

"MEINECKE HÖRT" (What Meinecke listens to)

Rock and Track

A Berliner for Detroit: **Manuel Göttsching**

first appeared on the scene with his band *Ash Ra Tempel*. Their early recordings, in 1971 for *Ohr Schallplatten*, led the British musician and Krautrock-chronicler Julian Cope, when this music was experiencing its major international revival, to comment, "Oh Fuck, man, this is the greatest Detroit-est trip off all time." Because it corresponded so well with the sounds of MC 5 or The Stooges. And because it fused Sun Ra, John Coltrane and Iggy Pop.

Already at the time, Göttsching was not only brilliant on the guitar, but on the electronics as well. Additional albums were recorded for the *Ohr* sublabel *Die Kosmischen Kuriere/Cosmic Couriers* (together with, among others, Timothy Leary and Rosi).

What brings us together here and now, however (and what Cope already considers to be boring), is the expansion of the Göttschingian notion of guitar, as documented from 1974 onwards, from rockistic (booming arcs of tension, ecstasy and redemption) to the ambient-like track (closed circle, hypnotic texture, pulsating surface). If we think of Can or Kraftwerk, Neu and Cluster, these are virtues that are attributed to an entire branch of the unique German path called Krautrock (which is why the ambient pioneer Brian Eno made the pilgrimage to West Germany back then), and which even saw their continuation in NDW/New German Wave (Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft, Liaisons Dangereuses).

In 1981, not far from the KaDeWe department store, Manuel Göttsching, by now a Virgin Recording Artist, recorded the nearly hour-long track-of-the-century, taking up both sides of an LP: E2-E4 (the cover's chessboard design explains the title). Even if it was only released in 1984, I'd like to take the opportunity to extend my congratulations on its 25th anniversary. The sections have great names like *Ruhige Nervosität*, "Quiet Nervousnes" or *Damen-Eleganza*, "Ladies' Eleganza". In the emerging techno scene, this sonic marvel (www.ashra.com) was admired, played, emulated and re-mixed - first in Italy, then in Afro-American Detroit, by Derrick May (1991) and Carl Craig (alias Paperclip People, 1994). The legendary DJ Larry Levan was buried to the sounds of E2-E4 in New York. And in Tokyo, Manuel Göttsching is worshipped as a demigod at the entrance to the Tokyo Tower - carved in stone next to Marilyn Monroe and Abraham Lincoln.

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