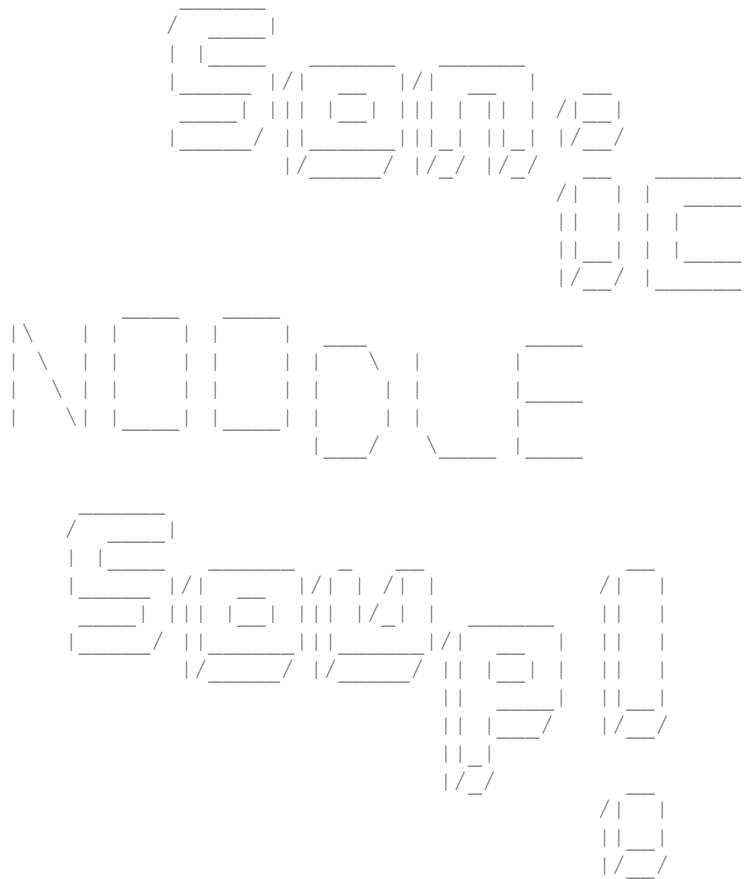


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++ SONIC NOODLE SOUP ++

the smart electronic noise zine  
issue 3 July 2002

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< Words from Audiobot Central >

Changes, changes, changes! Yes, Sonic Noodle Soup is undergoing some administrative changes for the better, which means that I have an easier job every month and I can chase up those obscure (and hopefully) interesting articles and

interviews for y'all. We now have a swanky new website, <http://www.metempsychosis.com/sonicnoodlesoup/> , kindly provided by Mr Eel and the Metem Krew. There you can read about what we do, subscribe to the zine and even take a gander at previous issues! If you dig new independent electronic music, go visit the Metem Krew at <http://www.metempsychosis.com/>

Audiobot Steve

< RetroTeChnoFunkAnoOdleHoUseMusiC >

Created to clear dance floors at the end of the night, Digeridoo by Richard 'Aphex Twin' James was a structured descent into noise and BPM madness. The single was backed by the lovely 'Analogue Bubblebath' - a world away from the mad fluttery beats and flanged synthetic swirls of tweakbox digitaldigeridoo, typical of his penchant for the hardcore/softcore approach to music making. Like eating wet concrete and blunt steel tacks for breakfast.

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/Creative Demons : A discussion with Kaden

I have long been a fan of the music of Kaden and I have even had the pleasure of re interpreting one of his many pieces. He produces dark tribal ambience and soundscapes that bathe the brain in polychromatic fluids. An established and life long musician, Kaden fills every piece with intelligent musicality and fine detail. What follows is a discussion I had with him and, I think you'll agree, contains some fascinating insights into the creative process.

SNS: How would you best describe the musical entity that is Kaden?

KADEN: I approach music rather like I approach life; pay attention and you'll find something to learn, and something to say. The key point is to understand both what you're doing, and \*why\* you're doing it. It's an approach that works on a lot of levels, and fosters a kind of 'awareness of purpose' that (for me, anyway) makes it easier to find a focal point. I've been a working musician for 25 years, playing an insane variety of music and instruments, from bass in C&W bands to drumming in ridiculously complex prog-rock ensembles. Every situation has left me with \*some\* indelibly imprinted musical truth that becomes part of my core creative vocabulary. When you apply some of these lessons out of context there's a result that's totally unexpected, but ultimately understandable, which gives you both a new creative tool, and a somewhat deeper (or wider) insight into 'how creativity works'. Musically, as with life, I'm also a fairly ardent advocate of 'first principle knowledge'; learn and understand the \*very\* basics of a subject, then teach yourself the rest. I learn useful things every day of my life, and I teach myself useful things every day of my life, musically and otherwise. The more you know, and the more you understand \*about\* what you know, the easier it is to get what you hear out of your head and into the real world. Yup, I think too much; whenever that gets to be a problem, I'll figure out a way to insert some form of randomness into the process, then see where that goes.

I'll use whatever's available as equipment; I've been a \*complete\* gearhead at some points in my life, and been forced to make instruments out of things I haul out of dumpsters at other times. Both circumstances are perfectly ok with me. I've never, however, been a gear \*snob\*...those guys make me laugh hysterically. There's small but vocal contingents of them on a lot of message boards sneering at anything not done on absolutely current and needlessly expensive gear, which leads me

to ask 'how on earth do they \*ever\* tolerate listening to material recorded last month, or even worse, last year?'. Interestingly, most of 'em would happily relinquish possession of several internal organs to own things like minimoogs (won't stay in tune for love or money, no midi, monophonic, no memory, no presets) and 303's (see previous, and NOISY), but if someone else uses them it's 'That's sooo '80s, man...I'm on the cutting edge, myself...', then they slot a sample CD of Clyde Stubblefield drum loops and use their state-of-the-art-gear to piece together other people's performances from the '60's into their 'cutting edge' material. The mind boggles. I used to love going on stage when I was in D.V.O.A. with Mark Spybey from Download...his instruments are a bunch of Fisher-Price Toys, a microphone, a cheap Roland multi-effects box and a mackie mixer. He records all the material on a cassette 4 track, and it's immaculately produced, stunningly innovative material, because he's taken the time to learn every quirky detail of his equipment. Timeless music from timeless gear, kinda. Brilliant.

SNS: People are often so keen on categorising music that some stuff gets lost in the shuffle. When I listen to your material I feel that it is rooted in something other than the typical Kraftwerk proto techno base. It seems to me that you owe a larger debt to pioneers like Roedelius and Eno.

KADEN: My affection for Roedelius is pretty well documented, but truth be known, my influences (from a noise/dark ambient standpoint) actually go back to Pierre Schaeffer and the entire Musique Concrete movement, which was the first serious application of heavily manipulated audio samples and electronic sound sources as a form of musical expression. Digital waveform manipulation and editing is a natural technological evolution from the early days of splicing blocks, found sound sources and insanely misused tube technology. Back then the composers/performers seemed more like middle aged high school physics teachers with horn rimmed glasses, cardigans and sensible ties as they hunched over tables crammed with heavily modified Ham Radio equipment coaxing (at the time) revolutionary noises out of seemingly thin air. Take that attitude and collide it head on with Harry Partch's approach to home-made instruments/home made music theory and you have a pretty irresistible set of influences for a technically inclined young lad in the early '70's... Then I tripped over free jazz on the way to a rehearsal in a King Crimson cover band and realized I didn't actually want ANY restrictions on what music was to me. 30 years later I've been fortunate enough to accumulate what seems like several lifetimes worth of ensemble experience in wildly diverse situations from country to prog to just plain weird. Every situation was educational, and ultimately inspirational. Except for playing bass in a country band, which pretty much has nothing to recommend it other than unbelievable amounts of free drinks. That isolated instance aside, when you start with \*basic\* musical knowledge apply that knowledge in non-mainstream contexts as a matter of course, then any \*other\* musical experience you gain takes on unexpected meaning when viewed through that skewed context. I'm awestruck by the beauty and passion that people like Schaeffer, Roedelius, and Michael Rother (to name a few) can evoke, but I have no desire to emulate them slavishly. I'm just a small explorer assembling little pathways towards creativity from whatever fragments present themselves. Technique wise, I'll study whatever I can lay my hands on, just to understand various processes...the 'why', rather than the 'how', but inspiration and creativity...muse, I suppose, just \*happen\*, based on the sum of my experiences, and the context I place them in.

SNS: There is a lot of tension and release in your work, very finely structured. When I create soundscapes I find that the hardest thing to achieve is to place each sound or layer into a reasonable context so that the listener does not experience jarring anachronism. When you compose, how do you stay on top of the mix and place the sounds in context?

KADEN: There's always a story, and usually, a minds-eye visual. There's plots, a cast of characters, a beginning, and an end. Once you have that, it's actually pretty simple; be mindful of the relative pitches of non-traditional sound sources, keep a spectrum analyzer open as much as possible so you know how your over-all frequency balance is accumulating, and try to audition each new voice in context of every other voice 1 on 1, as well as capo de tutti. If you're paying attention you'll find where each voice and section is most effective, and why. Method acting for audio samples, kinda. Think about your cast, and don't be afraid to audition a thousand hopefuls for even a bit part. If all your voices are \*effective\* and technically sound by themselves, you're half way there. Don't toss in a compromise sound source and tell yourself 'I'll fix it in the mix'; there's a \*real\* old studio term for that... 'polishing turds'. Having spent far too much time during my callow youth trying to do just that I can state with absolute authority that polishing turds only results in glossy shit. You've been warned. At one time I'm a pretty fervent advocate of T-Racks mastering software, but I gotta confess, the Izotope plugin mastering module has been sounding better and better every time I try it. Yup, mastering is an art, and a true artiste in the field can work wonders, but \*anyone\* can get a perfectly reasonable sounding master through the K.I.S.S. principal, with just a bit of low end compression and some EQ tweezing until there's hint of a smile on the frequency graph, provided they paid attention throughout the production process, and had quality source material in the first place. It ain't rocket science, kids, no matter how hard folks try to convince you otherwise.

SNS: Thanks Kaden!

IF you would like to listen to the work of Kaden, please visit:  
<http://www.mp3.com/Kaden>

If you are at all interested in Dark Tribal Ambient soundscapes and detailed music, I strongly suggest that you check him out. You can also find his homepage here: <http://listen.to/kaden>  
Dark Music for Dark Times

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/Don't let it control you : Mastering addiction

There was a time when I had no idea about mastering at all. To me, it was a fantastical final process that only experts and engineers knew about. Then came the time when I started to experiment with programs like T racks and a whole new world opened up to me. For a long time it was a world that imprisoned me. But no more! Today I stand up and get back to actually making music!

You see, I was an ardent admirer of that early nineties bleep and bass Sheffield scene. My walls would shake with the cthonic pulse of sub sub bass, low frequency monsters pioneered by the likes of LFO and Baby Ford. I never knew that a growling 10hz wallshaker could kill an amp until one day I sent a sample to a friend and it browned out his system. That was when I learned that bass could kill.

After that traumatic event, mastering became a growing obsession. I'd sometimes spend hours slaving over a piece, dropping squirly bits of treble, cutting bass and tiring my ears. My music production decreased and I went back over old tracks constantly, searching for the perfect final mix: the one that would stand out and gleam. Of course, that finality never came. I was never entirely happy with the end results and this formed my prison. That's when the instinct to attain perfection takes control and, as a result, raw creativity degrades.

I think independent music producers often have the hardest job. After all, we need to be writers, composers and engineers all at once. We don't have the money, the time or the flashy team of producers behind us to generate that pristine mix.

That's not to suggest it's impossible of course. Some bedroom mavens are very skilled indeed.

I've now decided that it's healthier to explore my music rather than to spend hours sweating over the details. We are supposed to be making music right? My sage advice is to step back from the process once in a while and relinquish some control, otherwise the details will control you.

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/Cybotron : A discussion with Rik Davis

When Cybotron released the LP 'Enter' on the Fantasy record label in 1983, the music world could never have imagined what impact it would have on contemporary electronic music. Splicing tech noir, paranoia, apocalyptic vision and electro, Cybotron managed to capture the essence of a city in flux and an uncertain future.

Of course, now it all seems so obvious, looking back: Rik Davis and Juan Atkins, Cybotron collaborators, carved out their own highly specific niche. After this album, Juan Atkins went solo as Model 500 and developed his own sound, Rik Davis continuing as Cybotron. I had the good fortune to get in touch with Rik and our highly individual discussion follows...

SNS: Hi Rik, Thank you for your time. Anyone who has studied the early history of Techno and Electro would be aware of the formation and music of Cybotron. At that time you had partnered with Juan Atkins and had been signed to Fantasy records, at which time you created and released the seminal 'Enter' album. Clearly, the philosophy behind it was very futurist and seemed like the US answer to Kraftwerk. What creative steps led you to this point and were you aware at the time that the sound you were carving out was quite unique and would have such an impact?

CYBOTRON: Futurist? Futurism without spiritual sight is artistic and intellectual suicide, Picasso, and Dali were both futurists, but abandoned the dead end of mindless futurism for the warm God inspired depths of surrealism and neo cubism, where they could paint with social and religious iconography and thus effect change in society. They could resist anarchy and fascism, two things which go hand in hand! No great musical personality has failed to produce his solemnity, or songs of praise and wonder, or to take his portion of victory over the Beast... Therefore the essence of "Enter" is "APOCALYPTIC" not Futurist. Kraftwerk bores me! With its mindless and soulless repetitive beats! With its lack of lyrical content. I found Ultra Vox, with their "Rage in Eden" approach far more stimulating, and closer to the goal of "CELESTIAL MUSE". As far as sound goes, this is irrelevant. If you approach music on that basis you will end up as out of style as "black face minstrelism". The King of the Judeo-Christian musical matrix is David, or Da'ood as he is called by the Koranists. He left behind NO SOUND! Only lyrics! This is the soul of all musics! Whoever departs from celestial order into chaos, shall perish in his own juices and gall. Impact means nothing! Everything on the radio has impact in the loony bin of popularity. Where everything has impact, nothing has real impact! But in short time becomes irrelevant as it degenerates into fading mass memory and becomes white noise... This is the first century of recorded media!

SNS: What was it like working with Juan?

CYBOTRON: Juan is talented, but adverse to the guitar. And ensnared in the contradiction of "Step time" and the quick fix of "The turntable". Which I have no interest in at all. I must have the Keyboard synth and the lyrical device! The vast sci fi synth texture, soaring legato, syrup thick, mocking the pimp inspired lies of the gangsta mind!

SNS: Obviously, since that time there have been countless evolutions of electronic and Techno music. How have you viewed that evolution.

CYBOTRON: Electronic Music is Subotnik!, Tomita, Larry Fast, Carlos etc. The acoustic maestros trapped the proto electronic musicians at the slaughter of the "Ars Electronica"... They had to deny the synth a place in the classical halls, so as to ensure the continuation of the slavery of the orthodox symphonia! And to prevent "New Masters." Techno Died with "Rage in Eden"... When the mindless pimps who controlled the lie of radio pop and the suicide by drugs and aids "night clubs", decided they would have no mention of God interrupting their orgies. They died by the tens of thousands horribly! More kids died of anal copulation and pop drugs than died in Viet Nam. I am "TEKNO" this is my religion. I am "CYBER" this is my Art!

SNS: So, the message of Cybotron is essentially apocalyptic in nature? That is, it represents a message of divinity, opposed to the workings of the music industry at large?

CYBOTRON: The "music industry" has as it's goal the exploitation of the creative, and the public. I cannot be concerned with that. It shall die and the men in it shall die but the artistic remains. It is corrupt but the artist, it's victim remains pure. The divine? Look here...

"As I slice through your TOWERS of glass and adamantine steel...

To which of your Las Vegas Gods will you appeal?...

Traces of cosmic lies on your blood stained path..

And I'm not the kind to sell out cuz I understand the new math..."

Rik Davis "Final Fantasy" from the album "Cyber Ghetto" circa 1995.

Futurism was a delusion of the pre world war 2 Bolsheviks. Apocalypse means revelation of truth. Futurism died under the heel of Stalinism and fascism. The world of Reaganic neofuturism died with the collapse of the twin towers of Babel dude. In Afghanistan, all music was banned by the Taliban, all tek was suppressed, the only book allowed in school was the Koran. TV was banned! This is the fate that the Marxist trained Anti-Tek worldwide Muslim conspiracy, would have us go to! We are in the Jihad right now. Toffler never foresaw this, but the Apocalyptians did! The same people have now slain and seek to slay all those who do not follow their divine view. But the cleansing of the hives will overtake them as well as the agents of chaos! As it always does.

SNS: I have often thought that the dark side of electronic music, especially the sensation obsessed club side of it, has the potential to unlock the robot inside of us and diminish our capacity for critical thought. The beat box has been turned into a money making device. But I also believe that independent music and Internet distribution represents a revolutionary element that might catalyze new change. What are your thoughts on these possibilities?

CYBOTRON: The beat box is an instrument as any other, but where everyone is an artist, there is no art! The club scene is a mindless orgy of disposable music and hedonistic delusion! There is not a single club that shall not utterly perish and become a ruin. Anyone who bases his life and energy in the clubs shall likewise be destroyed. No one can hold on to style in the clubs! There is no thought in the clubs, only "the Fuck", and the club owner is getting all the action, not you!

SNS: I just have to ask you out of curiosity, what is your

studio setup like? Do you have any preference for software based production?

CYBOTRON: I prefer Korg and ensonique, and roland synths, a PC with MOTU 24bit modules, Cubase... Trinity, no turntables... I think you deceive yourself when you call yourself performing at a fake soiree like "the Detroit Electronic Music festival" and you bring turntables, what is the diff between Detroit Techno and hip hop?

SNS: What is the next step for Cybotron?

CYBOTRON: Desk top "Cyber Videos", Internet movies, Neo art forms. Hip hop and mindless techno beats have killed the record thing.. Michael Jackson's "Invincible" cost 30 million dollars to make! People are downloading the music for free because the music is disposable, it's all so meaningless. We must evolve into a form that will be believed in, collectable, and also non disposable.

SNS: Thank you for your time.

To find out more about Cybotron, visit the website:  
<http://www.cybotron.com>  
Free movies, metamystics, Cybotron vids  
or to hear some tunes, visit <http://www.mp3.com/cybotron>

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/Review : Fruity Loops 3.55

Fruity Loops remains a very popular program. Its beatbox styled interface and snappy tools have been a hit with PC music makers since version 1 and the programmers of FL always seem to pack in a bunch of new stuff everytime they release a new version. I received my registration info a few days ago and eagerly downloaded the fruit flavoured beast...

So what's new in Fruity land? OK, as you'd expect, the interface is the same, with minor tweaks to the beat matrix resulting in a smoother look. Of course, most of the tweaks are under the hood, so let's take a peek...

Fruity now supports the DXi standard...so let's see, that means that it now supports VST, DX, VSTi and DXi...excuse me while I add in a few exclamation marks here !!! This makes for one big package. Most of the VST instruments I tried out seemed to work just fine. I don't have too many DX instruments, but the Pro 52 seemed to work OK.

Have you ever wanted to make Fruity talk? Well, the creative bods at Fruit land have now added a text to speech engine. It's a feature you need to drag and drop from the left hand explorer column, which is a bit awkward I think. However, once you open up the speech box, you can type in whatever you want, make it sound breathy and robotically sexy or just plain monotone and then you can save it as a preset. Very nice indeed, although I fear that we will now be assaulted with waves of Fruity sequenced trance stompers sporting speech juvenilia like 'Get your ass on tha dancefloor'...

For all you analog drum machine fans, now included is the 'Fruit Kick' - a sweet little plugin with parameters like 'click' and 'dist' that is tweakable and can output some solid sounding bass kicks. There is also the 'Drumsynth Live', a demo only, but it does look cool.

One plug I just have to mention is the 'Fruity Granulizer'...a kind of grain based, stuttering, morphing audio troll...just chuck in a wave sample and start using the knobs provided and in no time you'll have a shaky, sputtering instrument. Most excellent!

So far I have not encountered any bugs, but I have installed it alongside version 3.4 just in case. The 'What's New' docs do mention that there could be some compatibility problems with older version files, so I stepped on the side of caution and so

far have had no troubles.

The biggest gripe I have with Fruity Loops is the fact that it's difficult to compose in. Those old step sequencers were a pain to program anyway, so why base a whole software program on the concept in the first place? Software should be about ease of use. Still, they ain't gonna change this for me. This is what Fruity Loops is all about...a beatbox with cool bells and whistles. Definitely worth the upgrade for fans though!

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/Texture Mapping : Chatting with Richard Di Santo

Richard Di Santo is the digital curator of Incursion.org - a website dedicated to uncovering experimental forms of art. I recently had the pleasure of chatting with him...

SNS: The first thing that strikes me about the Incursion site is the close relationship between the visual artspace and the musicspace. The implication seems to be that there is a definite link between visual texture and audio texture. How do you see this relationship?

RDS: Essentially, the music review and the gallery exist independent of each other, and seem to run on parallel lines, never meeting on the same ground. For me, this implication of a link between visual and sound art is not an integral element of the site in its present form. Of course I don't mean that this link isn't there - far from it - rather that it is not necessarily a dialogue being initiated in these pages at the moment. When I started Incursion just over two years ago I had never really imagined that there would be a visual artspace. At that time the emphasis was first and foremost on the music review, and the next phase was going to be a forum for literary theory and experiments in narrative form. It was the connection between text and sound, between narrative and musical structures, between the author-composer and reader-listener which interested me, and is still something I am exploring in other arenas. The gallery came almost by accident (a happy accident nonetheless), on our first anniversary. The forum for literary experiments is still imminent.

SNS: What does Incursion seek to do?

RDS: At Incursion, the emphasis has always been on experimenting with known forms. The first and most prominent feature of the site is the Incursion Music Review, published every two weeks, with a focus on experimental music and sound art. We know that a music review will never replace the experience of listening, so when writing we don't presume to be able to anticipate each listener's response. We simply try to capture something of the essence of each work, inspire the reader's interest, draw out some points and keep still other qualities hidden in order to be discovered by others. On our first anniversary we developed the Incursion Gallery, an online artspace showcasing a selection of works by a small group of visual artists. There are no academics, commentaries or theories in the gallery; it is simply a series of 'rooms' with images on the walls. The future will see a wider trajectory of interests and pursuits being explored on the site, but these plans are still under wraps for the moment.

SNS: Would it be fair to say that the music review is not strictly focussed on one particular form of music? I get the feeling that you are more interested in new and experimental forms of sound and structure. There is almost a real sense of 'futurism' here.

RDS: It is true that I am most interested in experimental forms,



in projects that don't always fit into a specific genre, tradition or school of thought, but not exclusively. It's all about breaking the moulds we know all too well, about trying new things, about having original ideas about sound and composition and expressing them in compelling forms.

SNS: In reading discussions with I8U, Taylor Deupree and others, there is a real exploration of the granular detail and timbre of sound; analysis at the subatomic level of noise. Do you think that the increasing use of electronics has enabled this intellectualisation of music?

RDS: The use of electronics in music has certainly changed our vocabulary when it comes to talking about music, but I don't think it has changed critical approaches all too much. We still have a pair of ears and a brain with which to receive these sounds and at the most basic level we respond to electronic sound in the same way that we might respond to acoustic sound.

SNS: Thank you for your time Richard.

RDS: Thanks very much Steve!

If you would like to check out the Incursion art gallery and music review, please plug this into your browser:  
<http://www.incursion.org/>

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/Network

Weirdsville radio - The out sound from way in  
<http://www.weirdsville.com/>

Electronic Music 411 - <http://www.em411.com/>

<http://audio.gamingforce.com/>  
Your source for video game music. Tobal No. 1 rocks!

If you like a bit of fringe thinking and have never read Hakim Bey, check it out : <http://www.gyw.com/hakimbey/>

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/Credits

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