



# KRAFTWERK



## Timeline

1946	1947	1968	1970	1974	1975	1981	2020
Ralf Hütter is born in Krefeld, Germany	Florian Schneider is born in French-occupied southern Germany	Ralf and Florin meet at the Academy of Arts	The pair form the electronic band <i>Kraftwerk</i>	The band reach number 5 in the U.S. charts with <i>Autobahn</i>	They begin performing as a four-piece	They reach number 1 in the U.K. charts with <i>The Model</i>	Florian Schneider dies aged 73

## Key Songs

Ruckzuck	1970 – Kraftwerk’s early songs used traditional instruments (flute, violin, organ and drums).
Tansmusik	1973 – This has unusual synths and motor-like rhythms, showing the beginnings of electronic music.
Autobahn	1975 – Designed to capture the feel of the motorway (autobahn in German).
Trans-Europe Express	1975 - These danceable machine rhythms laid the foundations for electro, techno, house music and more.
The Robots	1978 – This song had a focus on technology and robots, even including simple robots performing live.
The Model	1981 – A song about the busy life of modelling.
Home Computer	1981 – The idea of a family computer was the thing of science-fiction in 1981, but Kraftwerk knew the future.
Expo-2000	1999 – Their first new song for 13 years.
Vitamin	2003 – As a keen cyclist, Rauf wrote this song about pre-ride proteins and taking vitamins.
Tour de France	2003 – Originally a hit in 1983 but re-recorded. It features synthesiser melodies mixed with the sounds of deep breathing and whirring bicycle chains.

## The Importance of Kraftwerk

### Electronic Music Pioneers

Although originally influenced by rock, punk and funk music, they moved towards electronic music. They were fascinated with technology and its link with art. They wanted their music to celebrate the modern world but were also cautious about it.

### Technological Innovations

Kraftwerk created their own electronic devices to use as instruments. They created a vocoder (changing the pitch and sounds of the voice). They created drum machines and even toured in the 2000s using 3D graphics.

### Made Because of Kraftwerk

Many bands recording and playing today and in the past say that Kraftwerk were one of their major influences:

- Daft Punk
- David Bowie
- Coldplay
- Jay-Z
- Kanye West
- New Order
- Bjork
- Depeche Mode



## Key Events

### WWII

The group grew up immediately after many German towns were destroyed after the war. German entertainment was destroyed so Hütter and Schneider found a musical identity in what surrounded them: the mechanized sounds of the German factories and language, away from American popular culture.

### Cycling and the Velodrome Show

Rauf Hütter was a keen cyclist and would often get dropped off 100 miles from the venue they were to play in, just so he could cycle the rest of the way. He was once involved in a cycling accident and ended up in 1982 and ended up in a coma. They also recorded the album 'Tour de France' which used bicycle gears, chains and a cyclist breathing within the music. They played a famous show in the Manchester Velodrome in 2009 with Great Britain cyclists circling the track during the show.

### 3D Shows

In 2017, Kraftwerk created a show where the audience had to wear 3D glasses as the group projected animations on a giant screen behind them.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Kraftwerk were a band from Düsseldorf in Germany. The name Kraftwerk means 'Power Plant' in German.