

TouchXtone Newsletter

News, CDs, Reviews

Dear Jim,

Thanks to everyone who came out for our show at Java Monkey in December! Definitely some wild and crazy sets that night and a great crowd of people there to help us celebrate the holidays. While TouchXtone itself doesn't have alot to report since then, there's plenty new going on individually for the members of TouchXtone at the moment.

Michael has about 5 different projects he's working on, both live and studio, with folks both local and spread over the globe in Germany and England. The big buzz surrounds Michael's new release with Conrad Schnitzler due out in a month or so. Read all Michael's goings on below.

Jim has been stockpiling solo electropop-ish tunes in the studio and going through a painfully slow, yet rewarding process of auditioning singers to add some vocal stylings to the mix. The tunes range in sound from Ulrich Schnauss to Erasure to hard to describe.

And Jim is hosting ambient music superstar Robert Rich on Robert's swing through Atlanta on April 9 at the EyeDrum Gallery (experimental cellist Diana Obscura and her husband Damon are are the opening act). Atlanta doesn't get many top-tier touring electroacoustic performers, and if there is one show to see this spring, the Robert Rich show is it. More details below.

Robert Rich Is Coming To Atlanta!

Experimental cellist Diana Obscura will open the show



TouchXtone can count on both hands the number of truly inspirational performers in the ambient electro music space and Robert Rich occupies one of those fingers. 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.

Rich began building his own analog synthesizers in 1976, when he was 13 years old, and later studied for a year at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA). He released his first album Sunyata in 1982 and most of his subsequent recordings came out in Europe until 1989, when Rich began a string of critically acclaimed releases for Fathom/Hearts of Space, including Rainforest (1989), Gaudi (1991), Propagation (1994) and Seven Veils (1998).

His two collaborations with Steve Roach, Strata (1990) and Soma (1992), both charted for several months in Billboard. Other respected collaborations include Stalker (1995 with B. Lustmord), Fissures (1997 with Alio Die) and Outpost (2002 with Ian Boddy.) He also records with his group, Amoeba, exploring atmospheric songcraft on their CDs Watchful (1997) and Pivot (2000). Live albums such as Calling Down the Sky (2004) and 3-CD Humidity (2000) document the unique improvised flow of his recent performances.

On his upcoming CD, Electric Ladder, Robert Rich finds a new voice for the vibrant interlocking melodies that characterized his works such as Numena, Geometry and Gaudi. With its seamless blend of analog modular synthesis and acoustic tonalities, Electric Ladder weaves a hypnotic spell - lush, ecstatic and seductive. Its shimmering geometric lines grow more sharply etched with the clarity of just intonation tunings and the intelligence that pervades Rich's compositional vocabulary.

Rich has designed sounds for television and film scores, including the films Pitch Black, Crazy Beautiful, Behind Enemy Lines, and Thank You for your Patience. His sound design fills the preset libraries of Emu's Proteus 3 and Morpheus, Seer Systems' Reality, sampling disks Things that Go Bump in the Night, ACID Loop Library Liquid Planet, and the TimewARP2600 soft-synth by WayOutWare. Rich has written software for composers who work in just intonation, and he helped develop the MIDI microtuning specification, which was accepted as an industry standard. His studio was featured twice in Keyboard Magazine.

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. Diana has played and recorded with The Living Jarboe (swans) and neo-classic/medieval trio Aphelion. The most recent CD release was recorded as a live soundtrack for the art of EK Huckaby. 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.

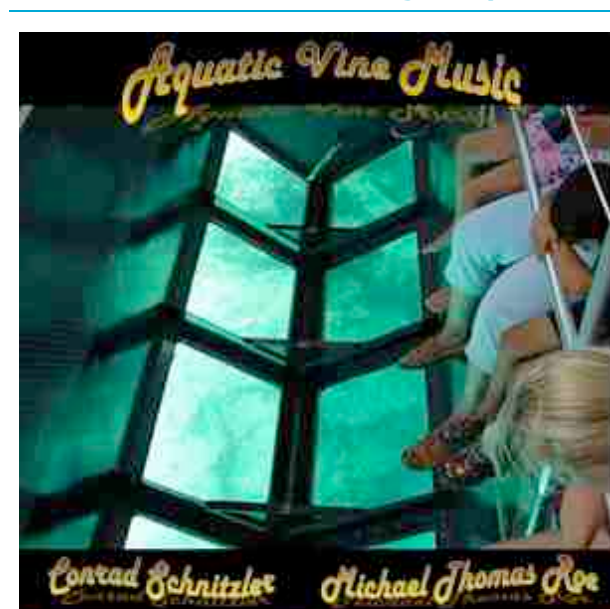
"Watching ethereal vocalist and cellist Diana Obscura, the listener gets the feeling that she has stepped out of a fractured fairy tale book. With her wild mane of hair and her cello poised low, she attacks the instrument with the fury of Johnny Ramone and the reckless grace of a possessed Cinderella."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

TouchXtone will be at this performance. We hope you will, too!

- [Robert Rich Web Site](#)
- [EyeDrum Web Site](#)
- [Diana Obscura Web Site](#)

New Michael Thomas Roe and Conrad Schnitzler CD

Latest collaboration nearing completion



"Aquatic Vine Music", the new CD from Conrad Schnitzler (Kluster, Tangerine Dream) and Michael Thomas Roe, is in test pressing phase. Michael is tweaking the graphics and is happy to report that the music is alive and well. He's looking for (probably) March release.

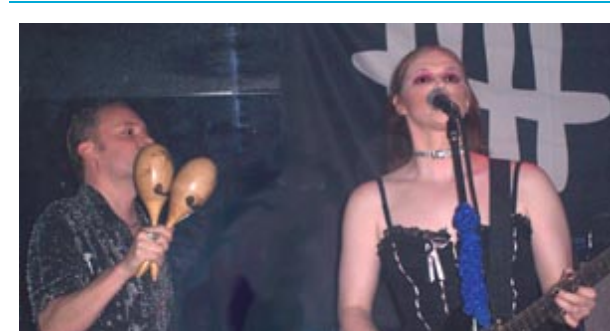
"Geez, I recall saying something about February release, at one point. I'm not sure what the reaction is going to be. I think it is either the zenith or the nadir. I do know that it is powerful, emotional music and almost "prog-rock" in its scope. It's definitely a better balance of Con's and my work than "Mi.T.-CON 04". Lots of beautiful undersea imagery with no small amount of menace. My hope is that the buyers give the piece several, if not more, very close listenings. There is a wealth of detail in there (even I, after many umpteenth listenings - for mastering, test pressings, etc., still hear new things in the mix)."

"I would like to point out that I still have copies of Mi.T.-CON 04 in stock, and will batch (though there was some interest from a Japanese distributor). So get 'em while they are hot. Actually have a few copies with the "alternative" cover available to pique interest. I may "re-dress" even more copies just to make the thing a little more collectable. Stay tuned for that."

- [Information about Mi.T.-CON 04](#)

More Michael Thomas Roe Projects

Amber Taylor, new Mi.T.-Bunny, and more...



"I'd be remiss not to mention my exploits with Atlanta's very own rock goddess, Amber Taylor. Few of you may recall my playing drums in Amber's band a few years back. Well, it seems that I've been promoted, as Amber has asked me to join her band playing keyboards, which is a whole lot of fun and an entirely new challenge. It's just me and the Korg MS2000, but I've been given the opportunity to play 'Eno' to the band's 'Roxy Music'. Speaking of Eno, we play Needle in the Camel's Eye in addition to some Iggy/Bowie/Lou Reed classics. Last gig we were joined by New York punk rock legend Jayne County. What an eventful night. A guy could get used to this."

"Finally, I've personally finished many, many new pieces with strange titles like I am here, Lord, there is evidence, The Longshoreman and Hall of Mirrors (a surprising piece done almost entirely on a Wavestation). Some of them involving an electronic percussionist, Steve Fortuna. Trying to get some recordings off the ground with female vocalist Aradia (are you listening, Aradia?)."

"Astro-Bunny/Mi.T.-Bunny with Nick Sutton is still in the hopper. Need more material, but Nick tells me that that's not a problem. Would love to see this released and get in the Real Vine Music catalog. Nick is, as they say, one of the best in the biz. Over and out..."

- [Amber Taylor Band Web Site](#)
- [Electrobunny Web Site](#)

Other News Of Interest

Festivals and monkey business



Java Monkey has been sold

We've just found out our favorite performance haunt for the last couple of years, the Java Monkey in downtown Decatur, has been sold and it is unclear how this will affect future bookings or performances. As we learn more, we'll pass it along. Thanks to past owner Michael Gallagher for his support. And here's hoping Blake Guthrie will remain in the booking seat.

Different Skies 2006 and electro-music 2006 Electronic Music Festivals

Two of the best electronic music festivals in the U.S. are getting ready to announce their individual lineup's for this year. Different Skies, held annually at Arcosanti, Arizona, will announce their list of 20 attending performers in the March timeframe, and electro-music, in its second year in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, will also announce its list of performers around the same time. Different Skies 2006 will be held September 11-17, while electro-music 2006 will be held June 2-4.

Both festival events are highly recommended!

- [Different Skies 2006](#)
- [electro-music 2006](#)

TouchXtone Links On The Web

MySpace, CD Baby, CafePress

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

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

- [Jim On MySpace](#)
- [TouchXtone On MySpace](#)
- [Buy TouchXtone CDs From CD Baby](#)
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