

# THE SHINDIG! GUIDE TO SPACEROCK INTERSTELLAR OVERDRIVE

FEATURING  
HAWKWIND  
PINK FLOYD  
GONG  
JOE MEEK  
ASH RA TEMPEL

CHROME  
SPACEMEN 3  
AMON DUELL II  
SUN RA  
WHITE HILLS  
AND MANY MORE!



SHINDIG!



# Alien Soundtracks: The Birth Of American Spacerock

Though progressive rock was perceived to have stagnated by the late '70s, the punk era unleashed a new generation of visionaries and innovators, with bands like CHROME basking in the freedom of independent labels and the DIY aesthetic. As recording technology became affordable and available to the general public, home-taping revved its engines in the late '70s and slammed into overdrive in the '80s, as bands released their music on cassette tapes and networked through small press publications and zines. It was in this environment that American spacerock bands like ALIEN PLANETSCAPES, F/i, ST 37, and ARCHITECTURAL METAPHOR flourished. JERRY HRANITZ explores the early years of American spacerock.

## CHROME

Spacerock originated in England and Germany during the late '60s and early '70s, but in the US it took until the punk era to emerge. San Francisco had been the embodiment of US born psychedelia, with its hippies and flower power, Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, Big Brother & the Holding Company, and Haight-Ashbury. But Chrome would create a very different form of psychedelia; something darker, visceral, and creatively chaotic.

Formed in San Francisco in 1975 by Damon Edge and Gary Spain, the first Chrome album – *The Visitation* – was released by Siren Records in '76. The lineup consisted of Edge and Spain, plus John Lambdin and Mike Low, utilising synthesizers, keyboards, guitar, bass, drums, mandolin, and electric violin. Though very different for its time, *The Visitation* is an uneven set, with some songs raucous rock bordering on glam, and others that are almost mainstream '70s rock. But there are also glimmers of ground-breaking things to come. 'Return to Zanzibar' may not have been spacerock or psychedelic, but it featured the kind of lo-fi, angular punk that would characterize the classic Chrome sound. And 'Kinky Lover' and 'Sun Control' sow the seeds of the art-damaged acid-punk lying just over the horizon.

Even the most ground-breaking flickers of creativity are at risk of burning out, but when Gary Spain introduced Helios Creed to the band, Damon Edge found the kindred spirit he needed and the Chrome chemistry fell into place. As Helios explains, "It seemed like Damon and I were on the same wavelength when we met. We were both into punk, American free punk before the punk explosion really happened; like John Cale, Iggy Pop & The Stooges, The Velvet Underground, and The New York Dolls. And we were into psychedelia and hard rock, UFOs and science fiction movies, especially the cheesy B-movies, and just noise for noise sake, scary noises and alien

noise. We just mixed that all up and *Alien Soundtracks* was the result."

Recorded by the quartet of Edge, Creed, Spain and Lambdin and released in '77 by Siren Records, *Alien Soundtracks* was a unique blend of punk, industrial, and psychedelia, all wrapped in an alien, UFO, space-age package. Helios describes Chrome's 'acid-punk' brand of psychedelia: "The old hippy psychedelia didn't show us that psychedelia could take you to dark and scary places. Hendrix did to some degree,

soundtrack that abruptly switches to a kinetically paced combination of tribal and carnival themes played at 78 rpm. The album is a sonic rollercoaster ride of acid drenched space-punk, rocking out with strange voice samples, chunky space-metal guitar riffing, multiple layers of haunting, anguished vocals, and gloomy, drifting ambience. The songs constantly shift gears, creating a strangely seamless non-linearity, full of co-operating contrasts, like a mad science experiment gone gloriously right. And it



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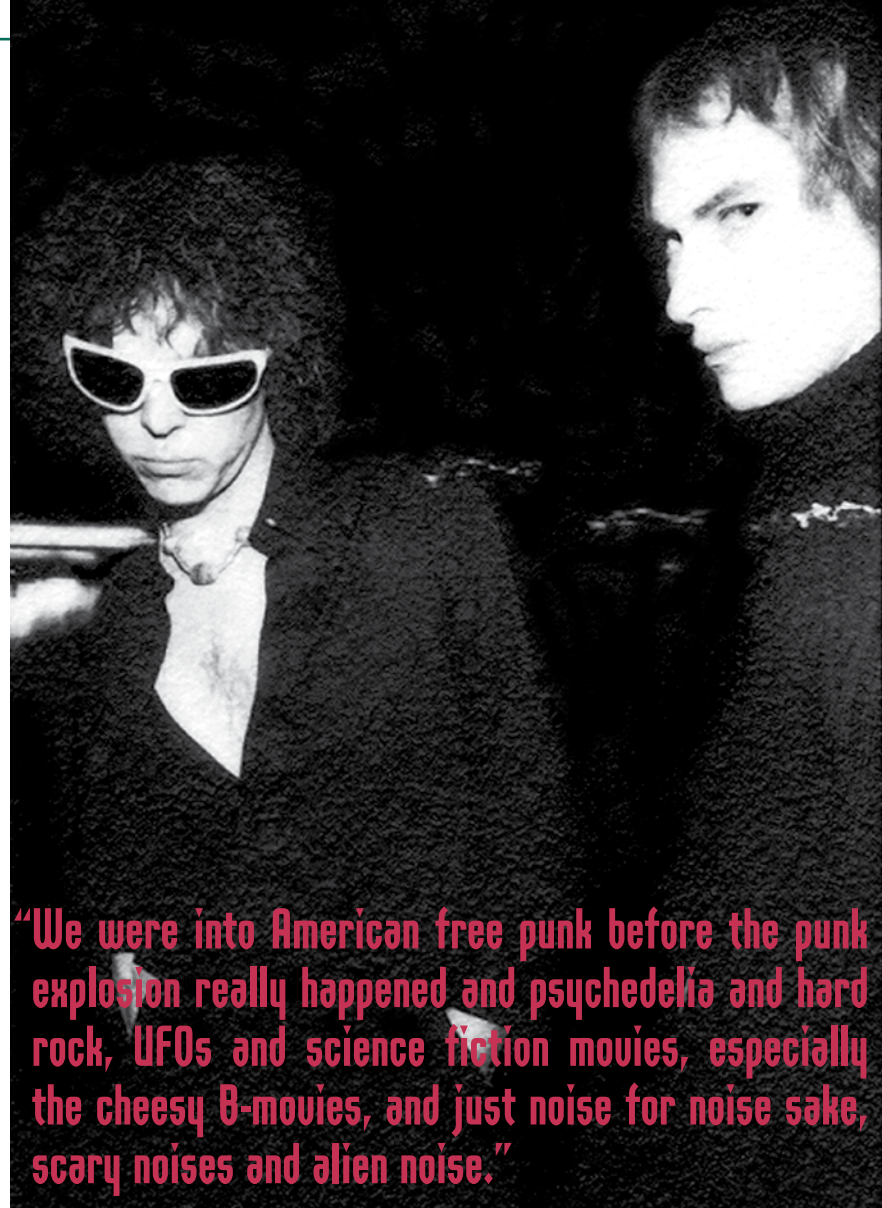
and Sabbath did of course, and they were a big influence. But the hippy thing had softened the concept of psychedelia and the idea back then was this whole phony 'Age of Aquarius' trip. It wasn't real. If it was going to have reality it needed to go to some dark places and Chrome did that. It was a psychedelia of the punk era and it worked."

The entirety of *Alien Soundtracks* is a lysergic morphing of Hawkwind's *Space Ritual*, William Burroughs cut-up experiments, The Residents and Black Sabbath, all jammed into a cosmic acid-industrial-punk grinder. The opening track, 'Chromosome Damage', comes roaring out of the starting gate with incendiary guitar, punk-motorik drumming and wild vocals, before fading and then inexplicably launching into a spaced out dirge of looped guitar weirdness and screaming acid-metallic riffs. 'Pygmies In Zee Park' is like a mash-up of Hawkwind and the *Suspiria*

was indeed about experimentation: "We experimented like crazy", Helios says. "We didn't know whether or not it was going to work, but it worked very well. It spawned a whole counter-culture of sounds. It worked so well we patterned *Half Machine Lip Moves* after it and that worked even better. We felt like we were on top of the world."







**"We were into American free punk before the punk explosion really happened and psychedelia and hard rock, UFOs and science fiction movies, especially the cheesy B-movies, and just noise for noise sake, scary noises and alien noise."**

The experimental lo-fi aesthetic was crucial to the Chrome sound, part of which Helios attributes to Hawkwind: "When I was young they were the only garage spacerock band that I liked. My first experience of Hawkwind was when I was tripping and my friend put on 'Master Of The Universe' and at first I was surprised that the quality was so bad. It was hard to get into it in a way, because up until that time I had only heard studio quality stuff. I didn't even know people recorded like that and put out records with that lo-fi quality like someone turned on a little recorder right there in the garage. But then when he cranked it up it didn't seem to matter and that lo-fi appeal grew on me. Its garage sound is what I actually began to like the most about it."

This writer's introduction to Chrome was via the '79 Ralph Records released *Subterranean Modern* compilation, featuring tracks by four pioneering misfits of the late '70s San Francisco creative milieu – The Residents, Tuxedomoon, MX-80 Sound, and Chrome. Each band couldn't have been more different from the other, but what they shared in common was a post-punk, post-prog, but nonetheless progressive ambition for something different. Helios recalls this fertile period in San Francisco: "We all hung

around at The Residents' warehouse. I hung around with The Dead Kennedys, mostly Jello (Biafra) because he's a really social fellow. Whenever we'd run into each other we'd hang out and he'd say, 'Hey Helios I really like your song 'Blood Red'. It reminds me of old Hawkwind!' The guys from Flipper were often around. The punk scene was small. We all knew each other. Damon and I went to punk shows at the Mabuhay and the Off Broadway and everyone knew who we were, but we were kind of mysterious because we didn't play live a lot. We just made these *avant-garde* recordings. I had friends like Philip (Snakefinger) from The Residents. Snakefinger was one of my best friends. We were getting to be very close friends before he died. The guys from MX-80 were really good friends and they used to let us go in free at the theatre they worked in. I knew the guys from Tuxedomoon and a couple of them were in Italy when Chrome played there."

The space-punk continued with '79s *Half Machine Lip Moves*, and the Creed-Edge creative relationship was such that by this time the music was recorded almost entirely by Helios and Damon, with minimal contributions from Spain and John L. Cyborg (the latter is either engineer Oliver

Dicicco or a made up name, depending on the source). From the acid-metal saturated doom-punk of 'TV As Eyes', to the Black Sabbath on steroids meets rhythm twisted cranium mangling of 'Zombie Warfare (Can't Let You Down)', Helios and Damon were on a creative tear, rocking hard and determined to break the rules through experimentation. As Helios says, "So many people want to control and intellectualize everything and they miss the great stuff, the spontaneous animal stuff that just happens when you let go, including mistakes. That was where we differed from The Residents. They had a very intellectual and analytical approach to their music, yet they sounded like Chrome in some ways because we were both weird. I'm glad they were what they were, but they were without the animal mistakes. If you want to know the difference between Chrome and The Residents it is in our approaches. Theirs was perfectionist and ours was more spontaneous and more about let's look at our mistakes and just go with those sounds and make that the piece."

Helios and Damon would release five LPs between '77-'82, plus numerous singles and compilation contributions. Red Exposure from '80 was once again primarily Helios-Damon dominated. *Blood On The Moon* ('81) and *3rd From The Sun* ('82) featured the quartet of Helios, Damon and brothers Hilary and John Stench on bass and drums.

Live performances were few. One was in Bologna, Italy in '81, apparently at the urging of determined fans. Songs from this show have appeared as bonus tracks on reissues, the quality being decent bootleg. The albums suggest that live performance would be a considerable challenge, but Chrome were just as much a rock band as they were an experimental colossus, and the recordings reveal impressive live potential. Helios also describes a show in San Francisco, likely from the same year: "Chrome played On Broadway only once. It was the biggest show at the On Broadway ever with a line down the block, because it only held 600 and there wasn't enough room. It was just so rare that we played and our albums had built up anticipation."

It was due in part to Damon's lack of interest in live performance that Helios



and Damon parted ways after *3rd From The Sun*. Damon moved to Paris in '83 and released several albums under the Chrome name between '84-'94. Tragically, Damon passed away in '95, the cause of death attributed to heart failure. Helios went on to record numerous solo albums and toured the world, remaining active to this day. After Damon's death Helios resurrected the Chrome name, periodically recording and playing live shows.

Helios and Chrome have seen a flurry of activity in 2013. Early '13 saw the release of *Half Machine from the Sun, The Lost Chrome Tracks '79-'80*, consisting of 18 unreleased songs from the vaults. Helios considers the compilation a completion: "Not just for the tracks, but also for the audio record of Damon and my creative output. We had different styles of songs and some of the more accessible songs were overlooked. Now the fans get to hear that stuff too."

Even more exciting, the current edition of Chrome is recording a new album, with a lineup consisting of Helios, Tommy Grenas (Farflung) on keyboards, Aleph Omega on drums, Keith Thompson on guitar, and performance artist and band manager Monet Clark on vocals. Helios' enthusiasm is infectious: "Tommy came to San Francisco from LA with some friends with an idea to find me years ago, and they found me. He also saw Damon on the street before he died. He has one of Damon's keyboards and understands where Damon was coming from. Aleph is as solid and heavy as a drummer can be and he's studied Damon's unique way of adding drum rolls. Without a good drummer you have nothing. Keith Thompson I chose because he's just an excellent and serious guitar player. And Monet is so naturally talented."

'Prophecy' is the first single from the album and to call it a monster would be an understatement. The spirit of classic Chrome is intact, without being a retro rehash of days gone by. The song rocks hard in space, sporting a catchy riff, killer blazing dual guitars, and haunting keys and backing vocals. As Helios explains, "I wrote it when the band was in the studio and then we recorded the bottom tracks on the spot. In a later recording session I told everybody to write a line of the lyrics to prove that prophecy could come from anywhere and we laid down my vocals and Monet's vocals, which we turned backwards, and Tommy fattened up his original keyboard line because I loved it. We were all in on the process. I'm always trying to make the best album, better than the last. I'm really happy with the new material."

If the rest of the album is as good as 'Prophecy', this edition of Chrome is sure to make a splash in the post-millennium spacerock world.



## ALIEN PLANETSCAPES

From 1981-2006, Alien PlanetScapes released over 100 cassette albums, contributed to several Cleopatra Records compilations, and released one studio CD that remains the crowning achievement of their career. Though the band evolved through dramatically different stylistic phases and experienced countless lineup changes, the mainstay and driving force throughout was Brooklyn, New York native Doug Walker.

Trained as a jazz musician, Walker immersed himself in the progressive rock, psychedelia, experimental music and jazz

Alien PlanetScapes was born. The first recordings were solo freeform electronic explorations. An April '81 piece captured on a cassette compilation illustrates a free-wheeling search for identity, utilizing radio waves, drones, bleeping electronics, and gothic spacey ambience. It was the free-improvisational jazz aesthetic that captivated Walker, something he had seen in European bands of the late '60s – '70s: "The electronic music community had changed direction toward the end of the '70s and the beginning of the '80s. The

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of the '60s-'70s. Electronic music was a particular fascination, a bug that had bitten the young musician in the late '60s: "One of the things that really hit me hard was in the Summer of 1967 I went with my family to Montreal for the World's Fair. At the U.S. pavilion was an ongoing demonstration of the Moog synthesizer. Robert Moog was there and I remember walking in and seeing this thing and falling in love with it immediately. It made sounds that I couldn't make on traditional instruments. I'd been studying flute since I was seven, and clarinet and saxophone in junior high school, and I couldn't make those sounds. Plus it was new technology. This was all space age to me."

Walker marks May 26th '80 as the day

artists that I'd taken my cue from were people like Tangerine Dream, Heldon, Klaus Schulze, and Ash Ra Tempel. At that time they all seemed to be going away from free improvisation into more structured approaches to their music. It was more rock structured."

A committed networker, Walker found fellow travellers in the cassette culture underground, and for the next few years numerous duo cassette albums of improvised electronic space explorations were recorded with such '80s underground luminaries as Louis Boone, David Prescott, and Carl Howard. The influence of early Tangerine Dream and Klaus Schulze are evident on these recordings, though the spirit of '70s progressive rock and *avant-*





*garde* music is never far away, as Walker supplemented the synthesizers and sequencers with flute, glissando guitar, organ, and percussion.

Yet it wasn't long before Walker felt that the floating electronic music had run its course, and he decided on a more rock-oriented format within a free-improvisational context. "One of the big influences that I had in the early '70s was Hawkwind. They had exactly the kind of elements that I was looking for in rock music. There was the electronics. There was the concept of weaving science fiction themes into the music. And that led to understanding more about other kinds of European rock music - bands like Can and Amon Düül. Ozric Tentacles were a big help too. We met through the cassette underground. I started writing to them in the mid-'80s and traded tapes with them."

One of the early full band Alien Planetescapes cassette albums - *Space Rock '88* - features a quintet of guitar, bass, violin, keyboards and synthesizers. The note on the j-card says, "This music is dedicated to the spirit of Van Der Graaf Generator and Gong", and indeed the entire 60 minutes of the album sounds like a cross between the darkness of VDGG and Gong at their most playfully exploratory, with deep Tangerine Dreamy atmospherics and a free-jazz flavour. Alien Planetescapes were creating a brand of spacerock that celebrated Hawkwind and the European pioneers, but unified these influences into a distinguishable Alien Planetescapes sound.

Despite the pace at which Walker was releasing cassettes, the membership was fluid and no two albums featured the same lineup. "For the entire year of '89 I experimented with finding a rhythm section, then finding guitar players,

saxophone players, and so on. That took a year." The '89 *Mysterious Black Dots* cassette features another quintet version of the band, this time with a dedicated drummer and saxophonist, cranking out jazz inspired high-energy spacerock that grooves. And the '92 *Radio Special Volume X* cassette features a six-piece lineup recorded in September, as well as an eight-piece in December, playing blistering rock that sounds like a spaced out blend of Soft Machine, King Crimson and Gong.

As the '90s progressed, Walker became increasingly interested in a more structured approach to rock music, without abandoning the improvisational foundation that had anchored the band from the beginning. This is best exemplified on the '97 studio recorded and CD released *Life On Earth*. The high energy, almost punk-ish cosmic rocking 'Radiation King' is one of the heaviest and most concise pieces of music Alien Planetescapes ever recorded. 'Chris In Space' is a Chrome-like layering of electronics and guitar with manic saxophone. Symphonic keys and mellotron pop up as the song develops, providing an intriguing counterpoint. And 'Lucky 13' begins as an *avant-garde* collage of electronic effects, before launching into a heavy rocking Hawkwind inspired jam.

Alien Planetescapes continued throughout the later '90s and '00s. There were multiple live performances, notably at the Strange Daze Space Rock Festivals in upstate New York and Cleveland, Ohio from '97-2001, as well as the Quarkstock 2000 Space Rock Festival in Columbus, Ohio and the Doug Walker Testimonial Space Rock Festival in Baltimore, Maryland in 2004. Sadly, Walker passed away in '06, due to complications from years of heart problems. (Quotes taken from an interview with Doug Walker in 1998.)

## RA CAN ROW

The early '80s was a transitional era for music. We had post-punk and new wave and the classic progressive rock bands were jumping on the MTV video bandwagon. Far from being a limbo period, the early '80s were bursting with creativity. In Cincinnati, Ohio, the quartet of Don Schott (bass, guitar and effects), Richard Biszantz (guitar), Steven Sailer (drums, organ and piano), and Paul Haneberg (mellotron and Mini-Moog) formed Ra Can Row and in 1982 released what would be their sole album on Schott's EYE Records label. A private pressing with minimal distribution, the self-titled *Ra Can Row* album may be a footnote in spacerock history, but is significant in that it pre-dates the Ozric Tentacles brand of spacerock that would emerge in the UK just a couple of years later.

The highlight of the album is the 16 minute 'Things Beyond Our Control', an improvisational exploration that's like a crystal ball view toward the Ozrics, with shattering guitar leads, funky wah'd rhythm guitar, but also classic prog mellotron. 'Somewhere Else' is a brief but

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intense blend of psychedelic Frippertronic guitar and effects, plus free-jazz drums and piano. 'RTZ' is a 12 minute assault that's equal parts Ozrics at their heaviest, Hawkwind at their freakiest, and at times has a spacey-jazzy Grateful Dead flavour. Lastly, 'Sometimes I Get Lonely' is a melancholy atmospheric piece that conjures up images of a Frippertronics performance on some dead, windswept planet.

Akarma reissued the album in recent years, though Schott says this is an unauthorized transcription from vinyl. "I have the only master tapes. There is one digital copy on a brand new hard drive. Maybe I will get to work with it in the next few weeks."



"Blanga". Diehard Hawkwind fans know the term. Blanga is characterized by high intensity spacerock, with a relentless, punishing rhythmic pulse, molten guitars, chest pounding bass, and meteor shower audio generators and synthesizers. Hawkwind's *Doremi Fasol Latido* and *Space Ritual* are archetypes of what blanga is about. Of the American spacerock bands born in the '80s, none would achieve the blissful annihilation of blanga more than Milwaukee, Wisconsin's F/i, though through the years they would explore a gamut of styles including space-punk, experimental noise, and floating space electronics.

Formed in 1982, F/i began as the duo of Richard Franecki and Greg Kurczewski. Franecki describes the band's formation: "Greg and I had earlier played in a band called The Drag, which was a Stooges/MC5 hard-rock band with punk-ish overtones. I had always been into experimental music, the punk thing being a brief diversion. When The Drag fell apart, Greg and I formed a two-piece ensemble called Surfin' Fuhrers. I played a small Moog synth and Greg played guitar. We used a drum machine and did simple, very repetitious riffs." Surfin' Fuhrers soon became F/i, which Franecki says has no deep meaning, though the unconfirmed story is that it stands for Fuhrers Incognito.

The band soon expanded to a trio with the addition of Brian Wensing on second synthesizer, and F/i began to widen their horizons. Franecki recalls: "When Brian joined we definitely became 'noisier' and more Industrial. Aside from the Industrial stuff, we were very much into Hawkwind and the experimental music coming out of Germany, now known as krautrock." Next to come was Steve Zimmerman, who would be F/i's equivalent of Hawkwind's Dik Mik and Del

Dettmar. "Steve was a total non-musician. He played the shortwave radio, often through an analog delay unit. Steve was very much into amateur radio and was a master at pulling stuff out of the atmosphere. He made the radio sound like a synthesizer!"

Like many musicians at the time, Franecki immersed himself in the burgeoning cassette culture network, and starting in late '82-83 began releasing F/i cassettes on his Uddersounds label. "I got heavily involved in the global tape trading network. A big help was *OP* magazine. They had a section where they reviewed cassettes. I used to send an F/i cassette to EVERY artist who had a tape reviewed and asked if they wanted to trade. That's how we initially established ourselves. I communicated with hundreds of people, all over the world, and contributed to as many cassette compilations as I could. A local Milwaukee music reviewer once commented that if a person in Lapland put out a cassette compilation in the '80s, F/i probably had a track on it."

Feeling that the Industrial/experimental music was becoming tedious, F/i brought in drummer Jan Schober and began to explore a more rock-oriented style. "With Jan, our sound became noisy and punk-ish with electronics; kind of a punky Hawkwind." Sure enough, cassette albums like the '84 *On Off* feature chaotic, high-octane space-punk, with thrashing drums, buzzsaw guitars, dense atmospherics, and electronics that sound like swarms of alien killer bees. The *Circle Is The Square*, released in '86, is one of my personal favorites from this period, showcasing a similar space-punk aesthetic. Two years after *On Off*, F/i are an increasingly tighter unit, and true to the spirit of blanga, the music shows no quarter in its assault, with a steamroller repetitive

rhythmic pace, ripping acidic guitars and synths that bring to mind an out of control '50s sci-fi film soundtrack.

F/i would reach a larger audience with a string of vinyl LPs on the Massachusetts based RRR Records label. "Our first record was a split LP on the RRR label with F/i on one side and Boy Dirt Car on the other. The RRR LPs really put us on the map and gained huge amounts of exposure for us." The '87 *Why Not Now?... Alan!* LP consists of both the experimental and rocking sides of F/i, with thunderous, off-kilter percussion and noisy soundscape driven pieces, anarchic spaced-out psychedelic-noise workouts, and rocking jams that sound like a droning take on the early Hawkwind sound.

The LPs also resulted in live performance opportunities well beyond their home base of Milwaukee. "F/i played live shows quite often in the '80s, though we mostly stayed in our home town and did not travel much. That changed a bit in the late '80s/early '90s. We were invited by a German concert promoter to come to Europe and the band toured Europe twice. Our reputation had grown in the global spacerock scene."

Franecki left F/i in the early '90s to form another spacerock band, Vokokesh, who released several albums on the Drag City and Strange Attractors Audio House labels. Speaking of where F/i was in the

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early '90s, Franecki says, "The group had 'morphed' into too much of a conventional 'rock' band in my opinion. Too much of the experimental edge had gone away. I formed Vocokesh in '91 to continue the direction I felt F/i should have been traveling in."

Though quiet for much of the mid-late '90s, F/i released the *Helioscopium* CD in '97 and played at the '97 and '98 Strange Daze Spacerock Festivals. Franecki rejoined F/i in the early 2000s, releasing the *A Question For The Somnambulist* CD in 2002, and the appropriately titled *Blanga* in 2005. Both F/i and Vocokesh (the bands have shared several common members) continue to record, releasing vinyl LPs on the Frankfurt, Germany based Pure Pop For Now People label.





Since 1987, ST 37 has been churning out a steady stream of cranium shattering space-punk, flesh rending psychedelia, and lysergic experimental weirdness. The story begins with two Austin, Texas based bands. The Elegant Doormats formed in a History of Rock class at The University Of Texas in '82 when students were given the option of writing a paper for their final exam or starting a band. As bassist Scott Telles explains: "The Doormats played a mixture of early punk influences, the prog we had all grown up on, and the newer psych and post-punk that we had all been getting into." Tulum formed in '85 by brothers Carlton and Joel Crutcher, named after the ancient Toltec city in Mexico, which Carlton had read about in Carlos Castaneda's books. "My vision for the band", Carlton says, "was to combine the best elements of late '60s psychedelic music with the high energy anarchy of punk, the free-form improvisational beauty and spirituality of '60s music and the do-it-yourself, anti-corporate, horrifying realness of punk-rock."

The Elegant Doormats and Tulum had a common drummer in John Foxworth and the two bands started sharing a practice space. The Crutcher brothers and Telles bonded over a shared interest in The 13th Floor Elevators, Butthole Surfers, Can, Amon Düül II, Hawkwind and Chrome and when both bands memberships started to crumble, the Crutchers invited Telles to join and ST 37 was born.

Named after a Chrome song, ST 37 released their first album, a short eight-

song cassette titled *Billygoat Nothinghead*, on their own Blue Circle label. Telles says, "Our stated aim at the outset was to take the psych and spacerock influences of Hawkwind and combine them with the raw energy and cut-up experimentalism of early Chrome circa *Alien Soundtracks* and *Half Machine Lip Moves*. Aside from those two our influences are all over the map - punk, prog, psych, krautrock, noise and

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electronics." ST 37 didn't exactly sound like Chrome, but this diversity of influences led to the development of a recognizable ST 37 space-punk-psych-experimental sound.

*Billygoat Nothinghead* was an impressive debut, establishing the disparate template of songs and experimentalism that would characterize nearly all ST 37 albums. Songs like 'Upaya Den' take a Pink Floyd 'Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun'

core and adds winding acid guitar and a rap-like spoken word narrative. 'Crabulus Nebulae' starts off as a swirling electronic space-punk jam and then devolves into a crazed combination of radio samples, Hendrix feedback, anguished vocals and avant-garde percussion. And 'Hollywood Cemetery' is pure cosmic thrash.

Several cassette releases and compilation contributions followed, as well as live performances. Carlton recalls that, "Former Legionnaires Disease and Vast Majority guitarist Walter Wolff gave us our first show at the Cave Club opening for his new rap band The Def Motherfuckers, whose gangsta band members proceeded to steal a bunch of our equipment right before we went on stage." ST 37 toured the U.S. multiple times over the years, highlights being appearances at the 1998 and 2000 Strange Daze Spacerock Festivals.

ST 37 made their vinyl debut in '90, contributing to the Noiseville Records sampler, *From Twisted Minds Come*, soon followed by the 7" single, 'Look At Yr Chair'. The first CD was *The Invisible College*, released in '92 on the Over And Out label, and is a personal favorite of mine from the band's early days. It's chock full of everything that makes ST 37 great, from heavy driving Hawkwind and Chrome inspired spacerock, to thrashy space-punk, cosmic psychedelia, and experimental fun. 'Ghosts Of Tempera Nymphs' is a highlight, being an eerie droning spacerock that's like Hawkwind gone goth. 'Gormless' is a brutal slab of spaced out goth-punk, with potent keyboards and seductive snake-like acid guitar. And 'I Shared My Mescaline Enema With Byron Coley' is an 11-minute instrumental assault on the senses that combines freewheeling improvisational acid-rock with the most extra-terrestrial moments from Hawkwind's *Space Ritual*.

Through the years ST 37 have released CDs and LPs on labels such as Black Widow, Prospective Records, Timothy's Brain, RRR Records, Lost Records, Emperor Jones and more. Other milestones in ST 37's career have been scoring the soundtracks to two Fritz Lang silent films - *Metropolis* and *Destiny* - and performing live to the films at The Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in Austin. Both soundtracks were later released on the band's Blue Circle label. Listening to the music and imagining the films, one gets a feel for the challenges, and resulting warts and all successes that accompany the construction of a silent film score that follows a linear, story-telling path. ST 37 also provide compelling narration to the voiceless action on the screen.

Of all the American spacerock bands born in the '80s, ST 37 remains the most active today. Carlton left in 2001 to form Book Of Shadows with his wife Sharon, and continues to release new albums. The big news of 2013 was ST 37 opening for Nik Turner at the famed Austin, Texas SXSW Festival.



Massachusetts based Architectural Metaphor (ArcMet for short) play a high intensity brand of spacerock that's like a blend of Hawkwind, *Saucerful/Meddle*-era Pink Floyd, and Tangerine Dream. Founder and keyboardist Paul Eggleston cites his attendance at the 1984 Stonehenge Free Festival as the inspiration for forming the band: "My roommate at The University Of Massachusetts had moved to Edinburgh, Scotland for a year and sent back tales of Hawkwind shows he had seen, along with cassette bootlegs he had made. His account of the '83 Stonehenge Free Festival finished with the plan that he and I attend in the coming year, which we did. So did Anthony, who went on to form Melting Euphoria, and Tommy Grenas, who went on to form Pressurehead and Farflung. I walked past Ozric Tentacles as they jammed. I think it may have been one of their solidifying debut shows."

Returning from Stonehenge, Eggleston began solo experiments and duets with Bill Buitenhuys, a sometimes partner on guitar. "I had my brother's Electro Harmonix Octave Multiplexer which gave out hellish sounds of chaos. Armed with that, a cheap early '60s Japanese organ, Ibanez Iceman and fuzzbox, we made the debut cassette, *Lone Rhino in a Flying Teapot* in '84", which Eggleston describes as "Adrian Belew meets Gong in our brains."

This early ArcMet had an improvisational, sound exploratory feel. "We were kind of a John Cage/Karlheinz Stockhausen version of Hawkwind. Our influences were very strongly *avant-garde* classical. Glass, Cage, Reich, Stockhausen. But beyond that Hawkwind was one of the big influences on everybody. We all liked Pink Floyd. And the German bands heavily influenced us, like Guru Guru, Faust, Can, Tangerine Dream, and Amon Düül II."

ArcMet's debut performance was at Innersleeve Records in Allston, Massachusetts followed by several college radio broadcasts, which garnered attention and, as Eggleston recalls, perplexed many. "MIT's WMBR were early fans who understood this atonal, semi-hippy space music that seemed to have no songs at all." A compilation LP

on Innersleeve Records, *Drastic Perversions*, includes an Architectural Metaphor song, giving the band their first national release.

Eventually growing to a sextet, ArcMet released what Eggleston considers their first proper cassette album, *Music For Mensas*, in '84. "We got some limited attention for our outright strangeness. Our sound at the time was a combination of early '80s Grateful Dead "space", Pink Floyd circa '68, and primal Hawkwind noise freak-outs. It sounded like a peaceful Throbbing Gristle."

Other cassette albums followed, and some of the earlier recordings would become more widely available with the release of the '95 *Odyssey Galacti* CD, which included tracks from '88. With the exception of space whispers and howls, the music is all instrumental. Tracks like 'Waterwheel' have a thunderous bass and tribal percussion, along with hauntingly spacey keys and psychedelic guitar leads. 'Anu' is like Philip Glass teaming up with Pink Floyd for a film soundtrack, being a cosmic adventure into rhythm and sound that culminates in an intense *Phantom Of The Opera* flavored 'Careful With That Axe, Eugene' finale.

'89 would be a watershed year for exposure, as ArcMet secured an opening slot for several dates on Hawkwind's US tour. Recalling the Somerville, Mass concert, Eggleston says, "this is the show where Dave Brock allowed me to do the speech for 'Welcome To The Future' as part of Hawkwind's encore."

In '94 ArcMet paired down to the trio of Eggleston, Deb Young on drums and vocals, and newcomer Greg Kozlowski on guitar, and it was this lineup that recorded *Creature Of The Velvet Void*, released by the Italian Black Widow Records label in '97. The album marked a turn for the band, featuring a more structured, song-oriented approach, without abandoning the improvisational, exploratory elements, not unlike a dark, symphonic Hawkwind. *Creature* is a heavy, droning song, with multiple layers of electronics anchored by a hypnotic, dissonant, two note keyboard melody. Deb's vocals have a trippy yet ghostly psychedelic quality. 'Kairos' and

'March Of The Wooden Potatoes' both sound like Tangerine Dream influenced space trips. The album also includes a 12 minute cover of Hawkwind's 'Golden Void', which ArcMet make completely their own. Eggleston's keyboards create a pitch black symphonic atmosphere, colouring the music with a variety of synth effects. And Kozlowski's guitar soars, playing profoundly tasteful leads that would make any Dave Gilmour fan swoon.

Of ArcMet "Version 2", Eggleston says, "This is the band that really got down to brass tacks and aligned us with a more professional approach. We played The Loud Music Festival in Northampton and The CMJ festival in New York City, the major unsigned festival of the '90s, much like SXSW is today." Other notable appearances included opening for Ozric Tentacles, Gong, The Legendary Pink Dots, Allan Holdsworth, and Pere Ubu.

ArcMet made numerous live appearances in the late '90s through mid-00s, including appearances at The Strange Daze Spacerock Festivals. Two more live CDs were released. Viva documented the bands performance at the Quarkstock Spacerock Festival in 2000. By the time Other Music was released in 2004, featuring music from a 2001 show in Connecticut, Deb Young had left the band, replaced by Dinosaur Jr's Pat Murphy on drums.

It wasn't until '13 that the band would release their first studio recorded CD since *Creature Of The Velvet Void*. Recorded in 2005, *Everything You Know Is Wrong* features the quartet of Eggleston, Kozlowski, Murphy, and new vocalist Andrea Aguayo. The classic ArcMet sound is intact, though there are a couple songs with a more mainstream feel, which Aguayo is well suited for, capped off by a tension laced cover of Roxy Music's 'In Every Dreamhome A Heartache'.

Jerry Kranitz runs the Aural Innovations website, the global source for spacerock and cosmically inclined psychedelia, krautrock and electronic music, featuring radio shows, reviews and interviews at Aural-Innovations.com