



Bio information: **RICHARD PINHAS & YOSHIDA TATSUYA**

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FILE UNDER: ROCK / ELECTRONIC / EXPERIMENTAL

**Experimental Rock Titans Richard Pinhas (France) & Yoshida Tatsuya (Japan) Create a
Soundscape of Galactic Proportions in *Welcome In the Void*,
the Second Chapter in Pinhas' Devolution Trilogy**

Forget **The Kills** and **The Black Keys**, if you're looking for a rock duo with a sound as big as the cosmos, try guitarist **Richard Pinhas** and drummer **Yoshida Tatsuya**. The revered bad-granddads of the French and Japanese experimental scenes have discographies stretching back decades, but **Welcome In The Void** is their first joint venture. A broiling mix of space-rock, electronic-rock and progressive-rock with a splash of noise, it shatters all expectations. With just two looped guitars, a drum kit and electronics, the duo create a soundscape of both galactic proportion and infinite detail, its immensity humanized by Pinhas' filigreed, often melody-driven playing. If you could hear the images captured by the Hubble telescope, they might sound like this. Think **Wagner** to the power of ten with a beat. Or **Hawkwind** with nuance.

Now entering his fifth decade as a recording artist, Pinhas' career has been one of unbroken risk-taking and innovation. After a couple of 1972 singles under the name **Schizo**, he formed the pioneering electronic-rock group **Heldon**, with whom he recorded seven albums from 1974 – 1979, along with another five under his own name or with other line-ups. Most musicians tend to move away from the margins as they get older, but Pinhas – who as a student at the Sorbonne was on the Paris barricades in May 1968, and whose first album with Heldon was titled **Electronique Guerilla** - edges ever closer. He has recently found stimulus in post-industrial music and has collaborated memorably with such noise auteurs as Japan's **Masami Akita** a.k.a. **Merzbow** and **Keiji Heino**, and the Detroit, Michigan trio **Wolf Eyes**.

Pinhas has a devoted following in Japan; his Heldon and solo music have been released in Japanese boxed sets, and he's toured that country several times in the past decade, playing with many of its best-known experimental musicians. Ten years Pinhas' junior, Tatsuya has been a beacon on Japan's experimental- and progressive-rock scenes since the early 1980s, with groups including **Ruins**, **Koenji Hyakkei**, **Korekyojinn**, **Acid Mothers Temple & The Melting Paraiso U.F.O.**, **Zeni Geva**, **Samla Mammamanna** and **Painkiller**. With accuracy, he has been called "the undisputed master drummer of the Japanese underground." Tatsuya and Pinhas met on one of Pinhas' first Japanese tours; after playing in a support band and joining Pinhas for an encore, Tatsuya and Pinhas made plans over dinner for future projects.

Teaming up for their first duo studio recording, Pinhas and Tatsuya push each others' creative limits to make something that even for the experimental master Pinhas, is a new experience: a single, 64-minute, all-instrumental track consisting solely of guitar, percussion and electronics. The spontaneity, intensity, and sheer force of the music created by the duo is a marvel. The powerful cover art, reminiscent of sci-fi themes from Pinhas' Heldon days, is designed by French illustrator **Yann Legendre**, who has designed the cover art for Pinhas' recent albums, beginning with 2006's **Metatron**.

"*Welcome In the Void* is the second album of the '**Devolution Trilogy**', which started with **Desolation Row** [Cuneiform 2013]," says Pinhas. "It is about the historical-political effect of machines and neo-liberalism, and their attempts to put people back into slavery. It is a cry to revolt against slavery. The trilogy is concerned with the devolution of mankind, of civilization, capitalism's devolution, and mainly the devolution of human/biological faculties – and how all this is related to the rise of machines." Asked about the album's title, Pinhas says that *Welcome In the Void* refers to "a kind of journey, not more into the being but into the Void - the nothingness that is now the "center" or the absence-of-center of our societies."

"It is one long track, lasting over an hour. Yoshida and I recorded it in Paris and Tokyo in 2013. I like real drummers. I've never used a drum machine, even in the early days. Heldon was one of the first bands to mix a real drummer with synthesizers. I'm very old school and I don't mind saying so". The Pinhas/Tatsuya collaboration is an ongoing one, and the duo has plans to tour and record more material in Japan in the near future. In addition, Pinhas and Tatsuya will play with Merzbow and Keiji Haino in May 2014, for a world premiere performance at **Festival International Musique Actuelle Victoriaville**, North America's premiere experimental music festival.

While long respected as a ceaseless innovator, Pinhas is on an unprecedented creative surge. *Welcome In The Void* is one of two duo albums that Pinhas will release simultaneously in May 2014; the other is **Tikkun**, recorded with guitarist **Oren Ambarchi**. Both follow fast on the heels of his widely acclaimed solo recording, **Desolation Row**. All are on Pinhas' longstanding label, **Cuneiform Records**, who have released Pinhas' new recordings since the 1990s and reissued his early solo and Heldon works. Pinhas is already working on new solo and group recordings for Cuneiform, scheduled for 2015 release. He is also scheduled to perform at nearly a dozen international festivals of avant garde music in 2014 and 2015, spanning three continents. Indefatigable, the **Electronique Guerilla** storms onward, melding man and machine, analogue and electronics, advancing sonic barricades while embracing the 21st century Void.

For more information on Richard Pinhas & Yoshida Tatsuya:

www.richard-pinhas.com - www.magaibutsu.com - www.cuneiformrecords.com

Richard Pinhas: Biographical Information

Born in May 1951, making him just old enough to become a teenage music fanatic during rock's mid to late 1960s counterculture heyday, French guitarist and electronic musician **Richard Pinhas**' aesthetic is typically associated with the early British and German electronic scenes. But that is only part of his story. There is a wild and anarchic quality to Pinhas' music, even at its most tightly arranged, which has nothing to do **King Crimson**, **Tangerine Dream** or **Kraftwerk**, and which comes from somewhere else.

Certainly, Pinhas' first band of note, **Heldon**, formed in 1974, sat comfortably in a lineage already established by the British and German pioneers. However, Pinhas' formative influences precede them. From the age of 13, when Pinhas was already a hardwired into music, and continuing through his teenage years, his family sent him to London for a month each summer to improve his English. Beginning in 1964, Pinhas became familiar with a tumultuous London music scene populated by guitar-centric bands such as **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers**, the launch pad for **Eric Clapton** and **Peter Green** in 1966 and 1967, and **Cream**, where Clapton later landed. Above all, London was illuminated most powerfully by **Jimi Hendrix**, during his lifetime the city's chief sonic innovator and counterculture beacon.

"I loved Clapton," says Pinhas, "but Hendrix was the one who made me want to play music. He was always the main event. I saw him live maybe eight times. In fact, in 1966, when I was still only 14 and already a massive fan, I actually spent ten minutes with him backstage at the Olympia in Paris. During the soundcheck in the afternoon he broke some strings. He didn't have any spares and you couldn't buy his brand in Paris, only in London. The MC of the show was a friend of mine and he knew that I used the same strings – **Picato Green 009 gauge** - so he asked me to come over with some. Hendrix shook my hand and chatted with me. I was totally stupefied. I almost didn't wash my hand again.

"The second big event for me was **Miles Davis** and his work with **Herbie Hancock**. That took me to the synthesizer in 1970.

"It was then, after Hendrix, from 1970 – 73, that I listened to King Crimson a lot. **Robert Fripp** and **Brian Eno** influenced me greatly. I knew of course the work of **Steve Reich** and **Philip Glass**, but the way Fripp and Eno did it with a guitar and a very simple synthesizer was powerful for me. I didn't actually discover the German scene, with **Tangerine Dream** and so on, until late in the day. It was Robert Fripp who opened this door for me."

Pinhas cites, in particular, the tape looping innovations developed by Fripp and Eno for their 1973 album *No Pussyfooting*; towards the end of the decade, Fripp's girlfriend of the time coined the word **Frippertronics** to describe the technology. In the 1990s, Pinhas built on the Frippertronics template to make his own **Metatronics** system, which he describes as "an evolving looping technique, where older material within the loop fades out and is replaced with the newer material – rather than static loops that simply repeat indefinitely."

When the Metatronics kick in, listening to Pinhas is like listening to the universe. Yes, Fripp's influence can be heard, but the raw, free wheeling, in-the-moment viscerality resonates with Hendrix.

It would be fanciful also to ascribe Pinhas' countercultural politics, never more evident than on *Desolation Row, Welcome...In The Void* and *Tikkun*, to Hendrix's influence. But there are convergences. In the late 1960s, Pinhas studied philosophy under **Gilles Deleuze** at Paris' radical-intellectual hub, Sorbonne University, and joined other students on the barricades during the "days of rage" in Paris in May 1968. Hendrix figured large on the soundtrack for May 1968 and Pinhas' growing political awareness was bookended by some of the older guitarist's front-page activities. At the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, in an intuitively situationist moment, Hendrix set fire to his guitar on stage. At Woodstock in 1969, his subversive take on "The Star Spangled Banner" respun a tradition. Tellingly, Pinhas' first album, with Heldon in 1974, was titled *Electronique Guerilla*.

From 1974 – 1979, Pinhas recorded seven albums with Heldon and five more under his own name or with other line-ups. All have since been re-released by Cuneiform, with whom Pinhas has also recorded new music extensively over the last 25 years. In the mid 1980s, before hooking up with Washington D.C.-based **Cuneiform Records**, he took a break from music to work on a book about Deleuze, Nietzsche and music, *Les Larmes de Nietzsche: Deleuze et La Musique* (Flammarion, 2001), and later co-edited a second book, *Deleuze épars* (2005). Pinhas currently runs www.webdeleuze.com, a website dedicated to Deleuze, who died by suicide in 1995.

Pinhas returned to the studio to record 1992's *DWW*. Between then and 2013's *Desolation Row*, he released an average of almost one album a year, under his own name, with **Schizotrope** (his group with cyber-punk novelist **Maurice Dantec**) or in collaboration with other artists, often including laptop artist **Jerome Schmidt**. Nearly all of these new recordings were released world-wide by Cuneiform.

In a departure from his preference for instrumental rather than vocal music, in the 1990s Pinhas experimented with multimedia presentations using spoken word and film, with texts by notable 20th century visionaries and futurists, among them **Deleuze**, science fiction writers **Philip K. Dick** and **Norman Spinrad**, and French novelists **Maurice Dantec** and **Chloe Delaume**.

"Generally, I think the non-verbal is the most powerful form of communication," says Pinhas. "You get to the core of things that way. In 1968 everybody was involved in politics. So music, philosophy and politics were connected for me from an early age. Philosophy also is concerned with repetition, time, looping. The same concepts. I don't think there is such a difference in the message except that music perhaps goes further, deeper – it is more powerful. As **Neitzsche** said, because it does not rely on words and meanings."

Or as **Fela Kuti** famously said "Music is a weapon."

"I came to Fela Kuti late and I never saw him live," says Pinhas. "But he was right. 'Music is a weapon' is a great aphorism. Deleuze also said you can change the consciousness of people with music, that music can be a political instrument. It is certainly more effective to change thinking through music than to carry a gun and kill people."

2006 found Pinhas reuniting with some of his Heldon bandmates for *Metatron*. In 2008, Cuneiform released *Keio Line*, a collaboration between Pinhas and Japanese noise provocateur **Masami Akita** a.k.a. **Merzbow**. It was a beautiful if unruly marriage. Pinhas is not a noise artist, but he has found stimulation in the form. Merzbow is one of a "second circle" of supporting musicians on *Tikkun*, surrounding Pinhas and Ambarchi at the core.

The spirit of collaboration continued on 2010's *Metal/Crystal*, featuring Pinhas with some regular compatriots including Heldon and **Magma** alumni, and with substantial contributions from Merzbow and the Detroit, Michigan avant-noise power trio, **Wolf Eyes**. In 2011, Pinhas released two new duo albums with Merzbow on Cuneiform: *Rhizome* and the vinyl-only *Paris 2008*, which captured a live encounter between the duo.

2013's *Desolation Row* found Pinhas returning to the barricades, fired up by the corporate greed that caused Europe's and north America's early 21st century economic collapse. Pinhas was joined on the album by leading jazz, progressive rock, free improvisation and noise performers — **Oren Ambarchi**, **Lasse Marhaug**, **Etienne Jaumet**, **Noel Akchote**, **Eric Borelva**, and **Duncan Pinhas**, one of Pinhas' two sons.

For the past several years, Pinhas the musician/philosopher has given thought to, in his words, the "Devolution of mankind, civilization, Capitalism's devolution, and mainly the devolution of [human/biological] faculties related to the rise of machines". *Desolation Row*, a sonic protest against the rise of neoliberalism, the global economic crisis and rising social unrest, was the first chapter in what he calls his "**Devolution Trilogy**". In May 2014, Pinhas released the second chapter for this Trilogy: *Welcome In The Void*, a duo recording with Tatsuya Yoshida.

Simultaneously with *Welcome in the Void*, Pinhas released another duo recording, called *Tikkun*, this time with multi-instrumentalist Ambarchi on guitar and loops. Borelva and Duncan Pinhas would also return. But with *Tikkun*, Pinhas switches gears from *Welcome In The Void*, using his collaboration **Ambarchi** to take on new themes and sonic frontiers. Instead of focusing on the slow degradation of our society and faculties, *Tikkun* is almost a response to the Devolution Trilogy, and deals with repairing the world, the mind, and emotions brutally devastated by technology.