

Faust



**Faust
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CD / LP / Limited LP



Few debut albums arrive with the kind of self-contained logic and radical spirit found on the self titled 'Faust'. Released in 1971, it marked the beginning of a project that would sidestep genre and expectation, offering a fractured, exploratory take on rock music, blending tape experiments, improvised structures, and surreal collage. This Bureau B reissue offers a fresh opportunity to engage with one of the most curious and uncompromising records of its time.

The story of Faust begins in 1969, when cultural journalist Uwe Nettelbeck met with Horst Schmolzi, an A&R man at Polydor in Hamburg. Schmolzi was looking for a German answer to The Beatles, but Nettelbeck had other ideas. With a generous advance in hand, he set out to assemble something far more radical. Nettelbeck headed into the Hamburg underground and fused members of the bands Nukleus and Campylognatus Citelli into a new six-piece lineup. From Nukleus came bassist Jean-Hervé Péron, guitarist Rudolf Sosna, and saxophonist Gunther Wüsthoff. From Campylognatus Citelli, he brought in keyboardist Hans-Joachim Irmler and drummers Werner "Zappi" Diermaier and Arnulf Meifert.

Installed in a converted schoolhouse in the rural village of Wümme, Lower Saxony, the band lived and worked communally, while Nettelbeck oversaw the project as producer, alongside engineer Kurt Graupner. Much of the Polydor money went not into marketing, but into building a custom studio on-site, allowing the band complete creative autonomy. Extensive cabling allowed instruments to be played without needing to leave the bedroom, clothing was optional and intoxicants were abundant. The actual recording process didn't begin until three days before the deadline, and what followed was a spontaneous burst of experimental creativity, equal parts anarchic and inspired. Remarkably, the resulting album doesn't sound rushed. On the contrary, 'Faust' feels deliberate in its unpredictability: a meticulously chaotic document of six musicians discovering a new musical language in real time.

The trip begins with "Why Don't You Eat Carrots," a collage of absurdist theatre and sound sculpture. Its snarling guitar feedback, shuddering electronics and tape-scratched pop samples mutate into a post-structuralist meltdown. Stones' "Satisfaction" and Beatles' "All You Need Is Love" are reduced to spectral phrases, mocking the very idea of cultural consensus. From there horns squeal, pianos splinter and voices swirl in delay, as if the entirety of a circus is being squeezed through the hoop of a bubble blower, leaving us to watch the whole spectacle bend, shake and shimmer in the sunlight. Next, "Meadow Meal" opens with resonant industrial tones, like air forced through plumbing, and gradually blossoms into a surrealist jazz-folk ritual. Fingerpicked guitar cohabits with blasts of reverb-heavy organ and beat-poet vocal incantations. At its heart lies a groove so deep and syncopated it borders on funk, only to collapse into chaos once more. And then there is "Miss Fortune", a 16-minute live improvisation soaked in hashish and reverb. One-note bass lines throb like minimalist mantras beneath swirling organs and mutant sax. Drums stutter toward cohesion and then back away in terror. Guitars unravel into smoke. And in the final moments, the music recedes, leaving behind a broken narrative, fragmented speech, laughter, coughs, like a bedtime story told by ghosts of a Europe still recovering from war.

Despite the experimental nature, surrealist lyrics and a complete rejection of conventional music form, this isn't an over intellectual exercise, or a display of wilful antagonism. Instead, Faust packed these three sprawling, sputtering pieces with the breadth of human emotion, capturing the chaos and complexity of existence in an audio analogue to Jackson Pollock's abstract expressionism. More than 50 years on, it remains a thrilling reminder of what can happen when artists abandon the map and follow instinct instead.

Tracklist

A1 Why Don't You Eat Carrots?
A2 Meadow Meal

B1 Miss Fortune

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