



This record was made for headphones.

DEAYED, DEAYED

A record of February 2007

Anu



1. (ARE U GONNA) LOOK THE OTHER WAY?

2. TURN THE HEADPHONES UP

3. SATELLITE DEATH

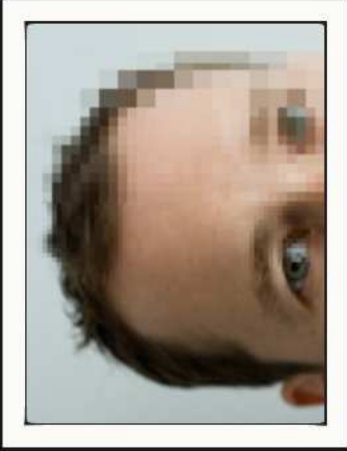
4. \$ICKRAP

5. BACK TRACK

6. OURBOROS

7. MY BEAT

8. DECAYED, DECAYED



Anu has been creating music for more than two decades.

He has played in ensembles since the 5th grade. He won two certificates of merit in the field of electronic music at Dartmouth College. For 6 months he held the number 1 spot on the experimental music charts at MP3.com. He is a pioneer and expert in the internet music industry, and one of the creators of the Rhapsody Music Service. Sometimes he teaches "A History of 20th Century Music" at Duke University's Talent Identification Program.

He currently lives in San Francisco, California.

This is his fourth solo album.

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DECA-ED, DECA-ED

A record of February 2007. Created for the RPM Challenge.

Written and recorded by Anu.

This is for Powerdrive, 14th Street Breakers, and all the other people who let me watch and learn breakdancing at Fairfax High School, Fairfax, Virginia in 1983.

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The music is available through most major online music distribution services. Try Rhapsody.

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THE 14 DAY RPM CHALLENGE: Record an album in 28 days, just because you can.

That's 10 songs or 35 minutes of original material recorded during the month of February. Go ahead...put it to tape.

It's a little like National Novel Writing Month, (NaNoWriMo.org) where writers challenge each other to write 1,700 words a day for 30 days, or the great folks over at February Album Writing Month (fawm.org), who encourage artists to write 14 new songs in February. Maybe they don't have "Grapes of Wrath" or "Abbey Road" at the end of the month, or maybe they do – but that's not the point. The point is they get busy and stop waiting around for the muse to appear. Get the gears moving. Do something. You can't write 1,700 words a day and not get better.

Don't wait for inspiration – taking action puts you in a position to get inspired. You'll stumble across ideas you would have never come up with otherwise, and maybe only because you were trying to meet a day's quota of (song)writing. Show up and get something done, and invest in yourself and each other.

Anyone can come up with an excuse to say "no," so don't. Many of you are thinking "But I can't do that! I don't have any songs/recording gear/money/blah blah blah..." But this doesn't have to be **the** album, it's just **an** album. Remember, this is an artistic exercise. Just do your best using what you have in order to get it done. If you have a four-track, become a four-track badass! A mini disc, a pro-tools rig, a Walkman, an 80's tape recorder – use it. Do your best. Use the limitations of time and gear as an opportunity to explore things you might not try otherwise. If you can afford studio time in a "real" studio, fine, but let's be completely free of any lingering idea that "good" records can only be made in a studio. If that were so, then all the old scratchy blues records or Alan Lomax field recordings that have changed our culture – the world's culture – wouldn't still resonate with us today as they do. Springsteen's haunting classic "Nebraska" was a demo he did at home on a crappy machine. That album is fricking awesome. What label would put those recordings out now? (See: who cares) There are a million examples of this kind of stuff, but the fact will always be: Well-written, honest music is compelling and undeniable no matter what it was recorded on. So put it to tape.

- Ten songs or 35 minutes of recorded material, on a CD, postmarked or hand-delivered by noon on March 1 to:
10 Vaughan Mall, Suite 1
Portsmouth, NH 03801

**EXCEPT FROM
THE RPM CHALLENGE**

- Recording can only be done in the month of February – no prerecorded songs.
- All material must be previously unreleased, and we encourage you to write the material during February too.

Just do your best to make the best album you can. Be unafraid.

What if every musician you knew put their music first for 28 days?

What if you recorded the best song of your life?

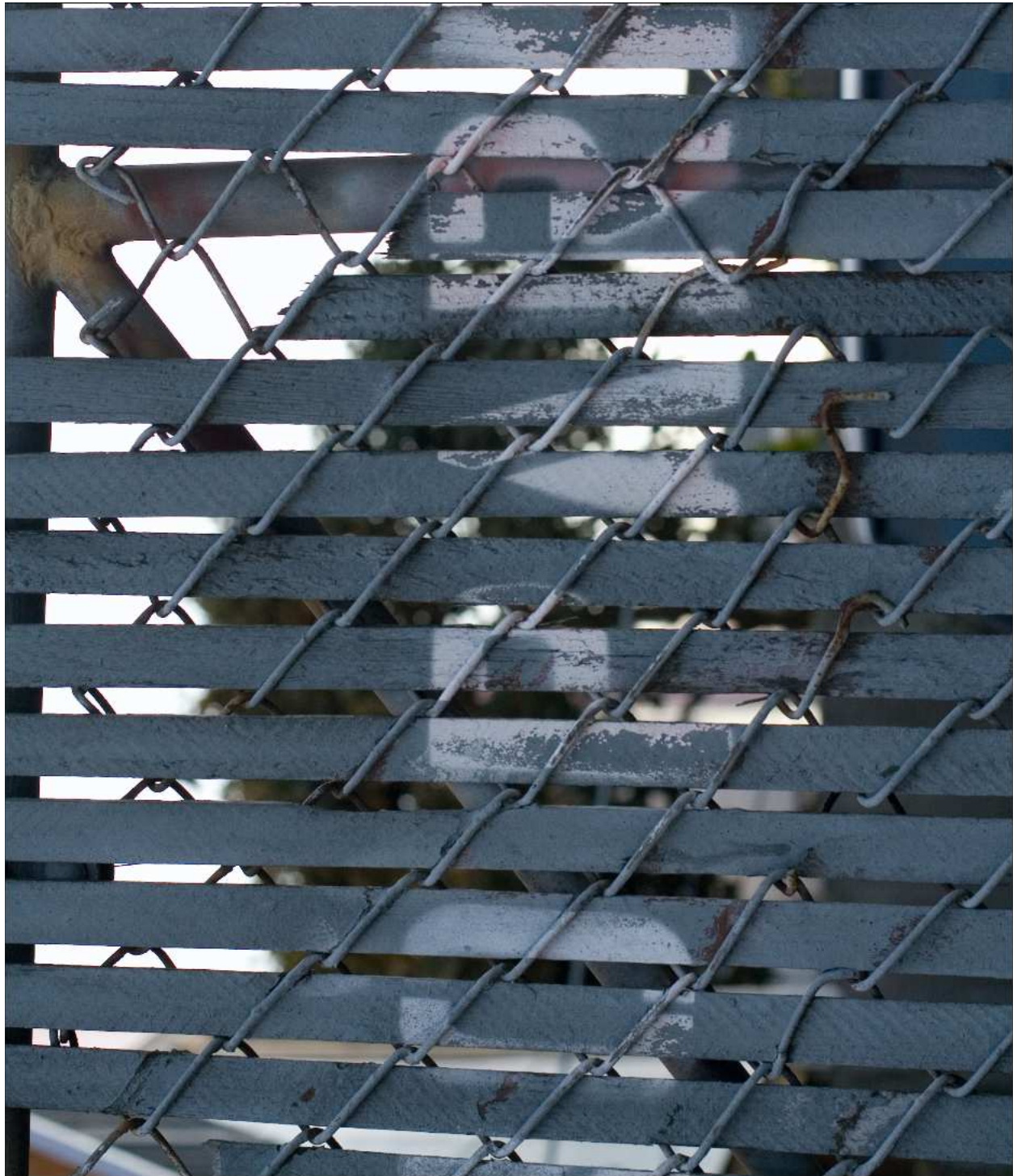
What if the world was never the same?

What's stopping us? Nothing. February is Record Production Month.

You have no reason to say no, and nothing to lose.



I WANT YOU
TO RECORD AN ALBUM IN 28 DAYS
SIGN UP NOW AT WWW.RPMCHALLENGE.COM



Alright, let's do this.

Why?

Having spent so much time over the last few years returning to pop/rock songwriting and singing, shifting over to something new like "hip-hop" is both refreshing and a bit intimidating. Of course, it's going to be **my** version of hip-hop, but that's what makes it interesting for me, and presumably for the listeners.

The challenge is that I am trying hard to make something with artistic value — it's far too easy for me to just crap out something that sounds like music I could bang out 10 1-minute songs (like **The Residents**' "Commercial Album") in an afternoon. I could do a 35-minute improvisation in, well, 35 minutes. But that's a cop-out. I want to make a real record.

I've been kidding around the idea of a record called "Decayed, Decayed" for a while. I've been making music for over 20 years — two decades. I'm also getting old. Entropy wins. Things fall apart. I thought it might be fun to write some "answers" to songs I've written during my life. Create something about disintegration — of myself, of the world, of life — we live in apocalyptic times. And tip my hat to rap and hip-hop, as well as some old favorites.

"Rock is dead." "Hip-Hop is the new rock." Does it then follow that Hip-Hop is dead?

I remember being completely blown away hearing "The Message" in grade school. I grew up breakdancing to **Run-D.M.C.**, grooving to **Herbie Hancock's** "Rockit" (the scratching in it changed my life, seriously), and thrilling to the music technology used in so much early hip-hop. That stuff just seemed so much more inventive, exciting, and futuristic than boring old guitars and drums. Tracks like **Afrika Bambaataa's** "Looking for the Perfect Beat" and "Planet Rock" sat on mixtapes next to **Thomas Dolby** and **Gary Numan**.

I had put together a mixer out of stereo components and Radio Shack cables and destroyed many records making my own "scratch dubs" and cassette edits. My brother and I "discovered" the **Beastie Boys** via the "She's On It" 12-inch single before "Licensed To Ill" dropped. Everyone else hated it — we loved it.

In college, I dug into **Public Enemy** around the same time I dug into the original MC — musique concrète as created by **Pierre Henri** and **Pierre Schaeffer**. I also started listening to alternative electronic groups like **Nitzer Ebb** and **Sixtyle**, who seemed to have something in common with hip-hop and Detroit techno. Minimal, stark tracks consisting of little more than a drum machine, bass synth, and somebody whispering, talking, or screaming.

A few months ago I started thinking about what sort of record I wanted to make after finishing my faux new wave epic with **Sid Luscious and The Pants**. All these thoughts went bouncing around in my head. I thought about some of the new hip-hop that I really like — **DJ Shadow** and the Mo' Wax gang, **Missy Elliott**, **The Coup**. I figured I'd give it a try.

Then the RPM Challenge came along. Hip-hop is the news — it should be made fast and disposed of fast.

Alright. Let's do this. Here we go.

Sunday, February 04 2007



(ARE U GONNA) LOOK THE OTHER WAY?

I had a friend with a problem that everyone ignored, pretending not to notice when he fell onto the floor
Never asked a question when he showed up late, lacerations from a situation, bruises on his face

No one said a word to him the day he lost his job. No one tried to help him out or find out what was wrong.
No one even speaks his name or mentions what we did. No one ever calls him now, I wonder where he is

This guy was a friend now he's vanished from our lives, and when I think about it now I feel ashamed inside
It always sort of bothered me and haunts me to this day. How could we all just look the other way?

What I really want to know is...

Are you gonna look the other way?

Subway train, I see your face, so tired from the human race—got your fancy headphones on so you can tune out everyone
But they say that eyes are the doors into the soul. I read that once in a book many years ago
And through those portals I can see deep into your self. You never stop to think about anybody else
I'm looking right at you now, but you won't meet my gaze
You can't handle what I know so I look the other way



*What I really want to know is....
Are you gonna look the other way?*

All around the world and right across the street
There are people in trouble, there are people in need

Now I'm almost done, yeah I just need to say
A few things to remember as you look the other way

One - that could be you some day

Two is to remember the rule of gold: do unto others and reap what you sow

Three is that the forgotten will rise and take back what they've been denied

Four: no one forgets those who betrayed them when they looked the other way

*But what I really want to know is....
Are you gonna look the other way?*

Have you done enough? Did you even try?

TURN THE HEADPHONES UP

When I wake up every morning
I've got music in my brain
and when my head hits the bed every night
it's the same
I'm dreaming up rhymes and synthesizer lines
casting out the hooks that are reeling
in your mind

Making up the downloads, RSS Feeds
Who's the god of the iPods?
Yeah, it's me
Checking out my flow, you can barely keep up
Ready for the volume and....

Turn the headphones up

A live report about what's going down
February 2007 San Francisco town
When I'm punching deck
You know I'm getting paid
I make more eating lunch than most do in a day

You're the same with your expensive brains
and cash and cars and places to stay
There are people on the streets holding out cups
We all look away and...

Turn the headphones up

Walking down the street or flying on a plane
Behind closed doors in sight it's plain
No one sayin' nothing and no one left to hear
Everybody's got some kind of plug in their ear

Nobody's listening and nobody talks
Mumbling to to the air
like they're down on their luck
Communication breaking down
it's getting kinda fucked
Whatever man....

Turn the headphones up





SATELLITE DISH

A lady friend backed up to me last week
She gazed into my eyes

and then she pinched my cheek. She whispered:

"Take me to my house and you can watch the show."

"Come check out my satellite dish, it's on, let's go."

I watched her leave and followed right behind

I saw the way her hips were swaying...

Damn, it was fine. She said:

"Let me show you what I've got in my backyard..."

And then she revealed those perfect curves
pointed up to the stars

Satellite Dish and I'm hooking up

Satellite Dish, I can't get enough

Satellite Dish, and I'm plugging in

Satellite Dish - let the fun begin

I turned down the lights, while she flipped around
I checked that dish out top to bottom,

I moved it up and down

I couldn't keep my hands off it felt so good to touch

I almost lost control, it was nearly too much

We lay there on her couch, stayed up half the night

Adjusting the position 'til things came in just right

I felt things I'd never felt before

She showed me how to push her buttons

Then she blew my mind with her

Satellite Dish and I'm hooking up

Satellite Dish, I can't get enough

Satellite Dish, coming in so clear

Satellite Dish, point it over here

Def? so def, it's the highest def that I've ever seen
Her dish looks so amazing I swear that it's obscene

I insist on the superior regarding the posterior

I can't accept, I will reject anything inferior

It feels like it's broadcasting right into my brain

It's so round and beautiful I think I'm going insane

She said

"If my package isn't enough for you

My girlfriend likes to watch

and she's got a hot satellite dish, too"

Let's check her out



FISHWRAP

Dateline: February 11
 In the year 2007
 You may want your kids to leave the room
 Some graphic content is coming soon
 Down the street some kids got shot
 More bombs went off this week in Iraq
 Nobody will admit that he's wrong
 And I'm trying to finish up one more song
 The weatherman says it's gonna rain hard
 Should you walk to work or take the car?
 Terror and danger everywhere
 And everyone says we should all be scared
 Seems like it's getting worse every day
 Bad news keeps on coming our way
 But you can't let it get you down
 We'll find a way to get by some how

Our next story: Wack MCs
 Who miss the point of raps like these
 Readin' off your notebook, frontin' like you're hard
 But your raps come across like
 you're reading off a cue card
 Stiff and stale, like day-old bread
 Your lips spill tales of hate and dread
 Bogus... like Fox news!
 Are you saying you're "fair and balanced", too?
 Ooh, did I hit a soft spot?
 Looks like you finally got caught out
 Now everyone knows
 About the lies and the life you sold
 And when your 15 minutes are gone
 How will you feel about what you've done?
 Did you try to make the world a better place?
 Or just try to scoop more on your plate?

Tonight we'll dose with one more thought
 You've gotta keep your head up
 when things get tough
 February 11, and it's raining
 But life is good, so stop complaining
 Be careful about what you put in your head
 You gotta search for the truth and get out of bed
 There's only one way to make things better
 We all have to pull together
 Fishwrap – the news isn't always the truth
 Fishwrap – don't let it get to you
 Fishwrap – Between the lines they're selling ads
 It stinks like fishwrap



BACK TRACK

Do...Do you remember? Do you remember how it felt when you were young and by yourself? The world was new but you felt old, you were alone and life was cold. In school you were enrolled you had your dreams and your hopes. And all was well. All was well.

Did...Did you forget? Did you forget what you had learned though it was branded, carved and burned deep in your memory where you keep all the secrets and beliefs, all your hopes and plans and schemes and the demons who live deep – what did they take?

What did they take?

Back... Back Track. The thread you led through the maze provides a way to keep you safe, so don't look back.

Now...Now it seems...Now it seems is the time for everything to rewind and for everyone to find comfort in the past that's passed, it's a blast, it's a gas, and when they're all asked they want the old days back. They like the old ways. They like the back track...

So...so ask yourself. So ask yourself if it makes sense to grab at that defense when you know how time is spent and we all wonder where they went. Where did the days go?

Where did the days go?

Back... Back Track. Flipping through your book of days heading for the final page so you look back. You can't turn back.

Back Track: A master clock that you obey while it makes the music play.

Your fate is sealed.



ourBobos

All you zombies better listen good, cuz I'm
only going to say this once
Cuz there's no sense in repeating it again cuz
repeating it again is dumb
This is a tale that starts with snakes
and in the end comes around
to beats and breaks
What time is it? What is time?
What do you think you're doing
when you're making rhymes?

Before you get lost here why don't you just
stop here and take it from the top again?
I'm trying to explain why it all sounds the same
and why we're spinning down the drain
Now I'm gonna toss benzene in the mix
it'll help you solve like Stradonitz...
I must confess that I digress here, but this
mess causes stress and a need to express here,
after I rest.

OurBobos What goes around comes around

Did you get "The Message" in 1982?
Synthesizers and beats,
bringing something new.

Original. No samples.

Then Run-DMC in 1984
busting out live guitar
made us yell for more.

The Kings of Rock, raising hell.

No samples.

Now you're digging through crates like you're
digging for gold, but you're digging up graves,
if the truth is really told.

Robbing the greats, thinking it's safe,
just stop
You're stripping and ripping off hip-hop.

Solisten -- my position: your mission as a
musician is to stop biting tracks, leave the vinyl
on the racks and break out of the loops that
you're trapped in

Break out of the loops that you rap in
Break out of the loop of your habits
Break out of the breaks and find a new path

All you zombies listen to me:
Music isn't spelled "MPC"

Everything they play now
I've heard before
It's just a copy of a copied copy's
copy of a copy
Now if some are confused
by all the words I use
Let me say it once more:

No samples

The vinyl spins
The tape loops

The bits buffer stutter repeat

I know who I am, but who are all you zombies?

Bringing in take-out
doesn't make you a chef
There's a reason they called it "fresh"

MY BEAT

I start off each morning with my favorite drug
Cook it up in the kitchen and take a slug
Coffee so black it helps me to wake
Prepared to attack the problems I face

Maybe it's keeping my blood pressure high
But with out my magic bean I'd rather die
It's probably the shitty way everyone drives
My Ducati commute is hairy sometimes

I get to work and boot up my machine
To spend the day staring at a couple of screens
Telephone headset I'm listening in
To yet one more meeting that I must attend

Most of the time I can't get much done
because I'm so busy trying to do stuff
About half of the time I don't get to leave
I eat at my desk if I've got food to eat

If it's a good day I might hit the gym
And try to maintain the shape that I'm in
If not I might just try to get the hell home
My wife and our couch and some time alone

Most of the nights when I get back
I pour me some good stuff
Bookers neat in a glass
An Arrogant Bastard is my best friend
I sit in a chair or stare at the bright screen
again

Dinner and it's time to cook something up
Fish in the broiler, broccoli is boiling
Dark chocolate...or should we go out?

Maybe I'll read or write something new
Go see my friends, rehearse with the band
Computers are calling again
Do you have any work to do?

All too soon it's time for the bed
Shut everything down, put earplugs in
A goodnight kiss, a caress or two
Then off to sleep, morning comes soon

And in my sleep, I'm walking my beat
In my hood, right down my street
Everything quiet and everything still
The city shimmers lights twinkle on hills

The weekend is here in a matter of days
Errands and projects and things to make
Maybe I'll work out, I'll try to go
For sure I need groceries from Rainbow

Sunday is my favorite time
Read the paper in bed, don't get out before
Staying in the best kind of rut
For 24 hours before Monday comes up

Work. Worry. Download. Repeat.
Worry. Remember. Work. Download.

Do Over.





DECAYED, DECAYED

It's 20 years since this started up
Let me tell you how it was
A 4-track Radio Shack tape deck
Hissing overdubs
I tried to get it down
Record what I had to say
I thought I had all the time I needed
Somehow it got away

I found old tapes and plastic discs
from a century past
But when I tried to hear theirs on
they fell apart in my hands
Leaving only faintest echoes
Fading in my brain
Memory erased
So much gone to waste

Decayed, Decayed

There were so many big plans for me
They all told me I was Great
13 years of experiments and studies
I finally escaped
4 years I lived in winter
9 in L.A.
Everything used to work just fine
Now it's not OK

Broken bones won't heal
This broken heart can't feel
And cars (some self-inflicted)
on skin rashed and peeled
My knees crack-crack-cracking
My mind is lagging
My guts slowly rusting
Hair turns thin and gray

Decayed, Decayed

It's just a matter of time you see you're already fine
The short straw in your hand is previously assigned
And with every breath you draw into your gasping chest
Think of how sweet it tasted, all the time you've wasted
Was it worth it in the end?
Would you do it the same if you could do it again?

The laws of physics simply state the case

Decayed, Decayed

Entropy wins
Everything fades
There is no escape
There is no escape

I walk beneath cherry blossoms
Listening to the rain

Decayed, Decayed







I DOWN 9 TO 80

Today I wrote and recorded the first track for "Decayed". The song is called "Turn The Headphones Up".

I started this morning around 10:30 am. I had gotten out of bed with a few ideas cooling away. I wrote a few things down and wandered down to the studio to get started. I figured I'd set a few things up and see what happened.

First order of business was to check out a few of Battery 3's various drum kits (especially the kits labelled "hip-hop") and see if there was anything usable. Spent an hour or two configuring a few of the kits to my liking before getting busy.

I started off with a fairly basic beat. One objective of this project is to use more percussion and fewer instruments/parts, so I broke out each drum sound



to a separate track and made different little grooves I could drop in.

I typed out some words based on a title idea I had — "Turn The Headphones Up". Naturally, I got the idea from watching the Dave Chappelle skit, but I wanted to do something a bit more serious, about the isolation that occurs now that everyone's always listening to MP3 players instead of carrying around boom boxes or just talking.

I got the first 3 verses done and an idea for the chorus. While I avoid obvious movie and TV samples like the plague, I figured it was appropriate to drop a few small grabs from **Dave Chappelle** in the track since he sort of gave me the idea and such samples are common in hip-hop. A bit of time correction in Cubase to make them groove a bit and...very nice.



Sunday, 04 February 2007

I'm going to give a shout-out to **Audio Damage** and their fantastic **Replikant** plug-in. I'm going to get lots of use on this project. I can tell.

Ran through the vocal track a few times. Doing decent hip-hop vocals is much harder for me than regular rock singing. More detail in unusual places. Not sure I'm comfortable with this yet, or that I don't sound completely ridiculous. Good. I'm clearly heading in the right direction!

Added a bass synth and a whiny lead on the Evolver somewhere between Dr. Dre and Gary Numan. A splash of Rhodes and the music was done.

I let it sit for a bit while I finished off the words and took care of some other things today, then dropped the last vocals in and did a more or less final mix.



BACK TRACK - SECOND TRACK DONE!

About an hour ago I threw down a close-to-final mix of "Back Track". This track is much more electro/techno. Heavily draws on Nitzer Ebb and Underworld.

I wrote most of the words last night and touched them up this morning. Started off laying down most of the drums and roughing out the structure. Added the synths and vocals before heading out to do a few errands.

I made more use of Replicant - this time on the low and quiet vocals. Some creepy and minimal synths, and lots of electronic percussion.

I may have to touch up the vocals in a few spots - not sure if I want the choruses to jump a bit more.

I like how weird it turned out.

Monday, 05 February 2007

curtained doors to bone

Last night I was up until about 2 am working on "Ouroboros".

Earlier in the week I had started a version of the track that was a bit too conceptual—in trying to make everything circular, I started with this cycle-of-fifths figure on the electric piano.

Interesting, but too pretty. Also too complex musically to work with. Spent a few hours moving in that direction and stopped.

Last night I started over, with a simple beat and figured I'd get the beats and rhymes roughed in before I tried adding any musical at all. This worked much better, and I got into a good groove.

Found a nice drum kit in Battery with some **Wu-Tang** overtones. I figured some of that faux-ethnic mystical vibe would go well with this track's title.

I ended up recording a guide track by practically whispering into the mic (it was very late and I didn't want to wake anyone).

Of course, it ended up having a pretty nice sound. I might end up re-doing the vocals in that more quiet style.

But intending to give it something a bit more punchy, I came home tonight and dropped in a few louder vocal takes, then edited them into shape.

Uploaded the result. **Battery 3** misbehaves a lot. And sometimes **Replixant** is random in all the wrong places.

Mostly I'm just being lazy.

Friday, 09 February 2007





FISHWRAP AND THEN SOME

It's a good thing I did so much work on "Ouroboros" this week. I had hoped to bash out 2 more tracks this weekend. Unfortunately, I only got to finish "Ouroboros" and "Fishwrap".

I spent several hours yesterday building up a mean old-school beat with a bit of techno bass for "Fishwrap". I had an idea of what I wanted, but as always the music and lyric writing took it in a slightly different (and probably more interesting) direction.

I'm at a stage where I'm starting to second-guess a bit and want to re-do some of the vocals on the tracks. I definitely want to be a bit more judicious about using **beatnik** on the main drum mix, as it's getting to be a bit much. There are other ways I can "distress" the drums which are less disruptive.

Work yesterday was limited by errands and weather, as was today. Had to hit the gym and meet some friends for dinner. And take advantage of the weekend to spend some time with my lovely wife.

Anyhow, at least I'm not behind my plan. I have 4 tracks that aren't horrible and am clocking in at 18 minutes or so – arguably halfway done.

I wonder if anyone is listening to or reading any of this.

Monday, 12 February 2007



ARCHIVE THE CONCRETE

Painful day at work yesterday. I started sending out the URLs for the basic tracks to a few of my friends to see what they think.

So far, nobody on the RPM site has responded to my posts, and if they've listened to my tracks, I have no idea what they think. I checked out some of the other "hip-hop" projects—finding them is difficult, as RPM oddly has no genre categorizations—and some are really good. It was both inspiring and a little unsettling.

I tried to channel some of that energy into the lyrics for the next track. I'll aim for finishing — "(Are U Gonna) Look The Other Way?"

In general, I am impressed with the quality of most of the recordings I've heard on RPM. Not sure if

that's because it's a self-selecting group or music technology has really made it easy to make a good-sounding record or I just happened to pick good tracks to listen to.

Am I making garbage? I don't know. don't think so. Either way, I'm enjoying the process and learning something.

I also had an interesting idea for the album packaging—I think I'm going to do a booklet that will include lyrics and photos. Not a booklet, a book!

Today I have 7.5 hours of back-to-back meetings followed by rehearsal with my other band.

Tuesday, 13 February 2007



UP TO 22 MINUTES, 5 TRACKS

About 6:45 pm Thursday I uploaded a nearly-finished mix of "Are U Gonna Look Tha Other Way?". This track really came together late last night once I put the strings on it.

I'd had the idea for this track for quite some time... it's based on a true story. It took the RPM Challenge for me to finish it. I was even partially inspired by one of a fellow RPMer's tracks (Unsung, you rule!) for the rhyme and flow.

I am pleased with this one—I think it will probably be the lead-off track for the record. I still have some vocal things I'd like to try on it—Iran doesn't like the hook right now, so I might try a few variations.

I also think it might be worth doubling up the "Have you done enough? Did you even try?" at the end.

One of the disadvantages of working so fast is you have very little time to experiment and consider—you have to commit and move on.

Regardless, this track takes me over 22 minutes. At the rate I'm going, I should be within shouting distance of the finish line after the upcoming long weekend. I'll need to be, because it looks like next weekend I have to be out of town.

I asked Iran to take some photos a few days ago. I had been culling through some shots she had for cover images. Good stuff, but I realized for this to be totally "right", all the images had to be taken during February 2007 as well. She wasn't very excited about what she brought back, but I thought it was perfect. I spent a few hours tonight starting to lay out the book that will contain the lyrics, notes, and these

blog entries along with the photos and a copy of the CD. It's going to be very cool when it's all done!

Friday, 16 February 2007



LAYING DOWN MY BEAT

This whole project is turning out to be much more successful than I anticipated. Last night I was rather tired from the week of work and was feeling uninspired. I have to finish a bunch of tracks this weekend to keep up with the schedule. I started working on some beats, but nothing was really happening. I decided to explore some of the alternative kits I have and loaded up the "Marching Band" sounds.

The drums were all mis-mapped but it turned out to be an interesting beat. Then I started thinking it was too weird or not in line with everything else I had done so far. Then I started thinking that I wanted this track to have a downtempo vibe. Feeling unproductive, I shut down for the night.

This morning I woke up late.

Talked to my lovely wife about my artistic dilemma and she encouraged me to do something weird and different. "You can always do the normal thing if it doesn't work." Good advice! After coffee, I went into the studio and started working on the beat. Once I had something decent, I started working on the lyrics.

I had been listening to some new hip-hop while running yesterday and thought it might be good to drop something with a triplet feel.

The idea was to describe my daily life – it's a common hip-hop trope. Most songs have 3 verses of 4 lines each, or 12 lines of verses. If I made each line correspond to 2 hours of a day, I could cover 24 hours.

The lyrics came pretty quickly and went in some surprising directions.

Nothing says "downtempo" like electric piano so I sat down and came up with a part reminiscent of **DJ Shadow**.

Since the track is about my life, I recorded a bit of the world outside and stuck it at the beginning and end. Beautiful. A little "Blade Runner" Evolver synth and the track was sounding so good I considered just making it an instrumental.

But the lyrics and vocals really made the track come alive. I really like this one.

Sunday, 18 February 2007

I WALK BENEATH CHERRY BLOSSOMS
LEARNING TO THE RAIN

2 minute warning!

A hard 3-day weekend of work and I've finished number 7, the title track, "De Cayed, De Cayed".

This one was very tough to get right, but persevering really paid off.

As far as I'm concerned, this is the centerpiece of the album, the track that really matters.

It's rather dark, but I like that.

The whole thing came together when I walked away from the computer a bit, ate lunch, and did some thinking.

About growing up in DC.

About Japanese aesthetics and cherry blossoms.

"I walk beneath cherry blossoms listening to the rain"—that image gave me an ending to build towards. Various apocalyptic things I'd been looking at and reading did the rest.

This is the last track on the record, to be sure. And creatively, I don't know what else to say. But I'm two minutes short of the minimum, so I need one more.

My wife thinks I should do a remix or instrumental of "My Beat". I told her I was considering an instrumental called "Instrumentals are Cop-Outs".

Maybe I'll rework the first attempt at "Ouroboros". I don't know. I need to not think about this for a while. I've been averaging something like 1 track every 3 days. I have a few more left.

Tuesday, 20 February 2007





THE ONCE LINE

After much thought, I realized I couldn't pad out the album with an instrumental, even if I titled it "Instrumentals are Cop-Outs". I had 3 ideas for tracks and at least 2 minutes or 3 songs to qualify as "finishing". But time pressure is on. Aside from work, I have to go out of town this weekend which makes it extremely hard to finish.

Last night I pulled some CDs thinking I would grab a bunch of metal samples for "Test Yr Metal". But I realized that I didn't have enough of the hair metal I wanted to sample. And I also realized I didn't want to build a track out of samples, since I'd done such a good job avoiding that so far.

So I started "Satellite Dish" and within 5 minutes had a powerful groove. 5 more minutes and the track was almost done. I had to go see a friend's band

play, so I left the computer running and refined lyrics in my head as I rode to the show. I came back an hour later and stayed up until 2:30 am tweaking the track and the rhyme.

Today I paid the price—I tweaked my neck and shoulder some time during the evening. I was dragging all day, and the mix I threw to check at work was missing most of the drums. After an awful day at work, I came home and finished "Satellite Dish", managing to cajole my wife into putting some vocals on it as well.

Now I'm writing the penultimate blog entry, and what will likely be the last blog entry for the book, which I need to send off to the printer very soon to have finished in time. What an incredible experience, what fun. Don't know if I'll do it again.

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

Decayed, Decayed

SOFTWARE

Effects

Apogee UV22 Dither
Audio Damage Disord 2
Audio Damage Replicant
Audio Damage Reverence
Digitalfishphones Bloofish
Digitalfishphones Floofish
Kjaerhus Classic Auto-Filter
Kjaerhus Classic Compressor
Kjaerhus Classic Delay
mda Combo
Prosoniq Northpole
Shiny-FX Spectral Monkeyage
SPL De-Esser
Steinberg BitCrusher
Steinberg Limiter
Steinberg Magneto
Steinberg Maximizer
Steinberg/mda Vocoder

Hosts

Steinberg Cubase 4
Steinberg WaveLab 3

Instruments

E-Phonic Drumatic 3
Native Instruments Absynth 4
Native Instruments Battery 3
Native Instruments Kompakt
Native Instruments Reaktor 5

HARDWARE

Dave Smith Instruments Evolver
Doepfer Pocket Dial
Doepfer Pocket Control
Event 20/20 bass
Fender Rhodes Mark I Stage Piano
JoeMeek SixQ
Mark Of The Unicorn Traveler
Midiman Midisport 4x4
Oktava 219 (modified)

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I may not have used your tools on this project, but I have used them on others.

You make the world a better place.

Special thanks to my wife, Iran Narges.
Your support made this album possible.

SLAMMER TAG

font by Jakob Fischer / pizzadude.dk



Written and recorded by Anu
Blue Moscow, San Francisco
February 2007

