



# The Players No 31

## Andy Pickford

Simply one of the UK's most talented musicians to have emerged on the synthesizer music scene in the early nineties, with the albums 'Replicant', 'Terraformer' and the best selling 'Maelstrom' which was performed live at Derby Cathedral. To date, people are still taking about that event.

After the remastered version of Maelstrom comes 'Lughnasad', one of Andy's personal favourites in his works. With this new version you have the original album, most of 'Lughnasad 2', music produced at the same time and those purchasing from his website, the 20 minute track 'Senanque' We've included on our website an interview with Andy from our magazine Sequences in 2003 which incidently concurred with the release of the original 'Lughnasad' album.

## Robert Fox

Robert is one of the leading exponents of melodic orchestral electronic music and co-founder of the band Code Indigo. Considered by many to be "Master of the Grand Soundscape", Roberts music has a unique signature and style that has established him as one of the most popular and original composers of the genre.



## Alexis Nembrode



"In love with the concept of transforming pure energy into art. I've always been deeply influenced by electronic music in general. I try to be as versatile as I can in my compositions, but I guess when I make ambient, my immediate influences are perhaps Ed Wynne, Geir Jenssen, Future Sound of London, Mike Oldfield, Steve Hillage, Children of Dub, The Ambush, Mario Schönwälder... Right now im focusing on a conceptual full length piece consisting on small compositions mixed together, a bit like KLF's "Chill Out" which might be ready by the end of the current year. In the meantime I will still be making other songs also Techno and Trance related."

## René van der Wouden alias REWO

In 1993 he started to build his own studio which acculated in his first release in 2004 called Pro Sequentia and its spine off, 'Recreation'. This was followed by 'Alchemia' (2006), 'Universal Quiet' & 'Sequential Tourism' (2008). Over last few years since then the release of, 'Numerus Fixus', 'Panarama', 'Fixus Naturalis', 'Soledad & Other Dreams', 'Zeppelins' and this year on Syngate Records, 'Earth Festivities'.

On the live circuit, guest appearance at E-Live 2005 with Gert Emmens, 2006, Gasometer Oberhausen concert with EL-KA, jamming with Ron Boots & Friends 2008, the Schwingungen Garden Party 2011 and one of the supporting acts at E-Live with headliners Loom.

René van der Wouden's music can be described as classical electronic with not only sequences but also with ambient sounds.

Now in 2013, Syngate Records released the album Earth Festivities.







## The Beyond

Is an Ambient Electronic Group started in 1986, by Rob Warner as a side project to Sudden Afternoon (an indie rock band)  
The LP 'Episcene' was released by Midnight Music / Rough Trade in 1987. The album had some success and demo recordings for a 2nd Album were made. Unfortunately the Record label went bust and Rob moved to the highlands of Scotland. Rob released 5 Beyond Recordings from 1990-2004, but these are currently unavailable. In 2009 Rob invited old friend Uwe D'Rose to join The Beyond to record the Album 'Exploring Imagined Spaces'.

In 2011 Rob started work on several new solo Beyond projects: One of which was given the working title of 'Ice'. The Concept of the 'ice' project was to produce an atmospheric, ambient sound environment, that would convey the experience of living and working in the polar regions.

## Duncan Mep

One Schorschie Sandro also known as Mellow Sonic a composer of dark ambient, and film music. Other projects include a dark drum & bass concept under the name of Biosys



## Christopher Alvarado

Is a multi instrumentalist who's primary methods of producing are sound manipulation, ambient and experimental music. Alvarado has been playing and performing since 1985 with diversified bands such as Twilight Transmissions, Harsh Reality, 23 Extacy, Little Sap Dungeon and a plethora of others in the blues, punk(hardcore), industrial, gothic, folk, rock, electronic and now ambient and experimental genres. With years of experience working with more than 160 artists, 17 releases, 12 compilations and guest artist on 5 others.

Christopher Alvarado's main influences are the people he works with, writing theme based sound, landscapes and Zoviet France.



## Ari Porki's

Ari's music is inspired by northern nature and four extreme seasons. This closeness of the nature obligatory comes through Ari's music even it's only through simple synthesizer sound, field-recording or sample.

As music has been part of Ari Porki's life for decades, there would be some kind of highlights of Ari's past, evolving from his sub-consciousness.

## Cousin Silas

Has been creating richly-textured ambient electronic soundscapes, aural moods of light and dark. He is certainly one of the best kept secrets under the radar, who hails from Yorkshire. His first release came in 2001 but quickly found the world of Creative Commons in 2005 and to date has a prolific catalogue of music, almost all of it can be had free.





## Alpha Wave Movement

Harmonic Resonance Recordings

(H.R.R.) is a independent music label which saw its genesis in 1995. The goal of H.R.R. was and still is to release and promote the music of Alpha Wave Movement and all other related projects( Open Canvas, Thought Guild, Gregory Kyryluk(solo) & Within Reason that I am directly involved with. H.R.R. began before any record/music label was interested in releasing my music except perhaps with the sole exception of Silent Records which took interest enough to include the first Alpha Wave Movement track on a "From Here to Tranquility" compilation cd. The debut release on Harmonic

Resonance Recordings was the 1995/96 release "Transcendence" and the release of new titles continues into the 2000's.



## Tangram

Peter Fabok is a progressive electronic music composer from Hungary. He is creating albums since 2001, from 2005 under the name "Tangram", as a homage to Tangerine Dream.

His most successful albums are "Mos Quataer" (2011) "Micropolis" (2010). His last release "Layers" (2012).

## Stan Dart

Since 2009 I compose electronic music. In the beginning it was just an attempt to have some fun, but soon after – due to the positive feedback of my friends – I decided to present my music a bigger audience. Besides composing I love to remix music from other artists.

So here we are. Most of my songs could be used in a movie; it's the soundtrack style I like at most. Inspired by electronic artists like Schiller, Jean Michel Jarre and Vangelis (and many more), I try to create my very own style to express my feelings, thoughts and ideas. Writing a song is like telling a story – and I hope you like my stories.



## Mark Dorricott

As a piano player from a very young age, took up the trombone playing in various local bands & orchestras, this progressed in later teens to the saxophone & tuba and last four years return to the keys.

He likes making up late night jazzy music & music you can listen to while travelling. Also enjoys collaborating with other musicians which brings us The new album with Stan Dart, titled, 'Events'.

## Real Time

Are a Electronic Duo from Cologne/ Germany by Thomas Bock and Norbert Hensellek, founded 2003 in Cologne/ Germany.

The music of REALTIME is orientated to the traditional EM (Berlin School). Influenced by famous musicians of this genre like Klaus Schulze, Kraftwerk or Tangerine Dream.







Acheloo

## Acheloo

Carlo Luzi is an Italian guitarist born in Rome in 1962. Computer programmer, lover of ambient, experimental and electronic music, he started to play electronic music in 1980 and founded the group "Terra della Sera" with Paolo de Gregori (Kaj Norrklus), producing several projects released on LP in Germany, but which were not widely available. In 2008 he formed the project "SeraSidereA", again with Paolo de Gregori and with the participation of soprano Daniela Massi releasing a double CD-R called "Aestetica Tenebrarum". In 2008 Carlo also released "Sirens" under the alias Acheloo and this was signed by AD Music who also signed the follow-up "Ihtar".

## Rainer Struck

Composer of electronical arts and Keyboardist ("The Orchestra") in the bands Separate Reality, Grayce and now actually Tonefolger. Composer and producer of several albums. Ambient direction, symphony, symphonic rock, rock and pop. Formation member of the "Flying Rock Orchestra" together with Gerd Thiele (Magic D7) and Karsten Anders (Dark Beat generator). More informations and free downloads:

<http://www.klangway.de> .... This is what we said in 1996- SEQUENCES : "You would never believe that Rainer Struck is a German rock musician... The contents are highly traditional classical sounds of such awesome dynamics, the nearest you get to a full blown orchestra.



## Tastenklang

Daniel Gessert New to the scene with his debut album on Syngate records, "Inspirations" is key sound debut album danceable tempo moving Electronics characterizes this album as well as relaxed, rhythmic melodies times, the album sounds like an innovative development of the sounds of Jarre -. buttons with sound but develops its own character

## E-Tiefengrund

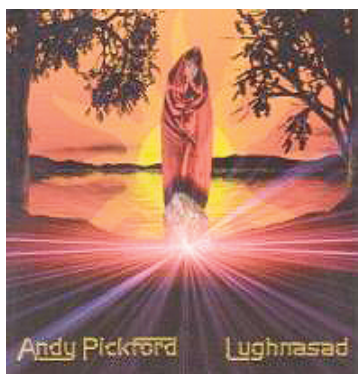
Are husband & wife team, Mick & Silvie Von E-tiefengrund, Voltage Sessions was recorded live with no overdubs and only analog 8 & 16-step sequencers, mixed in real time. So we never know where things are headed, from the very first sound, we let ourselves just get carried away by the sounds, everything is intuitive, planing dropped, new sounds spontaneous, improvised sequences and the mixer is the conductor for the machines, everything is Voltage.











**The past year has seen the return of modern legend Andy Pickford to the EM scene, both as one half of Spank The Dark Monkey & with a new solo album on his old label Centaur Records. CARL JENKINSON finds out how his time away from music has prompted him to re-evaluate his music & life in general.**

**Andy, good to see you back after all this time, care to fill us in on what you've been up to in the meantime, both musically & in your personal life?**

Life round here (at the time of writing - 19/11/03), hasn't been at it's most focused lately for various reasons. Following the upheaval caused after finding out my back was in no good state, I adjusted to clerical work (although being in an office staffed predominantly by young females has been an education - though not necessarily in the most pleasant way imaginable!), and had a very relaxed Summer working at my current favourite hobby of photography. During this time

## The Return of Nasty ANDY?

Paul Nagle and I have been able to realise several hours of raw material for possible future albums and, by spending a deal of time out there in the wilds I've been able to begin the initial thoughts on my next solo work.

**What's wrong with your back exactly?**

Oh I'm just an old man! My spine has more degenerative wear on the disks than it should for someone my age. This makes me prone to prolapse those disks if I'm not careful. The subsequent spasm can render me immobile for a couple of weeks, and in great pain for a further six. Ordinarily this shouldn't pose a problem - just as long as I don't go lifting heavy objects or do work which involves a high level of stress... well that describes playing gigs to a tee! So unfortunately I can't see myself doing too many of them from now on. Mind you, as long as I do look after myself, the condition can remain unchanged. If I mess it up once too often though, I can end up paralysed. There's plenty of incentive to look after the condition though. Spinal Tap's amplifiers go to 11, my pain goes to 12.

**You've mentioned in the past that the 'Nasty Andy' side would be toned down, does he still pop up today?**

Oh I'm sure some people would say he does! He's grown up a little though. So he's more like "Squinty-eye Andy" these days... he might keep quiet but he'll still give you a mean stare! I think the degree of 'hardnose' a person needs directly equates to how much they depend on the income. Possibly the best thing I did was to make music more of a pastime than a job. It allowed objectivity to enter into things more and has also allowed a good deal more consideration into my music.

**Concerning your latest solo album "Lughnasad" the music on it was certainly very different to what went before, did you see this as a 'new start'**

**for both you & your music?**

Well yes I do. It's a shift of emphasis away from some traditional synth music associations with sci-fi, hi-tech and statements of the here and now, to something of an antithesis of all that. It's a whole lot less wearing on the nerves to me than the constant injection of adrenaline I used to insert into my work. But then lifestyles change. It's not fun out there any more... work is stressful, life is stressful. So when designing an image of the kind of

inventing something for that purpose necessitates it's installation into a certain pigeonhole. I would certainly describe it as a 'dedicational' work, but structurally it takes it's inspiration from Chillout styles. I doubt you'll ever hear me putting any kind of 'emotional safety net' into my work like they would in New Age. My stuff needs to reach greater heights and depths for it to fulfil it's vision. That's strictly an Andy Pickford thing.

**So has this new style succeeded**



**in opening any new doors for you with labels or more widespread reviews, etc?**

It's done exactly as I predicted it would which is most satisfying. I remember telling Dave at Centaur that I felt the work would fox most of my usual followers, that it would therefore be slow to establish itself, but that once it had done so it would become regarded as a work of substance and longevity. This has all followed through. I also said at the time that although most either would or could not see as far into it as I had, some would succeed and they would come to speak with me about it. This is also true. Again, this is all part of the shift in emphasis away from relying on my work reward me financially and towards seeing as something of a spiritual reward. It's just as well considering I haven't actually received a penny from the label for it.

**Has the setting-up of your website (www.andypickford.com) allowed you to fulfil any of your marketing wishes to any extent?**

Not as yet but it may. We're still



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place you might want to escape to, I wanted to take account of all this. The end result was a lot calmer, quieter, more spiritual and definitely more substantial than most of it's predecessors (with the exception of Maelstrom I think).

**'The kind of place you might want to escape to?', that sounds dangerously 'new age'!!**

Not really, Carl - I'd say it was 'middle age', mate! True I am seeking a purpose for my music other than just for listening. Something just for listening is great but then you can put it away and forget about it. I can use Lughnasad as a tool to wind down to anytime I like, and I'm not sure



kind of searching for the more realistic way to sell through the site (main priority being my work with Paul Nagle right now), but without hampering the relationships with existing businesses we deal with. There have been a great many thoughts and suggestions, some of which might work such as an MP3 site and selling limited short-run CDRs via the site. But the full potential of my (our, if you count in STDM) site as something more than just a place to showcase our music ie: as a place to display my photography, writing (Paul's writing a full novel at the moment by the way) and artwork - that's all for the future.

**What about the technical side? Have you updated your studio to any extent?**

Nothing drastic. Once my Triton was fully upgraded and Paul Mason loaned my JD-800 back to me, I was fairly content to be able to

process most textures I wanted. I did purchase a Digidesign 001 for my PC, running Pro-Tools software. It's primarily designed for Mac and hasn't proven to be the most reliable beast, although it has enabled me to create and process more or less anything I want to.

**What prompted you to return to Centaur for "Lughnasad"?**

I liked getting back together with a team of



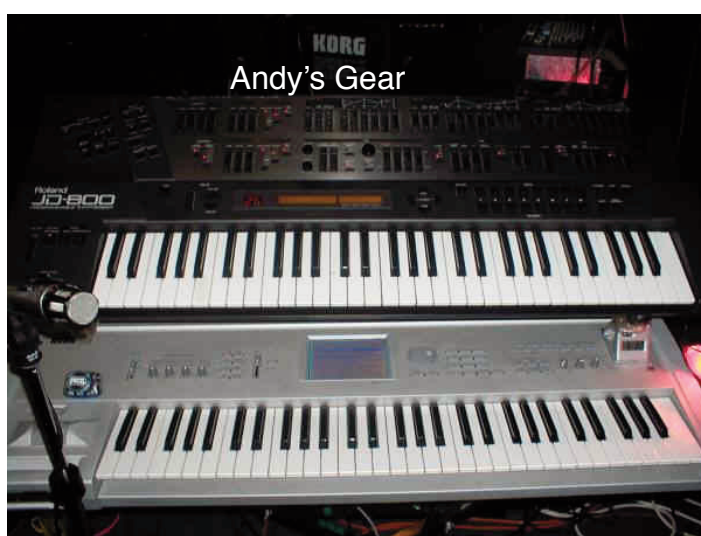
people I was familiar with. Their products are of a high standard and they don't heap responsibility on me to do a lot of the follow-up work for them. Some criticism was levelled at them at the time for allegedly leaning on me to amend/edit sections of the album. It is true that the work went through a number of versions before reaching a final cut, but this was all done with full co-operation. It's just that some people preferred the early versions when they heard them, and some didn't!

**Lughnasa is the name of a Celtic festival yet there didn't seem many Celtic influences in the music that I could make out, were your**

**springboard in this respect &, if so how did they influence the titles & music?**

True, in broadest terms the Feast of Lugh has its association firmly in Irish legend, but the date is marked by Pagans of many paths. It's also known as Lammass or Loaf-Mass and is the celebration associated with the 'Death of John Barley-corn' - the sheath of wheat traditionally sacrificed in order to bring blessing to the new harvest and commemorate the waning power of the old Sun God. I looked at not only the broad emblematic associations but also how my personal experiences tied in with them. The intent was to create an impression of that time, that season and the significance of old things being given in sacrifice in hope of renewal. In a sense it signified my burying certain elements of my old style in order to give birth to the new one. So I felt it was appropriate. As for things in the titles, music even; well there are literally hundreds of things secreted throughout the work. Some of them are fairly obvious but others are way too subtle to notice. I'll just say that the entire work was painstakingly constructed around certain numerical values attributed to something

## Andy's Gear



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## The Return of Nasty ANDY?

was left. I noticed that the textural backdrops really allowed for a lot of subtle dynamics and changes to take place. I also like that it was possible to build structure into something which sounds like it doesn't necessarily have much.

**Sessioning with Paul is not only fun, but highly productive. During the practice for the Space-Centre gig we managed to realise about eight hours of new material**

**Your collaboration with Paul Nagle on the Spank The Dark Monkey project is currently going from strength to strength. How did this first come about & how do the two of you tend to work together?**

Well this is where things descend into chaos I suspect! Paul and I take a radically different approach to what we consider to be a good sound. So different in fact, that the combination often works really well! We've been friends for some years now and I was attracted to the idea of improvising music entirely from scratch, like Paul can. Given Paul's affinity for solid sequencing/percussive backdrops and psychedelic undertones, and my ability to create textural underlay, freeform solos and on-the-spot structuring, we felt we had something worth exploring. Sessioning with Paul is not only fun, but highly productive. During the practice for the Space-Centre gig we managed to realise about eight hours of new material. And contrary to speculation about the amount of material having been

pre-practiced for our gigs, I can safely say neither of us have a faintest idea what we're doing from the moment the first note sounds!!! We might remember stuff along the way, but that's merely vocabulary.

**This wasn't your first mooted collaboration, of course, as you struck up a promising partnership with Dave Barker (Asana) during 1994/95 but, apart from your live appearance in Derby nothing tangible came of this. What happened & do you have any contact with him (or indeed any artists you were associated with such as Bekki Williams or Paul Lawler) today?**

Oh well now, there were strange forces at work in this land then about which we do not speak!! Seriously, I don't really know what's happened with Dave. I wouldn't mind getting back in touch actually now that there aren't silly things going on which cloud people's judgements etc. Dave's a very spiritual guy and his music comes from the heart. Paul Lawler and I still occasionally bump into each other but I'm not on any of the internet mailing lists now so it's been a while. He's a magnificent composer but he's yet to reach his pinnacle and will if he drives himself harder instead of doing what's easy for him. As for Bekki, I trust she's doing well for herself, as she deserves. Overall though I withdrew almost entirely from the 'scene' as was. I think if you bear in mind certain problems surrounding "Nemesis" and take into account that there was a lot more brewing under the surface which was not unrelated, then you can't really blame me for wanting a little as possible to do with things. I think

known as The Shumann Resonance (except I don't know how to spell it!). This is the frequency at which earthly electromagnetic waves rebound off the upper stratosphere and it equates to the frequency of brain alpha waves.

**One odd track is "Vanilla" which is rather a mundane title for such an emotional track, how do the two go together?**

Well actually it's a little joke for some friends of mine over in Germany. There is a ritual we used to perform late at night after having got ourselves pretty wrecked... the vanilla ice ritual. Sounds like the opening for a whole lot of perverse double-entendre doesn't it?! Actually it has more to do with that old demon known as "The Munchies"! Ah... but how does that explain the emotion in the music though? That's twofold - Firstly it's very much a 'returning to earth' track, something to begin the process of returning from the journey begun at the start of the composition. Secondly it signifies the onset of Winter which is the inevitable result of the 'demise of the Sun God' and 'going to ground of the Earth Mother' as was in ancient belief. Complex? You bet! Three years of research went into the album!

**The substances that caused you 'The Munchies' obviously played their part behind "Ambient Space Monkeys"! Any more in-jokes like that planned?**

suspect there will be plenty more of those! I mean, I was reading through Dave Law's review of the limited edition Ambient Space Monkeys set a few days ago, and I honestly don't know how he managed to keep the tone of the thing serious contending with track titles like 'Poolook'! Those titles were all Paul's work... You don't even want to know the titles I put forward! That much-maligned substance though, in small quantities, is a blessing for people with these kind of conditions and can make the difference between a fortnight immobilised and screaming, and 3-4 days back on your feet. Believe me, when you know this kind of pain, you take whatever miracles nature can provide.

**I guess a lot of people would have been expecting a dance music album, given various comments of yours years ago & the "Future Boy" track that appeared on the "World Wide Kind" compilation but that wasn't the case either. Is this something that you're planning to explore in future?**

At the time I'd hoped to do this. I'd hoped the internal processor of the Korg Triton would be able to cope with all I was throwing at it and also be able to hold the tempo steady, but it wasn't quite perfect. And at the time I wasn't doing PC sequencing. So I decided to go the chillout route by dropping off the backbeats to see what





I'd really lost touch with myself as a composer, and seeing how so many others had also lost touch with their priorities, I didn't think it was very realistic to carry on participating.

**There were rumours that you were unhappy concerning "Nemesis", care to put the record straight on this?**

I don't mind revealing some of my thoughts from that time. I suspect the label may opt to mount a challenge but then since I'm merely stating my reasoning I believe they would be mistaken. It's all about perceptions you see. At the end of the day you need to go with your own perception if that's where the strength of your convictions lie. Mine at the time went rather like this : I'd already played headline at the Derby Guildhall on a number of occasions and was able to guarantee a rapid sell-out there. I was evidently held in high regard by the people of my local area at this time. As a vehicle to launch the album the label proposed another Guildhall gig which I gave my tacit agreement to at that stage. It was then

announced to me by the label that I would be playing support to another act (for the record T-Bass although this could have been one of many acts at the time). I told them I didn't feel this was appropriate. I felt my fans might not understand the reasoning behind it. As things further transpired, the label seemed to be aspiring to stage a mini-festival at the venue and that I might be placed even lower down the billing. In hindsight you may call this vanity, but I felt decidedly insulted at the time and withdrew my support for the proposition. The straw which broke the camel's back, I felt,

I don't really involve myself to any level to know for sure what our guys are up to. I do know one thing though - I felt at the time that in order to progress we needed to marry our sound and programming expertise with the emergent underground styles of the time. Well naturally this went down quite badly with the remnant core of traditionalists. I note with some satisfaction though that within a few years came the Trance scene which did very like as I'd predicted and handed it's leading exponents a lot of kudos and a very substantial paycheque. I even note that some

musicians I knew back then actually did bother to listen to opinions like mine and

Sheffield bash



this took them in very positive directions. I would have liked to follow my own

advice too but then, if you note my previous answer you'll realise I was not only financially crippled

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but completely demoralised by the whole experience. Overall though I'm philosophical: what one person wants to appreciate may vary widely from the next. It's truly wonderful what we have, as synthesizer composers, not only the means but the inspiration to take music to the limits of our imaginations. It's equally good that we have that choice,

unhindered by commercial pressure etc. So it's a choice you make then - you either stand by your art or you stand by your ability to tolerate having your art changed to suit the mainstream. No two individuals will think the same way about this. And of course the other great things to have emerged since I was ranting my head off about all his, is CDR, MP3 and broadband internet as alternative means to disseminate music to a specialist scene. The only point I ever truly felt passionate enough about to want to raise though is this : where was the rampant totty? Sheesh... if I'd have known there wasn't gonna be a sexy chick to seduce me after each gig I'd have learned the geetar instead!

**What sort of photography do you do &, just out of idle curiosity is it at all connected to working with an office full of females???)**

Don't give me ideas! My photography centres around the same kind of things I try to bring out in my music - forms concealed within other forms. When you walk through a place, take care to look more deeply into the things around you because hidden within them are shapes and forms which affect you subconsciously. The ancients claimed such things were spirits as they made their presence felt without being seen. There's a whole field of interest in capturing these kind of images now and of course, me being me, it attracts my interest.

**So given that gigs are not likely to be on the agenda in the near future, what plans do you currently have?**

Weeeeee... the future may map out a little like this : I need to work on completing the

post-production on the first of two live albums from the gig Paul and I did at the National Space Centre. We also have two studio albums to finish. The plan being to release them over the space of a year or thereabouts. In the

meantime I want to start getting ideas down for my next solo work. I may also be doing things to progress my photography, and working alongside my partner Christine Reynolds, who is an extremely talented artist in her own right. Plans also to expand the website, to take STDM in a more serious direction etc. Lots of plans... now



was that in spite of the venue never having been booked (I confirmed this with the venue supervisor), the label still deducted the equivalent of the booking deposit from me as punishment. After that I lost the heart to support the release of the album and although it still went ahead, I paid a substantial 4-figure sum to the label in order to have it withdrawn after an initial quantity was sold to cover it's costs.

**A few years ago you were very forthright in your views on the direction that EM should take if it was to thrive. Have these views changed to any extent & how do you feel the**