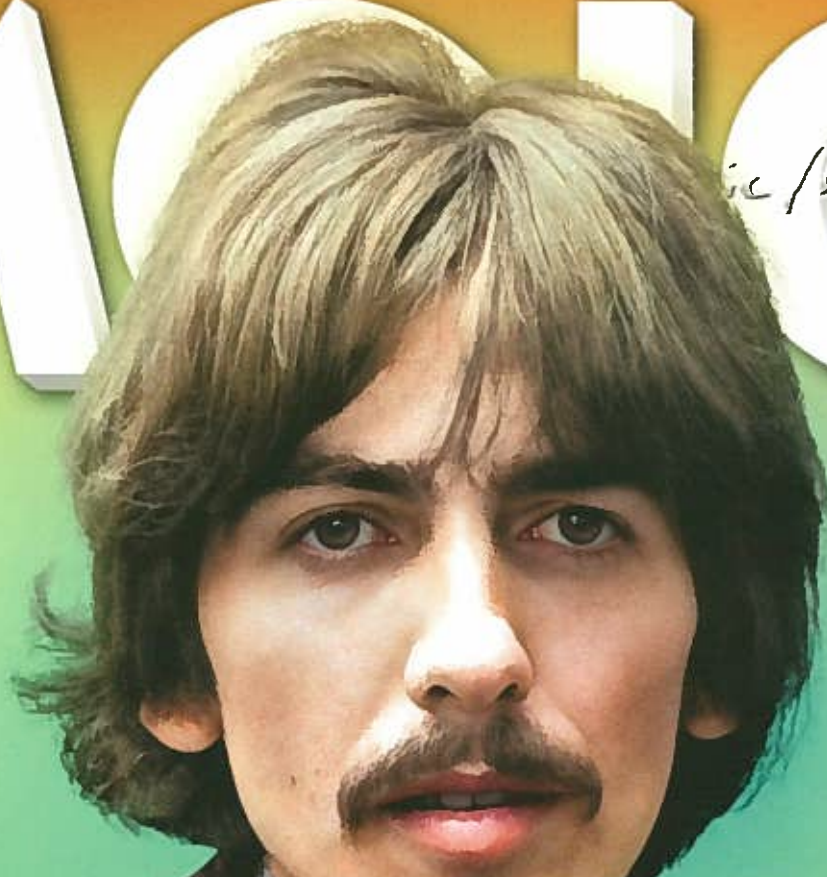


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10 The Cosmic Jokers

The Cosmic Jokers

KOSMISCHE MUSIK, 1974

You say: "A fraud and a con, but when the music's this good who's complaining." Gordon Campbell, via e-mail

According to Manuel Götttsching, these live cosmic jam sessions were recorded with full knowledge of the participants. Klaus Schulze, on the other hand, still insisted they were recorded and released by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser without the permission of the participants. Live-mixed by Dieter Dierks, the first and best of the releases features Götttsching and Schulze alongside drummer Harald Grosskopf and keyboardist Jürgen Dollase lost in a kind of heavy dub kosmische dynamic, a phased, floating sound of echo and delay. If you like this, check out the same year's heavier and harder *Galactic Supermarket*, with vocals from Rosi Müller and Kaiser's equally spaced-out partner Gille Lettmann.



CAST YOUR VOTES...

This month you chose your Top 10 Ash Ra Tempel and solo LPs. Next month we want your Tortoise Top 10. Send selections via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or e-mail to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Tortoise' and we'll print the best comments.



4 Ash Ra Tempel

Inventions For Electric Guitar

KOSMISCHE MUSIK, 1975

You say: "Superb. It's that 'repetitive trance music with guitars' thing that Spiritualized hit on with Electric Mainline." @JonJCrowley, via Twitter

Burned out by his involvement with Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser and following the breakdown of formative Tempel member Hartmut Enke, Götttsching effectively goes solo. He's recording in his kitchen and employing a bank of echo effects to make his guitar ("there are no other instruments used!" notes the back cover) sound like some giant melancholic sequencer. Like Tangerine Dream's *Phaedra* for guitar, it is second only to *E2-E4* in its futuristic divination of techno, with Echo Waves' hypnotic ostinatos simultaneously inventing trance, the riff from Pink Floyd's *Run Like Hell*, and the blueprint for Jason Pierce's *Spiritualized*.

Ash Ra Tempel and solo

Following Berlin's astral travellers along their myriad paths, Andrew Male.

"THERE WAS no 'idea' behind it," said Klaus Schulze in 1997, discussing the 1970 formation of Ash Ra Tempel with Manuel Götttsching. "We just did it. No big thing. [Back then] people founded groups, joined groups, left groups, disbanded groups. Nobody cared."

What he doesn't mention is the speakers. For in the summer of 1970, when the 21-year-old Schulze walked into West Berlin's Beat Studio, having just been dismissed as Tangerine Dream's drummer, what stopped him in his stacks was the speakers belonging to Manuel Götttsching's Berlin-based blues-jazz-improv outfit the Steeple Chase Blues Band: four huge WEM speaker cabinets, previously owned by Pink Floyd. Here was the 'idea'. "I said, We must form a band. I said, Forget blues rock for a new kind of 'space rock'."

Götttsching, born in 1952 in West Berlin, was a classically trained guitarist who'd had his head turned by free jazz. Schulze rechristened his band: Ash representing "the remains, the final curtain", Ra, the Egyptian Sun God, and Tempel, a place for rest and contemplation. Perhaps more significantly, Schulze introduced Götttsching to Ohr

"Forget blues rock for a new kind of space rock."

Recordings' Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser. Kaiser, who worked with his girlfriend Gille Lettmann and "schlager" music publisher and Hansa founder Peter Meisel, believed in a utopian new psychedelic music that would combine German folk and mythological traditions with improvisation, psychedelics and transporative religious communion: Kosmische Musik. For a brief period, the Ash Ra members were involved in numerous Kaiser projects, including the epic psychedelic party jams he released as The Cosmic Jokers, plus the tribal space-funk freakouts of Walter Wegmüller's *Tarot*, and Sergius Golowin's mountainside dream trip, *Lord Krishna Von Goloka*.

And, of course, an acid-fuelled session with US FBI fugitive and psychedelics guru Timothy Leary, *Seven Up*. Kaiser's projects arguably deserve a How To Buy of their own; they certainly obscure the divergent trajectories that Götttsching and Schulze's music took once the Tempel collapsed and both began experimenting with electronic music. Here we focus on those individual paths while highlighting their best work together. Inevitably, recordings have been left out, some because their historical significance outweighs the listening pleasure (*Seven Up*), others because they are nigh-on impossible to buy without applying for a second mortgage.



9 Klaus Schulze
Blackdance

BRAIN, 1974

You say: "Julian Cope isn't the biggest Klaus Schulze fan but this is his choice, so that's good enough for me." Belishabeacon, via mojo4music.com

A perfect midpoint between the unholy darkness of *Irrlicht* and the ambient placidity of later releases such as *Moondawn* and *Mirage*, Schulze's third solo LP incorporates synthesizers, phased trumpet, acoustic guitar and, shockingly, another individual: opera singer Ernst Walter Siemon, who provides gloriously doomed *Lieder* on side two's epic subterranean travelogue of phased organ and drum machine, *Voices Of Syn*. Like a post-apocalyptic Debussy's *La Cathédrale Engoutie*, *Blackdance* is a work of profound eerie symbolism, summoning a cursed Gothic soundworld far removed from the kosmische utopia envisioned by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser.



8 Ash Ra Tempel
Le Berceau de Cristal

SPALAX, 1993

You say: "Don't be put off by the sleeve – *Le Sourire Volé* is a monster!" @johnnicol, via Twitter

For the soundtrack to Philippe Garrel's 1975 *cinéma d'opium*, in which a heavily sedated Nico contemplates the aching void of existence while haunted by semi-mythical beings portrayed by Anita Pallenberg and Dominique Sanda, Manuel Göttsching was asked to compose "music to make you dream". Assembled from a live 1975 performance in Cannes with Agitation Free guitarist Lutz Ulbrich and a series of four-track recordings with Farfisa organ, EKO Computerhythm and an EMS Synthi Hi-Fi guitar effects unit, Göttsching conjured a series of "electric dreams". Eight mesmerising Buddhist meditations for late-night travelling, whether out on the road or in the comfort of your own home.



7 Ashra
New Age Of Earth

VIRGIN, 1977

You say: "I have a soft spot for this '77 album. Flows like a warm embrace from the sun. Gloriously affecting." @52Vinyl, via Twitter

Once dismissed as the worst kind of cosmic noodling, Göttsching's mid-'70s recordings have aged exceptionally well, embraced by a new wave of fans seeking out sublime deep-dream analogue space music. A composition for keyboards and synthesizers, *New Age...* is minimalist, meditative, moving from the repetitive melodic proto-techno of Sunrain to the side-long Fripp-meets-Floyd closer *Nightdust*, a nocturnal lullaby which also works as a benign answer to the deep-space nightmare of Klaus Schulze's *Irrlicht*. If you like this, seek out Göttsching's more guitar-oriented follow-up *Blackouts* (Virgin 1978), especially the almost Balearic funk groove of *Shuttle Cock*.



6 Ash Ra Tempel
Join Inn

OHR, 1973

You say: "Jenseits from *Join Inn* is one of my favourite things ever and often makes me cry a bit." @astralsocialite, via Twitter

Due to the emotional and psychedelic fallout from *Seven Up* (see intro) this would prove to be bassist Hartmut Enke's final appearance with Ash Ra Tempel. Klaus Schulze was back in the fold on drums (plus organ and synthesizer) and Göttsching was now playing alongside his partner Rosi Müller. Side one's *Freak 'N' Roll* is a 20-minute space jam that moves from blues-rock wah-wah into a kind of cosmic speed metal *Sabre Dance* without ever truly finding its feet. However, side two is utterly gorgeous, a beatless ethereal reworking of *Seven Up*'s *Timeship* in which Rosi Müller recounts Ash Ra's encounter with Timothy Leary as a kind of cleansing act of meditation.



5 Klaus Schulze
Irrlicht

OHR, 1972

You say: "Irrlicht is the one for me, one of the most terrifying records, often had to turn it off, so relentless and unsettling is it." John Hirst, via Twitter

With his first solo album Klaus Schulze was working in the realm of ruin and decay, by means of a broken electric organ, malfunctioning speakers, and a cheap single mike recording of a rehearsal by the Berlin University Orchestra played backwards. Beginning with a soiled base of tarnished drones, Schulze adds a series of demonic Gothic organ chords to the reversed rehearsal that reverberate and summon up horrible new colours, shapes and tones. It is the sound of slow, slouching doom, eventually replaced by side two's *Exil Sils Maria*, a series of dying aircraft whines and extra-terrestrial dust storms, a new dawn on a ruined planet. Good times.



3 Ash Ra Tempel
Schwingungen

OHR, 1972

You say: "My vote would go to *Schwingungen* (and *Join Inn*, *NAOE*, *E2-E4* and *Blackouts*). All just incredible." @Nonemorerecords, via Twitter

Produced by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser, with Wolfgang Müller on drums and Agitation Free's demon seer John L wailing on vocals, this is Ash Ra travelling into a corroded alternate future where John Lydon is singing with *Funhouse*-era Stooges. With Göttsching's demon Bo Diddley riffs, Matthias Wehler's evil alto sax wails and John L's hysterical repetition of "Flowers must die/Die die die die!", this is a bad trip you wish would last forever and end immediately. Side two's *Suche* and *Liebe* are the cure for whatever side one was: 19 minutes of deep space jungle ascent, Göttsching's synth-jacked ripples easing you into a minimalist Floydian heaven-state. Utter bliss.

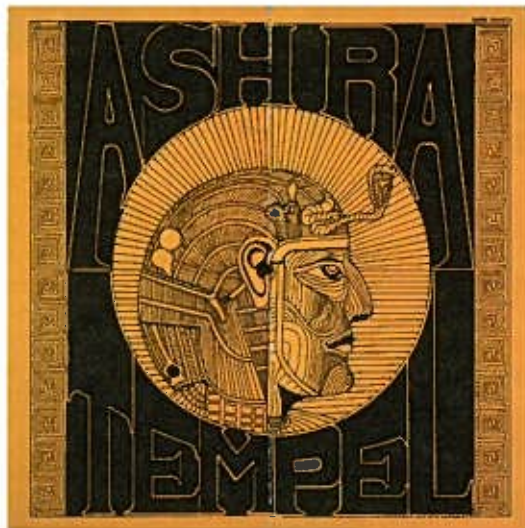


2 Manuel Göttsching
E2-E4

INTEAM GMBH, 1984

You say: "Bought it based on a glowing review in *Sounds*. Didn't know what to make of it at the time but gradually it's wormed its way in and is now a desert island disc." Ian Campbell, via Twitter

One of the most influential albums ever made, this techno ur-text was recorded by Göttsching in one hour in his Berlin studio on December 12, 1981. Utilising a suspended two-chord (E2-E4) vamp on his Prophet 10, a sequencer controlling the shifting accents, Göttsching gradually adding points of percussion, delicate melodic figures and guitar, *E2-E4* is a slowly evolving, hallucinatory exercise in relaxed repetition. With its euphoric simplicity blueprinted by *Inventions For Electric Guitar*, at its root core this is as much an act of spontaneous psychedelic riffage as the first Ash Ra Tempel LP.



Ash Ra Tempel
Ash Ra Tempel

OHR, 1971

You say: "Obviously... First side of this is an absolute monster." Jon Crowley, via Twitter

Recorded in Hamburg with Conny Plank, Ash Ra's debut formed the structural and ideological blueprint for both the band and Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser's "kosmische" philosophy. As with subsequent releases there is a single track on each side, each representing opposite yet complementary forces. Side one's *Amboss* ("Anvil"), begins with the FX-stoned shimmer of Manuel Göttsching and Hartmut Enke's guitars before some heavy growling drones ride in, accompanied by Schulze's tribal Detroit drums, forcing Göttsching to keep up with spectral Hendrix wails and chunky power-blues riffs. Flipside, *Traummaschine* ("Dream Machine") is the spatial, ambient comedown, sounding simultaneously soothing, righteous and, when those dark Göttsching riffs return, just that little bit terrifying.



NOW DIG THIS

The first thing you need to do is go online and experience the wonder of Walter Wegmüller's *Tarot* (Ohr, 1973), an album disqualified from this feature due to being unaffordable in all its imprints. Tempel alumni Manuel Göttsching, Rosi Müller, Hartmut Enke, Harald Grosskopf and Klaus Schulze are joined by Jerry Berkers and Jürgen Dollase of Wallenstein, and Walter Westrupp of Witthüser & Westrupp for a double LP of wild folkloric ur-funk. "The whole of rock'n'roll in one double LP," says Julian Cope in 1996's essential kosmische text, *Krautrock* sampler (out of print, but available as a PDF online). Also essential is David Stubbs' *Future Days: Krautrock And The Re-Building Of Modern Germany*.