The History of Versus X compiled by Arne Schäfer Arne and Torsten began with Beatles songs and a primitive The Blue Rockets (1974 - 1976) Arne began to play the guitar in 1976 as an autodidact tape recorder. Torsten had a cheap electric guitar and Arne whereas Torsten had some lessons at the Age of 10 - 12. Arne Schäfer (dr,voc) played on two empty washing powder drums with a Torsten s father had a two track reel to reel tape recording Torsten Winkel (g,voc) tambourine attached to one of them to get that snaredum machine which allowed to perform multiplay recordings whith effect. First recordings were made before voice cracking of each new track being overlayed on top of the last one. Several simple songs and even some sort of a Rock Opera Topas #1 (1977) were composed and partly recorded in collaboration. In the beginning of Topas some of these songs were played live Dirk Resler (b) with the band. Arne Schäfer (g, voc) The fathers of both Arne and Torsten were very much into Torsten Winkel (g,voc) Jazz music, mainly Parker and Coltrane. So naturally both Stefan Mayr (dr) were influenced by Jazz and mainly Torsten tried to get somewhat near to this ideal when they first got a Band together with their school friends Dirk and Stefan. However, because of musical and technical inability at that time the Topas #2 (1978) music came out as lengthy rockjazz improvisations about Dirk Resler (b) short chord patterns. Detlef Brauns joined shortly on the April (1979) Arne Schäfer (g) April was a short intermezzo when Arne and Torsten met the piano but left again heading for other intersts. Torsten Winkel (g) Arne Schäfer (g) drummer H.-J. Kapp-Lehmann and played some sort of Stefan Mayr (dr) Torsten Winkel (b) psychedelic space rock improvisations. After one concert H-J. Detlef Brauns (p) H.-J. Kapp-Lehmann (dr) left again and they disbanded. Topas #3 (1978 - 1980) After his Beatles phase Arne soon discovered Zappa, Jethro Tull, Yes and ELP but simultaneously Jazz captured his Joe Marienfeld (sax) Torsten wanted to try the drums and with the bass interest. With Topas #3 Torsten and Arne came much closer Arne Schäfer (g, b) player Jürgen Fehrs they played interesting Rock-Torsten Winkel (g, b) to their Jazz ideal by using sax and trombone, playing Jazz Jazz. One riff from these Sessions surfaced again standards and own compositions, and with Arne and Torsten Stefan Mayr (dr) on Arne s first Apogee album in the track In the sharing the duties of bass and guitar. Thomas Lange (tb) Dark (middle section). Avatar #1 (1981 - 1984) TAJ (1980) Michael Schebesta and Martin Pistor were interested in Jazz-Rock Fusion and Arne Schäfer (g) asked Arne if he wanted to join them. A more free form progressive rockjazz Arne Schäfer (g) The trio TAJ disbanded after Torsten left to build up his solo Michael Schebesta (dr) concept was established, similar to bands like Brand X, with Arne and Helmut Torsten Winkel (dr) carreer. He is now a well known Jazz guitarist, living in USA. Martin Pistor (b. cello) playing also synthesizer. The band was first named Pergamon Piers by Michael, Jürgen Fehrs (b) He changed his real name to Torsten De Winkel to make it but after some months they decided that this name was too far out and the band Helmut Schmidt (g, voc) sound more serious. He played with many famous Jazz and was renamed Avatar . A lot of gigs were performed in the Frankfurt area and Rockjazz musicians like Alphonse Mouson, Mike Brecker about two hours of music was recorded and published on several cassette tapes, (album Mastertouch), and Hellmut Hattler of Kraan (album but each distributed in very small number only. In 1984 Jörg Henseleit joined on Humanimals). Keyboards. He was very interested in Prog, but got lost in space soon after, then Avatar #2 (1984) got married. Martin Pistor, who also played cello on some recordings, left the band to join Aquamarinia, a funk-jazz-rock band, and was replaced by Christian Arne Schäfer (g, voc) Martin Pistor (b, cello) Schormann. In the last year of their existence they were playing some of Arne s Sachsenhäuser Underground #1 (1982 - 1988) solo songs he had recorded before by multitracking. After Christian left again and Helmut Schmidt (g, voc) several controverse discussions about musical direction, they decided to disband. Michael Schebesta (dr) Tommy Müller (dr) Jörg Henseleit (keys) Martin Schleußner (g,voc) Jürgen Schön (b) Markus Wiesner (voc) After Arne had joined Vague Venture he asked Helmut to In 1984 Arne responded to an ad by three guys who called join him again for his concept of an accoustic duo. They Sachsenhäuser Underground was basically a Punk band, themselves Vague Venture . They played with a drum founded The Remaining Structure and performed Avatar #3 (1985) but their leader, Martin Schleussner, was also a big computer and were looking for a guitarist who could also successfully some gigs in small clubs. The song "Come with Arne Schäfer (g,synth,voc) Vague Venture #1 (1984 __ 1985) Progressive Rock fan. Around 1990 Sachsenhäuser sing. It was the high time of the New Wave and Vague me", composed during this time can be found in a different Helmut Schmidt (g,synth) Matthias Schöller (keys,voc) Underground disbanded and Martin formed Ensemble Venture sounded somewhat like Ultravox. Arne liked the version on Arne s self released solo double CD Out of the Michael Schebesta (dr) Ralf Engelmann (b,voc,dr-progr.) Eclectique, an experimental band featuring his early Ultravox records and also found some interesting Darkness. Christian Schormann (b,synth) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) experimental approaches in the music of Vague Venture , so compositions. Notably, H.-J. Kapp Lehmenn joined on the drums, who had already played with Arne Schäfer in the he decided to join. band Avatar Sachsenhäuser Underground #2 (1988 - 1990) The Remaining Structure (1985 - 1986 Tommy Müller (dr) Arne Schäfer (g, voc) Martin Schleußner (g,voc) Vague Venture were very lucky to have Andreas Tofahrn as Vague Venture #2 (1986 - 1987) Helmut Schmidt (g) a full member, who owned the PA equipment and cared Tine (b) Arne Schäfer (g,voc) about the sound and recording technology. This was a big Markus Wiesner (voc) Matthias Schöller (keys,voc) relief for the musicians. After some gigs they decided that it Between 1988 and 1989 Arne composed two lengthy Rock Ralf Engelmann (b,voc,dr-progr.) would be better to play with real drums. Matthias asked his Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) Symphonies together with Gerald Heimann, who wrote the old colleague Stefan Maywald, who was mainly into Jazz, but Arne Schäfer and Martin Schleußner were studying chemistry German lyrics for the projects. The music was recorded by also liked Bill Bruford and Jethro Tull and was always open Arne via multitrack recording, with some additional vocals by together and knew each other well. They had already for experiments. So he joined soon after. performed together in the ad hoc guitar duo Nidado and the Gerald and presented to the public in three happenings, in which the music was played from tape and interpreted by a Entropies, who were playing compositions of Arne and slide show and live balett intrusions by Arne s mother Silvia. Martin, as well as some songs of their favourite bands (e.g. Peter Hammill, The Jam). After facing some problems with his Both symphonies (Die gläserne Wand and Schleifen) are In 1990 Vague Venture split up due to musical differences. They had available on a double CD released by Arne. band members Martin asked Arne to join the Ensemble played Arne s The Range of Matter live, but Ralf and Matthias did not Eclectique on guitar and vocals. like such lengthy Prog songs very much. So they decided to split up in Vague Venture #3 (1987 - 1990) two, with Andreas Tofahrn taking over the mixing for both fragments. **Ensemble Eclectique #1 (1990)** Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Arne asked his fellow student Lukas Ernst to join on Keyboards. Lukas H.-J. Kapp-Lehmann (dr) joined and Arne found the group name Versus X in a book about Matthias Schöller (keys,voc) Martin Schleußner (g,voc) physical chemistry. Ralf Engelmann (b) Tine (b) Stefan Maywald (dr) Andreas (keys) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Vague Venture #4 (1994) Martin had reactivated Jürgen Schön, the original bass Achmet (dr) Matthias Schöller (keys,voc) player of Sachsenhäuser Underground , but Michael soon Ralf Engelmann (g,b,voc) decided to quit after some controverse philosophical dispute Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) with Martin about linearity in music (or something). Since Versus X #1 (1991) there was no drummer left, Arne suggested that, instead of guitar, he could play drums, which he was very interested in Arne Schäfer (g,voc) since years. Martin agreed and the Ensemble Eclectique Lukas Ernst (keys) Lukas is a great classicaly trained musician, but he was more existed for approx. 2.5 years, playing mainly Martin's music Stefan Maywald (dr) into composing soundscapes for theatre and film. Not really and some of Arne s songs. Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) satisfied with the musical direction he quit after one year. Three songs were recorded with him, among them two songs **Ensemble Eclectique #2 (1991 - 1994)** which later appared on the first Versus X CD: Sacred War In 1991 Ekkehard Nahm saw Arne at a solo After 2.5 years, Arne became more and more frustrated with and Inside the Well. Arne Schäfer (dr,g,voc) concert and his interest was captured. After the gig playing the drums, because he felt that he could not achieve Martin Schleußner (g,voc) he asked Arne about his influences and agreed to his high quality requirements on this instrument. On the other Jürgen Schön (b) make a session to check each others ideas. Both hand Versus X were established, which demanded his full concentration. So he left the band in 1994. soon realised that they were almost exactly on the Ekkehard (nickname Ekki) had played in several jazz-rock bands and other same wavelength projects (notably together with the musicians Andreas Neubauer, dr, Kai Viehweg, dr, Greg de Neuville, g,voc). Frustated from the fact that he couldn t find After Arne left, the Ensemble Eclectique dissolved in musicians who had the same Art-Rock approach as Ekki, he even stopped playing various directions. However, in 1996 Martin and Arne again in bands in 1990 until he joined Versus X in 1992. It turned out that both Arne Versus X #2 (1992 - 1994) colaborated in the Rock Opera "The Perfect Linearity", which and Ekki had the same dream: A Progressive Rock band focussing on complex Arne Schäfer (g,voc) apart from Martin and Arne (who both wrote the songs, large scale compositions. Consequently, Ekki replaced Lukas and the typical Ekkehard Nahm (keys) played all instruments and sang) featured several additional Versus X style developed. They decided to produce their first CD with the new Stefan Maywald (dr) Singers. This non-Prog rock opera is available from Arne songs as an own production. At the prog convention in Aschaffenburg Stefan Kost Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) through the Apogee website on request. Some years later (then German representative of the french record label Musea, now the boss of Martin moved to Colone to perform his new job as a manager Angular Records) heard their music and was interested to present it to Bernard in the chemical indutry. Martin now performs his songs Gueffier of Musea Records. between punk and prog under the pseudonym Martin Eclec Versus X #3 (1995 - 1998) with some friends in Colone and wrote the song cycle "Köln The Musea people were excited not only by Versus X but also by Arne s solo Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Engineer", which was also performed live occasionally... tapes and decided to release them under Arne s pseudonym Apogee . Three Ekkehard Nahm (keys) Apogee albums were released on Musea: The Border of Awareness (1995), Stefan Maywald (dr) Sisyphos (1998) and The Garden of Delights (2003, with Versus X drummer Uwe Stephan Dilley (b) Flexable recorded their first CD in 1993 but no adequate Völlmar). On the first two Apogee albums Arne played all instruments himself (g, Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) label could be found for its release. It was finally released as b, keys, vocals) and used sample drums, until recently Versus X drummer Uwe an own production in 2000 and is distributed by Musea. In Völlmar offered him to play the drums, which he did on the latest Apogee Album 1994 Flexable converted into Transhumant. "The Garden of Delights". The musical style of Apogee is similar to Versus X , long songs with complex structures, unusual meters and mystic atmosheres created by keyboard and mellotron sounds, but without the piano arpeggios, Versus X #4 (1998) somewhat stronger musical contrasts and with more emphasis of the guitar work. Flexable #1 (1991 - 1994) Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Jörg Fischer (b,g,voc) Ekkehard Nahm (keys) Thomas Keller (keys, b-ped.) After Stefan Maywald s friend Stephan Dilley joined on bass, Versus X were able to further Jörg Fischer Uwe Völlmar (dr) Carsten Schönhut (dr) expand the structures of their compositions and arrangements. In 1997 the second Versus Mike Guttera (b) Transhumant #1 (1994 - 1998) X album "Disturbance" was released on Musea. This album was highly acclaimed by the Andi Tofahrn (mix.rec) Mike Guttera Uwe Kögel (g) international critics and sold a respectable number of copies. Thomas Keller (keys, b-ped) Carsten Schönhut (dr) In 1998 Stefan and Stephan decided to move away from Frankfurt carry out their regular Transhumant were rehearsing several complex and intricate Jörg Fischer (b, g, voc) jobs as dentist (Maywald) and IT-consultant (Dilley). Versus X continued to search for new compositions by Uwe Kögel and Thomas Keller, finally played musicians for about half a year, during which Stefan Maywald continued to play drums with one concert in 2000 but then two members had to stop their Versus X #5 (1999) Jörg Fischer them temporarily. musical activities temporarily due to personal reasons. In 2001 Flexable reformed in their original line up and are Arne Schäfer (g,voc) presently working on new material. Ekkehard Nahm (keys, b-ped.) Versus X tried several bass players and found Mike Guttera, a classically trained bass Uwe Völlmar (dr) player with great musical knowledge and abilities. Some months later Uwe Völlmar replied to Transhumant #2 (1999 - 2000) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) an ad from Ekki and joined shortly after. Soon it was clear that Uwe s virtuous and sensitive Mike Guttera (b) playing style fits perfectly in the band s concept. Uwe had played in several Mainstream Thomas Keller (keys, b-ped) In 2000, Versus X released their third album "The Turbulent Zone" on Musea, Rock and Blues Rock bands, which never satisfied him musically. He soon realised that with Carsten Schönhut (dr) Versus X he can well incorporate all his musical abilities on drums and percussion, for which again is very well reviewed by the fans and the international Prog media. Uwe Kögel (g) Between 2000 and 2004 Versus X played on several Progressive Rock Festivals which he had no possibility before. in Belgium, Netherlands, France, Spain and Germany. The live concert atmosphere was captured on the CD "Versus X - Live at the Spirit", which was Unfortunately, Mike decided to exclusively play his hand made upright fretless bass with the released in 2002. Jörg Fischer contributed some riffs and melody lines to the Versus X #6 (1999 - 2003) band. The sound of this instrument was really great in the low register, but Mike tended to recent Versus X compositions, but decided to leave in 2003 due to lack of spare play many high notes where his intonation on the instrument was not the very best. This Arne Schäfer (g,voc) time for his multiple musical activities. However, he immediately recommended to adversely affected the overall sound and led to some dispute with the other members Ekkehard Nahm (keys) substitute himself by his Flexable bandmate Thomas Keller, who is originally a because Mike refused to turn back to his bass guitar. Additionally there were some Uwe Völlmar (dr) keyboard player, professionally working in the field of musical therapy. He also decrepancies in opinion about the idealistic understanding of the band s concept. Mike left Jörg Fischer (b) plays drums, bass and guitar. Thomas has very similar musical taste as the other to join Transhumant and later The Silent Music Trio and Ekki completely took over the Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) Versus X members and also fits in well personally. bass parts with his Moog Taurus Bass Pedals for about half a year (1999) and two concerts. Jörg Fischer Flexable #2 (2001-) Some months later and after having tested some other bass players, Ekki met Jörg Fischer on a Spock s Beard concert. Ekki knew Jörg for a long time and had asked him several times Thomas Keller (keys, b) before, if he would like to join Versus X. After having heard Uwe Völlmar on the drums, he Carsten Schönhut (dr) Versus X #7 (2004 - 2007) was finally convinced to do so. Jörg is also a guitarist and singer and had played in several Jörg Fischer (b,g,voc) Progressive Rock bands between 1991 and 1995 with Carsten Schönhut, dr and Thomas Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Keller, keyboards (1991: The Union, 1991-94: Flexable, 1994: Transhumant, 1995: Ekkehard Nahm (keys, b-ped.) Uncle Aspic) and since 1996 he is also member of the Deep Purple cover band Cheap Uwe Völlmar (dr) Turtle . Thomas Keller (b,g,keys) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) In 2006 Uwe had to leave Versus X because his job location had been transferred to Cologne, which is too far away from Frankfurt to enable regular rehearsals. Both Uwe and the rest of the band felt very sorry that their fruitful 8 years collaboration could not be continued under the new circumstances. Nevertheless Uwe agreed to finalise the drumtracks for the new Versus X album Primordial Ocean which is now almost After Uwe left for Cologne we placed some ads in the internet and were really completed and intended to be released in Summer 2007. surprised when just one week later one of our ads was replied to by the well experienced drummer Thomas Reiner who has played in various rock bands before (e.g. progressive rock with Neronia (1996), Deluge (2003/2004) and Emolution (2004/2006)) and is also familiar with many other musical styles. Thomas not only was willing and able to join our musical efforts and even lives in Frankfurt, but he is also a great fan of progressive rock music and thus fits incredibly well into Versus X . His technically very elaborated style is somewhat different from Uwe s with an emphasis on percussive support of melodies plus additional noises and sound samples, which slightly change the Versus X sound and add some new influences to the Versus X compositions. Versus X #8 (2007 to 2013) Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Ekkehard Nahm (keys, b-ped.) Thomas Reiner (dr) Thomas Keller (b,g,keys) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) In 2012 Versus X lost their rehearsal room in Frankfurt and at the same time Thomas Reiner moved to his new house at the Rhine River. about 100 km west of Frankfurt. Some years earlier, Thomas Keller had already moved to a new place near Dillenburg, also in about 100 km distance from Frankfurt, but to the north. This made it almost impossible to agree on a new location for a rehearsal room which would be in an acceptable driving distance for all band members. Thomas Reiner became frustrated by the unsatisfactory situation and quit playing with the band in 2013. Although Ekki, Arne and Thomas Keller continued to compose and arrange music for the next Versus X Arne strongly wanted to play with a "real band" and consequently founded the ProgRock band That Perfect Moment in 2013 together album. Arne and Ebi soon found the guitarist and lead singer Frank Jung and with his brother in law, the drummer Ebi Gräf. TPM focus mainly on bass player Michael "Wolle" Wollesky to complete the first "That cover versions of classic Prog songs by Yes, Genesis, Gentle Giant, Versus X #9 (2013 to 2015) Perfect Moment "line-up. Since they could not find a suitable ELP, etc. and some original material. A very nice new feature of TPM keyboard player, they decided to share the "Key-job" between Wolle on are the three-part harmony vocals. Arne Schäfer (g,voc) guitar synthesizer, Frank and Arne and to concentrate on Prog songs Ekkehard Nahm (keys, b-ped.) which they could play with this line-up. Thomas Keller (b,g,keys,dr) That Perfect Moment #1 (2013 - 2015) Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec) Arne Schäfer (g, voc, b, keys) Wolle Wollesky (b, g, git-synth) Simplified (2015 to present) Frank Jung (g, voc, keys) Ebi Gräf (dr, perc.) Arne Schäfer (g, voc) Wolle Wollesky (g, voc, git-synth) Steffi Prötzmann (voc, perc.) After two years with TPM. Ebi realized that he wanted to play more groove oriented music and also more original material. In July 2015 he found what he was looking for and joined the To be able to play classic rock and great prog songs in a After having tested several drummers in Autumn 2015, TPM Rene Moreno Band , who combine latino-rock with punk. reduced line-up which is also suitable for very small venues, found the experienced drummer Oilver Werner, who fits in Wolle and Arne formed the "almost unplugged" trio perfectly with regard to both musical taste and technical Although Versus X could rehearse in Thomas Kellers flat, it was very "Simplified" in spring 2015, with singer Steffi Protzmann, abilities. Arne now plays in three different bands, but so far difficult to find a new drummer who was willing to drive to the distant who already sang on Arne and Martin's Rock Opera "The he can still manage it by proper time allocation. rehearsal location and was still very idealistic with regard to Versus X Perfect Linearity" back in 1996. "Simplified "fit together Simultaneously Arne is always active with his solo project music, which meant to spend a lot of rehearsal time without noticable perfectly due to their largely overlapping musical tastes and Apogee (featuring Versus X drummer Thomas Reiner and commercial profit and only rare gigs. After several non-successful TPM drummer Ebi Gräf) and released the Apogee albums love of harmony vocals. attempts to play with different drummers Versus X realized, that apart "Mystery Remains" in 2009, "Waiting for the Challenge" in from the technical ability, the right feeling for their complex music is 2012 and lately "The Art of Mind" in 2015. very important too. So before searching on for an unforeseeable time period, they made an attempt to ask Thomas Reiner whether he would That Perfect Moment #2 (2016 to present) re-join Versus X, since he always had that intuitive feeling for their music. Surprisingly he immediately agreed, however subject to an Arne Schäfer (g, voc, b, keys) agreement regarding modified rehearsal conditions. Wolle Wollesky (b, g, git-synth) Frank Jung (g, voc, keys) Oliver Werner (dr, perc.) Versus X #10 (2016 to present) Arne Schäfer (g,voc) Ekkehard Nahm (keys, b-ped.) Thomas Reiner (dr)

Thomas Keller (b,g,keys)
Andi Tofahrn (mix,rec)