

TouchXtone Newsletter

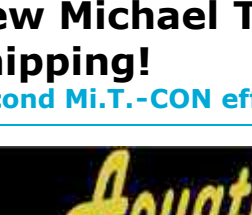
News, CDs, Reviews

Dear Jim,

Wow. Up over eighty degrees here in the Atlanta area. Spring is in full swing. All things blooming and budding. Just like the musical happenings of Michael and Jim, aka TouchXtone. Lots to tell and more on the horizon.

There is so much going on with us as the TouchXtone band (new gigs) and us as individuals (festivals, new collaborations and CDs, new equipment), that we're renaming this newsletter Ephemeral Radio to better represent all our diverse musical outlets.

We'll still be highlighting all things TouchXtone, but we'll also try to do a better job letting you know about all that music we do outside of TouchXtone. So next month's newsletter will have the Ephemeral Radio logo at the top, your information resource for Jim and Michael's musical activities. There'll still be lots of TouchXtone coverage in there. And lots of other good music like we used to hear.



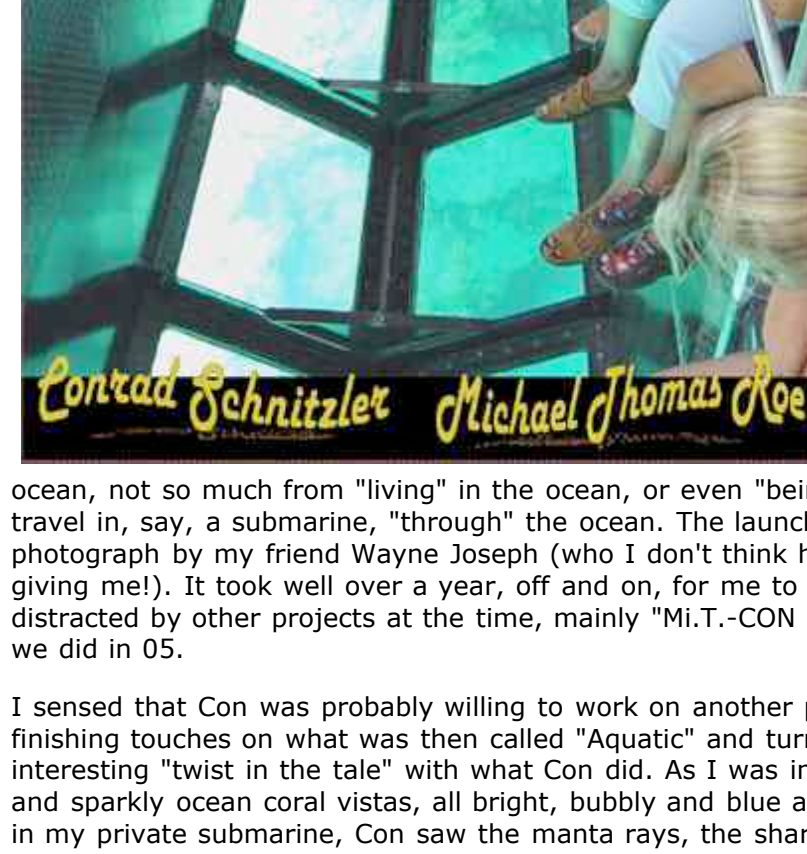
EphemeralRadio

good music like we used to hear

Jim Combs & Michael Thomas Roe of TouchXtone

New Michael Thomas Roe/Conrad Schnitzler CD Is Shipping!

Second Mi.T.-CON effort is dubbed "Aquatic Vine Music"



"Aquatic Vine Music" is now shipping, so Con and Michael are finally taking orders. Price will be \$15 plus \$3 shipping domestic (North America) and \$5.00 international. For the time being, orders can be made direct from the artists. Just send a note to mthom@mindspring.com. Or better yet, send a PayPal to the same address, and Michael will send your CD to you.

Michael tells us from his listens to the test pressings, it's a nice little baby and makes a Dad proud.

Says Michael... "I like to describe "Aquatic Vine Music" as a world within a world. My initial thinking on it was that it was a "meditation" on the

ocean, not so much from "living" in the ocean, or even "being of" the ocean, but more a travel in, say, a submarine, "through" the ocean. The launching pad really was the cover photograph by my friend Wayne Joseph (who I don't think had any clue what he was giving me!). It took well over a year, off and on, for me to complete the piece. I was distracted by other projects at the time, mainly "Mi.T.-CON 04" and the TouchXtone CD's we did in 05.

I sensed that Con was probably willing to work on another piece of mine so I put the finishing touches on what was then called "Aquatic" and turned it over to Con. And it's an interesting "twist in the tale" with what Con did. As I was imagining all these beautiful fish and sparkly ocean coral vistas, all bright, bubbly and blue as I channelled thru the water in my private submarine, Con saw the manta rays, the sharks, the squid, the octopus, the electric eels, all the creatures that I dared not think about.

And while my lovely submarine was grazing the waters unflinching, Con heard the sound of the motor, conceived its combustive engine and envisioned a story of its rivets slackening, its nuts and bolts loosening. In other words, while I floated the submarine, Con sunk it. A perfect complement! That is not to say that all is menace. By the end of the CD there is a powerful episode of redemption.

Aquatic Vine Music (2006 Real Vine Music) Conrad Schnitzler and Michael Thomas Roe (Mi.T.-CON 05)

Songs and timings: 01. 11:49 02. 06:42 03. 11:49 04. 05:02 05. 08:26 06. 04:43 07. 07:47 08. 04:27

- [Mi.T.-CON Aquatic Vine Music CD orders](#)
- [Or Send Your Order Through PayPal To \[mthom@mindspring.com\]\(mailto:mthom@mindspring.com\)](#)

Robert Rich's Atlanta Concert Is April 9th At EyeDrum!

Experimental cellist Diana Obscura opens show



Atlanta is fortunate to be the fifth stop on Robert Rich's 10-week tour around the U.S., Sunday, April 9 at the Eyedrum Gallery.

EyeDrum is located at Suite 8, 290 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, Atlanta, GA 30312. Phone: 404-522-0655. Doors open at 8pm, Diana Obscura begins promptly at 8:30pm, and Robert begins promptly at 9:30pm. Tickets are \$10 each.

Robert Rich Biography

With over two dozen albums, Robert Rich has helped define the genres of ambient music, dark-ambient, tribal and trance, yet his music remains hard to categorize. Part of his unique sound comes from using home-made acoustic and electronic instruments, microtonal tunings, computer-based signal processing, chaotic systems and feedback networks.

Diana Obscura Biography

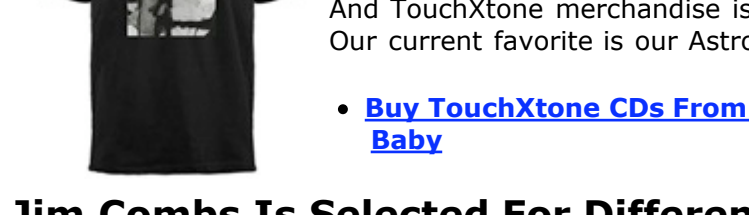
Diana Obscura creates spare, powerful, and evocative songs for cello and voice, which are influenced by early and avant classical music. Damon Young (of The Changelings) has teamed up with her on the new project, adding electronic sounds and manipulation, field recordings, guitar, and percussion. She is currently featured on the soundtrack of the independent film Ashtide, playing with the Hungry Flower Gamelan, and working on a full length ambient CD with Damon Young.

"Watching ethereal vocalist and cellist Diana Obscura, the listener gets the feeling that she has stepped out of a fractured fairy tale book. With her wild mane of hair and her cello poised low, she attacks the instrument with the fury of Johnny Ramone and the reckless grace of a possessed Cinderella." -Lee Smith, Creative Loafing

- [Robert Rich Web Site](#)
- [Rich/Obscura Atlanta Show Information](#)
- [Diana Obscura Web Site](#)
- [EyeDrum Web Site](#)

TouchXtone Back At Java Monkey In May And June

We'll be performing new material out on the patio



TouchXtone, voted by Creative Loafing readers as Atlanta's Best Electronic Band, is playing at Java Monkey in downtown Decatur, GA on Friday, May 26, and Friday, June 23.

This is our first gigs since December '05 and there'll be lots of new sounds and beats to kick back on the patio with. We love it when it's spring at the Java Monkey because the patio is fully open and Friday nights are pretty much a party there. Good eats, beer, wine and of course, coffee.

We go on at 8:30pm and will play 2 sets until 11pm. Look forward to seeing you there!

Java Monkey, 205 Ponce de Leon Ave. #5, Decatur, GA 30030, 404.378.5002

- [TouchXtone Schedule](#)
- [Java Monkey Web Site](#)

TouchXtone CDs Are Back In Stock At CDBaby.com

We also have cool new black T-shirts at our store



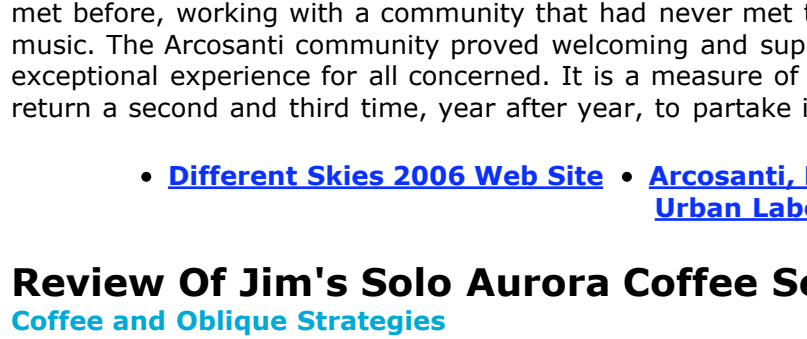
TouchXtone CDs are available from CD Baby. And remember that our tunes are also available for download from iTunes and most other download stores on the web.

And TouchXtone merchandise is available at our CafePress store. Our current favorite is our Astroboy back cover T-shirt.

- [Buy TouchXtone CDs From CD Baby](#)
- [Buy TouchXtone Merchandise From CafePress](#)

Jim Combs Is Selected For Different Skies 2006 Festival

Will attend week-long event at Arcosanti, AZ, Sept. 11-17



Jim has once again been selected to attend the prestigious Different Skies 2006 Electronic and Space Music Festival held annually at Arcosanti, Arizona, about an hour north of Phoenix. This year's event boasts 22 performers from Finland, England, Canada, and the United States. All will descend upon Arcosanti, Paolo Soleri's Arcology (architecture and ecology) showcase in the desert between Phoenix and Flagstaff, and spend a week jamming and composing the music that will then be performed on Saturday night in the Arcosanti Colly Soleri Amphitheater (that's a picture of Jim playing his melodica in the amphitheater at last year's Different Skies).

Different Skies began in 2003 and was the brainchild of musician and Recording Magazine editor Mike Metlay and Tucson musician/radio show host Doug Wellington. Different Skies is an electronic space music festival, a workshop for artists in these and related experimental music genres, a working vacation, an intensive and rewarding creative environment, and an opportunity that rarely presents itself in the rarefied world of space music: a chance for members of that community to get together for an extended period of time in a controlled and isolated environment, to network and learn from one another, form new professional alliances and new friendships, and to create and perform an evening of entirely original new music for an enthusiastic audience.

Electronic music, which features the synthesizer and computer as prominently as it does traditional amplified and acoustic instruments, is traditionally viewed as a lonely art form, created by musicians working alone in small studios. Opportunities to build community among these musicians are rare.

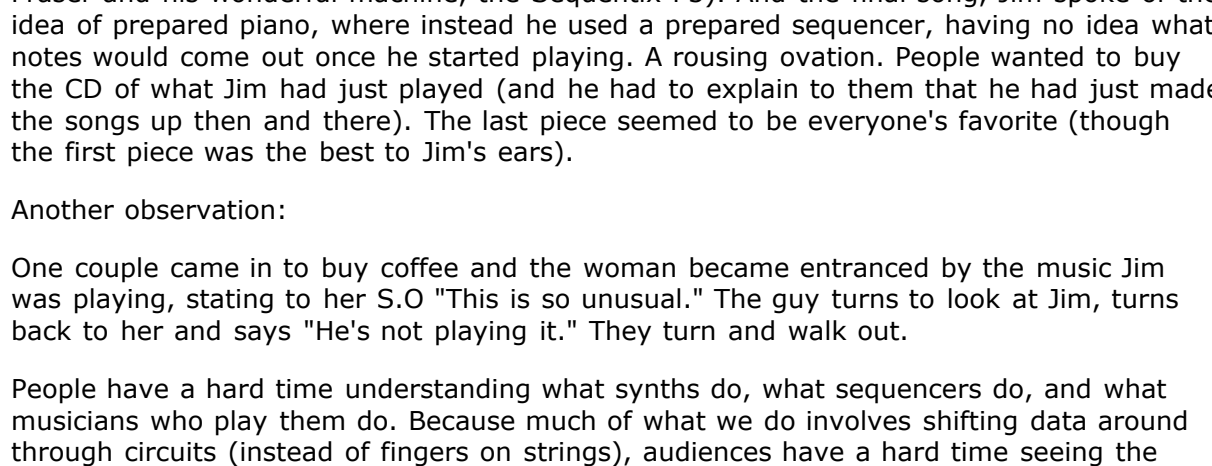
A key step in making Different Skies come to life was to find a place which was inspiring and welcoming to visiting musicians, where rehearsals could be both relaxed and energetic, with a fixed goal in mind while allowing for flexibility of scheduling on a day to day basis. Arcosanti, with its wonderful admixture of futuristic architecture and art-colony sensibility, seemed a perfect choice.

It was an untried idea that required the cooperation of over a dozen artists who'd never met before, working with a community that had never met them or heard much of their music. The Arcosanti community proved welcoming and supportive, leading to an exceptional experience for all concerned. It is a measure of the event's success that artists return a second and third time, year after year, to partake in the musical experience.

- [Different Skies 2006 Web Site](#)
- [Arcosanti, Paolo Soleri's Urban Laboratory](#)

Review Of Jim's Solo Aurora Coffee Set

Coffee and Oblique Strategies



Jim's solo set at Aurora Coffee in Virginia-Highlands last month was well received. He was second on a bill including Brad Jones on solo blues acoustic guitar and gothic folk duo The Annunaki (who reminded us of a prog-y Kate Bush with an awesome acoustic guitar player, and if you know how much we love Kate Bush, you know what a compliment that is). The volume was set at a normal stereo in living room (lattes would drown things out for a few seconds) and the whole vibe was incredibly intimate.

Jim was armed with his Sequentix P3 connected to a Novation Nova, Lexicon Jamman, and Korg ER-1 and ES-1, and was driving the rig from a Roland JD-800.

For the first song, Jim solicited help from the audience in selecting what notes he would play (he had seven different audience members draw a card that corresponded to a note; a C7 chord as it turned out) and the tempo he would play at (87bpm) and then started with a 32-sec JD-800/jamman loop, then switched over to the P3 and built up the track, eventually brought in the Korgs, and finally faded back to the jamman loop.

The second song was more of the same (though he talked in depth about inventor Colin Fraser and his wonderful machine, the Sequentix P3). And the final song, Jim spoke of the idea of prepared piano, where instead he used a prepared sequencer, having no idea what notes would come out once he started playing. A rousing ovation. People wanted to buy the CD of what Jim had just played (and he had to explain to them that he had just made the songs up then and there). The last piece seemed to be everyone's favorite (though the first piece was the best to Jim's ears).

Another observation:

One couple came in to buy coffee and the woman became entranced by the music Jim was playing, stating to her S.O "This is so unusual." The guy turns to look at Jim, turns back to her and says "He's not playing it." They turn and walk out.

People have a hard time understanding what synths do, what sequencers do, and what musicians who play them do. Because much of what we do involves shifting data around through circuits (instead of fingers on strings), audiences have a hard time seeing the causation between us, the machines, and the music.

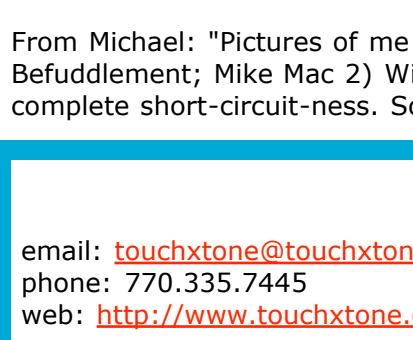
The next time Jim performs in that kind of venue, he's going to take more time to explain how he sets up his canvas (looping devices), prepares his paints (sounds on his synths), and then paints the audience a picture.

Jim sends many thanks to Brad Jones, Criminal Records, and Aurora Coffee for the opportunity to perform. He had a blast.

- [Criminal Records Web Site](#)
- [Aurora Coffee](#)
- [Brad Jones On MySpace](#)

Ramon Bonzon Joins Jim Combs, Form Sensitive Chaos

Work on first Sensitive Chaos CD is underway



Sensitive Chaos is a new electro synth band that currently features Ramon Bonzon (voice, percussion) and Jim Combs (synths, voice, percussion). Sensitive Chaos originally started as a solo outlet for Jim's more sequency, song-structured material. "I started going down a solo/instrumental Ulrich Schnauss kinda path, but it became apparent that vocals and guitar were more inline with what I had in my head," said Combs. "I started looking for a vocal collaborator back in late December and Ramon answered a Craig's List ad right around March. He's got a great voice and a strong guitar sense, plus his songwriting chops are immediately memorable. We've both got that Erasere and Depeche Mode thing going on in our head."

Ramon is from Chicago where he fronted wave rocking Elephant's Best Friend (EBF) before venturing south to Atlanta. Ramon's voice has been compared to a cross between Andy Bell and Morrissey and his songwriting shows influences as diverse as Cure, New Order, Erasere, Depeche Mode, U2, REM, OMD, The Killers, Doves, Travis, Coldplay, Radiohead, Aqualung, and Keane.

Bonzon and Combs are currently working up material and are looking forward to a future CD and live shows.

- [Sensitive Chaos Web Site](#)

All Our Links Belong To MySpace

It's about the friends

MYSFACE MUSIC Jim and Michael, TouchXtone, and Sensitive Chaos have MySpace pages, so be sure to add us as friends if you're on there, too.

Our MySpace pages have blogs, photos, music samples, show announcements, and more.

- [Michael On MySpace](#)
- [TouchXtone On MySpace](#)
- [Jim On MySpace](#)
- [Sensitive Chaos On MySpace](#)

Mi.T.-iMac And The Loop Monster

Michael falls headfirst into the world of Macs and Ableton Live

Michael's collaborations with Little Rabbit/Electrobunny rubbed off in a big way. Michael has added a G5 iMac 20" complete with Ableton Live and a Digidesign Mbox.

From Michael: "Pictures of me and the Mac. Actually follows an arc: Mike Mac 1) Befuddlement; Mike Mac 2) Wild-eyed wonderment; and Mike Mac 3) Bewilderment and complete short-circuit-ness. Somehow music appears on the grid, but how, is a mystery."

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