

## Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

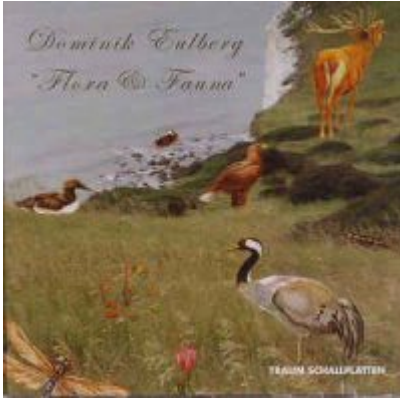
Every single day we are bombarded with slogans, adverts, forged smiles and the cult of the new. Everything seems insubstantial and just waiting to fall apart. From the rise of *Primark* and disposable fashion, to music made to be played on tinny headphones, the average lifespan of art, love and culture has become unbearably brief. By the time a record reaches the shelves of your local record store it is yesterday's news. Online leaks, ripping, *Youtube* and playlists have transformed music from something tactile and of value into something designed merely to capture your attention between the ads. By **JOHN BITTLES**



Yet, there is always hope. Step forward Cologne legends [Traum Schallplatten](#), who, over the last 18 years have released some of the most sublime techno, house and electronica ever to grace a human ear. The label have come a long way since **Riley** and **Jacqueline Reinhold** started it way back in 1998. Since their first release, (*Elektronische Musik – Aus Buenos Aires*), the label have unleashed the likes of **Dominik Eulberg**, **Fairmont**, **Minilogue**, **Extrawelt**, **Dinky**, **Ryan Davis**, **Applescal** and **Microtrauma** upon the world. While in 2016 alone we have already had fantastic records by **We Need Cracks**, **Dovim**, **Nick Dow** and **sine sleeper**, who turned more than a few heads with their sublime debut EP *Honest Intentional Noise*. If that isn't enough, July sees the return of label head **Riley Reinhold's** esteemed *Tour De Traum* mix series, with Volume *XII* offering four and a half hours of dance music so good it could make even an overly pessimistic robot smile.

Way back in 2006 I first stumbled upon *Traum* through the deep techno melodies of *Flora & Fauna* by **Dominik Eulberg**. From the elastic groove of *Die Trottellummen Von Helgoland* to the mournful, yet playful air of *Der Zug Der Kraniche: Boten Der Veränderung*, I was hooked from the very first play. Add in the *Cocoon*-style throb of *Die Invasion Der Taschenkrebse*, the spooky technoism of *Keine Nieten Bei Den Herbstzeitlosen*, and the funky-assed strut of *Brenzlich, Brenzlich Dachte Der Feuersalamander* and you have an album of majestic electronica which I still listen to repeatedly today.

Yet, pretty much anything released on the label is worth tracking down. *The Traum Collection* by **Max Cooper** brings together fifteen of his best tunes, taking in hazy ambiance, driving techno, melodic house and more. Another fave are the deep, electronic textures of *Particles of Bliss* by **Ryan Davis**, which swells and flutters seductively, helping make it one of my favourite albums of all time. The gorgeously romantic melodrama of *Transition* by **Egokind & Ozean** is another pick, while, for anyone wishing to gain a flavour of the label, I can recommend any of the *Tour De Traum* comps which will contain at least a couple of tracks capable of making your heart leap with joy.



By now you may have realised that I am a bit of a fan. So I was excited that back in June *Traum* reached a bit of a milestone, bringing out its 200th release. When you consider that most labels don't exist long enough to witness their 20th record these days, this is really quite a feat. On the extended EP, artists such as **Extrawelt**, **Thyladomid & Jonas Mantey**, **Stillhead** and **sine sleeper** take tracks from **Mario Hammer And The Lonely Robot's** *L'esprit De L'escalier* album from earlier this year, and inject them with some *Traum*-style electronic cheer.

Over nine long, luxurious tracks the EP exemplifies everything that is great about the label. We have beautifully programmed beats, a stunning sense of depth, spacious ambiance, and melodies galore. For me *Traum* are at their best when working within an almost 'post techno' sound, shying away from the monotonous loops, banging brutality and ear-splitting noise which characterises much of the techno scene to concentrate on music which is emotionally engaging and speaks directly to the soul. Make no mistake, the tracks on *L'esprit De L'escalier Remixes* are not just for the club. In fact, they will work wonders on headphones, at home, with a lover, or even having tea with your nan.

The EP starts with two re-rubs by *Traum* and *Cocoon* stalwarts **Extrawelt**, who merge *Mono No Aware* with the title track to create two fantastically fresh techno jams. The first of these, *Mono No Aware/L'Esprit De L'Escalier (Extrawelt Redux)* is a sensual house track which utilises shimmering synths, sharp hand claps and a rich atmosphere to create something which both thrills and soothes throughout its nine minute running time. The duo's *Tool Mix* is the perfect accompaniment to the former, upping the dance floor drama and increasing the beats for a heads down slice of techno heaven likely to cause scenes of euphoric devastation on any floor.

It's not all bubbling dance floor thrills though, as the likes of **Stillhead**, **Ian Max Mauch** and **Mario Hammer** stay true to the shivery ambiance of the source material with their gorgeously atmospheric refits. Conjuring images of distant landscapes, tormented romances and expressive stares, these moments of quiet contemplation add a musical depth to proceedings, and come to form the beating heart of the entire EP.

Other highlights include **Thyladomid & Jonas Mantey's** refit of *Sirimiri (Hammersche Modularverschaltung)*, which adds a subtle injection of pace and an otherworldly sense of wonder to the original to produce a nine minute long opus. Reminiscent of the widescreen house loved by DJs such as **Sasha**, **Michael Mayer**, or **Lawrence**, the song still finds ample space for emotional resonance within its driving groove. Further in, **Jonas Mantey's** reinterpretation of *Chackwaira* is sure to be a highlight of a warm-up set near you soon, while **sine sleeper** recall the ghosts of IDM on their remix of *Nyctophilia*. Yet, just as you're sitting pretty, midway through they knock you for six by introducing crisp beats and an intense techno throb. Hitting you like a punch to the gut, this may just be the best thing on the entire EP.

If this sounds like your cup of tea and you would like to discover more music from *Traum*, label head **Riley Reinhold** highly recommends the following five releases:

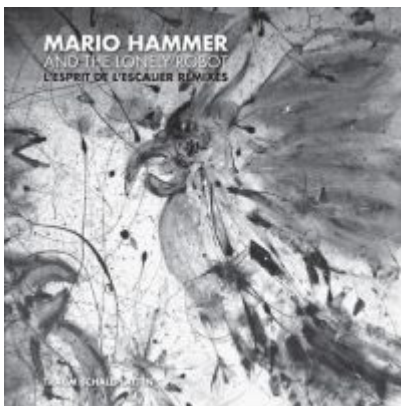
**Dominik Eulberg** - [Flora Und Fauna](#).

**Process (Steve Barnes)** - [Integ](#).

**Max Cooper** - [Harmonisch Serie](#).

**Nick Dow** - [Insect Parade](#).

**Dovim** - [Cryo Gemini](#).



Any release from either **Minilogue** or **Extrawelt** is also more than worthy of your time. Perhaps, also, it is fitting to end with some words by Riley himself, who described the ethos of *Traum* as being »true to our philosophy to build up a biotope where exciting music can bloom, we are now protected by clouds and people with taste from all over the world«.

Anyone seeking more information on *Traum* and its many affiliate labels (*MBF*, *Telrae*, *Trapez*, etc) should head to the label's [Website](#), while you can buy **Mario Hammer And The Lonely Robot's L'Esprit De L'Escalier Remixes** in any good record, or download store. And, with their 200th release sounding this good, here's hoping that the next 18 years bring 200 more!

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)