

GRAWOOD

AT A GLANCE
JANUARY, 1984
10th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

JAN 16-21

MARK HAINES AND THE ZIPPERS

JAN 24

THE CHOSEN

JAN 25

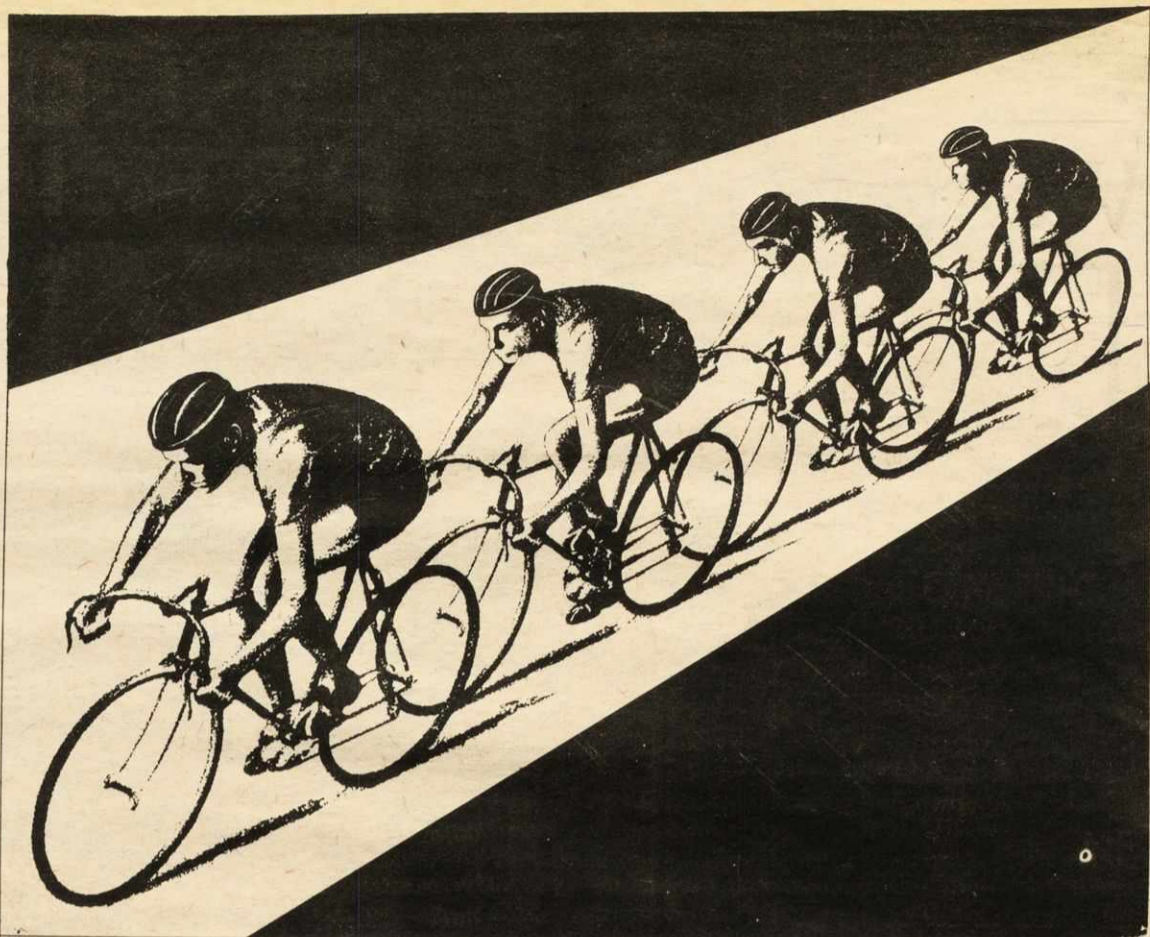
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Kraftwerk tours the past

by Moritz Gaede

Kraftwerk never a conventional band in any sense, were always far ahead of their time—setting standards for synthesizer music from the mid-70's until today. Of the countless musicians they have influenced, New Order, Bowie, and Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark are just the tip of the iceberg.

Tour de France, which was used by several European radio stations as the theme music for sports reports on the actual Tour de France of 1983, is Kraftwerk's latest release.

It is an incredibly catchy, completely understated song with emotionally evocative synth lines. Once again Kraftwerk have

picked a European epic as their subject and again they create an atmosphere that is utterly unique and instantly recognisable as ... Kraftwerk.

Parallels are easily drawn to Autoban, Kraftwerk's first international success, and Trans-Europe Express, their epic travelogue eurodisco hit of 1977.

Tour de France falls short of my expectations. Although it is a dance track of haunting beauty, it lacks the gripping, problematic substance that gives Kraftwerk's greatest songs their truly haunting quality.

Radioactivity and The Man Machine, my favourite Kraftwerk albums, both convey the fright-

eningly evocative imagery of human alienation in a technological world. Here the very technology which Kraftwerk use to express themselves becomes the prison in which the isolated human can feel only loneliness and shock.

In the song "Showroom Dummies", and later in "The Robots", Kraftwerk express their private nightmare: "we are showroom dummies—we are the robots."

In 1981, Kraftwerk's vision of the man-machine came true. The concerts promoting the Computer World album of that year were performed by four robot look-alikes—showroom dummies who produced a music in which the human element was almost obsolete.

Tour de France marks a return to Kraftwerk's early ideas. It has more in common with Trans-Europe Express than anything else. Having pushed the robot-man concept over the human edge, Kraftwerk again delve into the fascinating aspects of man-machines.

In Tour de France the man fused to his bicycle is the entity through whom Kraftwerk evoke the European travelogue mystique typical for them.

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