Planeten Sit-In*** (Kosmische Musik/ Hobby Magazine)
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

22. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Sci-Fi Party*** (Kosmische Musik)
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

23. **COSMIC JOKERS & STERNMADCHEN – *Gilles Zeitschiff*** (Kosmische Musik)
    Re-issued on Spalax Records

24. **FAUST** (Polydor)
    Frustratingly available on a mid-price Japanese Polydor CD, which imports here for around £20(!.) Find originals in any provincial record shop for the price of a new vinyl LP. I bought two in Nottingham for £8 each (August 1994CE) and one in Calne, Wessex for £12 (April 1995CE), so don't fall for inflated prices.



Stockhausen's *Hymnen* – a divine marriage of German experimentalism and the supercharged influences of 1966 West Coast rock'n'roll.



The ultimate display of the Krautrock aesthetic: a German **Velvet Underground** compilation in a fake Roger Dean Yes-style sleeve.



The Fabulous but tragically un-recorded **Psy-Free** – Klaus Schultze's first & super-idealistic free-rock group in 1968.



Tangerine Dream in its most extraordinary incarnation – Edgar Froese, Klaus Schultze & Conrad Schnitzler in 1969.

Tangerine Dream's greatest work. Note the ultra-rare free balloon on *Electronic Meditation* (Richard Gravett Collection) and the 1972 freakout 45 *Ultima Thule*.











Tangerine Dream *Electronic Meditation* (with balloon)

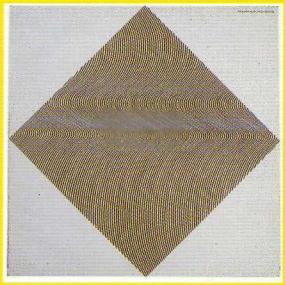
Tangerine Dream *Alpha Centauri*

Tangerine Dream *Zeit*

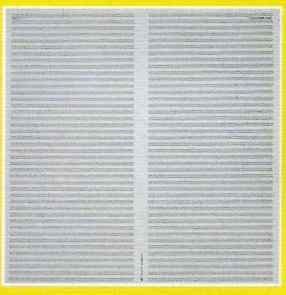
Tangerine Dream *Atem*

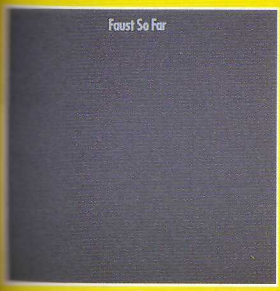
Tangerine Dream *Ultima Thule* 45

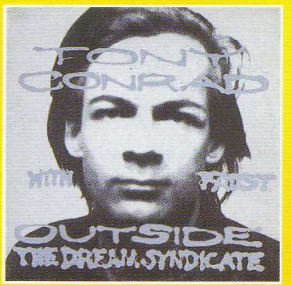
Faust's greatest work.
(**Faust** is pronounced "Fowst",
to rhyme with "cow".)











Faust *Clear/1st*

Faust *So Far*

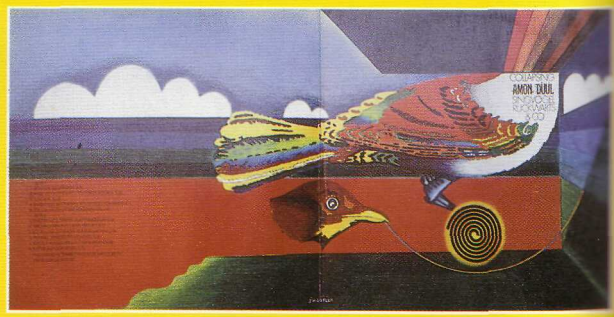
Faust *The Faust Tapes* (back cover)

Faust *IV*

Tony Conrad & Faust *Outside the Dream Syndicate*









The greatest work of **Amon Düül I**:

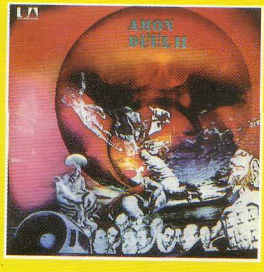
Psychedelic Underground

Paradieswarts Düül

Collapsing (gatefold)

Disaster (gatefold)













The greatest work of **Amon Düül II**:

Phallus Dei *Dance of the Lemmings*

Yeti *Carnival in Babylon*

Wolf City (gatefold)

Utopia *Utopia* A. Düül Project

The **Neu!** Family including **Cluster**, **La Düsseldorf** & **Harmonia**. (**Neu** is pronounced "Noy", to rhyme with "toy".)











Neu *Neu!*

Harmonia *Musik Von Harmonia*

Neu *Neu 2*

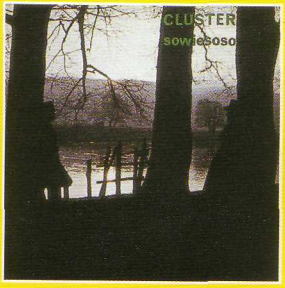
Neu *Neu 75*

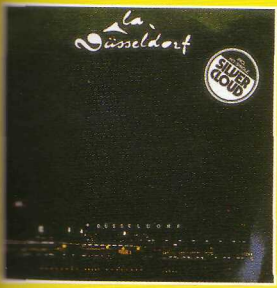
Harmonia *Deluxe*













Cluster *Cluster 1*

Cluster *Cluster 2*

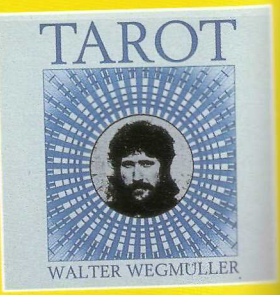
La Düsseldorf *La Düsseldorf*

Cluster *Zuckerzeit (back sleeve)*

Cluster *Sowiesoso*

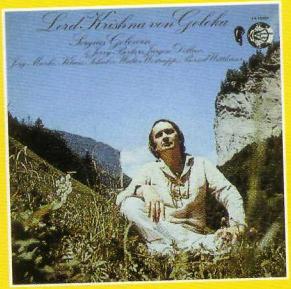
La Düsseldorf *Viva*

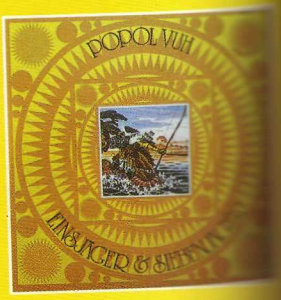
These are Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's early mage recordings, etc., when everything was still Sweetness & Light.











Ash Ra Tempel & Timothy Leary *7Up* (reissue)

Sergius Golowin *Lord Krishna Von Goloka*

Walter Wegmuller *Tarot*

Klaus Schultze *Cyborg*

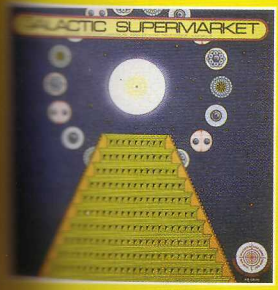
Popol Vuh *Einjager & Seibenjager*

Here are the 5 classic **Cosmic Jokers** LPs that destroyed R-U Kaiser's career.











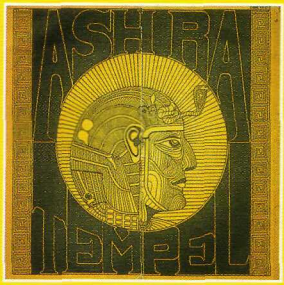
Cosmic Jokers *Cosmic Jokers*

Cosmic Jokers *Galactic Supermarket*

Cosmic Jokers *Sci-Fi Party*

Cosmic Jokers *Planeten Sit-in*

Cosmic Jokers & Starmaiden *Gilles Zeitschiff*









Ash Ra Tempel *Ash Ra Tempel*

Ash Ra Tempel *Schwingungen*

Ash-Ra Tempel & Timothy Leary *7Up*

Ash-Ra Tempel *Join Inn*





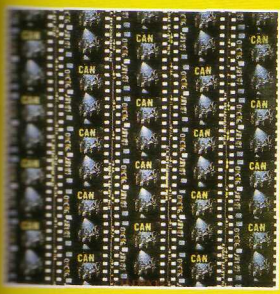


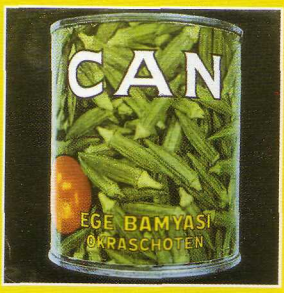
The first 4 **Ash Ra Tempel** LPs are unequivocal to-the-Moooon! genius. Above: Klaus Schultze fucked in lippy, the tragic Hartmut Enke before the Fall, and Manuel Göttsching – the underground hero Guitar-god of all time.

Opposite: The first 4 **Can** LPs are faultless. Buy them all. Bottom: **Can** on stage.









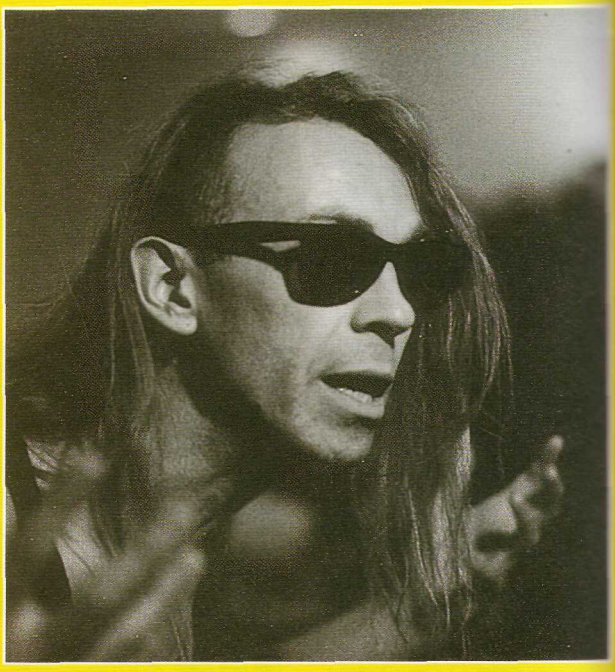
Can *Monster Movie*

Can *Soundtracks*

Can *Tago Mago*

Can *Ege Bamyasi*





Julian Cope in Cologne, Germany, discussing Krautrock with *Spex* journalists on August 15th, 1995 (Common Era).

HEAD HERITAGE aims to alert all the Heads (the geniuses, the psychos, the neurotics, the culturally dispossessed) to any truly lost or shadowy knowledge or Wisdom of our recent & ancient past. This *Krautrocksampler* was an ideal place to start – and we expect that the Trip will be a real slow-burner...

Dorian & Julian Cope (Ma & Pa Excellence)

FAUST – *So Far* (Polydor)

SO FAR is in the same Japanese inflationary hole as the clear album. While you're waiting, check out those provincial record shops. Stay far away from Notting Hill Record & Tape Exchange, though. My friend Psychedelic Paul got a copy of NEU 2 in Doncaster for £2 last November (1994CE), so let's get down and get looking.

FAUST – *The Faust Tapes* (Virgin)

Re-issued on Recommended Records.

FAUST – *IV* (Virgin)*

Brilliantly re-issued on Virgin Records at mid-price in original packaging.

SERGIUS GOLOWIN – *Lord Krishna Von Goloka* (Kosmische Musik)

Still unavailable at the time of going to press (Summer 1995CE)

GURU GURU – *U.F.O.* (Ohr)

Re-issued on ZYX Records.

HARMONIA – *Musik von Harmonia* (Brain)

Re-issued briefly by Brain Records, then withdrawn.
Currently available unofficially from Germanofon Records.

HARMONIA – *Deluxe* (Brain)*

Currently available unofficially from Germanofon Records.

KRAFTWERK (Vertigo)

KRAFTWERK in Britain was a double album combining the two original records KRAFTWERK & KRAFTWERK 2. Both LPs are now currently available separately, as originally intended, on Germanofon Records.

LA DUSSELDORF (Nova/Decca)

Currently unavailable on CD and hard to find on original. Maybe Germanofon will re-issue it.

LA DUSSELDORF – *Viva* (Nova/Radar)

Currently unavailable. Lookout for old '80s CDs, this album is still available cheaply (£8 – 1995CE) if you strike lucky.

MOEBIUS & PLANK – *Rastakrautpasta* (Sky)

RASTAKRAUTPASTA has just been re-issued on a 2 for 1 single CD with its inferior but still highly entertaining sequel MATERIAL.

NEU! (Brain)

Re-issued expensively on Germanofon Records

NEU! – *Neu 2* (Brain)

Re-issued expensively on Germanofon Records

NEU! – *Neu '75* (Brain)*

Re-issued expensively on Germanofon Records

POPOL VUH – *Affenstunde* (Liberty)

Popol Vuh's re-issue scene is up the wall right now. AFFENSTUNDE is available on CD with the title track on IN DEN GARTEN PHAROAS as a bonus, thereby rendering the awesome magic of "Vuh" completely at sea. Try calling Alan or Steve Freeman at Ultima Thule in Leicester. They'll explain in detail without blowing your mind.

40. **POPOL VUH – *In den Garten Pharoas*** (Pilz)*
See note for AFFENSTUNDE

41. **POPOL VUH – *Einjager & Siebenjager*** (Kosmische Musik)
Re-issued on Spalax Records.

42. **POPOL VUH – *Hosianna Mantra*** (Kosmische Musik)
Re-issued on ZYX Records with original artwork. Beware the inferior version on Spalax, which accidentally used deteriorating master tapes.

43. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Electronic Meditation*** (Ohr)
Currently available on a cheap CD with unoriginal generic artwork art-work (same at the following 3 LPs but in different colours) from Jive Electro. Throughout 1994 CE, on a book-signing tour through the Virgin Megastores of Britain, I picked up between 10/20 of each one on sale and gave them to friends everywhere. They don't look like much but the CDs sound fabulous. Search them out – they're so unprepossessing that most people bleep right through 'em. Also available on Relativity Records in original Reinhard Hippen packaging.

44. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Alpha Centauri*** (Ohr)*
See above note for ELECTRONIC MEDITATION

45. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Atem*** (Ohr)
See above note for ELECTRONIC MEDITATION

46. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Zeit*** (Ohr)
See above note for ELECTRONIC MEDITATION

47. **KLAUS SCHULTZE – *Irrlicht*** (Ohr)
Re-issued on Fnac Records.

48. **KLAUS SCHULTZE – *Black Dance*** (Brain/Caroline)
Re-issued on Brain Records.

49. **WALTER WEGMULLER – *Tarot*** (Kosmische Musik)*
Re-issued on Spalax Records in a box with Wegmuller's original Tarot paintings – the price is a ridiculous £50. Everyone I know is freaking at the stupidity of this, especially with such a special Classic.

50. **WITTHUSER & WESTRUPP – *Trips & Traume*** (Ohr)
Re-issued on ZYX Records.

Many of these records will be unavailable in high street megastores, though I know people at both Tower and Virgin who are stocking the stuff and claim that it is selling. If you have a problem, call Ultima Thule and they'll send you a list plus, I'm quite sure, tell you anything else you might wish to know. Here is their address and phone number:

THE ULTIMA THULE RECORD SHOP
1, Conduit Street
Leicester
LE2 OJN
(0116) 285 4545

Krautrocksampler in review – top 50

1. AMON DUUL I – *Paradieswarts Düül* (Ohr)

ELLA BAUER – vocals, harp & bongos
RAINER BAUER – guitar & vocals
ULRICH LEOPOLD – bass, piano & vocals
DADAM – guitar, bass & vocals
HANSI – flute & bongos
KLAUS ESSER – guitar
HELGE FILANDA – drums & vocals
NOAM – African drum

Here's an album that scared me as a teen and I'd never even heard it. Every week, in the days when they were still just a record shop, I'd scour the Virgin Mail Order list. This album was always included, and always it said just: "Paradies Warts Düül". I never even knew about Amon Düül I! I'd always read it like mail order lingo, ie. "Machine Head Purple" and "Zeppelin Holy". This album reveals Amon Düül as a reformed and holy union. Behind the wall of distortion, Amon Düül had two very beautiful singers in Ella and Rainer Bauer, but nobody could hear them until now. As "Love is Peace" fades in, this massive Teutonic folk-groove, which lasts all of Side 1, sounds like the 13th Floor Elevators' *Easter Everywhere* period. A downer "Slip Inside this House" that begins: "Once I got a hang up in the Time-machine," and proceeds to narrate with some clarity and a great lyrical beauty about how we have all come to clock-watch and so let life sweep by us before we know it. Spiky acoustic guitars eventually pick out a particularly un-bluesy and major-chord version of the "Purple Haze" riff, before a key-change into the verse. *Paradieswarts Düül* was Amon Düül's album for Ohr Records, and their only recording other than the massive 1968 jam session that produced the three LPs *Psychedelic Underground* (1969) *Collapsing: Singvogel Ruckwarts & Co.* (1970) and the posthu-

mous double-LP *Disaster. Paradieswarts Düül*'s packaging in one of [illegible] Records' rare single-sleeves suggests that this was not considered a [illegible] release. But it is a fabulous record, and one which places Amon Düül [illegible] new level. Whilst "Love is Peace" often sounds like a never-ending [illegible] plistic take on Traffic's *John Barleycorn Must Die*, Side 2 of the album [illegible] them descend to a mantric Velvetsy downer-trip called "Snow your [illegible] Sun your open mouth". And despite progressing so that they were slightly more able to keep time, they hadn't lost the whole commune thang. In various configurations, many different musicians contribute to the album's three songs. The last song is "Paramechanische Welt (Paramechanical World)", a long unchanging 17 verse weepy. A stone classic. If you love the plaintive darkness of Amon Düül II's epic "Sandoz in the Rain" from Yeti then I'm sure you will love this album.

Other Records: *Because Amon Düül I were conceived as a political musical commune, only PARADIESWARTS DUUL, their fourth LP attempted to even approximate contemporary rock idioms. Their other releases were: PSYCHEDELIC UNDERGROUND (Metronome 1969) COLLAPSING: SINGVOGEL RUCKWARTS & CO. (Metronome) and the DISASTER double album (BASF 1972.) They are deadly rare and all poor quality freakout recordings with beautiful gatefold sleeves.*

IMPORTANT BEWARE NOTE: *In the early '80s, Dave Anderson & John Weinzierl, both formerly of Amon Düül II, formed a new Amon Düül with no number after it. Remember that this is an entirely different scene based in North Wales (!) The LPs released were HAWK MEETS PENGUIN AIRS ON A SHOESTRING (Compilation) & MEETINGS WITH MAN MACHINES...*

2. **AMON DUUL II – *Phallus Dei*** (Liberty)

JOHN WEINZIERL – guitar, bass & vocals
CHRIS KARRER – guitar, violin & vocals
FALK-ULRICH ROGNER – organ
DAVE ANDERSON – bass
RENATE KNAUP – vocals
SHRAT – bongos & vocals
PETER LEOPOLD – drums
DIETER SERFAS – drums
with
HOLGER TRULZSCH (Popol Vuh) – percussion
CHRISTIAN BURCHARD (Embryo) – vibes

This first statement from Amon Düül II caused ripples around Europe, not least in the Ladbroke Grove offices of Clearwater Productions, a similar communal arts scene which supported the early Hawkwind. *Phallus Dei*'s packaging had a monolithic red and blue shimmering shake-appeal that had not been seen since the formidable packaging of the Texan International Artists label, home of the 13th Floor Elevators and the Red Crayola. The music inside was a crazy mix of Middle-European rhythms, phonetic male

vocals that merely approximated rock'n'roll (and with disregard for any real accuracy), operatic screeching female voice like a truly-achieving Yoko Ono, plus violin, guitars and percussion percussion percussion all the way. Two drummers and Schrat the bongo-player were augmented by Embryo's Christian Burchard on vibraphone and Holger Trulzsch from Popol Vuh on yet more bongos.

At first the music is unfathomable. The chords are ill-defined and the sound is so cluttered as to present a jamming feel akin to their sister band Amon Düül I. But it was just this ramshackle quality which would see Amon Düül II into the '70s as one of the only true creators of improvised rock. The LP opens with their now-standard "Kanaan", a spectacular slab of Egyptian high-magic replete with the daunting mass of percussionists which swarm across the horizons and conjure instant images of D.W. Griffiths' early movie epic *Intolerance*. The only reference could be the Deep's "Colour Dreams", an ancient Cameo-Parkway 45 from 1967, but this is surely coincidence. *Phallus Dei* follows deep into Side 1 with "Dem Guten Schonen Wahren" and "Lucifers Ghilom", which occupy a strange early Roxy Music mood, though pre-dating Roxy (and probably inspiring them, too. Check this and Can's *Monster Movie*. No coincidence I'm sure). But it's the epic title track that most consumes the listener. "Phallus Dei" covers the whole of Side 2 in great daubs of hoe-downs, freakouts and sometimes brief pre-ambient soundscapes of sheer abandoned joy, as the drums disappear for minutes on end only to re-surface as the engineer realises and fights to clear up the sound. Though the recording of *Phallus Dei* gets pretty lo-fi at times, the LP conjures an ancientness comparable only to Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures*.

AMON DUUL II – *Yeti* (Liberty)

PETER LEOPOLD – drums
SCHRAT – bongos & vocals
RENATE KNAUP – vocals & tambourine
JOHN WEINZIERL – guitar & vocals
CHRIS KARRER – guitar, violin & vocals
FALK-ULRICH ROGNER – organ
DAVE ANDERSON – bass

with
RAINER BAUER (Amon Düül I) – guitar & vocals
ULRICH LEOPOLD (Amon Düül I) – bass
THOMAS KEYSERLING (Amon Düül I) – flute

In Tamworth, *Yeti* was such a big LP that longhairs actually called each other "Yeti" as a greeting. It was only two years ago that my friend Doggen, himself a fellow Midland Man, told me that his Nottingham mates had also referred to each other as Yetis. Doggen is 10 years younger than me but the oral tradition remains. Such is the make-up of this classic Double-Album, possibly the Ur-Kraut album of All. And as such, this LP deserves a long and detailed sonic and psychic description:

Side 1 opens with the clatter-punk of "Soap Shop Rock", three or four songs played right through as John Weinzierl makes bizarre lyrical pronouncements, all from the head of art-director/organist Falk Rogner. It was here that Amon Düül II began their tradition of songs mixed up to form one huge and dazing song-cycle. The ominous engulfing but horribly titled "Flesh-Coloured Anti-Aircraft Alarm" is an incessant death-dance, the pleading vocals reminiscent of *John Barleycorn Must Die*-period Steve Winwood, most specifically "Stranger to Himself", but with a life-threatening atmosphere that is smothering the singer at all times.

Side 2 begins with the classic 45 "Archangels Thunderbird", a storming Ur-punk riot of metal riffing over which Renate wails more Rogner insights:

When the everywhere-eye
Asks You,
Who is the emperor
Of the sky,
Take the Archangel's Thunderbird.

Then it's back to the Whirling Dervish Kosmische electric folk of "Cerberus", furious arranged music of pure light, shards of which spill out and shatter the room. Riff upon riff upon title upon freaky-deeky title. The listener is caught in a web of dense dense sound. Reaching out for the LP sleeve will not save you for you are deep in the middle of thee greatest Amon Düül II trip ever. Dalek-voiced No-men call and sneer, riffs fused from Orc-punks and Sci-Fi Priests ensnare you. "The Return of Ruebezahl", "Eye-Shaking King" – what is happening? Are there really chords and notes to this music? Finally "Pale Gallery" comes on like early Roxy two years too soon, Rogner's vacuum-cleaner organ inhabiting the margins of civilisation but threatening to suck up all in its path – like a dissenter left to go crazy on the edge of a new space colony.

On Side 3, the title-track "Yeti" starts like "A Saucerful of Secrets" but soon becomes a furious mix of Can's "Mother Sky" and The Velvet Underground's "European Son". The searing guitars are Islamic Arabs calling the devoted to prayer, screaming in the upper register as the two percussionists hollow-out in a big Mo Tuckeresque burn up. Then it's the Stooges or Pere Ubu, and the furies of American mad Mountain-men the Kaleidoscope. Oh, it's too much, too unforgiving, and it's sexier than anything with that prowling lead-bass. The shake appeal of that violin makes it Pagan and ritualistic, before the general stew of sound comes alive like a million amoeba each taking his 15 seconds of fame. 18 minutes of truly free-rock. If the MC5 heard this, they would have wept that Elektra and Atlantic Records had kept them under such strict control. The Cosmic journeys of Sun Ra and the freefall of John Coltrane, so beloved of both the MC5 and the Stooges (check out "LA Blues") – these great moments are found all over the monstrous and aptly-titled "Yeti".

Side 4: "Yeti Talks to Yogi" is a Seer-ing (sic) six minutes of Syd Barrett Pink Floyd. The organ returns always to the same note, the rhythm guitar repeats the same chimed major chord, the bass and drums lead the whole

trip, thunderous and pounding. But soon the Dervish Hordes return, and the violin and Yoko wail across a Hieronymous Bosch landscape evoking all the demons of thousands of years of movement across the Central European Plain. As the tribes are scattered, so will the tribes regroup, if only to scatter once more. But this epic double-album ends in a truly compassionate way – with the wonderful nine minute Kosmische folk improvisation they called "Sandoz in the Rain". Here Amon Düül I and II joined forces to create an unearthly impression of mythical times. Ironically, "Sandoz in the Rain" only bears comparison with the Amon Düül I's Paradieswarts Düül-period "Love is Peace". There is no Amon Düül II song remotely like it. Rainer Bauer sings in a kind of fake-English, fake-rock'n'roll yawp that is just about as Un-Fake as it gets. This brooding aching flute and percussion driven piece brings the fabulous *Yeti* to a remarkable conclusion. It's a fantastic LP – the definitive double-album that proves everything good about what Progressive Rock could (and should) have become in the hands of the masters.

4. AMON DUUL II – *Carnival In Babylon* (United Artists)

JOHN WEINZIERL – e. guitar, acoustic 12-string & vocals
CHRIS KARRER – e.guitar, acoustic guitar, violin, soprano sax & vocals
LOTHAR MEID – bass & vocals
RENATE KNAUP-KROTENSCHWANZ – vocals
DANNY FICHELSCHER – drums & percussion
PETER LEOPOLD – drums & tambourine
KARLHEINZ HAUSMANN – keyboards, electronics & organs
with
JOY ALASKA – vocals
FALK-ULRICH ROGNER – organ
OLAF KUBLER – soprano sax & door

After the disastrous double-album stop-start of *Dance of the Lemmings*, Amon Düül II returned with a very fine middle-European Kosmische electric-folk album. John Weinzierl sounds uncannily like The Red Crayola's Mayo Thompson on the opening song, "C.I.D. in Uruk", a beautifully weird piece that's followed by their biggest British radio song of all. "All the Years 'Round" was all over the John Peel show, and even had John Peel attempt to pronounce Renate Knaup-Krotenschwanz and get it wrong. It's a very cosmic watery arrangement with a Renate vocal inflection which Pete Shelley would later use on a Buzzcocks single. Amon Düül II really got away with being more *prog* than normal because they were so fucking loose; no contemporary group would have attempted such complex arrangements and left all the shit notes in. Sometimes they'll be rocking out and the two drummers are fussing with the cymbals or something. It really keeps the whole thing in check. On the record label next to "Kronwinkel 12" on Side 2, it reads: *Thanks to all the paranoid people who meanwhile moved out*. Maybe this offers some insight into the reason the previous album was so crap. The atmosphere on *Carnival in Babylon* has returned to

a family, and Amon Düül II is a happy commune again. The best, most loving song is "Tables Are Turned", a magical lilting percussive groove copped from Traffic's "Vagabond Virgin". It's not until the last song of the album that Amon Düül II stretch into their usual electric trip out, and even "Hawknose Harlequin" is noticeably shortened. Rumours abound that the track was meant to cover the whole side of an album. *Carnival In Babylon* is a very mysterious and elusive album, especially in context with its muscular follow-up *Wolf City*.

5. **AMON DUUL II – *Wolf City*** (United Artists)

JOHN WEINZIERL – guitar & vocals
CHRIS KARRER – guitar, violin, soprano sax & vocals
RENATE KNAUP – vocals
FALK-ULRICH ROGNER – organ & synthesizer
LOTHAR MEID – bass & vocals
PETER LEOPOLD – drums & FX
DANNY FICHELSCHER – drums, guitar & vocals
with
JIMMY JACKSON – organ
OLAF KUBLER – sax
AL GROMER – sitar

The fantasia of Amon Düül II was never so prevalent as on *Wolf City*. They swept out of *Carnival in Babylon* into intricate progressive rock with overtones of Pavlov's Dog and the Who. Sounds horrendopus but it's truly beautiful. The opening song, *"Surrounded By The Stars"* is sheer brilliance, with Renate Knaup at her Yoko Ono operatic best. Many find Renate's screech too much, but I still have a crush on her from the *Carnival in Babylon* sleeve back in 1972, so I'm a goner already and well past the point of judgement. "Green Bubble Raincoated Man" is very Bowie-ish – the strident vocals and harmonies – though it soon slips into the familiar wa-punk blitzo they were all so fond of. Especially the funny-boogie bit with huge over-recorded bass.

There's no point in going through the whole album because it's the best Amon Düül II songs album there is. "Jailhouse Frog" is a true classic. In 1972, they were still using phasing and 1969 American garage riffs. Awright! Man, mon Düül II used to be so organic, but now they'd become all arranged and clever, all the stuff I should hate, but it's still fantastic. The Faust piano bit on "Jailhouse Frog" is so cosmic, goes on so long and yet it doesn't get boring because Amon Düül II were an experimental band and had a remarkable sense of rhythm and time. The two epics of Side 2 are the title track and "Deutsch Nepal", a huge sexy Krautrock Doo-wop with vocals by the Funny Fuehrer. Once more, the Amon Düül emphatic Krautrock trip comes into operation. The riff is played by about 10 musicians, all locked in to a "Stand By Me" kind of chord sequence, though it's no more soully than Faust's "It's a Rainy Day". Remember, this is the first Amon Düül II album of all *real* songs.

6. ASH RA TEMPEL – *First* (Ohr)

HARTMUT ENKE – bass & electronics
KLAUS SCHULTZE – drums & electronics
MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitar & electronics

Heat-haze harmonics begin "Amboss", the opening side long track of *Ash Ra Tempel*. Intense cymbals and frenzied rumbling bass catch a rhythm, ride it, then it descends once more. It is the power-trio playing as meditational force. When Klaus Schultze's drumming comes in after about three minutes, the thunder is highly charged and superfit, right on The Beat, bash bash bash. Then it's off on the wildest 20 minutes of freakout blitzkrieg. At one point, everything breaks down into a guitar blaze of feedback fed through FX for minutes on end, until the drums tear back in so crazily and in comes Larry Graham bass playing of the Swoopingest kind. Oh fuck man, this is the greatest Detroit-est trip of all time. Not a heavy metal assault but a methodical breaking down of all your senses until you are crushed and insensible. And if Side 1 has pulverised you, then the 25 minute "Traummaschine (Dream Machine)" lets you lie there in the afterglow and never disturbs you beyond the slightest disruption of Vibrations. A percussionless dreamscape of sounds cascades around the room, and a wailing woman-voiced beauty fills the air. Then, rising out of the peace comes the guitar shimmer and finally the hollow congas of Klaus Schultze. And the fuzz beauty of Manuel Göttsching's guitar scythed all down in the great rush through space. Then it's off into yet another inspiring dimension as Ash Ra Tempel fly around the universe... *Ash Ra Tempel* is at its greatest when it's impossible to work out what instrument makes which sound.

It's one of the greatest rock'n'roll LPs ever made.

7. ASH RA TEMPEL – *Schwingungen* (Ohr)

HARTMUT "INDRA ROGER" ENKE – guitar, bass, electronics
MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitar, organ, electronics, choir
WOLFGANG MULLER – drums & vibes
with
JOHN L. – vocals, jaw-harp & percussion
MATTHIAS WEHLER – alto sax
ULI POP – bongos

"Beware of *Schwingungen*!" That should be the large sticker on the front of all copies of this record. For it is dangerous to be casually introduced to something that is life-changing, as I found out to my cost when first listening to this record. It all starts fairly simply and without any cause for alarm – "Look at Your Sun" begins with a Doorsy lone groover guitar begins a pedestrian blues, beautiful. Then the most crushed voice, a cross between Johnny Rotten and Tiny Tim, preaches its way into the proceeds. God, it is beautiful – John L. repeats over and over, "We are all one, we are all one", until a howling fuzztone solo guitar blows the whole one-chord "Signed D.C." ringing-cymbals torture to an end. And then the most far out track of

all begins. This is called "Flower Must Die" and it is a free-rock giant that transcends everything else in its field (there are no contenders.) As I've written before, PIL sounds like this. John L. was John Lydon in a previous incarnation. After a slow weird build, a frantic streamlined one-chord mantra kicks in and it's like the Stooges' *Funhouse* period but in a Righteous Vision Zone that fucks them right off. Phasing tears at the whole tracks as this Holy Racket crosses into Hyper-space and everything gets all hyphenated just-for-the-sake-of-it. "Flowers Must Die", man, it's fucked up. Over on Side 2, the title-track ("Vibrations") begins poetically enough with Wolfgang Muller's epic and hugely reverbed vibraphone. Organ fades in and FX guitars, and time passes by. Finally, tom-toms roll and the developing pace is built upon until that great eternal chord sequence finally materialises – this is the one that Göttsching and Enke believed was the sound of heaven. They may have been right. And *Schwingungen* was a gift from the Gods.

8. **ASH RA TEMPEL & TIMOTHY LEARY – *7Up*** (Die Kosmische Kuriere)

TIMOTHY LEARY – voice
BRIAN BARRITT – voice
LIZ ELLIOTT – voice
BETTINA HOHLS – voice
PORTIA NKOMO – voice
MICKEY DUWE – voice & flute
HARTMUT "HAWK" ENKE – bass, guitar & electronics
MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitar & electronics
STEVE A. SCHROYDER – organ & electronics
DIETMAR BURMEISTER – drums
TOMMY ENGEL – drums
DIETER DIERKS – synthesizer & Radio Downtown

In chaos it was conceived and in chaos it was recorded. Yet Dieter Dierks, the great Aural Architect of the Cosmic Couriers, turned *7Up* into a personal triumph and a Kosmische dream. Opening like some other worldly Pere Ubu performance, the greatness of Ash Ra Tempel burned so brightly on *7Up* that there is really nothing else like it. Hartmut Enke and Manuel Göttsching had begun in the Steeplechase Blues Band and here returned to their riffy roots. It can hardly be called a retro act, though, as the context of music is everything. And with Dierks at the controls, even the New Kids on the Block would have sounded psychedelic. *7Up* is like a late night radio show glimpsed through a shattered tuner where all but the most truly dangerous sounds have been allowed to stay, to drift and to dance around the performers.

The charm of *7Up* is the weird juxtaposition of Timothy Leary's Mob, and their desire to holler up a storm and the Kaiser's gang, who are clearly there to celebrate Leary the guru and LSD magician. That the Kaiser's gang win is clear, but not before Leary, Brian Barritt and the countless other

singers have squeezed every screwed-up sexual blech emotion out of themselves. The result is an extreme gem, a flash of hysterical white lightning, and a pre-punk Technicolour yawn in the grandest of traditions. In typical Ash Ra Tempel style, the record is divided into two pieces, "Space" and "Time". Within this, though, Timothy Leary's ideas are allowed to free-flow and the two sides are therefore divided into mini-songs all segued together. The highlight of Side 1 is "Power Drive", a West Coast burn-up that transcends any W. Coast music I ever did hear. Leary and Barritt present the greatest twin-vocal of all time, coming on like Jagger and Morrison but too caught up in their own maelstrom to be anything less than Heralds of the Punk-future still five years away.

9. **ASH RA TEMPEL – *Join Inn*** (Ohr)

HARTMUT ENKE – Gibson bass
MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitar
KLAUS SCHULTZE – drums, synthesizers & electronics
ROSI MULLER – voice

"Freak'n'roll" fades in like it never started – just was always there from the beginning of time, a dry wa-guitar freerock riff-out unlike any of the other Ash Ra Tempel LPs, and not much like any other music. Yes, there are bluesy riff but none of them have a blues context. Manuel Göttsching's guitar is so confident that he sometimes drops down to a simple major chord groove, whilst the Hawk pushes that round woody bass into strange overlapping rumbling melody. And it's the return of Klaus Schultze on drums which propels "Freak'n'roll" to its height. No-one but Klaus has the ability to transcend rock'n'roll in such an on-the-beat non-groove-y way and still send sparks of light into the cosmos as he does it. "Freak'n'roll" is so egoless that it even works at a quiet volume as meditational music. Themes rise from the high tempo pulse beat, then are carried along the muscles of the song into the main area where the riff actually becomes real and expressionist for just long enough before slipping back into the musical fabric of the song. As usual with Ash Ra Tempel, the other side is an enormous drift piece called "Jenseits (The Next World)", a beautiful Klaus Schultze meditation of haunting synthesizer chords over which Rosi Muller tells the story of the Cosmic Couriers' meeting with Timothy Leary. Gradually, the pulsing guitar becomes increasingly intense and turbulent, but Rosi never sounds less than freaked out. Essentially, "Jenseits" is a precursor to Klaus Schultze's later spacey minor-key grooves. Unfortunately, this was the last Ash Ra Tempel album in its particular 'series'.

Other Records: *After JOIN INN, Manuel Göttsching took over the Ash Ra Tempel mantle alone. The follow-up LP STARRING ROSI was an entirely different direction, more accessible and very commercially successful. I find it of no use at all after what Ash Ra Tempel had come to represent, but at least Göttsching was still alive. A multi-layered multi-tracked guitar album called INVENTIONS FOR ELECTRIC GUITAR followed. This is*

easy listening and of no great consequence, though it was probably some kind of achievement in the mid-'70s.

10. **CAN – *Monster Movie*** (Music Factory/UA)

MALCOLM MOONEY – vocals
HOLGER CZUKAY – bass
MICHAEL KAROLI – guitar
JAKI LEIBEZEIT – drums
IRMIN SCHMIDT – keyboards

Can's first LP opened like the Velvet's "European Son", all inverted bass riffs, fast strummed one chord rhythm guitar and tom-tom drumming over a blanket of single note organ noise. But "Father Cannot Yell" is a great song and a structured well-arranged constant builder. It is their black vocalist Malcolm Mooney who imprinted himself most heavily on *Monster Movie*, and from almost the first moment, he is in charge. Mooney sings in a Hendrix style, announcing and making pronouncements in a cool spoken way and, most clearly, making no effort to be coherent as his is a German audience. Mooney's vocals slide into Universal Man speak at times as he grunts, whinnies and beats the air to get the right effect. "Mary Mary, Quite Contrary" follows next, a "Venus in Furs" meets Love's "Signed D.C.", the whole thing having a strange blues atmosphere, though the violin of Michael Karoli is Cale-ing to the Nth degree. Side 1 finishes with Can's greatest rock'n'roll song ever, "Outside Your Door". Two to three years after this song, Roxy Music's "Remake/Remodel" and "Editions of You" were later cut from the very same rock. The whole of Side 2 is taken up by the live concert track "You Doo Right", an extremely devotional song in which Malcolm Mooney addresses his current living situation as a black American in Germany. It is the steady anchor of Holger Czukay's bass which keeps this whole song together over its 20 minute run, leaving space for Michael Karoli and Irmin Schmidt to edge in and out of major and minor keys as the vocal's lilt suggests. This is a masterful LP.

11. **CAN – *Soundtracks*** (United Artists)

MALCOLM MOONEY or
DAMO SUZUKI – vocals
HOLGER CZUKAY – bass
MICHAEL KAROLI – guitar
JAKI LEIBEZEIT – drums
IRMIN SCHMIDT – keyboards

Though an unofficial second album, *Soundtracks* works extremely well because of its refusal to attempt to bring rock'n'roll dynamics to the structure of the record. The vocal theme from "Deadlock" opens *Soundtracks*, with its wailing crying howling guitar themes which Damo Suzuki follows melodically and melancholically, over a dramatic mid-tempo drum

rhythm. "Tango Whiskyman" follows, another Deadlock piece with thunderous rhythm propelling a sexy low-key groove as Damo sings the keyboard/guitar theme once more. Then the instrumental "Deadlock" theme piles in, a huge Cecil B. De Mille organ and drums tour de force link-piece. "Don't Turn the Light on, Leave Me Alone" was Damo Suzuki's first Can recording, though he does not sound pissed off and freaked out as he really was. The song is rhythmically and acoustically close to *Ege Bamyasi*, with the bluesy pulled acoustic of Michael Karoli. Side 1 finishes with Malcolm Mooney's "Soul Desert". How different he is from Damo: a barely concealed on-the-edge freak, he grabs the music from the other members of Can and directs it immediately into a blues strut like Syd Barrett's "Maisie", chordless, insistent and utterly compulsive. Most of Side 2 is taken up by the 14-minute driving beauty of "Mother Sky", a Teutonic "LA Woman" in a *Funhouse* Stooges vein. The mantric raga melody is sung by Damo Suzuki over the droning bass of Holger Czukay. But there is plenty of time for the most savage and howling guitar solos from Michael Karoli. The late night urban-ness of "Mother Sky" is truly filmic and must have worked superbly in its intended place on the soundtrack of Jerzy Skolimovsky's Deep End. "Mother Sky" is a long long moving thang, but I'm still fascinated as to how it would have sounded with Malcolm Mooney on vocals. Mooney is back again for the last song on the LP, a standard called "She Brings the Rain", a walking bass jazzer about a girl who brings "magic mushrooms out of dreams." No drums or dynamics, instead violin and beautiful bell-tone bluesy guitar and the rarest of Can effects, dual-vocals, brings this strange album to a close.

12. **CAN – *Tago Mago*** (UA)

HOLGER CZUKAY – bass, editor & engineer
MICHAEL KAROLI – guitars
JAKI LEIBEZEIT – drums
DAMO SUZUKI – vocals
IRMIN SCHMIDT – keyboards

Once described as a kind of new Chamber Music, this Can allusion probably best befits the opening track of their *Tago Mago*. "Paperhouse" is beautiful, elegant ensemble playing, the kind of perfect soundtrack for the film Don't Look Now. Damo's melody is followed by Michael Karoli's guitar, and the driving watery drumming of Jaki Leibezeit is well to the fore. It is a storming and clear dual guitar blitz, even Television-like as Irmin Schmidt keeps all keyboards out of the track and allows Michael Karoli the rare opportunity to imagine himself part of the Jefferson Airplane. There's a beautiful coda, an indescribably jagged and beautiful thing…a rend in the tape and then it's off into the vocals and drums of "Mushroom (Head)". Damo repeats one sullen phrase over and over, I think it's "One-eyed soul – Mushroom Head. One-eyed soul – Mushroom Head. I was born. And I was dead." Over this repeats a beautiful guitar/organ motif as the drums get way down low. Low and clattery and almost imperceptible. "I'm gonna get

my kicks there, I'm gonna get my fix there," the most brilliant rock'n'roll lyrics ever. The side ends with the storm breaking, the lightning flashing and the fading in of one of the most mysterious tracks ever. Search it out. I can't describe it. Damo's vocals are backwards and beautiful. It's a fucking gorgeous thing. All of Side 2 is taken up by the monumental "Hallelujah", another heavy rhythmic thing where overdubbed percussion and sound-effects soon take over from Damo – and Can get as close to world music as they can get. "Hallelujah" is not an organic freakout as such. It is full of edits and of different parts, but the themes that begin will always return. And the greatest theme of all is Damo's vocal refrain that kicks in midway through the track. It's a classic pop-hook and the guitar recognises the fact immediately. At that moment, Can could be playing "Sally Go Round the Roses". The whole instrumental side of "Hallelujah" is so confident that it's like the Meters playing avant garde music.

"Aumgn" is just plain weirdness, like the early 1969 experiments of Organisation, Amon Düül I and Kluster (sic.) It's in these kinds of tracks that all rock'n'roll, by reducing itself to the sum of the physical attributes of the group, actually reaches heights of the group unconscious impossible by merely rocking out for three hours. Irmin Schmidt intones in a huge voice that just goes on & on & on, until a non-rhythmic drum bursts in, messes about and finally careers off into percussion a go-go, and we're into light-speed. Side 4 of this epic monsterpiece begins with the strange screamer called "Peking O", an organ and vocal ritual blast that slowly elevates itself out of the mire into a bossanova from an early drum-machine as Damo and Irmin Schmidt freeform with vocal and e. piano craziness. The drum-machine is switched off, speeds up, Damo speaks in streams of the most humorous tongues. Oh, what the hell – it's a gas. And all changes for the wonderful album closer: "Bring Me Coffee or Tea" is a beautiful lilting, ever building melodic groove – an amalgam of all Can's greatest attributes, the woody almost marimba-like bass of Holger Czukay, the clatter of Leibezeit's drums, the spindly Karoli guitar, the sexual devotion of Damo, even Irmin Schmidt's curiously egoless ability to not play a thing unless he's contributing. "Bring Me Coffee or Tea" is a song in which the forth-coming *Ege Bamyasi* sound is previewed, but still in its raw angry *Tago Mago* state. This was their most ritually inspired album.

13. **CAN – *Ege Bamyasi*** (United Artists)

DAMO SUZUKI – vocal
HOLGER CZUKAY – e.bass
MICHAEL KAROLI – e.guitar, acoustic guitar, 12-string & shenai
JAKI LIEBEZEIT – drums
IRMIN SCHMIDT – organ, e.piano, clavioline & steel guitar

Ege Bamyasi was the closest to a pop LP that Can ever got. That's not to say that it is pop, but there are at least clear cut songs with grooves of delightful melody and moment, plus a teen-appeal that still leaves me gasping with love for Damo Suzuki. *Ege Bamyasi* opens with the percussive rush of

"Pinch", nine minutes of groove in which the whole group seems to stand around the direction of Jaki Leibezeit's fury of drumming. Only Damo's vocal monologue edges out of the taut melee and one of the group hangs a hook on his vocals with a retarded but ultra-catchy mechanical bird-whistle. "Sing Swan Song" follows in its devotional mid-tempo wake, like a fast funeral barge rows by warriors, sculling to the music. Damo's vocals are breathily soaring and always his half-English sounding, half-unconscious lyrical pronouncements end in the words "...Sing Swan Song" to give the strong impression of something divine being lost. "One More Night" completes Side 1's drum-led groove down a narrow alley where one chord is enough for Damo to coo "One more Saturday night, one more suck o' your head," over and over and over. Behind him, the most sexual ethereality enfolds the listener, as Suicidey distantness sends him to sleep. The bedroom mood continues on to Side 2 with the pleading chorus of "Hey you, you're losing, you're losing, you're losing, you're losing your Vitamin C." Again the drums clatter and bounce as Holger Czukay's abrupt bass scatters hard low percussives into the arena. The album is then cut in half by the wild trance-funk of "Soup", a 10 minute freakout back in *Tago Mago*-land. I didn't love it as a 14 year old except for its ability to empty rooms. Harmonically, I wish now that it were at the end of the album, but what a fucking carve-up. When Damo starts raving like Kevin Rowlands from Dexy's it gets really funny. Then it's into "I'm So Green", my favourite ever Can song. This light breeze of a song is so flimsy that it threatens to blow away at any minute. Here's where the David Cassidy comparisons compare most favourably. And then "Spoon" closes *Ege Bamyasi* with just about the most unusual "Making love in the afternoon" hit song of all time. This was the first Can LP I bought brand new (Torquay, July 1972) and it is still my favourite.

14. **CAN – *Delay*** (Spoon)

HOLGER CZUKAY – bass
MICHAEL KAROLI – guitar
JAKI LEIBEZEIT – drums
MALCOLM MOONEY – vocals
IRMIN SCHMIDT – keyboards

When Can's *Delay* came out in 1982, it was a hell of a revelation. They'd sounded even more raw than *Monster Movie*. Whoa. Michael Karoli tore chords straight out of the Martin Bramah/Fall school of '78. 10 years early. No wonder they thought it was too much in 1968. And it was a trip just to hear the obvious Mothers/Beefheart grunge-funk of "19th Century Man" and "Butterfly". Happily, Can kept the fartsqueekblurt to a minimum and just punked it up on *Delay*. Malcolm Mooney is as brilliant as ever. Though I was a Damo Suzuki nut, I feel that had Malcolm Mooney never gone crazy, they would have been as consistent as the Velvets, and would never have given way to the class-act tactic. *Delay* reveals Mooney to be a stronger singer and narrator than ever, "Thief" especially is as mournful as

his tracks on the *Can Soundtracks*. It's a real shame that Can's release style was so bitty. They were forever putting classics next to those horrible E.F.S. jerk-offs they obviously found so chortlingly successful, but which were really just irritating flotsam & jetsam. Never mind, buy *Delay* and lose your head.

15. ***Cluster II*** (Brain)

DIETER MOEBIUS – Guitars, keyboards, electronics, percussion & FX
HANS-JOACHIM ROEDELIUS – Guitars, keyboards, electronics, percussion & FX

This was really Cluster's first *LP* in terms of an available career that music fans could really buy into, yet it is musically as challenging as the previous three LPs that bore the Cluster name in its differently spelled guises. Dieter Moebius & Hans-Joachim Roedelius' previous incarnation as Kluster, with Conrad Schnitzler, had produced two sonic experiments that bore more allegiance to Schnitzler, whilst the Phillips released Cluster, though a fabulous record similar to drumless early Kraftwerk, has always been virtually impossible to find. Again, Conny Plank is a mainstay of this recording team, even receiving co-credits for the writing of *Cluster II*. The six minute opener "Plas" is reminiscent of the first Cluster LP with pounding echoes of sound reverberating around the cosmos. *Cluster II* has much in common with early Suicide, indeed it is hard to imagine that Alan Vega & Martin Rev did not base many of their sound experiments on this music. The 12-minute "Im Suden (In the South)" features slow cyclical fuzz guitar repeated over a fading ominous backing track, whilst a treated early drum-machine clatters in and out of the mix, creating an arid desert effect. "Fur Die Katz" closes Side 1, returning again to the same cosmic FX lunescape that so much of the early Cluster trip inhabits. Side 2 opens with the 14 minute "Live in der Fabrik", another huge vibrational landscape where melody has no place and the unfolding of unworldly events is everything. But Cluster get closest to a normal world on "Georgel" where the identifiable organ makes a refreshing change, and the album closer is the percussive and surprisingly expressionist "Nabitte", on which pianos clang back and forth over the same two chords as artificially generated rhythm ebbs and flows in a tidal manner. There is a timelessness in this music which releases it from restrictions such as bars and beats per minute, though Tangerine Dream would take this to its logical conclusion on *Zeit*, and Cluster would later meet Neu!'s Michael Rother, and discover melody in music.

16. **CLUSTER – *Zuckerzeit*** (Brain)

DIETER MOEBIUS & HANS JOACHIM ROEDELIUS – e. organ, piano, rhythm-machine, Davoli & Farfisa synthesizers, Hawaii & e. guitar

After *Cluster II*, this bizarre follow-up took Cluster in a direction that they

would increasingly develop over the years. *Zuckerzeit* means 'Sugartime', and the syrupy child's synthesizer music class ethic was suddenly out in force. Starting the LP with a drum-machine that most groups would not even consider was working, Cluster stormed into the opening "Hollywood" mantra as though they had the balls-out rhythm section of life. Gone were the long Velvets drones and the space-cake emittings and bleeps, and in came the Clangers-on-a-toy-planet sound that Dieter Moebius seems to have inspired. In terms of audio retardation, this is Cluster's finest record. For they simplified everything so much that the whole album seems like merely snatches of some passing car's stereo turned up full. On "Caramel", they managed to have three instruments playing the same sub-Troggs riff! Eno was mightily impressed by *Zuckerzeit* and spent a great deal of time making his next album *Another Green World* full of similar short short vignettes. But compared to the Cluster technique, his muso-packed eulogy was stilted and unorganic. On *Zuckerzeit*, Cluster displayed a wisdom of sound that is utterly reconciled to the titles, delivery and entire trip. "Hollywood", "Caramel", "Marzipan", "James", etc. There is no duffer title. On "Rote Riki", they deemed a burbling fizzy synth fart-attack worthy of jamming on for over six minutes. It works splendidly, but who the hell genius thought of taking the risk needs a kiss and a slap with a wet fish at the same time. *Zuckerzeit* was produced by their Harmonia cohort, Michael Rother of Neu! Like Kraftwerk, Cluster seemed equally attracted and simultaneously repulsed by anything rock'n'roll. The sleeve is good enough to eat, and Dieter Moebius is sitting on Joachim Roedelius' lap on the inner sleeve! It's hysterically compellingly brilliant on ALL levels.

17. **CLUSTER – *Sowiesoso*** (Sky)

DIETER MOEBIUS & HANS-JOACHIM ROEDELIUS – All instruments

After the brilliant artistic success but huge commercial failure of the 1975 *Deluxe* LP, Harmonia split up and Michael Rother went solo. But Rother's input had changed Cluster forever and 1976's *Sowiesoso* was the first fruit of that labour. The album opens with the eight minute title-track, a perfect one-chord marriage of the early mantric experimental style, and the curious lilting melodies that pervaded their music after Rother's involvement. "Halwa" follows in an obvious Eastern-styled synthesizer Arabesque with crassly beautiful monophonic synthesizers, and then it's off into the easy going cosmic schoolboy instrumental called "Dem Wanderer". The side closes with a psychedelic Charlie Brown-theme tune called "Umleitung (Diversion)" with its funny repeated piano motif and bouncy octave bass, as a chorus of German ravers fades in almost against the beat. This tune especially lodges itself into the brain like few others, hooky like only Cluster can be. On Side 2, three long pieces of gentle atmosphere pervade: "Zum Wohl" is a slow drive through the stars, "Es War Einmal" is another darling Charlie Brown theme tune, sad and reeking of lost childhood, and

half-remembered nursery-rhymes. But the closing track, "In Ewigkeit", is even more Charlie Brown-like: a beat generation late night-club hometime pedestrian jazzer played on electronic instruments over a heartbeat bass drum. *Sowiesoso* is candy pop music in the surreal world.

Other Records: *Cluster continued to release albums for many years after this, as well as recording many solo LPs and collaborations also: RASTAKRAUTPASTA/Moebius & Plank, ZERO SET / Moebius, Plank & Neumeier, the CLUSTER & ENO LP, AFTER THE HEAT/Cluster & Eno, etc. Of their '80s albums, I am a fan of CURIOSUM but not a fan of GROSSES WASSER. Moebius & Roedelius recently released a new CD which I've not yet heard. Generally, I would advise you to check unrecommended releases thoroughly as their output is always fabulously diverse.*

18. **TONY CONRAD w/ FAUST – *Outside the Dream Syndicate*** (Caroline)

TONY CONRAD – violin
RUDOLF SOSNA – electronics & guitar
JEAN-HERVE PERON – bass
WERNER DIERMEIER – drums

The Faust billing on this actually breaks a few trade-descriptions acts. Only three of Faust's five members appear here with Tony Conrad and, for me, just the missing sax of Gunter Wusthoff makes the Faust appellation debatable. But this is no place for pedantry, for *Outside the Dream Syndicate* is a supreme Krautrock record and is the Missing Link that explains German obsessions with the New York experimental scene and the Warhol scene. The original LP was originally released on Virgin's mid-priced Caroline label for £1.49, and was a big hit at parties. *Outside the Dream Syndicate* is just two long tracks called "The Side of the Machine" and "The Side of Man & Womankind". Both are 20 minute-plus mantras of a Groove-maintained. One track features a stilted straight ahead mid/slow beat, the other is a rippling tom-tom heavy roll. At all times, Tony Conrad's violin is an unwavering and secure one note/one tone. When the album was re-issued recently on CD, there appeared a brand new 20 minute track called "The Side of Woman & Mankind". Of course. The same stoic mantra was there again. In the avant-garde, Conrad knows no peers. He is so fundamentalist that his only rival in the whole of the Universal music scene could be Sky Saxon of the Seeds. No-one but Saxon and Conrad have ever shown such commitment to repeating themselves over & over on the off chance that the Truth may just be a slightly different shade to the last one they tried. *Outside the Dream Syndicate* is ideal for playing repeatedly until it takes over the room and actively Becomes you.

19. ***Cosmic Jokers*** (Kosmische Musik/Cosmic Couriers)

MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitar
KLAUS SCHULTZE – synthesizer
DIETER DIERKS – bass & mixing
HAROLD GROSSKOPF – drums
JURGEN DOLLASE – keyboards

This is Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's finest and most dubious hour. Probably conceived during the chaos of the Timothy Leary/Ash Ra Tempel 'festival' in Bern, Switzerland, 'The Kaiser' began to record cosmic jams using various configurations of musicians. *Cosmic Jokers* is easily the greatest of these albums, possibly because it's the most archetypal Kosmische Krautrock trip of all. Two long songs which build, erupt, decay, diminish, falter, regroup, undulating all the time and rising and falling like a musical oil wheel. It's astonishing organic free-rock of the highest standard of all time. The album is credited to the five musicians, a peculiar Krautrock supergroup. Ash Ra Tempel's leader, Manuel Göttsching, plays extremely cosmic rhythm guitars that falter and fade and get phased and fazed, whilst Jurgen Dollase, leader and keyboard player of the heavy group Wallenstein, and his drummer, Harold Grosskopf, both add linear unfathomables quite at odds with the leaden arrangements of their full-time group. Klaus Schultze adds washes of yet more synthesizer, and the awesome mixing desk of Dieter Dierks effectively takes the lot into cosmic stew territory with an attitude that often renders individual instruments indistinguishable from each other. It's a rolling dub mix where one instrument is always taking the lead but never for long before another rises to take its place – an endless waxing and waning, a pure joy to trip out to.

20. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Galactic Supermarket*** (Kosmische Musik)

KLAUS SCHULTZE – synthesizers
MANUEL GOTTSCHING – guitars
JURGEN DOLLASE – mellotron & piano
HARALD GROSSKOPF – drums
DIETER DIERKS – bass & mixing
ROSI MULLER – vocals
GILLE LETMANN – vocals

Starting with a heavy piano/drums groove like John Cale and Terry Riley's "The Protégé" from their classic LP *Church of Anthrax*, The Cosmic Jokers return to their trip with an un-cosmic dub beginning, melodicas and guitars spinning off all over the place. Gille Letmann says a couple of words before the breakdown into Clangerland, a place where goofy synthesizers call to each other over exquisite mellotrons and tinkling spacey grand piano. Again, it's just two huge tracks – this time the ever shifting "Kinder Des Als" and the title track "Galactic Supermarket". The female voices take a while to assimilate after the austerity of the first Cosmic Jokers LP, and the

opening track wanders around for a while before ascending to its righteous groove. The women scream "Schnell Schnell!" and the helicopter drums of Harald Grosskopf propel us once more into a hectic frantic major-chord trance out. It's the sheer unbalance that makes this record such a delight. At times, Klaus Schultze's synthesizer is so loud that it swamps everything in its path.

The title track "Galactic Supermarket" begins like one of Van Der Graaf Generator's greatest and most drawn out riffs. A slow 6/4 bass licks over ominous Pawn Hearts-style shifting chords. Again, the piece is slow to begin, as though they are searching for harmony but each musician is confused and solitary. Manuel Göttsching freaks out in a fury of wa-guitar madness, forcing the others awake, but this is really a down-in-the-mouth scene and the whole Trip descends further and further until... an inevitable slow burning groove gets itself together and the scene whips itself up into a Shake Appeal Flip-out. This LP takes a little longer to get into than *The Cosmic Jokers*, but give it time and it's in your head forever. Those piercingly loud Klaus Schultze synthesizers which sound so bizarre the first time? You'll be waking up with them in your head, whistling them in the street, people will think you've lost your fucking mind. Right On.

21. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Planeten Sit-In*** (Kosmische Musik)

FEATURES THE REGULAR COSMIC COURIERS CROWD

Billed as the Quadrosound Hobby Magazine sampler, I never noticed quite how weird this LP was until I had to review it for this book. *Planeten Sit-in* starts with the ultra-farty "Raumschiff Galaxy Startet", a synthesizer outburst of four dimensional interest which quickly segues into the drum phased maelstrom vocalled "The Planet of Communication". "Elektronenzircus" kicks in another synthesizer freakout of half a minute's length into "Der Narr im All', a Cosmic Jokers "Astronomy Dominie" trip. "Raumschiff Galaxy fliegt in die Sonne" is another Funkadelic-angled "Free Your Mind & Your Ass Will Follow" trip-out. A deafening monolithic monophonic synthesizer cuts through everything in its way. "Intergalactic Nightclub" is a cross between John Cale and Terry Riley's "The Protégé" and Irmin Schmidt's vocals on *Soon Over Babaluma's* "Come Sta, La Luna". The final track of the side is a synthesizer and tom-tom psyche-out into a kind of Ivor Cutler mantra, and the beautiful recurring Jurgen Dollase piano theme. Side 2 is a helicopter rotor bland synthesizer attack beginning with high frequencies spilling all over, and bass and drums loose grooving. The track is "Electronic News" and we're back in Funkadelic territory, though they never got 2/1000's as loose as this. It's sheer throwaway catch-the-moment genius.

"Intergalactic Radio Guri Broadcasting" is a drum-led groove with synthesizers and beats coming in and out. Loads of echo, then totally dry and some chanting. More chanting and synthesizers. Bubbling, squealing below it the rhythm persists. More noise then a bass-led rhythm then squir-

ling farting synthesizers and you can't tell whether it's "Raumschiff Galaxy gleitet im Sonnenwind" or "Interstellar Rock: Kosmische Musik". Whatever, it is beautiful and epic and I love it to death. Harald Grosskopf has an insistence to his drumming that I've never recognised in anyone else. He hits fast snare rolls, many in rapid succession, as the rhythm is held together by the thunderous bass/e.guitar crunch. More Dr. Who-ness from "Raumschiff Galaxy saust in die Lichtbahnen", then it's off to the "Planet des Sternmadchens", a kind of *Galactic Supermarket* female freakout affair, with Gille gasping and cooing over heavy pulse drumming and the obligatory cosmic synthesizer.

22. **COSMIC JOKERS – *Sci-Fi Party*** (Kosmische Musik)

GILLE LETMANN – voice
BRIAN BARRITT – voice
WALTER WEGMULLER – voice
ROSI MULLER – voice
JURGEN DOLLASE (Wallenstein) – keyboards
HARALD GROSSKOPF (Wallenstein) – drums
JERRY BERKERS (Wallenstein) – bass
HARTMUT ENKE (Ash Ra Tempel) – guitar
MANUEL GOTTSCHING (Ash Ra Tempel) – guitar
KLAUS SCHULTZE – synthesizers
WALTER WESTRUPP – various
DIETER DIERKS – bass

Sci-Fi Party is the great Kosmische Musik sampler, an advert for *Tarot, Gilles Zeitschiff*, The Cosmic Jokers' *Galactic Supermarket*, Ash Ra Tempel's *Starring Rosi*, the *Planeten Sit-in* LP, and Wallenstein's *Cosmic Century*, one of the straws that broke the Cosmic Couriers' back but a great LP nonetheless. The record begins with "Im Reich Der Magier (In the Land of the Magician)", a spoken word piece by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser and Gille Letmann over an edit from "Galactic Joke", the side long first track on the *Cosmic Jokers* LP. It always reminded me of a weird take on The Doors' "Riders on the Storm", before flying off into deepest Space-rock territory. It's eight and a half minutes of re-mixed bliss. Next up is the most 'street' cut the Cosmic Couriers ever did, the fabulous "Der Herrscher". If this was a modern 45, I reckon it would be a hit. The vocals shoot all over the place whilst George Harrison on "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" assaults a mutant riff of Neil Young's "Lookout Joe" and the Wayne County band playing "Sweet Jane". Then you have the true sick insanity of "The Cosmic Couriers Meet South Philly Willy", a nightmare guitar theme tune right out of Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. Yes, it's that sick and jaunty. This is where Wallenstein are at without someone to watch over them. Beware. Side 2 opens in a flurry of distorted junior synthesizers, then the big Daddy synthesizer shoos them all out of the room and it's an edit from "Kinder Des Als" from *Galactic Supermarket*. Re-shuffling these tracks in a new situation with introductions, etc. is a very cool idea and *Sci-Fi Party*

is just that. Next is Brian Barritt's "The Electronic Scene", in which he explains the extreme possibilities felt within the Leary camp on meeting the Kosmische crew. Jurgen Dollase's beautiful mellotron descent from "Kinder Des Als" then returns and mixes serenely into Ash Ra Tempel's "Interplay of Forces". This is the most cosmic of their most commercial *Starring Rosi* LP, which Manuel Göttsching chose to do after the Kosmische overdose at Dierks' studio. "Interplay of Forces" becomes a classic psychedelic instrumental. *Sci-Fi Party* ends with "Planeten Sit-in", a re-mix from Tarot and a beautiful piano and synthesizer piece reminiscent of *Songs for Drella* by Lou Reed and John Cale. And so, gently and breezily, ends the gaudily jacketed, havoc-causing record they called *Sci-Fi Party*.

23. **STERNMADCHEN (ASH RA TEMPEL, COSMIC JOKERS & GILLE LETMANN) – *Gilles Zeitschiff*** (Die Kosmische Kuriere)

GILLE LETMANN – spoken word
TIMOTHY LEARY – spoken word
WALTER WEGMULLER – spoken word
R-U KAISER – spoken word & producer
BRIAN BARRITT – spoken word
LIZ ELLIOTT – spoken word
KLAUS SCHULTZE (Ash Ra Tempel) – synthesizers
MANUEL GOTTSCHING (Ash Ra Tempel) – guitar
HARTMUT ENKE (Ash Ra Tempel)- bass, guitar & FX
JURGEN DOLLASE (Wallenstein) – keyboards
HARALD GROSSKOPF (Wallenstein) – drums
TOMMY ENGEL (Ash Ra Tempel) – drums
DIETMAR BURMEISTER (Ash Ra Tempel) – drums
DIETER DIERKS – synthesizer & mix

A monumental space-rock magazine, *Gilles Zeitschiff* is a long spoken word Tripout apologia in which The Kaiser and Gille Letmann used her Starmaiden guise to explain/further mythologise and generally eulogise the whole Cosmic Couriers trip. Using tracks from previous Cosmic Couriers LPs remixed by Dieter Dierks, and overlaid with Gille's spoken words, the record was very was successful and deeply trippy – it is a real classic. The best two tracks are Brian Barritt's "Cosmic Courier Bon Chance", in which he explains the psychic aspects of making Sci-Fi/Psi-Phi music work, and the greatest of all, "Electronic Zeitalter". This is Ash Ra Tempel at their most Kosmische and with Klaus Schultze. It's a jewelled mantric piece fabulously level all the way through and again using the same chord sequence previously heard on the *Schwingungen* epic "Suche & Liebe" and the *7Up* epic "Time". The voices of Tim Leary and Brian Barritt waft in and out over a timeless Dark Star spacescape. And *Gilles Zeitschiff* has the greatest cover of all the Cosmic Couriers' LPs. It is Peter Geitner's finest moment in the bizarre tackiness of '70s gameshows, huge glitter head-

phones, and an enormous 48" x 36" poster featuring all of the Cosmic Couriers stars.

24. **FAUST – *Faust AKA Clear*** (Polydor)

ARNULF MEIFERT – drums
WERNER DIERMEIER – drums
HANS-JOACHIM IRMLER – organ
GUNTER WUSTHOFF – synthesizer & sax
RUDOLF SOSNA – guitar & keyboards
JEAN-HERVE PERON – bass

Four years ago, I had dinner with a very successful journalist who told me that he'd had to review Love's *Forever Changes* for *Q Magazine* now that it was available on CD. Wow, I shouted. You lucky fucker! Yes, he said. But I know it so well I couldn't summon up any real energy, so I just gave it 8/10. *Forever Changes* is a dark achievement. Were it an ancient text on a document it would be hidden from view and spoken of in obscure circles. But because it operates through the medium of Pop Music, it gets tarts like said Journalist giving it 8/10. This is a classic case of a man Sleepwalking through life. So now I have to set to and tell you about the first Faust album, and I will not let you down. For a start, it's a big 10/10. No, make that 11/10. It defies categories. It's a horrible noise. It's cut-ups to the Nth degree. Part of it is just like Frank Zappa's *Lumpy Gravy* (a funny bit, thank the Goddess.) It is super-gimmicky, syrupy in the weirdest places, and never outstays its welcome. But probably the strangest thing of all is just how good Faust sound when they are creating on the spot moments of rock-'n'roll on the epic "Miss Fortune". Here they transcend all studio trickery, and here they come alive. Listen to the Mothers of Invention's concert recordings from 1966 onwards and it's just trash. Musical bollocks of the most merely capable variety. Faust live? This is a different thing entirely. Like all the greatest Teutonic groups, Faust were brought up with middle-European dances and a staple of folk and tradition which was not 4/4. As a consequence, German bands could get far more complex than U.S. and British bands would ever dare and it still sounds rocking and crazy, rather than a bunch of Twee Smug Gits. Find an old Caravan, Man or Henry Cow LP for 50p somewhere and compare it with this. I'm joking of course.

25. **FAUST – *So Far*** (Polydor)

WERNER DERMAIER – drums
HANS-JOACHIM IRMLER – organ
JEAN-HERVE PERON – bass
RUDOLF SOSNA – guitar & keyboards
GUNTER WUSTHOFF – synthesizer & sax

As classic rock'n'roll album openers go, few beat *So Far's* "It's a Rainy Day (Sunshine Girl)". Tom-toms bom-bom-bom-bom for a few bars, then

a low bass piano copies it in the thud-thud-thud-thud, then the Krautrock Temptations coo to each other: "It's a Rainy day, sunshine girl, it's a rainy day, sunshine baby." Talk about a smart bloody opening. The best sax solo in the world chases the fade. It's my favourite ever Faust song. Have I said that enough times, yet? I'll be honest about it. I really like Krautrock. Faust *So Far* was released in an all black sleeve. The album has a shiny blackness to the music. There's an ominousness in the gross image that depicts the song "No Harm", a small woman being attacked by a gargantuan man, which is disgusting and questionable. But I'm sure that it was intended to displease, though I can't say that is any great reason for an artist to do such a thing. Elements of the Velvet Underground acoustic third album scene is picked out by *Faust* around this time. Also, the brass fanfare of the title track has a tough instrumental skank, pre-dating Can's Teutonic reggae excursions. "Mamie is Blue" is yet another rip of the Soft Machine's "We Did it Again", but the drumming/synthesizer playing duel is truly astonishing music, especially those electric drill funk noises. Side 2 also contains more of the typical Faust semi-cut-up-threatening-to-be-a-song any-moment trip. I think they intended to record a Typical Rock Album as a basic standpoint, but they tried not to make the songs typical at all. Certainly, "It's a Rainy day (Sunshine Girl)" is the classic opener, and "In the Spirit" closes *So Far* the same way "America Drinks and Goes Home" ends the Mothers' *Absolutely Free*, the same way "Jugband Blues" ends *A Saucerful of Secrets*, the way "Something Happened to me Yesterday" ends the Rolling Stones' *Between the Buttons*. Maybe I need a couple more examples. This is a great album. Search it out.

26. **FAUST – *The Faust Tapes*** (Virgin)

ARNULF MEIFERT – drums
WERNER DIERMEIER – drums
RUDOLF SOSNA – guitar & keyboard
HANS JOACHIM IRMLER – organ
JEAN HERVE PERON – bass
GUNTER WUSTHOFF – synthesizer & sax

It well befits the Myth of Krautrock that what became the figurehead of the genre originally bailed out of the shops at 49p! And even more incredible is the recent revelation that Virgin Records lost no money on the campaign. Steve Lewis, the man behind the scam, claims to have taken very few risks for what appeared at the time as an Heroic release. Whilst the mastertape of Faust's home-recordings was bought cheaply from Uwe Nettlebeck, the album sleeve was a glorious Warholian pre-punk mess. One side was press clippings that revealed just how freaked-out their home country had been when the clear *Faust* LP had first appeared in 1971. The other side was Bridgit Riley's monochrome op-art trip called 'Crest'. And even this was an obvious and risk-free winner. Five or so years earlier, Leonard Bernstein's out there *Music for our Time* LP had employed Riley's 'Current' to fabulous effect. That the two different paintings could have

been details of one larger work ensured in advance that *The Faust Tapes* would look great.

The album fades in slowly in a cacophony of rainy city blues, droning synthesizers and tonelessness. An abrupt edit cuts suddenly to a call and answer vocal and drum groove and... bang! A savage edit into... a ballad. Piano, drums, acoustic guitar, Eno-ish synthesizer and voice. A ballad. Except that the vocals were intriguingly trans-Atlantic and sounded insightfully psychedelic in a badly-translated way. It was charming:

"When you leave your place and walk in someone other's garden,
Suddenly you see, it's a woman colour in your mind to be."

Most surprising about *The Faust Tapes* is the number of truly wonderful pop and rock songs hidden within the cut-ups and experiments of the album's tangled grooves. And halfway through Side 1 is their most defining Krautrock riff of all. It's another of Faust's Krautrock/Family Stone/ Temptations trips in the tradition of "It's a Rainy Day". A scientific German-American voice makes pronouncements over the groove and

Gunter Wusthoff's sax tears along over a loopy breakneck driving beat, as the call and answer of life kicks in:

"Chet-vah Buddha, Cherra-loopiz
Chet-vah Buddha, Cherra-loopiz
Chet-vah Buddha, Cherra-loopiz
Chet-vah Buddha, Cherra-loopiz."

50,000 copies of *The Faust Tapes* were sold in 1973 and the night they played at Birmingham Town Hall, it seemed as though those words could become a football anthem. The Heads were taking over. Soon after, as we lay in my friend Cott's caravan listening to The John Peel Show, out of nowhere the DJ began to read out the names of the 20 or more songs from *The Faust Tapes*. The sleeve and label of the LP had showed no titles to any of the songs and Cott raced around trying to find a pen. It was all over in half-a-minute and all I could remember was some title about Humphrey Bogart. It took me a while to come to terms with the fact that John Peel was in on Faust's intended wind-up of its audience – that we were only meant to hear the titles fleetingly and race around like half-wits. And Faust were right... it was their persistence in the Entirety of their trip that makes them so legendary now. Even better, *The Faust Tapes* was the social phenomenon of 1973, and it finally brought the true avant garde into everyone's living room, for a short while at least. But most of all this LP revealed just which side of the fence everyone was really standing. In April 1980, Jim Kerr, leader of dinosaurs Simple Minds, gleefully told me how he and his mates had all chucked their copies of *The Faust Tapes* off the roof of a Glasgow tenement. Enough Said? I'm sure that's the phrase.

27. **FAUST – *IV*** (Virgin)

WERNER DIERMEIER – drums
HANS-JOACHIM IRMLER – organ
GUNTER WUSTHOFF – synthesizer, sax & sleeve art
RUDOLF SOSNA – guitar & keyboards
JEAN-HERVE PERON – bass

This was Faust's oddity. No one got it at the time (apart from the few who are right now saying, "Hold on, I got it!" Yeah, well I never saw you making too much fuss.) Faust left their beloved schoolhouse in Wumme for the plush art-hippy surroundings of Virgin's Manor Studios in Oxfordshire. The difference is large, though sonically not at all. They opened *Faust IV* with "Krautrock", a raging 12 minute Velvets inspired E-major wa-everything instrumental. It's an acid meditation of the highest Theta-in-a-rock-'n'roll-style as you ever would wish to conceive of. 12 minutes is a long while. I don't think the drums come in for about six minutes, though I've never timed it. And though I say Velvets-inspired, only John Cale/Terry Riley's Academy in Peril is a true comparison. But "Krautrock" is just s FUZZY. "The Sad Skinhead" follows, an unlikely bluebeat skank. There's a crap Kim Fowley single from the mid-'70s that opens, "Here comes zee Vest German reggae music!" Well, this is truly it. "The Sad Skinhead" is also like very early Television, bitty and psychotically twee. "Jennifer" is seven minutes of Barrett-ised dream psychedelia, low "A Day in the Life" tom-toms behind the song give it its phenomenal atmosphere. Side 2 is just as good – another semi-medley like Side 2 of *So Far*. There's some raw acid guitar-rock into their classic "Giggy Smile". This is in the top five of all Faust songs. Imagine the Mothers of Invention if they'd coerced Zappa into taking LSD. Faust mix a boogie with a Bavarian on-the beat and get a kind of (yet again) Syd Barrett, "Honey Love You, Honey little Sunday morning love" feeling. Psychotic and jaunty. *Faust IV* finished quite sadly. "It's a bit of a Pain to be where I am" is the lyric. Back on their "Jesus/Some Kinda Love" trip, and they say goodbye – it was the last studio album together. A tragedy, really. But as I was one of *Faust IV's* teen detractors, it's possibly best to just regret that their moment did arrive, did pass, and has now taken its foothold in rock'n'roll history.

28. **GURU GURU – *U.F.O.*** (Ohr)

MANI NEUMEIER – drums, percussion, e. drums, gongs, voice, tape & Contactmike
ULI TREPTE – bass, microphone, transistor radio, intercom & mixer
AX GENRICH – guitar, echo-units & pedals

Guru Guru had no vibe whatsoever in Britain and I remember seeing a copy of this album in Mercer's Record Shop, in Tamworth, when I was 14, and the same copy again when I was 20 during the punk thing. It never sold because we all thought it was a hard rock LP like Jane or Birth Control. Once you spend your money on that stuff, you get scared to experiment

with such limited funds ever again. Which is a shame because *UFO* is what every psychedelic power trio should have sounded like. In fact many of them did until record companies dismissed it as jamming and said, "All well and good but where's the song?" On *UFO*, riffs grind out like Kraut-Sabbath and remedial solos are sustained whilst the drums, at times, move into free-jazz territory so totally at odds with everyone else that it's a berserk and head-detuning moment. There's no point in describing each track as they exist on a planet of their own making, but I'll try in any case. For instance, "Stone-In" opens the album, a spacious moan at mid-tempo, whilst Mani Neumeier wails low and jazzy, like Oscar Peterson used to do. "Girl Call" follows in noise-rock territory until a riff gradually emerges and noogies the brain for a while, whilst Ax Genrich's wa-vibrato peals like bells and pulls at you from all sides, before the most horrible edit into Retardville and the genius of "Next Time See You at the Dalai Lama". The title-track covers half of Side 2, a Dark Star mass of becalmed deep-space. This is my favourite side of Guru Guru. There's a 12-minute track of equal intensity on the second LP, *Hinten*, called "Spaceship". The album ends with "Der LSD-Marsch", which sounds as though it was recorded in a school rehearsal hall after listening to the Troggs – over-recorded recorders and space-whispers give way to Joy Division intensity that will not give up. But simple fuzz-themes and co-exist with the resident free-bass and jazz drums on *UFO*.

Other Records: *Though I've only put one Guru Guru LP in my Top 50, I should mention that their first four LPs are remarkable and charming in a curious and inspiring way. I'd recommend you listen to HINTEN, KAN-GURU and GURU GURU but I personally get less into them as they become more quirky and feature more rock elements.*

29. **SERGIUS GOLOWIN – *Lord Krishna Von Goloka*** (Cosmic Couriers KK 55002)

SERGIUS GOLOWIN – spoken word
JERRY BERKERS (Wallenstein) – bass & guitars, bongos & vocals
JURGEN DOLLASE (Wallenstein) – piano, mellotron, vibraphone, triangle & guitar
JORG MIERKE – e. guitar, organ, percussion, spoken word & vocals, flute, electronics & congas
KLAUS SCHULTZE (Ash Ra Tempel) – drums & percussion, organ, Mellotron, guitars & electronics
WALTER WESTRUPP – acoustic guitar, flute, mouth-organ, South Cambodian windchimes, psalter, tablas & percussion
BERND WITTHUSER – acoustic guitar

In which, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser offered us the second of his great Mage Recordings. After Timothy Leary (KK55001) had so moved the producer with *7Up*, 'The Kaiser' and his Starmaiden Gille Letmann decided to stay in Switzerland and record some more of the wise old men. As with Leary, the recording of Sergius Golowin, the middle-aged ex-MP, was nothing less than a full-on Vision-saga. Six musicians accompanied Golowin's pro-

nouncements throughout the LP, and it's most remarkable of all that the speaker showed such restraint, often letting the band fly off into Ash Ra Tempel-land at any opportunity. It makes the most sensational combination and a long Kosmische-epic of high magic proportions. Opening with the 15 minute plus "Der Reigen", the LP announces its occultural intention with sombre pre-Christian keyboards then softly softly into the ritual... a building slow amoeba production, at first scouting but soon positive in its holy direction. This music is a life, but then "Der Reigen" means the dance and these performers are whipping it out. There is one very different song on this LP, called "Die Weisee Alm". It's a piece of Jurgen Dollase music and it is very beautiful indeed. The chords are mawkishly Cosmically sentimental, in a huge Alpen Euro-keyboard way as Golowin tells us of the Edelweiss blooming. It sounds unlike any other song I've heard before, conjuring up the same daft but nevertheless true feelings as something like David Ackles' heroic "Montana Song" from *American Gothic*.

The huge unfolding driving thing called "Die Hoch-Zeit" covers the whole of Side 2, in which Klaus Schultze's drums are combine harvesters in a Canadian wheat field 50 miles across. Massive choirs of mellotron hold the distant horizon and the machine that is the music covers the land like locusts. Dry dry music. Arid heavy tragedy – Side 2 of Joy Division's *Closer*. Golowin doesn't even say a word for about the first eight minutes. Then he's off on a long intense psychic bloodletting of indescribable beauty. Underneath, the music rages off sometimes inaudible, sometimes unlistenable, sometimes so holy, so righteous that the listener lifts into hyper-space and clarity is approaching. There is no doubt this is the very highest magic – believe me. The Ur-klang of Mesolithic Man. No intellectual ever made music such as this. Golowin has three wives and lives in the mountains still. His voice and that music. A righteous vision.

30. **HARMONIA – *Musik von Harmonia*** (Brain)

J. ROEDELIUS – organ, piano, guitar & e. percussion
MICHAEL ROTHER – guitar, piano, organ & e. percussion
DIETER MOEBIUS – synthesizer, guitar & e. percussion

Like eternal music that has briefly surfaced into the real world, "Watussi" fades in tripping over itself, its drum-machine rhythm as unlikely and flat-footed as anything on the trio's collaborations on Cluster's *Zuckerzeit*. Indeed, it is this otherworldy quality courses throughout the debut Harmonia album; melodies are both child-like and cosmically eternal at the same time. The next track "Sehr Kosmisch (Very Cosmic)" (!) also fades in, a distant 11-minute mood piece propelled by heartbeat bass drum and the synthesizers of another cosmos calling to us. Eventually, huge hothouse drum rhythms come pulsing out of nowhere, similar in general attitude to the low-key side of Eno's *Another Green World*. And then it's off on the electronic horse-ride of "Sonnenschein", a beautiful electric snare-drum march that reminds me of Omar Sharrif's dramatic and endless arrival out

of the heat haze in David Lean's "Lawrence of Arabia". It is difficult to explain these pieces. They are vignettes of a sort, but far more than that, taking up vast areas of sound and then disappearing back into the cosmic flow. "Dino" is an uplifting Neu! groove under a sibilant and all-pervading drum-machine. Michael Rother's guitar is prominent and tragic on this track, preparing us for the pure Cluster of "Ohrwurm (Earworm)", a static melodically challenged slob-piece with Dieter Moebius' guitar showing a delightfully slack and underachieving sound. "Ahoi!" is becalmed on a river, a half-speed messing about in boats trip with no percussion and a rhythm that has all the urgency of a fat man in a kid's paddling pool, whilst "Veterano" returns to the "Dino" fast 4/4 drum-machine dominated sound, over which typical Cluster/Harmonia pretty prettiness plays alongside a curiously *Ege Bamyasi*-period Michael Karoli-styled guitar lick. Again, the loud drum-machine trips over itself and virtually consigns the rest of the music to the back of the hall. The whole album is one of caught moods, like catching the little people playing on a remote VHS camera but knowing that they'd have run a mile had you been there. Musik Von Harmonia is very much like that – it hardly seems to be the product of modern musicians, existing in a different period of the world. And with the strange toy-like electric piano of "Hausmusik", Harmonia are gone. Their second LP was nothing like as curious sounding, far more confident and upfront. But this LP is meditational despite the shortness of its tracks, and each mood-piece of long snippets of feel and vibration sends the listener into a delightfully whacked-out state.

31. **HARMONIA – *Deluxe*** (Brain)

MICHAEL ROTHER – guitars, keyboards, vocals
HANS-JOACHIM ROEDELIUS – keyboards, vocals
DIETER MOEBIUS – synthesizer, Nagoya harp & vocals
with
MANI NEUMEIER (Guru Guru) – drums

Even in general Krautrock terms, *Deluxe* is an unknown and often dismissed record. That it is a classic will soon be recognised, for it is disturbing to hear "Monza" the same way as Neu!'s "Hero" or La Dusseldorf's "La Dusseldorf" is disturbing. It's just too goddamn early! But I digress. *Deluxe* opens with the beautiful melody of the titletrack, a vocal and synthesizer slow gallop close to mid-'70s Kraftwerk in atmosphere. The beautiful choral melody repeats over & over and the song cycles around and around. There is a timelessness about the music which, despite its crass sounds, is spacey and utterly charming. Next up and clear to the end of Side 2 is the pulsing and formidable "Walky-Talky", at which point Mani Neumeier is introduced. Had Jaki Leibezeit played the part, he would have rendered it as Neu! would have played it – see the early Rother albums as proof. But Mani Neumeier renders the beat far more into a horseride than a drive, and he keeps the organic-ness of the track intact over its 10 minutes of pulse existence. And then it's on to Side 2, where "Monza" presents Step 2 of the

punk road from *Neu '75's* "Hero" and "After Eight". The funny repeated vocals are back over a sibilant drum beat and the most intense guitar playing. Words cannot describe this. Then it's on to the low-key fades of "Notre Dame" – a synthesizer drone piece with percussion effects and the tacky Bavarian string synthesizers that La Dusseldorf later became so fond of. "Gollum" could be from *Sowiesoso* (at this time only one year away from recording) with its film theme melody and unfamiliar Neumeier drumming. Likewise, the last track "Kekse" is a *Sowiesoso*-type song of primitive programming and wistful child's keyboards. *Deluxe* is hard to write about, but it is a classic Krautrock LP.

32. ***Kraftwerk*** (Vertigo)

God knows where Ralf & Florian were at during this first LP. They constructed grooves out of laboured bricklayer riffs which truly have no groove at all. It's so tight-assed you want to prise it apart with a hammer. Kraftwerk opens with the monster Krautrock epic "Ruckzack". The opening eternal synthesizer chord is peculiarly like a garage version of the "Autobahn" beginning. Then it's off into the strangest mix of Neu! rhythm and a horrible jaunty Jethro Tull flute groove with no melody. Yet the whole thing also reminds me of something off the second Suicide album. Anyway, there's all these references flying at you at once, and then it gets weird as only Krautrock can get. A big foul atonal organ comes in, followed by spacey Moog synthesizer, then the whole song speeds up, not gradually, but out of nowhere. It speeds up and slows down as though one person played every instrument and is in perfect non-harmony with himself. So it's a remarkable feat which can only have been achieved by either Ralf or Florian conducting everyone. Then this great motorik groove becomes a horrid rhythmless noise, which fades out and back in a kind of phased psychedelic early Van Der Graaf Generator way. This continues for some time. It is extremely epic and cosmic like a roller-coaster on magic mushrooms. Whoa! And this just carries on continuing... phasing... disappearing... reappearing...phasing again. It predates Neu! and it is very Neu! And it's a remarkably rocking start to the first ever Kraftwerk album.

The other song on Side 1 is the far more experimental but similarly berserk "Stratovarious". At 12 minutes, this song starts as a meditation, though a very squealing one, then develops into a many headed monster efficiently playing four instruments at once extremely accurately in terms of timing and power of thrashout, but playing none of those instruments technically well in any virtuoso sense. When it finally can't get any faster, it gives up and falls in on itself. Then the song picks up an "L.A. Woman" groove that can't help getting a bit faster all the time. And the groove is very cranky and un-oiled. There's creaking wa-wa pedals and a very Soft Machine fuzztone organ, Hamfisted and furious. It's brilliant.

Side 2's "Megaherz" is a Deep-space grill-out. We seem to get the musical information at delayed intervals. It is quite beautiful. Rich tones steep the music in thick heady stew of sound, especially in the light of the closing

electric storm from hell they called "Vom Himmel Hoch". Ha. What a track. Doodlebugs, V1 and V2 missiles, flying bombs, call them whatever. They just keep flying over the horizon, only to be destroyed by enormous explosions. It's a late blitz on Kraftwerk's home town. The song begins to pick up, and Kraftwerk actually begin to groove, turbulently, flailingly, drums and synthesizer farts vying for the most grooove. It's the inevitable Kraftwerk stumble-riff which speeds up/slows down as usual with wild synthesizer "conversations" and clanky-ness of an industrial East German variety. Wild farty music that slips into ambience only to wrench off your scrotum the next moment. A synth-bass comes in, the whole thing picks up speed and it's the Stooges at Toys R Us. Neu! and the Muppets join in and it's Truly a classic record. Of course, Ralf & Florian end it all with a fucking huge bomb.

33. ***La Dusseldorf*** (Decca)

KLAUS DINGER – guitar & vocals
THOMAS DINGER – percussion, vocals & light
HANS LAMPE – percussion & electronics
with
NIKOLAUS VAN RHEIN – keyboards & synthesizer
HARALD KONIETZKO – bass

Klaus Dinger's finest moment lasts for the whole of the first Dusseldorf album. From the moment the needle touches down, it's a sonic speed trip through every street in Dusseldorf city. Klaus Dinger and his two drummer/cohorts came up with such a stunning album here that punk rock happened and Bowie copped a feel. We all know this, but why was it so good as to cause these effects? Because underneath the dumb-dumb exterior is a great songwriter and Mr. Hookline of all time. Dinger pulls a chorus out of a single synthesizer line, he gives his whole manifesto in one word chants. On the whole record, there are four songs, three with words (the other being their intrumental monster hit "Silver Cloud"). The words are "Dusseldorf" (From the opening song "Dusseldorf"), "Dusseldorf" (again, from the following song, "La Dusseldorf"), and "Time" (From the song "Time".) Yet Klaus Dinger's melodies and sense of rhythm and build are masterful. They use weak rhythm guitar, like Neu!, and a powerful drum-led sound full of cosmic surf-punk synthesizers. It's like no-one, but shares a similar spirit to Sigue Sigue Sputnik. Uncool and cool. Masterful and arrogant. This is intentionally and wilfully amateurish genius.

34. **LA DUSSELDORF – *Viva*** (Nova/Radar)

KLAUS DINGER – vocals, percussion & guitars
THOMAS DINGER – drums & vocals
HANS LAMPE – drums & percussion
with
ANDREAS SCHELL – piano
NIKOLAUS VAN RHEIN – keyboards & synthesizers
HARALD KONIETZKO – occasional bass

Viva was Klaus Dinger's most hopeful album of all, coming in late 1978 after the negative aspects of punk had finally kicked in. Here was the man whose sound had been the architectural blueprint on which British punk was based, yet now he was singing of life and love over all. *Viva* opens with the French sung title-track, a post-Heroes two minutes 30 seconds of beauty, which segues into the funny Roxy/Mott the Hoople piano drive of "White Overalls". "New style hit the city," wails Klaus. "It's white overalls," repeating "Overall overall overall" in a funny Bavarian piss-take way. Many people cannot take this – the sheer Germanness of it all is encoded in synthesizer sounds that evoke the lost days of Grimm's Fairy Tales and Kindergarten. The long instrumental "Rheinita" is like "Silver Cloud", the hit single from La Dusseldorf's first LP, motorik bassless double-drums beating the synthesizers and pianos along an autobahn where there are no cars, no people, only the forms of civilisation with the people it was built for long gone. The short garden recording of the sound FX track "Vogel (Bird)" leads us into the ultra-singalong "Gelt (Gold)" which closes Side 1. The double-drums again propel us into the most serene and obvious melodic land where string synthesizers and the wobbly funny analogue sounds are then repeated as vocal melodies. It is this singing of keyboard tunes that makes the whole trip so charming. Especially as Klaus Dinger sings of the Beatles' "All You Need is Love" over the candy sweet fuzz guitars and phased rhythms. Side one finishes with the repeated chorus: "Make Love, Make Love, Make Love, Make Love Not War." Right on…

Side 2 returns to the epic Kosmische territory of Hope with the side long 20 minute of "Cha Cha 2000". Here, Dinger takes us into a land inhabited by Walter Carlos' A Clockwork Orange soundtrack and the annoyingly agreeable sounds of Kraftwerk's *Autobahn*. Dinger sings "The future is calling" and tells us that we all need to change, to start looking deep within ourselves. It's charming and naive yet utterly believable in the context of the whole Dusseldorf trip. I guess you'll have to listen to this to decide – I know Krautfans who find this side of Dinger's muse too mawkish and gooey. Me? I trust the guy all the way and I cry when I'm caught in its dumb holding-pattern.

Other Records: *Though the third La Dusseldorf LP INDIVIDUELLOS is not in my Top 50, it would certainly be in my Top 60. Dinger took the funny Bavarian sound to its logical conclusion on this final album, even re-recording a classic song from Neu! as "Leiber Honig '81".*

35. **MOEBIUS & PLANK – *Rastakrautpasta*** (Sky Records)

DIETER MOEBIUS & CONNY PLANK – all instruments
HOLGER CZUKAY – bass

This is an album of slobbering and drooling genius. Seven pieces of empty spacehead on-the-beat Krautfunk. The album opens with "News", samples of TV news over a heavy bass slide-trombone groove. Actually, there's no bass slide-trombone at all but that's the effect created. The title track is the funniest dude-ingest track since the grooves on Lou Reed's 1978 album *Street Hassle*, another curve-ball out of nowhere. This inner-city Bavarian reggae loads Lee Perry absurdities on top of Faust absurdities and combines them all with the New York of Dillinger's *Cocaine in my Brain*. Huge synthesizer melodies with catchy-as-hell harmonies, some of which make you grit your teeth, over a garagey white *There's a Riot Goin' On* rhythm track. The classic rock'n'roller monster is "Feedback 66", the title alone would have made Suicide cream. The track itself growls along like electro-Stooges, similar to the machine sounds of Suicide's second album. And ugly feedback (mike feedback... not even guitar feedback) all-the-way. If Moebius & Plank were not geniuses of the Teutonic-kind, they could not have attempted such a speculative foray as *Rastakrautpasta*. But when it falls on its ass it doesn't matter because, success or failure, it's always funny. Ha, they had no World Music aspirations, thank fuck.

36. ***Neu!*** (United Artists/Brain)

KLAUS DINGER – percussion, guitar, vocals & Japanese banjo,
MICHAEL ROTHER – guitar, deliguitar, bass & double-bass

23 years ago, I lay in a caravan in Tamworth in Staffordshire and had my attitude to ALL music changed. The piece, which was playing on the John Peel Show, was called "Hallogallo" and was the opening track from the first LP by Neu! Nothing ever sounded so different to me, and still nothing has superseded "Hallogallo" for its sheer bravery of sound. Whilst most Krautrock groups layered their sounds in epic sheets of impressionism, the Neu! sound was a dry and upfront expressionism. It's mystery was in its refusal to be mysterious – everything could be heard on first listen and this was a most beguiling quality. A bass-less motorik beat leads "Hallogallo" from a long fade into straight ahead E-major riffless grooving. Behind it, intermittent backward guitars punctuate like seagulls on echo-less cliffs. There is no melody. There is no vocal. There is nothing to tell you where you are in this seamless corridor with no end. If Neu! had split right after the opening track of their first LP they would still have changed rock'n'roll.

But *Neu!* was a blueprint for a new kind of rock'n'roll with no past and no immediate future, and it was to be seven years before the world caught up, if they ever truly did. On the rest of Side 1, "Sonderangebot" explores music about to take off but never doing so, hanging in mid-air – its slowed down backward cymbals billowing like speeded up clouds before finally

exploding into the watery wa-guitar/dry drum beauty of the now Neu-standard "Weissensee". Side 2 continues in this low low-key manner. "Im Gluck (In Luck)" retains the suspension of rhythm and the characteristic Michael Rother wa-guitar, whilst the album closer "Lieber Honig" is again drumless, led only by Klaus Dinger's fragmented Japanese banjo and breathy Damo Suzuki soundalike vocal. In the background is Rother's awesomely low bowed double-bass. Indeed, the entire first Neu! LP could have been a mantra supreme had they rejected one specific song. But that song is almost 10 minutes long and opens up wounds on Side 2 that break the listener out of any stupor – clearly the aim of the musicians. The track is "Negativland", now another Neu! standard. With its shrieking drill opening, "Negativland" is a studious non-groove which speeds up and slows down at will, the drums and bass louder than anything yet merely functional as seven years early post-punk Keith Levene/John McGeoch guitars howl hideous chordless and distorted. *Neu!* is never a disappointment even after 23 years. It is never a beauty to get used-to.

37. NEU! – *Neu 2* (Brain/UA)

MICHAEL ROTHER – guitar, bass, piano, fiddle, zither, percussion & electronics
KLAUS DINGER – Japanese banjo, 11-string guitar, percussion, Farfisa piano, Bandonion, speaking, electronic & record-player

Aha, Neu!'s great mistake/misjudgement – the one they fucked up the budget on and had to finish in a hurry. So what's it really like? It's a classic. Of course. Like all true experimentalists, Klaus Dinger and Michael Rother fell on their ass from time to time. But what's an experiment for if there is never a failure? And this failure is undoubtedly one of the most successful ever. *Neu 2* begins with "Fur Immer (Forever)", an 11-minute cover version of "Hallogallo", opener on *Neu!*. But this is a more lush and fertile, greener landscape than the short-grassed plains of the *Neu!* LP. "Fur Immer" is less experimental, warmer and more accessible, more driving too. But from then on in it's a pop-art blitz of jagged off-the-beat edits and repeats like something from Amon Düül's *Psychedelic Underground*. It's a sound-effects record of endless churchbells and wind, of the classic Dinger beat threatening from time to time, until "Lila Engel (Lilac Angel)" bursts in to end Side 1 with bassless clatterdrum-groove, machine-gun stutter one-chord guitar and howled hollered vocals that always sound like:

"Oh, dee der dat dut dat duh-dah, Oh, dee der dat dut dat duh-dah,
Oh, dee der dat dut dat duh-dah, Oh, dee der dat dut dat duh-dah."

Side 2 is the real fuck off. There is no cohesion at all. "Neuschnee" at its proper speed and also at 78 rpm, "Super" at correct speed but also at 78 rpm and 16 rpm. "Hallo Excentrico!" is created thus: "Fur Immer" is recorded with Klaus Dinger putting his fingers on the tape-machine whilst Michael Rother and Conny Plank have a conversation in the control room. And the Neu 2 vibe is extended right over into the sleeve where all photographs are stuck down by large blobs of tape and the whole of Side 2 is crossed out and

written over in pen. The photos of Rother & Dinger are actually photocopies of passport photobooth shots, and Dinger's face is painted like a glam superhero.

38. **NEU! – *Neu '75*** (UA/Brain)

KLAUS DINGER – voice, percussion, guitar, piano & organ
MICHAEL ROTHER – guitar, piano, synthorchestra, electronics & voice
THOMAS DINGER – drums
HANS LAMPE – drums

This is Neu!'s perfect album. The reunion that transcended all their previous history. Perhaps the lack of pressure brought everything into clarity for just long enough. *Neu '75* begins with the totally typical motorik drivingness of "Isi", but all the guitars have been substituted with a schoolroom piano of remedial efficiency and beautiful oboe-like synthesizers that billow and coo like Eddie Jobson, when he was still trying to sound like Eno hadn't left Roxy Music on Stranded. "Seeland" follows, a floating drifting sunset of a song with weeping dual lead guitars like an awesomely slowed down New-age version of Thin Lizzy around "The Boys are Back in Town". Okay, that's exaggerating, but the guitar is between that first description and Bowie's *Heroes* title-track. But then, this LP and La Dusseldorf were the two blueprints for Big Dave's Berliner period. The side finishes with the Damo Suzuki-type space vocal of "Leb'Wohl", another schoolroom piano from another kindergarten – drifting, wistful and charming with its obvious tapes of waves lapping on a beach.

Side 2 begins the transformation with the classic Ur-punk of "Hero", in which every proto-punk device is thrown into its six heavenly screamed minutes. Klaus Dinger sings like a man possessed (though not possessed with a singing voice) over banked Steve Jones massed guitars and the double drumming of life. This is followed by the 10 minute Krautgroove of "E-Musik" – a kind of mantric Bavarian shuffle that subtly pulverises the flesh over a long time. Then it's back to "Hero" again, here re-named "After Eight", and a much wilder version. Klaus Dinger has by now given up even attempting to be coherent and just drools the words out. It's the end of the best Neu! LP of all. Buy it and find out.

39. **POPOL VUH – *Affenstunde*** (Liberty)

FLORIAN FRICKE – Moog synthesizer
HOLGER TRULZSCH – percussion
FRANK FIEDLER – synthesizer-mixdown

Beginning with the Splashing of Time's pool, *Affenstunde* (Monkey Hour) soon pulses off into the cosmos with its curious Dr. Who meets the Clangers sounds. Here, the big Moog was in its non-classical setting and setting the avant-garde on its head. That this is 1970 seems extremely early, but

Florian Fricke was never so much ahead of time as out of time: that is he appeared as an avant-gardist but was really a traditionalist-hearted Visionary. The rhythm on the unwieldy-titled opening track "Ich Mache Einen Speigel – Dream Part 4" is all generated from the synthesizer, like distant planets signalling to each other. Occasionally, a blip and a beep and there's a whole new cosmic messenger ready to make contact. "Dream Part 5" is wholly percussive, a mass of rhythms and contra-rhythms recorded in the listeners face. The humorously titled "Dream Part 49" is a claustrophobic dense affair where an other worldly synthesizer checks out an uninhabited planet. Side 2 features the 18 and a half minute title-track, which begins with weird hollow percussion, an endlessly galloping exhilarating rhythm which is Crusader-like, conjuring up images of the Saracens, and early Islam. Voices, real and synthesized, appear in the background, awesome synthesizer screeches and then more hollow percussion. Finally, the whole thing breaks down to a single synthesizer voice and what appears to be a road sweeper passing slowly outside. It is not that but another of Fricke's tricks. A low tone begins, a hanging bouncing pulse behind it, the bell-tone dips and melodically forms into a Keltic mantra of some great beauty – Ivor Cutler's "Life in a Scotch Sitting-Room" is the mood that springs to mind. There are also correlations with the "Telstar" theme, a kind of archetypal stellarness. It's the use of early Moog which sounds similar to "Telstar"'s monophonic clavioline – a 1950s fore-runner to the synthesizer which has similarly sharp tones. As the developing Kelt piece unfolds, hollow percussion invades and Fricke fools around with the modulation to get ridiculous but effective hooting sounds. *Affenstunde* is a marvel of atmosphere and innocence.*

**It's hard to imagine that this first album would be merely a shadow compared to the impending IN DEM GARTEN PHAROAS. Indeed, the title-track of that record is very similar to most of AFFENSTUNDE. Only when "Vuh" kicks in does the High Authority of A Greater Life truly kick in. See following review.*

40. **POPOL VUH – *In Den Garten Pharoas*** (Pilz)

FLORIAN FRICKE – Moog synthesizer, organ & Fender piano
HOLGER TRULZSCH – African & Turkish percussion
FRANK FIEDLER – Moog synthesizer mixdown

The title-track of *In Den Garten Pharoas* is the natural harmony of ancient everyday life. Fast drumming in an underground cave, the sculling of oars and a waterfall where women are crouched at their daily washing. The artificial Star Trek voice of a woman, a priestess, calling the faithful to prayer. The sound of water rushing by a community of endless ancient souls, *this track is more evocative of the damp Northern Europe of ancient times than the Pharoah's* fertile but hot garden of 5000 years ago. Holger Trulzsch's congas are soon beating the tribes down, welcoming them into the ritual as Florian Fricke's moog courses its way down the endless sub-

terranean channels long ago cut into the still forming earth. The congas blow and blow until, after many minutes, the beautiful Fender piano cuts through like a clear cool pond of lilies, frogs and a wild flute player sitting on the bank. This is divine healing music – a wondrous elegiac Adam and Eve trip. The theme reminds me of something from that classic Elektra LP *Cosmic Sounds* by The Zodiac. It is soothing in a familiar way, traditional in its musicality but unorthodox in its context. There are only two tracks on this album, and each could not be more different. Amidst roaring cymbals and cathedral organ, like the death of a great statesman, "Vuh" opens its gates to a great flood of energy, a coursing nutritious sound that cooks the listener in their own aura and delivers their soul to the heavens. I have mentioned earlier that this piece of High-energy is a little beyond the norm. Like "Fly & Collision of Comas Sola" on T. Dream's *Alpha Centauri*, "Vuh" is a mantra to lose your mind to. Florian Fricke recorded this piece on the great medieval organ at Skiftskirche Baumburg. Whoa, this ideal combination of High Christian Tools and the Master Magician is all too obvious. And by the time the Turkish Chimes begin their fury, it is all to obvious that one of thee great meditational Holy works has been captured on tape.

41. **POPOL VUH – *Einjager & Seibenjager*** (Kosmische Musik)

FLORIAN FRICKE – piano & spinette
DANNY FICHELSCHER – e. & acoustic guitar, drums & percussion
DJONG YUN – vocal
with
OLAF KUBLER – flute

Danny Fichelscher's spindly vibrating one-minute guitar opus "Kleiner Kreiger" opens this bizarrely light and airy album. Then it's pretty much Florian Fricke's trip the rest of the way. I can only describe the strange beat of "King Minos" as Hip-Bland music, so inspiring yet using almost Carpenters chords. Fricke's piano is supported only by Danny Fichelscher's heavenly guitar and his crashing cymbal-led drumming. "Morgengruss" continues the Hip-Bland edge with its ultra-melodic lead guitars and 12-strings. But Fricke is a past master of sailing close to the wind, and he never fails to drag some emotion or other out of the listener that the listener has forgotten he ever had inside him. "Wurfelspeil" returns to the "King Minos" place, this time supported by the flute of Olaf Kubler, Amon Düül II's producer. It is a dramatically uplifting music, especially with the bass-less rock'n'roll drums. "Gutes Land" closes Side 1 with its piano and cymbals peaceful piece, the theme consciously echoing the main theme from the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, then moving into a kind of Television area where Danny Fichelscher's rapturous guitars remind me of "Venus" from *Marquee Moon*. The whole of Side 2 is occupied by the epic title-track "One Soldier & Seven Soldiers". The sleeve of the album is one of Peter Geitner's Kosmische Musik greats – a classical Chinese print of a soldier pursued across water by flotillas of enemies,

surrounded by gematriac designs of suns and planets in gold and saffron yellow.

The tragic voice of Dyong Yun soars over a gentle piano theme, until the now familiar guitar and drum themes of Danny Fichelscher crash in to intrude most gorgeously and ethereally. The music builds gradually until, without becoming aware of it, it is flooding the room, Fichelscher's guitar is strangulated and desperate, until all falls and the gentle introduction theme returns. It is a truly unexpected and magical music. I cannot imagine any but the German artists of this period getting away with this. In any other hands, it could be horribly produced and ruined. As it is, the degree of sheer virtuosity is always overwhelmed by the minimal low-key production and the deep and obvious transcendence of the players.

42. **POPOL VUH – *Hosianna Mantra*** (Kosmische Musik)

POPOL VUH (FLORIAN FRICKE) – piano & cembalo
CONNY VEIT – 12-string & e.guitar
ROBERT ELISCU – oboe
DYONG YUN – vocals
KLAUS WEISE – tamboura
with
FRITZ SONNLEITNER – violin

This is the record on which Florian Fricke actually appeared as Popol Vuh! This is where he tried to combine the newness of his eastern musical discoveries with the traditional church music he grew up with. It is spectacularly, beautifully timeless. The opening track, "Ah", features lilting oboe playing the Tiny Tears melody, but whose classical name I've forgotten. The occasionally featured Japanese female singer, Djong Yun, makes ethereal contribution to the album, especially on the second track "Kyrie". And the then 17-year old Connie Veit is the other star of the record, his guitar ranging through eloquent restrained accompanying 12-string to stupendous gone magical lead guitar. It's hard to explain the devotional quality of this record. It sounds like a recording made on a retreat, perhaps at some cosmic convalescent home. And the low-key epic 10-minute title-track which closes Side 1 is truly healing music which treads a divine line between the obvious eastern exploration of the times and the utterly unexplored world (in the rock field certainly) of Christian Spirituality. Side 2 opens with my two favourite tracks of all. Firstly, "Abshied" is a rippling teetering and falling piano piece, reminiscent of parts of John Cale's *The Academy in Peril*, but that is really wide of the mark and I'm struggling to find a context to describe it. "Segnung" follows, another divine seagull guitared soar above the rippling piano waves and Robert Eliscu's oboe and vocals of Djong Yun. The last beautiful dream song is "Nicht Hoch in Himmel (Not High in Heaven)", strangely titled as the ever-upward Lee Underwood jazzy belltone guitar combines with Djong Yun's vocals and the piano to sound utterly ascending, devotional and heavenly. *Hosianna Mantra* sounds like nothing else I've heard.

43. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Electronic Meditation*** (Ohr)

EDGAR FROESE – 6 & 12-string guitars, organ, piano, broken glass
KLAUS SCHULTZE – drums, metalstick, whip
CONRAD SCHNITZLER – cello, violin, guitar

As pure experimentation goes, *Electronic Meditation* was a wild success. The cello of Conrad Schnitzler dominates the opening moments of "Geburt (Genesis)", swooping high up the neck then down down down to the lowest notes, as Edgar Froese's guitar begins to beat out a clanky non-rhythm and Klaus Schultze's furious tom-toms hesitate at first then burst through the sound to establish a huge tribal beat. Flute dances around the track as ugly crash guitar chords build... but it all falls to pieces. And noise, rhythmless and annoying, is the only thing left. Gradually, an organ shape develops, but "Genesis" is never more than a strung-out beginning to a very wild record. And it's only on the comparatively standard weirdness of the 13 minute "Journey Through a Burning Brain" that any kind of rock'n'roll is achieved. Here, one rhythm guitar and drums support one of the most bitty acidy fried solo guitar excursions of all time. Klaus Schultze's drums are stupendous: a blur of thunderous toms that shatter the VU meters whilst the guitars, goaded by the drumming, begin to do battle in a way that no American bands ever attempted. It's a fucking riot that even the Texan bands never came close to. If you think you've heard rock'n'roll without hearing this LP, you are crazy. Side 2 opens with the experiments of "Cold Smoke", a kind of organ based feel-piece which slowly builds into a recognisable musical performance. The pounding drums eventually give up, then try again, then... after what seems like ages, another furious jam builds – the guitars are bitty bitty, feeding back constantly. Pure manic inspiration. It's as if Conrad Schnitzler's guitar has to be struck constantly just to curse the fucker from its annoying but fitting microphonic feedback. The track cuts off at its height, horribly edited into the next free-rock piece. "Asche zu Asche (Ashes to Ashes)" again features the feedback guitar as Froese returns to his earthbound organ-playing. The drums still fuss and freak out, but no-one goes with them for a while until, again, all hell breaks loose. Finally, a hymnal organ and backward spoken words announce the last track of the LP "Auferstehung (Resurrection)" and we are back in the same territory as the opening track "Geburt".

44. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Alpha Centauri*** (Ohr)

CHRIS FRANKE – percussion, lotos flute, pianoharp, zither & synthesizer
EDGAR FROESE – guitar, gliss bass, organ, voice & coffee machine
STEVE SCHROYDER – organ, voice, several echo machines, iron stick
with
UDO DENNEBOURG – flute & words
ROLAND PAULYCK – synthesizer

It was at this time that I loved, feared and was in awe of T. Dream. My older friend, Cott, he of the Revox reel-to-reel and the money of one who was 17,

walked into Diskery in Birmingham and bought a white label of *AlphaCentauri*. To me it invoked times both beyond the apocalypse and before the flood.

Klang! Another organ and harmonic guitar beginning, wailing synthesizer, stop-start rhythms and a building frequency of yet more synthesizer announces the start of *Alpha Centauri*. Flute dances over the grungey organ, more rhythmless synthesizer, a gradual opening up of this awesomely restricted sound, the organ becomes stereo and the perspectives widen. The false start of "Sunrise in the Third System" is over, and the introduction is complete. And then the slow build begins again into one of T. Dream's greatest ever tracks, "Fly & Collision of Comas Sola". This huge 13-minute epic is not rock'n'roll, though it has some of the ingredients. But the vast sweeps of cosmic synthesizer and the flatfooted church organ act as special grounders on which the main aspect of freak out, the drums and flute, can be hung. It's as though the musicians feel each others' vibrations but cannot hear the notes the others are playing, similar to the relationship between the backing tracks and the vocals on Captain Beefheart's *Troutmask Replica*. And as the intensity reaches its height, Chris Franke's jazz based tom-tom blitzouts is as crazy as Klaus Schultze's contribution to "Journey Through a Burning Brain" on *Electronic Meditation*. On Side 2, the title-track is a vast 22-minute Kosmische mood-piece utilising synthesizers, flutes, and the first leanings towards the huge follow-up, *Zeit*. Steve Schroyder's echoed organ has the greatest sound here, a precursor to the forthcoming T. Dream sound, and also mirroring the Conrad Schnitzler cello sound from the first LP. But Schroyder would have no part in T. Dream's future after this record, being booted out by Edgar Froese and relocating to Ash Ra Tempel, the other greatest Kosmische Group in Germany. The album finishes with a beautiful Teutonic chorale. T. Dream have always been great with atmosphere voices and never afraid to bring it all out – belching or farting, it would be no problem to them if it meant getting the right effect.

45. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Zeit*** (Ohr)

CHRIS FRANKE – VCS3 synthesizer, cymbals & keyboard
EDGAR FROESE – gliss guitar & generator
PETER BAUMANN – VCS3 synthesizer, organ & vibraphon
with
STEVE SCHROYDER (Ash Ra Tempel) – organ
FLORIAN FRICKE (Popol Vuh) – moog synthesizer
JOCHEN VON GRUMBCOW (Holderlin) – cello
HANS JOACHIM BRUNE – cello
JOHANNES LUCKE – cello
CHRISTIAN VALLBRACHT – cello

Aaaaaah… the harmony of *Zeit* is the greatest of any rock'n'roll lullabies. Its soothing medicating soporific tones are an exquisite flying carpet that takes you ever so gently up into the Land of Hyper-nod. Though *Zeit* is not

my favourite T. Dream LP, it is by far the most played and the one I would kiss Edgar Froese hardest for creating. 80 minutes of utter Kosmische beauty. Music that hangs in Deep-space. Songs the size of planets with titles the size of cities: "The Birth of Liquid Plejades", "Nebulous Dawn", "Origin of Supernatural Probabilities" and the title track "Zeit". Released on one CD, *Zeit* is a perfect riot. I spin it over & over for hours on end. Like the Tony Conrad CD, its remarkable unchanging unfolding near-static barely-shifting vegetable organic-ness takes over the room and permeates the whole house. If you leave to pee or make tea, the room in which *Zeit* is playing becomes that room. You know that anyone calling in the middle of its playing will never see that room in the same light ever again. And that's about all I can say. Look at the line-up of musicians above. It sounds like that. Imagine tripping and seeing the testcard moving on TV. *Zeit* is quite like a planet-sized version.

46. **TANGERINE DREAM – *Atem*** (Ohr)

EDGAR FROESE – mellotron, guitar, organ, voice
PETER BAUMANN – organ, VCS3 synthesizer, piano
CHRIS FRANKE – organ, VCS3 synthesizer, percussion & voice

Tangerine Dream's fourth LP *Atem* was recorded in the wake of their Kosmische double masterpiece *Zeit* and its aberrant Barrett Floyd-like 45 "Ultima Thule". Here, they managed to cross-pollinate the two ideals to dramatic and often violent effect. But I'll tell you this: *Atem* is as glorious as a Cecil B. De Mille movie and about as cinematic. The pounding tom-tom drums and the fanfare of mellotron on the opening bars of the title-track is like background music for building the pyramids to. A huge slab of pounding meditational rock that eventually subsides into a massive groovy meditation. This takes up all of Side 1, whilst Side 2 opens with the wonderful flutey "Fauni-gena", whose melody I always suspect the Fall ripped off for their early classic "Repetition". The mellotron again totally dominates the soundscape, and when "Circulation of Events" drifts in, there's barely any way of noticing that a new track has appeared. A growing generating Kosmische breathing life-of-its-own monster, it inhabits the same territory as Cluster, but could also be a throwback to the sounds of *Zeit*. "Wahn" finishes the album: it's that track I told you about earlier where they get all chimpy and start primal-screaming their heads off. I so admire T. Dream at these times. Art must be achieved any fucking possible way and here it is in Top-gear. Drums and mellotron again punctuate the scene and turn it into a garagey groove of truly unlikely effects. For me, this was the last of the classic releases. After this, they fell into the 'easy listening' of *Phaedra, Rubicon* and so on. But this was their beginning – six long years of experimentation and a roaring spectacular success.

47. **KLAUS SCHULTZE – *Irrlicht*** (Ohr)

KLAUS SCHULTZE – synthesizer, organ, guitar, voice, choral vocals, percussion

Man, this is the one where the orchestra all thought Klaus was crazy. He fucking was! And what a star! What stellar Vision pulled this bit of Ancient Rumbling out of him?

The orchestral rush at the beginning of the 29 minute "Ebene and Gewitter: energy rise-energy collaps" is so fucking exhilarating that it sweeps the listener clean into the air. A few stabs of strings, a hesitant moment and… wahhhhhhhhhhh the air all around is cleaved in half, as the orchestral ascent begins. Then it's an abrupt stop and the now familiar Zzzzzzzzzz of Klaus' synthesizers take over. One a low low aircraft drone. One a midrange large engine hiss. Out of nowhere comes ice-ring orchestra, a cheap unmysterious kind of reverb that takes you back to childhood. And melodies are to the rear, all focus being on the drifting weight-lagen synthesizer. And so it is that the orchestra comes in and out throughout this strange ugly tone-less synthesizer mantra, almost Stockhausen in the way that the orchestra punctuates the space rather than harmonising the air around the synthesizer. But finally, Klaus' organ begins to take over, a phased berserk thing in what is now the typical Klaus Schultze minor chord chunter. But this grumbling builds slowly to a full-scale complainathon, the wild minor chords and full-voiced Teutonic aaaaaaaaaaahs coming out at the height of power. It's an inspiring performance, full of physicality and deep down resolve. All this floods right out on to the tape with a highly magical transference of ideas. And Klaus always goes too far. He starts vamping it up, switching the tone adjusters full-on, catching you on two chords for who-knows-how-long and just keeping in there with the psychic Noogies. And just when you think it'll never end, it does. Crashing to a stop and caught in all kinds of weird repeated weirdness. And after a minute or so of crashes, in comes the low-key organ coda, revitalising itself for the next onslaught… In stark contrast, Side 2 is a spiritual and cosmic planet beaming vibrations of both sound and light to the listener. It is like being caught in an asteroid storm of the purely non-physical variety. It feels threatening but it is not, only massaging and kneading the mind with the constancy of the assault.

48. **KLAUS SCHULTZE – *Black Dance*** (Brain)

KLAUS SCHULTZE – synthesizer, organ, piano, percussion, phase-trumpet, 12-string acoustic, orchestra
ERNST WALTER SIMON – bass voice

I will always feel a special affinity for *Black Dance* as it was the first Klaus Schultze LP I ever bought. In 1974, Virgin's mid-price label Caroline released *Black Dance* in its original Brain Records artwork, with typical Urs Amann Dali-esque nightscapes and his strange limbless stickpeople all over the record sleeve. And all for £1.49. This was Klaus' third LP release,

though he had recorded the as yet unreleased Picture Music but was without a record deal at the time of that album's recording. *Black Dance* is a mainly drum-machine and acoustic guitar led record, all the instruments conspiring to make the music far more tangible than previous recordings. Two very long pieces form the backbone of *Black Dance*: the 18 minute "Ways of Change", with its fast picked 12-string, congas and bongos; and the huge 22 minute "Voices of Syn", a phased-drumbox led synthesizer groove that begins in a soup of bass voice and organ. This last piece occupies all of Side 2 and features Klaus' typical jamming over a slightly detuned and unvarying minor chord organ. As a 17 year old, this record was my seduction LP, the only one I had. The final piece, "Some Velvet Phasing", is more standard Klaus – a rhythmless synthesizer shift, yet still operating in the same atmospheric territory of the rest of the album. *Black Dance* works peculiarly well as a complete package, and is ideal for repeated plays. It is unlike his other albums of the period, and is closer in style to the later *Dune*. It's easy to spend a whole evening just flipping *Black Dance* back and starting again.

49. **WALTER WEGMULLER – *Tarot*** (Kosmische Musik)

WALTER WEGMULLER – text & voice
JERRY BERKERS (Wallenstein) – bass
JURGEN DOLLASE (Wallenstein) – mellotron, organ & piano
HARTMUT ENKE (Ash Ra Tempel) – wa-guitar
MANUEL GOTTSCHING (Ash Ra Tempel) – wa-guitar
KLAUS QUADRO SCHULTZE – synthesizers & voice
HARALD GROSSKOPF (Wallenstein) – drums
WALTER WESTRUPP – acoustic guitars, mandolin, pipes, voice, etc.
BERND WITTHUSER – spoken word
ROSI MULLER & DIETER DIERKS – choir

This huge double-LP is as all-encompassing as rock'n'roll gets, proving that Krautrock's greatest strength was its ability to consume all American and British music, assimilate it, and then regurgitate it all as though the Mothers, the Velvets, the Doors, the Stones, the Fugs, the freerock and free-jazz of Detroit, and the experimentalism of Germany could all be thrown into some Kosmische Pot. They truly proved that it could. Beginning like the Hendrix-y side of early Funkadelic, "The Narr" is tearing jagged old-fashioned funk like Detroit loved to make. Jurgen Dollase's piano is cocktail-mayhem – really the Funkadelic LP is the best comparison. In contrast, "Der Magier" comes on like some Kosmische night-rally, all screaming synths and freaky keyboards before jumping in with both feet to a one-chord driving blues that barely establishes itself before breaking down again as Walter Wegmuller makes his proclamations. But explaining the diversity of this album should not blind anyone to its obvious total cohesion, for there is a unified theme and manner of playing which pushes this music out of the reach of other rock'n'roll musicians. It is the performance – the confidence and the sheer ability to make decisions on the spur of the

moment which transcends all other scenes. On *Tarot*, the commitment is to the project. At no point does the ego of rock musicians become an issue, all are subordinate to the main Trip. I cannot drudge endlessly through the record with detailed descriptions. They would be boring and facile, and no way could I explain individual pieces which are intended to work as a whole. The mix of the music is so unbalanced that even an Elton John ballad would sound extreme in such surroundings. "Die Herrscherin" is pretty pretty cosmic bongo based island music, but it is followed with the New York Lou Reed riffing of "Der Herrscher", as un-Kosmische as it gets. The strength of the Cosmic Couriers is their individual ability and their lack of need to impress this at all times. R-U Kaiser also shows incredible judgement for recording these magic men. Like Golowin, Walter Wegmuller grabs the attention with the same bollocks as Jim Morrison, and imparts meaning without the need to be constantly in the face of the listener. In other words, he says his bit and lets the music take you out there. On "Der Wagen/Die Gerechtigkeit, we could be in the middle of an Ash Ra Tempel blitz. I would guess that we are really, there's just more people to contribute to it and they all reveal the same high level of Unification of Intuition. The ritual and performance is awesome, the sounds bizarre, threatening, comforting, inspiring and often excruciating all at the same time.

So wide are the parameters of *Tarot* that Klaus Schultze even narrates "Der Weise" in a delicate boy's tone which is extremely touching, especially at the end when Klaus, his text all finished, apparently unconsciously begins to hum along with the track. Man, I'm listening to the album as I write this and I have to tell you *Tarot* is the whole of rock'n'roll in one double-LP. Now "Die Kraft" sounds like Funkadelic again, wild solo guitars over tribal drumming and bizarre deep spoken words. Later on, they'll launch into a *There's a Riot Goin' On*-period Sly drum-machine piece that still sound so uplifting – I have to admire the sheer Poetic Greed of the Cosmic Couriers. They wanted to do it all, and they fucking Achieved!!! There's no point in carrying on this ridiculous attempt. BUY THE ALBUM: IT'S THE SOUND OF THE COSMOS. By Side 4 (CD2), they've given up on the structure and gone for an early Afterburn. But that's cool as well, because it's the greatest craze-out of all. I'll leave now, I'm gibbering.

50. **WITTHUSER & WESTRUPP – *Trips & Traume*** (Ohr 56016)

BERND WITTHUSER – acoustic & e. guitar, vocals
WALTER "WALT" WESTRUPP – guitar, zither, e. mandolin, psalter, percussion, flute, trombone & trumpet, vocals
BERND "CURNY" ROLAND – bass & vocals
RENEE ZUCKER – drums, percussion, flute & vocals

In March 1971, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser applied his Kosmische rules to the Witthuser & Westrupp muse with remarkable success. As I wrote earlier, the atmosphere of the record was steeped in the same vibes as ESP-Disk, Straight Records and, most of all, the Elektra recordings of Tim Buckley.

Firing on all cylinders at once, *Trips & Traume* came on like some Jerry Yester-produced monster session, an audaciously loose and freewheeling muse. In actual fact it was the multi-instrumentalist talents of Walt Westrupp which gave this impression – zithers, psalters and all manner of traditional instruments contributing to the stew. *Trips & Traume* begins with the Thomas Rother poem "Lasst Uns Auf Die Reise Gehen", a beautiful reflection on the journey of a man's life over a mystical drummerless groove. The spindly free-jazz guitar on the empty and epic "Trippo Nova" is pure Lee Underwood, somewhere between Buckley's *Blue Afternoon* and *Happy Sad*. I'm using any reference I can to explain these songs, but it would be unfair to suggest that the trip is in any way borrowed. On Side 2, "Illusion I" is an instrumental version of Tim Buckley's "Phantasmagoria in Two", but that in no way lessens the LP. *Trips & Traume* is truly its own Teutonic master, inspired by the American scene but achieving exclusively European results, using voices as a constant horizon of sound and fuelling the songs with flute-driven melodies and bizarre FX. The eight minute "Orienta" is one of the most beautiful Kosmische pieces ever, working in the same territory as Sergius Golowin's "Die Weisse Alm". A repeated cyclical mandolin and Fiddler on the Roof "Doi Doi Doi" vocals over which Witthuser speaks clearly and ominously as the whole thing builds faster and faster to a fabulous mass of male and female singers, the mandolin tumbling and dancing. On Side 2, the spoken monster "Karlschen" hangs in mid-air like Syd Barrett's "Golden Hair". As a non-German speaker, the female voice immediately sends me off into late childhood – any spoken German is a mysterious magical incantation to a Krautrock-fan. I just wish the LP was much longer; it's all over far too soon. *Trips & Traume* ends in the jaunty "Nimm doch einen joint, mein freund", a Euro-folk Que Sera Sera singalong advocating marijuana:

"Some people say Hash makes lush, but give me a joint." Right On.

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KRAUTROCK RICHARD GRAVETT – A chance meeting with Richard's girlfriend, who works at the Poland Street branch of Reckless Records in London, led me to Richard, who sold me all the Cosmic Courier & Amon Düül I vinyl, then proceeded to find and send me all kinds of cassettes, DATs, records and transparencies of all the sleeves I could not get hold of. Thanks very much, man.

BRIAN BARRITT – I was introduced to Brian Barritt by our mutual friend Flinton Chalk, who had told me that Brian's book about the Neolithic cairns of Loughcrew, in Ireland, was a stoned gas of epic proportions. When Brian gave me permission to use portions of his unpublished manuscript *The Road of Excess* ("It's all information, Julian"), including a chapter on the Cosmic Couriers called "The Kaiser", my joy was complete. Thank you, Brian.

ANDREW LAUDER – I sat in Andrew's office and discussed how, in 1969, Abi Ofarim, then manager of Can and an international pop-star himself ("Cinderella/Rockerfella"), walked into the then teenage Andrew's Liberty Records office in Ladbroke Grove, London, and gave him No. 210 of the limited first pressing of Can's first LP *Monster Movie*. Special thanks for the Neu! and Amon Düül II stories, and extra thanks for having the foresight to sign them in the first place.

KIZLA DEUTSCH – I'd like to thank the former Gavin Wall, now one half of the group Tabhunter, for kick-starting me back into Krautrock mode in Summer 1991 (C.E.). Had I not heard the strains of *Neu 2* coming from the front of the tour bus, this all may never have happened. Then again...

DORIAN COPE – ... An awesome devotion & love to my darling wife, who edited this book with unbelievable fastidiousness. Though, as she says herself: "I am an Ash Ra Tempel groupie... so I had motivation."

VIRGIN

PRESS RELEASE

FAUST situations

in preparation: a piece to be performed in time, during Faust's forthcoming tour of England. not so much an experience as a situation. to which one is highly subject.

influence

a list called 'thus' on which you & Faust appear also includes the Heisenberg principle, anti-matter, relativity, Hitler, relativity, cybernetics, D N.A., game theory, etc. "something's in the air".

absurd decisions

this is the time we are in love with. the Absurd was ushered in & seated in the place of honour. this was an attempt to render the Absurd impotent. it failed. the Absurd, it is now decided, has medicinal properties'. the Absurd, it is now discovered, decides'. but that was now, learning to eat time with one's ears. savouring each moment - distinct as a dot of braille. how located the you you see you as is'. is that location drawn towards definition by attending to this outrageous cacophany?

this is the time we are in love with. in the midst of Faust-mouzik time ticks like a bomb, in its midst the sour fuse of love is snuffed out & relit again & again'. why all this strangeness ? the answer is something to do with polishing mirrors to reflect time & love. a reflection has no memory. that is the strangeness of it. but it means nothing.

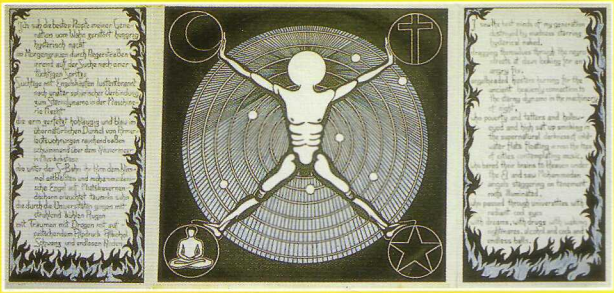
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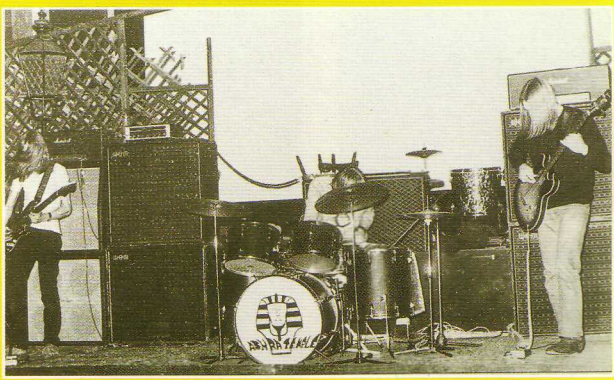
Faust have mentioned that working as they do in the space between concept & realisation they are in fact doing nothing. Faust would like to play for you the sound of yourself listening. then we would have consciousness. then we could talk about altering that consciousness. then we could forget about music'.

"hallowing caves of bass with mallets of wool they played.
leaving the treble shriek to gel in a slit in the moon they played".

Virgin Records, 2 Vernon Yard, 119 Portobello Road, London, W11 Telephones: 01-229 8001 & 01-229 6642

The **Faust** Manifestos were available free to everyone on the 1973 **Faust** tour.
Henry Cow posters were also available free, but I threw mine away as soon as I got home.







Detail from the centre-opening gimmick sleeve of **Ash Ra Tempel**'s eponymous 1st LP.

Ash Ra Tempel: Manuel, Klaus & Hartmut could play for up to 5 hours at a time without looking at each other.

Left: This is Mani Neumeier of **Guru Guru**, a musical giant of a man who records naked in Thailand today. He also played with **Harmonia** .













Moebius & Plank *Rastakrautpasta*

Kosmische Musik Ohr Records Sampler

Klaus Schultze *Irrlicht*

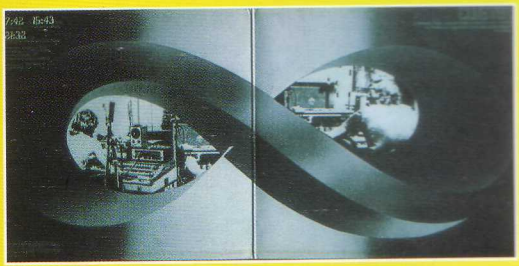
Kraftwerk *Kraftwerk*

Guru Guru *U.F.O.*

Popol Vuh *Hosianna Mantra*

STOP PRESS: 2ND EDITION NEWS

Go & listen to Agitation Free's *Last* album. Their 23 minute epic "Looping" is a transcendental Faust/Ash Ra Tempel burn-up. Horribly rare and unavailable until now (January 1996 C.E.). Spalax Records released this sucker just for you.











Cluster *Cluster 1* (gatefold)

Popol Vuh *In Den Garten Pharoas*

The Can *Soul Desert* 45

Amon Düül II *Phallus Dei* (reissue)

Amon Düül *Paramechanical World* 45 (back sleeve)

Witthüser & Westrupp *Trips & Traume*



A HEAD HERITAGE COSMIC FIELD GUIDE: 5 CLASSIC IMAGES OF KRAUTROCK

When Glam-rock appeared around 1972, the West German bands again took it all, assimilated it, and came out looking funnier & more convincing than any groups had since Funkadelic/Parliament. On **Amon Düül II**'s *Viva La Trance*, the group successfully combined theatrical animal costumes, harlequin Teutonics, and the current snakeskin platforms and fake furs, à la Sly Stone meets Bowie. Even more ridiculous was **Can**'s sudden pursuit of glam in a Velvet Underground style. I was very uncomfortable to see all these older guys poured into leathers & shades, especially as Michael Karoli, the only young pretty one in the group, was photographed on his knees in a particularly submissive pose, surrounded by 3 pouting middle-aged Sugardaddies.

But Krautrock was the German pre-punk self-awareness trip of all time. And these groups had suddenly plugged into where the post-war British psyche still had the Germans pegged – as the Bogeyman Rotter of all Europe. And they exploited the situation in *thee* most genius of ways. From **Amon Düül I** to **Amon Düül II**, via **Faust**, **Cluster**, **Can** and **Guru Guru** – Krautrock groups played this role. Here are my 5 favourite Krautrock images:

1. *Faust IV* opened with their 12 minute epic called *Krautrock*. (A huge double-album sampler on the hip German Brain label was also called *Krautrock*, and after Conrad Schnitzler's time in **Tangerine Dream** & **Kluster**, one of his early solo LPs also contained a track called "Krautrock".)

2. **Amon Düül**'s "Mr. Kraut's Jinx" and "La Krautoma" both appeared on the sprawling 1975 double-album, *Made In Germany*, the first (and only?) Krautrock-opera.

3. The first 'kraut' reference of all was on **Amon Düül I**'s 1969 "Mama Düül and her Sauerkraut-band Start Up!" from their first LP *Psychedelic Underground*.

4. **Cluster**'s Dieter Moebius and his producer, Conny Plank, released an album of Bavarian reggae-meets-New York-fuzz and called it *RastaKrautPasta*!

5. But the greatest Krautrock image of all is surely the sleeve of **Amon Düül II**'s *Live in London*. A gigantic German-helmeted Stormtrooper insect claws the London Post-Office tower from its foundations as flying-saucers lay the city to waste overhead.

In hindsight, Krautrock was not remotely 'hippy' in its modern post-punk definition. It was soaringly idealistic and hard as nails. This *Kosmische Musik* was played by painted freaks and longhairs whose attitude had never left the idealism or the communes/collectives of the mid 1960s. Krautrock's heart was still in the MC5's guitars and the White Panthers' civil insurrection of 1969 Detroit, and the sheer moment of Andy Warhol's 1966 Exploding Plastic Inevitable. **Guru Guru** even tried to redeem the swastika on the eponymous *Guru Guru* LP, placing it in the centre of the record-sleeve, and reversing it on an ancient woven design, therefore restoring the swastika to its original peaceful direction. (It was a brave idealism but, like The Swastika Redeemer, a contemporary New York artist who is tattooed with hundreds of different & ancient swastikas all over his body, it was hardly enough to obliterate such recent memories).

But Krautrock can only truly be defined in hindsight, as many of the groups were only intent on capturing the Moment. There are more classic extended true 20 minute-freakouts within the sleeves of Krautrock LPs than in the British & American music of all time. And all in space-punk gatefold sleeves, too. Albums were impossible to judge as they came out because they defied analysis alongside anything else but other Krautrock. And for all its '60s idealism, the West German scene was never in a stasis – it did not yearn for some lost undefined Golden-age, but constantly dipped into the new music forms that arrived and adapted them as its own. This ability to assimilate all the best of the New conspired to make *Krautrock* a substantial art-form with considerable stamina. And so powerful has the term *Kraut* remained that its modern connotation to any German Head is as a description for the finest Marijuana ■

Front cover image of Shrat taken from **Amon Düül II**'s LP *Yeti*

Krautrocksampler
designed by **Jane Stevenson**

£7.99 net in UK

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