

International Mars Society Conference 2003



CD "Soundtrack For A Mars Movie" by the Extremophiles Is Now Available



NASA-backed, one-of-a-kind sound recording project from Mars-simulation habitat is finally completed with album art by world renowned space artist Michael Carroll

One year ago, a group of scientists, explorers, and musicians met in the Utah desert to begin a unique experiment. They designed a series of tests to see how music could be incorporated into a Mars mission as both an activity for downtime for crewmembers, and as a medium to test communications between collaborators on Earth and on Mars. The music experiment, conducted with a time delay and a limited bandwidth connection, was called the Interplanetary Collaborative Music Project (ICoMP). The two-week-long simulation was conducted out of the Mars Society's Mars Desert Research Station (MDRS).

The musicians were Commander Frank Schubert, Engineer/National Geographic Correspondent Sam Burbank, and NASA Planetary Scientist Kelly Snook.

They were joined by world renowned exo-biologist Penny Boston, NASA Space Psychologist Ephimia Morpheu, and Biologist/Engineer Steve McDaniel. Because one of their science goals was the study of microbes found in this extreme environment, the crew was named The Extremophiles.

The ICoMP experiment only called for three musicians in the habitat, but it soon became clear all of the crew had something to add. McDaniel contributed a song he wrote when his son was born, Boston wrote lyrics, and Morpheu sang. "We couldn't have stopped the rest of the crew from contributing if we wanted to. The music became part of the fabric of our rotation. Not an interference, just the soundtrack of our little village inside of that spaceship," said Burbank.

The ICoMP experiment was an instant success. Musicians from around the world began contributing to songs written in the habitat. Some "Earth" studios even contributed original songs for The Extremophiles to add to. One of those songs came from Mark Mothersbaugh, founder of the pop band DEVO. Said Mothersbaugh, "These guys can handle so many styles well and have such vocal range, it is scary." The song ended up as the lead track on The Extremophiles album.



After the experiment, the three principle band members went their separate ways: Frank to Iceland to develop the next Mars Society research station; Kelly to Africa for a NASA science and education tour; and Sam to Sicily for his next science film for National Geographic. The music pulled them back together again.

"The songs were just compelling. We came up with something like 20 songs in that little tuna can (habitat), and they were too good to let go. The next thing I knew



Frank and Kelly were saying 'Let's make this happen, we'll meet you in San Francisco for the next recording session.' How could you say no to that?" Said Burbank. The Extremophiles began turning a science experiment into a pop music album.

The last year has been a busy one as the best songs were picked, refined, and ultimately mastered by long-time Submarine Studios engineer Jeremy Bloch. "The thing I noticed was how easy this album was to master. The mixes came in clean and rich, ready to go. It's amazing they were able to do most of that in a spaceship," said Bloch.

The majority of the post recording took place in San Francisco at Submarine Studios. The band met there to put the finishing touches on the CD, joined by violinist Scott Myers and percussionist Joshua Burbank, and myriad other contributors. It was during this time the band also began working with drummer David Kendrick, a writer/musician from Los Angeles. Kendrick contributed to several songs on Soundtrack, and has since become a permanent member of the group.

"Soundtrack for a Mars Movie is a sonic blast into the past and a fast ride into the future." John Conelley, Planetary Scientist, NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston.

With Soundtrack For A Mars Movie now completed, the band is gearing up for the concert stage. The next performance will be in **Eugene, Oregon on August 15th**. in conjunction with the Sixth Annual **International Mars Society Conference**. More information about the new album and live shows can be found at www.theextremophiles.com.

Says guitar player, Frank Schubert, "We are really looking forward to playing these songs live. The rehearsals sounded great and it will be fun to go out there and spread the word about Mars and space." Look for The Extremophiles throughout the solar system, and at a concert hall near you. Contact Schubert for interviews and a sample CD.

For further information about The Extremophiles, visit our website at: www.TheExtremophiles.com Come join us as we start a new trail of exploration - A new trail **On To Mars!**

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