



KRAFTWERK

And The Electronic Revolution

(Sexy Intellectual/MVD, 2008)

Review by Joe Milliken

Kraftwerk are the true creators and most influential band of the electronic music era. In fact this very documentary, which also seriously delves into the history of the genre, indeed lists the genre itself as the subtitle to the band's headline. In other words the genre did not spawn the band, rather Kraftwerk designed the genre. The first hour of the three hour documentary reveals a history of German experimental and electronic music, which led to the formation of the early band Organization, which became Kraftwerk.

The film reviews the band's creation and the evolution of their particular and peculiar music, and the vast influence it has had on such sub-genres as electronica, dance, techno, new wave and synth-pop. The list of artists Kraftwerk has influenced is vast and varied, from David Bowie and Brian Eno, to Devo, Radiohead and Coldplay.

Co-founded by Ralf Hutter and Florian Schneider in the late 60's, Kraftwerk broke away from the experimental and music going on in Germany at the time, which was generally referred to as "Kraut-rock," and developed their own style, a style by which virtually all electronic music would spawn from thereafter. A form of music that actually re-shaped and re-defined the entire genre.

From the beginnings of Organization and the formation of Kraftwerk, to the slow but steady rise of their unique ambient rhythms and technical soundscapes, to their 1976 break through hit "Autobahn", to the resurgence of their influence in the 80's, this documentary explains their history about as well as it can be told without the actual input of Hutter and Florian themselves. Which is the only area where this film falls a little short. Two other former members of Kraftwerk indeed participate which helps, however it is a shame that you do not get added insight from the leaders and creators of the band and that it is not a completely authorized documentary.

With that said, you will not find a more complete history of both Kraftwerk and the era of electronic music.