



Krautrock sampler

Julian Cope

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Author : Julian Cope

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From Reader Review Krautrock sampler for online ebook

David Manns says

There's not many books on the subject of Krautrock, or Kosmische Musik, but Cope's was one of the first to bring the music back into something approaching the mainstream. Cope's approach is that of the fanboy, a headlong rush to preach the Krautrock gospel and convert the uninitiated. Sadly that means objectivity goes out of the window.

The early part of the book where Cope sets the scene and introduces the main players is good and his pieces on bands such as Neu! and Tangerine Dream are effective, but later on he gets all metaphysical and trippy and starts trumpeting the virtues of some of the more obscure offshoots of Krautrock. That's where he loses me.

The last part of the book is dedicated to Cope's highly selective and personal Top 50 Krautrock records, for which he provides reviews. Again his love of the music comes through in the passion of his writing, but again he has no objectivity and his highly personal cut-off point for some bands is questionable.

Cope has said that he has no plans to revise or update this book, which is long out of print (you can, as I did, locate a PDF of it with a simple google search), and he has acknowledged that there are factual and interpretive errors. But for all that it is an enjoyable and informative read, just take it all with a pinch of salt.

Timothy Gabriele says

This book is definitely written as a fanboy love letter. I had heard much about it and was hoping there'd be more in the way of historical information. There's some, but each band is only limited to a chapter each and a few pages at that. Some, like Popul Vuh and Guru Guru (and Kraftwerk!), only come up briefly. Also, an epilogue would be nice as Cope only sees the era ending as he thinks each suggestive band gets exhausted (for Can, this means before Soon Over Babaluma! Blasphemy!). Overall, it's an entertaining take on the subject matter, but by no means definitive.

Kimmo Sinivuori says

I love this book for two reasons. First, when it came out it introduced me to the wunderbare welt of Krautrock (if lucky you could then still find many of the original albums that Cope writes about.) Second, it is absolutely hilarious. Cope's writing is funny, personal, informative, full of enthusiasm and most importantly it is independent. We need these kinds of independent publications that cover subjects that no established publisher would touch with a long stick. We also need great personalities like Mr Cope to write such publications. What more can you ask from a music book?

Derek says

Very personal, idiosyncratic, and passionate. If you're into it, it's worth hunting down.

Also check out Julian Cope's "Head Heritage" Web site for more great, enthusiastic writings about heavy psychedelic music, old and new.

Rob says

It is pretty fair to say that no one expected Julian Cope to prove to be so well-suited to the task of historian and critic. This short, impassioned book on Krautrock - which essentially put the genre back on the map and gave it a critical shape by separating it from the lumpen morass of (mostly derivative) prog that it had to often share shelves and turntables with - came out in 1995 and was an immediate revelation. It has since gone out of print, although it is suggested that Cope will republish it again shortly, possibly with an e-book version. Or maybe, we suggest hopefully, with an update or maybe another 50 of his wizardly album reviews.

Why is it a revelation? Because Cope strikes the perfect balance between scholarship and context on the one hand, and sheer infectious joy on the other. This means that just as the head and heart are both stimulated in the best Krautrock, so are we taken on a journey through these years of fervent, febrile, fertile output with the ultimate guide. He teaches you and turns you on, berates you and inspires you. You trust his taste because he lays it out open. For him, once the restless searching spirit 'evolves' into chops and technique - as you could say occurred with Tangerine Dream as they turned the corner of sobriety towards Phaedra and Rubycon - then Cope zones out and moves on to something else. Can's lengthy payout through the 1970s, shorn of their bizarre and unmistakable vocalists and seeking muso grooves, gets a similar cold shoulder, and while he makes positive noises about Klaus Schulze's groundbreaking ambient electronic career, he leaves all that outside the scope of this book and treats him more or less as a pretty face.

Actually I am writing this short review after doing suitable penance for never having sat down and listened properly to Amon Düül II. Oh, I had heard their name and could probably name a couple of choice tracks, but that was all music scholar bluff. I hadn't really listened to Phallus Dei or Yeti or Dance of the Lemmings. Or any of their other albums. And I had listened to Popol Vuh's stunning soundtrack albums for Werner Herzog, but not the amazing East-West dance of Hoasianna Mantra. And Cluster with Eno, and a couple of tracks on the Roedelius compilation, but never their own classic albums. Now, led by Cope's enthusiasm - first formed in his adolescence and carried on down the years - and his wonderful musician's ear and capacity to even dare to tackle the gargantuan task of trying to explain in words the subtlety and enormity and madness and timelessness and dexterity and sheer questing versatility of the music that was being made by these ornery glitter-eyed Germans in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I can do just that. And the truly bizarre part is that much of this music is almost 50 years old, but it literally could have been made yesterday.

Ed says

While it is undeniably important in the popularization of Krautrock, it's less useful for a contemporary reader. Cope is a reasonably entertaining writer, but KrautRockSampler has the feel of an out-of-date textbook. The band bios are sub-liner-notes in quality and don't have much that you can't get from a well-written Wikipedia page. His list of 50 top Krautrock records leaves out canonical records like Can's Future

Days as well as bands like Agitation Free that were uncovered more recently.

Still, the book is a fun and short read. One highlight of the book for me was hearing Cope's stories about growing up a Krautrock fan in England. He was there as this music washed up on the radiophonic shores and is able to tell a convincing and entertaining story of how interfaced with British music.

Mirco con la C says

Commento del marzo 2013:

Al'età di 16 anni rimasi folgorato dall'ascolto di Ummagumma dei Pink Floyd. Mi spalancò orizzonti sonori sconosciuti e cambiò radicalmente i miei gusti musicali, facendomi sembrare banale quanto sentito sino ad allora.

Trascorsi dei mesi cercando di ascoltare qualcos'altro che mi procurasse delle sensazioni simili, ma con poco successo. Va detto che in questo modo scoprii un sacco di buona musica, di artisti e dischi fondamentali, ma le mie orecchie adolescenti erano affamate di suoni estremi e non c'era quasi nulla che riuscisse con lo stesso fervore a trascendere la forma-canzone per lanciarsi ad esplorare l'ignoto. I successivi dischi dei Pink Floyd mi suonavano, e mi suonano ancora, piatti e patinati. Neppure molta di quella che mi veniva spacciata come psichedelia riusciva a soddisfarmi. Arrivai a concepire l'idea borgesiana di scrivere recensioni di dischi inesistenti che immaginavo potessero appagare le mie aspettative.

Grazie al fitto scambio di cassette ed informazioni con altri musicofili riuscii ad ascoltare Yeti degli Amon Düül II e finalmente mi si spalancarono "le porte del cosmo, che stanno su in Germania", per citare un noto brano di Finardi. La mia fame di suoni visionari fu saziata. Dopo le jam session orgiastiche degli Amon Düül II conobbi le estasi mistiche dei Popol Vuh, i trip lisergici degli Ash Ra Tempel, l'horror vacui di Tangerine Dream e Klaus Schulze, le inclassificabili, futuristiche, nevrotiche avanguardie di Faust, Can, Neu!, Cluster e via dicendo...

Mi stupiva che la scena musicale tedesca dei '70, il cosiddetto krautrock, venisse considerata per lo più come marginale dagli altri cultori e dalla critica (con qualche eccezione, in particolare il prezioso volumetto "La musica rock progressiva europea" di Al Aprile e Luca Majer).

Eravamo negli anni '80, fu a metà del decennio successivo che giunse a colmare la lacuna questa appassionata guida/ode alla grande Kosmische Musik. Il musicista/druido Julian Cope trasfonde nella scrittura lo stesso estro creativo ed allucinato che lo guida nel far musica. Scordatevi l'asettica completezza ed imparzialità delle enciclopedie, Cope si lascia guidare dal suo trascinante e contagioso entusiasmo di fan ("I was a teenage krautrocker" è l'incipit del libro), usando uno spericolato ed irresistibile linguaggio fatto di espressioni gergali ed iperboli. E' semplicemente lo stile che questa musica richiede. L'ideale sarebbe cimentarsi con la lettura in lingua originale, ma la il traduttore Luca Fusari ha fatto un ottimo lavoro per questa tardiva ma meritoria edizione italiana. Peccato solo che, a differenza dell'edizione inglese, la copertina non abbia recuperato l'iconica immagine del "tristo mietitore" che campeggia sulla cover di Yeti degli Amon Düül II.

Krautrock sampler accende inevitabilmente la miccia della curiosità nelle menti ignare. In me ha risvegliato il desiderio di riascoltare certi vecchi dischi in vinile, e riscoprire immutata la magia della musica incisa in quei solchi. Secondo Cope è la musica di una generazione bisognosa di creare qualcosa di nuovo ed estremo, per rompere col passato ed affrancarsi dall'eredità del nazismo.

"...musica furiosa e armonizzata fatta di luce pura, da cui si rovesciano frammenti che radono al suolo la stanza. Riff dopo riff, titolo assurdo dopo titolo ancor più assurdo. L'ascoltatore è catturato da una ragnatela di suono denso denso. Stringere la copertina non vi salverà, perché ormai siete nel mezzo del più

grandissimo trip Amon Düül di sempre. Non-uomini con voce di Dalek chiamano e ghignano, riff forgiati da Orchi-punk e Sacerdoti Fantascientifici vi intrappolano."

Tim Niland says

Krautrock was the derisive name given to West German progressive rock made from the late sixties to the mid seventies. Cope is an English psychedelic rock musician of note, and he fell under the sway of this music as a teenager, so he takes the approach of being the Uber fan and evangelist, in a charming way, like being cornered at a record store by an obsessed fan. He covers most of the important bands of the period (although big is relative, since most bands sold comparatively few records) from the quirkiness and experimental Faust to the innovative progressive rock of Can, with loads of psychedelic warriors, recalcitrant free jazzers and even Timothy Leary along the way. These records were very difficult to track down back when this was written, but between You Tube, Spotify and sundry music sharing services the music is quite accessible and Cope makes for an appealing guide for the exploration of the genre.

Drew says

I was very fortunate to get the opportunity to read this book at all. Back when British postpunk/psychedelic musician Julian Cope self-published this book in the mid-90s, it sold quickly and soon went out of print. He's done a couple of reprint editions since then, but there just aren't that many copies of this in existence, and since it is currently out of print, any that are for sale tend to go for upwards of \$100. I wasn't willing to pay that much, but due to the good graces of the internet, I was recently able to locate a .pdf copy that was available for download from a blog.

I'm so glad I did. I had an absolute blast reading this book. While it was every bit as informative and entertaining as my most recent music-history read, Simon Reynolds' "Rip It Up And Start Again," Cope's book is far shorter--only about 150 pages total--and read less like a scholarly work and more like a nonstop thrillride. If Reynolds is comparable to Greil Marcus, then Cope is more like Lester Bangs, filling every page of his book with overbrimming enthusiasm and out-of-control stream of consciousness rants about all of the great Krautrock records he grew up listening to. He couches these rants in a framework of the genre's history, and does a very good job of delivering a primer for all those (like myself) who are only vaguely aware of the circumstances in which these records were created. Cope explains how "Krautrock", far from being the derogatory term many have taken it to be, was actually a self-created label jokingly applied to their own records by many bands of the genre--Faust even going as far as calling the opening track on their fourth album "Krautrock." He explains the genre's roots as well, pointing to such disparate influences as the West German-based group of American GIs The Monks, 20th century German minimalist composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, and The Velvet Underground as essential building blocks for what came to be known as Krautrock. He further details the movers and shakers of the genre, both those who were inextricably linked to one project (Edgar Froese of Tangerine Dream, the members of Can and Faust) and those who bounced around from band to band willy-nilly (Klaus Schultze, Manuel Gottsching, Klaus Dinger), and tells the hubristic story of Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser and his manipulative power trip as the mastermind behind the Cosmic Jokers.

Above all, Cope expounds gloriously upon the merits of nearly every album he mentions, creating within his reader an insatiable urge to hear them all with such sentences as: "What the hell is going on in that song?"

Something scary is implied but the meaning always eludes me." and "Fuck Jim Morrison's ridiculous 'Renaissance Man of the Mind' description. That was just an excuse to be a fat slob. That was just an existentialist knee-jerk. No. No. No. These freaks were fit. Superhuman. Superman. They were here to go. But all in good time." (Those excerpts pertaining to Amon Duul II and Ash Ra Tempel's collaboration with Timothy Leary, respectively.) I tried so hard not to get out of control, not to toggle constantly between the .pdf and my downloading program, recklessly cueing up every new album Cope mentioned. But in the end, I couldn't restrain myself. I've downloaded at least 30 Krautrock albums in the last 24 hours, and I don't even want to think about how frustrating an experience reading this book would have been back in the days when I couldn't do such a thing, and had to hit up record stores in the often-fruitless quest to locate some of these obscurities. Rest assured, I will eventually buy many of these albums (the Can and Neu! albums alone have been on my list for years). But it is a relief to get to hear them right now, and even more of one to discover that Mr. Cope is almost always justified in his effusive praise. This truly is a musical genre inhabited by an embarrassment of riches. And there is no better book to read in order to get excited about discovering all of them. Check this thing out--but try to avoid getting soaked on Ebay in the process. Some judicious Googling will work wonders.

rob says

Long out of print, I finally managed to find a PDF (and some GHB and BC-2 to go along) and I jumped in the magical top dropped acid dropped deuce&1/4 and left with the cosmic couriers to find God knows what.

Finding a good treasure trove of things in Cope's newer JAPROCKSAMPLER, I was hoping my world would be opened up here, having never gotten the \$ to be able to read this first. It's kind of a cosmic sneeze, really. You know what's coming and its exciting and a total rush, man, but there is nothing really new. People have complained that Cope has covered only the more popular Krautrockers (and its true) but he does it well enough. And his long-running Ur-jokes and jabs start here and carry over to the net, so thats kind of fun to pick apart, I guess.

This sampler being much smaller than the other I quickly got the top 50 in the back only to find that they're in alphabetical order, not order of hotness. Kinda of a disappointment as it comes of as just an index of records you know he drools over instead of a real _LIST_ of things with some thought put to the order. Internet digging and most of all TIME has shown this book its age: he gleefully dotes on things that're more RAWK than others, and shits on some bonafide CLASSICS, all because he thinks they're 'new age' or something because it isn't the caveman rock of early TD and Guru Guru.

One huge plus this has over JRS: Cope was THERE, man. Krautrock being the British phenomenon it was, Julian got to see Amon Duul and Can play and his small explanations of the shows and their timing/success are the best thing 'bout the book.

If you can, 'pic this up fer'a tennah' as J. would say. Otherwise, use your cosmic browser and found your own head heritage.

edit I should mention the copy I read had AD2's "YETI"s review (and the accompanying page) completely missing! So if that review is godlike and I don't know it, disregard everything I wrote.

Scott says

This book is more or less considered to be the Holy Grail of all Krautrock books. It's incredibly rare and insanely expensive. But it's all justified because of how influential it is to an entire sub-genre of music. For me to get my hands on a copy was about as exciting for a Krautrock fan as...well, getting my hands on any of the ultra-obscure albums included in Cope's hallowed "50 Best Albums" list.

Which brings me to my thoughts on the book. The book simply gets 4 stars for how influential it is. It has spawned interest in a largely-forgotten genre and catapulted seminal bands like Neu!, Can, and Faust to their exalted pedestals today (where they sit, unanimously worshipped by the rock intelligentsia).

Cope is an interesting character, because while his words on these bands have been so highly regarded, he is still marginalized somewhat because of his eccentricities. But maybe there's some truth behind that characterization...his writing style is truly bizarre, but it's charming at the same time because of the sheer excitement he has for the music. He is a fan boy of the best stripe.

My gripe with the book is that the descriptions of the music are quite unorthodox. He's not really in the same league with other rock journalists, at least as far as descriptive writing style (I'm thinking of Simon Reynolds here, for instance). He writes from the heart, though, almost like a teenager would tell his best friends about his favorite bands (and his book is replete with many of the same head-scratching colloquialisms that a teenager might use, too). But it's impossible not to sense his infectious enthusiasm for these bands.

The biggest contribution of the book--and the segment of it that has made the book so important to Krautrock enthusiasts and collectors--is his list of his 50 favorite Krautrock albums. He includes this in the end of the book, and it's quite possibly as close to Krautrock canon as it gets. Sure, others have been critical of the book and the list as not being truly comprehensive...but Cope makes no pretensions of this. He's purely sharing his own opinions and invites the reader to check them out, too.

I would love to see this book back in print as a newer edition. But Cope has long said that he will not do it, and so I have to get in line with the other fans to get one of these rare gems. Still, this is an eye-opening book that turns on true rock "heads" (his words) to some music really worth checking out.

Sarah says

omg. have been wanting to read this for years but my library doesn't own it and it's been outta print + \$80-\$200 used on amazon. today i learned that the PDF form is here:

<http://www.swanfungus.com/2006/10/kra...>

read fast, friends, in case it gets taken down!

found via <http://www.dangerousminds.net/comment...>

Jesús says

Guía fundamental para viajar la época (finales de los años 60-principios de los 70) en la que el rock alemán construyó su propia tradición desde la nada sembrada tras la II Guerra Mundial, para lanzarla inmediatamente después al espacio y alumbrar la llamada Kosmische Musik. El estilo de Cope, ruidoso, místico, sofocante y alucinado, muy pop, y en ocasiones basado en descripciones literalmente imposibles, tiene la sonoridad perfecta para un libro así. Su top 50 de álbumes es ideal para escuchar durante la lectura, aunque no pretende ser una lista "objetiva", sino un recorrido prácticamente biográfico construido alrededor de su experiencia y sus recuerdos. Porque, ¿de verdad Kraftwerk no merecía un capítulo propio en este ejemplar de gastronomía típica alemana?

Robert Jaz says

Cope's Krautrock sampler is an absolute classic. It was one of the first books to break through and appear on record store shelves so that a kid from anywhere USA could learn about the great German musical experimenters in their prime period of creativity of the late '60s and early '70s, when Krautrock really was getting defined as a genre unto itself. While I would credit the Freeman Brothers and their Audion Magazine / Ultima Thule record shop as predating Cope with writing, reviewing, and making many of these rarities available, you must give Julian the props of being the first celebrity to enthuse about this music to a larger audience, thereby opening the floodgates for reissues that continue to this day. Julian's writing style is fun and sucks you into each chapter, making you really want to run out and find whichever release he's going on about. It's a mix of fan appreciation writing, and a great knowledge of musical forms in general that really captures the spirit of these original pioneers of the German Kosmische scenes. While Julian gives you his favorites, and he's pretty dead on correct with the classics - I would suggest also obtaining the Freeman Brother's Crack in the Cosmic Egg so that you will be able to further explore the bands and releases that Cope does not mention, dislikes or ignores - and there are many many wonderful bands and albums beyond Krautrock sampler. At the time of this writing, both of these books are scarily high priced in the collector market fetching obscene numbers. Thankfully the Freeman's have "repressed" their book as a beautiful cd-rom with more content including audio and visual additions.

Jacob says

Julian Cope makes every band he writes about sound like the best band in the world, even the shitty ones
