



ASMUS TIETCHENS

BIOTOP



Reissue. Originally released 1981

CD / vinyl (180g) / download

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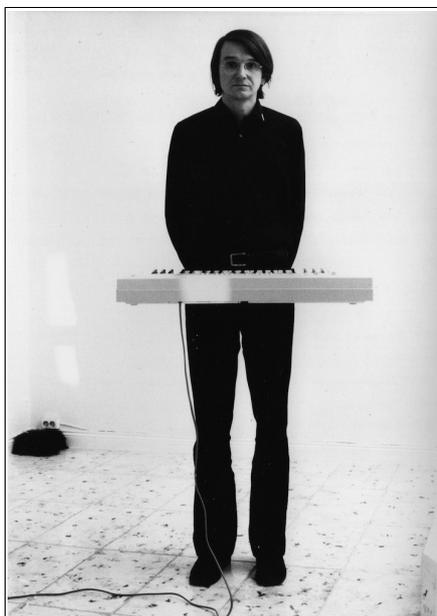
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Tracklisting:

- 1 In die Zukunft
- 2 Miss Ann Trope
- 3 Die elektrische Horde
- 4 Räuschlinge
- 5 Geisel des Monats
- 6 Blutmund
- 7 Cretin Statique
- 8 Gasmaske in Blau
- 9 Moderne Arroganz
- 10 Stressmen
- 11 Tango Fellatino
- 12 Sauberland
- 13 Trümmerköpfe
- 14 Sekundentanz
- 15 Träumchen am Fenster
- 16 Biotop

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Key info:

- Asmus Tietchens is one of the best known German artists in the field of abstract music. Five of his early works, roughly definable as **avant-garde synthesizer pop**, are to be reissued progressively by Bureau B. "Biotop" was the first Tietchens release on Sky Records (Cluster, Rother, Roedelius, Moebius, Plank, Riechmann amongst others)
- Available on CD (digipak), vinyl (180g) or for download

In retrospect, we might suspect that Asmus Tietchens was deliberately leading us up the garden path with the discordant pseudo pop of his early musical productions. Four albums between 1981–83 and a handful of individual pieces comprise the "Zeitzeichen" (time signal) phase which, in the words of their creator, was characterized by the implementation of "rhythmic-harmonic set pieces and gaudy record sleeves". These albums do indeed feature elements of the noisy-abstract structures which Tietchens would be in a position to release from 1984 onwards in a more industrial setting, figuring prominently in his main body of work. Yet to understand "Zeitzeichen" as a period of transition, a mere curiosity, would be wide of the mark.

Günter Körber released the *Biotop*, *Spät-Europa*, *In die Nacht* and *Litia* albums on Sky Records. His label specialized in contemporary electronic music, often cosmic or kraut-like, but also offered a platform to unagitated-cryptic experiments. Tietchens was well acquainted with the Sky programme, both as a listener and through personal friendships—with Dieter Moebius, Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Michael Rother. Hence establishing contact presented little difficulty. Sixteen tracks had been produced for *Biotop* but, in 1980, saw no genuine prospect of a release, so signing to Sky was a logical move.

The Sky series is markedly different, surprisingly so, from the debut album *Nachtstücke*, rife with "soft rhythms and harmonic bliss" as Tietchens acknowledges today. Not something which can be said of *Biotop*. In keeping with the sleeve's garish colour scheme, derision, idle pathos and dissonance in abundance are flung sardonically at the expectations of pop. But there was more than ironic intent in the disjointed rhythms and sliding melodies. These blaring, crashing tracks glare with artifice, mirroring the ideas of an artist lacking the inclination and capacity to compose straightforward easy listening music.

Biotop is inhabited by insectoid squeaks, banging percussion and echoes of displaced nursery rhymes. The hectic piece *Moderne Arroganz* is notable for a voice listing types of insurance; from behind this "unbeatable idiocy" (Guido Sprenger) a critical reflex emerges which can be taken as social commentary—it is no coincidence that *Sauberland* resounds with squeaky absurdity, taking itself none too seriously. One would not be wrong, therefore, to divine the artist finding himself in the banefully piercing title track, which rejects the alleged harmlessness of the album, a contrary "I'm here too", attenuated only by the remark "let's see how things go". But Tietchens' half hoping, half sceptical stance—underlined as an endless groove on the initial pressing—proved unfounded.