

Artist: **Hypnobeat**  
Title: **Forbidden Plant**  
Label: Artificial Dance / Rush Hour  
Cat. No.: AD005



In the natural evolution of electronic music culture, what is now considered 'techno' comes from a lineage that interweaves early East and West Coast synthesis, kosmische and industrial experimentation in the '70s, the physical thrust of funk, disco, electro and much more besides. Landing squarely in the midst of these technologically-motivated developments came Frankfurt-rooted outfit Hypnobeat. A true product of the open-ended spirit of DIY, tape-based music that proliferated in the 1980s, this prescient project championed deft, machine-powered rhythm programming as its modus operandi long before the practice would become a dominant global cultural form.

Following releases from King Ende Shneafliet, Pasiphae and more, Artificial Dance turns its attention to this recently re-discovered curio from the annals of German electronic music. Spearheaded by James Dean Brown (also known from Perlon's Narcotic Syntax) and Victor Sol, and featuring other rotating members such as Pietro Insipido, Tobias Freund, and more recently Helena Hauff, the project places the Roland TR-808 drum machine front, centre, left and right of its polyrhythmic explorations – a practice loosely defined by the group as "neo-tribal", here presented in hypnotic stereo.

Since the project was revived in 2012 with Hauff joining JDB on stage for improvised live performances based on one 707 and three 808s, there have been a string of archival releases shining a light on the early and more recently recorded works of this forward-thinking venture. These include last year's *Prototech* double-pack on Dark Entries / Serendip, *Ritual Fire Dance* on Arma and a live recording from Les Siestes Électroniques on Pluie/Noir.

This latest collection for Artificial Dance comprises three freshly unearthed iterations of Hypnobeat, with different personnel and diverse sounds. Long-form A-side track "Polychrome Desert" is a pure percussive exercise, programmed and recorded by JDB in 1986 with a chain of three 808s filling out a stereo panorama. The crisp, clean signal of the iconic drum machines' polyrhythms has only a minimal treatment, stripped of the noise and FX colouration that had typified prior Hypnobeat output. The intention was to create a pure, meditative rhythm drawing on African influences and reinterpreted through what was then the music technology of the future.

"Spies In Malaysia" is a live recording from a concert Hypnobeat performed in 1985, in Frankfurt. Due to a personal contact with JDB, industrial icon Z'EV appeared as the support act. During the ensuing Hypnobeat performance, the percussion performance pioneer joined in on stage improvising additional rhythms on an Opel Kadett engine bonnet hanging at the back of the stage alongside the usual two 808s. The lurid melodic passages and crunchy percussive blasts of "Spies in Malaysia" formed the closing track of the set.

Recorded in the same year, "Sumatra Railway" was the product of an impromptu recording session between JDB and Victor Sol, where they opted to broaden the palette of Hypnobeat and fold bass and guitar into their electronic concoctions. The rhythm centres around a preset on the Roland CR-8000 and finds the pair exploring a more shadowy, surf-inspired sound, laden with echo and freewheeling through seven minutes of sun-kissed, subtly tropical subversion.

With each successive release, the plot surrounding Hypnobeat thickens in a tangle of 1/4" jack cables and ancient effect pedals. From its shifting line-up to the diverse sonic repertoire, it remains one of the wondrous plants of German electronic music in the pre-techno era.



A

**Polychrome Desert**

rec. 1986 | RC: 3x TR-808, treatments  
*previously unreleased*

B

**Spies in Malaysia**

rec. live 1985 | RC: rhythms, TB-303, synth, treatments | PF: MC-202, sampler, treatments, stage mix | PP: syncussion, el. percussion  
*released on "Specials/Spatials" cassette, 1986*

**Sumatra Railway**

rec. 1985 | PF: rhythms, bass guitar, guitar, treatments | RC: guitars  
*released on "Specials/Spatials" cassette, 1986*

**Romulus Cœurque | Porn Flake | Peter Prochir**

Recorded at bureaublanc, "Batschkapp", Frankfurt and Secret Twitchdance  
Engineered and mastered by Tobias Freund at Non Standard Studios

Side A de-hissed by George Horn

Artwork by Marko-Vuleta-Djukanov

Coordinated by James Dean Brown and Olf van der Elden, with thanks to Victor Sol



[www.hypnobeat.net](http://www.hypnobeat.net) | <https://artificialdance.bandcamp.com>