

## The History of Rock Music: 1976-1989

New Wave, Punk-rock, Hardcore

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### The New Age and World-music

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(These are excerpts from my book ["A History of Rock and Dance Music"](#))

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#### *New-age music 1976-89*

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In 1975 Palo Alto guitarist [William Ackerman](#) (1) coined the term "new-age music" and founded a record label, Windham Hill, to promote atmospheric instrumental acoustic music.

New-age music was thus born as a reaction to rock music. Rock music was loud and noisy, expressing a teenage spirit. New-age music was quiet and melodic, expressing an adult mood. New-age music had no vocalist, no drums and no electric guitar.

New-age music was, first and foremost, a synthesis. It was a synthesis of cultures (high and low), moods (upbeat, ecstatic, melancholy, spiritual), genres (folk, electronic, jazz, classical, psychedelic), formats (song, symphony, suite, jam) and lifestyles (western and eastern). Since each of these components had existed for decades (if not centuries), new-age music pre-existed itself. The most obvious ancestor of new-age music is classical music itself. Despite the aristocratic way it was presented in the symphony halls and opera houses, classical music had included "mood" instrumental music from the very beginning. Debussy and Satie, in particular, invented new-age music before Ackerman. Composers as diverse as Bach, Strauss, Messiaen, and Stockhausen provided new-age musicians with unlimited sources of inspiration.

The term "new age" was a reference to the spiritual mood that had taken hold of the hippy generation. As they grew up, the former hippies became more and more interested in eastern practices for meditation and relaxation. They became an essential part of their lifestyles, and soon created a market for both literature and arts.

A natural relative of new-age music was ECM's aesthetic jazz, which born out of Miles Davis' jazz-rock fusion and his fellow "fusionists" (Weather Report, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett), had been one of the most significant innovations in jazz during the early 1970s (Oregon, Tere Rypdal, Jan Garbarek). ECM had proven the existence of an adult market that was interested in smooth, elegant and mellow sounds. New-age music simply proceeded to tap an even larger version of that market: the market that had the same need but had no artistic pretensions (i.e., did not require a virtuoso playing the music). ECM's sophisticated counterpoint of timbres and melodies was adapted by new-age music to a humbler format, removing the improvisation and emphasizing the melody.

Ackerman's main reason to found his label had been, actually, the scarce availability of records in the solo acoustic vein of John Fahey, and Fahey would remain another important prototype for all solo new-age musicians. Other progressive-folk musicians such as Sandy Bull and Robbie Basho had been doing "new-age music" since the early 1960s.

At about the same time, Stephen Hill's program "Music From the Hearts of Space", which had been airing out of nearby Berkeley since 1973, began promoting a similar kind of music, although his favorite musicians employed electronic keyboards rather than acoustic instruments. Here the main influence was "minimalism", the avantgarde music invented by the likes of LaMonte Young and Terry Riley, which was both spiritual and keyboard-based. Riley's *Rainbow In Curved Air* (1968) was the progenitor of all melodic electronic suites, and Young's stationary music was the progenitor of ambient music. The second main influence on electronic new-age music was "kosmische musik", which soon became more important in practical terms. Hill's proteges merely adapted the format of the "cosmic couriers" to a more contemplative and spiritual mood, removing the drama and enhancing the ambience. Needless to say, these musicians learned from the lessons of the early electronic musicians, the likes of Walter Carlos, Jean-Michel Jarre, Vangelis. New-age music was born near the Silicon Valley, the place where electronic keyboards abounded, a natural meeting point of the counterculture and high-tech. In 1982 Sequential Circuits introduces the "Prophet 600", the first keyboard enabled with MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), a system to connect music instruments to computers, which in 1983 could be connected to a Roland's "JX-3P", the first time that two MIDI instruments were connected. In 1983 Yamaha introduced the DX-7, the first synthesizer to be sold by the hundreds of thousands. The number of electronic musicians rapidly multiplied during the 1980s.

New-age music was very much about achieving nirvana via a union with Nature, and soon began to incorporate sounds of nature. This had been done before, but not as consciously. For example, **One Stormy Night** (1966), by Brad Miller's Mystic Moods Orchestra, incorporated natural sounds, a "cosmic" theme and a hippy mood.

The passion of new-age musicians for eastern music, religion and civilization prompted many of them to fuse western and eastern instruments, and others to further expand their music towards other ethnic sounds. It was an evolution of the Byrds' raga-rock and of Les Baxter's and Martin Denny's "exotica", but facilitated by a larger availability of

exotic instruments and of exotic recordings. The naive multi-cultural experiments of hippies such as the Incredible String Band and the Third Ear Band were revisited in a more competent manner by the western purveyors of "world-music".

Usually, the birth of world-music is assumed to be **Music For Zen Meditation** (1964), an improvised jam between USA jazz clarinetist Tony Scott and two Japanese musicians, Hozan Yamamoto on shakuhachi and Shinichi Yuize on koto, although both Sandy Bull (in the USA) and Davy Graham (in Britain) had already integrated Indian music and Anglosaxon folk music at least one year earlier. Another landmark was Ravi Shankar's recording of **West Meets East** (1967) with classical violinist Yehudi Menuhin. But, of course, plenty of jazz musicians (John Coltrane, Don Cherry) and of classical musicians (John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen) had already toyed with eastern, Latin and African music. Since the most consistent practitioners were jazz musicians, World-music can be considered very much a jazz invention, pervasive since the late 1950s in the works of Miles Davis, Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Don Cherry, and in the works of every jazz and blues musician if one considers African music. It comes as no surprise, then, that the term "world-music" first applied in its modern form to the music of a jazz bandleader, Paul Winter. In the following decades several aspects of non-western music were to be integrated with elements of western music: Indian ragas, Indonesian gamelan, African polyrhythms, Middle-Eastern cantillation, Jamaican reggae and dub, Japanese classical music, Chinese classical music, Eastern European folk dances, Brazilian pop music, etc.

Whatever vehicle they chose, new-age musicians shared the simple, unassuming, laid-back quality of their music with the music meant "not to listen to" (as Brian Eno put it): easy-listening orchestras (Richard Clayderman), lounge music (Burt Bacharach), and supermarket muzak (the RCA Victor series of "Moods in Music"). Despite the wildly different ideological underpinnings, these genres converged towards the same concept of music for relaxation, which became the fundamental dogma of new-age music. In fact, new-age music was, ultimately, but another term for ambient music, whether ambient "chamber" music (performed with acoustic instruments) or ambient "electronic" music. The key addition to Eno's original program was the spiritual element (the whole point of calling it "new age" music).

New-age musicians had in common the market (affluent adults) and little else (an instrumental approach). By the mid-1980s there was new-age music for solo instrument, small chamber ensemble, synthetic orchestra and ethnic ensemble.

### *Solo acoustic music*

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Ackerman's first collections of quiet acoustic solos, **In Search Of The Turtle's Navel** (1976) and especially **It Takes A Year** (1977), set the standard for the tone, halfway between the philosophical and the lyrical, rooted in country and folk music, inspired by John Fahey's "primitive" music, that would become the epitome of new-age music. The guitar was

new-age music's primordial instrument, but it lost steam after the first few years in which albums such as [Eric Tingstad's](#) **On The Links** (1982), **Aerial Boundaries** (1984), by [Michael Hedges](#) (1), [Paul Speer's](#) **Spectral Voyages** (1984), and [Carl Weingarten's](#) **Dreaming In Colors** (1986) improved over Ackerman's model. On the other hand, albums such as [Bruce Becnar's](#) **Take It To Heart** (1986) harked back to easy listening music.

The piano became the main new-age instrument thanks to the success of [George Winston](#) and his first suite of free-form melodic piano solos, **Autumn** (1980).

[Michael Jones](#) (13), the master of the lyrical stream of consciousness, penned the impressionist **Pianoscapes** (1985), the sophisticated cello-piano duos of **Amber** (1987), the majestic chamber music of **After The Rain** (1988), one of new-age's melodic masterpieces, and the four ambitious suites of **Air Born** (1994).

[Marcus Allen](#) (1) crafted the romantic **Petals** (1981) and **Solo Flight** (1985).

[David Lanz](#) (2) specialized in collections of domestic vignettes with folkish melodies and tempos, such as **Heartsounds** (1983) and **Nightfall** (1985).

[Liz Story](#) (1) indulged in the lyrical introspection of **Unaccountable Effect** (1985) and especially **Speechless** (1988), further refined at the border between Keith Jarrett and Eric Satie on **Escape Of The Circus Ponies** (1990).

During the 1980s their highly chromatic fusion of folk, jazz and classical was refined by a number of pianists: [Michael Gettel](#), with **San Juan Suite** (1986), [Bruce Stark](#), with **Dream Song** (1988), [John Boswell](#), with **The Painter** (1988), [Wayne Gratz](#), with **Reminiscence** (1989), etc.

[Peter Kater](#) (2) crafted [Flesh & Bone's](#) **Skeleton Woman** (1993), a rare experiment of piano and vocals, besides **Migration** (1992) with native-American flutist Carlos Nakai,

[Scott Cossu's](#) **Still Moments** (1980), [Spencer Brewer's](#) **Portraits** (1985), Lanz's **Cristofori's Dream** (1988), [Jim Chappell's](#) **Saturday's Rhapsody** (1990), and [Tom Barabas's](#) **Sedona Suite** (1992) were among the albums that launched a more orchestrated form of piano-based music, reminiscent of the easy listening orchestras of the past.

Among flutists, the most celebrated was jazz-educated [Paul Horn](#) (1), who made a career of recording solo improvisations/meditations "inside" spectacular buildings, such as the ones collected on **Inside The Taj Mahal** (1968) and especially **Inside The Great Pyramid** (1976). His vocabulary of fragile mummy-like whispers that exuded millenary silence and zen ecstasy was instrumental in creating the ultimate new-age atmosphere.

The oboe was chosen by [Nancy Rumbel](#), particularly in duets with guitarist Eric Tingstad, such as **Legends** (1988).

The harp was another typical new-age instrument, lending itself to the angelic and relaxing tones favored by the genre. The idea was as old as Harry Bee's **Windharp** (1972), a double album entirely devoted to the vibrations of the harp caused by the wind, and was resurrected mainly by [Georgia Kelly](#), whose **The Sound Of Spirit** (1981) emphasized the symbiosis with Nature. [Susan Mazer](#) pioneered the electric harp on her duos with Dallas Smith's woodwinds, starting with **The Fire In The Rose** (1985). [Andreas Vollenweider](#) adapted the new-age harp to dance rhythms on albums such as **Behind The Gardens** (1981).

The violin, and strings in general, featured prominently in [Daniel Kobialka](#)'s work, such as **Echoes Of Secret Silence** (1982), while [David Darling](#) (2) focused on the cello for his solemn and almost baroque meditations, both in an ensemble setting, such as **Cycles** (1982), that featured Jan Garbarek's saxophone, Steve Kuhn's piano and Collin Walcott's percussion), and **Eight String Religion** (1993), his melodic peak, as well as in the solo setting, such as **Dark Wood** (1995), his most austere effort in the realm of neoclassical music.

Drums were unwelcome on most new-age albums, but the spiritual wing of new-age music gladly admitted exotic percussions, a tradition that harked back to [\(Henry\) Wolff & \(Nancy\) Hennings](#)'s **Tibetan Bells** (1972). Examples of world-music centered on percussion instruments (and rooted in jazz improvisation) included: [Frank Perry](#)'s **Deep Peace** (1983), [Mark Nauseef](#)'s **Wun Wun** (1985), [Michael Pluznick](#)'s **Where The Rain Is Born** (1989), [Glen Velez](#)'s **Assyrian Rose** (1989).

If all new-age music emphasized relaxation and meditation for therapeutic purposes, a few musicians made that the core of their business model, starting with [Steven Halpern](#)'s **Spectrum Suite** (1975) for solo piano, [Robert Gass](#)' "extended chants" of **On Wing Of Songs** (1977), and [Iasos](#)' **Angelic Music** (1978) for electronic drone.

### *Acoustic ensembles*

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[Shadowfax](#) created the standard for the new-age acoustic ensemble with chromatically-rich and melodically-relaxing albums such as **Shadowdance** (1983). Significant contributions to the "chamber" wing of new-age music came from former members of David Grisman's quintet, whose "jazzgrass" lent itself to a neo-classical interpretation. Violinist Darol Anger, pianist Barbara Higbie, mandolinist Mike Marshall, and bassist Michael Manring formed [Montreux](#), that released borderline albums such as **Sign Language** (1987) and **Let Them Say** (1989), and Anger led their spin-off, the [Turtle Island String Quartet](#) (1), whose **Turtle Island String Quartet** (1988) perfected those ideas.

If new-age chamber music was mostly influenced by jazz, **Summer Suite** (1983), that featured [Teja Bell](#) on guitar, Dallas Smith on lyricon and Jon Bernoff on vibraphone, and [Steve Kindler](#)'s **Dolphin Smiles** (1987) fused neoclassical, psychedelic and folk elements, an idea further refined by [Bill Douglas](#)' **Circle Of Moons** (1995).

[Nightnoise](#)'s **Nightnoise** (1984) was chamber music inspired as much by Celtic folk as by jazz improvisation.

The sounds of nature frequently complemented the sounds of the instruments, as on [Dean Evenson](#)'s **Desert Dawn Song** (1979). [Tim Wheeler](#)'s **Calmer Panorama** (1988) mixed flute, natural sounds and synthesizer. [Riley Lee](#), a USA virtuoso of the bamboo shakuhachi flute, penned **Oriental Sunrise** (1982) for shakuhachi, koto and ocean waves.

### *Electronic new-age music*

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As electronic keyboards became more commonplace, new-age music became increasingly electronic. Pioneering works such as **Dragon Wings And Wizard Tales** (1982) by [Emerald Web](#) (the duo of Bob Stohl and Kat Epple), and **Nightcrawlers** (1984) by the [Nightcrawlers](#) (the duo of Tom and Peter Gulch) resumed the experiments of the Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Company and the Tonto's Expanding Head Band, and set them in a magical and mysterious universe.

Through his projects, [Chuck Van Zyl](#) advanced the notion of the electronic studio as a tool to create surreal soundscapes, notably with Xyl's **Nuclear Winter** (1985), Xisle's **Aural Explorers** (1989) and **Moment Of Totality** (1990).

The tone of these experiments became lighter and warmer, to the point that new-age electronic music came to sound merely like a version of easy-listening music for electronic keyboards: **Water Wind And Stone** (1986) by [Checkfield](#) (the duo of John Archer and Ron Satterfield), **Tear Of The Moon** (1987) by [Coyote Oldman](#) (the duo of Michael Graham Allen on Native-American flute and Barry Stramp on electronics), **Moonwind** (1987) by [Wavestar](#) (the duo of David Ward-Hunt and John Dyson), etc.

### *The Los Angeles school*

TM, ®, Copyright © 2005 [Piero Scaruffi](#) All rights reserved. The Los Angeles school, specializing in lengthy suites à la Tangerine Dream performed with the latest electronic keyboards, was the most relevant breeding ground for electronic new-age music. [Michael Stearns](#) (2), after beginning in the "cosmic" of **Planetary Unfolding** (1981), specialized in assembling and playing electronic monsters on **Lyra Sound Constellation** (1983) and **Chronos** (1985). [Kevin Braheny](#) (2) opted instead for fairy-tales that explored the universe with the eye of a child: **Perelandra** (1984) and **Galaxies** (1988). [Thom Brennan](#)'s **Mountains** (1993), recorded in 1987, was one of the most ambitious works, a feat later replicated by his introspective monolith **Satori** (2002).

By far the most prolific and successful artist of the original Los Angeles school was [Steve Roach](#) (45). He began as a shy disciple of Schulze's cosmic music with electronic suites such as **Traveler** (1983), but became more and more introspective via the monumental **Structures From Silence** (1984). His masterpiece, **Dreamtime Return** (1988), established the archaic, oneiric, shamanic and psychological coordinates that would

ground of all his subsequent work. **Strata** (1990), a collaboration with Robert Rich, **Australia - Sound Of The Earth** (1991), the Suspended Memories's **Forgotten Gods** (1993), a collaboration with flutist Jorge Reyes and guitarist Suso Saiz, and **Well Of Souls** (1995), a collaboration with Vidna Obmana, were journeys to the collective subconscious. Their soundscapes were alive with the heat of the desert and the darkness of the cosmos. The titanic and terrifying **World's Edge** (1992), **Dream Circle** (1994) and **The Magnificent Void** (1996) increased the doses of angst and unknown, and crowned Roach as the most metaphysical of the cosmic couriers.

### *The Bay Area school*

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A parallel branch of electronic new-age music had to do with the symphonic sound that was made possible by the new generation of keyboards.

In the Bay Area, [Constance Demby](#) (11) coined a **Sacred Space Music** (1982) that reached a powerful climax on **Novus Magnificat** (1986), possibly new-age music's ultimate masterpiece, that borrowed from Bach, Terry Riley and Brian Eno.

The electronic soundscapes sculpted by [Robert Rich](#) (5) competed with Steve Roach's in complexity and psychological depth, and revealed an even greater emphasis on abstract tones. In 1982 Rich began performing "sleep concerts", continuous flows of soothing and static music (à la Brian Eno's *Music for Airports*), such as **Trances** (1983) and **Drones** (1983), a form that he would then abandon until the colossal **Somnium** (2001). Instead, Rich progressively increased the density and plasticity of his watercolors, from the philosophical poems of **Numena** (1987) to the pastoral naturalism of **Rainforest** (1989), eventually achieving a kind of morphing "organic" music with the algorithmic structures of **Gaudi** (1991), and the ethnic transfigurations of **Seven Veils** (1998). At the same time his study of just intonation and microtones progressed via the 21-minute four-part suite *Star Maker* (1996), off **Below Zero**, a constantly mutating stream of drones. The seven-hour "sleep concert" **Somnium** (2001) was the kind of monumental detour that harks back to a personal beginning and projects into the collective subconscious.

### *Electronic impressionism*

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Throughout the 1980s there was immense progress in incorporating electronic sounds in mass-market music. The spectrum was very broad. The brief vignettes of [Kerry Leimer](#)'s **Closed System Potentials** (1980) borrowed from both ambient and minimalist music. Veteran rock saxophonist [Steve Douglas](#) (1) penned the eclectic and sprightly space-fusion of **Rainbow Suite** (1981). [Peter Davison](#) crafted austere and ascetic electroacoustic sonatas on **Selamat Siang/ Music On The Way** (1980) and **Glide** (1981). On the other hand, [Yanni](#)'s **Optimystique** (1980) basically reinvented pop muzak for the electronic age.

The ensemble of [William Aura](#) (1) designed lengthy electronic chamber ethnic-jazz suites on **Heartspace** (1981) and **Lovely Day** (1981).

[Suzanne Ciani](#) (1) provided the natural link with the early electronic pioneers and the classical world on the visionary **Seven Waves** (1982) and the mini-concertos of the **Dream Suite** (1994).

The second generation continued to swing between more experimental (ambient-minimalist) formats, for example [Don Slepian's](#) **Sea Of Bliss** (1986), [Tony Gerber's](#) **Teleworks** (1986) and [Giles Reaves'](#) **Wunjjo** (1986), and poppy orchestrations, for example [David Arkenstone's](#) **Valley Of The Clouds** (1987), [Don Harriss's](#) **Abacus Moon** (1989) and [Steve Haun's](#) **Midnight Echoes** (1989), with [Ray Lynch's](#) **Deep Breakfast** (1984) and especially **No Blue Thing** (1989) drawing inspiration from folk and baroque music; although the truly new-age spiritual style was perhaps best represented by the impressionistic melodies and shimmering tapestries of [Richard Burmer's](#) **Mosaic** (1984), [Michel Genest's](#) **Crystal Fantasy** (1984) [Kurt Riemann's](#) **Gaia** (1989), and [Robert Carty's](#) **Natural Wonder** (1992).

Jean-Michel Jarre's symphonies inspired many of these electronic works, for example [Mark Shreeve's](#) **Legion** (1985) and [Ian Boddy's](#) **Phoenix** (1986) in Britain, and [Lothar Krell's](#) **Sinnfonie Fur Amphitrite** (1991) in Germany.

Canada had its own school, with [Jacques De Koninck's](#) **Music Of The Stars** (1990) following the impressionistic dogma, [Mychael Danna](#) (1)'s **Sirens** (1991) inventing a lyrical and visionary style that borrowed from both classical and folk music, and [Tim Clement's](#) **Waterstation** (1990) representing the most sophisticated version of exotic exploitation. Danna and Clement had already collaborated for years on albums that fused landscape and electronics, as in the suite *The Land Beneath The Waves*, off **Summerland** (1985).

[Jonh Serrie](#) was a proponent of lightweight electronic fantasias with the cosmic **Flightpath** (1989) and especially the mystical **Tingri** (1990).

[Tim Story](#) (1) fused acoustic and electronic sounds on **Beguiled** (1991), a series of gentle and elegant pieces for grand piano and electronic keyboards that straddled the border between Erik Satie's sonatas and Brian Eno's ambient music.

Fred "[Raphael](#)" Sharpe (1) was one of Harold Budd's most austere followers on **Music To Disappear In** (1988) and especially **Angels Of The Deep** (1995).

Spanish guitarist [Suso Saiz](#) composed the cosmic trance of **Hypnotics** (1988) for guitar drones.

Demby had pioneered a sound that became more popular in the following decade. Later examples of the electronic new-age symphony were [Jay Scott Berry's](#) **Symphony Of Light** (1990) and [James Asher's](#) **The Great Wheel** (1990) and **Globalarium** (1993).

Far from being only what was advertised (relaxation music for aging yuppies), new-age music represented the first broad application of pretty much all avantgarde techniques (electronic, electro-acoustic, minimalist, improvised, ethnic) to the melodic, tonal system.

### *Decline and fall of the new age*

New-age music, properly speaking, faded during the 1990s. Branded as "adult" music, it did not quite find an audience beyond the meditation and relaxation market (a market that could not sustain artistic growth). Nonetheless, new-age guitar albums included [William Ellwood's](#) **Natural Selections** (1995) and [Randy Roos'](#) **Primalvision** (1995). The piano was exploited for the new-age sonatas of [Christopher Peacock's](#) **Island Time** (1989), [Danny Wright's](#) **Autumn Dreams** (1991), [Robin Spielberg's](#) **Heal Of The Hand** (1994), and [Cheryl Gunn's](#) **Visions of Venus** (1996). The flute was the instrument of [Richard Warner's](#) **Quiet Heart - Spirit Wind** (1996). Electronic works in the new age vein included [Paul Sauvanet's](#) **Tristesse** (1995) and [Dino Pacifici's](#) **The Journey** (1997). Therapeutic music was well represented by [Gabrielle Roth's](#) shamanic and percussive **Trance** (1992).

### *World-music*

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World-music for the avantgarde was a completely different beast from world-music for the pop world. While pop artists were adopting melodic, timbric and rhythmic elements of African, Latin and Asian traditions, the avantgarde exploited those elements in a less explicit manner, as referents (backwards) to humankind's ancient past and (forward) to a futuristic global village.

First and foremost, [Paul Winter](#) (1), a veteran jazz saxophonist, became the itinerant apostle of third-world music. His main contribution to world-music was the hyper-fusion of **Common Ground** (1978), which forged a language made of jazz, animal voices and ethnic folk.

[Jon Hassell](#) (122), a student of both Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pandit Pran Nath, created a deadly combination that would resonate for decades in world-music compositions: the ghostly sound of his trumpet lost in nightmarish electronic background. His trumpet was both a call of the wild and a wail of grief, both as ancestral as possible in a modernist setting. The quasi-ambient **Vernal Equinox** (1977) and the jazzier (and less successful) **Earthquake Island** (1978) led to his masterpiece, **Dream Theory In Malaya** (1981), one of the fundamental recordings of the decade, that pushed electronic music back into the primordial swamps and jungles of Africa. After the equally eerie **Aka-Dabari-Java Magic Realism** (1983), Hassell abandoned the supernatural tension of those works and contented himself with impressionistic works such as **Power Spot** (1986).

The melodramatic suites orchestrated by Masanori "[Kitaro](#)" Takahashi (1) in Japan, such as **Oasis** (1979) and **Silk Road** (1980), were emblematic of how electronics and world-music conquered the (pop) world. [Osamu](#)

[Kitajima](#)'s east-west folk-jazz fusion of **The Source** (1985) was the epitome of the meeting of different sounds under the aegis of new-age music.

Japanese percussionist Yasukazu "[Yas-Kaz](#)" Sato composed music for western and eastern instruments, as well as home-made and toy instruments, for example on **Jomon Sho** (1984).

The tradition of the Third Ear Band was pursued by ensemble works such as [Do'Ah](#)'s **Light Upon Light** (1978), **Inverness** (1983) by Radiance (former Paul Winter Consort's cellist David Darling, guitarist Jim Scott and oboe player Nancy Rumbel), [Ancient Future](#)'s **Natural Rhythms** (1981) [Eternal Wind](#)'s **Eternal Wind** (1984), [Night Ark](#)'s **Picture** (1986).

Jon Hassell's and Steve Roach's "de-contextualizing" and "de-constructing" approaches to world-music exerted an enormous influence on the electronic musicians of the 1980s. Seattle-based composer [Jeff Greinke](#) (2) fused ambient, industrial and ethnic idioms on **Cities In Fog** (1985), **Timbral Planes** (1988) and **Changing Skies** (1990).

Jazz trumpeter [Mark Isham](#) (2) crafted the atmospheric and oneiric **Vapor Drawings** (1983) and **Tibet** (1989), coining a psychedelic and electronic form of jazz-rock.

Edward Larry Gordon, mainly active under the moniker [Laraaji](#) used an amplified zither for **Essence/ Universe** (1987).

[Michael Brook](#) (1)'s **Hybrid** (1985) and **Cobalt Blue** (1992) [Lucia Hwong](#) (1)'s **House of Sleeping Beauties** (1985), [Patrick O'Hearn](#) (1)'s **Ancient Dreams** (1985) were works that mixed a austere performance, sublime arrangements, exotic fascination and metaphysical message.

[Michael Gilbert](#) devised the electronic orchestration of African-inspired percussive music on **The Light In The Clouds** (1987).

**The Wolf At The Ruins** (1989) and **Blind Messenger** (1997), by [Forrest Fang](#) (11), who bridged the spiritual music of Deuter with a more authentic ethnic spirit and a more austere concept of the chamber concerto; **Nierika** (1989) and **Cronica De Castas** (1991), by [Jorge Reyes](#) (2); and **Yatra** (1990) and **Dorje Ling** (1992) by [David Parsons](#) (1); rank among the late masterpieces in the genre.

[Stephen Bacchus](#)'s **Pangaea** (1990) mixed electronic and exotic instruments. [Paul Avgerinos](#)'s **Muse of the Round Sky** (1992) was chamber music with exotic overtones. Even more commercially successful were [Cusco](#), i.e. German flutist Michael Holm and keyboardist Kristian Schultze, with stereotyped collections such as **Apurimac** (1988).

The commercial success of Enya and Loreena McKennitt helped reintroduce the voice in new-age music. The exotic/spiritual overtones of those singers was the key to acceptance among the new-age community, for example for the evocative hymn-like vocal tours de force of [Patrick Bernard](#)'s **Atlantis Angelis** (1990).

World music of the new-age kind, in general, aimed at rediscovering the

spirituality of ancient civilizations.

New-age music spawned a "Celtic revival" that produced an endless series of speculations on the Celtic tradition, mainly collections of music for dulcimer ([Malcolm Dalglish](#)) and harp ([Kim Robertson](#)), but little of artistic value.

It also spawned a less pervasive "Native American revival" that revealed a number of Native American musicians, notably flutist [Carlos Nakai](#), whose collaborations with pianist Peter Kater, **Natives** (1990) and especially **Migration** (1992), were probably the genre's most accomplished works. Their idea of ancestral chamber music led to the soundscapes of [Dik Darnell's In The Presence of Angels](#) (1994).

It was only a matter of time before Latin music also got the "new age" treatment, starting perhaps with [Ben Tavera King's](#) celebration of the tex-mex traditions on **Border Crossings** (1984). The most celebrated album in that vein was Ottmar Liebert's **Nouveau Flamenco** (1989), that spawned a whole generation of albums for exotic guitar, such as [Jesse Cook's Tempest](#) (1995).

A lesser revival affected klezmer music, the instrumental music of Eastern European Jews. Its protagonists included: Andy Statman (a former bluegrass mandolinist who pioneered the klezmer revival in the 1970s), the Klezmer Conservatory Band (founded in 1980) and the supergroup Brave Old World. Assimilating jazz and rock, klezmer revival music led to the [Klezmatiks' Rhythm & Jews](#) (1993) and [Kol Simcha's Voice Of Joy](#) (1993).

In the age of globalization, western popularizers of foreign traditions became an oxymoron, and ethnic music was best represented by musicians of the original countries. Such was the case of the most abused tradition of the 1960s, Indian music, which became widely available in the 1980s. Among late USA practitioners of world-music, [Jai Uttal](#) fused pop, jazz and Indian music on **Footprints** (1991).

### ***The real world-music***

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African and Middle Eastern music experienced a boom in the 1980s as they absorbed elements of rock and pop music.

Cheba Fadela was the first Algerian pop-raï queen, enjoying unsurpassed popularity with hits such as *Ana Ma H'Lali Ennoun* (1979) and *N'Sel Fik* (1983), which are fully westernized (even synthesizers).

A typical French-style maudit and Bohemian artist, [Cheb Khaled](#) (1) took the sound of the Algerian revolution and transposed it into the punk era. Rai became the voice of the poor and the oppressed, and, in the years of the Civil War, the voice of the anti-fundamentalist westernized youth, as documented by the slick synthesized production of **Kutche** (1989).

Mali is the land of the griots (the French word for the native word "jeli"),

the bards of the Sahara who accompany themselves with the kora harp, the balafon xylophone and the ngoni lute, descendants of a century-old tradition. Mali, or, better, the swamps of the Niger river, might also be the homeland of the blues. Traditionally musicians come only from some families: the job of musician is hereditary.

The first major recording of the acoustic music of the "Manding" region (roughly Mali to Guinea), characterized by sweet singalong melodies, was **Yasimika** (1983), conceived by Guinean kora player and vocalist Jali Musa Jawara, accompanied by balafon and guitar.

The first national voice of Mali was [Boubacar Traore](#) (1), a vocalist and guitarist who played an African version of the blues. He didn't record his music until **Mariama** (1990).

Mali's vocalist [Salif Keita](#) (1) was (1969) a co-founder with Tidiane Kone' of the Super Rail Band and (1972) a member of horn-band Les Ambassadeurs, that cut the epic *Mandjou* (1979). His first solo album, the dramatic **Soro** (1987), incorporated rock arrangements and took advantage of western studio techniques, while remaining faithful to his African roots.

Kasse' Mady Diabate, the voice of the National Badema orchestra, who moved to Europe in 1983, followed in Keita's footsteps with **Fode** (1988) but then returned to his roots with **Kela Tradition** (1990).

Mali's virtuoso of the kora harp [Toumani Diabate](#) (1), son of the Sidiki Diabate who recorded the first album ever of kora music, **Ancient Strings** (1970), introduced elements of minimalism, psychedelia and blues into his solo kora album **Kaira** (1987).

With the album **Ali Farka Toure** (1988), Mali's blues guitarist [Ali Farka Toure](#) (1) carved a niche in the territory of Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder, but then returned to his roots with the elegant **Savane** (2006).

Powerful vocalist [Kandia Kouyate](#), a sort of Aretha Franklin of Mali, was first immortalized in the 1980s on **Kandia Kouyate & the Ensemble Instrumental**. On **Kita Kan** (1999) she alternates between the western orchestra, the rock combo and the African folk ensemble, whereas **Biriko** (2002) is a traditional, acoustic effort.

[Orchestra Baobab](#) (1) was the most famous of the Senegalese combos that mixed Cuban music and African music, for example on **Pirate's Choice** (1982).

Senegal vocalist [Youssou N'Dour](#) (3) became a teenage sensation with the band Etoile De Dakar, whose **Xalis** (1979) established mbalax (Cuban music performed with western instruments and augmented with African polyrhythms) as a major form of dance music. The formidable **Immigres** (1985) proved what kind of force of nature N'Dour's ensemble was, especially when coupled with the Middle-eastern inflection of his tenor. The stylistic Babel of **Set** (1990) was perhaps his most emotional and most intricate statement.

The Senegalese band [Toure Kunda](#) (1) pioneered the African invasion of Europe with the fusion of western-style melodies and Middle-eastern or

reggae rhythms performed on traditional instruments of **Freres Griots** (1979).

Cameroon's saxophonist [Manu Dibango](#) (1), who became famous thanks to the proto-disco groove of *Soul Makossa*, fused African rhythms and melodies with reggae, notably on **Gone Clear** (1979), and funk, notably on **Waka Juju** (1982).

Guinean kora player Mory Kante, who succeeded Salif Keita in the Rail Band in 1973, adapted Mandinka music to the dancefloor and produced *Yeke Yeke* (1987), the first ever African single to sell over one million copies.

Maham Konate's percussion ensemble [Farafina](#), from Burkina Faso, delved into African polyrhythms on **Bolomakote** (1988).

Ethiopia, one of the world's most ancient nations, was virtually obliterated (both as a people and as a culture) by the communist dictatorship of Mengistu between 1974 and 1991. The Ethiopian music that was recorded between 1969 and 1978 was unknown in the rest of the world until the late 1990s. Indeed, the Ethiopian scene of the 1960s was one of the most lively scenes in the world. The country that will later be identified with chronic famine was actually experienced a moderate boom. The soundtrack of that boom was played by countless swing bands in countless night clubs. The censorship and persecution of the 1970s scientifically destroyed that scene, and the massive economic collapse that followed Mengistu's communist reforms sent the few survivors into exile. In 1978, Mengistu officially banned all vinyl recordings of music, and Ethiopian music went into hibernation until the 1990s.

Ethiopian virtuoso vocalist Mahmoud Ahmed, accompanied by the jazzy Ibex Band, penned a form of dance-pop that drew from both African, western and Middle-eastern sources on **Ere Mela Mela** (1986), that compiled some of his hits from 1975-78.

Ethiopian vocalist Aster Aweke, who relocated in 1982 to the USA, adapted her extraordinary voice to a repertory of soul-jazz-rock, at times gritty like Aretha Franklin at her best, and at times soporific like Sade, on **Aster** (1990), which actually summarized her eleven Ethiopian cassettes, and **Kabu** (1992).

Congolese keyboardist and musicologist [Ray Lema](#) Ansi Nzinga relocated to France, where he achieved the rumba, rock, funk and reggae fusion of **Kinshasa- Washington DC- Paris** (1983). His adult phase was instead devoted to merging African rhythm and western classical harmony, particularly on introspective albums of piano music such as **Tout Partout** (1994).

On the contrary, Brazzaville's singer-songwriter Pamelò Mounka, an alumnus of Tabu Ley's Afrisa, remained faithful to the traditional Congo sound on **L'Argent Appelle l'Argent** (1981).

Albums by westernized singers from Congo in the 1980s also included Kanda Bongo's **Amour Fou** (1984) and Souzy Kasseya's **Le Retour de l'As** (1984).

Ivory Coast's singer-songwriter Alpha Blondy (Seydou Kone), with **Jah Glory** (1983), and South Africa's [Ermelo "Lucky" Dube](#), with **Rastas Never Die** (1985), became the first reggae stars of Africa.

Zimbabwe's jit music is a percussive dancefloor style that weds Shona melodies, thumb piano, and guitar-driven rhythm'n'blues, something halfway between Zaire's soukous, Ghana's highlife, and South Africa's mbaqanga.

Zimbabwe-Shona minstrel [Thomas Mapfumo](#) (2) specialized in the genre of political songs (chimurenga music) that was in vogue during the civil war. Substituting electric guitar (Jonah Sithole) and drums for the mbira thumb piano and hosho rattlers, Mapfumo created his own personal hybrid of African and western music on albums such as **Gwindingwi Rine Shumba** (1980), while **Chimurenga for Justice** (1986) opted for a mellower sounds and introduced a languid fusion of soul, rock and reggae.

The [Bhundu Boys](#) popularized jit in the Britain with the effervescent **Shabini** (1986).

Zimbabwe's guitarist John Chibadura was the virtuoso of jit. His albums **Mudzimo Wangu** (1985), **5000\$ Kuroora** (1986), and **Sara Ugarike** (1987) were among the most popular of the genre. When he went reggae, Chibadura was equally successful with **Zuva Refuka Kwangu** (1988). He died in 1999.

Lebanese oud virtuoso [Rabih Abou-Khalil](#) (1) combined jazz improvisation and his Middle-eastern folk traditions (intricate rhythms, ornate melodies) on albums such as **Between Dusk and Dawn** (1987).

Yemeni-Israeli vocalist [Ofra Haza](#) became a star by singing traditional Jewish psalms arranged for the disco by state-of-the-art producers on **Yemenite Songs** (1987).

Turkish sufi multi-instrumentalist Omar Faruk Tekbilek sold out his traditions to the new-age crowd on **Whirling** (1994).

### ***Indian music***

Indian music was frequently quoted in the West but rarely heard outside the Indian communities of Britain and the USA.

Only some of the masters (Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar, Pandit Pran Nath, Zakir Hussain) reached a broad audience in the West.

Since 1973, the stormy voice of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan interpreted the hypnotic litanies of Pakistan's "qawwali" (sufi devotional music). His lengthy improvised vocal acrobatics are best represented by the colossal *Ni Main Jana Jogi De* and *Yeh Jo Halka Halka Saroor Hai* on **The Day The Night The Dawn The Dusk** (1991) and by the live performances of **Intoxicated Spirit** (1996). "Discovered" by Peter Gabriel, Ali popularized the style for the British audience with **Shahen-Shah** (1989). After the westernized format of **Mustt Mustt** (1990), basically electronic funk-rock

with dub overtones, he delivered the four soaring tours de force of **Shahbaaz** (1991), accompanied only by droning harmonium and frenzied tablas, the **Devotional and Love Songs** (1993) with guitar and mandolin juxtaposed to harmonium and tablas, and **The Last Prophet** (1994), which focused on call-and-response group singing. He died in 1997 at 41, having recorded some 120 albums.

In the 1970s Debashish Bhattacharya reinvented the Hawaiian slide guitar as a raga instrument by adding resonating strings and droning strings and developing the lightning-speed three-finger picking technique displayed on recordings such as **Raga Ahir Bhairav** (1993).

A younger influential sitar player in the "tantrakari ang" (the instrumental style of music) was Nikhil Banerjee (widely considered the century's greatest virtuoso), while "gayaki ang" (the vocal style) was represented by Vilayat Khan and, at the end of the 20th century, Shahid Parvez.

Instrumental masters (ustad) of other instruments included bansur (bamboo flute) player Hariprasad Chaurasia, particularly the **Rag Ahiv Bhairav** (1987) and the 69-minute performance of his **Rag Lalit** (1988), and violinist Lakshminarayana Subramaniam, devoted to jazz-Indian fusion on **Garland** (1978) and **Spanish Wave** (1983).

[Ilaiyaraaja](#) (born Gnanadesikan Rasaiya) experimented a fusion of Bach and raga on **How To Name It?** (1988).

Vocalist Lakshmi Shankar has often wasted his talent in light, pop efforts, but at least **Pancha Nadai Pallavi** (1991), which features three fourths of Shakti, is a dramatic and austere work in the classical tradition.

In 1989 John McLaughlin hired an Indian percussionist, [Trilok Gurtu](#), the son of vocalist Shobha Gurtu, who had already played with Don Cherry and with Oregon. Gurtu's own **Usfret** (1988) offered an intense mix of Indian vocals, jazz-rock and world-music. on recordings such as **Raga Ahir Bhairav** (1993).

### *Jamaican music in the 1980s*

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Vocal trio [Black Uhuru](#), supported by the rhythm section of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, wrapped reggae and Rastafarianism into a slick production of drum-machines and synthesizers, especially on **Red** (1981).

Third World offered a commercial fusion of reggae, funk and soul.

Innovators of the next generation included toaster and turntablist Yellowman (Winston Foster), a pioneer of "dancehall" (reggae music with rock drums) who established his reputation with **Mister Yellowman** (1982), crossover artists such as [Eddy Grant](#), with the electronic Afro-rock-reggae-funk fusion of **Walking on Sunshine** (1979), [Eek-a-Mouse](#) (Ripton Joseph Hylton), who invented a unique vocal technique that harked back to the early days of toasting, as displayed on **Wa Do Dem** (1982), and Mikey Dread (Michael Campbell), who crafted **African**

**Anthem/ At The Control Dubwise** (1979), with help from Scientist, King Tubby, Augustus Pablo and Sly & Robbie, and **World War III** (1981), with help from Scientist, after collaborating with the punk-rock band Clash.

As far as dub goes, King Tubby had raised an entire generation of recording engineers, who went on to become innovators of Jamaican music, such as Prince Jammy (Lloyd James), who concocted the all-digital reggae *Under Me Sleng Teng* (1985), credited with inventing "ragga" (a fusion of reggae, rap and electronic dance music), and Scientist (Overton Brown).

Popular reggae musicians of the 1980s included Judy Mowatt, who, as a backup vocalist for Marley, was one of reggae's first female performers, and, as a soloist, crossed over into pop-soul balladry, Ivory Coast's sociopolitical bard Alpha Blondy (Kone Seydou), and David "Ziggy" Marley, son of the prophet, who sold out his father's myth to the international disco-pop crowds. Dancehall toaster Shabba Ranks (Rexton Gordon) and Shinehead (Carl Aiken) were the stars of ragga hip-hop.

The star of the 1990s was Buju Banton (Mark Anthony Myrie), revealed by **Til Shiloh** (1995).

### *German electronic music*

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Remnants of "kosmische musik" in Germany abounded.

[Peter Frohmader](#) (13) was an impressive talent of composition and orchestration. His gothic nightmares **Nekropolis** (1981), **Cultes Des Goules** (1985) and **Ritual** (1986), particularly the middle one, credited to [Nekropolis](#) established his credentials in manipulating electronic and acoustic sounds, and in creating claustrophobic atmospheres. The four-part electronic symphony **Homunculus** (1988) shifted gear and attained the menacing intensity of a futuristic vision. **Through Time And Mistery** (1988), his masterpiece, contains compositions that draw inspiration from the Middle Ages as well as from avantgarde composers such as Stockhausen, Ligeti and Cage. Finally, he achieved his mystic phase with albums such as **Cycle Of Eternity** (1994), still dense, tense and metaphysical.

Austrian multi-instrumentalist [Gandalf](#) (1) devoted his career to Tolkien-like fairy-tales such as **Journey To An Imaginary Land** (1980).

Albums such as **Electronic Universe** (1985), by the duo [Software](#) (1), i.e. Peter Mergener and Michael Weisser, and **Heart Symphony** (1991) by [Karunesh](#) (Bruno Reuter), continued the great German tradition of electronic meditations.

In a more somber and austere register, [Asmus Tietchens](#) (1) composed ambient music à la Brian Eno, for example **Nachtstucke** (1980), the more abstract quasi-industrial suites of **Seuchengebiete** (1985), and surreal electro-acoustic concerts, such as **Zwingburgen Des Hedonismus** (1987),

before achieving his romantic peak with the **Marches Funebres** (1989) for electronics and percussions.

[Bernd Kistenmacher](#) revived the form of Schulze's cosmic symphony with **Wake Up In The Sun** (1987) and **Outlines** (1990). So did [Solitaire](#) (Elmar Schulte and Rudiger Gleisberg) with **Altered States** (1990).

In Denmark, [Klaus Schonning](#) (2) added Scandinavian naturalism (sense of great wide spaces, arctic landscapes and bright white light) to the stereotypes of "cosmic music" on albums such as **Symphodyse` I** (1989) and **Symphodyse` III** (1991).

"Kosmische musik" largely tapered off towards the end of the 1980s, outpaced and outlived by ambient music. Among the last German "cosmic couriers", [Mathias Grassow](#) established himself with **Psychic Dome** (Aquarius, 1992), permeated by mythological themes and new-age spirituality.

However, the most innovative take on the cosmic language came perhaps from Italy thanks to [Federico "Deca" DeCaroli](#) (1), notably his third album **Claustrophobia** (1989) and even more **Simbionte** (2002).

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