



DUNKELZIFFER

COLOURS AND SOUL

Reissue (originally released 1983)

CD / LP / Digital

Release: July 16th 2021



Welcome to the world of Dunkelziffer - a hip hive mind who buzzed away in the post-industrial decay of Köln's Stollwerck complex. Taking a radical approach to sound, style and group dynamics, this loose collective of musicians and artists blazed an experimental trail through the 80s, offering an alternative vision of German pop fit for a decade of constant change.

Emerging in the wake of Can's late seventies supernova, Dunkelziffer became the centre of gravity for a new era of creativity in Köln. Embracing the stylistic freedom of this fresh start alongside the time and space offered by their residency in the Palazzo Schoko, their jam sessions, often including associates from the Food Band, Phantom Band and Catalans Dream Band as well as anyone passing through, soon segued into a (slightly) more formal ensemble, though free-thinking and free-movement remained central ideologies.

Leaving egos well outside the door, Dunkelziffer wrote and recorded with no hierarchy, offering each member an equal stake in songwriting and sonics. Unsurprisingly the result is a wild stylistic fusion, equal parts art-rock, dub, soul, and jazz which, to the eternal credit of the collective comes together with an unconventional brilliance.

On their 1983 debut, Colours And Soul, Dunkelziffer offered an hour long odyssey through the fringes of the pop landscape, creating a kaleidoscopic journey through sun-kissed skank, coastal funk, demented drum circles and tachycardic new wave.

Appearing from the chaos of an outboard explosion, opener 'Kedema' lays the foundations for the seductive strangeness which follows, rewiring a lilting dub rhythm with skewed synth tones and curious percussion as late-Can man Rebop Kwaku Baah's unique vocals form a lopsided melody. Island undulations give way to angular excitations on 'Bleib Night So Lang Im Schatten Stehn', a propulsive piece of new wave alive with Wolfgang Schubert's skronking horns and some poised female vocals. From there the group bask in the light of their own miracle, surrendered to the seven minute groove of 'This is How You Came', a sublime psychedelic blend of hypnotic bass, frazzled guitars and jazz-rock interludes. 'Keine Python' signposts the way to Babylon by autobahn before tribal electronic trio 'Dark Number', 'Stil Der Neuen Zeit' and 'Zufall In Der Wirklichkeit' take us to the midpoint in a polyrhythmic trance.

'S.O. 36' opens the B-side with an overload of adrenaline as a lurching AKAI-ready half time transforms into the fast paced motorik stomp of a jazz-punk freakout. The dance-floor friendly 'Strom' follows, embracing a similar strain of sticky industrial funk as Unknown Cases' anthemic 'Masimba Bele', while 'Free' leads us back into the light, riding the thermals over a sparkling shoreline as the cannabis psychosis gives way to the purest reggae high. The playful 'Colours And Soul' serves some hip and horizontal diy-dub on the B4, beachballs splashing into the surf before interlude 'Arche Noah' nudges into the highlife heat beat of 'Don't Ask Me'. Finally it falls to 'Beside The Light' to close out the set, a hazy piece of ecstatic pop equally informed by each of the diverse influences which came before. In some ways this is the story of the LP in a song; experimental ideas in accessible form, delivered by a group free to enjoy their journey without worrying about the destination.

- Patrick Ryder



Tracklisting

1. Kedema
2. Bleib nicht so lang im Schatten stehn
3. This Is How You Came
4. Keine Python
5. Dark Number
6. Stil der neuen Zeit
7. Zufall in der Wirklichkeit
8. S.O. 36
9. Strom
10. Free
11. Colours And Soul
12. Arche Noah
13. Don't Ask Me
14. Beside The Light

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