



ETERNAL

WATCHLAND

OF THE 9-

DIMENSIONAL

TORUS

J A S O N H E R R E L L D T

Songs

Eternal Watchland Of The 9-Dimensional Torus

1. A Dirty Penny In Mollyhaven Creek (7:44)
2. Half-Invisible Paramour (9:04)
3. A Private Investigation Into Widow Canterbury's Penniless Felon Of A Nephew (9:11)
4. The Levitating Innkeeper's Misanthropy (7:07)
5. Necromania Transmutual (6:10)
6. Cutting Open A Listless Raconteur (6:49)
7. Consider N (1:39)
8. Quincy Bonaventure's Rotating Electric Hymnography (8:20)
9. Every Exit Leads To A Hallway Of Ghosts (3:14)

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All songs were created by Jason Herrboldt, and are available for free at percivalravenwood.blogspot.com.

What Even Is This?

It's a good question. I wish I had an answer.

It started out with a trip to a NE Minneapolis thrift store on a bright fall day in 2016. I was out for a walk when my muse grabbed me by the collar, threw me against a tree, and screamed, "You have to do this!"

My muse is not coy.

"Go to the nearest thrift store and raid the used CDs," it went on. "Buy a bunch of them, and rip them to shreds!"

And so I did. This is the result.

The Accident Of Inspiration

It wasn't entirely my fault; I'd been wandering around listening to bands like Nurse With Wound, The Hafler Trio, Cyclobe, Current 93, Andrew Liles, Negativland, and the like. Real fucked up *musique concrète* type shit. Experimental noise shit. The kind of music your friend's weird stoner roommate used to listen to during acid trips when you were a teenager. Which is... OK, I guess I was your friend's weird stoner roommate.

Anyway, I'd been tossing around the idea of a new music project for a couple of weeks. October was nearing, and I felt guilty for not having any fresh content for my scary music blog. At one point on my walk – I believe it was while listening to *The Murray Fontana Orchestra Plays The Hafler Trio* – it struck me that many of the albums I'd been listening to lately contained clever manipulations of other people's music. I could do something like that! Not nearly as well, I'm sure. But why not give it a try? (By the way, if you've never heard this Murray Fontana album, and you like scary, fucked up music, it's time to treat yourself.)

I'm Good At This For Some Reason

I've become very comfortable with audio editing in the last decade. I've been using the same program (the wonderful TwistedWave) for all my music projects, even the dancy mixtapes and bootleg remixes. So it's a trivial thing for me to rip some music off a few discs, throw them in the editor, and start tearing things apart. This gives me visual access to the music, allowing me to quickly skip right to the interesting bits, the outtakes and odd sound effects, those unguarded moments of a cappella goodness. And then decimate them.

Even as I was ripping the music apart and taking a closer look at each song, I had very little idea where this was all going. "Less talk, more work!" my muse barked. I knew I was fumbling my way towards *something*, but I had no idea what the finished product would look like or sound like or feel like. I had eleven of the weirdest CDs I could find, a fantastic sound editor, and nothing but time (I was in between jobs). The only thing I was certain of is that whatever I came up with would be weird and scary. Because Halloween. And also because my muse is a little weird and scary.

Even now that I've come to the end of it, I still don't fully understand what I've created. All I know is that it's done. (My muse seems reluctantly satisfied.)

The Tick-Tock

The tracks were recorded more or less in the same order as they appear on the album. I recorded the first song the day after I purchased the CDs, and the second song the day after that. I think I had the first two tracks down and a proof of concept for the third within three days. I mostly worked at night, when my crazy neighborhood quiets down. I managed to record all the music within two weeks of that fateful trip to the thrift store, between September 21st and October 3rd.

The Definition Of Recursion

With very few exceptions, everything on this album is a loop. It's no accident that I used words like "rotating" and "torus" in the titles. Even those odd effects that sound nothing like a loop? In all but the rarest cases, that's exactly what it is. At one point (*Half-Invisible Paramour*) there are four cycles falling in and out of phase with each other at once, and each cycle itself is made up of a loop. (By the way, there are foreshadows of *Half-Invisible Paramour* in my loopy, distorted *Dreadful Occasion* remix from 2011.)

I've been fascinated with cycles in music since before I can remember. It shows up everywhere: in classical, dance, metal, pop, Latin jazz, you name it. And while it sounds pleasing to the ear in some cases, looping things that are never usually looped gives rise to the feeling that something is wrong; it brings to mind malfunctioning robots, self-destructing spaceships, and crazy people on the bus. It registers as a warning, makes you feel uneasy. And I'm pretty sure this is what my muse had in mind.

The Madness Of Track Three

Speaking of crazy people – working on track three (*A Private Investigation...*) very nearly drove me insane. What started out as a relatively simple proof of concept quickly spiraled into a technical morass of despair. I'm reasonably happy with the finished product, but it took a good thirty hours to complete. At one point I even wrote a program to randomly assign the order of words and stuttering word clips used for the first two sections, but even those had to be artfully manipulated to prevent the odd creative division by zero. Thus did my first brush with algorithmic songwriting come and go. (Let's just say it'll be a while before I try it again.)

For example, there are four short musical loops in the first section of the song, with one of twelve spoken words looping over it. This process repeats three times for a total of 36 word / music pairings. I wound up carefully arranging it so that each of the twelve words is spoken over each of the four musical loops only once, while trying to stop any two words from repeating (harder than it sounds).

Also, for some reason I felt it was important that every second-long group of vocal stutters in the last section should be unique enough to stand out on its own. I didn't want the listener to be able to detect any copying and pasting, in other words, and so I spent another five hours stitching together random voice clips in such a way that they would not seem to repeat, even though they do (also harder than it sounds).

In spite of all this work, *A Private Investigation* did not wind up being my favorite song on the album. That distinction easily goes to *Quincy Bonaventure's Rotating Electric Hymnography* (track 8), which somehow fell together in one evening.

What CDs Did I Use?

If I may turn hipster for a moment, you've probably never heard of any of them.

1. 4Him – The Basics Of Life
2. Art Patience – Spirit Of The Woods
3. Charlie Walhof – Memories
4. Chris Spheeris – Fantasy
5. Enlightenment – Enlightenment Guided Meditation: Healing
6. Kindermusik – Feathers
7. Lifescapes – Celtic Dreams
8. Praise Him – Joy
9. Tom Prin – Spirit And Soul
10. Toots Sebring – Arnie's Open Door
11. Various Artists – Wolves

Here's how they were used:

1. A Dirty Penny In Mollyhaven Creek

Art Patience – Spirit Of The Woods

Lifescapes – Celtic Dreams

2. Half-Invisible Paramour

Toots Sebring – Arnie's Open Door

3. A Private Investigation Into Widow Canterbury's Penniless Felon Of A Nephew

Chris Spheeris – Fantasy

Enlightenment – Enlightenment Guided Meditation: Healing

Praise Him – Joy

4Him – The Basics Of Life

4. The Levitating Innkeeper's Misanthropy

Art Patience – Spirit Of The Woods

Enlightenment – Enlightenment Guided Meditation: Healing

5. Necromania Transmutual

Charlie Walhof – Memories

Various Artists – Wolves

6. Cutting Open A Listless Raconteur

Kindermusik – Feathers

7. Consider N

Charlie Walhof – Memories

8. Quincy Bonaventure's Rotating Electric Hymnography

Chris Spheeris – Fantasy

Toots Sebring – Arnie's Open Door

Lifescapes – Celtic Dreams

Praise Him – Joy

Tom Prin – Spirit And Soul

9. Every Exit Leads To A Hallway Of Ghosts

Praise Him – Joy

Enlightenment – Enlightenment Guided Meditation: Healing

It was no small feat ripping the audio from the CDs that I found. A few of them were program install discs (with the adorably dated "CD-ROM" label on the cover), and neither my MacBook nor my PC would have anything to do with them. (This was a major disappointment, because one of them was about colonoscopy education!)

Even some of the audio discs wouldn't give up the ghost at first. My MacBook wouldn't even acknowledge that a disc was inserted into my optical drive, let alone rip the audio. I had to install iTunes on my PC and try there, and that's when I discovered the issue – about a third of the CDs I bought weren't registered on Gracenote's CDDb, the service that populates song information on your computer when you insert a CD. I was finally able to rip these discs on my PC, but they came through as Unknown by Unknown, Track 01, Track 02, Track 03, etc. It's for this reason, for example, that I have no idea if *Praise Him* is the name of the band or the name of the album. It's just a guess. (Some of the CDs I bought looked straight up homemade.)

Even more adorable (and a bit heartbreaking) are the "Visit our website!" messages on the back covers. (You can guess how many of those are still up and running.) While not quite the trip back in time as my 2011 album *Allusions & Homages To Mrs Regera Dowdy*, where I used samples of wax cylinders from the 19th century, it was still a strange exploration into not-so-recent music history.

(By the way, I love the highly random nature of this effort – from the CDs I happened to find, to the clips I wound up using from each song, and even the way the clips were mixed and layered together. Everything about this project is a tribute to accidental nonsense.)

Acknowledgments & Apologies

Obviously huge thanks and apologies go to everyone who worked on the CDs listed above. I'm sure exactly none of them had any idea their work would be used in such a way, even if it was done in a spirit of reverence and respect. (Scans of all eleven CD covers can be found below.) I might be a common thief, but I give credit where it's due.

Speaking of the cover, I'd like to thank dafont.com/inversionz.font. I've never worked with see-through fonts before. The effect over colorful images is electrifying.

Huge gratitude goes to the East Lake Street Savers in Minneapolis, MN and Unique Thrift in Columbia Heights, MN for providing easy access to such great raw material.

Thank you [TwistedWave](#) and [Audacity](#) for the fantastic effects and powerful editing abilities.

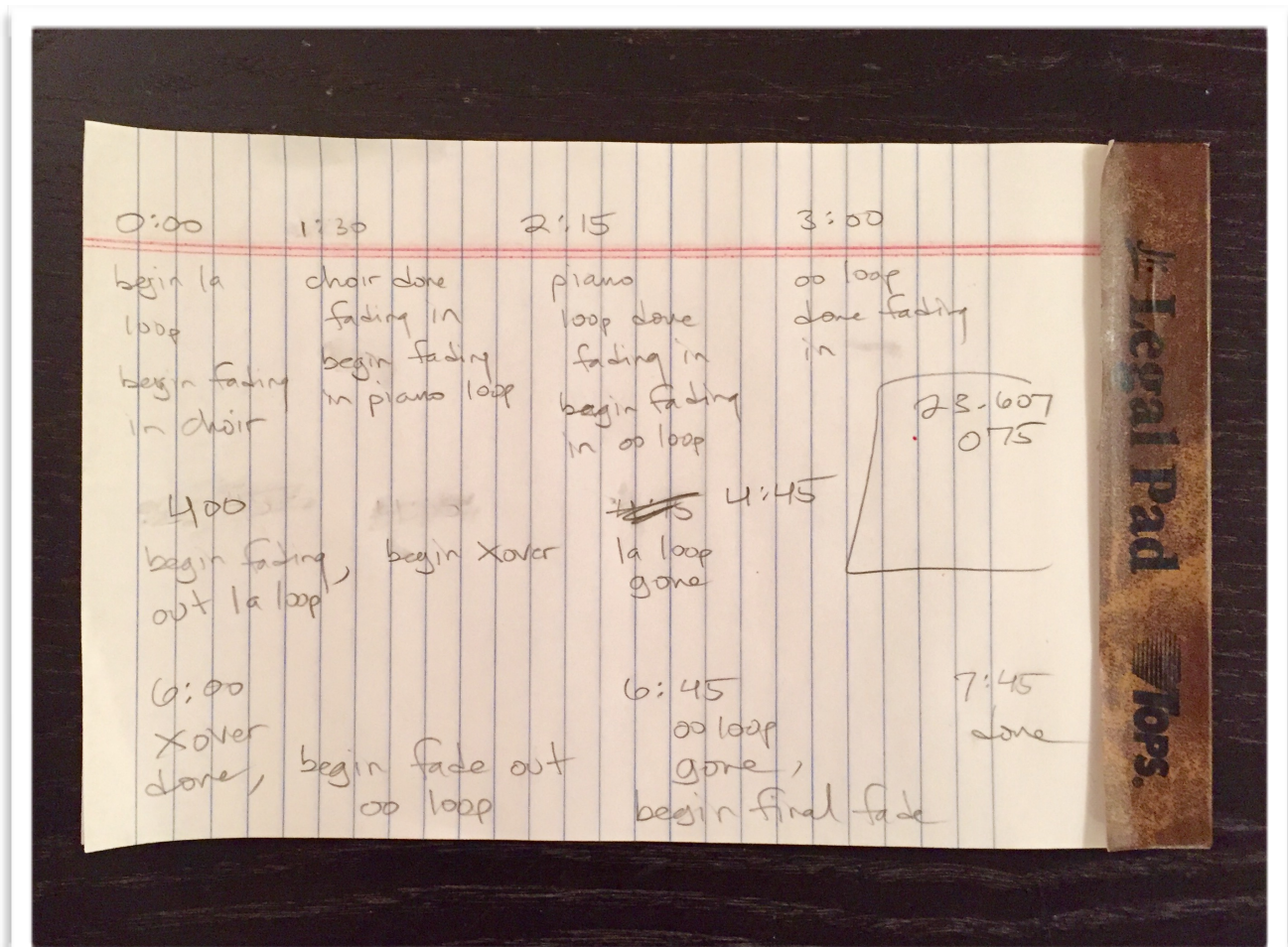
A special thanks to my sweetie Josh for being my beta listener, as well as giving me the encouragement I needed to keep going. I love you, boo! 🐼

Thank you to wordgenerator.net for helping me come up with the song titles. As usual, the songs were just as much fun to name as they were to make, and took almost as long.

Thank you for the inspiration to do this in the first place: Nurse With Wound, Cyclobe, Andrew Liles, The Hafler Trio, Throbbing Gristle, Coil, Richard Devine, their teeth to points, Oneohtrix Point Never, Negativland, and Pierre Schaeffer.

This album is dedicated to the artists I ripped off to make it.

Scrapbook



Arranging Quincy Bonaventure's Rotating Electric Hymnography.

```

        s = Integer.toString(integer);
    }
    clipStrList.add(s);
}
System.out.println(clipStrList);

Collections.shuffle(lengthList, new Random(seed));
List<String> lengthStrList = new ArrayList<>();
for(Integer integer : lengthList) {
    String s = "";
    if(integer < 10) {
        s = "0" + Integer.toString(integer);
    } else {
        s = Integer.toString(integer);
    }
    lengthStrList.add(s);
}
List<String> subItems = lengthStrList.subList(0, 14);
System.out.println(subItems);

i++;
System.out.println("");
}

@Test
public void uniqueWords() {
    int j = 0;
    while (j < 30) {
        List<Integer> wordList = new ArrayList<>();
        for (int i = 1; i < 13; i++) {
            wordList.add(i);
        }
        // assertTrue(wordList.size() == 12);
        // System.out.println(wordList);
        long seed = System.nanoTime();
        Collections.shuffle(wordList, new Random(seed));
        System.out.println(wordList + "\n");
        j++;
    }
}

```

Utilizing Java's Collections shuffler to randomize word and word clip order in *A Private Investigation Into Widow Canterbury's Penniless Felon Of A Nephew*.

```

RUN 3

01 A: floor (bad)
02 B: solar
03 C: open
04 D: focus

05 A: vibrate (bad)
06 B: tense (bad)
07 C: touching (bad)
08 D: inhale (bad)

09 A: chair
10 B: arrange
11 C: eight (bad)
12 D: body

== FIXING IT ==

RUN 1

01 A: touching
02 B: floor
03 C: solar
04 D: inhale

05 A: focus
06 B: open
07 C: eight
08 D: arrange

09 A: vibrate
10 B: tense
11 C: body
12 D: chair

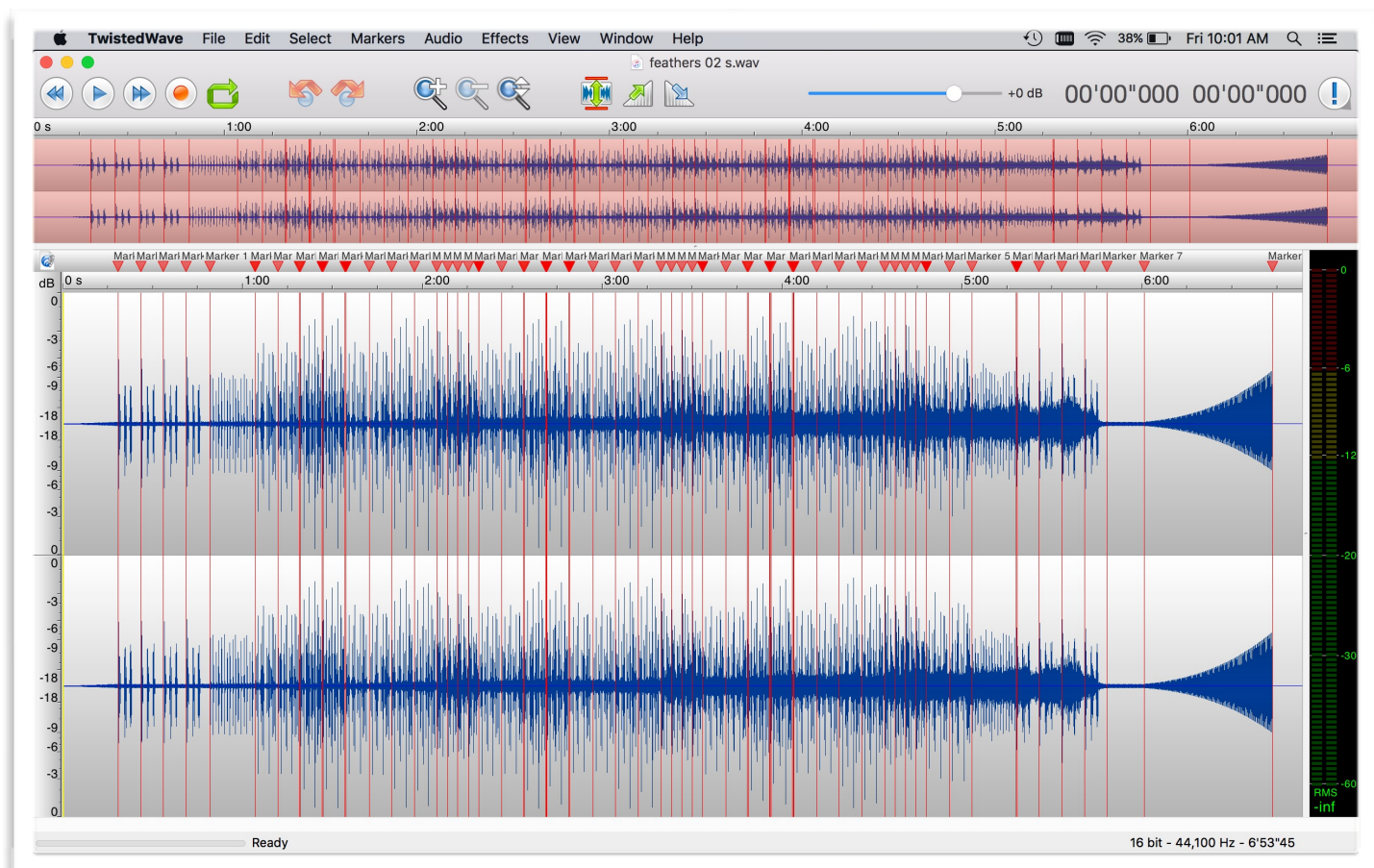
-----
a: 8.700
b: 8.723
c: 8.943
d: 8.951
-----

RUN 2

01 A: solar (12) *
02 B: body (3) *
03 C: inhale (6) *
04 D: tense (7) *

```

Refining word order in *A Private Investigation Into Widow Canterbury's Penniless Felon Of A Nephew*.
 (One of those rare cases when it's faster to do something by hand instead of writing code to do it.)



Time marks! Time marks everywhere!
A view into *Cutting Open A Listless Raconteur*
from a TwistedWave window.



Where it all began.
(Unique Thrift in Columbia Heights, MN.)

For More Information

jasonherrboldt.com

hardcoremathuser.blogspot.com

percivalravenwood.blogspot.com // this is where the free downloads for this album live

itsoverforbarbie.blogspot.com

facebook.com/hardcoremathuser

intothefuture@gmail.com



Art Patience



S P I R I T O F T H E W O O D S

“Memories”

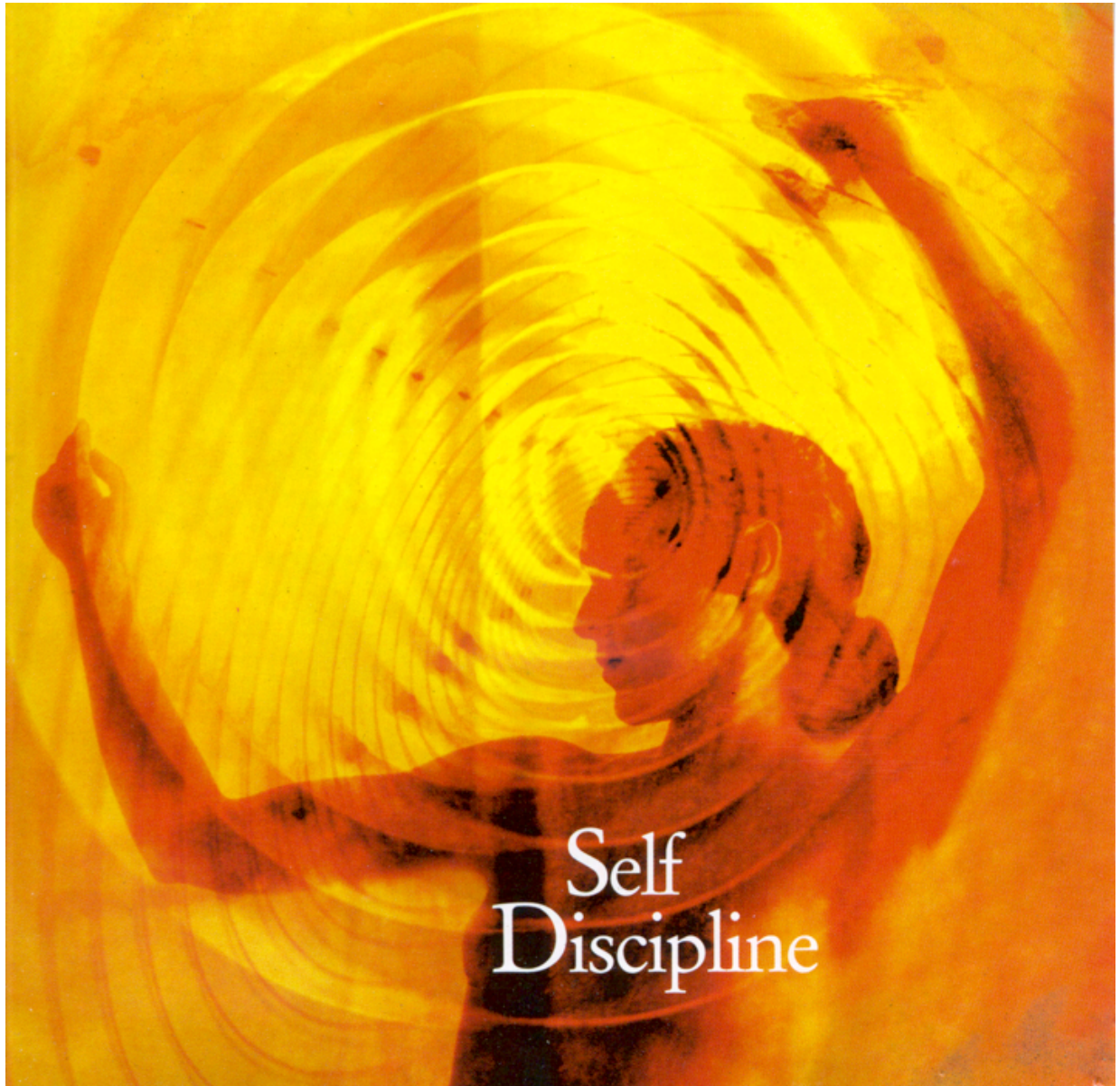


by Charlie Walhof

A long-exposure photograph of a waterfall, creating a soft, ethereal blue and white flow of water. The foreground is dominated by a dark, rocky surface covered in a thick layer of fallen autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. The background is dark and indistinct, focusing attention on the water and the foliage.

FANTASY

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SPHEERIS



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Discipline



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Joy



Spirit & Soul

Tom Prin
piano & orchestra

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**ARNIE'S
DOOR**



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ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING

A
Giant-screen
Experience



Original Film Score by MICHEL CUSSON

With Songs by Bruce Cockburn, Robbie Robertson, Sacred Spirits,
Joanne Shenandoah, Walela, Paul Winter and Mary Youngblood

Thank you for your attention, and happy "eternal" Halloween!

Jason Herrboldt

Minneapolis, October 2016