



the transatlantic feedback

a play loud! documentary film by dietmar post and lucía palacios

(usa / germany / spain 2006, 100 min, color and black & white)

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the film (short synopsis)

The monks were 5 American GI's in cold war Germany who billed themselves as the anti-Beatles; they were heavy on feedback, nihilism and electrical banjo. They had strange haircuts, dressed in black, mocked the military and rocked harder than any of their mid-sixties counterparts while managing to basically invent industrial, heavy metal, punk and techno music.

The genre-overlapping documentary film not only illustrates the pop music phenomenon in its political, social and cultural-historic contexts, but also reveals the monks project as the first marriage of art and popular music and this months before Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground.

The five protagonists of the film came to cold war Germany in 1961 as soldiers and left the country in 1967 as avant-garde monks. For more than thirty years they were not able to talk about their strange experience. In the film the five original band members recount for the first time their adventure.



the story (long synopsis and additional comments)

The Monks are the first alternative band within the relatively new panorama of rock music in the 60s'

The film opens with the Monks performing live in July of 1966 on the TV show BEAT-CLUB (the German equivalent to the American Band Stand). TV announcer: "Today's show was opened by the Monks with the original Boys Are Boys And Girls Are Choice. A few days ago they released their first records with an unusual, new and surprising sound". Jochen Irmeler, founding member of the avant-garde krautrock band FAUST was 15 when he eye witnessed the Monks on that particular show, which had an astonishing audience of 6 million youngsters: "In retrospect I don't see a difference between James Last and the Beatles. Not to mention the unutterable Rolling Stones. It was a shock to see the Monks perform among all the other harmless bands. The vitality and minimalism that fascinated me, and the hardness. There wasn't anything like it." Later in the film Jochen Irmeler will describe the difference between old-fashioned sweet pop music and the new wild monk music. When we see the monks attacking the guitar not only all hell breaks loose but it is the first clear art manifesto of detaching oneself from regular pop music. Mike Leckebusch, founder and producer of the first TV show (Beat-Club) for teenagers called the monks record "black monk time" the record of the year in 1966.

play loud!

presents

monks

The beat is dead, long live the hop!

The Monks want to outstrip the Beatles!

The Monks as former US servicemen dare to sing against the American involvement in Vietnam.

They don't play sweet melodies about how terrible the war is. Adorno called 60s' protest music by Dylan and Baez sweet and unbearable. The monk music is what Samuel Beckett does in theatre: stripped down and minimalist, crude, harsh, to the point.

It is the first spoken/screamed word pop music. Instead of rhymes the monks use dada/rap attacks:

Alright, my name's Gary.
Let's go, it's beat time, it's hop time, it's monk time now!
You know we don't like the army.
What army?
Who cares what army?
Why do you kill all those kids over there in Vietnam?
Mad Viet Cong.
My brother died in Vietnam!
James Bond, who was he?
Stop it, stop it, I don't like it!
It's too loud for my ears.

Pussy galore's comin' down and we like it.
We don't like the atomic bomb.
Stop it, stop it, I don't like it . . . stop it!
What's your meaning Larry?
Ahh, you think like I think!
You're a monk, I'm a monk, we're all monks!
Dave, Larry, Eddie, Roger, everybody, let's go!
It's beat time, it's hop time, it's monk time now!

Learnt beat music in the army!

the transatlantic feedback

Warriors turn musicians at Coleman Kaserne, Germany at the highpoint of the cold war (1961-1964)

Between 1945 and 1992 approximately 9 million Americans came to Germany as part of the US army. In 1961 Roger Johnston (drums), Dave Day (banjo/guitar), Gary Burger (vocals/guitar), Eddie Shaw (bass) and Larry Clark (organ) arrive in Germany. It is the year of the strongest US presence in Europe. The 5 soldiers are stationed between 1961 and 1964 only a few miles from the Iron Curtain at Coleman Kaserne in Gelnhausen. Their mission is to defend West Germany's Fulda Gap against a possible invasion by the Warsaw Pact. During the Cuban Missile Crisis they experience the possibility of a third world war. Roger Johnston: "We were sitting inside the tanks with full loaded ammunition, ready to go. I thought I don't want to do this. But what could you do? You are inside the tank. It goes you go. We were canon fodder". Dave Day: "I was ready for it. My life growing up wasn't that great. If I do die in war my mom would be proud of me".

When John F. Kennedy visits the troops in June of 1963 in Langendiebach (Hanau) all 5 protagonists are among the 15.000 parading soldiers. Kennedy addresses the importance of the presence of so many American troops in West Germany. A few days later he visits Berlin where he makes his famous remark, "I am a Berliner". In November of the same year he is assassinated in Dallas. Dave Day and Gary Burger are practicing music on the army base when the message reaches them. After that the alerts at Coleman Kaserne were more serious. Dave Day: "That's when I thought there might be a war. America is going to be attacked. Now is the time".

During their service time the five GI's meet and decide to make a name for themselves as the cover band The Five Torquays, performing contemporary American pop music in the surrounding local GI bars. Also they are part of the army band Jingle Bells performing for Germans in hospitals, old folks homes and orphanages.

Music becomes a big part in their lives and performing in the red light joint MAXIM BAR gives them experience and excitement. And it is through music that they relate to Germans.

The Five Torquays decide to stay in Germany (1964-1965)

After their army discharges in 1964 the 5 soldiers decide to stay in Germany. For one year straight they tour Southern Germany covering the top ten hits of the day. Gary Burger: "The first year out of the army

was probably the best year in my life. We had cars, girl friends in every town, nothing to do all day unless we were going to rehearse". During this time as civilians the former GI's gather a completely different experience of German culture and language. Eddie Shaw, Roger Johnston and Dave Day get to know their future German wives. Gary Burger: "We were losing our American identity". Roger Johnston: "You learn that where you are from isn't the center of the world". And they learn that some young Germans are still carrying WWII with them.

1964 is the break-through year of the Beatles and other British Invasion groups. Occupied by Americans in the South and British in the North, Germany turns into the world center of "Beatmusik". All over the country are teenage clubs and local beer halls where young bands can perform 365 days a year, every night for up to 8 hours. Because of the new British music The Five Torquays are forced to change their repertoire to be able to stay in business.

During their one-month engagement in April of 1965 at Heidelberg's Odeon Keller they experience their biggest success. The same month they record the first and last 7" as The Five Torquays.

Two managers discover the band. The invention of the music of the future (June – December 1965)

In 1965 Karl H. Remy and Walther Niemann, two young German intellectual admen, artists and avid beat music fanatics, are looking for a band to test their ideas. In June of the same year in Stuttgart they visit the local Rio Bar and discover The Five Torquays.

Remy and Niemann are two former art students of the two most prestigious art schools in postwar Germany. The Ulm School of Design is the direct precursor of the Bauhaus. The Folkwang School inhabits several different disciplines, such as music, performing arts, sculpture, dance and design. Both schools stand for what is called "Gesamtkunstwerk". Remy and Niemann desire to shape and mold a "Beatband". The project is called "monks". In conjunction with the five American musicians they work out a "Konzept" which drastically changes the image, style and music of the band. The Five Torquays accept the offer but reserve some doubts. Soon the managers announce the art manifestos:

Der Beat ist tot! Es lebe der Hop! (Beat is dead! Long live the Hop!)

Wir haben keine Vorbilder! (We don't have any heroes!)

In Mönchskutte gegen den Grossmutterstil der Beatles! (In monk's cloth against the Beatles!)

In the months between June and December 1965 the two managers and five band members work feverishly on new song material. Remy and Niemann visit the rehearsals. In a collective effort the 7 monks invent totally "new music". They are looking for zero point. Their idea is to deconstruct mainstream pop music. And by doing so they experience the "novelty". The music is based on simple rhythms and repetition of rhythms. Instead of playing 4 bar or 8 bar changes the band plays 13 bars. They are working for tension points to make the audience nervous. Song beginnings, middles and endings are erased. Everything is one pure "überbeat": minimalist, aggressive, raw and dada. The lyrics are reduced to a simple framework of slogans- cynical, provocative and filled with cold war angst.

Instead of singing “I want to hold your hand” they scream “I hate you with a passion, baby, but call me!”. The background voices are church like in unison like Asian mantras. And the instrumentation’s line up is turned upside down. Instead of a traditional front man, a collective lined up in one row is presented. The bass is the first distorted fuzz bass ever, the drums don’t use cymbals only tom toms like in classical orchestras, the guitar is not melodic, distorted and raw feedback, the organ not melodic, just screaming and the new rhythm instrument is the first electrified banjo in rock history, which works as part of the drum set and almost sounds like a snare drum if there wasn’t this industrial touch to it.

The final step of the transformation is the image. In opposition to the longhaired musicians of the time the monks shave their heads, wear classic black monk cowls with gallows-ropes around the neck. The design is pure Bauhaus. The aesthetics black and white. Eddie Shaw calls Remy and Niemann the ultimate designers of an art vignette. People on the street react to the monks as if they were a religious order. Gary Burger: “They didn’t know we were a rock band”.

The record producer (October 1965)

Jimmy Bowien, Polydor producer, famous for his work with left wing songwriter Franz-Josef Degenhardt, convinces the conservative major record label Polydor to sign the monks. Bowien believes that the monks music will be a turning point within the history of pop music. He claims that their music was early heavy metal or industrial – terms that in October of 1965 were unheard of. And he likes the fact that the monks abandon the use of regular love songs.

Monk time – why do you kill all those kids in Vietnam? Mad Vietcong! (October – December 1965)

When in late summer of 1965 US troops start carpet-bombing Vietnam. The two managers react immediately and propose new lyrics that address these political issues. The monks’ theme song “monk time” (“Here are the monks”) undergoes a harsh change and is turned into a protest rant. A new song by the title Complication is composed. Both songs denounce the war. Discussions and doubts arise among the 5 band members. Some of them would rather leave the project and go back to America.

Hamburg - the Mecca of Western beat music (January 1966)

In January of 1966 the project is launched in the Mecca of Western beat music – Hamburg. The managers choose the world famous TOP TEN CLUB, a club, in which the Beatles started their career. It was the TOP TEN where the Beatles had their first fans and where German artist and photographer Astrid Kirchherr created the famous Beatles haircut. It is here where the monks play for four weeks to sold-out audiences. The biggest sensationalist tabloid BILD ZEITUNG reports extensively about the new wave band the monks. As if dada artists Baader and Huelsenbeck had their fingers in the pie. Hamburg is a big success for the monks. They start believing in the strange project and also get to know a different, very diverse, liberal and tolerant Germany. When Eddie Shaw recounts his Hamburg experiences he has turned into a German himself.



Mannheim – a GI town (February 1966)

In February of 1966 the monks go to Mannheim – a Catholic middle sized town in the south, with many American GI's. At one of the shows the monks are attacked by an audience member, a GI who just arrived from duty in Vietnam is offended and calls the monks names. The monks themselves feel foolish, embarrassed and confused. Here they are as former American GI's playing anti-war songs. Some band members want to leave. The managers react and set up six strict monk rules to keep the band in line and on course. And again the avant-garde aspect of the art project shimmers through. Malcolm McLaren was probably taking notes.

THE RULES FOR THE MONK IMAGE: In public, openly you have to be always a monk, always be dressed black, short hair, always move like a monk, hard, sexy, exciting, full speed, strong and dangerous.

Cologne - recording of the LP “black monk time” (March 1966)

In March of 1966 the monks play at Cologne's Storyville Club. And it is in Cologne where they record their landmark album BLACK MONK TIME in 2 and a half days. Sound engineer Werner Henjes and producer Jimmy Bowien recount the occasion. Bowien recalls his own enthusiasm by stating that if we can capture the futuristic sound on tape then we are at a turning point in rock history. Werner Henjes: “It was difficult to capture this immense wall of sound, which was so different from the regular beat bands of the day. We mainly used the one ambient microphone. We recorded the entire LP in 2 days and a half. There was not much time for experimentation. That wasn't necessary because the band had an accomplished live sound already”.

Promoting the new – the monks at the TV Show “Beat Club” (July 1966)

In July 1966 the monks perform 3 songs live on the most famous German TV program Der Beat-Club (comparable to the American bandstand). Jochen Irmmler, member of the avant-garde krautrock band “faust” was 15 when he saw the monks on the show. He recalls the occasion as one of a kind. Jochen Irmmler: “Beat music was still based on the prettiness of Bach music. The monks negated all that and they said no to the arrogance and snobbism of current beat bands, such as the German Lords or the British Rolling Stones. There was nothing like the monks, nothing as hard as them. Ok, it was fun too, what the Monks did. But it was a bit more than just fun. In my eyes they were calling upon people for liberation. We could have had the 68' revolution 2 years earlier if people just had understood.”.

In Irmmler's eyes the monks were an outcry for liberation, something that he wouldn't forget for the rest of his life. Rock critic Greil Marcus believes that within popular art there are few moments loaded with the idea of absolute freedom. In his opinion Dada, Surrealism, The Situationists, Michel Mourre, Elvis and The Sex Pistols had that magic power. Marcus probably didn't know about the monks.

The band goes on tour for 1 1/2 year (August 1966 – July 1967)



The band goes on a grueling 1 and a half year tour all across Germany. The tour is organized by renowned booking agent Wolfgang Gluszczevski (Spotnicks, Hep Stars). Every day they perform in a different town. In the smaller towns the teenage audiences wish to hear the records of the day. For the most part they despise the monks, neither understanding nor respecting their futuristic music. Eddie Shaw: "Here we were an art band working on grassroots level".

After only one year of working together the manager team starts breaking up

Walther Niemann and Karl-H. Remy start breaking up their business relationship because of Karl's drinking and possible power struggles. Walther Niemann continues working with the band but he recedes further into the background. Gary Burger: "Once the manager team came under rough roads the monks were basically done without knowing it." Exhausted, disappointed, and without the managers' support the five monks slowly start growing apart. They find it tough to be always dressed as monks. They miss the managers' guidance and encouragement. In October of 1966 though they perform as stronger monks than ever on the TV show Beat, Beat, Beat (AFN/HR) the anti war song COMPLICATION.

Complication,
Complication,
Complication,
Constipation!
People cry,
People die for you.
People kill,
People will for you.
People run,
Ain't it fun for you.
People go
To their deaths for you.
Complication!

Art should save the monks – the German Andy Warhol, fashion photographer and artist Charles Wilp invites the monks to play and record music for his Afri-Cola commercials

Yves Klein called Charles Wilp the Prince of Space. Charles Wilp calls the monks the first pop band without gravity and invites the blasphemous troupe to his world famous studio at Cornelius Strasse in Düsseldorf. Charles Wilp is in the middle of the creation of what should become later one of the most famous advertising campaigns in the history of postwar West-Germany, which brought him an invitation to the "documenta art fair" in Kassel. He wants the monks to perform his "unreal" music for his Afri-Cola commercials. The monks spent an entire day in his studio, playing and improvising Wilp's composition. Wilp is still completely fascinated by the encounter with the monks and still sounds disappointed and angry when talking about the failure of the project because of financial differences. The tour across Germany he denounces as being wrong because you need to infiltrate and subvert the high-end commercial world. Strangely enough, thirty years later the real Coca- Cola Company will use monk's music for one of their campaigns. Wilp could have been the last chance to revive the monks. As



testimony of the monks-Wilp collaboration play loud! discovered for the first time photographs of the musicians playing at Wilp's studio. And you will see the monks wearing bow hats and dancing, as if the dada foxtrot just came about in 1967 and not in 1916.

Two soft singles or the beginning of the end

The record company is getting nervous. The LP "black monk time" is not selling. Two softer singles are released that break with the previous radical music. "I can't get over you" and "Love Can Tame the Wild" sound tame and harmless. It is the failed attempt to achieve success by making softer, safer and more commercial music. Roger Johnston: "It discouraged the monks. It discouraged me".

The last time the monks look like real monks – Jimi Hendrix (May 1967)

The tour continues. In May of 1967 in Kiel at the Star Palast the monks share the bill with Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix hadn't broken through yet and was a month away from his US debut at the Monterey Pop Festival. In Kiel Hendrix is very intrigued by the monks music. Eddie Shaw: "Hendrix said your music is very interesting. His style was Blues and ours was Überbeat. We were not melodic enough as he was. We were too extreme. He gave me some doubt. I had the feeling he was going where the future of music was and I wasn't sure we were".

The end of the monks - a tour to Vietnam – former real GIs dressed as false monks protest the war in front of real GIs (July – September 1967)

Tour manager Wolfgang Gluszczevski recalls that they were always hoping for the commercial success. And the first promising gig financially was a three months tour to South-East Asia, including Vietnam. Dave Day: "The monks doing protest song. I don't think the GIs would have liked that".

All visas are issued and the band members are waiting at the Frankfurt airport when a message from drummer Roger Johnston reaches them saying: "I can't take it any longer". It is the end of the monks. It is the end of the experiment.

Homecoming in 1967 – some see Germany as their home – living in oblivion

Eventually all band members make their way back to the US. The country they encounter is in turmoil over the Vietnam War. It is the time of the hippie flower power music. Eddie Shaw: "Our music was way past where they were. I had seven years of culture shock. It was not easy coming back here. I was a refugee in my own hometown. I spoke more German than English. I felt German. I am probably as much German as I am American".

Gary Burger and Dave Day feel completely out of place and go back to Germany. Roger Johnston and Larry Clark make smoother transitions. But all have difficulties adapting to the new situation.

They feel disappointed and lost, and never talk to anybody about the monks music they made in Germany, feeling somehow ashamed of it. From then on for 30 years they live separate lives and have little contact with each other.



Re-discovery (1990's)

During the 80s the sole monks record "Black Monk Time" begins to gather a cult reputation among fans and record collectors in the United States. In the early 90s the makers of the fanzine Ugly Things track down Eddie Shaw and Gary Burger and relate for the first time the monks story. The monks are completely surprised by the fan interest. The fact that actually someone could like their strange music strikes them as absolutely impossible.

Reunion in 1999

In 1999 the monks play two reunion shows in New York and are celebrated by fans and media. Dave Day is amazed by the fact that the monks 32 years later are popular and not dead. Dave Day: "Our managers were geniuses to think this far ahead". Eddie Shaw agonizes over reunions. Genesis P.Orridge, inventor of industrial music: "I am old, I know them from way back. When I heard they were playing I came down. It's a religious thing. One has to know one's roots. Jon Spencer (JS Blues Explosion, Pussy Galore) is nervously looking forward to the gig. Byron Coley, Spin Magazine staff writer: "They don't sound like a 60s' band really. You hear a little Bo Diddley beat once in a while but I don't know what else there is that anybody could pick out as a real influence." Peter Zarella (The Fleshtones): "It is experimental but it is totally like rock and roll. You can dance to it. No, it is not like noise rock or a bunch of people noodling. They can play. They play rock and roll, it is great. It is forceful. Almost with a certain amount of military discipline, may I say?"

In the meanwhile backstage 5 old men, our former monks get into their costumes and get ready for their first show ever in the United States of America.

At home in 2002

Dave Day is at ease with his life. We see him picking flowers with his wife Irene. Dave Day: "I always wanted to play in New York. I have a good memory now. And I finally found a home. I am happy". And he almost breaks into tears. Roger Johnston is aloof to the experience. Roger Johnston: "I lost interest. It's what I used to be. Get rich, limousines, yeah, who wouldn't. I saw the Who, The Beatles. It wasn't meant to be. Wrong time, wrong place". He keeps cleaning the church. Larry Clark takes dance classes in a church and denies any political implications. Larry Clark: "The monks were not political. At least for my part that wasn't my intention".

Gary Burger arrives at City Hall of his 95 souls community. He is the major and has to heat the place before the meeting. Gary Burger: "The monks were a political band in a small sense because of monk time and maybe in the large sense. I am at ease with my life and the monks experience made a difference in my life. It made me a better, more tolerant person". Eddie Shaw is an author and is printing out what will be the manuscript to his latest book. Eddie Shaw:

"The monks were totally backwards. They were defying everybody. And of course the American distributors would not touch it with a ten-foot pole. I credit the Germans for having a more open discourse on art than we had. I am very happy to have been a monk and to work with these people who were willing to go where I could not see anybody with the guts to go".



the filmmakers

With “monks – the transatlantic feedback” Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios collaborate on a project for the third time. Their first short fictional film “Cloven Hoofed” premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival and was included in the series *The Cruel Machine* because of its uncompromising imagery and content. Their second collaboration was the documentary film about the performance artist Bill Talen/Reverend Billy, which played (and still is playing) numerous festivals and movie theatres around the globe.

Dietmar Post was born in Germany in 1962. He studied Television, Theatre & Cinema Studies and Spanish Language at the Free University of Berlin, New York University and at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). He received a Master’s degree in 1995. After living for many years in New York Post currently resides in Berlin.

His most recent credits are:

- Assistant director/researcher for the documentary film *Wall Street*, by German filmmaker Thomas Schadt for German TV (ARD and Arte).
- Co-director of a series of sports commercials (Soccer World Cup 98, Tour de France 98) (ARD)
- Assistant director/production manager for the documentary *Walker Evans*, by German filmmaker Reiner Holzemer for German TV (BR and Arte).
- Line and service producer (USA) for the documentary *The Nomi Song*, by American filmmaker Andrew Horn for German TV (WDR).
- Assistant director/researcher/production manager for documentary *The Net* by German artist and filmmaker Lutz Dammbeck for German TV (SWR and Arte).

List of films as director/producer:

- Bowl of Oatmeal (short, USA, 1996, 16mm, 10 min)
- Cloven Hoofed (short, USA/Germany/Spain, 1998, 16mm, 12 min)
- Reverend Billy (documentary, USA/Germany/Spain, 2002, digital video/16:9, 60 min)

Lucía Palacios was born in Spain in 1972. She studied Cinema Studies at the Complutense University of Madrid. In 1996 she obtained a scholarship at New York University through the Spanish government. While in New York she worked as production manager for several films and as TV news reporter for Canal+, Televisión Española and SAT. Currently she resides in Berlin (Germany).

Her most recent credits as producer and production manager include:

- Reverend Billy & The Church of Stop Shopping, documentary by Dietmar Post.
- The Nomi Song, documentary by Andrew Horn for WDR (Germany).
- La Espalda del mundo, documentary by Javier Corcuera for Elías Querejeta P.C (Spain).
- Cloven Hoofed, short by Dietmar Post (Germany/USA).



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monks – the transatlantic feedback

a play loud! feature documentary film

featuring

Gary Burger (original monk; vocals/guitar)
Larry Clark (original monk; organ)
Dave Day (original monk; banjo/guitar)
Roger Johnston (original monk; drums)
Eddie Shaw (original monk; bass)
Charles Wilp (fashion photographer, composer, Afri-Cola guru, ARTronaut and collaborator of the monks)
Jimmy Bowien (Polydor record producer of the monks)
Gerd Henjes (Polydor sound engineer of the monks)
Wolfgang Gluszczewski (tour manager of the monks)
Joachim Irmiler (Faust, 60's eyewitness, fan, musician)
Jon Spencer (Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, 90's fan, musician)
Byron Coley (Spin Magazine staff writer)
Genesis P-Orridge (Psychic TV & Throbbing Gristle, 60's fan, musician)
Peter Zaremba (Fleshtones, 80's fan, musician)

credit list

production company	play loud! productions
produced and directed by	Dietmar Post & Lucía Palacios
edited by	Dieter Jaufmann & Karl-W. Huelsenbeck
camera & sound by	Dietmar Post & Lucía Palacios
music by	the monks
soundtrack / tribute	Jon Spencer, The Gossip, Mouse on Mars, The Fall, Faust, Int. Noise Conspiracy, Alan Vega, Silver Apples, raincoats, Alec Empire and more
film advisor	Peter Stockhaus
commissioning editors	Katya Mader (3sat/ZDF) Lili Kobbe (Hessischer Rundfunk)
in collaboration with	Chicago Underground Film Fund Other Music (New York) Reel Life (New York) Anthology Film Archives (New York) 3sat/ZDF (German Public TV) Hessischer Rundfunk (German Public TV) Filmförderung Hessen hr (German Film Board) Filmbüro NW (German Film Board) Cine Impuls (Berlin) Nattress Productions (Ottawa) German Films (Munich) Filmstiftung NRW (Düsseldorf)

special dedication

in memory of	monks drummer Roger Johnston (1939 – 2004) monks collaborator Charles Wilp (1932 – 2005)
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technical data

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the drawing for the movie poster was provided
by german painter daniel richter.
the same drawing was also used for the design
of the tribute record “silver monk time”.



In conjunction with the film play loud! has released the double cd "silver monk time – a tribute to the monks"

In 1965 the monks were looking for a new zero point in pop music and created what later turned into the milestone record "black monk time". "black monk time" accidentally or intentionally pre-dated several genres that were to come: kraut rock, electronic music, heavy metal, punk, industrial and techno. When the monks in january 1966 launched their "living (pop) art project" at famous reeperbahn "top ten club" the largest german tabloid "bild-zeitung" wrote "noise, noise and no melody – robot music!" In July of the same year the monks presented their black record for the first time live on the teenage TV show "beat-club". To the surprise of many they started the show with an improvised new song, which wasn't even on the record. You could call it commercial suicide. The song itself was archaic, one repetitive beat, 3 monks beating on gigantic tambourines, an organ gone mad, a guitar on the floor that fed back and at one point was shyly touched by 4 band members. All typical macho-like-rock attitudes were taken out. It was pure and swinging joyfulness and seemed to have more in common with art than with regular pop music.

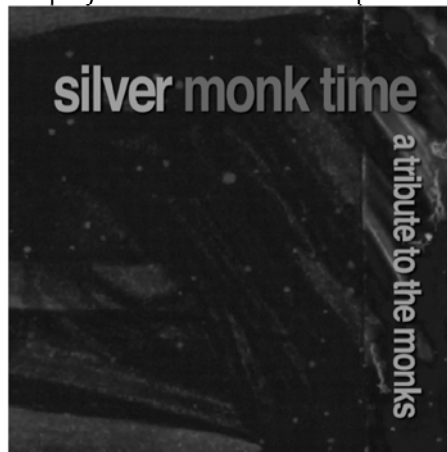
Therefore maybe it was misunderstood. To some degree though it was the end of rock music, as we knew it. The monks called the song "monk chant". Rumor has it that "monk chant" was supposed to be the one and only idea for their second long player. One primitive beat spread out on two lp sides. "You are playing the music of the future, you are supposed to play the audience into ecstasy," demanded their two german managers. This second (never released) record was to be called "silver monk time".

play loud! is proud to announce 29 international pop bands who continue the musical journey initiated 40 years ago by the 7 monks, gary burger, larry clark, dave day, roger johnston, walther niemann, karl-heinz remy and eddie shaw.

Crank it up and enjoy this brand new ecstatic **monks** record.

it is (finally) **silver monk time**.

play loud! double –cd / cd-pl-02



silver monk time – a tribute to the monks

with fsk, the fall, faust, fehlfarben, doc schoko, gudrun gut, die goldenen zitronen, chicks on speed, ptv 3 (psychic tv), international noise conspiracy, the havletones, alexander hacke, barbara manning, floating di morel, s.y.p.h., alec empire, silver apples, alan vega, mouse on mars, the raincoats, jason forrest, singapore sling, 27/11, nista nije nista, mense reents, 5.6.7.8's, cycle, the gossip, jon spencer, solex, charles wilp and the original monks

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Copies for sale will be available at the FESTIVALS



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----- MONKS LIVE ----- LATEST NEWS:

In late October 2006 the MONKS sold out their first European shows after 40 years in LONDON, ZURICH and BERLIN. Crowds went absolutely wild. Fans from all over the world attended.

More info can be found at:

www.playloud.org
www.the-monks.com

Festivals the movie has been screened at:

Los Angeles / Don't Knock The Rock – Juli 2006
München / Int. Filmfestival – Juli 2006
Chicago Underground Film Festival – August 2006
Minneapolis / Sound Unseen – August 2006
Leeds Int. Film Festival – Nov 4 & 6, 2006
Frankfurt Int. Film Festival – Nov 3 –11, 2006
Kassel Documentary Film Festival – Nov 11, 2006
Oslo Int. Film Festival – Nov 16 – 26, 2006
Gijon Int. Film Festival – Nov 23 – Dec 1, 2006
Berlin & Beyond Film Festival San Francisco – January 17, 2007
Würzburg International Film Days – Jan 25 – 28, 2007
Göteborg Int. Film Festival – Jan 26 – Feb 5, 2007
Music Doc Festival Malmö – Feb 8-11, 2007
Nat Film Festival Copenhagen - March 22 - April 1, 2007
Belfast Film Festival – March 22 – April 1, 2007
VISION – Festival of German Films in Australia 2007
(Sydney 19-29 April; Melbourne 20-29 April; Brisbane 26-29 April; Perth 27-29 April)

Up-coming festivals:

Music on Film - Film on Music (MOFFOM), Prague – Oct 18-22, 2007
MILANO INTERNATIONAL DOC FESTIVAL, Sep. 12th - 30th, 2007
MAR DE PLATA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL Nov 2-11, 2007

AWARDS:

AUDIENCE'S FAVORITE

AT LEEDS FILM FESTIVAL 2006

AUDIENCE AWARD (best documentary)

AT BERLIN & BEYOND FILM FESTIVAL SAN FRANCISCO
(The largest West Coast showcase for German film) January 2007

AUDIENCE AWARD

AT WÜRZBURG INTERNATIONAL FILM DAYS January 2007



quotations: documentary "monks – the transatlantic feedback" and the double cd "silver monk time"

"A penetrating and loving documentary film".

„Ein eindringlicher und liebevoller Dokumentarfilm.“

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, July 2006

"It takes more than just documenting a great band to make a great movie: the band has to be unique in spirit and story and fit into a larger picture of the rock canon, and the filmmakers have to find the cinematic language to bring that essence to the screen. Never have these rarities all come together more beautifully than in "monks - the transatlantic feedback". Dietmar Post and Lucia Palacios have given us a brilliant journey with the most extraordinary rock band to ever cut vinyl!"

"Um einen guten Film zu machen, reicht es nicht aus, eine große Band zu dokumentieren, Die Band muss einen einzigartigen Geist versprühen und die Filmemacher müssen eine ästhetische Filmsprache finden, um diesen Geist auf die Leinwand zu bringen. Niemals zuvor sind diese Seltenheiten auf so wunderschöne Weise aufeinander getroffen wie in "monks – the transatlantic feedback". Post und Palacios schicken uns mit einer der außergewöhnlichsten Popgruppen auf eine brillante Reise"

ALLISON ANDERS, Los Angeles (Regisseurin von u.a. „Gas, Food and Lodging“), Juli 2006

"American soldiers stationed in Germany who became anti-Beatles: a banjo with a microphone in it to make it electric, a fuzz bass in '66, and an amazing singer, not to mention the drummer and organist, both out of this galaxy with what they were doing. I Hate You is probably their masterpiece – "I hate you with a passion baby ... but call me!" True grit. Their melodies were pop destructive and must be played to your younger brother."

THE WHITE STRIPES, Mojo-Magazine 2002

"Mit ihrem beispielhaften Dokumentarfilm setzen Post und Palacios den einzigartigen Monks das längst überfällige Denkmal. Absolut empfehlenswert!"

"With their exemplary documentary Post and Palacios have left an overdue memorial to the extraordinary Monks. Highly recommended".

INTRO Magazin, Oktober 2006

"A wonderful documentary film – a long overdue history lesson. Go and watch it!"

"Ein wundervoller Dokumentarfilm – eine lang überfällige Geschichtsstunde. Unbedingt anschauen!"

ROLLING STONE, Januar 2007

"Ein grandioser Film."

"A magnificent film".

DIE ZEIT, September 2006

"Ein großartiger Dokumentarfilm."

"An brilliant documentary film".

HAMBURGER MORGENPOST, November 2006

„This absorbing documentary by Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios tells the Monks' story with precision and flair. It's the witty and unsentimental interviews with the five band members that reveal their focus and idiosyncratic brilliance“.

„Dieser packende Dokumentarfilm erzählt die Geschichte der MONKS mit ungemeiner Präzision und sehr viel Flair.“

CHICAGO READER, August 2006

"Ein einmalig eindrücklicher Film."

"A uniquely impressive film".

JAZZTHETIK, Dezember 2006

„After eight years of research, Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios have managed in their documentary "Monks – Transatlantic Feedback" to create an impressive and intimate retrospective upon which their own judgements never intrude. It follows The Monks from their spells in the army and as the Torquays and the creation of their distinctive sound all the way through to the reunion of 1999, painting an affectionate portrait, rich in details, in which songs, television recordings, post cards and other original documents are interspersed with interviews that allow each of the five band members to give his own account of The Monks – the occasion for some priceless anecdotes. Dietmar Post: "Another of the reasons we wanted to make this film is that they're funny". And funny, the five most certainly are, with

none of the pretensions of rock stars, coming over instead as likeable, 'normal' people, who just happened to have produced some great rock 'n' roll. If you think of the canned laughter they add to American sitcoms, it'll give you some idea of the audience response to the first public showing of the film "Transatlantic Feedback" in Germany; peels of genuine laughter punctuated the viewing at regular intervals. What also makes "Transatlantic Feedback" extraordinary is that it paints a portrait, from the standpoint of enthusiastic but critical fans, of a fascinating band that richly deserves greater recognition".

CHRIS WILPERT, October 2006

„Mittlerweile haben sich die Monks mit dem erdrückenden Gedanken angefreundet, Geschichte geschrieben zu haben. Sie erzählen darüber in Dietmar Posts und Lucia Palacios' exzellenten Dokumentarfilm *Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback*, der bitte nicht in die Hinterhofkinos und ins Spätabendprogramm abgeschoben werden sollte. Sondern in die großen Häuser und auf die besten Sendeplätze gehört, zeigt er doch exemplarisch, wie sich Musik und Geschichte, Rock 'n' Roll und Kalter Krieg einander bedingen.

Zeitgleich zum Film haben Post und Palacios eine Doppel-CD herausgebracht, auf der The Fall, Alec Empire, Silver Apples / Alan Vega, The Gossip, Gudrun Gut, Faust, Doc Schoko, S.Y.P.H. (Int.) Noise Conspiracy, Alexander Hacke und viele, viele mehr den Monks ihren überfälligen Tribut erweisen. Betitelt *Silver Monk Time*, nach der nie erschienenen zweiten LP, für die Polydor kein Geld mehr ausgeben wollte. In Berlin gefeiert haben Ana De Silva und Gina Birch von den Raincoats, Fehlfarben-Sänger Peter Hein wie Schorsch Kamerun von den Goldenen Zitronen. Gefeiert hat eine ausverkaufte Grosse Bühne der Volksbühne, ein Publikum, das sich nach zehn Minuten nicht mehr auf den begehrten Plätzen halten konnte. Und ein sichtlich froher und enthusiastischer Mark E. Smith. Er hat getanzt.“

SATT.ORG, Oktober 2006

"People are recontextualizing the history of rock music because of the Monks," said Genesis P-Orridge. "There's a missing link that was completely overlooked because they were so much just in Germany. And it was just a geographical mistake. If they had managed to travel, then things would have been very different. I've always wished that the Monks had come to London to play. I think if they had moved to London they would have been incredibly successful".

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, October 2006

„Es fällt zunächst schwer, die netten Herren, die Dietmar Post und Lucia Palacios für ihre wunderbare Doku »Transatlantic Feedback« aufgestöbert haben, mit ihrer Avantgarde-Kunst übereinzubringen. Den einen treffen wir beim Putzen in der Kirche, der andere ist Bürgermeister eines 90-Seelen-Orts mit holzbeheizter Rats-Hütte. Der nächste schwooft beim Seniorentanz ins Bild. Im Interview kommen den fünfzehn fast die Tränen, als sie über ihre Jahre in Westdeutschland sprechen – und sich wundern, dass ihre Musik heute wieder als »kultig« gilt. Kaum noch vorzustellen, dass Gary Burger (Gitarre, Gesang, Larry Clark (Orgel, Gesang) Dave Day, (elektrisches Banjo), Roger Johnston (Schlagzeug) und Eddie Shaw (Bass) Mitte der Sechziger mit Tonsuren, Kutten und Slogans wie »Gegen den Großmutterstil der Beatles« durch westdeutsche Klubs tobten, mit als erste Rückkoppelungen einsetzten – und heutige Journalisten zu der These hinreißen, sie hätten den Punk erfunden. Zehn Jahre vor den Sex Pistols.“

NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, Oktober 2006

„Hochgelobt, wahnwitzig und sehr berührend.“

„Highly acclaimed, crazy and very moving“.

STANDARD WIEN, Oktober 2006

„Ein fantastischer Film, der in seiner Mischung aus Privatem und Politischem an den Film von Fechner über die Comedian Harmonists erinnert.“

„A fantastic film, which in its mix of private and political reminded me of the film by Fechner about the Comedian Harmonists“.

BERTOLD SELIGER, August 2005



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“ ‘Silver Monk Time’ vereint die Mitglieder der Monks mit Interpretationen und Coverversionen von heutigen Künstlern, die von den Monks beeinflusst wurden: Von The Fall über Mouse on Mars und die Goldenen Zitronen bis zu The Gossip reicht die illustre Liste der beteiligten Musiker. Künstlerisch ähnlich kreativ und unerschrocken wie die Monks stehen ihre Enkel für eine Form von Popmusik, in der ästhetisch und musikalisch Gewagtes zu entdecken gilt, in der einmal das Unversöhnliche vor dem Selbstzufriedenen den Ton angibt.

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG, Oktober 2006

“Un poco de rock, y además del bueno. Monks - The Transatlantic Feedback es un interesante documental que nos introduce en la increíble historia de una banda de los años 60, the monks, que sobrepasó su época en décadas, dejando de lado el “beat” que estaba de moda para crear un tipo de música a la que hoy reconocemos como precursora de estilos tan diversos como el punk o el tecno.

Como película el documental es una pequeña joya. Sus directores renuncian a hacerse notar para aproximarse al estilo repetitivo y cortante característico de la música de los monks, en un montaje basado en los mismos principios, llano pero tremendamente efectivo.”

RTVE - DIAS DE CINE, Madrid (Spain) November 2006

“Dietmar Post and Lucia Palacios's lively doc *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* tracks down all the band members, now in advanced middle age and living quiet lives that barely hint at their prepunk pasts (drummer Roger Johnston passed away after filming his interviews). All five are given equal time to reflect as well as share impressive caches of memorabilia (especially photos with detailed captions) that suggest someone, at least, was aware that the Monks' lightning-in-a-bottle moment would later be eagerly revisited by future devotees of incredibly strange music. A reunion concert — marking the group's first-ever stateside show — nudges the film in a *Bands Reunited* direction, but for the most part *Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback* is propelled by the triumphs of the group's past, which include 30-year-old tunes that still sound wholly creative (and ever so off-putting) even today”.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN, January 2007

The Hollywood Reporter.com.

July 06, 2006

Forget the chanting, these Monks rocked

By [Chris Morris](#)

The Loyal Order of the Monks convened at REDCAT in the Disney Concert Hall on Saturday for the Don't Knock the Rock Festival's sneak-preview screening of "Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback," Dietmar Post and Lucia Palacios' documentary about one of the most intriguing prophetic cult bands of the '60s.

Eight years in the making, the film follows the musical transformation of five American GIs who met when they were stationed in Gelnhausen, Germany, during the Cold War. After apprenticing as the Torquays in the same rough "beat clubs" in which the Beatles were schooled, these strangers in a strange land acquired a pair of managers, the image-savvy advertising men Karl Remy and Walther Niemann, who re-conceptualized the group as the Monks.

As bassist Eddie Shaw says with precision in the film, the Monks were "an art band working at a grass-roots level." Clad in black, wearing rope neckties, their hair close-cropped and tonsured, the five musicians ground out an unprecedented style mating yelping vocals, primitive beats, percussive electric banjo, screaming keyboards and high-volume guitar work featuring forward-looking feedback, distortion and wah-wah effects. The band's lone album "Black Monk Time," released by German Polydor in 1966, was a dizzy, wondrous combo of Teutonic austerity and American exuberance. But it flopped, and the group fell apart in 1967.

The Monks were wrested from obscurity three decades later, thanks to the ardent embrace of garage-rock fans, the well-received release of Shaw's self-published 1994 memoir (also titled "Black Monk Time") and the first American issue of the album in 1997 on Rick Rubin and Henry Rollins' label Infinite Zero. In the late '90s, the band's credo "Monk Time" was featured in a national TV ad for the sports drink Powerade. "The Transatlantic Feedback" climaxes with footage of the band's debut U.S. gig at New York's Cavestomp Festival in 1999.

Co-director Post's fascination with the Monks long predated America's interest in the band. He recalls that in Germany's early punk era, the group's album was played at parties alongside the Clash and Wire. "I knew from the first time I heard the Monks in 1981, this is something different," he says. "To me, it made total sense."

Like Shaw -- who attended the REDCAT screening with banjoist Dave Day -- Post dismisses any notion that the Monks were a garage band. "Bullshit," he says, instead relating the band's development to such artistic movements as Bauhaus and Fluxus, which clearly had an impact on managers Remy and Niemann.

"The five Americans were able to fill the concept with their own ideas and background and music," Post adds. "They swung."

Palacios continues that the bandmates "had nothing in common. ... If they were not in the Army, they would never have been together."

After the REDCAT screening, Shaw told his audience that the diverse tastes of the band members -- swing and modern jazz, country and '50s rock 'n' roll -- and an accommodation bred by Army life forged the Monks' bizarre sound.

"The Monks are five different guys from five different genres of music," Shaw said. "We had to adapt to each other. We all had to compromise. ... (But) being in the Army creates strange bedfellows. We were already used to working out of our own realm."

Post and Palacios are seeking international distribution for their penetrating, loving documentary. In the meantime, their production company Play Loud! is readying a tribute album, "Silver Monk Time." And -- hold on to your cowls -- the Monks are contemplating a late-2006 tour.

press clippings / monks – the transatlantic feedback

DIE ZEIT

SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Fünf US-amerikanische GIs lernen sich 1961 in Südwestdeutschland kennen und gründen dort, in permanenter, auf den erwarteten Dritten Weltkrieg gerichteter Alarmbereitschaft, eine Band. Nach ihrer Entlassung aus der Armee 1964 bleiben die Musiker im Lande, tingeln weiter, haben Autos, haben Freundinnen in jeder Stadt. Sie spielen die Top Ten Hits anderer Bands. Gleichzeitig malen sich zwei junge Männer aus den Designschmieden Essens und Ulms eine Combo aus, wie sie die Welt noch nicht erlebt hat. Sie sehen die fünf Ex-GIs live. Die sind ganz stolz auf ihre endlich über die Ohren gewachsenen Haare, doch die Designer, die im Nu ihre Manager werden, überzeugen sie davon, sich Tonsuren rasieren zu lassen und sich fortan **The Monks** zu nennen: In Mönchskutten gegen den Großmutterstil der Beatles losrocken. Sie sollen nun eigene Stücke schreiben und entwickeln, unter deutscher Anleitung, vor Can, vor The Velvet Underground, einen revolutionären, am ehesten durch ihre zufällige Bekanntschaft in der Kaserne erklärbaren eklektischen Stil: Ein harsch elektrifiziertes Banjo sowie ein jazziges, an Gene Krupa erinnerndes Schlagzeug stechen besonders hervor. Auch der verzerrte Baß. Wilde Orgelkaskaden. Alles stark repetitiv. Dazu dadaeske Texte. Das Publikum ist irritiert bis brüskiert, die Musiker würden dann doch lieber wieder Covers spielen, aber die beiden Manager setzen sich durch. 1965: Plattenvertrag mit der Polydor. Ein Anti-Vietnamkrieg-Song wird aufgenommen, Hamburgs Top Ten Club erobert. 1966 spielen die Monks in Köln ihr epochales Album Black Monk Time ein. Charles Wilp bemüht sich für seinen Afri-Cola-Werbefilm um sie. Sie touren bis 1967, dann brechen sie gemeinsam mit ihrem hippen Management auseinander, gehen nach und nach in die USA zurück. Wo sie drei Jahrzehnte später, gestrauchelt, gestrandet, zu braven Bürgern geworden, von den Filmemachern Dietmar Post und Lucia Palacios ausfindig gemacht und erneut zusammengetrommelt werden. Der grandiose Film The Transatlantic Feedback entsteht (www.playloud.org; ich sah ihn auf dem Münchner Filmfest, ich will ihn auch als DVD haben), dazu eine Tribut-CD namens Silver Monk Time mit Huldigungen von Faust über The Fall bis zu Mouse on Mars. Am 23. Oktober spielen sie ein absolut exklusives Konzert in der Volksbühne Berlin.

Neue Zürcher Zeitung 19.10.2006

Rückkehr der Mönche

The Monks, auf CD, live und im Film

Welten liegen zwischen den Monkees und den Monks. Und doch sind sie Teil der gleichen Geschichte. Die Monkees wurden 1966 als erste Band für eine amerikanische Fernsehserie ausgewählt. In Wahrheit gaben die Bandmitglieder nur die Gesichter für rund zwanzig Hits her, eingespielt wurden sie von Studio-musikern. Als zwei Mitglieder der Monkees 1966 zur US-Armee eingezogen werden sollten, kam es zu weltweiten Protesten. Demgegenüber wurden The Monks von amerikanischen Soldaten gegründet, die in Deutschland stationiert waren. Nach der Entlassung aus dem Militär nahm die Band 1966, in ihrer Heimat unbeachtet, ihr erstes und bis dato einziges Album auf. «Black Monk Time» klingt auch heute noch wie das schroffe, minimalistische Tondokument, das in den Sechzigern in Deutschland kommerziell floppte. Gleich im ersten Song heisst es selbstbewusst und deutlich: «It's beat time, it's hop time, it's Monk time. You know, we don't like the army. What army? Who cares what army? Why do you kill all those kids in Vietnam?» Mit ihrem Protest gegen den Krieg nahmen die Monks das rebellische Element vorweg, das die Beatles und die Rolling Stones erst ab 1967 in ihrer Musik zum Ausdruck brachten. Erst allmählich offenbarten sich die künstlerischen Strategien der Monks. In der Öffentlichkeit traten sie damals stets uniform in Schwarz gekleidet, mit Ton-sur-Haarschnitt und mit Seil um den

Hals in Erscheinung. Konzeptionell begleitet von den beiden mit den Avantgarde-Theorien des Bauhauses vertrauten deutschen Werbegrafikern Walter Niemann und Karl-Heinz Remy, fungierten The Monks als Vorläufer des Punk. Ihr Look war furchteinflössend, ihr Sound beschränkt sich auf wenige monotone Gitarrenakkorde mit umso drastischerem Feedback über einem stur treibenden, hypnotischen Beat, der von einem Banjo betont wurde. Damit standen The Monks vor den Stooges und den visionären Totengräbern des Rock'n'Roll. «I hate you», sangen sie kurz und bündig, während den Monkees «I'm too busy to put anybody down» in den Mund gelegt wurde. Bereits zweimal wurde «Black Monk Time» erneut veröffentlicht. Zuerst 1981 in Deutschland, als The Monks mühelos zu den Protagonisten der New Wave sortiert wurden. Dann 1997, als der Produzent Rick Rubin und der Musiker Henry Rollins «Black Monk Time» erstmals für den amerikanischen Markt lizenzierten. Die Renaissance der Monks war also bereits im Gange, als ihr Bassist Eddie Shaw 1997 die Autobiografie der Band, «Black Monk Time», veröffentlichte. 1999 traten die Monks in Originalbesetzung in New York, erstmals überhaupt in den USA, auf. Schon vorher hatte das deutsch-spanische Dokumentarfilmer-Paar Lucia Palacios und Dietmar Post die einzelnen Bandmitglieder ausfindig gemacht, um sie in dem Film «The

Transatlantic Feedback» zu porträtieren. Mehr als sieben Jahre dauerten die Arbeiten an der Dokumentation. Um Finanzierungsschwierigkeiten zu überbrücken, stellten die Regisseure «Silver Monk Time» zusammen. Aus dem ursprünglich geplanten, aber nie erschienenen zweiten Album der Monks ist nun ein Doppelalbum geworden. «Silver Monk Time» vereint die Mitglieder der Monks mit Interpretationen und Coverversionen von heutigen Künstlern, die von den Monks beeinflusst wurden: Von The Fall über Mouse On Mars und die Goldenen Zitronen bis zu The Gossip reicht die illustre Liste der beteilig-

ten Musiker. Stilistisch uneinheitlich, aber künstlerisch ähnlich kreativ und unerschrocken wie die Monks stehen ihre Enkel für eine Form von Popmusik, in der es ästhetisch und musikalisch Gewagtes zu entdecken gilt, in der einmal das Unversöhnliche vor dem Selbstzufriedenen den Ton angibt.

Julian Weber

Various Artists «Silver Monk Time» (Play Loud). - The Monks treten am 21. Oktober in Zürich im «Mascotte» auf. - Der Film «The Transatlantic Feedback» wird in Zürich am 21. Oktober, 24.00 Uhr, im Kino Riffraff gezeigt.

The Chicago Reader logo consists of a stylized, bold letter 'R' in yellow and black, followed by the words "Chicago Reader" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark grey rectangular background.

Chicago Reader

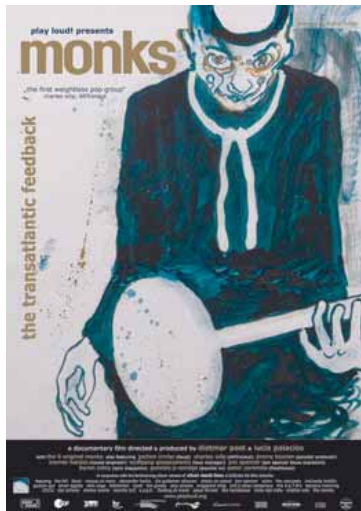
MOVIE SECTION

AUGUST 18, 2006

The Monks—The Transatlantic Feedback

The Monks were a short-lived rock band launched in the mid-60s by five army vets in Germany. They began as a run-of-the-mill combo, but an encounter with two German admen transformed them into concept-rock minimalists who wore black robes and matching tonsures and whose sole album, *Black Monk Time*, presaged the rise of heavy metal and punk. This absorbing documentary by Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios tells the Monks' story with precision and flair, climaxing with a 1999 reunion gig in New York. But it's the witty and unsentimental interviews with the five band members that reveal their focus and idiosyncratic brilliance. (Peter Margasak)

100 min. 7 PM.



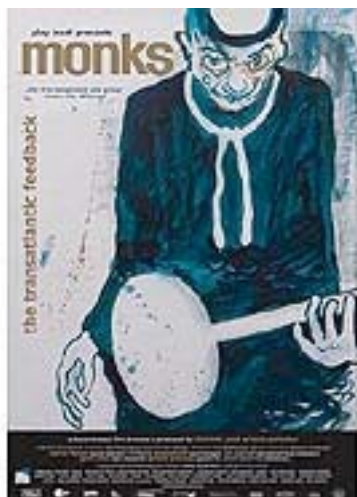
Die Avantgarde-Mönche

ZDF/3sat - Dokumentarfilm zum Filmfest München eingeladen

Der Dokumentarfilm „monks – the transatlantic feedback“, der als Co-Produktion mit ZDF/3sat entstand (Redaktion: Katya Mader) ist zum Filmfest München eingeladen worden und wird dort am 19. Juli im „Internationalen Programm“ seine Deutschland-Premiere haben. In dem ungewöhnlichen Musik-Dokumentarfilm von Dietmar Post und Lucia Palacios geht es um die legendäre, stilbildende Beat-Band „The Monks“, über die „Rolling Stone“ schrieb: „Bis heute gibt es nichts in Kunst, Rock, Punk- oder Nut-Rock, das der verrückten konzeptuellen Strenge des Images der Monks und dem rohen, Avant-Biergarten-Sound der einzigen LP der Gruppe ‚Black Monk Time‘ nahe kommt.“

Mitte der 60er Jahre kam es in Deutschland zu einem einzigartigen deutsch-amerikanischen Kulturaustausch: Fünf in Deutschland lebende, amerikanische Ex-Soldaten, die während ihrer Militärzeit eine Beat-Band gegründet hatten, trafen auf zwei deutsche Künstler und Beat-Fans. Gemeinsam entwarfen sie ein Band-Konzept, das mit dem gängigen Bild des Beat brach: Die „Monks“ schnitten sich die Haare kurz, rasierten sich Tonsuren und trugen anstelle von Krawatten Galgenstricke um den Hals. Ihre Musik war minimalistisch und aggressiv, ihre Texte ironisch und radikal, ihre Ästhetik provokant und dadaistisch. Die besondere Situation zwischen Adenauer-Politik und Vietnamkrieg, amerikanischer Pop- und wachsender deutscher Gegenkultur manifestierte sich in den radikalen Anti-Kriegsliedern der Monks und der eigenwilligen Melange aus anglo-amerikanischem Pop und deutscher Avantgarde. Heute gelten die "Monks" als geniale Wegbereiter diverser moderner Musikströmungen; Bands wie Faust, Can, Amon Düül oder Kraftwerk sowie verschiedene Protagonisten des Punk sehen sich als ihre direkten Nachfahren. Aus den persönlichen Erinnerungen der fünf Musiker und umfangreichem Archivmaterial rekonstruierten die Dokumentarfilmer Dietmar Post und Lucia Palacios diesen besonderen Moment deutsch-amerikanischer Zeit- und Popgeschichte.

!ntro



23.10.2006 06:00

MONKS. THE TRANSATLANTIC FEEDBACK D 2006

R: Dietmar Post, Lucía Palacios; Play Loud! Productions

Fast wären sie in Vergessenheit geraten, die Antipoden der Beatles: The Monks, ein progressives Quintett ehemaliger GIs im Wirtschaftswunder-Deutschland. Während die Liverpools "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" dudeln, schreien die Monks "I Hate You, Baby" und werfen ein bitteres "But Call Me" hinterher. Auch die Kleidung der Monks entspricht dem Negativbild der Beatles, die in den 60er-Jahren adrett im Anzug auftreten und bei kollektiven Bewegungen ihre putzigen Pilzköpfe schütteln. Die Monks tragen Mönchskutten und so ziemlich die uncoolste Frisur, die es gibt, nämlich eine Tonsur. Bei den Konzerten verzweifeln die Kids an der puren Energie des Quintetts, dem gellenden Gesang und der brachialen Rhythmik, die sich keinem standardisierten Tanzschritt unterordnet und den Manierismus der angeblich revoltierenden Jugendlichen konterkariert. Davon zeugen "Beatclub"-Filmausschnitte der Monks-Konzerte, die die beiden Filmemacher Dietmar Post und Lucía Palacios an den Anfang ihres äußerst bemerkenswerten Films "Monks.The Transatlantic Feedback" gestellt haben.

press clippings / monks – the transatlantic feedback

Acht Jahre Arbeit stecken in dem ersten Dokumentarfilm über die Avantgarde-Beatband. Den Regisseuren ist es zu verdanken, dass dieses einzigartige Bandphänomen der 60er-Jahre nicht in den dunklen Kanälen der Musikgeschichte verschwindet. In den Interviews der Bandmitglieder und ehemaliger Wegbegleiter wird deutlich, dass die Monks nicht nur die Vorkämpfer des Punk sind. Nach ihrem Militärdienst schlagen sich die fünf Amerikaner zunächst als durchschnittliche semiprofessionelle Beatcoverband durch und heißen The 5 Torquais. Alles ändert sich, als sie 1965 auf Absolventen der Designschulen Ulm und Essen treffen. Karl H. Remy und Walther Niemann realisieren mit den Amis ihre Vision einer konzeptionellen Beatband, basierend auf Theorien des Minimalismus, Dekonstruktivismus und Dadaismus. Fortan werden Erscheinungsbild und Image, Texte und Musik zur Marke Monks verdichtet. Der Begriff "Beatmusik" wird wörtlich genommen, man komprimiert die Instrumente auf den Rhythmus, auf den kollektiven Schlag, der die scharfe Kritik der Texte am Kalten Krieg potenziert. Das Musiker- und Designkollektiv erarbeitet die fünf Regeln der Monks, das die kurzzeitig wiedergewonnene Individualität der Ex-Soldaten dem Band-Image unterordnet. "Transatlantic Feedback" huldigt nicht nur dem Gesamtkunstwerk Monks. Der Film zeigt auch die Selbstzweifel der Musiker und ihre Probleme mit der Programmatik. Denn die Zeit ist noch nicht reif für die Monks, und der Erfolg bleibt aus. Eine Schallplatte und zwei Singles werden von ihrem Label veröffentlicht, dann lässt man sie fallen. Die Band löst sich auf, die Mitglieder kehren desillusioniert in ihre Heimat zurück und verschweigen bis zu dem Filmprojekt ihre Erlebnisse. Mit ihrem beispielhaften Dokumentarfilm setzen Post und Palacios den einzigartigen Monks das längst überfällige Denkmal. Absolut empfehlenswert!

Matthias Schneider

tip Berlin

18. Oktober 2006

Musik | The Monks



Die Anti-Beatles

Jack White ist vom destruktiven Pop der Monks begeistert, Alec Empire erkennt Parallelen zum Techno, und Charles Wilp wollte sie für seine berühmte Afri-Cola-Kampagne gewinnen. Selten war man sich so einig: Die Monks sind ein Phänomen!

„It's Monk time!“, brüllt Gary Burger gleich zu Anfang der einzigen, epochalen, tiefschwarzen Monks-LP „Black Monk Time“. Und tatsächlich ist es an der Zeit, die Geschichte dieser seltsamen Band, die Mitte der 60er Jahre durch Deutschland getingelt ist und nach nur einem Album und zwei Singles vom Polydor-Label verstoßen wurde, zu erzählen. Die letzten 40 Jahre waren die Monks nur einer Gruppe von hauptberuf-

lichen Plattensammlern und Musikern bekannt. Jetzt haben sich der Regisseur Dietmar Post, die Volksbühne und eine illustre Schar von Musikkollegen wie Mark E. Smith von The Fall, Jon Spencer und Alexander Hacke zusammengetan, um an eine ebenso vergessene wie wegweisende Band zu erinnern.

Es ist das Jahr 1963, mitten im Kalten Krieg. John F. Kennedy ist auf Deutschlandbesuch. Bei sei-

ner Rede in West-Berlin sagt er „Ich bin ein Berliner“ und geht damit in die Geschichtsbücher ein. Sein Besuch der in Deutschland stationierten US-Soldaten in Langendiebach bei Hanau findet hingegen kaum Beachtung. Doch unter den 15.000 salutierenden GIs befinden sich fünf Jungs, die nur zwei Jahre später als die Monks ihrerseits einen Eintrag in den Annalen der Sixties hinterlassen sollten. Der Schlagzeuger Roger Johnson, Bassist Eddie Shaw, Larry Clark an der Orgel, Dave Day am Banjo und der Sänger und Gitarrist Gary Burger haben sich während ihrer Dienstzeit kennengelernt. Sie waren jung, begeistert vom Rock'n'Roll und in der Army, um ihrem provinziellen Leben in den USA zu entfliehen. 1964 gründeten sie ihre erste Band The Five Torquays und spielten aktuelle Hits aus den US-Charts in so bedeutenden Etablissements wie dem Odeon-Keller in Heidelberg.

Schon bald sollten die unbeschwerten Torquays ein jähendes erfahren. Als zwei junge Desig-

ner in ihr Leben traten und die Idee von einer Beatband als Gesamtkunstwerk offenbarten. Es waren Karl H. Remy und Walther Riemann, Absolventen der renommierten Folkwang-Hochschule für Design. Sie entwickelten ein Konzept für eine Musikgruppe, das nicht nur die Musik selbst, sondern ihr gesamtes Image betraf. Die Torquays erklärten sich einverstanden. Und so entstanden die Monks am Reißbrett. Remy und Riemann schrieben ein Manifest, in dem sie festlegten, wie die Band sich in der Öffentlichkeit präsentieren sollte. Die Kleidung wurde komplett schwarz, um den Hals trugen sie grobe Stricke, und wichtigstes Erkennungszeichen wurde die Tonsur, ein kreisrund ausrasierter Teil des Haupthaars, nach dem Vorbild echter Mönche. Sexy, hart, aufregend und gefährlich sollten sie sein.

Im Studio arbeiteten Remy und Riemann mit den Monks an den Aufnahmen zur ersten Platte. Sie änderten die eingängigen Viertel-Rhythmen, machten den

The Monks | Musik

Beat aggressiv, vertrackt, minimalistisch und roh und nannten ihn fortan „Überbeat“. Weg vom braven Image und melodischen Harmonien hin zu verzerrter Orgel, stampfendem Bass und einem schrägen, elektrisch verstärkten Banjo. Die Monks waren die Nihilisten des Beats, und ihre Songs wie „I Hate You“, „Complication“ und „Shut Up“ waren verbale Hasstiraden gegen alles und jeden. Mehrere Jahre vor MC5, den Stooges und den Ramones und vielleicht nur vergleichbar mit The Velvet Underground, waren die Monks etwas zwischen Konzeptkunst und Proto-Punk.

Zwar hatte sich Polydor bereit erklärt, die erste Platte zu veröffentlichen, der damalige Monks-Produzent Jimmy Bowien war sogar von dem neuen Sound begeistert: „Es war wie eine frühe Form von Heavy Metal oder Industrielmusik“, schwärmte er später. Doch finanziell waren sie ein Desaster. Der Beat-Club-Auftritt von 1966 zeigt auch warum. Irritiert bis lustlos bewegen sich die deutschen Beatjünger zu den Feed-

backorgien der Monks. Sie hatten weder den Star-Appeal der Beatles noch den Sex-Appeal der Stones – sie waren einfach nur anders. Bald haftete ihnen der Ruf der Anti-Beatles an. Weil niemand das Potenzial der Gruppe erkannt hat, wurden sie von den Zuhörern ignoriert, vom Label entlassen und von der Presse vernichtet. Die „Bild“-Zeitung schrieb den heute durchaus zukunftsweisend klingenden Satz: „Krach, Krach und keine Melodie – Robotermusik“. So waren die Monks nicht nur die Precursoren des Punk und Heavy Metal, sondern haben auch die Klangästhetik elektronischer Musik vorweggenommen. „Hätte man sie damals schon verstanden, hätten wir die 68er-Revolution vielleicht zwei Jahre früher gehabt“, sagt Jochen Irmner von der Avantgarde-Rockband Faust. 1967 war aber Schluss, die Monks hatten sich zerstritten, wollten nach Hause in die USA und außerdem auch mal ein buntes Hemd oder lange Haare tragen. Es war schließlich der Sommer der Liebe.

Jacek Slaski



Beim Friseur wurden die Torquays zu den Monks

Die Rückkehr

Der Filmemacher Dietmar Post war schon lange ein Fan der Monks. Die Idee für einen Dokumentarfilm entstand noch während seiner Zeit in den USA. Gemeinsam mit seiner Frau Lucia Palacios verwirklichte er nach mehreren Jahren mühsamer Arbeit schließlich „Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback“, den Film, der ein kleines Monks-Revival losgetreten hat. Am 23. Oktober wird die Volksbühne in ein Monks-Headquarter umfunktioniert. Neben der Präsentation des Films wird auch das Erscheinen der Monks-Tribute-Doppel-CD „Silver Monk Time“ mit Beiträgen von den Fehlfarben, Goldenen Zitronen, Mouse on Mars, Jon Spencer, den Berlinern Doc Schoko und Floating di Morel und vielen anderen gefeiert. Und als absoluter Höhepunkt spielen die wiedervereinigten Monks ihr einziges Deutschland-Konzert. Dazu kommen Gastauftritte prominenter Monks-Fans wie Peter Hein, Schorsch Kamerun, Ana da Silva und Gina Birch von den Raincoats sowie Mark E. Smith von The Fall. Spät in der Nacht wird Alec Empire mit einem DJ-Set die Monks-Feier beenden.

sla

► Monks in der Volksbühne Record Release: „Silver Monk Time“, Filmvorführung: „Monks – The Transatlantic Feedback“, Konzert der Monks und Gäste, Volksbühne, Mo 23.10., ab 20 Uhr, AK: 18/24 €

Musik | The Monks

Die Überwindung des individuellen Ruhms

Der Deutsche Filmemacher Dietmar Post hat nicht nur eine Musiklegende wiedererweckt, sondern auch deren Entstehung am Reißbrett offengelegt



Monks-Shouter Gary Burger zwischen Regisseur Dietmar Post und Koregisseurin Lucia Palacios

tip Wie sind Sie überhaupt auf die Monks aufmerksam geworden?

Dietmar Post Ich kannte die Monks zwar schon sehr früh im Zusammenhang mit der deutschen New-Wave-Bewegung. Die Monks-LP wurde 1979 erstmals in Deutschland wiederveröffentlicht und in der Punk- und New-Wave-Szene viel gehört. So haben auch Bands wie FSK oder die Goldenen Zitronen, die jetzt auf unserem Monks-Tribute zu hören sind, in dieser Zeit das erste Mal von denen erfahren. Die intensive Auseinandersetzung hat aber in meiner Zeit in New York begonnen. Dort erschien die Platte erst 1997 auf Infinite Zero, dem gemeinsamen Label von Rick Rubin und Henry Rollins.

tip Was gab es dann für Reaktionen in den USA?

Post Das hat dann für relativ viel Rummel gesorgt. Beim „Rolling Stone“, „Spin“ bis zur „New York Times“ war man sehr interessiert. Es hieß dann, die Monks wären die vergessene Perle des Garage-Punk. Mir sind die Monks aber als Konzept- und Kunstband in Erinnerung geblieben, die hatten mehr mit Gang of Four oder Wire zu tun als mit den Sonics. Gut, die Rohheit bringt sie schon in die Nähe der Sonics, der Sound also, aber nicht die Songstrukturen. Das war dann die Initialzündung für mich. Irgend-

was wurde hier falsch verstanden, und ich wollte genauer hinschauen. Dann haben meine Koregisseurin Lucia Palacios und ich angefangen, die alten Monks-Mitglieder zu kontaktieren.

tip War es schwer, die einzelnen Musiker zu finden? Schließlich haben sie seit 30 Jahren keine Musik mehr gemacht.

Post Es war nicht so schwer, denn im Zuge der Wiederveröffentlichung gab es in kleineren Fanzines auch schon Interviews mit den Monks. Der Organist galt sehr lange als verschollen, den haben wir erst später gefunden. Wir haben dann angefangen, das wenige, was über die Geschichte der Band bekannt war, zu lesen und waren erstaunt, wie wenig man eigentlich über die Band wusste.

tip Wo gab es denn Lücken?

Post Zum Beispiel war der gesamte Zusammenhang mit den Managern Remy und Niemann absolut unbekannt. Auch die Monks selbst haben den Einfluss der beiden nicht richtig einschätzen können. Die wussten nicht, dass die auf der Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm und der Folkwang-Schule in Essen waren. Es gab da auch so einen inneren Widerstand, die Katze aus dem Sack zu lassen. Die versuchten anfangs, das ganze Monk-Ding für sich allein zu reklamieren.

tip Ohne Remy und Niemann wären sie aber die Torquays geblieben und nie zu den Monks geworden.

Post Genau. Das war für uns auch als Dokumentarfilmer der Reiz. Natürlich findet man nie die ganze Wahrheit, aber eine Wahrheit zu finden, die der Geschichte ungefähr entspricht, war schon unser Ziel. Es ist eigentlich auch nicht schlimm,

»The Monks führten das Konzept ihrer Manager mit ungeheurer Drastik aus. Als Soldaten waren sie Befehle gewohnt«

dass Remy und Niemann in dem Film nicht vorkommen. In dem Text im Abspann sagen die ja selbst, dass ein guter Manager sich im Hintergrund bewegen sollte. Heute wollen sich im Musikbusiness viele um jeden Preis in den Vordergrund spielen, da ist es doch fast erholend zu sehen, dass es auch anders geht. Es gibt zum Beispiel keinen Presseartikel von damals, wo die Namen von den Managern genannt werden, auf dem Plattencover werden sie auch nicht erwähnt.

tip Lag die Besonderheit der Monks vielleicht auch daran, dass die Musiker früher Soldaten waren und die Manager mit ihrem Konzept eine Art Befehl ausgaben und die Jungs dann deshalb mit dieser ungeheuren Drastik zu Werke gingen?

Post Das hat schon etwas damit zu tun, und auch, dass die Manager sich sehr bewusst eine amerikanische Band für dieses Projekt ausgesucht haben. Man darf ja nicht vergessen, die Torquays waren eine der wenigen US-Bands inmitten der British Invasion. Amerikaner sind im Gegensatz zu Briten mehr an Teamwork interessiert, und zu der Zeit waren sie auch weniger antideutsch. Als Soldaten waren die Monks auch geformt. Die haben schon während ihrer Dienstzeit Musik gespielt und mussten gelegentlich auch Dinge spielen, die ihnen vielleicht nicht so gut gefallen haben. Die waren es also gewohnt, Befehle entgegenzunehmen.

tip Die Musiker standen aber schon hinter dem Konzept?

Post Ja natürlich! Das Interessante ist, dass sie sehr schnell Feuer fingen. Diese Idee, den Enthusiasmus, die Radikalität und auch endlich die Situation, dass sie etwas Eigenes kreieren konnten. Das Wichtigste ist aber, was auch Monks-Sänger und -Gitarrist Gary Burger kürzlich der „Spex“ gesagt hat: Sie waren eine demokratische Band.

tip Wie ist das zu verstehen, das klingt so nach Politrock oder SPD.

Post Politisch waren sie schon, gegen den Vietnamkrieg zum Beispiel. Gemeint ist aber die Geisteshaltung, die die Monks von Gruppen wie den Beatles oder Rolling Stones unterschieden hat. Bei den Monks ging es um ein Kollektiv, das als Popband präsentiert wurde. Es ging nicht um den Einzelnen und das eigene Ego, sondern um ein Konzept, dem man sich untergeordnet hat, um Corporate Identity und die Überwindung des individuellen Ruhms. Deshalb auch der sehr radikale Name „Monks“. Ein Mönch ordnet sich in jeglicher Hinsicht einem höheren System unter.

Interview: Jacek Slaski



ROLLING STONE, Nr. 1, JANUAR 2007

Volksmusik



Die Kloster-Poster-Boys

Ein neuer Film über die seltsame Beat-Band Monks enthüllt, dass die Idee mit Mönchs-Look und Avantgarde-Lärm von gewieften Kunststudenten kam

Sonnenraster zittern im System. Lesen Sie weiter! *It's MonkTime - It's HopTime*. Ja, richtig, die beste Beat-Band, die je auf deutschem Boden gegründet wurde, ist zurück! Nach 40 Jahren! Vor ein paar Wochen

haben die Monks die Berliner Volksbühne ausverkauft, und sie werden wiederkommen. Live und in dem wunderbaren Dokumentarfilm „The Transatlantic Feedback“. Und ein Tribute-Album namens „Silver Monk

Time“ gibt es auch. Nicht lesen! Lesen Sie doch nicht! Lassen Sie Saphire in die Rillen gleiten.

Aber was ist dran am Monks-Hype? Warum sind plötzlich alle so verrückt nach ein paar amerikanischen Rentnern, die

1964, nach ihrer Zeit als G.I.s in Gelnhausen, eine Band gründeten? Worte sind skizzierte Lügen. Darum machen die Monks ihre Worte selbst. In „The Transatlantic Feedback“ sprechen sie vor der Kamera. Zum ersten

Mal. Über ihr 1966 von der deutschen Polydor veröffentlichtes Debüt „Black MonkTime“, über den kurzen Ruhm, das Unverständnis der Deutschen und die Rückkehr in die USA. Als gedemütigte Nobodys in ein vom Vietnam-Krieg verändertes Land. Der Meilenstein „Black MonkTime“ wurde erst 1997 auch in den USA veröffentlicht, von Rick Rubin und Henry Rollins.

Wahrheit ist süchtig. Lüge ist die Kunst, dem anderen zu gefallen. Die Monks aber lieben... „Die Nähe zu den Sonics ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen, weil die Musik ähnlich rau klingt, ähnlich ungeschliffen“, sagt Dietmar Post, der zusammen mit seiner Lebensgefährtin Lucia Palacios sieben Jahre an der Dokumentation gearbeitet hat. „Das Missverständnis, die Monks seien eine Garagenband gewesen, war einer der Gründe, diesen Film zu machen. Natürlich findet man auch bei den Monks diesen 50er-Jahre-Arschtritt, dieses Aus-dem-Bauch-heraus-Rocken, wie bei Elvis oder Little Richard. Doch gleichzeitig ist da auch ein intellektueller Überbau, ein klares Konzept, das von Ideen John Cages beeinflusst war: Jeder Ton ist wichtig. Jeder Musiker ist wichtig. Die Monks waren ein Kollektiv, das nur als Kollektiv funktionierte.“ Zählen Sie von 9 bis BLAST OFF, und schwimmen Sie in den Urwald der Großstadt.

Wer hat diesen Golem des Rock'n'Roll in die Welt gebracht? Wer hat aus der niedlichen Beat-Band The Torquays – die 1964 mit nachgespielten Top-Ten-Hits durch die Republik tingelte – die finsternen Monks erschaffen? Jene



düsteren Männer in Schwarz, mit Stricken um den Hals und kahlen Mönchstonsuren auf dem Kopf. „The Transatlantic Feedback“ beginnt mit einem Auftritt der Monks in der ARD-Sendung „Beatclub“. Alle, auch der Schlagzeuger Roger Johnson,

drei Monks gleichzeitig auf einer am Boden liegenden E-Gitarre herum, bis sie heult und pfeift. Vor Jimi Hendrix! Hans Joachim Irminger von der Krautrock-Legende Faust hat das als Teenager vorm Fernseher miterlebt: „Das war ein Schock zwischen

tende Malcolm-McLaren-Vorläufer, die die besten Kunstschulen des Landes besucht hatten: die Ulmer Hochschule für Gestaltung (Remy) und die Folkwang-Schule für Design (Niemann). Sie machten aus der Beatband eine Bruderschaft, gaben den Musi-

drei Akkorde – einer musste ausreichen. Becken am Schlagzeug? Braucht kein Monk!

Regisseur Dietmar Post weiß warum: „In den 60er Jahren gab es sehr viel radikalere Künstler als heute. Remy und Niemann würde ich dazu zählen. Sie haben

mit den Monks das geschaffen, was Beuys eine ‚soziale Skulptur‘ nennt. Sie haben ein Produkt erfunden, und das Produkt musste für sich selber sprechen. Das ist die Idee, die dahintersteckt. Es gab keinen Vertrag, und die Manager tauchen weder in Pressekärlungen noch in Zeitungsartikeln auf.“

Die Monks-Musiker verstehen heute noch nicht so recht, was damals mit ihnen geschah. Wie in einer Therapiesitzung grübeln und assoziieren die Bandmitglieder in der Dokumentation über ihre Zusammenarbeit mit den beiden steif und nerdig aussehenden Managern. Dazwischen immer wieder Bilder einer pedantisch aufgeräumten BRD, über der eine unsichtbare Spannung liegt. Die Monks waren ein flackerndes Streichholz, dem ledig-

lich die Zündschnur der Popularität fehlte, um einen Großbrand zu entfachen.

Im weiteren Verlauf von „The Transatlantic Feedback“ wird der Band auch noch die Erfindung von Punk, Techno und Heavy Metal zugeschrieben. Und immer wieder Bilder aus dem „Beatclub“: die manischen Mönche vor hölzernen hüpfenden Backfischen. Daran scheiterte die Mission: „Das war auch für die Jungs kein Geschäft. Da ging bei den ersten zwei Liedern niemand auf die Tanzfläche“, erinnert sich Monks-Konzertagent Wolfgang Gluszczevski.

Der Werbefilm-Gott Charles Wilp sinniert noch darüber, ob die Monks unsterblich geworden wären, wenn sie die Musik zu seinen Afri-Cola-Spots gespielt hätten. Aber welcher 18-jährige Mando-Diao-Fan weiß heute schon, was für sexy Sachen sieben Nonnen bei Vollmond im Afri-Cola-Rausch anstellen? „The Transatlantic Feedback“ soll im Frühjahr in die Kinos kommen – eine längst überfällige Geschichtsstunde. Ansehen!

JÜRGEN ZIEMER

Die kursiv gedruckten Zeilen stammen aus den Linernotes der alten „Black Monk Time“-LP.



Neulich in Berlin: Filmregisseure Lucia Palacios und Dietmar Post mit Monks-Bassist Eddie Shaw (l.). Dann die Show!

stehen in einer Reihe unmittelbar am Bühnenrand. Wie Kraftwerk, viele Jahre später. Riesige Tambourine werden geschwungen, hier braucht niemand Melodien, der Beat regiert. Nur Keyboarder Larry fingert in den Tasten von übermorgen. Auf dem Höhepunkt von „Boys Are Boys And Girls Are Choice“ klopfen

all den harmlosen Erscheinungen. Wenn ich das rückblickend sehe, gibt es für mich keinen Unterschied zwischen James Last und den Beatles.“

„Transatlantic Feedback“ betont erstmals die Bedeutung der Monks-Manager und Werber Karl Remy und Walter Niemann. Zwei ausgesprochen zurückhal-

kern ihren Namen, ihre Outfits und neue Regeln. In einer „Keine Experimente“-Ära höhnten die Monks: „Why do you kill all those kids over there in Vietnam? Mad Viet Cong. My brother died in Vietnam! James Bond, who was he? Stop it, stop it, I don't like it!“

Dekonstruktion wurde großgeschrieben, die Rhythmusgitarre gegen ein Banjo getauscht. Nicht



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Silver Monk Time: A Tribute to the Monks (Play Loud!)

The Uberbeat (and a war or two) goes on

by Don Allred

June 12th, 2007 2:19 PM

In 1966, five American ex-GI bar band vets, re-christened the Monks, presented Germany with *Black Monk Time*. "Uberbeat," they dubbed it: drums directing bass volts, organ jolts, guitar feedback, electric banjo as percussion, echoing harmonies, and pre-Slim Shady chatter, jumping in and out of the mix, right on cue. "It's Monk Time, it's Hop Time," they called, before and after ragging on "Mad Vietcong," James Bond, and "What army? Any army."

Silver Monk Time compiles 29 covers and homages as follow-up to the 2006 documentary *Monks—The Transatlantic Feedback*. The Fall expertly probe the ripples of "Higgle-dy Piggle-dy," Jason Forrest folds Monks demo tapes into the birthday-suit salute of "Monk Hop," and the Raincoats simultaneously croon and hammer "Monk Chant" 'round the mountain. All this while the 5.6.7.8.'s "Cuckoo" spins right off its peak, brushed by the smoke-ring feathers of Nista Nije Nista's "Kuchhuche."

Doc Schoko's doom-swallowing "Sei Still" smirks at its English-speaking doppelgänger, "Shut Up," as rolled by the stoic-to-furious International Noise Conspiracy and tapped out by the tremulously tight toot-toot-tootsies of Floating Di Morel. Eventually, the Monks' own frontman, Gary Burger, appears in the belligerent belly of Faust's "Beware...." "The war is never done," he reports, and also, "The war has not begun." If anybody can jump past such looming contradictions (two sides of a meta-War on Terror?), it's a Monk. And *Silver Monk Time* buys us all some more hop time, finally!

press clippings / silver monk time – a tribute to the monks



WIRE, UK 05.07

Silver Monk Time: A Tribute To The Monks

PLAY LOUD 2xCD The Monks emerged from a 60s garage band called The Five Torquays, a group made up of American GIs who had been stationed in Germany and were influenced by the British Beat scene that had seemingly taken over the world. After changing their name to The Monks and (for a gimmick) shaving their Beatles styled haircuts into tonsures, they went into the recording studio to produce *Black Monk Time*, an album that has since been given holy grail status by garage rock connoisseurs. The Monks planned a second album to be called *Silver Monk Time* that never happened, but now an army of musicians (including Faust, The Raincoats, Mouse On Mars, Einstürzende Neubauten's Alexander Hacke, The Fall and many others) have joined forces to pay homage to what they still consider to be a special and influential group.

Unlike many tribute projects that fall flat due to those involved being either overawed or ignorant of the original material, *Silver Monk Time* succeeds because the participants have taken the group's primitive rock surge as a template to experiment with. As a result the sound of The Monks is treated to a 21st century workout with synthesizers and beat tracks threaded through the original quartet's already way out psychotic minimalism. Every one of the 29 tracks here has qualities, but some of the stand outs include Alec Empire and Gary Burger's global war update for the band's thematic "It's Monk Time", Mouse On Mars' bump and grind remake of the same (entitled "Momks No Time") that, to these ears, somehow reminds one of John Cage's *Construction (In Metal)* pieces, and Mark E Smith's gloriously raucous psychobilly rendering of "Higgle-dy Piggie-dy" where he sounds as though he has swallowed the microphone in his enthusiasm as the rest of The Fall mercilessly shred their equipment behind him. In the accompanying booklet Smith makes the observation that The Monks sound like a forerunner of Can with an American singer, a notion that might have slipped by the majority of the group's fan base, but one that is nevertheless spot on. EDWIN POUNCEY



Posted: Fri., Feb. 2, 2007, 4:36pm PT

Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback

(Documentary -- Germany-U.S.-Spain) A Play Loud! production in association with 3sat and ZDF. Produced, directed by Dietmar Post, Lucia Palacios.

With: Gary Burger, Larry Clark, Dave Day, Roger Johnston, Eddie Shaw, Charles Wilp, Jimmy Bowien, Gerd Henjes, Wolfgang Gluszczewski, Joachim Irmeler, Jon Spencer, Byron Coley, Genesis P-Orridge, Peter Zaremba.
(English, German dialogue)

By [DENNIS HARVEY](#)

A unique footnote in '60s pop music history gets definitive docu treatment in "Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback." Dietmar Post and Lucia Palacios' feature tells the curious tale of five American G.I.s stationed in Germany who were -- briefly -- turned into one of the era's odder, more obscure rock experiments. Duly rediscovered for cult status by musicians and fans in recent years, the Monks were a memorably outre, ahead-of-their-time act. Archival material and interviews with now-middle-aged former band members dominate this excellent if slightly overlong pic, which merits DVD (and possible limited theatrical) pickup in sympathetic territories.

Like nearly everywhere else in Europe, early 1960s Germany had finally traded privation for prosperity and was in a partying mood. A youthquake began to rumble in cultural, artistic and political terms. It was an exciting time for footloose American soldiers stationed in cities like Hamburg, where the Beatles had first found success and where such "beat music" fueled a sleepless nightclub scene.

Five young Yanks stationed there began playing as a cover band while still enlisted.

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Dubbing themselves the Torquays, they were like a hundred other such combos. But this quintet attracted the attention of Karl-H. Remy and Walther Nieman, two enterprising Germans with shared backgrounds in design and advertising. They were looking for a band to manage -- and mold, for concept they had in mind. Having already signed off on their military tours, Torquays Gary Burger, Larry Clark, Dave Day, Roger Johnston and Eddie Shaw blithely signed on.

Remy and Nieman envision a conceptual art piece masquerading as top-40 pop fodder. "Monk music" would strip songwriting to the bone, with sarcastic or nonsensical lyrics, Burger's shrill vocals, hammering beats, dissonant guitar, violently strummed banjo, hypnotically basic organ and bass lines.

The Monks themselves were required to sport haircuts like Franciscan monks, wear black uniforms, and otherwise follow strict rules outlined by their mentors at all times, onstage and off.

Quickly branded "the anti-Beatles" for their aggressive, even hostile look and sound, the Monks quickly grabbed local media attention, although they were never exactly popular. Launched even earlier than the likewise image-and-sound "negative" Velvet Underground back in the States, sans Andy Warhol's stamp of celebrity endorsement (though the V.U. failed commercially, too), Monks were a caustic avant-garde incongruity in the developing Peace & Love climate of the times.

Nonetheless, the group scored myriad gigs (once opening for Jimi Hendrix), a few TV appearances on Euro "Shindig"-type shows, released several flop singles and one 1966 album.

The German manager-masterminds (who declined to participate in this docu) lost interest as the act failed to catch on. Meanwhile, band members felt increasingly restricted. In 1967 they simply quit. All returned to the U.S. and built lives completely unconnected to rock.

Helmers do a vivid job etching the creatively fervid times, with an editing style whose dynamism echoes that of "Monk music." Pic drags only in the last stretch, when it takes a bit too much time sketching the present-day circumstances of all the former Monks. However, their thrill at finally playing the U.S. at a New York City reunion gig (which attracts several indie-rock celebrities) 35 years later is contagious.

Tech package is crisp. Camera (color/B&W, DigiBeta), Post, Palacios; additional camera, Renato Falcao; editor, Dieter Jaufmann; additional editing, Karl-W. Huelsenbeck; music, Monks; sound, Post, Palacios; Reviewed on DVD, San Francisco, Jan. 10, 2007. (In Berlin & Beyond Film Festival.) Running time: 100 MIN.

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The Monks getting their famous haircuts.

IT'S MONK TIME, AGAIN

American GIs, Shaved Heads and Cold War Music History

By David Gordon Smith in Berlin

Everyone knows the Monks, right? That anti-war group of American GIs who dressed up as clerics and changed rock history in 1966? No? Find out how the most important rock band you've never heard of are being rediscovered.

All right, my name's Gary . Let's go, it's beat time, it's hop time, it's monk time now! You know we don't like the army. What army? Who cares what army? Why do you kill all those kids over there in Vietnam ? -- "Monk Time" by the Monks

Right from the opening seconds of the Monks' one and only album, "Black Monk Time," it's obvious that this is no ordinary 1960s beat record. The album's first track, "Monk Time," begins with a keyboard playing a single telegraph-transmission note as a robotic drum thuds down on the beats in a techno-esque rhythm. Then an electric banjo

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comes in, thrashing percussively on the backbeats, followed by a crunchy electric guitar riff. The vocal is a deranged rant about the Vietnam War. Monk Time indeed.

Yet for all the dissonance, the Monks -- made up of five American ex-GI's in Germany -- built quite a following after the record's 1966 release. And these days, the band is experiencing something of a second coming. A star-studded tribute album came out last fall, complete with a release party in Berlin -- the group's first show in Germany in 40 years. The re-united Monks went on to play in London and Zurich and are currently in discussions about possible shows in Europe later this year.

Furthermore, a fascinating new documentary film called "**The Transatlantic Feedback**" -- which tells the story of how the five working-class American soldiers made rock history -- has won awards at film festivals the world over, most recently being screened over the weekend at the Gothenburg International Film Festival in Sweden, and will get a cinematic release in Germany in May. And despite their advanced ages, Monk music is as fresh as ever. "It was a pleasure to see those old-timers enjoying themselves the way they did," says Alexander Hacke of legendary German industrial band Einstürzende Neubauten, who was at the Monk's recent Berlin reunion show. "The music still hadn't lost any of its aggression and anarchy."

But it wasn't just the music, which won them an audience. The group took its name seriously -- they took the stage in black monk outfits and even went so far as to shave the crowns of their heads in a monk-style tonsure. (Think the Velvet Underground meets Umberto Eco's "Name of the Rose.") Plus, there was a certain novelty factor to ex-GI's -- they had sat in their tanks, engines running, during the Cuban missile crisis -- singing anti-war songs.

As the film, which took eight years to make, reveals, the image was at least partly the brainchild of the Monks' two managers, Walther Niemann and Karl-H. Remy. The two intellectual art-school graduates took the five GIs' beat group, The Torquays, and re-invented them as a concept band. Niemann and Remy, who were also responsible for the innovative Bauhaus-influenced album cover of "Black Monk

Time," gave the five Monks list of rules for how to behave in public and stay on message -- including always dressing as a monk.

The band even achieved fame in 1960s Germany due to appearances on the hugely popular TV music show "Beat-Club." Dietmar Post who co-directed "The Transatlantic Feedback" together with Lucia Palacios, was amazed to find that the locals in the village where the Monks had been stationed as GI's still knew the band when he filmed there. "Every single person over 60 who had been into music remembered them," he says.

To some degree, they would be hard to forget. The Monks, says Post, were the first punk band -- "except they could really play their instruments" -- and they've also been credited with inventing heavy metal and even techno, due to their love of noise and minimalist repetition.

Their egalitarian approach to music -- they played in a row on stage, pre-figuring techno pioneers Kraftwerk -- and their John Cage-style every-note-is-equally-important aesthetic were also innovative. They were probably also the first band that ever put a mic on a banjo and use it as a percussive instrument -- something, which caused jaws to drop then and now. Guitar feedback is another one of their inventions -- Jimi Hendrix himself described their music as "strange" when he met the Monks backstage in Germany.

German electronica artist Alec Empire, who says he was "massively influenced" by The Monks, feels there is a line running through German rock music from 1960s' Krautrock, to Kraftwerk in the 1970s, through to Einstürzende Neubauten in the 1980s. "If you take these extreme bands, then the Monks are arguably the starting point for that," he says. The five Americans, in other words, may have laid the foundations for German rock.

British musician Genesis P-Orridge, a pioneer of industrial music with his bands Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV, goes even further. "In a way they're the missing link between beat music and the Velvet Underground," he says. "If the Monks had only played more concerts, or if they had gone to England or gone to America sooner, they would



have been huge."

The Monks' lack of commercial success seems to suggest otherwise, though. The music was simply too unconventional to attract a large number of fans at the time. "The Transatlantic Feedback" includes footage from "Beat-Club," showing confused audiences standing around while the Monks smilingly sing "People cry, people die for you / People kill, people will for you." "It's the strangest thing I've ever seen," Post admits.

Indeed, the band's experimental nature contributed to its eventual break-up in 1967. "The music was hard, it was minimalist, and at the time it could not find an audience," Monks bass player Eddie Shaw recalls. "The record companies could not continue to record us and so we had to stop."

And for years, they were largely forgotten, apart from a cult following among musicians in Germany, until Post came around -- the filmmaker is also the driving force behind the "Silver Monk Time" tribute album and the reunion shows. Post says his motivation for making the film was to set straight the widely held idea that The Monks were just another 1960s garage band. "Their music was much more important than that," he says. "Forty years later, the record is still interesting to listen to."

So too are the live shows. Singer Gary Burger has brought "Monk Time" right up to date with a new electronic version recorded with Alec Empire for "Silver Monk Time." But now, instead of singing about Vietnam, Burger rants about current US missions: "Why did you kill all those kids over there in Iraq? George Bush, who is he?" "The Monks were an anti-war band," he says. "The messages that they gave in the '60s hold true today."

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GOETHE-INSTITUT AUSTRALIA presents
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Australia raves about documentary film **MONKS – THE TRANSATLANTIC FEEDBACK**

“One of the must-sees at this year’s festival of German films.”

Real Time Magazine

“A major highlight of this year’s festival is MONKS – THE TRANSATLANTIC FEEDBACK. It is a funny, fascinating and hugely enjoyable documentary.”

Filmink Magazine

“This film is a thoughtful, almost careful exposition on the merging of cultures, and one that reserves its loyalty for the creative and the groundbreaking – regardless of taste. It makes a variety of largish claims regarding the genesis and foundations of subculture, but seems to do so without exaggeration or hesitation. Refreshingly, the film’s format forgoes the increasingly popular MTV-style, and relies instead on more organic interviews and a variety of excellent footage.”

Brian Duff, Filmink Magazine

“German music has a well-deserved reputation for being experimental and avant-garde. But who knew that five American GI’s based in Germany in the sixties were considered to be the forefathers of industrial, heavy metal, punk and techno music. This compelling documentary Monks: The Transatlantic Feedback, showcases the life of one of the wildest, and most influential bands of their time.”

Urban Cine File Magazine

“One of my Munich Film Festival highlights was the music documentary MONKS – THE TRANSATLANTIC FEEDBACK. Everyone knows Elvis Presley served Uncle Sam in Germany, but have you heard about the American GIs who stayed after their tour of duty and formed one of the most influential rock bands of all time? Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to meet the Monks, who dressed the part and are seen wiggling out in front of amazed German teens priceless TV archival footage. It is a wonderful window into the German-American cross-cultural experience. (...)

I spoke to Dietmar Post and Lucia Palacios (a couple of nicer rock and roll filmmakers you couldn't wish to meet) about the many sell-out screenings their film has had in other parts of the world, and I hope other capital cities give it the turn out it deserves.”

Richard Kuipers, Variety Australia

More detailed info and reviews are available at

<http://www.playloud.org/themonks.html>

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/au/lp/prj/ff07/flm/en2041546.htm>