



VONO

DINNER FÜR 2

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Tracklisting:

- 1 Dinner für 2
- 2 Tanzstunde
- 3 Im Schein des Neon
- 4 Lottozahlen
- 5 Lover Werner
- 6 Mit mir zum Siege
- 7 Mauertanz 1
- 8 Bitte wenden
- 9 Tief im Dschungel
- 10 Hirnregister
- 11 Der Zauberer
- 12 Nimm alles mit
- 13 Leben in Irland
- 14 Mauertanz 2
- 15 Hitze

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Among the lesser known dark-electro/post-punk bands of the early 1980s, the Berlin duo VONO really stood out. The radical nature of their music, the cold sound and sparse lyrics – VONO were arguably on a par with the more prominent ambassadors of the genres (*DAF, Liaisons Dangereuses* etc). Extreme even for the early eighties, their minimalism was constructed purely on synthesizers and heavy on bass. With lyrics to match, their debut album “Dinner für 2” was unique.

Auspicious beginnings for VONO back in 1982 offered no warning that the name would later fade into relative obscurity. Two brothers, Norbert and Volker Schultze, founded the project in the late seventies. They generated a substantial following in the cooler clubs of Berlin, playing a huge number of notoriously loud gigs.

It was their producer Stephan Kaske who pointed them in the direction of legendary German label Sky Records (home to seminal albums by Cluster, Brian Eno, Michael Rother, Conrad Schnitzler, Asmus Tietchens etc.). Kaske had released records of his own on the label, under the name of Mythos. Sales of VONO’s debut album vastly exceeded expectations, to the satisfaction of the musicians and the label. Nevertheless, the brothers chose to embellish the sound of their sophomore work with guitar and drums, moving closer towards rock music.

Given its consistently minimalist ethos, “Dinner für 2” is surprisingly varied. Dark and danceable electropop dominates, but spherical sounds and gentler moments are also there to be found. The songs are, for the most part, built on a framework of just one or two recurring bass patterns or melodies, coupled with lyrics which are barked rather than sung and delivered with Teutonic rolled “R”s and exaggeratedly uttered final syllables. Some tracks have a rather Dadaistic flavour, featuring a single line like “Tief im Dschungel sitzt ein Haifisch” (deep in the jungle, a shark lurks) or numbers shouted into the microphone, as on “Lottozahlen” (lottery numbers). An occasional instrumental track offers some light relief.

What a shame that VONO did not stick to their radical concept. At least we have this gem of electronic music, one which we can now present to a wider audience.