

# The History of Rock Music: 1966-1969

Genres and musicians of the Sixties

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## Kosmische Musik 1969-72

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

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Fundamentally, British rock recycled USA rock for a different kind of audience: the Beatles recycled it for a pop-oriented audience, progressive-rock (in all its neo-classical and jazz variations) recycled it for an intellectual audience. German rock, instead, invented a different kind of rock music. In fact, many German bands were not playing "rock" music at all. There is no question that the great era of German avant-rock was inspired by psychedelic music, but the German interpretation of psychedelic music had little to do with reproducing the effects of drugs: German musicians saw a relationship between psychedelic experiments and the German electronic avantgarde (such as Karlheinz Stockhausen), a relationship that, in retrospect, was already obvious in the USA's psychedelia, but that no one had articulated before.

In 1968 three young musicians, Conrad Schnitzler, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Klaus Schulze, founded the "Zodiak Free Arts Lab" in Berlin. This became the first venue for popular electronic music in Europe. That can be considered the moment when German musicians figured out that strategic relationship between psychedelic music and avantgarde music. The following year, Can debuted, playing rock music inspired by the classical avantgarde and by modern jazz. In 1970 Kluster (Cluster) began recording keyboards-based instrumental music that was inspired by the industrial society, with an emphasis on static drones (the prodromes of both industrial and ambient music). 1971 is the year when Tangerine Dream invented "kosmische musik", using synthesizers and sequencers instead of guitars and drums. The "trip" of acid-rock had become a "journey" into the cosmos. At the same time, Faust began recording songs that were, de facto, studio collages of rock music, electronic sounds and "concrete" noise.

1972 is the year that German musicians went spiritual: Popol Vuh released **In Den Gaerten Pharaos**, recorded inside a cathedral, which fused electronic music and Eastern music (thus predating new-age music); and Deuter released **Aum**, a fusion of Eastern and Western religious music, of acoustic instruments and natural sounds. It was also the year that kosmische musik found its

definitive format: the long, electronic suite. Tangerine Dream's **Zeit**, a double album that contained four side-long suites, and Klaus Schulze's **Irrlicht**, a cosmic symphony played with electronic instruments, were the archetypes that would be copied for the next 30 years.

The last of the great German inventions also occurred in 1972: a band named Neu! began playing obsessively rhythmic music.

The full impact of these profound, multiple and interbreeding innovations would be felt only decades later, but it would change the whole meaning of the word "music". No other movement, school or current in the history of rock music, apart from the early rockers, influenced so many musicians for so many decades.

### *The early masters*

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Amon Duul II and Can are representative of the two main cultural backgrounds of German bands: the hippy communes and the avantgarde.

Amon Duul 0 were a free-jazz trio, formed in 1966 in Munich by guitarist and violinist Chris Karrer and by drummer Christian Burchard. Amon Duul (with no zero) were, instead, the musical expression of a commune that included both artists and political activists, and in particular Karrer. This early version of Amon Duul was perhaps the most politicized group of Germany's 1968 (the year of the student riots). A 48-hour session, improvised towards the end of the year, yielded enough material for three albums of tribal and chaotic jams, inspired to the concept of amateurish music proclaimed by leader Ulrich Leopold. Only the first one, **Psychedelic Underground** (? 1968 - ? 1969), was authorized by the band. Towards the end of 1968, Karrer decided to leave the commune and start a rock band, which was named [Amon Duul II](#) (21). They were perhaps the most "teutonic" among the early German masters. Their sound was "gothic" in the most authentic (least sensational) sense of the word. Their cultural roots, not their self-indulgence, led them to gothic atmospheres. The title-track off their debut album, **Phallus Dei** (? 1969 - apr 1969), is a long, wild, chaotic bacchanal that blends rock'n'roll, electronics, dissonances, psychedelic chanting, blues jamming and African percussions. They soon abandoned their most blasphemous and provocative stances, and their sound more clearly revealed the influence of Californian acid-rock. Their musical language kept evolving, soon incorporating more instruments and switching from improvisation to composition. The three multi-part suites that make up the bulk of **Tanz Der Lemminge** (? 1970 - feb 1971), and particularly *The Marilyn Monroe-Memorial-Church*, are neither as dark nor as apocalyptic, although they maintain a degree of angst and perversion. **Yeti** (? 1970 - nov 1970), another masterpiece notable for its Wagner-ian intensity and monumental undertaking, found a balance between noise and harmony, hard and soft rock, the gothic and the pastoral. Amon Duul II had mastered the fusion between rock'n'roll, avantgarde and world-music, using such fusion to pen long and dynamic post-psychedelic musical journeys that reinvented the form of the classical fantasia in the age of post-modernism.

More than any other band, Can, formed in Cologne by two classically-trained musicians, bassist Holger Czukay and pianist Irmin Schmidt (both alumni of Karlheinz Stockhausen), and by Globe Unity's free-jazz drummer Jaki Liebezeit, transformed progressive-rock into a science. By bridging electronic music, jazz

music and rock music, [Can](#) (22) accomplished the first organic study on rhythm and texture in rock music. Their hypnotic and glacial instrumental jams straddled the line between free-jazz, acid-rock and chamber music. While pursuing an erudite divertissement of Cage's aleatory music and Schoenberg's atonal music, while experimenting with the potentialities of electronically-manipulated instruments, while favoring subdued, fragmented, loose structures and sinister, menacing atmospheres, Can became masters of a new electro-acoustic form of music: within the German school of the 1970s, Can were the ascetics. After **Monster Movie** (aug 1968/jul 1969 - ? 1969), a largely improvised and exuberant kaleidoscope of Pink Floyd-inspired and Velvet Underground-inspired psychedelic music, Can entered the labyrinthine fray of progressive-rock with their monumental **Tago Mago** (nov 1970/feb 1971 - feb 1972), a work blinded by Eastern mysticism and immersed in a jungle of collage techniques and sound effects (the demonic bacchanal of *Halleluwa*, the oneiric soundpainting of *Aumgn*) further complicated by the psychodramas of Japanese vocalist Kenji "Damo" Suzuki. After the bleak **Ege Bamyasi** (dec 1971/jun 1972 - nov 1972), that predated the languid, dejected tones of post-rock and trip-hop, Can dealt another blow to the rules of harmony with **Future Days** (aug 1973 - sep 1973), their most psychological work. Instrumental scores such as *Bel Air* are dense, amorphous, amoebic lattices of sounds, the musical equivalent of Monet frescoes, that metabolize jazz, funk, rock, Indian music and dissonance.

**Canaxis 5** (jul 1968 - feb 1969), the first solo album released by Can's [Holger Czukay](#) (11), added another milestone to their career: the marriage of electronics and ethnic music, i.e. the birth of electronic world-music. Czukay would explore this theme two decades later, when pop-star David Sylvian lent a hand to the lengthy suites of **Plight And Premonition** (? 1986/? 1987 - mar 1988) and **Flux And Mutability** (dec 1988 - sep 1989), particularly in *Plight*. **Canaxis 5** also pioneered "sampling" by blending together loops of exotic music (the sources were from Japan, Australia, Vietnam).

### *The cosmic couriers*

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[Tangerine Dream](#) (15), formed in Berlin by guitarist Edgar Froese, percussionist Klaus Schulze and keyboardist Conrad Schnitzler, were among the earliest conscious explorers of a new musical universe opened by electronic instruments. Tangerine Dream's music was born as a psychedelic journey in the heavens, and, aided by the new electronic keyboards, transformed into a contemplative survey of the universe. By borrowing from impressionistic painting, ecclesiastic music, the minimalist avantgarde and from Eastern transcendental philosophy, Tangerine Dream invented "kosmische musik", one of the most influential genres of all times. Froese, percussionist Christopher Franke, a flutist and two keyboardists recorded the three improvised jams of **Alpha Centauri** (jan 1971 - apr 1971) that defined the genre; and the band pared down to a trio (Froese, Franke and keyboardist Peter Baumann) for **Zeit** (may 1972 - aug 1972), their masterpiece and one of the most important albums of the time, a four-movement symphony which adopted a more electronic format and a looser concept of rhythm. With **Atem** (jan 1973 - mar 1973), perhaps their most formally accomplished album, they turned to a less intimidating vision of the cosmos, one that led to the lighter, baroque and melodic approach of **Phaedra** (dec 1973 - feb 1974), **Rubycon** (jan 1975 - mar 1975) and **Ricochet** (oct 1975 - dec 1975), and to the new-age sound of the 1980s, when Froese and Franke were joined first by

Johannes Schmoelling (1980) and then by Paul Haslinger (1986).

Unlike the acid-rock it descended from, Tangerine Dream's "kosmische musik" was minor-key and devoid of climax: it simply floated, disregarding the traditional song format. Tangerine Dream introduced a new concept of "time" in rock music, whereby a group of notes can float forever, with no story development. Tangerine Dream removed the vocals from rock music, thereby showing how inessential they had become: instrumental music stopped being an eccentric novelty. The orchestral and choral textures created by the mellotron and the electronic pulses created by the sequencer opened new horizons to the whole art of "coloring" an atmosphere. They wed the trance-like approach of avantgarde music (Riley, Ligeti, Part) to a new culture of "color", that dignified even the most stubborn repetition of simple patterns. Tangerine Dream used the chromatic properties of electronic instruments to charge each sound with all sorts of fantastic and metaphysical meaning. Their journeys were both in the universe and in the mind, in time and in space. Those journeys, above all, were always chromatically resplendent, occasionally flamboyant, but always vivid. Unlike so much acid-rock and free-jazz jamming that indulged in depressed tones and grey scales, Tangerine Dream painted music with the very essence of beauty. Unlike jazz and rock improvisers who decomposed music to a brainy soliloquy, Tangerine Dream elevated it to a stately condition. By renouncing the narrative element, Tangerine Dream turned music into a subgenre of painting. Their compositions are frescoes rather than symphonies.

It was also a new way to tell "fairy tales". Tangerine Dream invented folk music for the new millennium. Each of their "cosmic" pieces retells the story of Ulysses turned cosmic courier. Tangerine Dream's music is the perfect soundtrack for the mythology of the space age. They also pioneered the attitude of cybernauts, who explore an artificial space.

They were contemporaries with the moon landing. The world was caught in a collective dream of the infinite: Tangerine Dream gave that dream a sound. It wasn't merely the philosophical fear of what our mind cannot comprehend: it was instead a visionary approach to the fascinating mysteries that lie beyond what our mind can comprehend.

It was also a mystic experience. The imposing crescendos, the majestic notes hanging from the immense arches of cathedrals, evoked a sense of eternity. The religious, spiritual component came to be naturally linked to the exploration of outer space, the way it had been for centuries linked to the exploration of inner space.

Few groups in history have had such a revolutionary impact on the music of their time. For thirty years (from ambient to disco, from techno to new-age music) popular music would simply apply their numerous intuitions in different contexts.

Despite having flooded the market with a lot of awful recordings, [Klaus Schulze](#) (126) was one of the most significant, influential and original composers of the 1970s. During his first decade alone, Schulze pioneered a number of genres that would become popular during the following thirty years, from disco-music to ambient music. But, mainly, Schulze penned the first aesthetic of popular electronic music, an aesthetic that inherited from Indian raga the sense of tempo, from jazz the sense of spontaneity, and from late romantic symphonists the sense of magniloquence. In many ways, **Irrlicht** (apr 1972 - aug 1972) created both the archetype and the reference standard for "kosmische musik". Schulze's recipe included: Bach-ian organ overtures, Tibetan-style droning, "Wagner-ian" polyphonic architectures, Pink Floyd-ian cosmic psychedelia, Gregorian liturgy, John Coltrane's metaphysical explorations, and perhaps even Michelangelo's

"Sistine Chapel", and many other ingredients. The synthesis achieved by that electronic symphony was momentous and ground-breaking. Schulze sculpted/painted an ambience that sounded like a live recording of galactic life, but, rather than indulging in rendering cosmic events, he focused on the pathos that the unknown and the infinite elicit into the human soul. The symphony alternates moments of catalectic suspense, of apocalyptic chaos and of moving melody: Schulze sequenced them so as to maximize awe and angst. Like Tangerine Dream's **Zeit**, Schulze's **Cyborg** (feb/jul 1973 - oct 1973) was a double album containing four side-long electronic suites, and, like many other German musicians, Schulze was introducing more rhythm into his visions. However, this new monolith maintained the "symphonic" quality of the previous one (enhanced by a huge chamber orchestra). While the lengthy, slowly-unraveling suite remained his favorite medium, *Totem*, on **Picture Music** (fall 1974 - jan 1975), and the inferior *Voices Of Syn*, on **Blackdance** (may 1974 - ? 1974), continued the progression towards a more "accessible" format. The best results were to be found on **Timewind** (mar/jun 1975 - aug 1975), which contains two of his most violent (or, better, "Wagner-ian") sonatas: *Bayreuth Return* and *Wahnfried 1883*. The explosive *Floating*, on **Moondawn** (jan 1976 - apr 1976), combined the usual battery of sequencers with manic percussions. Rhythm disappeared from **Mirage** (jan 1977 - apr 1977), one of the earliest albums of ambient music. Another stunning masterpiece, **X** (summer 1978 - sep 1978), summarized all his experiments. The four monumental suites paid homage to Teutonic culture like no one had done since Wagner. Having reached his baroque and romantic zenith, Schulze began wasting his talent in trivial new-age music. **Audentity** (dec 1982/jan 1983 - feb 1983) and **Dresden Performance** (aug 1989/may 1990 - oct 1990) would be his last meaningful works.

Each and every other member of Tangerine Dream launched a solo career, but nobody was as successful as Schulze. **Romance '76** (jul/aug 1976 - sep 1976), by [Peter Baumann](#) (1) and **Aqua** (nov 1973/mar 1974 - jun 1974), by [Edgar Froese](#) (1), were probably the best of the solo works of the others, while [Chris Franke](#) (1) would not release a significant work until **Babylon 5** (may 1995 - sep 1995).

### ***The soundtrack of industrial neurosis***

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Cluster, Kraftwerk, Neu and Faust had little or no interest in psychedelia, and even less interest in the universe. They were (morbidly) fascinated by the human psyche in the 20th century.

Originally, Hans-Joachim Roedelius, Dieter Moebius and Conrad Schnitzler formed [Cluster](#) (4), or, better, Ensemble Kluster, to play wildly dissonant and heavily electronic psychedelic music, collected on **Klopfzeichen** (dec 1969 - nov 1970) and **Zwei Osterei** (feb 1970 - early 1971). Renamed Cluster (with producer Conrad Plank replacing Schnitzler), also the title of **Cluster** (jan 1971 - ? 1971), the trio began to indulge in velvety drones, distorted reverbs, cyclic repetitions and tonal poetry, thus aiming for a form of contemplation instead of Kluster's abstract painting. The musical continuum of **Cluster II** (jan 1972 - ? 1972) drew inspiration from Tangerine Dream's psychedelic/cosmic meditations, but without the emphasis on the "visual", sensational, chromatic, symphonic aspects that Schulze had gone on to develop in his solo career. Cluster's

electronica was subtle and psychological, rather than emphatic and psychedelic: sound effects were employed to create unnerving feelings, not the trancey ecstasy of the cosmic poems. Their focus was on the background cosmic radiation rather than on the explosion of a supernova. **Zuckerzeit** (fall 1974 - late 1974), featuring Neu's Michael Rother, and **Musik Von Harmonia** (jun/nov 1973 - ? 1974), credited to [Harmonia](#) (1) but featuring the same trio as the previous one, veered towards lighter atmospheres and artificial rhythms. Continuing the transition, Cluster converted to Eno's ambient music with **Sowieso** (? 1976 - ? 1976) and, after two collaborations with the British master, scored their best ambient work, **Grosses Wasser** (? 1979 - ? 1979).

[Kraftwerk](#) (4) influenced two separate (and often conflicting) groups of musicians: the hyper-abstract noise-makers and the hyper-hedonistic dance-pop crowd. Both industrial music and disco-music descend from Kraftwerk. They were not the first band to focus on the sound of industrial society (Kluster did so a couple of years earlier) and they were not the first band to make music with electronic keyboards, but they were probably the first musicians to fuse those innovations with pop melody (for better and for worse). When they pursued that fusion, they de facto replaced conventional drumming with electronic rhythms, or, better, the essence of Afro-American civilization with the essence of European civilization. Each suite on **Kraftwerk** (jul/sep 1970 - dec 1970) and **Kraftwerk 2** (sep/oct 1971 - jan 1972), which introduced the drum-machine (replacing Klaus Dinger) and probably remains their futuristic masterpiece (*Kling Klang*), was a harrowing, awe-inspiring fresco, worthy of abstract painting, of Morton Subotnick's electronic Dadaism, of surrealist poetry, but with the emphasis on the "man machine". **Ralf & Florian** (jul 1973 - nov 1973) refined the relationship between rhythm and melody, and **Autobahn** (may 1974 - nov 1974) finally abandoned any intellectual pretense and laid the foundations for disco-pop. But now their operation of "black exploitation" was not all that different from what Presley and the Beatles had done: 1. take black music; 2. remove the provocative elements; 3. enhance it with modern technology; 4. and turn it into easy-listening music for the white masses.

Searching for a middle point between post-nuclear psychedelia and psycho-ambient "musique concrete", [Faust](#) (112) coined one of the most powerful, dramatic and eccentric languages in modern music. Known for the spartan editions of their records and for the ascetic modesty of their members, Faust were, in a sense, the first "lo-fi" group. Technically, the ensemble's music pushed to the extreme an aesthetic of darkness, ugliness, fear, chaos, the irrational, that stemmed from expressionism, surrealism, theater of the absurd, Brecht/Weill's cabaret, the myth of the "supermensch", Wagner-ian melodrama, "musique concrete", all fused in a formal system that was as much metaphysical as grotesque. Influenced by Frank Zappa's collages, these teutonic vampires injected angst, like burning lava, into a sound that was deliberately fastidious, repulsive, incoherent. Demented, demonic, paranoid, acid and violent, their compositions constitute a puzzle of sonic boutades and hermetic puns. Their opus was a black mass that deteriorated into "happening". However, behind the surface, Faust's music hid a moving vision of the human condition, one of the most lyrical in the entire history of the century. The visions of hell on their debut album, **Faust** (? 1970/sep 1971 - late 1971), particularly *Miss Fortune* (with the age-defining lyrics "Are we supposed to be or not to be?"), represent one of the noblest testaments to modern alienation. That album was the soundtrack to something both horrible and tender that had just happened to humankind. **So Far** (mar 1972 - ? 1972) was a more conventional set of songs, and **Tapes** (jun

1971/jun 1973 - ? 1973) was a collage of small fragments. Faust's second masterpiece, **IV** (jun 1973 - sep 1973 - ? 1974), or, better, its tour de force *Krautrock*, is a bleak, menacing, agonizing whirlwind of galactic magma that consumes thermonuclear energy. If the Indian mystics wanted to become one with Brahman, Faust the atheists tried to become one with the Big Bang.

Formed by guitarist Michael Rother and percussionist Klaus Dinger, both veterans of Kraftwerk, [Neu!](#) (102) invented the ultimate soundtrack for industrial neurosis. **Neu!** (dec 1971 - feb 1972) pushed the technique of iterative patterns and the impressionistic approach that were popular among contemporary cosmic musicians to the limit. Pieces such as *Negativland* are essentially continuums of rhythmic impulses propelled by Dinger's legendary "motorik beat" and by obsessive repetition of ferocious percussive patterns (occasionally bordering on jack-hammer noise). It was tribal drumming applied to the devastating neurosis of the post-industrial era. *Fur Immer*, on their second album, **2** (jan 1973 - may 1973), offered the last glimpse into their personal and public hell. **Neu! 75** (dec 1974/jan 1975 - feb 1975) was a much quieter and softer affair, downplaying the rhythmic element and incorporating a stronger melodic element. After the split, each musician continued Neu's mission. Both first solo album by [Michael Rother](#), **Flammende Herzen** (jun/sep 1976 - ? 1977), and *Dusseldorf*, on the first album **LA Dusseldorf** (sep/dec 1975 - ? 1976) by Dinger's [LA Dusseldorf](#) (1) resumed the nightmare. Neu's anti-romantic futurism and anguished hyper-realism of Wagner-ian intensity would be highly influential.

### *Spiritual music*

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Deuter and Popol Vuh turned hippy mysticism into a new musical genre.

Georg [Deuter](#) (15) was a pioneer of world-music, and one of the earliest "hippy" musicians to blend western avantgarde and eastern spirituality. The marriage between modern, ancient and eastern cultures is embedded in the core elements of his music: respectively, electronic keyboards, flute melodies, and exotic percussions. Deuter presented his credentials in the four-movement suite *Babylon*, off his debut album **D** (? 1971 - ? 1971), that sampled Karlheinz Stockhausen, Tangerine Dream, raga-rock and acid-rock. **Aum** (? 1972 - ? 1972) was the first Indo-western mass: Hinduist liturgy is transfigured from the viewpoint of the classical avantgarde, while natural sounds and lush percussive textures enhance the ceremonial quality. Deuter continued his mission with a series of devotional albums inspired by his sojourn in India. The suites released on **Haleakala** (? 1978 - ? 1978) and **Ecstasy** (? 1979 - ? 1979) blend Tibetan mantras, "om"-like vocals, electronic drones, sounds of nature and discreet melodies to recreate the intimate ecstasy of the spiritual experience. **Silence Is The Answer** (? 1980/? 1981 - ? 1981), his masterpiece, summarizes his musical achievements on a monumental scale, although Deuter would later join the ranks of less profound new-age music with **Nirvana Road** (? 1984 - ? 1984).

One of the most significant groups of all times, Florian Fricke's [Popol Vuh](#) (114) absorbed Eastern spirituality within the format of Western music. Fricke's work has been a constant exploration of the same theme: how to express the most personal, profound, austere spirituality by means of western classical music, western sacred music and profane rock music. It was a marriage of East and West, and a marriage of past and present, made on Earth. In fact, it was made in

Germany, and it bears the stigmata of German history. Almost inevitably, Fricke ended up denying the fundamental tenet of German music of his age: electronics. The humble, peaceful tones of acoustic instruments served his purpose better than the majestic complexity of synthesizers and sequencers. Despite the fact that Popol Vuh's debut album, **Affenstunde** (? 1970 - jan 1971), was an all-electronic album (in fact, it was one of the first rock albums to employ the Moog synthesizer), the ethnic percussions, the natural sounds and the pastoral tone turned it into their first essay in abstract soundpainting, focusing on the ambience rather than on pathos. Popol Vuh further detached themselves from the clichés of "kosmische musik" with **In Den Gaerten Pharaos** (? 1971 - apr 1972), one of the most significant albums of the decade. Partially recorded inside a cathedral, its two suites evoke a quiet, intense spiritual experience, aiming for a communion with the forces of the universe, with the infinite and with eternity. The sound is mostly inert and timeless: there is no melodic center, no rhythmic underpinning, no narrative development. Electronic instruments had never been employed in such a humble format, i.e. to travel "inside" rather than "outside". The transition from electronic to acoustic instruments, and from grandeur to humility, was completed with **Hosianna Mantra** (? 1972 - jan 1973), one of the most significant works in the entire history of rock music. This Eastern-western meditation-mass for chamber ensemble, centered around the angelic wails of Korean soprano Djong Yun, carried out a sublime integration of Buddhist and Christian meditative/contemplative practices. This album also completed Popol Vuh's repudiation of rhythm: if Tangerine Dream had removed rhythm (i.e., Time) from its cosmic soundpainting, then Popol Vuh removed rhythm (i.e., Time) from its spiritual soundpainting. Building on that intuition, **Seligpreisung** (? 1973 - may 1973) began a mystic trilogy devoted to holy books, **Einsjäger & Siebenjäger** (may 1974 - ? 1974) and **Das Hohelieds Salomons** (feb 1975 - ? 1975) being the other two parts. **Letzte Tage Letzte Nächte** (? 1976 - ? 1976) marked an equally successful conversion to more conventional psychedelic-rock.

[Eberhard Schoener](#) (2), a classical violinist and conductor, who has staged several collaborations between rock musicians and symphony orchestras, endorsed Deuter's and Popol Vuh's spiritual stance on **Meditation** (summer 1973 - ? 1973) and his best electronic poems, *Sky Music* and *Mountain Music*.

### ***German prog-rock***

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Compared to so many German giants who revolutionized the history of music, German progressive and psychedelic bands were hardly relevant. Nonetheless, many of those bands rank with the best British bands of the time.

[Ash Ra Tempel](#) (1), formed by guitarist Manuel Gottsching (and initially featuring Klaus Schulze on keyboards), practiced a more earthly form of cosmic psychedelia on **Schwingungen** (feb 1972 - ? 1972) and on their masterpiece, *Freak'n'Roll*, off the album **Join Inn** (dec 1972 - apr 1973), the ultimate synthesis of hippy culture and German expressionism, of the Grateful Dead and teutonic sensibility. [Manuel Gottsching](#) (2) formed the **Cosmic Jokers** (feb/may 1973 - ? 1974) with Schulze and then started a solo career with the ambitious **Inventions For Electric Guitar** (jul/aug 1974 - jan 1975), which would be followed by more and more spiritual works for the new-age generation. On the other hand, the rhythmic patterns of his **E2-E4** (dec 1981 - ? 1984), a one-hour piece for guitar and synthesizer recorded live at home, predated techno music.

The trio [Limbus 3](#) (Odysseus Artnern, Bernd Henninger, Gerd Kraus) composed the free-form **Cosmic Music Experience** (? 1969 - ? 1969), with the side-long *New Atlantis*. They later expanded to a quartet, Limbus 4, for **Mandalas** (mar 1970 - ? 1970), with the 20-minute *Plasma*.

Formed by Swiss percussionist Marcus "Mani" Neumeier (who had played with jazz musicians Irene Schweizer and the Globe Unity Orchestra), the [Guru Guru Groove Band](#) offered a surreal mixture of psychedelia, humour, improvisation and collage technique on their 20-minute juggernaut *Der LSD Marsch* (1970), off **Ufo** (jun 1970 - ? 1970).

[Brainticket](#) delivered the exotic-cosmic-erotic-electronic suite *Brainticket Pts 1 and 2* on **Cottonwood Hill** (? 1970 - ? 1971).

**Malesch** (jul 1972 - dec 1972), the debut album by [Agitation Free](#) (1), enhanced the recipe of acid-rock with frantic exotic dances (reminiscent of middle-eastern dervishes) and with avantgarde touches, due to Michael Hoenig's synthesizer.

The electronic suites of **Rot** (? 1972 - ? 1973) by [Conrad Schnitzler](#) (1), a founding member of both Cluster and Tangerine Dream, are closer to Morton Subotnick's avantgarde electronica than to "cosmic music".

Gruppe [Between](#) (1), featuring keyboardist Peter Michael Hamel, contaminated "kosmische musik" with free-jazz, world-music, minimalism, and even the symphonic orchestra on **Dharana** (? 1972 - nov 1974).

A myriad bands were born in the wake of the German boom. [Yatha Sidhra's A Meditation Mass](#) (? 1972 - ? 1973) was a spiritual work in the vein of Popol Vuh's **Hosianna Mantra**. [Kalacakra's Crawling To Lhasa](#) (? 1971 - ? 1972) and [Dom's Edge of Time](#) (? 1970 - ? 1971) offered world-music à la Third Ear Band. [Gila's Gila](#) (jun 1971 - ? 1971) indulged in mystic and medieval atmospheres. [German Oak's German Oak](#) (summer 1972 - ? 1972) was a session of casual tribal free rock. [A.R. & Machines](#), basically the solo project of Achim Reichel, indulged in introverted psychedelia for guitar and sound effects on **Die Grune Reise** (? 1970 - ? 1971) and then spaced out on the dreamy extended suites of the double album **Echo** (? 1972 - ? 1972).

More derivative progressive-rock was played by bands such as: [Organisation](#) (later evolved into Kraftwerk), whose **Tone Float** (? 1970 - aug 1970) was one of the earliest examples of acid-jazz-raga fusion; and [Eloy](#) (1), whose symphonic arrangements and Pink Floyd-ian vocals would bloom on **Ocean** (sep/oct 1977 - end 1977). Progressive-rock clichés were also recycled on [Anima Sound's Stürmischer Himmel](#) (? 1971 - ? 1971), [Golem's Orion Awakes](#) (? 1972/? 1973 - ? 1973), [Schicke Fuehrs & Froehling's Symphonic Pictures](#) (? 1976 - ? 1976), etc.

The jazz school featured: [Xhol](#), whose **Electrip** (? 1969 - ? 1969) parallels Frank Zappa's developments in jazz-rock; [Embryo](#) (1), whose **Opal** (apr 1970 - oct 1970) was influenced by John Coltrane's mystic free-jazz; [Dzyan](#) (1), whose **Time Machine** (? 1973 - ? 1973) contains four complex jams that offered an unusual hybrid of acid-rock, progressive-rock, world-music and Canterbury-ian jazz-rock; [Passport](#), whose **Looking Thru** (oct 1973 - ? 1974) acknowledged the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Soft Machine; and Brainstorm' **Smile a While** (aug 1972 - oct 1972).

Perhaps the oddest experiment of the time was [Zweistein](#) (1), the project of German pop singer Suzanne Doucet (disguised under the moniker Jacques Dorian) that released only the triple-LP album **Trip, Flipout, Meditation** (oct 1970 - end 1970), a post-psychedelic sound collage that drowned naive melodies under a thick layer of studio effects.

### *Meet the avantgarde*

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Former Gruppe Between keyboardist [Peter-Michael Hamel](#) (24) coined an instrumental, keyboard-based sound that is reminiscent of both Bach and Terry Riley with **Hamel** (? 1972 - ? 1972) and **Colours Of Time** (? 1980 - ? 1980), with the latter being his most imaginative work, whose magniloquence and austerity also permeated **Nada** (? 1977 - oct 1981) and **Bardo** (? 1981 - ? 1981). **Transition** (? 1983 - ? 1983), perhaps his most experimental work, ran the gamut from Bach to tribal music, from Tibetan trance to Riley's dervishes, and led to ever more ambitious works: the sonata **Organum** (? 1985 - ? 1986) and two pieces for string orchestra dedicated to the concept of Time, *Arrow Of Time* and *Cycle Of Time* (1988).

The exotic element was central to the music of [Stephan Micus](#) (23), as was the entire cultural world of the Far East. **Implosions** (mar 1977 - ? 1977) is more than an erudite version of Popol Vuh's **Hosianna Mantra**. In pieces such as *As I Crossed A Bridge Of Dreams*, a gentle psalm for sitar, guitar and voice, Micus sets Zen philosophy to hypnotic quasi-ambient music. That form of languid Eastern-western chamber music for small orchestra of ethnic instruments was further explored on **Koan** (? 1976 - ? 1981) and **Wings Over Water** (jan/oct 1981 - ? 1982), and articulated in more and more virtuoso combinations. **Ocean** (jan 1986 - ? 1986), Micus' definitive symphony of timbres, led to the more abstract soundscapes of **Twilight Fields** (nov 1987 - ? 1988), which is static music for droning instruments and found objects, and **Music Of Stones** (? 1986/? 1988 - ? 1989), which collects, literally, improvisations for resonating stones.

After disbanding Agitation Free, [Michael Hoenig](#) (10) set a new standard for cosmic music with **Departure From The Northern Wasteland** (? 1976/? 1977 - ? 1977), a melodic fantasy that blended Tangerine Dream, and Terry Riley, and even predated ambient house.

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