



Manuel Gottsching Interview

via E mail, in August

Being the son of an inventor it is no surprise that Manuel Gottsching managed to produce music so far ahead of its time. His seminal “E2-E4” is still to this day cited as one of the most important pieces of electronic music despite being originally recorded in 1981. His work has inspired many artists including Adam Beyer, Prins Thomas and Joaquin Joe Claussell. Before this influential 30 minute 12” Gottsching was already spreading the minimal ambient love with various collaborators during the 70’s under the project names of Ashra and Ash Ra Tempel.

Manuel is heading to this month’s Metamorphose festival to perform his epic “E2-E4” live and solo on stage. Despite receiving numerous offers from promoters in the US and UK Gottsching chose the land of the rising sun as the place to perform this masterpiece 25 years after its creation. We picked this icon’s brain via the magic of the internet to find out what was running through his mind in the lead up to this historic event.

> Interview : Nick Lawrence (HigherFrequency)



HRFQ : You have released well over 20 albums throughout your career, so what is the secret to consistently producing music?

Manuel : This is top secret, but I will tell you: my father was a university professor in Berlin with his own faculty, but first of all he was an inventor. And this is what I probably have got from him: the talent and love to invent things, to create and to be before the time – this is the biggest pleasure for me.

HRFQ : Is there any special reason why you chose your 1997 Ashra concert in Japan to reunite with Lutz Ulbrich and Harald/Steve Baltes?

Manuel : I have been invited to perform in Japan and as it was the first time for me to play in your country I did not want to perform alone, but maybe I also felt that I wanted to play with my band after creating and performing alone for a while (since the 80’s).

HRFQ : And now, what is the driving force behind deciding to perform your solo masterpiece “E2-E4” for the first time ever live at the Metamorphose festival?

Manuel : Metamorphose has invited me to perform already some years ago. But I had not a proper idea what program to present. As this year it is the 25th Anniversary of “E2-E4” (I recorded it in December 1981, but released only in 1984) I wanted to thank Metamorphose for their big interest in my music and decided to make a special present to my Japanese fans for their faith. So I will perform for the first time ever “E2-E4” live and SOLO on stage as I did produce and recorded it 25 years ago, but of course with new electronic possibilities. (By the way, I was asked to do this performance by some promoters from US and England but decided to play the solo-live-premiere in Japan!)



HRFQ : “E2-E4” was originally released in 1984 despite being recorded three years earlier. What were some of the reasons behind the delay?

Manuel : Because there was no interest to release it then, it was obviously too early for this kind of music... Some of the German music papers (e.g. the Berlin based famous magazine ZITTY) even wrote that there is no excuse for this composition which is not to be called music at all but a sin. It was the American Larry Levan (who ran the Paradise Garage in New York) who discovered it and made it famous all over the world. Then ZITTY wrote another article apologizing.

HigherFrequency (HRFQ) : Where did the concepts and sounds for this album come from? How did you manage to create a sound so far ahead of its time that electronic music producers and DJs still admire today?

Manuel : I worked with synthesizers a few times at Studio Dierks but it was not significant at that time. After my very influential album “Inventions for Electric Guitar”, and since I founded my studio 1974, I started to work on producing and composing this kind of music with sounds from drum machines, keyboards, synthesizer and sequencer seriously. Around 1974, I also began to listen to US minimal musicians like Steve Reich, Phil Glass and Terry Riley. My first albums based on my studio experiences and may be on the influence of the mentioned minimal music but also my old influences from the 60ies like Peter Green led to “New Age of Earth” and “Dream and Desire” and to compositions that I performed solo live for fashion events (to be still released!). There were three of them: “No 1” was in 1976, “Laufsteg” 1978 and “Big Birds” in 1979. So New Age of Earth and the music for the above mentioned fashion shows led straight to “E2-E4”.

HRFQ : This year a collection of DJs from around the world including Prins Thomas will release a tribute CD in your honour. How does it feel to have influenced so many new artists?

Manuel : I feel very honoured that the young generation of musicians and producers like my work. Prins Thomas even released a Maxi Vinyl with the title “Göttsching” to honour me, which I find quite nice. Thanks Thomas! But it is not only “E2-E4” that has influenced the young generation. There are pieces from the 70’s like “Deep Distance”, “Ain’t no time for tears” or “Shuttlecock” which are popular, too. Those three titles are on the LP/CD album “Joe Clausell meets Manuel Göttsching” (DiskUnion), and they sell very well! And there are of course the classics “Sunrain”, or “Echo Waves”. But my new music on DIE MULDE or CONCERT FOR MURNAU is equally liked by fans and professionals all over the world...

End of the interview