

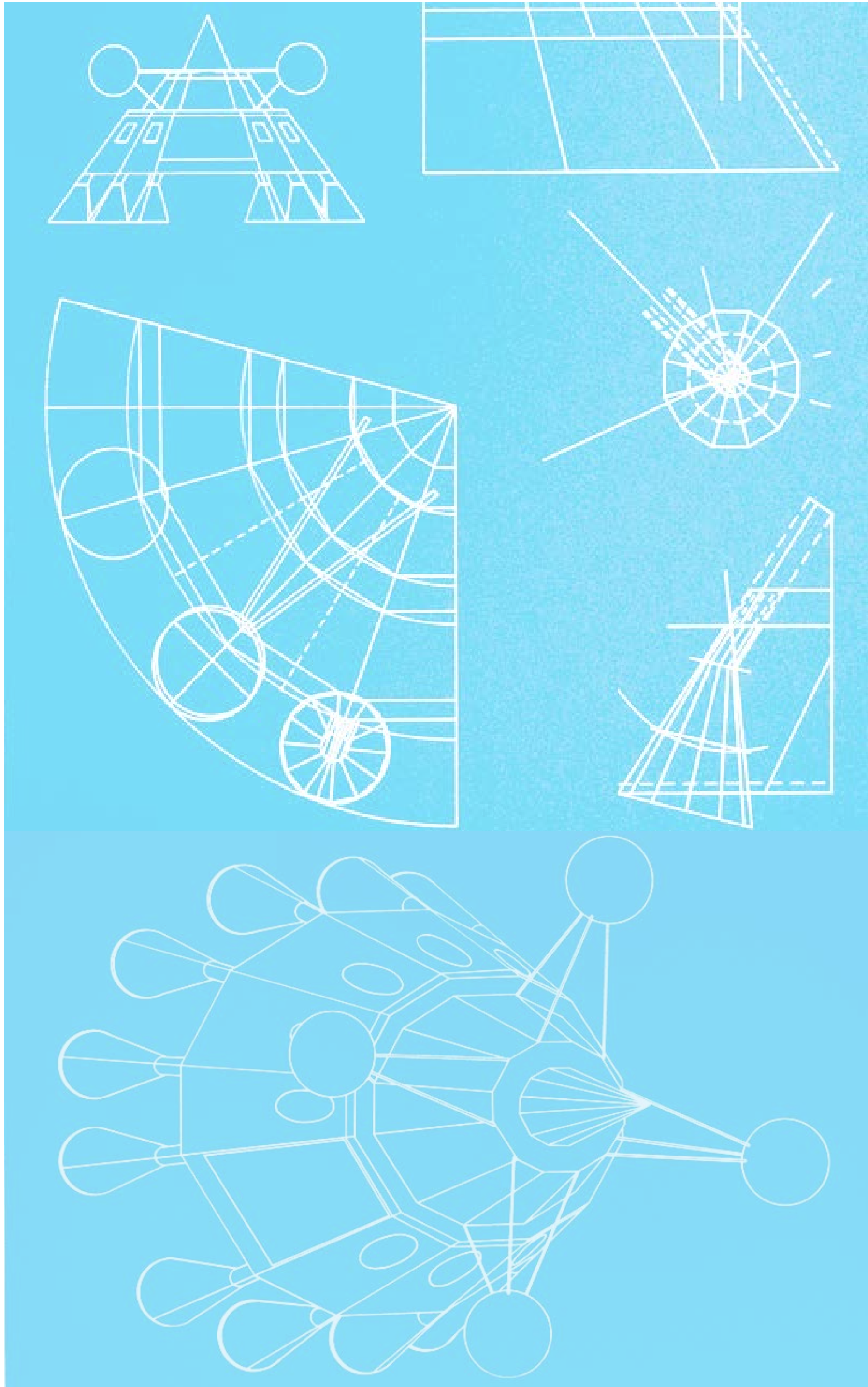


# **DIDACTIC**

**COLLECTION OF ADJACENT MYTHOLOGIES**

**A Supplement to the Museum of Psychphonics**





# THE MUSEUM OF PSYCHPHONICS

We live in a world where all things not-strange are propped up as a fiction of normalcy. We aim to corrupt this charade with a new normal — a psychphonic disruption, a shared consciousness built upon outlawed narratives and talismans. It is a temple, a secret mechanical garden, an extraterrestrial portal, a museum for the post-internet age.

Within this transdimensional sanctuary you will discover curiosities documenting the great counter-conspiracy that is continually waging battle against the threat of big Silence.

Experience these strange wonders from both the far and near corners of the world. And remember, All the World is Watching. Let's give them a show.

Welcome to The Museum of Psychphonics and Collection of Adjacent Mythologies.

Editors: Benjamin and Janneane Blevins  
Creative Direction: PRINTtEXT  
Art Direction: Kipp Normand  
Publisher: This is Meru

Contributors:

**Mitchell Douglas** "Once Upon a Time Called Now: Parliament's Mothership"  
**Dr. Rhonda Baughman** "Elvis, 2001, A Space Odyssey, Market Square Arena: Synchronistic Link"  
**Maurice Broaddus** "The Mis-Education of Kurt Vonnegut"  
**Elle Roberts** "Dead Black Men Don't Lie: The Ferguson Brothers"  
**Taylor Peters** "A Future Finely Zipped: Immigrant Memory and Music"  
**Susannah Koerber** "Music for Tomorrow: Sun Ra Plays for the Space Age"  
**Dr. Fiona McDonald & Dr. Larry Zimmerman** "A Dent in Your Worldview: The Psychphonics of Knowing Earthworks"  
**Kyle Long** "Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell"  
**Richard McCoy** "Acton: James Turrell's Tule Fog"  
**Enrique Ramirez** "The Astral Lightning Rod"  
**Thomas Kennedy** "Pythagoras and the Music of the Spheres"  
**Ben Winters** "Robert Fludd and the Celestial Monochord"

Co-conspirators:

Stuart Hyatt, Michael Runge, Michael Taft, Scott Stulen, Alyssa DeHayes  
Sedcairn Archives, blottboy, Shame Thugs



# ONCE UPON A TIME CALLED NOW

Staging the Religion of Parliament/Funkadelic's

Mothership

MITCHELL DOUGLAS

"Once upon a time called now..." is not a call to arms, but a call to funk: the galaxy-searching, Big Bang Theory of otherworldly jam birthed by an earthbound brother from another planet named George Clinton...

or Star Child...  
or Dr. Funkenstein...  
or Lollipop Man aka the Long Head Sucker...

...depending if the mood, the groove, and everything—including his funky emotion—is on the one.

Can y'all get to that?

When Clinton, an enterprising New Jersey-based doo-wop singer of the '50s and '60s, stepped into the '70s with a new vision for The Parliaments, the world was better for it. Drop an article and a letter, turn the "backing band" recording alias that was Funkadelic into a full-fledged, body-rocking thang of its own, and it was clear that Clinton's evolution was much more than semantic. With Parliament shaking rumps in an R&B vein and Funkadelic rocking out, there was nothing Clinton couldn't do.

Boasting a revolving cast of players that included horn maestro Maceo Parker, guitar gods Eddie Hazel and Garry Shider, keyboard wizard Bernie Worrell, and electric bass pioneer Bootsy Collins (to name a few), the juggernaut that was Parliament/Funkadelic explored, stretched, and broke boundaries in the most beautiful ways: Parliament as the swinging, horn-backed funk band James Brown could be proud of (sure, Maceo had a hand in that), and Funkadelic as the Hendrix-on-10 rock outfit that didn't care how unconventional it was. Eventually, one funky hand forced the other, and Parliament set its sights on the cosmos.

But why were musicians fascinated with the concept of space, and in the case of African American artists, why did this reimagining of blackness take such an honored place in our American psyche and cultural advancement? You could blame it on the age, say we were hungry to be treated right, get away from the hell we were



catching on earth and imagining ourselves in a new and real free world. Perhaps the planet still had the echo of 1969 and "one small step for mankind" ringing in its ears after Apollo 11 gave America the bragging rights to claim the first moon landing by the living and breathing (David Bowie was famously pleased as well). After Sun Ra declared "Space is the place" in '72, Parliament/Funkadelic cosigned. Long before we were defining any art genre as Afrofuturism, Sun Ra was living it. Clinton soon followed, using his family of musicians to provide a funky soundtrack to exploring the galaxy.

If the title track of Funkadelic's '73 release *Cosmic Slop* was the simultaneously interstellar and inner city distress signal audible from light years away ("I can hear my mother call..."), Parliament's "I Just Got Back" on the '74 album *Up For the Downstroke* ("I just got back from another world / It was way, way past another side") was an answer and a sign of things to come. Parliament took up the mantle of space travelers like Kirk and Spock with much better outfits and cooler tales to spill. The evidence was unearthed in Parliament's '75 release *Mothership Connection* and its '76 successor *The Brides of Dr. Funkenstein*. "P-Funk, uncut funk—the bomb" was transmitted live from "the chocolate Milkyway" by the mythical radio station WEFUNK. But it's one thing to display flying saucers and outfits that would make KISS jealous on your album covers, quite another to take it to the stage. In '77, Clinton and his

cast of funkateers proved it could do just that on a grand scale. The band's incomparable performances were captured that year on what is arguably one of the finest live albums in existence: *Parliament Live: P. Funk Earth Tour*.

In a seamless mix of funk factions, Funkadelic's '75 title track to *Let's Take It To the Stage* and "Get Off Your Ass & Jam" from the same album and "Undisco Kidd" and "Take Your Dead Ass Home" from its '76 release *Tales of Kidd Funkadelic* became key crowd bonding moments on Parliament's *P. Funk Earth Tour* album. It was getting harder to tell one band from the other (and maybe, just maybe, that was the point). Forget about who did what, just dance.

But Parliament/Funkadelic is more than music—it is a religion, complete with its own language, traditions, and rituals, the landing of the Mothership, perhaps most important of all. It should be understood that there was church on the stage when the Mothership landed, that audiences absolutely lost their minds when the gone-too-soon Glenn Goins laid down a silky incantation declaring "I can feel the presence of the Mothership." If you've heard the *P. Funk Earth Tour* album, you're already familiar with the audience's screams of approval. Backing Goins, a magical P-Funk Greek chorus sing/chants "Swing down sweet chariot, stop and let me ride," and, seemingly through the persistent urging of Pastor Clinton, Deacon Goins, and the devoted flock, the Mothership lands on stage and the "service" gets hot.

In this moment of unequivocally groundbreaking rock and roll staging, there are truths about the Mothership that can't be ignored. Skeptics can laugh and say that ship ain't really go nowhere, but as a symbol for all things P-Funk, it most certainly did. That symbol was more for the traveling of the spirit than the body, and the Mothership moved plenty of spirits. The music is what moved our bodies. Then and now, each part integral to the mythos of this funky black future.

Back to that consideration of a time called now.

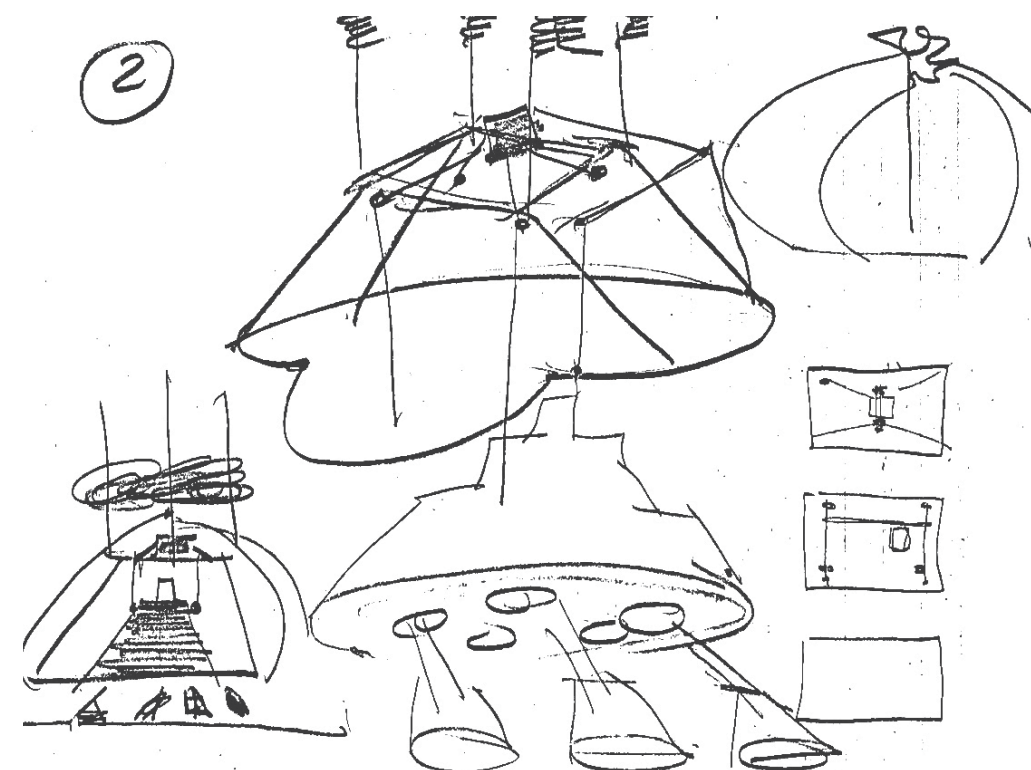
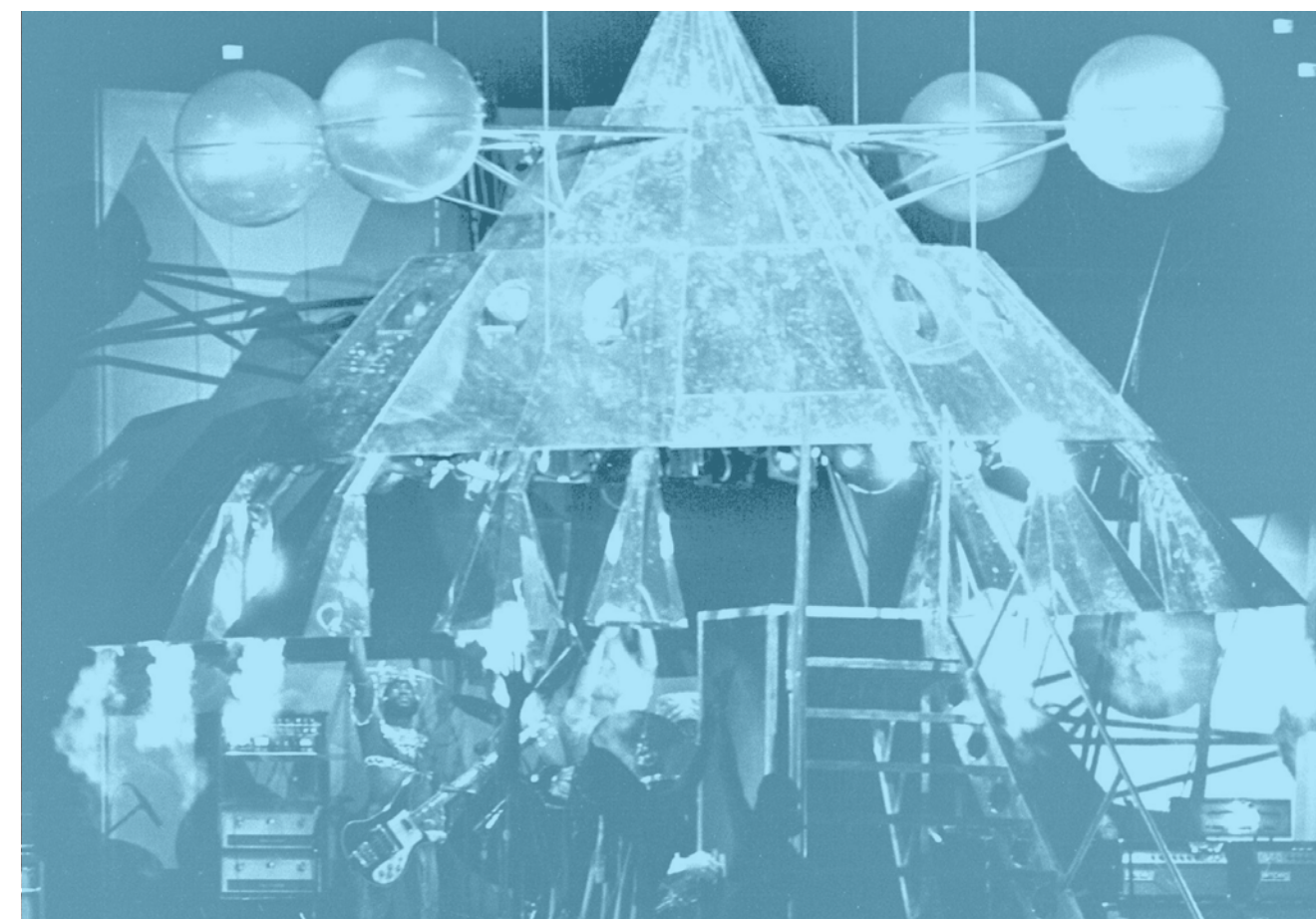
Consider yourself privileged to be in the presence of what owner Tom Battista, an Indianapolis native and music industry legend in his own right, refers to as the "Baby Mothership." Constructed of an aluminum frame and body like the parent craft, this mini version of the Parliament totem is a testament to Clinton's dedication to first-class staging.

Before the funk hit the road, Clinton sought the help of lighting designer Jules Fisher, a Broadway veteran who, before working with Clinton, helped stage tours by Bowie and The Rolling Stones. The original Mothership, an inflatable stretch limo, and other iconic stage props were constructed at a Broadway production house in Newburgh, New York, Battista explains. Head carpenter with Parliament's road crew from 1975-1981, Battista was responsible for the flight and landing of the Baby and the Mother. In that time period, the Baby Mothership, Battista estimates, was used in at least 400 performances.

On gigs where the size of the venue allowed for the use of both vessels, Battista notes, the band gave its fans a feast in perspective. With a little Broadway magic via a deep sea fishing motor (appropriate with Parliament's "Aquaboogie" destiny waiting in 1978), the Baby Mothership came into the earth's atmosphere gliding over concert goers on its way to the stage, a shower of pyrotechnics in its wake. Battista's attention then shifted to "landing" the full-scale spacecraft on the stage. As the Mothership touched

down, Clinton rose from a hidden elevator beneath the stage while CO2 tanks were triggered to emit smoke, emulating the appearance of the band's own lunar landing. Through the clouds, Clinton emerged in a white, full-length ermine coat and matching hat, the planet-hopping threads of his famous alter ego, Dr. Funkenstein. On the live album, the crowd at the Oakland Coliseum showed their love with thunderous applause. Certainly, the production planned by Clinton and Fisher was a feat to be witnessed and praised.

So where does that leave you, visitor to this museum of logic and reality-defying oddities? Hopefully, nodding your head on the one in agreement that you are in a very lucky, and surely funky, space. Enjoy.



Calif. 91710

reg,

our phone conversation this morning, please enclosed, drawings for the larger of the two craft for the Parliament Tour.

d like you to formulate an estimate, based on the drawings and our discussion, for a pyrotechnic flame effect, to emanate from each of the two craft. Duration of effect is approx. 5-6 seconds. Desired length of flame is 5'-6'.

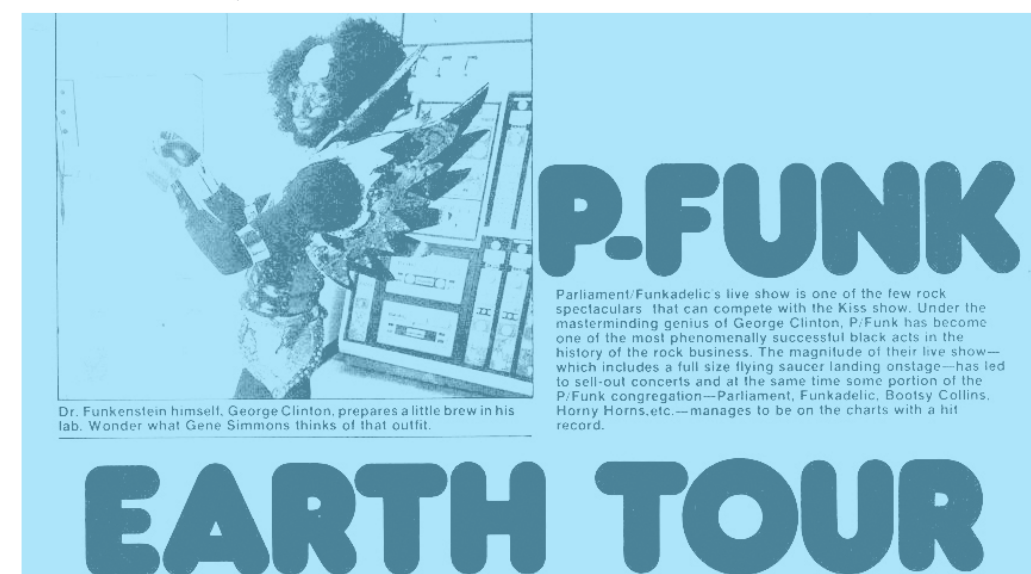
signature space craft effect, as discussed, would involve a run of approx. 300', and would last for this distance in twenty to thirty seconds. provide us with a detail drawing - dimensioned and necessary apparatus, so that we may proceed with the design of the miniature craft housing.

be in touch with us as soon as possible.

regards,

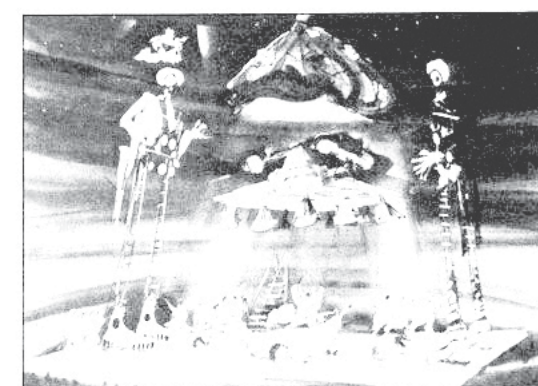
Fisher

CALL BACK - JUNE  
PROMISED DRAWING  
CALL BACK -

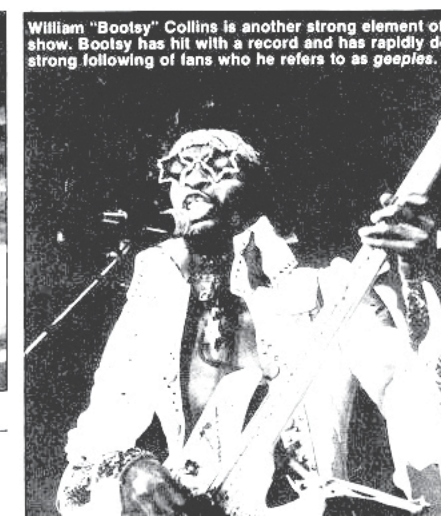


Dr. Funkenstein himself. George Clinton, prepares a little brew in his lab. Wonder what Gene Simmons thinks of that outfit!

Parliament/Funkadelic's live show is one of the few rock spectacles that can compete with the Kiss show. Under the masterminding genius of George Clinton, P-Funk has become one of the most phenomenally successful black acts in the history of the rock business. The magnitude of their live show—which includes a full size flying saucer landing onstage—has led to sell-out concerts and at the same time some portion of the P-Funk congregation—Parliament, Funkadelic, Bootsy Collins, Horny Horns, etc.—manages to be on the charts with a hit record.



This sketch shows the magnitude of Jules Fisher's stage set for the P-Funk show. \$275,000 was gambled on it being a success.



William "Bootsy" Collins is another strong element of the show. Bootsy has hit with a record and has rapidly developed a strong following of fans who he refers to as geepies.





# ELVIS, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, AND MARKET SQUARE ARENA:

Synchronistic Link  
DR. RHONDA BAUGHMAN

This author always likes to interview experts when researching synchronistic connections. Of course, the definition of expert varies wildly among journalists, academics, and writers. For those about to enter the Museum of Psychphonics, you are about to become one of those experts. However, it is important to leave pre-conceived ideas behind and suspend disbelief of multiple (yet occasionally appearing as cliched) conspiracy theories. This author is not the first to explore synchronistic connections between the film, the singer, and the venue. It is important to note—the singer is deceased, director Kubrick is deceased, and the venue is deceased, (now the site of forthcoming luxury apartments). Yet all remain alive in the minds of those who had knowledge of them and continue to take an interest in them.



ly plane, and all have altered the definition and use of the word and concept of synchronicity as needed. Any practitioner of the sync arts can do this. Elvis Presley and Stanley Kubrick are prime examples, witting or unwitting, of sync artists. Furthermore, the Market Square Arena housed many sync artists and creators, even attendees during its heyday—and although the arena has since been leveled, a memorial stood there. A memorial to Elvis Aaron Presley designed by Alan Clough.

On a personal sync note: this author's first boyfriend, a high school sweetheart of ten years, was born on the date of Elvis' death: August 16, 1977. One of the first two pop-up books this essay's author received as a child, was an Elvis pop-up book, from her father's record store, Kosmic Blues. Kosmic can be defined as containing space dust, as Elvis and the original Market Square Arena now do, as does Kubrick and Kosmic Blues, and the theme of space dust, which is certainly explored in *2001*.

## II. Exploration

Andras Jones has taught and led this author toward many trajectories of synchronicity, and provided powerful insight and direction along the way (as Jones' dream psychologist father, Dr. Richard M. Jones did for him, and as the twin fathers of modern psychology Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung did for Dr. Jones). I can go on, but for the sake of brevity, this is as far as the lineage trace will go: Jung/ Freud, Jones, the father, Jones, the son, to Baughman. The definition and concept of synchronicity is, for our purposes, meaningful coincidence. Over the course of all careers (Baughman, Jones, senior Jones, and Jung/Freud) two of the five are still on this earth—

A second expert, *Run* author Douglas Winter, pointed out Elvis often opened his shows with the 'Sunrise' flourish of *Also sprach Zarathustra*—aka the theme used in Kubrick's 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. As an artist, it's a clever, inspiring, and magnanimous way to open a show. Elvis performances, onstage and on film, are timeless, infinite. *2001* the film, along with its music and original composer Richard Strauss, explore and offer, at minimum, a definition of infinity. The performer, himself, is an infinite entertainer. His contributions to the world live on long after his earthly departure.\* Additionally,

according to an updated version of Elvis performances, titled 'The Elvis Concert' (begun in 1997), this song is still used to open his shows—after his death, via computer technology. Kubrick's film vision of infinity alongside the human race's obsession with conquering all, including land, air, sea, space, technology, (to name a few) as well as the concept of 'death as art in life', is noted and has been realized with these posthumous Elvis performances, giving even more support for his infinite composition.

And considering performances, the King's last concert was in Indianapolis, IN at Market Square Arena, demolished in 2001, coincidentally. In at least three cases, 17,000 people were reported as having attended Elvis' final live concert, although the number changes with the reporter. Some bloggers are fond of pointing out Elvis' specific death date: August 16, 1977—(8+16+1977 = 2001), but there are other numbered synchronicities. For these three musical containers, there are, in fact, 17 numbers/letters in each of the following: Synchronistic Link, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Market Square Arena, and Elvis Aaron Presley. The number 17\*\* is a spiritual number. Adding the numbers 1 and 7, you reach 8 — the number of infinity. A biblical interpretation for the number 8 indicates a new beginning or resurrection. The new apartments being built on the site of the former arena has been called 360 Market Square—or the number of degrees in a circle—which is a continuous loop, where the end meets the beginning, which meets the end...

## Notes

\*If he has, in fact, departed. To this day, eager Elvis fans point out his numerous sightings even after this death pronouncement. This author

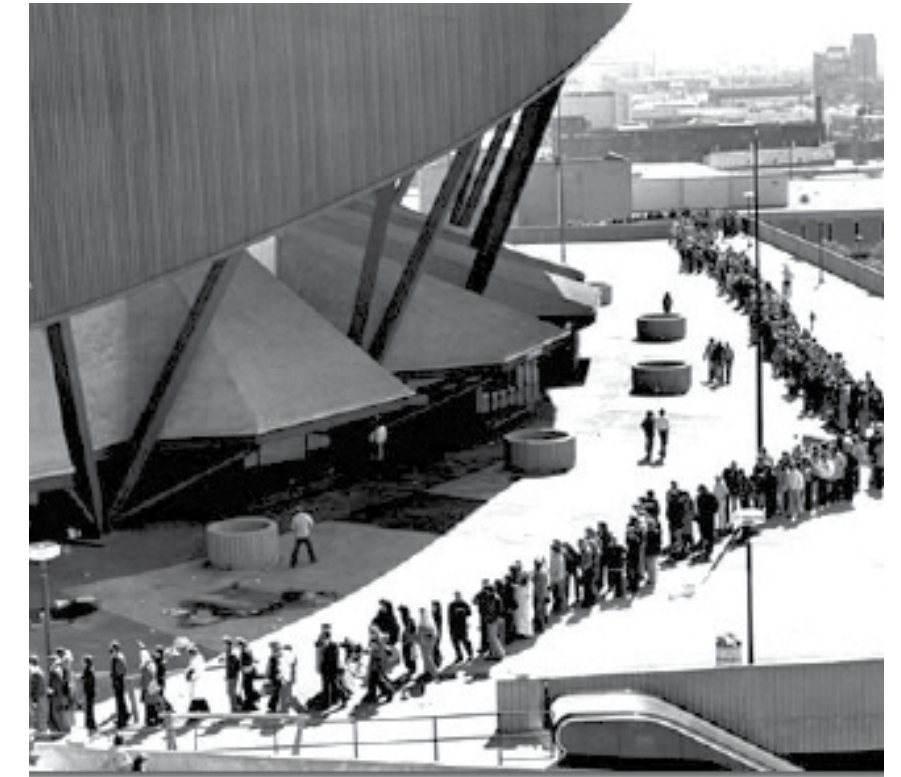
believes he is deceased, but should someone believe otherwise, this author would not attempt to remove any meaningful connections between the viewer, seeker, and artist himself. It can also be noted that as long as we discuss something, it is never, truly dead.

Elvis was 42 years old when he passed—42, it can be noted, is the answer to the universe in Douglas Adams' book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Aren't we all, in fact, galaxy hitchhikers? Finally, the word 'explosion' can be used for all three items explored: the demolition of Market Square Arena, the exploding of Elvis on the rock-n-roll scene/ the explosive news of his death, and the explosion of the universe—at beginning and end, as well as the groundbreaking film itself—in *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

## References

- <http://www.elvispresleymusic.com.au/pictures/1977-june-26.html>
- <https://www.quora.com/Why-did-Elvis-open-his-shows-with-the-theme-from-2001-A-Space-Odyssey>
- <http://www.inquisitr.com/2246532/an-elvis-presley-hologram-will-perform-15-shows-next-year-in-las-vegas/>
- [\\*\\*http://numerology-thenumbersandtheirmeanings.blogspot.com/2011/05/number-17.html](http://numerology-thenumbersandtheirmeanings.blogspot.com/2011/05/number-17.html)
- <http://indyhub.org/sorry-i-missed-it-on-presley-the-circle-city-and-immortality/>
- <http://www.indystar.com/story/money/2015/12/04/360-market-square-contractor-seeks-26m-unpaid-work/76793954>
- [http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=796\\_1191843629&comments=1](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=796_1191843629&comments=1)
- <http://lostindiana.net/2001/07/08/market-square-arena-indianapolis/>

Interview: Andras Jones, 01 January 2016  
Interview: Douglas Winter, 02 January 2016



r o n P r e s l e y  
9 6 5 7 9 5 1 3 5 7

$$+9+6+5) + (7+9+5+1+3+5+7) = 80$$

$$8 + 0 = 8 = \infty$$

August 16, 1977  
8 + 16 + 1977 = 2001

(Synchronistic Link) 17  
(2001: A Space Odyssey) 17  
(Market Square Arena) 17

$$1 + 7 = 8 = \infty$$

5 3 4 9 1 1 9 6 5 7 9 5 1 3 5 7

$$(5+3+4+9+1) + (1+9+6+5) + (7+9+5+1+3+5+7) = 80$$

$$8 + 0 = 8 = \infty$$

Elvis death: August 16, 1977  
8 + 16 + 1977 = 2001

# of characters

(Synchronistic Link) 17  
(2001: A Space Odyssey) 17  
(Market Square Arena) 17

$$1 + 7 = 8 = \infty$$

$$(Birth \# = 9) + (Name \# = 8) = 17$$

$$1 + 7 = 8 = \infty$$





# THE MIS-EDUCATION OF KURT VONNEGUT

MAURICE BROADDUS

The most spiritually splendid American phenomenon of my lifetime is how African American citizens have maintained their dignity and self-respect, despite their having been treated by white Americans, both in and out of government, and simply because of their skin color, as though they were contemptible and loathsome, and even diseased. — Kurt Vonnegut, *Armageddon in Retrospect*

With the recent passing of local literary historian, E.S. Osburn, a cache of research and half-finished articles have been discovered, shedding light on the life, work, and method of noted author, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Osburn posits that Vonnegut's stories exist as examples of poststructuralism, with him inscribing himself into his own myths in order to make his inner Self magical. This allowed him to become a character and to experience his story as one might experience a dream. This dovetails with Osburn's other theory about Vonnegut, which stated that the author had become obsessed with the idea that to unlock the African American experience was to unlock the secrets of life.

Hints of this obsession reared itself on occasion throughout his interviews. For example, Vonnegut credited his family's African American cook and housekeeper, Ida Young, claiming that she not only raised him but also taught him values for the first ten years of his life. "Ida gave me decent moral instruction and was exceedingly nice to me. So she was as great an influence on me as anybody," he said. Having described Young as "humane and wise," and that "the compassionate, forgiving aspects of my beliefs" came from her, Osburn began to speculate about the actual existence of Ida Young or if she was simply a figment of his imagination, a muse by way of Magical Negro.

Or what music is, I don't know. But it helps me so. During the Great Depression in Indianapolis, when I was in high school, I would go to jazz joints and listen to black guys playing, and, man, they could really do it. And I was really teared up. Still the case now. — Kurt Vonnegut, an NPR interview

Much has been written about Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s struggle with alcohol. Osburn tied his addiction to Vonnegut's attempts to reach higher planes of thought in order to decode the African American experience. Belief was the only magic he knew and the ability to consciously choose his beliefs was at the heart of the power of his work. What he chose to believe in was music. In his final collection, *A Man Without a Country*, he wrote, "If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph: 'The only proof he needed for the existence of God was music.'" Vonnegut's initial forays into his magical way of thinking began with him creating, what Osburn called, his shield of will, wherein he visualized himself constantly surrounded and protected by a jazz quartet.

The best outline I ever made, or anyway the prettiest one, was on the back of a roll of wallpaper. I used my daughter's crayons, a different color for each main character. — Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*

Osburn became increasingly convinced that Kurt Vonnegut engaged in a kind of magical consciousness as a way of interacting with the real world. He created a universe with himself at the center. This was the safest way for him to understand the African American experience. For example, this method allowed him to write the first of what Osburn called Vonnegut's lost essays, "Of Plantation Life and Space Travel."

Vonnegut's inner journey began with the creation of what Osburn described as his secret studio. He surrounded himself with memorabilia, objets d'art, and an assortment of kitsch, and spent an hour of meditative thought each day examining them for the important truths they wanted to convey to him. The world transformed into a luminous place, infused with meaning, and ripe to be ridiculed.

His stories often found their roots in the African American experience, though he had no way of accessing that cultural heritage outside of his dream studio. Any attempt to incorporate African Americans consciously into his work ended up with a series

of Magical Negroes that would make Stephen King proud: Lyman Enders Knowles (the crazy elevator operator from *Cat's Cradle*), Wayne Hoobler (illiterate convict from *Breakfast of Champions*), or Elgin Washington (the maimed pimp from *Breakfast of Champions*). So he sought help from a higher plane of existence.

Vonnegut made a habit of walking aimlessly for hours around Indiana Avenue, the epicenter of African American culture in Indianapolis. He traced ley lines, currents of magical energy, which he believed divided up the city. Soon he found messages in the marquees for upcoming stage acts, passing license plates, sigils in graffiti, and even communiqués via the patterns in the flight of birds. In explaining its disappearance, Vonnegut became convinced that the once-renowned Two Johns Theater now resided on a sentient street which only appeared a few nights a month in Indianapolis as it now traveled throughout the Midwest. This conviction sent him on a tour of the Midwest chitlin circuit and led to one of his most famous lost essays, "Following the River South: The Birth of Jazz."

And I like Strauss and Mozart and all that, but the priceless gift that African Americans gave the world when they were still in slavery was a gift so great that it is now almost the only reason many foreigners still like us, at least, a little bit. That specific remedy for the worldwide epidemic of depression is a gift called the blues. All pop music today - jazz, swing, bebop, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, the Stones, rock and roll, hip hop and on and on - is derived from the blues. — Kurt Vonnegut, *A Man Without a Country*

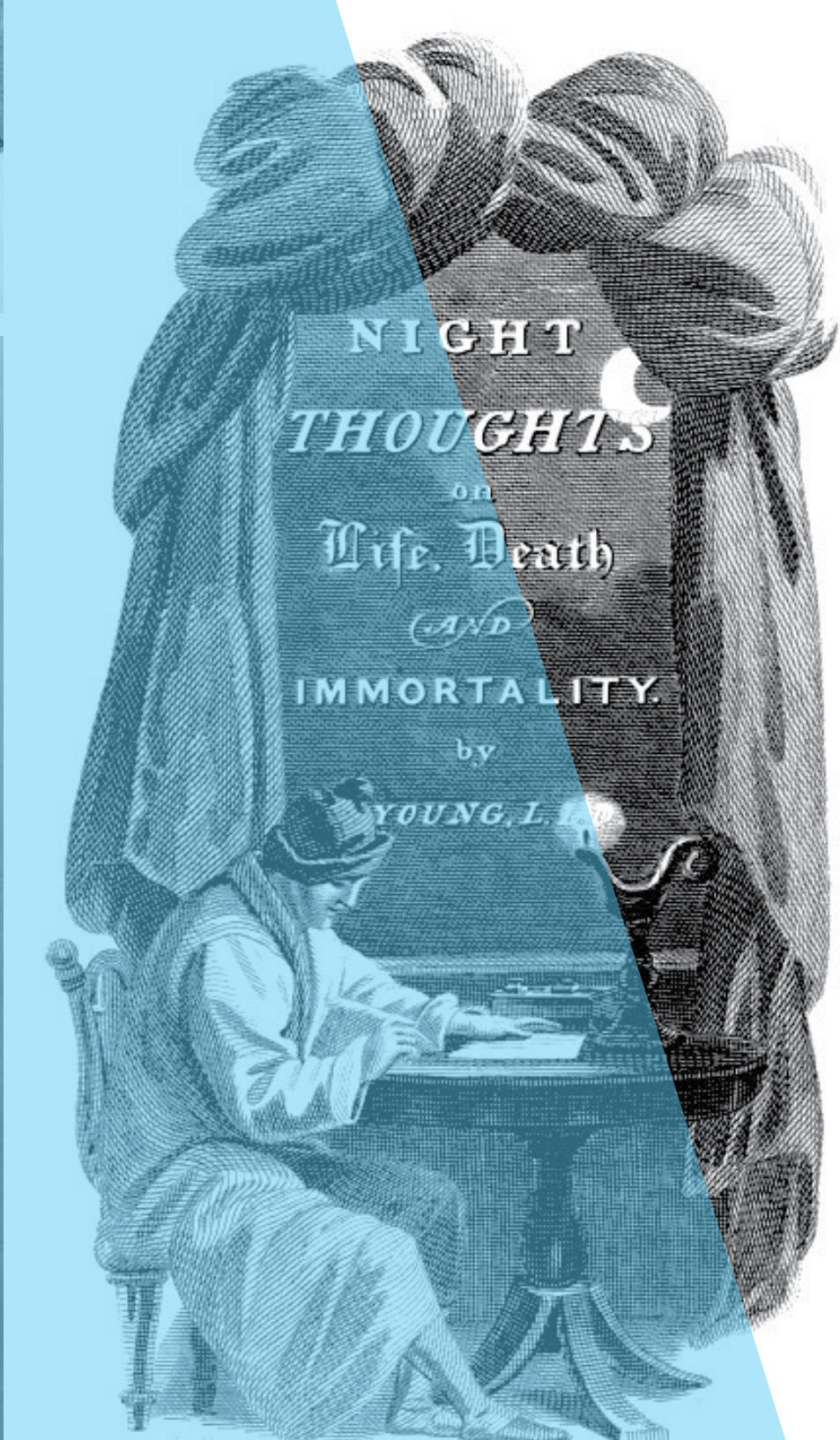
The Vonnegut family name has long been associated with architecture. Kurt Vonnegut's grandfather, Bernard Vonnegut, Sr., co-founded the architectural firm, Vonnegut & Bohn. His father, Kurt Vonnegut, Sr., merged the firm to form Vonnegut, Wright, & Yeager. The firm was responsible for many public, institutional, and commercial buildings throughout Indianapolis. Osburn claimed to have evidence that the family dealings caused them to cross swords with a powerful and

vindictive chapter of the Freemasons who were attempting to suppress all roads to truth. It was this family legacy that drove Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. to heavily code and disguise messages in his work.

Eventually, he finished his codex though its exact nature remained, a mystery. An insatiable collector, he accumulated one of the largest 33, 45, and 78 LP assemblages of rare jazz records. They were packed away in a storage locker under a pseudonym. To this day, no one can find the paperwork to reveal where this trove is. Rumors conflict as to whether he recorded his own spoken word album or if he merely recorded an unpublished short story into locally produced classic jazz tracks. Some say the backward masked recordings were decoded via the numerological system of the Five Percent Nation and went on to influence local hip hop artists such as the 42nd St Cru, Singular, and the hip-hop super-group, the Murder Queen Posse.

The last of Vonnegut's lost manuscripts was a work in progress. The essay would be the first public acknowledgment of his magical system as it meditated on corporate logos as capitalist sigils. The thesis focused on the rampant spread of capitalism through the ethos of society, with the idea that corporate branding spread throughout space unoccupied by the imagination of folks. The culture's collective unconscious was usually powerful enough to fend off the viral invasion of corporate brands. However, it had been under surreptitious attack ever since the MTV astronaut planted its eponymous flag on the moon and launched an offensive on our collective attention spans.

It should be noted that in the coroner's report, the cause of E.S. Osburn's death was listed as complications due to syphilitic dementia along with the presence of large amounts of psychotropic mushrooms in his system.





# DEAD BLACK MEN DON'T LIE

## The Forgotten Story of the Ferguson Brothers and the Incredible Legacy of Indiana Avenue

ELLE ROBERTS

Let the average Indiana resident tell it, Jim Crow was a distant cousin with a successful enterprise, hands clean, in the Deep South. Revisionist and romanticized history allows for the motherland of the Ku Klux Klan to become the cradle of Hoosier Hospitality in less than a century. One hundred years births generations and then some, but in retrospect isn't very long at all. Time tells the tallest of tales, stories masquerading as folklore so deliciously grandiose and outlandish, the truth contained within is incredible. Thankfully, dead men don't lie. In Crown Hill Cemetery is a grave carved out in early spring of 1974, beneath the etched tombstone and fertile ground is a casket, and inside the box is a man adorned in a tailored, bright red zoot suit. But stories like his rarely end six feet under.

Picture Indianapolis right now, five years shy of celebrating its Bicentennial, affectionately known as a big city with a comforting, familiar feel. Or a frustratingly small town desperate to be metropolitan — depends on who is inquiring. It's not difficult to imagine an eerily similar Indianapolis in 1920, a deeply segregated, steadily developing city, an urban core bursting at the seams as the Great Migration attracted nearly 13,000 Negroes from southern states, many settling along Indiana Avenue or on cross streets a skip away.

Enter Denver and Sea Ferguson, brothers born and raised in Brownsville, a tiny, rural, white town in Kentucky, 200 miles south of Indianapolis. Throughout their childhood, father Sam, a son of slaves, and mother Mattie, quietly bought small parcels of the town until they held the majority of the land. They taught their boys the power of owning property through practice, sent Denver to the front lines of World War I and Sea to earn a degree at Lincoln University. A newly minted veteran, Denver followed the Black masses to the Circle City, purchased a home, and invested in his own printing press company within walking distance of the Avenue.

The influx of Black Americans relocating to Indiana, living in downtown Indianapolis sparked an exponential growth of KKK



membership. Historians estimate a quarter of all white, male Hoosiers joined ranks between 1910 and 1920. Racial tension between blacks and whites boiled over in the streets and bled into the highest levels of municipal office, severely depressing local opportunity and upward mobility for Black families. The Ferguson Brothers, rock 'n' roll pioneers, and a touch of extrajudicial ingenuity changed the musical, political, and economic landscape of the city and beyond.

Denver dug his heels into building an empire, designing a lottery ticket disguised as a baseball scorecard. Folks bought as many tickets as they had money to stretch and scribbled their runs, hits, and errors in three columns, placed their bets with runners hiding in plain sight, and awaited the weekly bank reports to declare a winner, or usually, lack thereof. Two types convened at the back door of the print shop, runners and winners for payouts and cops and politicians for payoffs. The gambling business amassed 200 employees and return on investment so high, Denver summoned his brother to Indianapolis to help him keep supply and demand in check. The Fergusons conducted business as a team and separately, operating as complements amid fierce competition to turn a quick and constant profit. Denver, quiet and unassuming, and younger Sea, personable and visible, the brothers equally formidable, especially together.

They acquired Odd Fellows Hall, a three-story, white social club on the corner of Vermont and Senate, an offshoot of Indiana Avenue. Sea opened a real estate

brokerage in a suite on the first floor and converted the remainder of the first floor and the second into the Cotton Club. The third floor transformed into Denver's Trianon Ballroom. Both black nightlife attractions served as popular destinations for traveling big bands and musical acts, from Walter Barnes to Duke Ellington. The connection to Barnes earned Denver access to Chicago's Bronzeville rock 'n' roll beat (expanding to Detroit, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis) a primer for the Chitlin' Circuit with anchor venues for touring black musicians and performers throughout the rural and urban South — Jackson, Houston, New Orleans, Memphis, and Jacksonville.

On a tipped hunch, Denver built and debuted Sunset Terrace in 1938 on the far end of Indiana Avenue across the street from and just ahead of the city erecting Lockefield Gardens, a government housing project. The Sunset became a renowned black dance hall, arguably one of the best in the country during its heyday. The Fergusons developed their joint business venture into an unorthodox community foundation, incubating budding businesses, providing credit for struggling families, and donating resources to youth groups.

The aftermath of a grisly murder linked to the Fergusons' white rivals on the Avenue proved egregious for black businessmen in the area. In 1940, a political crackdown from the mayor's office rippled through the police department and municipal agencies. Denver, Sea, and fellow black business owner Goosie Lee lost their liquor licenses to

trumped-up causes. Not long after, Denver's lottery business folded under the pressure of increased police presence on the Avenue. In direct response to the city's literal blacklist, the brothers created a booking agency to bring major black entertainers to Indianapolis, and financially back tours of the Chitlin' Circuit, contributing to the monumental careers of B.B. King, James Brown, Little Richard, and more.

By the late 1940s, both transitioned their businesses to legal entities. Denver found himself tangled in a transnational marriage and ugly divorce with a German-born woman whose photo appeared in *Jet* magazine. Complications from several strokes caused his death in May of 1957. Sea prevailed against pesky tax evasion charges and lived as a celebrated and successful businessman and active member of the NAACP in the city until he passed away of natural causes in March of 1974. He's the brother buried, suited and booted to the heavens in Crown Hill, alongside his parents and older brother.



Whether Denver and Sea should be denounced menaces or hailed heroes isn't the question. Despite authority figures relentlessly questioning their ethics, the Ferguson brothers redefined urban development, creating a self-sustaining, bustling district for thousands of marginalized black people in a way that still can't be replicated to date. The city designated Indiana Avenue as a cultural district in 2004, christening the area a prime tourist destination, without acknowledging the contributions of people like the Ferguson brothers and so many others towards establishing a once vibrant epicenter for black culture in the Midwest.





# A FUTURE FINELY ZIPPED

## Immigrant Memory and Music

TAYLOR PETERS

He's just around the corner, out of view from the second-floor landing of Indianapolis' Scottish Rite Cathedral. There's a Gore-Tex skin bag at his waist and he's blowing it full of carbon dioxide. The busy bustle of winter breakers is everywhere. Some event has people streaming in from the suburbs. The reservoir at his waist is plump enough to squeeze and resuscitate the little reed. A dark-headed second grader—this was me—is gawping at designs on the floor and is about to be scared for his life.

May every orchestra have its fill of breath-powered instruments. Trumpets. Trombones. May the air exit these players' lungs, enter their instruments riding a throughline, agitate the metal thing until it sounds, and be done. May the instruments split the voice but may they still accept the same old breath we use when we shower sing (to) ourselves.

That Gore-Tex skin bag, that reservoir, that bagpipe, found only in a rare orchestra, it's collecting a stretch of exhales to deploy, disconnecting them from the singular so they can slip and ricochet off the reflective walls of the stairwell as they wake up a dark-headed second grader—me—to a wash of dread. That second grader's brain, my brain, cannot, could not, compute the suddenly everywhere sound of the bagpiper's recitation as it lunges out of the background on the landing. The second grader is bowled/blown over by that sound. I was always jumpy.

I was afraid of inevitability, of universal annihilation, and the bagpiping tapped that. At 7-years-old, I'd stay up late watching movies I shouldn't have been watching. I remember one about a man who had been poisoned, who had only 24 hours to live. It might have even been a comedy in retrospect, but the inexorability felt serious. That sense of being closed in on still powers my dreams once in awhile.

I found a reservoir for some of this fear in the Bible. The book of Revelation says the Archangel Gabriel will blow his trumpet on Judgement Day. Jesus tells his followers that no one can know the day or the hour that he will return. I took that to mean that if I sat

in vigil, quietly repeating to myself, "This will be the moment," then some contractual obligation would kick the can down the road. I'd have trouble sleeping, listening closely and trying to focus on the mantra. Any sourceless sound could've been Gabriel soloing, announcing that I'd missed an interstitial second trying to catch my breath between repeats.

So that unseen bagpipe was cosmic. I couldn't explain any of it to myself on the landing at the Scottish Rite, but the extinction of humanity felt bigger, realer, more frightening than individual death and dismemberment. At least, after my limbs were collected, there'd be someone around to say my name a few more times.

And one day, may I remember without the internet who it was that said that we all die twice: (1) when our breath stops, and (2) when no one else is around to puff our name with a generation hop of CPR.

There are other instruments that grab at more than just a huff. Pump organs. Accordions. The breath that powers them is pulled from the thick air. In a crowded room, who knows what mix of yours and mine goes through those chambers.

It's unsurprising that something like the accordion is central to the polka, a style that's equal parts of the Americas and of Europe. It's a goofy little thing that we pump so that it can sing (of) itself by way of everyone else, like musical first-aid.

May my limbs be ever ready and collected, prepared to hold, to squeeze life into lungs or reservoirs. May my understanding of just what I extend remain perfectly shimmering.

My city is full of buildings whose names and historical subterranea I never consider. That Scottish Rite and its foggy (ma)sonics I hardly even visit now, but three days a week I'm in another building not too different. The Athenae-

um. Formerly—I just learned—we called it The German House, right up until "anti-German sentiment" in World War I sent that title underground, switching it for the Greek goddess of justice and war strategy. I go there for the YMCA, the basement weight room, and I've usually got headphones in when I do.

In 1907, the east wing of The German House was home to the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union. In 1941, Indiana University incorporated it, and now it's the oldest school for physical education teachers in the United States. I have seen pictures and monuments to this history as I practice pull-ups, but I have hardly once thought of the historical throughline. Me, a German, whose family jettisoned the ugly extra syllables in our surname at Ellis Island.

In the 1800s, German immigrants in Indianapolis—several of whom probably populate my backstory—wanted to preserve their heritage, if not their full last names, and so they started singing together, backed by accordions. A February 2015 headline to an article on local singing societies in the *Indianapolis Star* proclaims that German culture still thrives on the city's east side, so the preservation worked. Many thanks to the 1872 accordion-pump founding of Indianapolis' Liederkrantz, a singing society which is still alive today. They boast an outdated website and a flat-fronted building over on Washington Street. Together, they sing of their selected identities in weekly meet-ups and annual performances.

Many thanks, too, to the Musikverein at The German House, an orchestra and choir dating back to 1897, stocked initially with local musicians who spoke only German. It was disbanded in 1918 due, again, to "anti-German sentiment," but kept its throughline, now going by The Athenaeum Pops orchestra. Named the "oldest orchestra in the city of Indianapolis" (how many others can I even list?) on their website, they purport to "play the music everybody loves" while an image shows them performing for a half empty set of chairs.



**psych** : from Latin Ancient Greek "soul, breath"

**phonic**: from Greek alternate form from Ancient (phōnē, "sound")

Latin *psychē*, from Greek ψυχή (*psukhē*, "breath")

**psychphonic** = ψυχήφωνή the sound of breath

Greek *phon-* te form of *phono-*, cient Greek φωνή "sound, voice")

ψυχήφωνή of breath

I can outline my own memory of "orchestra," all the classes, and trips, and every time I was shushed with my friends as we watched a violinist etch out concertos. But "orchestra" comes from the Latin via Greek and used to mean "to dance." A dance is historically inscribed in that expensive ticket to sit and to watch others sit. The Möbius strip of history flips us around like we're half-cooked schnitzel. May I stay limpid for many of these flips.

Words bury in time as much as they uncover. Like the soft-shoe of "anti-German sentiment" and what that must have actually meant to rename whole buildings. Of course, it means so little now, with partial German names and German culture so embedded that amber-trapped versions put forth by smaller and smaller groups warrant only puffy, intermittent headlines in the local paper. Same with the Scottish, where I imagine middle-aged guys who love to go for tapas will pop on that kilt they got online only maybe once a month to do their due diligence. Even so, carrying on these names and these practices must put fresh breath into ailing lungs.

May naming prop a cosmic CPR against second death. Name a son, a daughter, or a building and ward off disappearance. Unless, somehow, the name, in wartime, is associated with an out-group, in which case, may it be easy to alter the historical places registry, to enlarge the basement, and to add a new set of squat racks. And may even then, the background be clear and still.

What should I call the act of self-consciously activating only heritage memories week by

week? Maybe self-obsession. And what should I call the act of carrying someone else's name without realizing it, even and especially when what I'm really trying to do is find someone to carry for me before I start pulling a pension? Because certain things get built by certain people walking in buildings named for certain other people they never knew and whose names don't even register as names for years and years, and then all those people, they eventually die, and with their first and especially their second dying breaths, the Möbius of their linguistic historical

registries eek out a confused fact about the way things used to be, how things ought still to be, and a clipped shiver of what's nearly up ahead. And on and on and on.

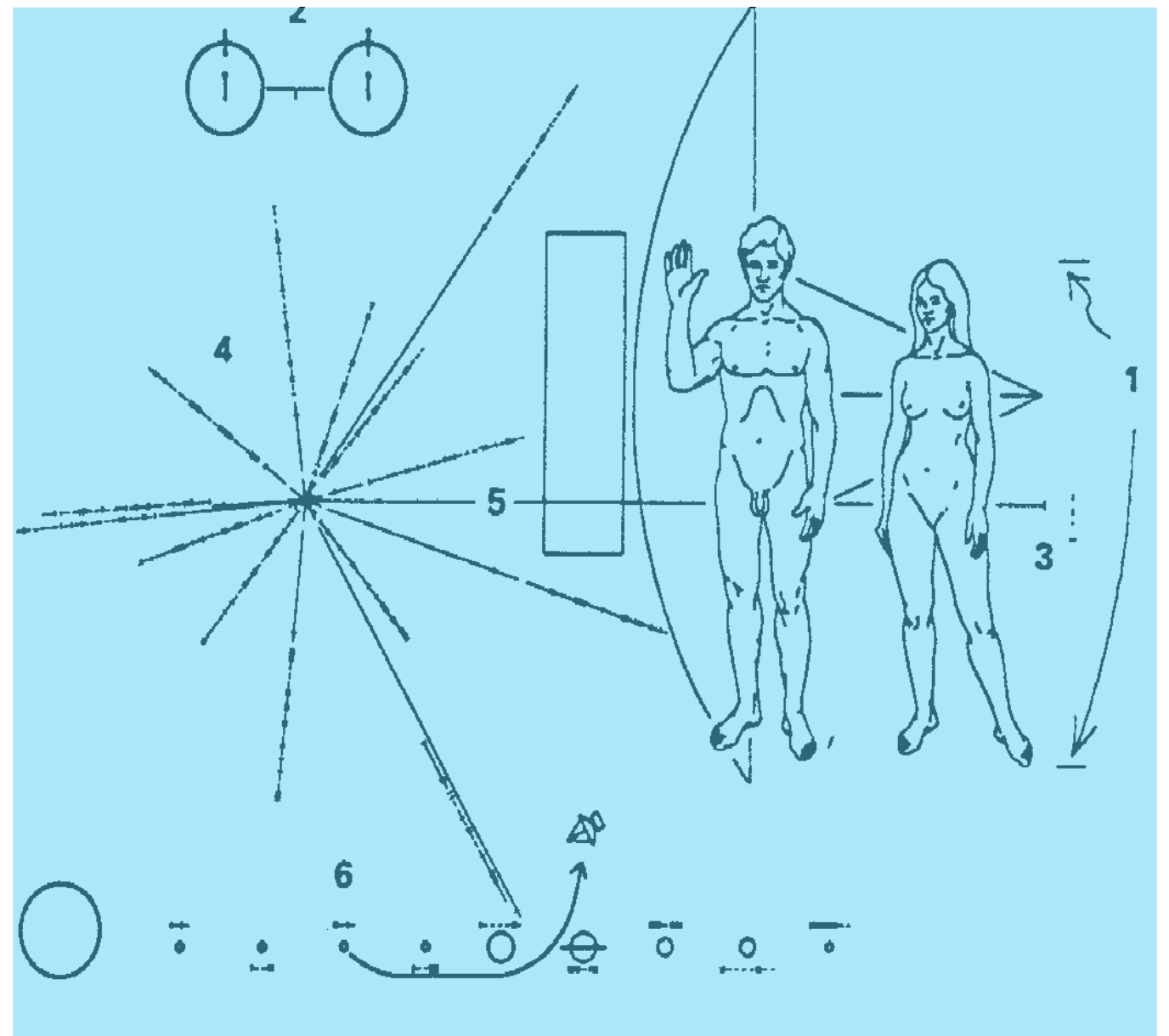
And then someone starts an orchestra or plays bagpipe in a hallway or finds an old accordion in a storage shed. And then the second-grader gets nervous again when he can't find his family where he thinks they were standing on the second-floor landing and then figures quickly that this sonic moan must mean he got left behind.

Certain emotional patterns and pathologies are said to operate on a continuum, e.g., narcissism on one end, selflessness on the other. Thinking about carrying names, asking for my name to be carried, worrying about there not being anyone left to remember me because we're all dead or raptured, and how that self-interest translates into an empathy for every human soul that I can't fence, it has me looking for some ground where self-love and self-hate aren't on opposite ends, but fully simultaneous. Where the continuum wraps around a modulo. Somewhere in the outside, where another formula would find left meeting right, east meeting west. This is the plot of land I'm trying to locate and speak from.

Right here, I'd like to say that every action is inscribed in a

groove, making rumble strips in history, but I truthfully don't know what that means about how I live in time. I enter a building, I sing a song, I wonder where that sound is coming from, I say "Hi," to someone I love, and I'm surely doing so at the end of a long stretch of exhales. And I'm surely as well kickstarting, breathing again, keeping it on, so that maybe next time someone wants to enter a building, sing a song, wonder after a sound, lift a weight, or say, "Hi," to someone they love, I might get my own inscription. Should I sing louder to deepen the groove? Should I do it out of narcissism or self-release? Should all of this be terrifying because I'm doing it alone, or comforting because I can't be unique?

May everything I ever say be just me. Just me dangling facts by fishing wire while the CPR-certified air compressor consciousness in my skull is crushing and releasing, cinching and then loosening, winding up objects, filling them with energy that isn't mine and atoms of air that lungs couldn't respire until they are so wound that they sing of themselves in a lonely society of hollow songs that echo off basement walls until shortly after my time here zips up not in a tandem glistening instant with every other living soul, but hopefully, totally, blisteringly solo. Just me singing songs of other people. Just me breathing breath that's my own. Just me listening. Amen.





# MUSIC FOR TOMORROW: Sun Ra Plays for the Space Age

SUSANNAH KOERBER

“Everything you desire for this planet and never have received will be yours in outer space.” This was the promise at Sun Ra’s Outer Space Employment Agency, addressing a blighted Oakland, in the 1974 film *Space is the Place*. Space was Ra’s place, mythic and physical, where the impossible is realized and creativity extends without barriers. There, he would bring humanity through music, saving it from its own destructive impulses. For Sun Ra, pianist, composer, arranger, and bandleader from the planet Saturn via Birmingham, Alabama, music was both the harmonious order of the cosmos and the means to reach it, by opening the mind.

Sun Ra was not the only one who saw space as a way beyond earthly limits. His vision developed during his years in Chicago (1946-1960), corresponding with the space age itself, from the earliest rockets through Sputnik’s launch to Kennedy’s promise of a man on the moon. Ra was also a central figure in jazz’s creative explosion, expanding past conventions into explorations of other cultures and other tones. Ra took flight as one of the spacemen and scientists of a new music. But it was built on years of musical study and research into history, science, science fiction, and the esoteric.

Sun Ra arrived on Earth as Herman Blount in 1914. Raised in the Afro-Baptist tradition, named after the famous magician Black Herman, a child when Tutankhamen’s tomb was opened, and an insatiable reader, his early musical brilliance was matched by his curiosity. But there was the humiliation and danger of the Jim Crow South, where he was constantly made aware of the limits imposed on him. In the late ‘40s or early ‘50s, he received his call, later recounting a vision of aliens on Saturn who returned him to Earth, showing him the mass of people desperate for knowledge and direction.

The world was being refashioned in the post-war period. Civil rights activity heated up as veterans returned home unwilling to accept the denial of freedoms they had defended with their lives. The superpower U.S. competed with the Soviet Union. Former colo-



nies in Asia and Africa moved toward independence. The new alignment of power came with technologies—atomic weaponry and energy, rockets and satellites—that could reshape the entire planet, either bringing on an apocalypse or stretching the potential of humankind to the furthest reaches of the universe.

Responding to this mix of promise and threat, frustrated by the limits he saw on human potential, Ra would act through music. His research came together in a philosophy that rejected history for myth, combining ancient Egyptian and African elements with the knowledge powering the space race. He saw among African Americans remnants of the true Egyptians, proof of greatness. In jazz, he saw how African Americans created music of tremendous power and innovation. In the big bands, he saw an ideal community: their collective improvisation and fusion into a community demonstrating a discipline and precision that promised true potential could be met. These were the traits needed to create music that could communicate on an intergalactic scale, to develop the science that would take us to outer space, to

master the chaos of the world.

Through the five decades of his career, he would mix historic accomplishments with the future. Musically, he combined the father of swing, Fletcher Henderson, who he played with when he first arrived in Chicago, and Duke Ellington with rhythm and blues, bop, avant-garde classical music, and the latest experiments in jazz. He relentlessly rehearsed his musicians, recording almost everything and eventually producing more than 180 albums, 120 on his own El Saturn records, one of the first artist-run labels.

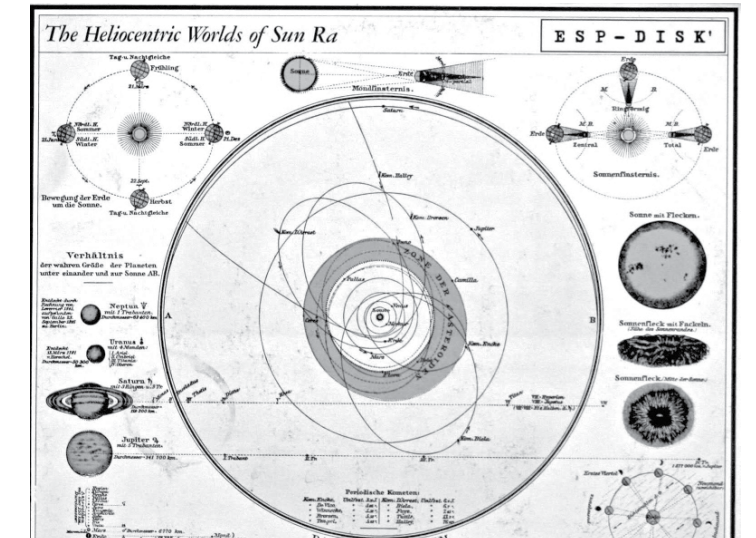
Creating and playing the music that could connect humanity with the cosmos was serious business—he warned his musicians of the perils of even one wrong note. He changed his name in 1952 to Le Sony’r Ra, later incorporating himself (corporations being eternal) stating: “my business is saving the planet.” In 1954, he formed what he intended as a pure rehearsal band, devoted to its craft regardless of commercial success. This would become the Arkestra, the group that would last the rest of his life and beyond. By the late 1950s, he had added space cos-

umes and special effects, combining art, dance, and theater with music to create a total experience.

The Arkestra’s name shifted to fit the purpose of the music it played: Myth-Science, Intergalactic, Solar, Cosmo Love Adventure... Whatever the name, its members were not just musicians but tone scientists. Ra’s conception of science included mystical things hidden from those not prepared to see them. In an interview for *Musica Jazz*, quoted in John Szwed’s superb biography *Space is the Place*, he explained that this was “... not science as we know it, but another kind. I’ve been looking for a solution which goes back to Egypt, and to the whole universe. I think musicians are on a superior level, but unlike scientists, they haven’t been accepted for their abilities.” He privileged the role of music in efforts to expand the human reach and move into the future—music as a universal language that pre-dated and extended beyond humans, allowing access to the structures of nature.

This faith in music was not unique to Sun Ra. Indianapolis native James Spaulding, a virtuoso alto saxophone and flute player who was with the Arkestra from 1957-59, shared this view of music’s role. Discussing his wide experiences in experimental jazz for a 2015 *NUVO* interview with Kyle Long, he said: “It felt like we were all traveling on this journey together. . . We were obsessed with trying to make things better for ourselves and on this planet. Having dreams beyond this physical existence, reaching for the stars and the planets.”

The Arkestra would move to New York in 1961 and ultimately settle in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, continuing to play past Sun Ra’s death in 1993. They developed an international following while remaining true to the philosophy that was clear by the time they left Chicago. As reported by Szwed, shortly before his death Sun Ra charged them with continuing his mission: “You project your spirit outward and become everyone else—you understand them and their needs... I’ve given you all the information I can; now it’s up to you.”



## Syllabus for Sun Ra’s 1971 course, *The Black Man in the Universe* University of California, Berkeley, 1971

*The Egyptian Book of the Dead*

*Radix*

Alexander Hislop: *Two Babylons*

The Theosophical works of Madame Blavatsky

*The Book of Oahspe*

Henry Dumas: *Ark of Bones*

Henry Dumas: *Poetry for My People* eds. Hale Charfield & Eugene Redmond, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1971

*Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, eds. Leroi Jones & Larry Neal, New York: William Morrow 1968

David Livingstone: *Missionary Travels*

Theodore P. Ford: *God Wills the Negro*

Rutledge: *God’s Children*

*Stylus*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1971), Temple University

John S. Wilson: *Jazz. Where It Came From, Where It’s At*, United States Information Agency

Yosef A. A. Ben-Jochannan: *Black Man of the Nile and His Family*, Alkibu Ian Books 1972

Constantin Francois de Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney: *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires, and the Law of Nature*, London: Pioneer Press 1921

*The Source Book of Man’s Life and Death* (Ra’s description; = *The King James Bible*)

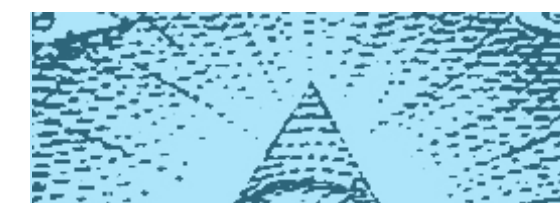
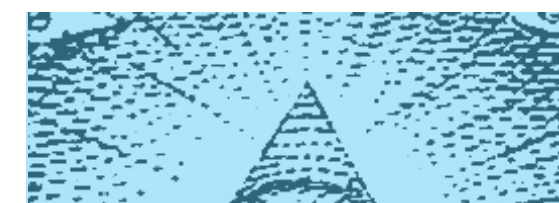
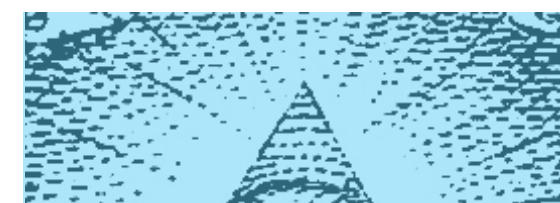
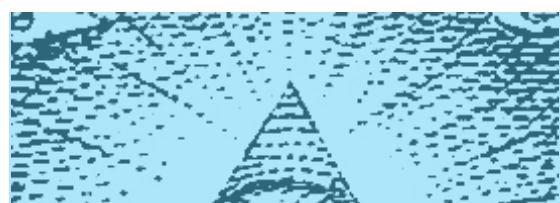
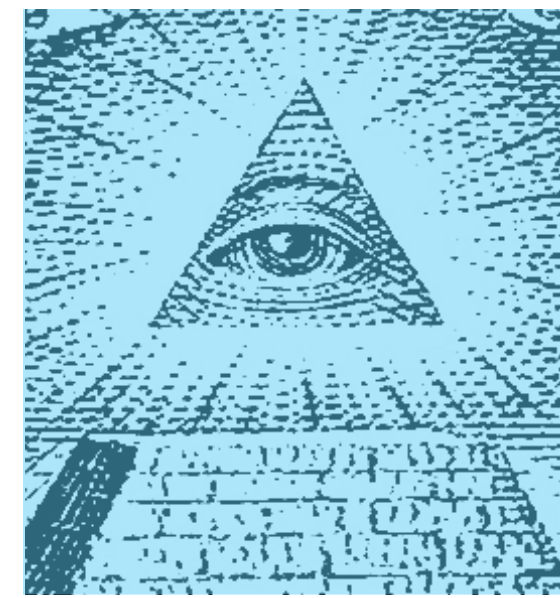
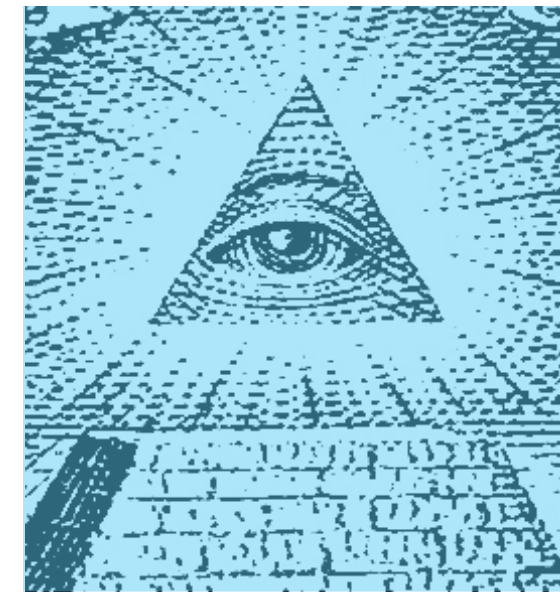
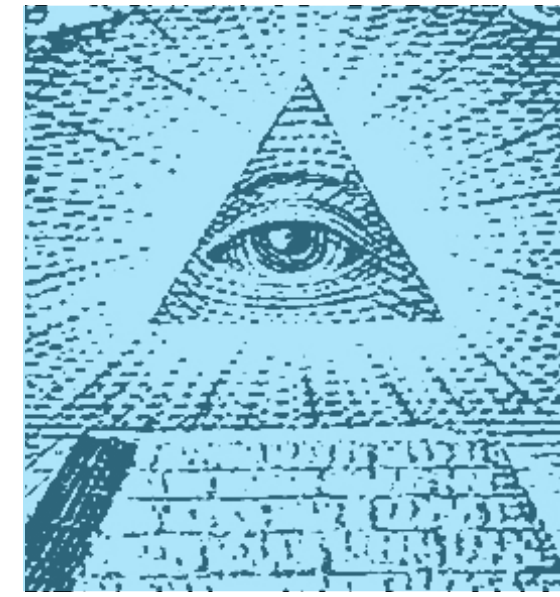
Pjotr Demianovitch Ouspensky: *A New Model of the Universe. Principles of the Psychological Method in Its Application to Problems of Science, Religion and Art*, New York: Knopf 1956

Frederick Bodmer: *The Loom of Language. An Approach to the Mastery of Many Languages*, ed. Lancelot Hogben, New York: Norton & Co. 1944

*Blackie’s Etymology*









# A DENT IN YOUR WORLDVIEW

## The Psychphonics of Knowing Earthworks

DR. FIONA McDONALD AND DR. LARRY ZIMMERMAN

### The Scene

Over cups of coffee, pages of notes, journal articles amassed, webpages reviewed, and the silencing of theory books muffled in a cloth bag, an eminent archaeologist and an emerging visual anthropologist play off the page of the idea of how sensory experiences underwrite adjacent mythologies to meta-narratives of place in the pursuit of new knowledge through psychphonic encounters.

### The Framing

Meta-narratives, adjacent mythologies, and alter-narratives all emerge from somebody's truth, or their need for a truth to hold on to. Myths are cumulative and amass potency over time in the same way that artificial formations on the land are built up with a vision for resilience and permanence. As anthropologists and archaeologists, we seek validity for the facts we excavate or witness. For archaeologists, it takes extraordinary empirical evidence to prove and disprove ones' story or theory of mounds. For anthropologists, it requires in-depth qualitative knowledge of the meaning of the earthworks today, and how oral traditions open up lived knowledge from the past. But as humans, we must find a way to be present in a place to let the sensory experience we have help us to question the fictions of normalcy or the accuracy of myths.

### The Discussion

We dig. We listen. We observe. We witness. We interpret. We sense. And we can *only* infer. Instead of accepting a meta-narrative as the normative truth, we as researchers believe it is imperative to appreciate that the stories that become the meta-narratives often tell more about those who wrote them than about the myth they recount. But as we know, each person who visits a site, holds an object, or witnesses an event writes their own story that may or may not be connected to the scientific reality of the ground under them, the material against their skin, or the moment within which they exist.

Take, for example, myth and science. Both tell us that the dirt

under our feet contains the elements from which we are made and which nurtures us. Though we may shape the dirt to suit our needs for survival—and, too often, abuse it—at some profound level, we understand, even honor dirt's sacredness to survival. How and why do the stories differ?

All too often, museums and heritage sites act as forces of authority that craft and reinforce meta-narratives as they consciously filter out the stories that don't fit their norm. They silence the stories that cannot be rationalized through the lens of Western science. As anthropologists and archaeologists, we try to understand what was somebody's truth of a place, of a time. To accept the cacophony of facts that become mediated through our own bodies—our own archive of experiences, biases, and alter-narratives—in order to question the fictions of normalcy.

Here in the heartland of what we now call North America, the first inhabitants of the land certainly thought so. They built effigy mounds in the shape of birds, bears, and panthers along high ridges that were not leveled by the last glaciers; a bit further west, along the high ridges overlooking the Plains, they aligned small boulders to make effigies of turtles, snakes, buffalo, spoked 'medicine wheels,' and even people; south of the Great Lakes in what is now Indiana (such as at Mound State Park near Anderson), as well as Ohio and West Virginia, they piled millions of baskets of dirt into fantastic and vast geometric figures and often buried their dead in both large and small linear and conical earthen mounds. About 500 years before European settlers arrived, some Native Americans lived in cities of as many as 30,000 people, larger than any city in Europe at the same time. There they built the largest prehistoric earthen structure on the continent, its base covering 5.3 hectares and 28 meters in height containing more than 61,000 cubic meters of earth. Smaller cities from this period, such as Angel Mounds outside Evansville, dot the landscape across most of the lower Mississippi River drainage. Although anthropologists and archaeologists know many of the reasons people

were motivated to spend generations building these mounds, we only have hints of their beliefs from decorative motifs on pottery, small figurines, etched shells, and a few other artifacts, but there are other clues from the oral traditions of their descendants. The myth comes when people try to tell the *why* part of the story, a mechanism for rationalizing the unknown. It is not unknown. It is only unknown to those whose story it is not their right to tell.

By the time European settlers took notice of the mounds, many of the Indigenous nations whose ancestors built them had perished from the horrific pandemics that accompanied non-Indigenous settlement. The tribal peoples and their cultures were nearly ghosts, but not completely, as we know from the rich, thriving, and vibrant Indigenous communities we have the privilege to live with on their land today. Nevertheless, at that time, the European settlers flooding the area puzzled over the mounds they saw, figuring that the Native Americans had neither the knowledge nor numbers to build them. We know this was not so, and their assumption was fueled by a misinformed belief that Indigenous people were inferior given the problems with early-anthropology and ideas of those such as Lewis Henry Morgan. For want of better terms, European settlers invented a story of the mysterious—probably white—"Mound Builders" who must have been here before the Native Americans, thus negating Indigenous rights to land. Indeed the stuff of myths that have accrued over time, Europeans argued that just about anyone but the Native Americans had built the earthworks. They went so far as to think it was the work of the survivors of sunken Atlantis—itsself a myth—or the Vikings, or the Welsh, to name a few, but the leading candidates for building the mounds in this myth were the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, named once in the Old Testament, then never again. As Robert Silverberg suggests in his book *The Mound Builders: The Archaeology of Myth* (1968), the settlers were a people mostly severed from Europe with desperate longings for a deep European history, so they invented one in North America. By

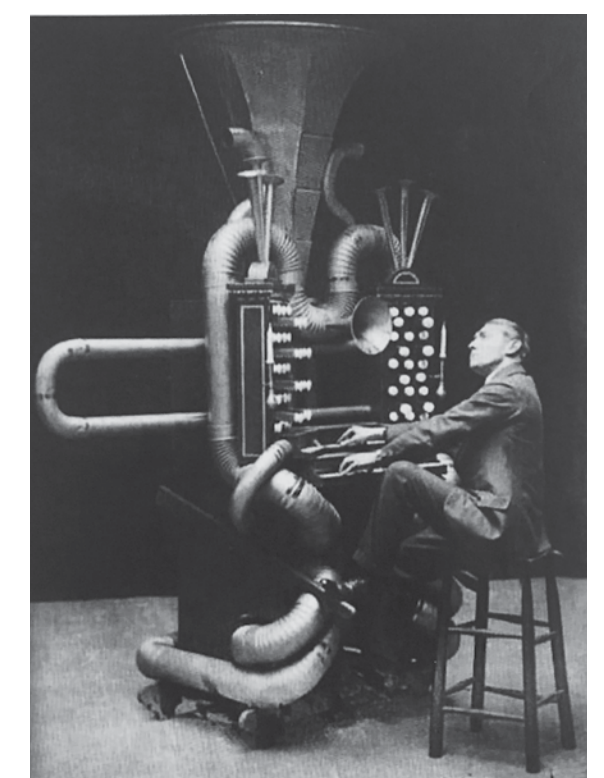
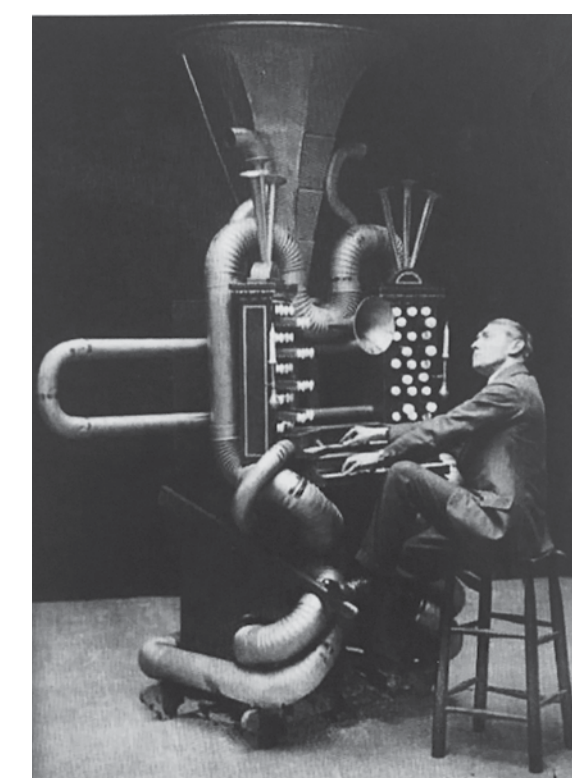
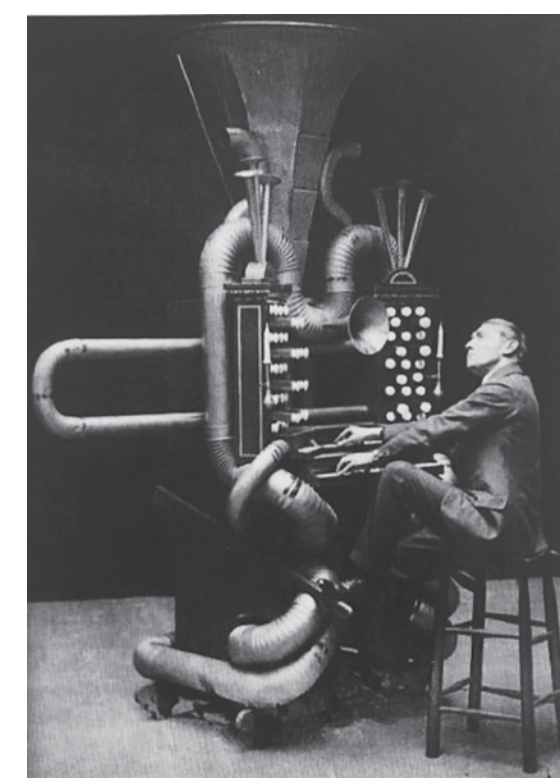
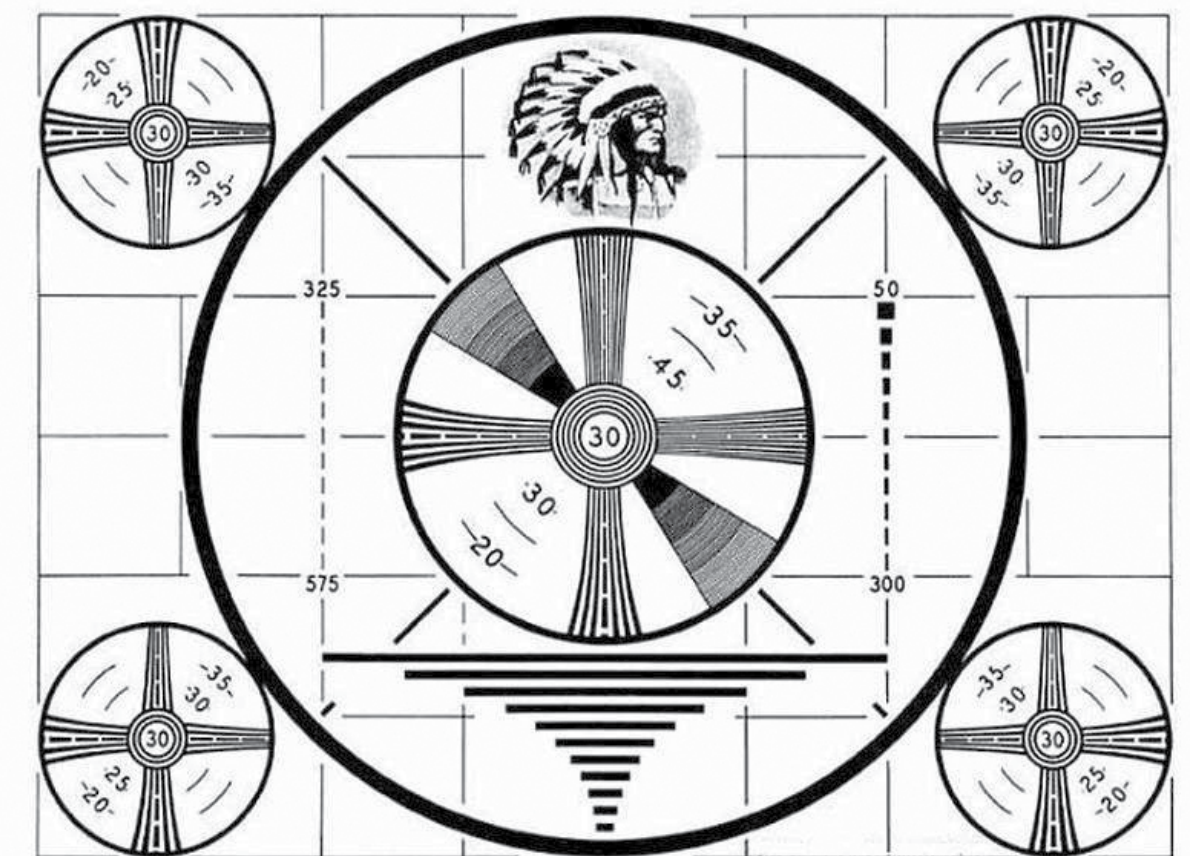
the 1880s, the myth so consumed the populace that Congress paid for an investigation of the question. Scholars used the relatively new sciences of archaeology and ethnography to excavate mounds and to study the remaining Native American tribes before they 'disappeared' in order to investigate their oral traditions—even though there was still disbelief that Native Americans constructed the mounds. The evidence was so overwhelming that the investigators had no doubt that the ancestors of the living Native Americans had built the mounds, and as such the myth was debunked. But by then the damage was done. The myth was so entrenched as a truth that at least one religion included it (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—the Mormons), taking it as a core belief. Others willingly accepted that Native Americans built the mounds, but that to build earthworks so complicated, they must have had outside help. For them, the myth has now morphed into pseudoarchaeology, claiming construction advice was received from extraterrestrial visitors or linked with New Age beliefs. This meant seeing the mounds as ancient expressions of a psychic unity of humanity rather than Indigenous ingenuity. For some, cacophonies of fact apparently can become a prolonged, unpleasant din.

Some 20,000 earthworks had been surveyed east of the Rocky Mountains by the mid-1800s, but have now been reduced by agriculture and development, numbering under 2,000 with many of them threatened daily. Still, dozens have been archaeologically investigated, strengthening the truth that Native Americans did build the mounds. But while researchers can rarely attempt to answer through inference the questions of who, what, when, where, and how, it is the question of *why* that remains elusive, leaving answers open to speculation and the ground fertile for the making of myths comprised from the cabinet of curiosity, of objects placed in the earthworks to activate or protect them.

### The Conclusion

As we move through the layers of history, reverberating with the

soundwaves of time, we try to step into the story to catch the vibration as we excavate and understand the palimpsest of truths in the objects, the land, and oral histories that live around us, before us, and very likely will remain after us. With that, we seem to have left the detritus of the journey in the dirt, the artifacts a sort of archaeological curiosity cabinet. We can never, and will never, speak for the cultures that are not our own. We let the sounds of objects, the echoes of places, and the muffled moments in time present opportunities to understand where the truth dwells—where the *alter-narratives* can and do liberate us from the fictions of normalcy (created by the master-narratives of the history of time) to put a dent in our worldview.









# ACTON

## James Turrell's Tule Fog

RICHARD MCCOY

I'm pretty sure it was a Friday afternoon when I called James Turrell's studio to find out why his artwork at the Indianapolis Museum of Art was named *Acton*. I didn't expect him to answer the phone that day; but there I was talking to one of the most important artists in the U.S. He was interested in telling me about his artwork, a piece he'd made in the late 1970s.

"When I was working as a pilot for the U.S. Postal Service in California," Turrell told me, "I would encounter a fog that made flying very difficult. This fog, called tule fog, is so dense that when I was in it I couldn't tell which way the plane and I were going. So I named the piece for a city I stopped in during this time: Acton, California."

Having an artist talk about an artwork is often better than having them write about it. Hearing their words and inflections builds a psychic connection between minds. His artwork is a room on the third floor of the museum, which is part of his "Space Division Construction" series. It is a viewing space, with a 6 ft by 12 ft opening cut into a wall with lights on each side that cause the opening to appear as a misty gray rectangle on the wall. There is truth in the precision that was used to construct the entire installation, and there is truth in the dimensional relationship of the rectangle on the wall; it is a shape designed for you to look into. And it is a shape that wants to contain something.

It is a re-creation of tule fog, a portal to another place, and an effort by Turrell to bring a carton of air from that small town in California to Indianapolis. Back then I thought of the artwork like an environmental snow globe, one that was always just shook up. In it, you can actually peer back in time, to what Turrell had seen in Acton in the 1970s.

During my ten years working for the museum in the conservation-restoration department, I spent hours looking at *Acton*. I also did something that few others have done: I climbed through the rectangle (after taking my shoes off) and collected all of the little things that visitors threw into it.

Part of my job was to clean the fog.



Because this cleaning needed to be done so frequently, I later assigned this work to others in the department.

I never really understood why visitors were compelled to throw items into this artwork. And, yes, I know they didn't just accidentally "drop them" in there, because many items were very far in the back of the space and many of the things did not appear to be things that one would normally have in hand. Also, some people would lean into the opening and spit onto the floor. Finally, and I don't want to get into it, but there is a story told by the senior staff about a couple caught having sex in *Acton*...

The first time I brought the collected things from *Acton* down to my basement museum studio, I found that I didn't want to throw them away. These things had become charged somehow. They had passed through the fog and were now something different. Perhaps "passed through" is the wrong term. Maybe they dropped through the fog.

Throwing something into *Acton* can be seen as an attempt to disrupt the fog, or to test its presence or validity. It's more than just a punk move to mess with the museum (or to get back at whoever made you come see this thing in the first place). I don't want to pretend to be able to psychoanalyze the motivations of those that threw things into *Acton*. And I don't think they are bad people. But they were running some kind of mental test

on the fog, if not themselves.

I think Turrell proved that fog is transportable and in some ways mentally transferable. We all carry a kind of fog around with us wherever we go. It is that indescribably beautiful thing that exists between you and me during a conversation, and that space between us when we walk on the street, with our feet in step and our shoes clicking on the sidewalk.

Fog is also empty. It can hold nothing. It moves around things. Passive.

We started collecting the things that were thrown into *Acton*, and soon we needed a vessel to store them. I'm not sure where I got the mayonnaise jar, but at some point we started stuffing the things in there. The jar became full, so we smashed things further down. Like the fog, it seemed like it was never full and that it could always accept more things. It was a vessel to contain what could not fit into the fog, and would not remain. But it was also a vessel filled with what remains from those that visited the fog.

Not everyone throws things into the fog. Some let it be. Some stand and stare into the fog. They realize the duality of the fog, that it is there and it is nothing. You are there looking at the fog, but the fog, also, cannot be.

The fog was built from simple materials. Wood studs, drywall, plaster, paint, and 4 bulbs in light fixtures which are connected to

the city's electric grid. Deep inside the wiring of the museum there is a set of light switches that are programmed to come on at specific times. I probably don't have to tell you this, but the fog is a kind of magic show, a performance of space. A work of art.

There are records in folders and on computers in the museum that determine the precise facts used to construct and care for *Acton*. The artwork is insured for a value of approximately \$400,000 in the event it is damaged or destroyed.

I left the museum in the summer of 2013. I packed up all of my things from my desk: books, files, pictures of my kids and wife, little things I had collected over a 10-year stint working for the place. But I left the mayonnaise jar filled with items from the fog behind. My friend, Laura, still worked there and she wanted to continue putting things in the jar. But when she left the museum a year later, I asked a friend to retrieve the jar for me. I wanted it back. This jar is a kind of secondary portal to the fog, a portal back to the museum. A collection of nothings.

In this collection, in this jar, I can see the actions of cleaning the fog, the people that helped me care for and about that artwork. Those dedicated to making the fog visible in its clearest form. In the jar, I can see more clearly what cannot be seen between all of us.

As for *Acton*, like all artworks, it has no voice or capacity to speak, but it is charged with a soul; perhaps it is my own psychphonic relationship with it that carries the charge. Or maybe it's shared between you and me. If you're curious and want to test the relationship, I recommend that you stand in front of the fog. Who knows, maybe you'll throw something into it, maybe you won't.





# THE ASTRAL LIGHTNING ROD

ENRIQUE RAMIREZ

A speculative genealogy of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in downtown Indianapolis will conjure a host of other, similar towers, long lost to cordite blasts or wrecking balls. Some died as they were born, as drawings, paintings, or engravings, testaments to a long-lost architectural imagination. There is, for example, Albrecht Dürer's engraving of a "Monument to Commemorate a Victory over the Rebellious Peasant" (1525), where a seated, hunched figure, dressed in rags and stabbed in the back with a broadsword, sits atop a column made of larders, milk jugs, grain bushels, pikes and scythes. Moving forward several centuries, Ernest Hébrard and Henrik Christian Andersen's "Tower of Progress" (1913-14) appeared as a monument to scientific advancement and the centerpiece of their ill-conceived "World City of Communications." The Tower itself was an architectural fantasy in the truest sense: massive, overscaled, more wedding cake than monument. These all conjure Bruno Schmitz's now familiar obelisk, planted in the middle of Monument Circle at the intersection of Market and North Meridian Streets, if not for their similar forms and arrangements, then for something altogether more mysterious.

There is, after all, something downright spooky about the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. Perhaps it is the way the limestone sculptures of soldiers from the Mexican, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars gaze at the world beyond the monument with hollowed eyes. Subjected to more than a century of rain, snow, sunlight, and a host of other environmental conditions, these soldiers appear more like giant bleached wraiths, mouths and faces captured in a mute rictus by dint of the sculpted stone. Or maybe it is George Brewster's "Victory", the robed female figure standing on a sphere, bearing a torch and sword, perched atop the Monument as Nike on the outstretched hand of Athena. It all conjures a sense of mystery, perhaps even of foreboding.

And it all begins with a seemingly strange question: Why did Mrs. Sophia Fairclough-Smith, a

professional spirit medium from London, run out of the Art Institute of Chicago one spring day in March 1920? The facts may, as is often said, be lost to history. There were no eyewitnesses there, but thanks to the *Chicago Tribune*, we have a glimpse of the story. It goes something like this.

Mrs. Fairclough-Smith was scheduled to give a lecture on "The Higher Mysticism" at the museum that day. As she was preparing for her lecture, she sensed something, perhaps emanating from the hall of mummies in the Institute, an "evil aura" manifested and rarefied as a series of "brown rays" coursing throughout the museum. This was no place for a lecture, much less for a séance, so in searching for a more propitious venue for "The Higher Mysticism," Mrs. Fairclough-Smith settled on the Congress Hotel, a building she found pleasurable for the "intellectual blue" spirit rays propagating throughout.

That same day, a little over a mile away, north on Michigan Avenue, at the Northwestern University School of Law, the renowned criminologist Robert H. Gault convened in front of university officials. Like the details surrounding Mrs. Fairclough-Smith's visit, this séance is also shrouded in a veil of mystery. At that meeting, Gault spent the balance of the time denouncing the work of the English physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, FRS. Along with Heinrich Hertz, Max Planck, James Clerk Maxwell, and Edouard Branly, Lodge figured prominently among a group of scientists invested in probing the effects of the ether on the propagation of wireless signals through the air. The economic potential of such work was well known as the time. Shortly before the turn of the century, Lodge assigned his patents for radio wave transmitters to the Italian engineer and experimenter Guglielmo Marconi, who was living in England at the time. Nikola Tesla, who gained international recognition for his work on electromagnetism, sued Marconi for patent rights to the world's first commercial radio transmitter and won. With mysterious financial backing, the US Patent Office eventually assigned

the rights to Marconi, who profited from the decision immensely. And it was not until the 1940s that this decision was reversed and Tesla's name rightly established as the inventor of the radio.

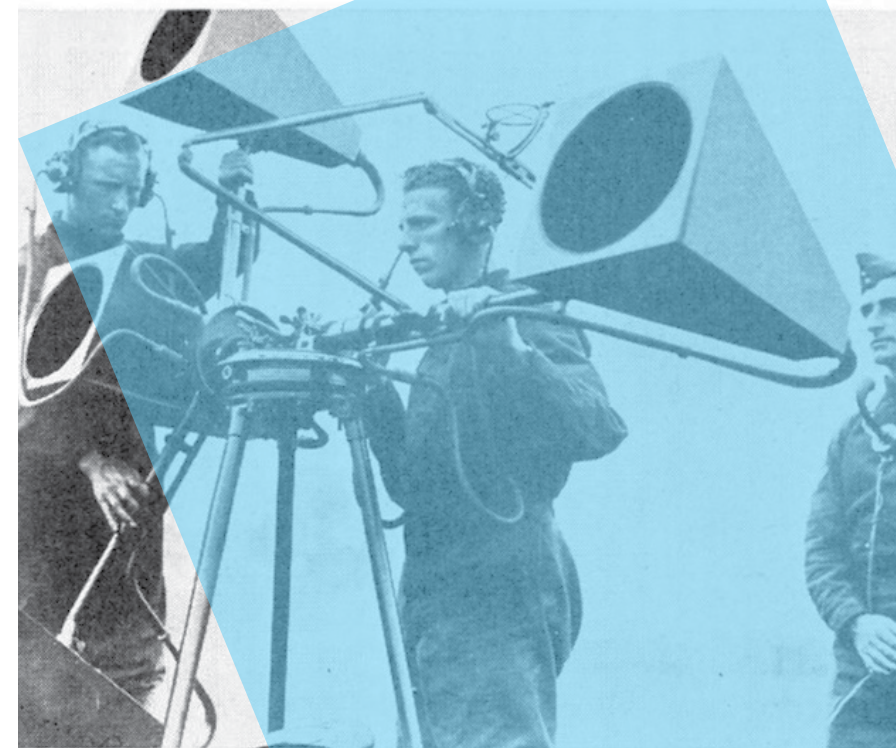
We are getting ahead of ourselves, and as for the answer to why Gault convened this meeting, it is quite possible that he was hell-bent on debunking Lodge's ideas about spiritualism and astral projection. Many of Lodge's peers in Europe were interested in finding some kind of scientific justification for supernatural phenomena. Theories of electromagnetism and light propagation were convenient, as they dealt with the transmission and reception of ineffable, elusive messages through the atmosphere. Lodge was also an outspoken advocate for advanced research in the paranormal, and it was under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research that he met Frederic W.H. Myers. Myers was an important presence in Lodge's life. Lodge contributed to Myers' key texts about paranormal phenomena, including the massive *Phantasms of the Living* (1886), which catalogued hundreds of instances of telepathic communication between the dead and the living. The text was also controversial in that it claimed that paranormal activity was a projection of the collective unconscious, linked to a vast repository of extra-physical images and sensations that Myers called the "metetherial world." An important comparison is in order. As electromagnetic waves flowed through the ether, psychical activity transversed the metether. It was through this metether that Lodge was able to "talk" to Myers shortly after he died in 1901—this was the very conversation that Gault wanted to discredit.

Some spirit voices could "hop" from the metetherial world to the ethereal. Scientific luminaries like Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla claimed to hear such distant, otherworldly voices—known later as Electronic Voice Phenomena, or EVP—through electrical equipment and radios. In his laboratory in Colorado Springs in 1900, Tesla even claimed to hear voices from outer space. Of all the images associated with this kind of communication, two gener-

al types come to mind. There are those, of course, that show a man seated in Tesla's Colorado Springs laboratory, watching as brilliant tentacles of electrical arcs emanate from a magnifying transmitter in the middle of the room, illuminating the space, so much so that one can see all of its details, from the balloon framing to the slatted parquet flooring. Then there are images of the towers themselves, the only architectural objects associated with Tesla. The unfinished Wardenclyffe Tower in Shoreham, New York, is perhaps the most famous. The tower consisted of a half-dome with radiating transmitters atop an upward tapering wooden scaffold, mounted on a brick Beaux-Arts laboratory designed by Stanford White. Yet the magnifying transmitter tower in Colorado Springs is more familiar, if not architecturally significant. It was the inspiration behind the RKO Radio Pictures Logo, an overscaled, animated radio antenna (perhaps more evocative of the Eiffel Tower than Tesla's magnifying transmitter) rising from the North Pole, emitting concentric radio signals from its peak.

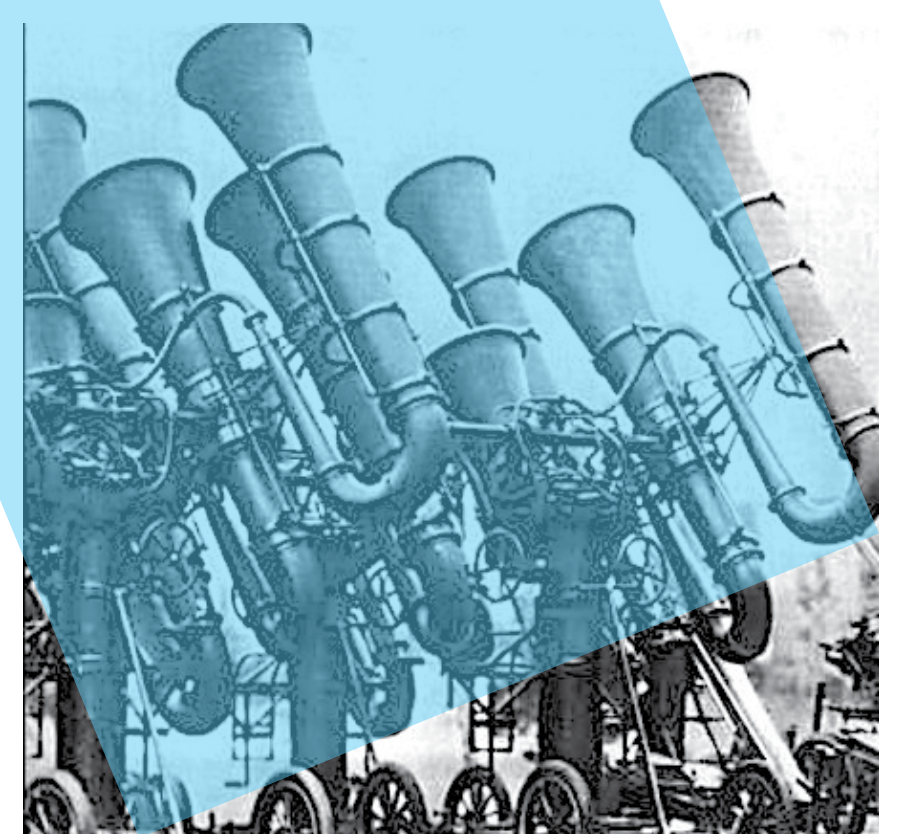
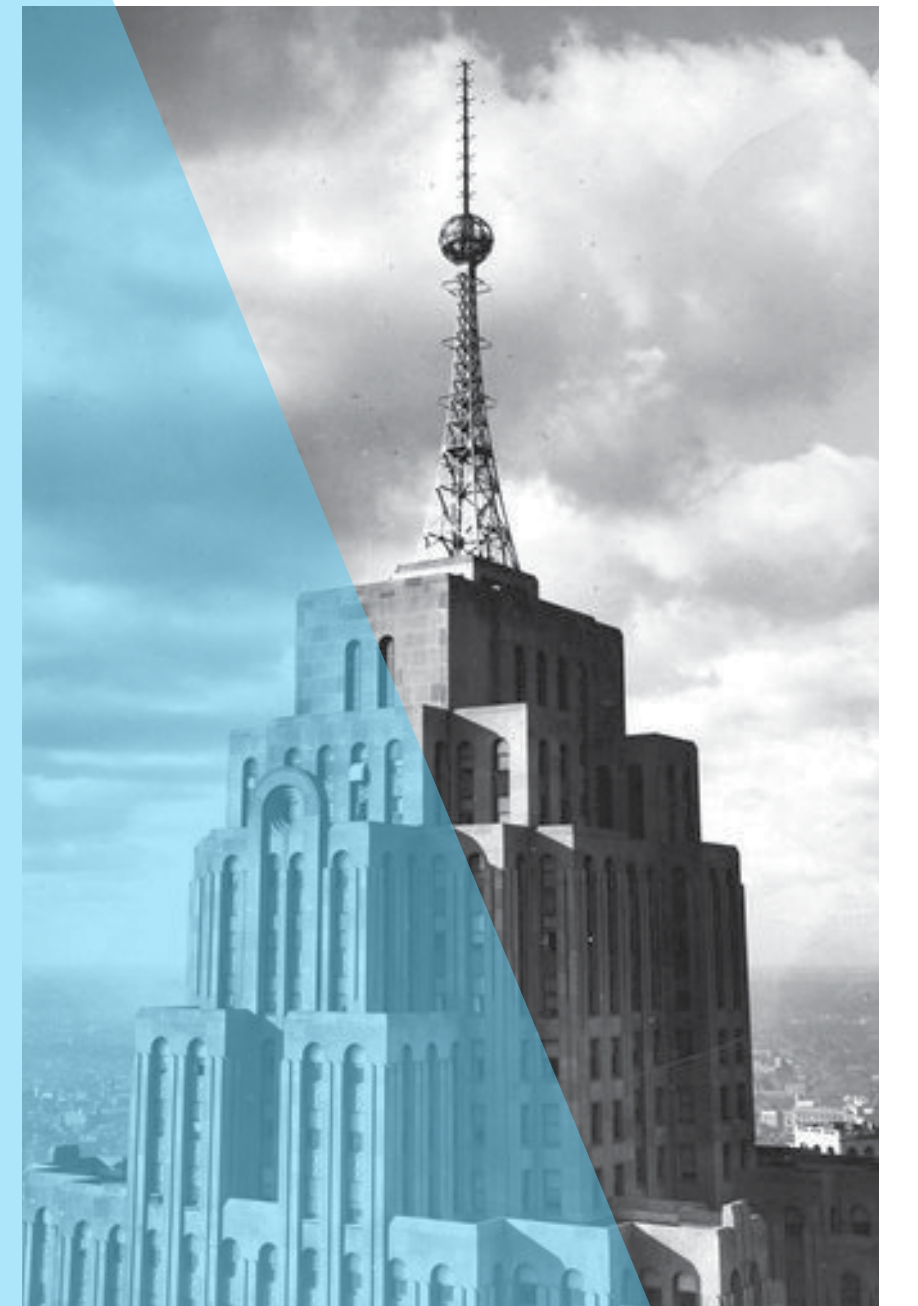
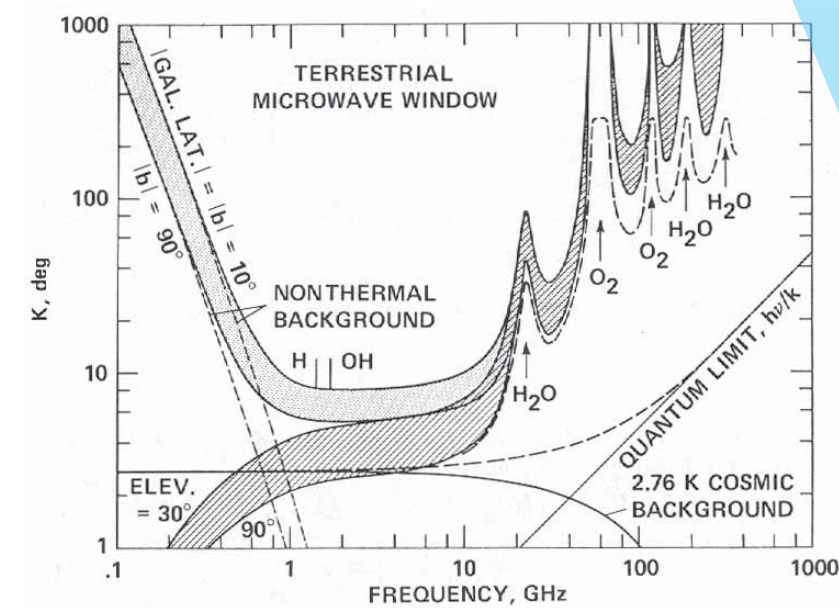
This imaginary tower, in many ways, is the spiritual distant cousin to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. Why is this? In 1888, shortly after Bruno Schmitz was chosen as the supervising architect of the Monument, the German-born Chicago-based architect and structural engineer Frederick Baumann was appointed as "deputy architect." Baumann was a known figure, having translated works by Gottfried Semper into English for *Inland Architect* magazine. He was also an expert at fireproofing, and as deputy architect, one of his main tasks was to plan and design the network of copper shielding inside the obelisk and throughout the Monument Circle site—in essence turning the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument into a giant lightning rod. We can only guess as to the kind of signals that the Monument conducted—for if anything, it was a conduit, a medium channeling the invisible, electrical fluttering of dead souls from the air, creating a livewire of bygone voices running along the parallels and meridians that make up the Indianapolis grid.

# "Big Ears" Listen for Airplanes in Mimic War Raid over Britain



These are sentinels who will spread alarm if warplanes approach England. Sensitive "ears" amplify sound of motors and tell path of approach.

Soldiers with big ears stood guard over the British during recent air maneuvers which were featured by enemy planes. The "ears" were highly sensitive listening devices which the Royal Engineers pointed into the air, picking up the hum of approaching aircraft and relaying the information to the defending air force.

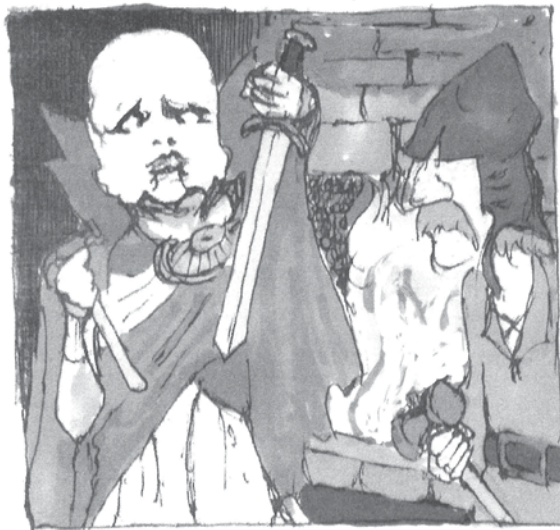




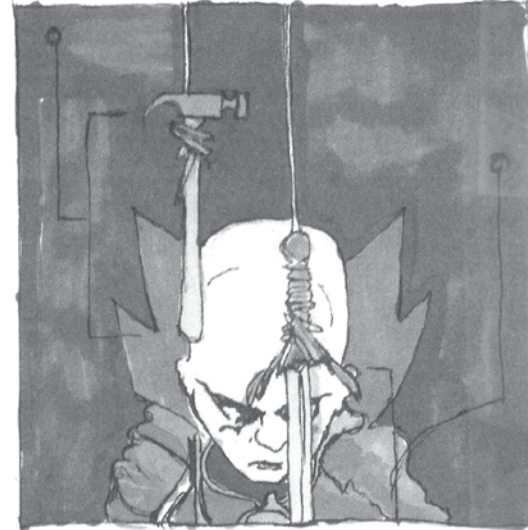
# PYTHAGORAS

*& the music of the spheres*

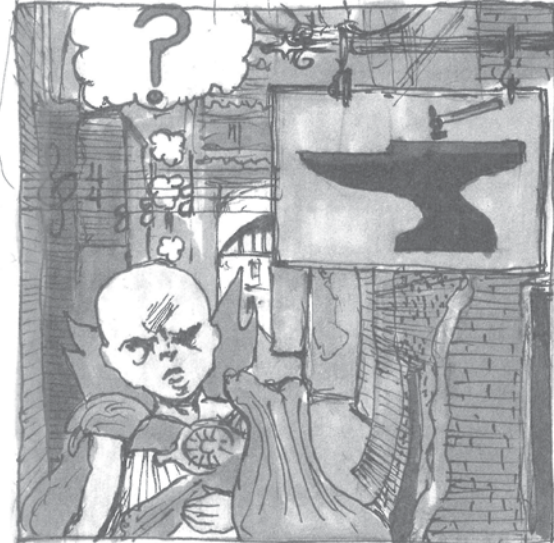
MK-LITRAUGHT/SIDE-B  
"MUSICA UNIVERSALIS"/THOMAS KENNEDY  
PRINTTEXT W/ ANIMAKINGDOMPUBLISHING.COM



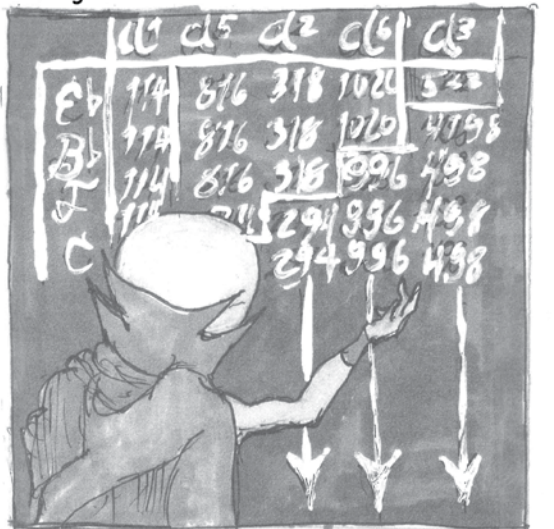
He investigates.



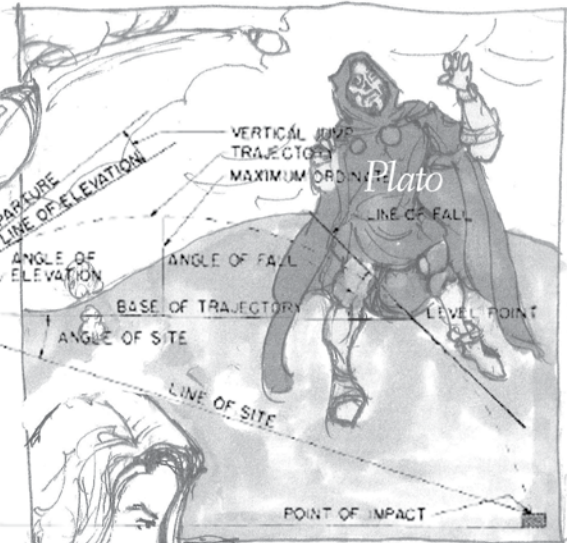
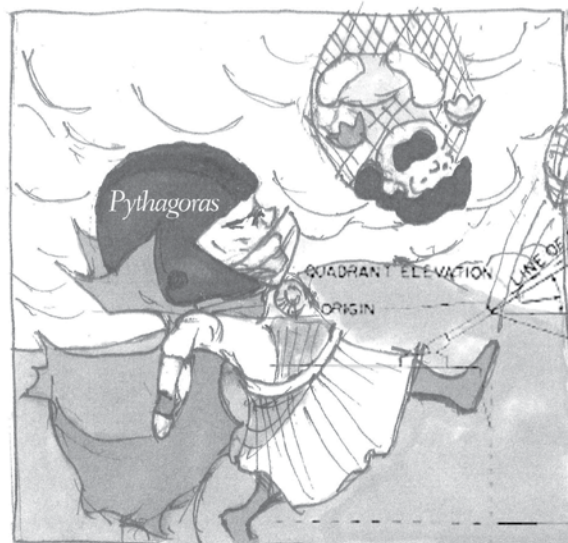
Using gut-strings as a scale he figures out that the harmonies are related to the ratio-relationship between the weight of the hammers & the iron bars that the hammers are striking.



Pythagoras—walking by a blacksmiths—hears harmonies coming out the window.



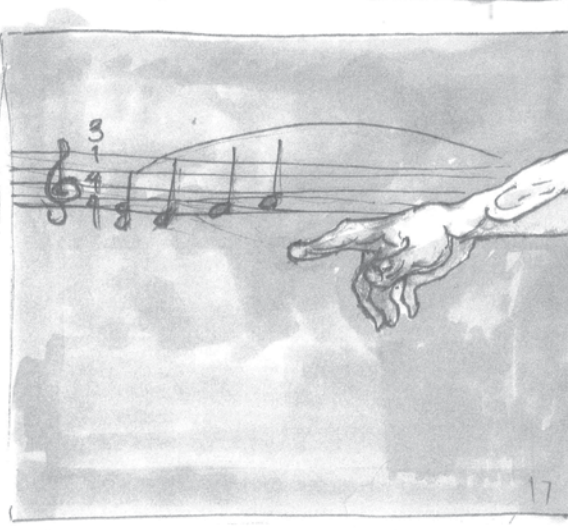
Based on this insight, Pythagoras is able to uncover a system of relationships known as the harmonic scale.



Plato was a Pythagorean.



All the monks in the middle-ages and on up through Isaac Newton—all those guys were Christian Neo-Platonists.



They thought the universe was a song that God was singing—they thought Mars and Venus were singing in harmony.



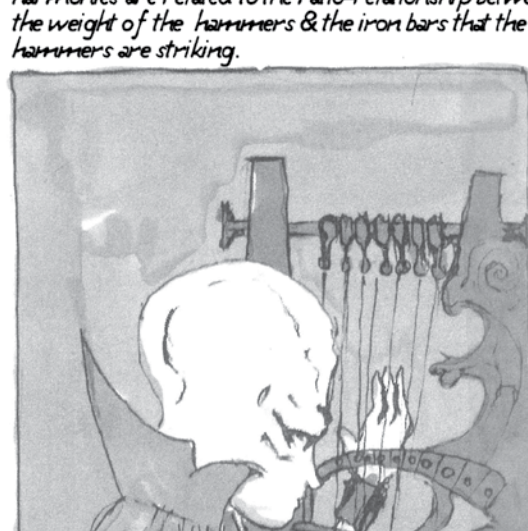
From our vantage point, this belief—Neo-Platonist belief in the "Music of the Spheres"—looks a bit like the time that Anaximander guessed (correctly) that "Man came into being from all sorts of animals"....



...but guessed incorrectly that our most recent evolutionary ancestors were fish.



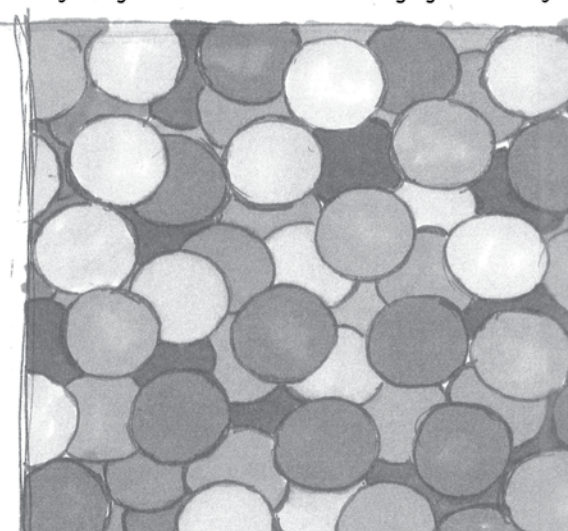
At least that's how Nichomachus wrote down the story.



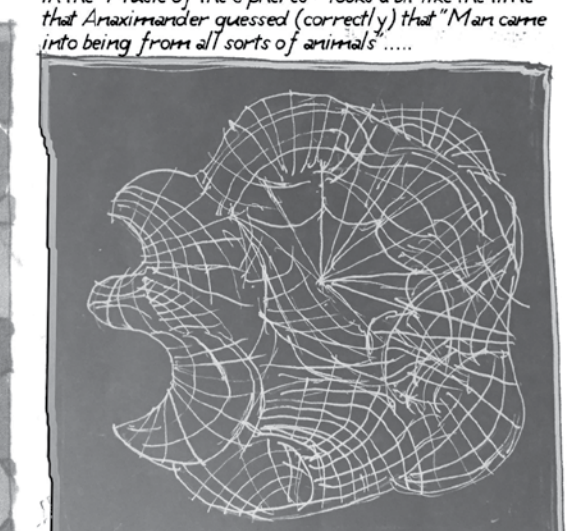
I spit it more likely that Pythagoras figured out the harmonic scale while tuning his citherae and day-dreaming about geometry?



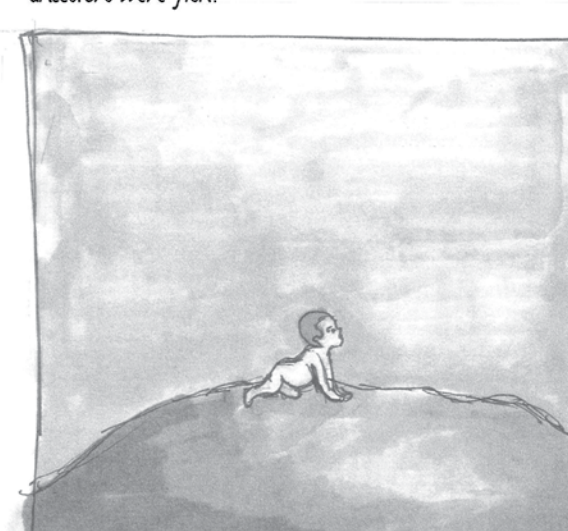
You'd have to ask Nichomachus.



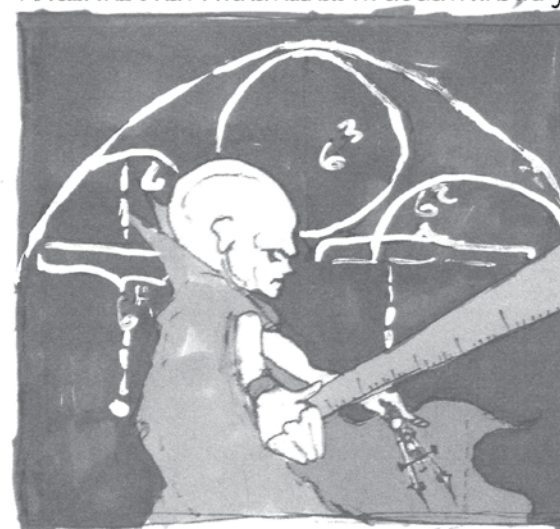
The cosmic ball-pit of atomic and subatomic particles posited in classical theory has lost a lot of ground over the past hundred years—and especially in the last thirty..



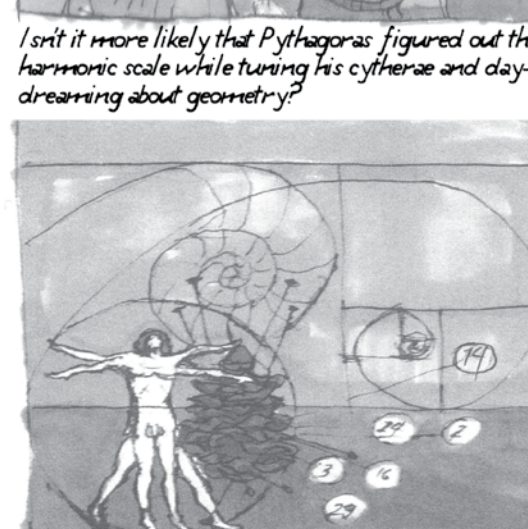
These days the deepest, most basic constituents of our reality are looking more like some kind of quantum music.



Anaximander based his proto-evolutionary theory on evidence he found close to home. "Other animals can feed themselves directly after birth but man requires careful feeding for a long period of time & thus could never have survived through the earliest youth of his first generation without a parent."



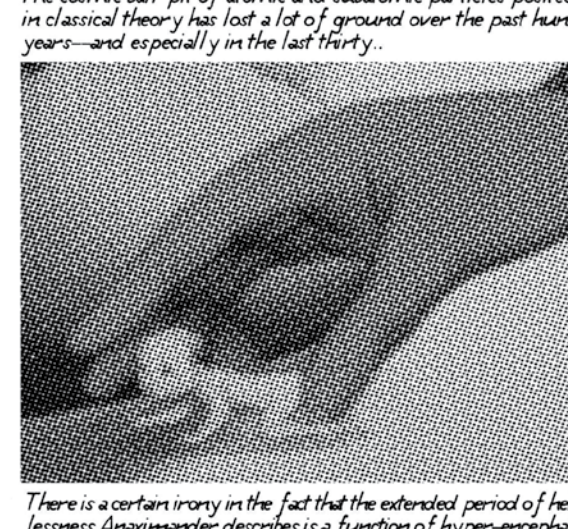
Nichomachus: "Pythagoras wondered if it would be possible to devise instruments to systematize hearing, as our sense of sight is made more precise by the aid of compass, rule, telescope or our sense of touch is refined by scales and weights to measure mass. Thinking of these things Pythagoras passed by the blacksmiths and heard the hammers ringing."



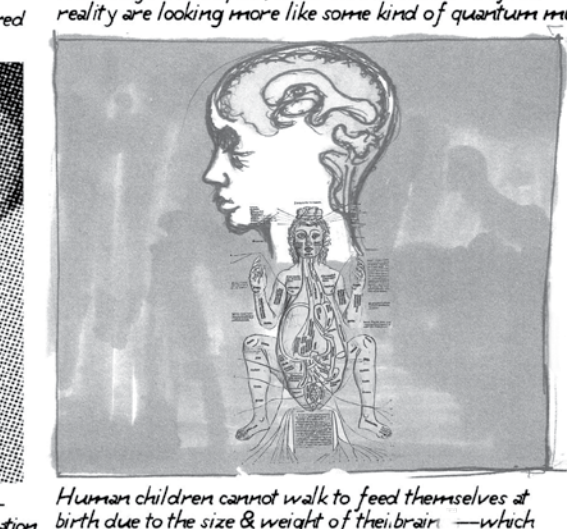
Like the golden ratio—which shows up in the structure of pine cones, seashells & renaissance figure drawing—the harmonic scale is a pattern that works like a cheat code for understanding the invisible, hidden structure of the universe.



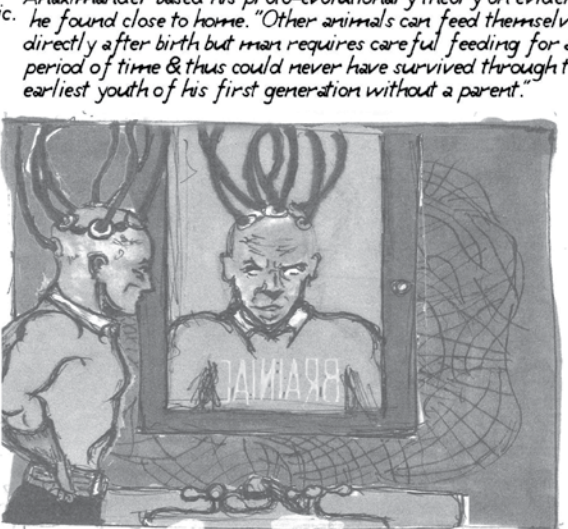
"What does it mean?"



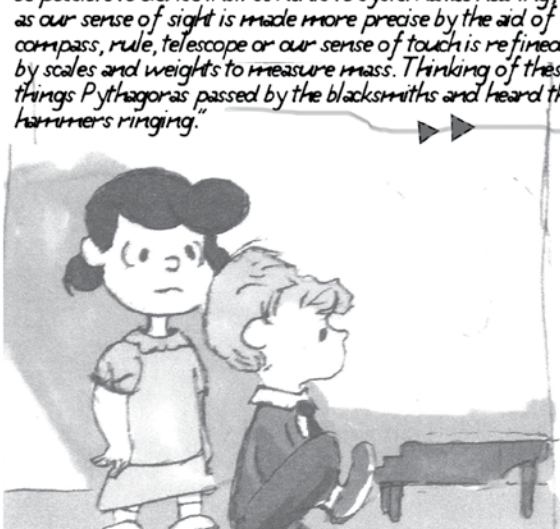
There is a certain irony in the fact that the extended period of helplessness Anaximander describes is a function of hyper-encephalization—the same evolutionary detour that gave him the brain-power he needed to have his insight in the first place.



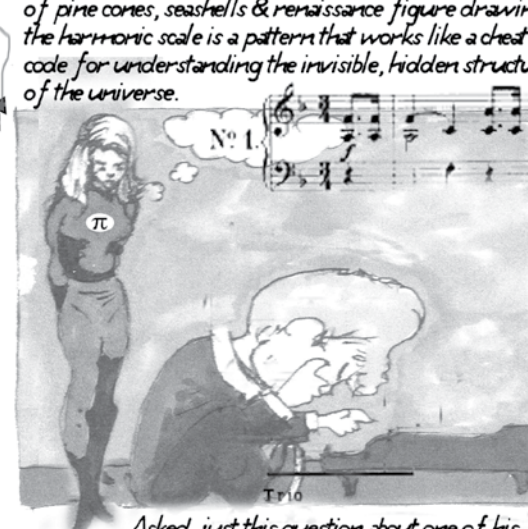
Human children cannot walk to feed themselves at birth due to the size & weight of their brain—which already causes agony in the process of childbirth, would destroy the mother if it was allowed to fully mature in the womb. Original sin (cursing women with pain in childbirth) has very little to do with apples & mostly to do with the organ of intelligence apparently.



As Aristotle says: "Of all animals, man has the largest brain in proportion to his size."



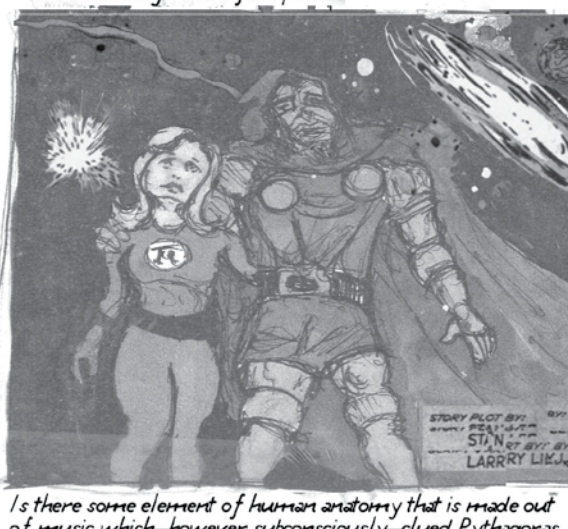
Asked just this question about one of his compositions Schubert played it again.



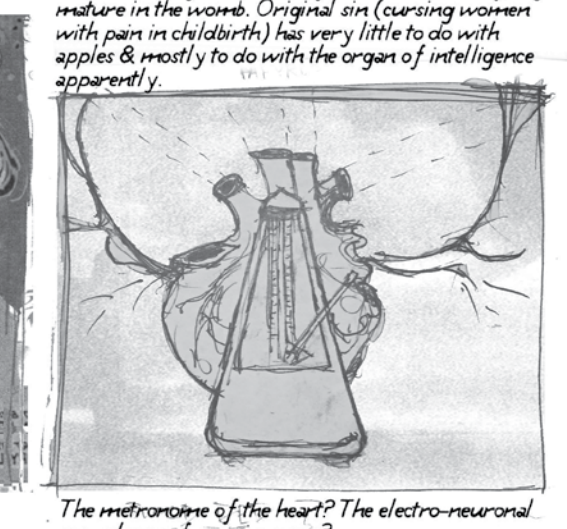
"In music, being and meaning fuse."



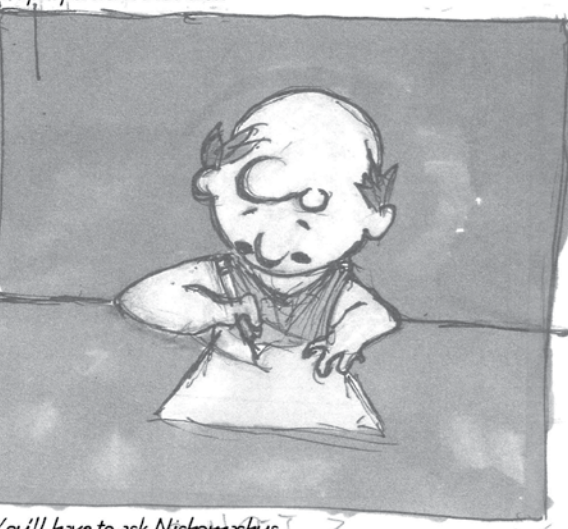
"In music, being and meaning fuse."



Is there some element of human anatomy that is made out of music which—however subconsciously—clued Pythagoras in to the harmonic scale & the music of the spheres?



The metronome of the heart? The electro-neuronal symphony of consciousness?



You'll have to ask Nichomachus.

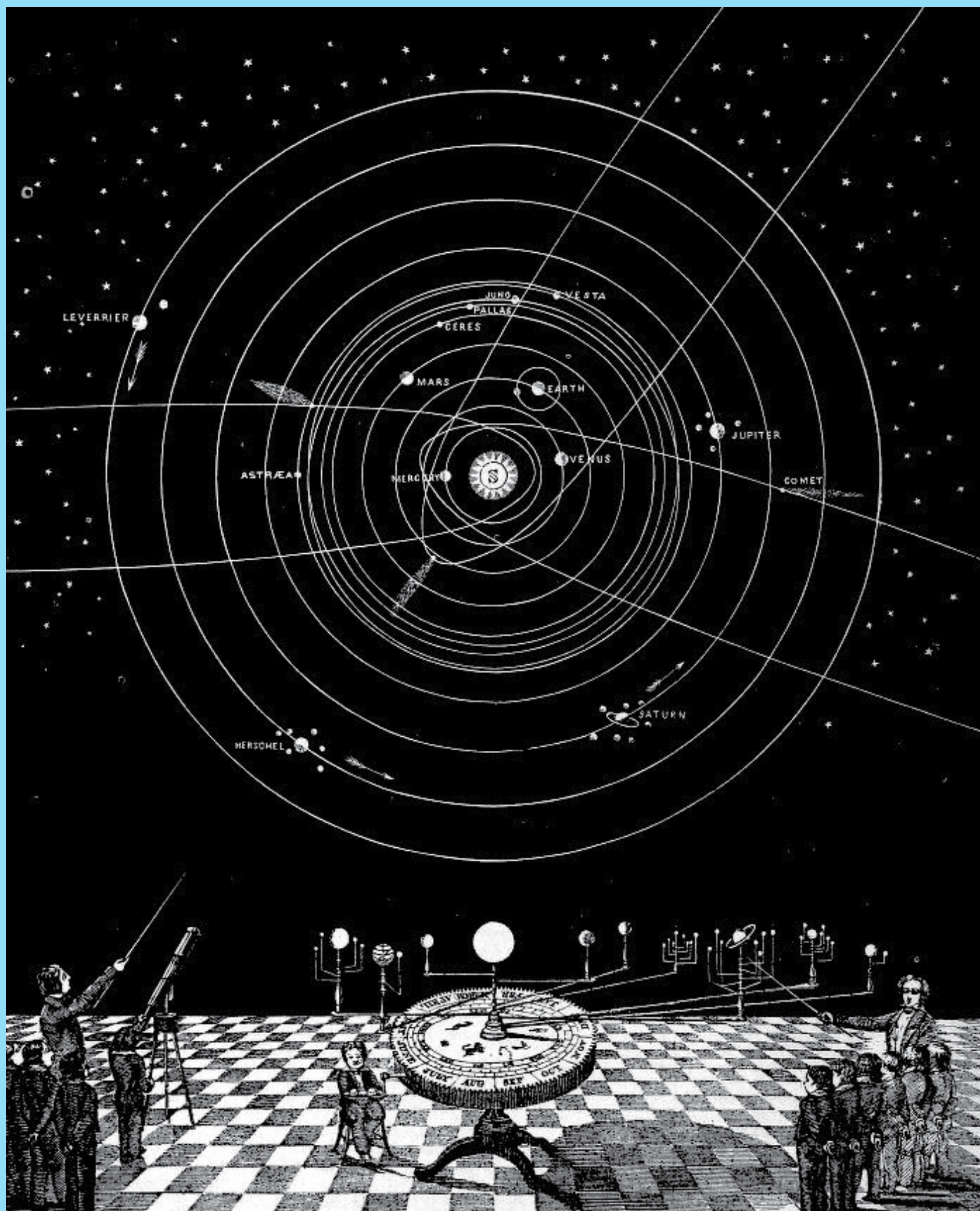












THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY

**EFROYMSON FAMILY FUND**

**THE INDIANAPOLIS FOUNDATION**

WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM  
**THE HARRISON CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO  
**TOM BATTISTA**  
**JOYFUL NOISE RECORDINGS**