

eclectic VIBES

FOR MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

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NORTHEAST
BY
HEART



Victor
the Scavenger



Israel's Agents of Change

Orphaned Land

Roy Sanjib
The
Graffiti
Guy!

**Big
Bang
Blues**
From
Delhi's
Belly

**Ancient
Future**
Taking
Fusion
Forward

**Digital
Suicide**
On the
Revolutionary
Road

Some Fads That Need To Go + Women and Middle Eastern cinema

TRACKLISTING

VOLUME- II ISSUE-8



ORPHANED LAND

While in town recently, this Israeli band unwinded with *Eclectic Vibes*

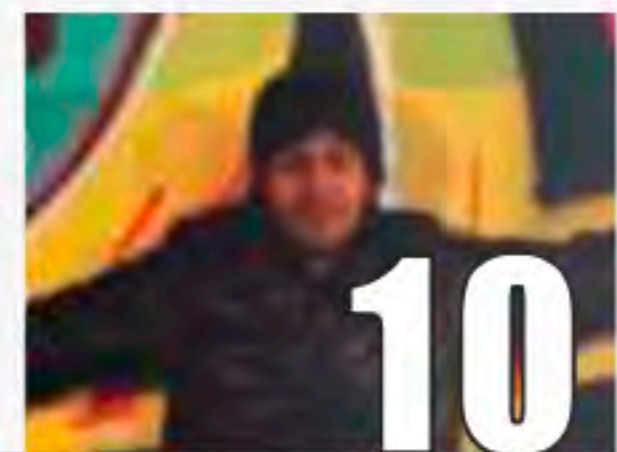
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DIGITAL SUICIDE

In an all new rebel avatar

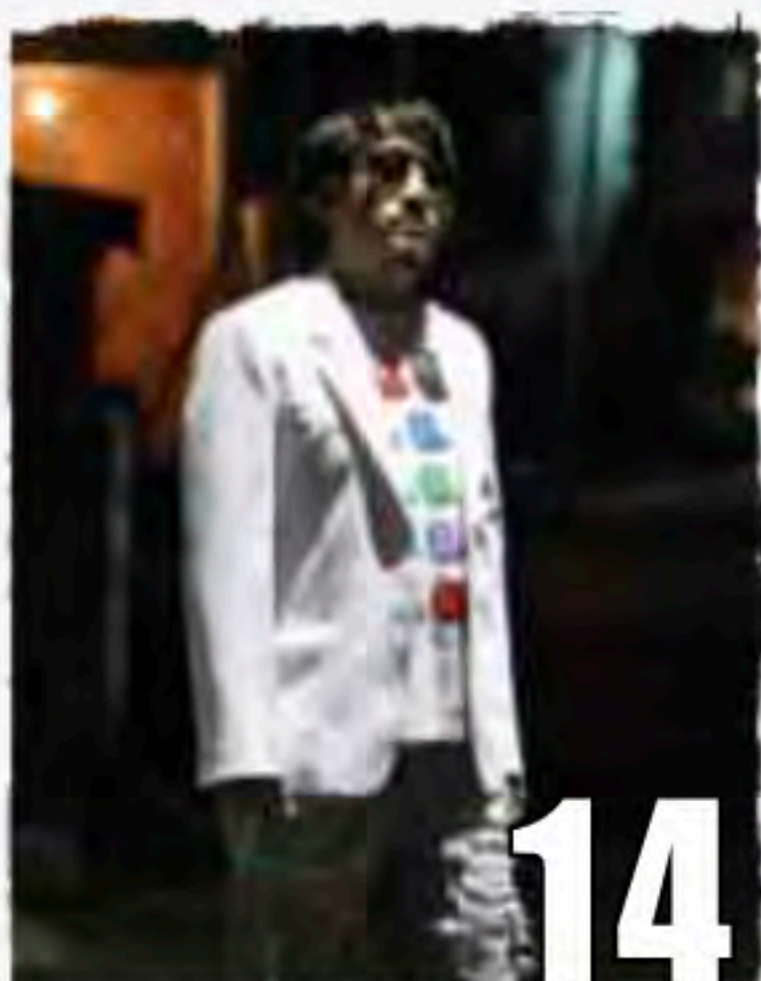
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30 PERFORMERS, 33 YEARS

World fusion music wouldn't be what it is today without the compositions, concerts and collaborations of the Ancient Future ensemble...



Circa: 1978. A bunch of young college students from the Ali Akbar College of Music, San Rafael, California got together to blend, fuse and merge musical boundaries and create compositions that were common to all humanity. To fuse Indian, African, Balinese, South American, European and Middle Eastern rhythms and notes with jazz, rock and reggae and create what we now call "world fusion music". The 20-something youngsters — Matthew Montfort, Benjy Wertheimer, Phil Fong and Mindy Klein, dreamt of creating a new genre, a genre that would encompass all musical forms and traditions. And thus was born Ancient Future!

In its 33rd year now Matthew Montfort and his Ancient Future is only getting bigger, with around 30 performers in the ensemble and a musical repertoire that includes the rarest of sounds and instruments. World music, indeed!

Here's Matthew Montfort with the Ancient Future story, exclusively for *Eclectic Vibes*.

What's "Ancient" and what's the "Future"? Why the dichotomy?

What we are doing with world fusion music is learning from the great ancient traditions of the world and bringing that musical knowledge into the music of the future.

What initiated the Ancient Future ideology? What was the initial spark that ignited this movement, if I may say so?

I came of age in Boulder, Colorado, in the late '60s and early '70s. It was a hotbed of intellectual, artistic, and idealistic political activity. I was initially attracted to the guitar due to Jimi Hendrix. After studying his music, I decided to be a professional guitar player, and that to have an edge I wanted to learn as much advanced music as possible. So I decided to study jazz and classical music with the idea of incorporating that musical knowledge into rock. After embarking on that, I heard the jazz-rock experiments of Chick Corea, and the symphonic-rock work of the band Yes. This led me to whole-heartedly embrace

the concept of fusion of musical forms. Then I began wondering why musicians should stop at fusing Western musical forms when there were so many different types of music in the world. I decided that rather than simply making the type of music that was popular, that it made more sense to make the music that the world would need if humanity were to survive. So I decided that "world fusion music" was the music that was needed by humanity to point the way towards cultures learning from each other and growing in the process, rather than engaging in conflict, war, and environmental and cultural destruction.

When Benjy and I arrived in California to study at the Ali Akbar College of Music, we moved into the house where the Diga Rhythm Band sometimes rehearsed. That band was a project of the then young tabla wizard Zakir Hussain...

Take us through your journey from then till now. What's different now from 1978?

In 1978 we were all very young: the first Ancient Future concert occurred the night before my 21st birthday. The band consisted of my girlfriend at the time,

Mindy Klein who now goes by the name Mindia Devi, and my best friend since fourth grade, Benjy Wertheimer.

When Benjy and I arrived in California

from Colorado to study at the Ali Akbar College of Music, we moved into the house where the Diga Rhythm Band sometimes rehearsed. That band was a project of the then young tabla wizard Zakir Hussain and Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead. When we started, the very idea of purposefully fusing different traditions was controversial, and even the traditional music of the world was not really a part of the general public awareness here in the USA. We took it as our mission to turn on audiences to music from cultures they were not familiar with. We performed at unlikely venues such as the California State Fair. We were able to open up people who were, for example, used to listening to country and western music, to the music of India because our music had material that was familiar along with material that was new to them.

In the mid-1980s, there was a new trend in instrumental music in the music industry, and labels were suddenly somewhat interested in what we were doing. We were signed to Narada Records. We bucked the trend, and made several records which were considered a bit too up-tempo and jazzy by our record label: "Dreamchaser" which debuted at number 2 on the JAZZIZ National Airplay Chart, "World Without Walls" featuring tabla master Zakir Hussain, and "Asian Fusion" featuring top Chinese Indian and Vietnamese musicians.

Finally, as I had predicted, in the 1990s the world music movement started to emerge in the public consciousness. Unfortunately, the record label didn't see that as an important development and so they didn't do any promotion. For a while, it looked like world music was getting enough attention from the media to become the next big thing in the industry, but that was short lived.

By this time, Ancient Future was doing a lot of work with guest artistes from many different musical traditions. We didn't know it yet, but we were in the process of evolving into a large chamber ensemble featuring musicians from all over the world who performed in various smaller configurations. By the turn-of-the-century, we were performing in a number of countries around

the world.

Then in the last decade the music business collapsed due to changes in technology. We are developing new ways to support the music without an industry or state arts support, but we aren't quite where we need to be in that process. But it is gratifying to see that our controversial vision of cross-cultural collaborations between master musicians from around the world producing a new movement towards world fusion music has indeed come to fruition.

World Fusion Music, that's quite a heavy terminology. Do you ever feel like you are yet to do justice to all forms of world music?

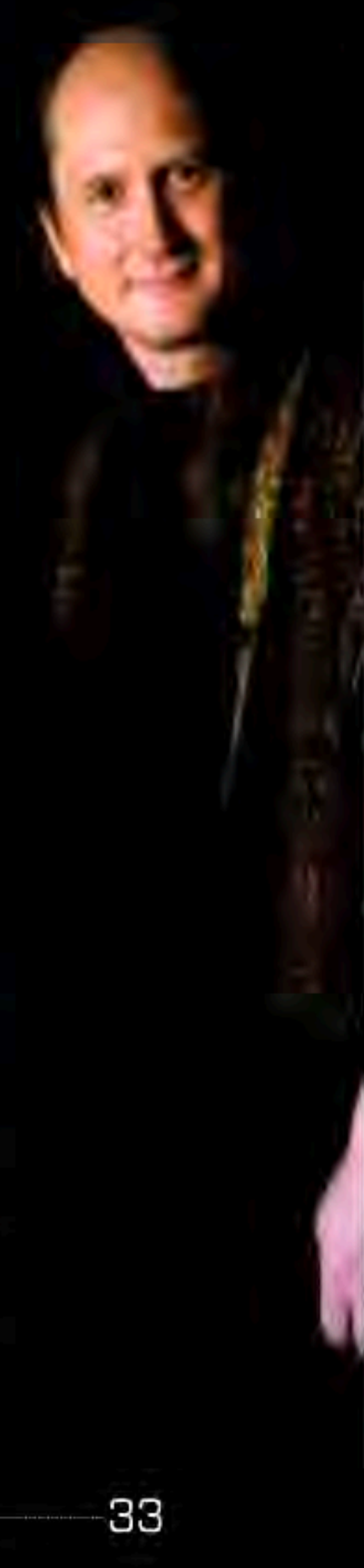
World fusion music is a mission. Of course in just one lifetime, no one can do justice to all forms of music in the world. I'm very happy that we've been able to work with so many forms and in the short time that we've had so far.

You have worked with all kinds of music, can you pick a favourite? Which is the one style which you love working with the most?

I really can't pick a favourite. Each culture has something unique to offer the world. Some cultures have developed very advanced classical forms of music, and of course these advanced forms of music have a lot of musical knowledge to impart. So as musicians we are obviously very drawn to classical traditions, but we love popular forms as well.

Is there any particular style or genre which is the easiest to fuse and re-create?

That's a good question. But I don't think there's any one style or genre that's easiest to fuse; rather I do believe that there are certain mixtures of genres that are hard to fuse



together successfully. A cooking analogy would be making a dish featuring coffee and mustard. But a master chef could find a way to do that.

Since you know almost every kind of musical tradition, tell us where does Indian music stand in the world music scenario? How is it different or similar from all other music?

The classical music of India has very advanced rhythms and has made melody a high art form combining in-the-moment emotional expressions and a spiritual science of sound. It features very high development of those two musical elements. One place it very much differs from Western classical music is in the realm of harmony. Western classical music has very advanced harmonic expressions, but the harmonic structure can dictate the melody. In Indian classical music, the melody is all-important.

World Without Walls, is the remastered re-release of your 1990 classic. Why the need for a

re-release?

World Without Walls was originally released on CD and cassette on Sona Gaia Records, which through series of sales and mergers ended up being owned by Capitol Records. But by that time, it was out-of-print, so I'm not even sure they knew they owned it. It was the only one of our records that was not available on iTunes. When Capitol Records learned that the exact line-up of Ancient Future that had made that record was performing a reunion concert at the famous Yoshi's jazz club, they decided to re-issue it on iTunes.

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Any plans to come up with the 8th full-length?

We've already started to record the 8th release. It is a crowd-funded recording, and it is called *The Archive of Future Ancient Recordings*, or A.F.A.R. for short. For those that participate in the funding process, it is already available

as there are already 8 songs in the archive totaling more than 50 minutes of music. Subscribers can download all the songs in the archive and every song we add to the archive as we complete the project. For subscribers, this release will be quite a bargain as the archive will undoubtedly end up being very large. When the project is completed, we will release a subset of it to the public.

Ancient Future is now a big group of people. How do the practice sessions work out?

There are over 30 musicians who work in the band. But we have never all played together at one time. Rather, we have small ensembles that get together to perform specific concerts and recordings. So it is really very easy to practice together.

Apart from the guitars, sitars, tablas, what other unique instruments do you use in your acts?

Scalloped fretboard guitar, flamenco guitar, Glissentar, Chinese *gu zheng*, Vietnamese *dan bau*, Arabic violin, cello, Arabic percussion, keyboards, Balinese *gamelan*, Chinese flutes, *santoor*, piano, and *didjeridu* are some of the unusual instruments.

Jazz, reggae, rock: How do they work out in your creations?

We use elements from these forms as the muse dictates. For example, on our 'Asian Fusion' recording, we recorded a traditional Vietnamese folksong using a reggae beat. Years later, it was released on Putumayo's 'Asian Lounge' release, and was a big hit.

What else is left for you guys to achieve or create? Any goal, any work that you still feel is left to be done?

There's just so much left to do in world fusion music! The main problem is choosing which of the many projects we would like to focus on. Fans of world fusion can help us make that determination by becoming sponsors and subscribers to our A.F.A.R. project. The quicker we can raise funds, the more music we can make!

LINK:

www.ancient-future.com/ www.facebook.com/pages/Ancient-Future/109674829058313

WORDS: BIDISHA SINGHA

