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About Software

German electronic project Software were founded by sound designer Peter Mergener and science fiction writer and artist Michael Weisser in the early '80s. Heavily inspired by Berlin school electronics, the duo found a home with Klaus Schulze's Innovative Communication label, where they released well over a dozen albums and several compilations. Their music explored science fiction concepts, but the duo's usage of natural sounds, including bird calls and rushing waves, as well as acoustic instruments (particularly saxophone), kept their music earthly and organic. Software were never as well-known or acclaimed as artists like Tangerine Dream, but they found a sizeable audience among fans of new age music, and their work anticipated much of the ambient techno and downtempo of the 1990s and beyond.

Initially recording under their own names, Mergener and Weisser made their debut in 1984 with *Beam-Scape*, an album of pulsating, arpeggio-heavy soundscapes. *Phancyful-Fire* and *Night-Light* were both credited to the two individuals, but *Chip-Meditation* and *Electronic-Universe*, both released in 1985, were released under the Software name, and the duo continued producing under the moniker. *Syn-Code* and two *Past-Present-Future* compilations appeared in 1987, and several albums followed in 1988, including *Digital-Dance*, which contained the single "Island Sunrise." *The-Third-Dimension-Live-In-Concert* and *Chip-Meditation, Pt. 2* (containing material recorded in 1985, during the sessions for the first volume) both appeared in 1989.

Mergener left Software for the first half of the 1990s, during which he released several solo albums on CUE-Records. Software's 1990 album, *Fragrance*, was composed by Weisser along with Schulze and his studio engineer, Georg Stettner. Billy Byte (aka Stephan Töteberg, of the group Megabyte) joined Software from 1991 until 1993, appearing on the erotically charged *Modesty-Blaze* albums, as well as the more nature-focused *Cave*. Following remix album *Space-Design*, Software (once again the duo of Mergener and Weisser) released the darker, medieval-inspired *Heaven-to-Hell* (*Requiem für Analoge Seelen*), which featured vocals from several choirs. *Sky-Dive* and *Fire-Works* followed, also containing a heavy presence of choral vocals, but the duo ceased activity around 2000, and Mergener continued releasing solo albums on the Prudence label. A few CD compilations of Software material were subsequently released.

Software largely faded into obscurity until their music was rediscovered by a new audience during the 2010s, as interest in new age rebounded. "Island Sunrise" earned recognition as a prototype of vaporwave, and Software began to develop a new cult following. In 2017, the entire Software catalog was made available digitally for the first time by 100% Electronica, which also reissued the in-demand *Digital-Dance* on vinyl.

~ Paul Simpson