



V.A.
Klar!80

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CD / LP / digital



KLAR! 80: a label with no program

This compilation represents an initial – and long overdue – foray into the years 1980 - 82, when KLAR! 80 was a cassette label, paired with a shop of the same name in Düsseldorf. Founded by Rainer Rabowski, KLAR!80 released 18 cassettes of varying length and a box set containing three 12" vinyl Eps which fetch handsome prices among collectors nowadays.

The *KLAR!80 - Ein Kassettenlabel aus Düsseldorf 1980-1982* collection reaches even further back in time than the *SAMMLUNG - Düsseldorfer Kassettenmusik 1982-1989* (BB236/2017) collection, similarly curated by Stefan Schneider, which focused on the mid-1980s Düsseldorf cassette scene. It captures the brief period between the end of punk and the looming capitalisation and digitalisation of so many aspects of life.

A report for the future.

Spontaneity and understatement characterised the brief creative period of KLAR! 80, which lasted from April 1980 until October 1982. Experimentation was the driving force behind the label's output, released exclusively on home-made cassettes. Whatever happens to be accessible was swiftly transformed into artwork for flyers, posters and cassette inlays with the aid of scissors, a typewriter and felt pens, then photocopied.

Art, perceived as such, is no longer created in the studio, but in the copy shop or local café.

In 1981, the compact cassette was the medium of the moment. Cheap, readily accessible and quickly copied, a democratic means of production and an end product that was easy to distribute. Everyone's a musician! Anyone can do it! Do it yourself!

The DIY ethos of punk saw the emergence of a new type of producer: an instrumentalist, arranger, author, publisher, manufacturer and retailer all in one. Cassettes pre-empted the influence of personal computers to the extent that they enabled a single person to cover multiple steps in the production process which had hitherto been the remit of specialists. The musicians who release their works on KLAR! 80 are, at once, distinctly individual spirits and yet related, familiar and yet unfamiliar, like-minded and yet, and yet not... the personal is mixed with adjacent art. New forms of collaboration are explored, sometimes lasting only as long as a single recording session: from a band to a project. So it was that KLAR!80 introduced the early experiments of Christo Haas and Beate Bartel, performing here as CHBB, to the world. Before long, they would enter the international dance charts with their pulsating sequencer sounds as *Liaisons Dangereuses*. Eva Gössling imported no wave from New York to Düsseldorf, grafting electronic and motoric elements into the sound. Strafe für Rebellion, who opened the record with a sculptural sonic collage, would later release numerous albums on the prestigious Touch label in London.

Today, the Aachener Strasse shop in the Bilk district of Düsseldorf survives in a few Polaroid pictures and video recordings made by Agi Yuzuru and Mamoru Shibuya, two journalists visiting from Osaka. The label shut down in October 1982 and, in the years that followed, the original cassettes, master tapes and artwork were either given away or misplaced. The recordings you can listen to here have been gleaned from private collections of well-preserved cassettes, painstakingly restored and digitalised.

Rainer Rabowski: "At the very moment when the label and shop needed to reinvent themselves, I would have had to come up with a new business model, something I had never wanted to do." The end came about quite innocuously, with no explanation.

Rainer Rabowski and Stefan Schneider, Düsseldorf March 2023

Artist & Track

01. Strafe für Rebellion - Blaue Mig
02. Roter Stern Belgrad - Ta Ku Sey
03. Und Piloten - Umsturz
04. Roter Stern Belgrad - alpha waves
05. Europa - Dein Zauber
06. Ralph & Ernie - Ralph & Ernie
07. Xao Seffcheque und der Rest - Mir fehlen die Worte
08. Rara, Axel & Ralph - Rara, Axel & Ralph
09. Eraserhead - OT
10. P.Projekta / G.Ranzz - M4
11. CHBB - Mau-Mau
12. Roter Stern Belgrad - Blas dein Knie ein
13. BLÄSSE - Taktlose Klapperschlangen

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