

# SPACE DEBRIS INTERVIEW and REVIEWS



Space Debris has just released a new live double LP and a live cassette. Phil Jackson caught up with Christian Jäger and the rest of the group for an update on this special kosmiches and rather progressively inclined improvisational quartet.



**AD** I see you have a new bass player- please tell!

**CHRISTIAN (drummer)** : Vroni Frisch is the new lady on the bass, she is lifting our niveau (level) once more; she is a friend of Winnie (the keyboard player- ed) , they studied music together the same time in Mainz/Germany. it's unbelievable how close the drumming- and bass-playing is working now!

**AD:** I have often wondered about bands like Space Debris- how you get gigs and whether you all have jobs as well. Can you offer some insights into the 'ordinary lives' of the band?

**CHRISTIAN:** Three of the members are earning their money with music professionally, but mostly with other projects than Space Debris because you can only earn the high costs of the vinyl-productions and other band-costs with SD. We have no gig-aquisition since 2001, we play, when somebody calls us.

**AD :** You and Tommy go back a long way. You must have a very special bond. Looking back over that time are any special memories you wish to share?

**CHRISTIAN:** Tommy is a very fine friend and we mostly agree not only on musical themes. We listen together to music and we meet each other as friends to talk and visit concerts or just drink a beer together. The theme "Mountain" was called so, because of a trip in the mountains (Alps) in 2006

**AD:** Over the history of Space Debris are there any pieces of music you are particularly proud of?

**CHRISTIAN:** Proud? I would call it: I'm a big fan of Space Debris music, my favorite is changing every year. I think, that our kind of music -improvised Hard/Psychedelic/Fusion - is very original and seldom, I don't know any other

band who has such output by working like SD with no rules...I'm proud of the fans and the free concept, which is very unique.

**AD:** In Winnie (who was not in the original band) you have found an exceptional keyboard player. Where did you find him?

**CHRISTIAN:** Winnie is playing now 10 years with SD, much longer than Tom Kunkel (the original keyboard player- ed) , and Winnie did 90% of our gigs and 70% of our LPs and CDs. I called Winnie, because the first organ player quit, and Winnie wanted to join, it was very easy and a big unbelievable luck for the band!

**AD :** What kinds of music do the group members like to listen to?

**CHRISTIAN:** You can see here in Detail, the favorite 7 LPs of each member:

<http://www.spacedebriprojekt.de/musiker.htm>

### **Tommy Gorny**

- 1 Genesis Lamb Lies Down On Broadway
2. Zappa: Fillmore East 1971
3. KingCrimson: Court Of The Crimson King
4. Deep Purple: Made In Japan
5. Pink Floyd: Dark Side Of The Moon
6. Hendrix: Band of Gypsies
7. Doors: The Doors

### **Winnie Rimbach-Sator**

1. The Mahavishnu Orchestra :The Inner Mounting Flame
2. Led Zeppelin: Houses Of The Holy
3. Avishai Cohen: Continuo
4. Joshua Redman: Elastic
5. Miles Davis: Kind Of Blue
6. Deep Purple: Made In Japan
7. Tigran Hamasyan: Arrata Rebirth - Red Hail

## **Vroni Frisch**

1. Aaron parkes: Invisible Cinema
2. Thundercat: Drunk
3. Bootsy Collins: Fresh Outta P University
4. Michael Jackson: Off The Wall
5. Laing: Wechselt die Beleuchtung
6. Red Hot Chili Peppers: One Hot Minute
7. Bob Curnow's L.A. Bigband: The Music of Pat Metheny & Lyle Mays

## **Christian Jäger**

- 1.Santana: Same
- 2.The Whoo: Live At Leeds
- 3.Jimi Hendrix: Electric Ladyland
4. Mahavishnu Orchestra: Inner Mounting Flame
- 5.Black Sabbath: Same
- 6.Zappa: Waka Yawaka
- 7.Tommy Bolin: Teaser Deluxe

**AD:** Have you any other recommendations of progressive/ space rock bands from your travels?

**CHRISTIAN:** For example: Weltraum, Lava 303, Guru Guru, Kraan, Ax Genrich, Baby Woodrose, Paisley Tree.

**AD:** Yes, I know most of them. We reviewed Paisley Tree, great album and 'Kraan Live' remains one of my vinyl favourites. Will you ever come to the UK?

**CHRISTIAN:** Yes, surely we would like it, if somebody calls!

**AD:** Wow, a cassette- 'Spacedelic Odyssey'! Why this medium?

**WINNIE RIMBACH-SATOR (keyboards):** Cassettes are awesome! While you're driving your van through the mud on a festival site in the summer, what could be better than to blast space rock from your trusty cassette deck through your speakers? For me, this is the feel-good medium of my childhood. Cassettes are almost indestructible and I've always wanted to have one of my own.

**AD** 'Interstellar Rex II' is nearly 14 minutes long and a sequel to 'Interstellar Rex' on the double LP perhaps. Here are my impressions (for our dear readers!) and some questions: Space Debris does 'light and shade' really well, it is multi-dimensional music, choppy organ chords, fuzz laden guitar, heavy bass, solid drum groove, Focus like in places, some killer riffs. I imagine the incredible lizard roaming the interstellar forests looking for prey then sustained organ and some nice guitar harmonics imply the Rex is having a contented rest after gorging his meal! Maybe some indigestion sets in with the wild climax to the number with fluid organ runs and some great guitar licks. You see what your music does to my mind! QUESTION: Are your pieces thematic? Is 'Interstellar Rex' really meant to depict a great lumbering beast or my senses just working overtime?

**TOMMY:** No, they don't (*I thought you would say that- Phil*)....if our music creates movies like that in your mind. things went the right way. German listeners talk about the effect of „Kopfkino“ while listening to Space Debris. „Kopfkino“ (cinema in head??) is the exact description of your impressions and visions while listening to our music. That's something, that makes me very proud, it's the most important thing to me in making music. Maybe my bandmates will agree. Johann Sebastian Bach said: "true music should be for the honour of God and the recreation of the soul" I'm not sure about God, but if we touch the souls of our audience or listeners this way it all turned out right.

**WINNIE:** When the recordings are done, then we (or to be exact: most of the time Christian) try to condense everything that happened into a name for the song. The difficult thing is to find a title that starts the imagination, and that doesn't limit it to a single story or interpretation. If this is what this song makes you see, then we totally endorse it! And. to make senses work overtime is the ultimate goal for instrumental music! If that is what's happening - great!!!



**WINNIE:** The pieces are thematic in the sense that we try to tune into the feeling of the moment. Nearly everything is freely and collectively improvised - but we don't plan stories ahead with words.

**AD:** Next on the tape comes 'Ur' which simmers rather than boils with the subtlest of synth playing, a brilliant climax and a Hendrix quote at the end, from 'Band of Gypsies' for sure. What are your main inspirations? Let's see if I can guess: Hendrix, Allmans, Focus, Doors (less so), how about Grateful Dead (I don't really hear it though!)

**CHRISTIAN:** Doesn't the hook-melody (keys) of the song 'Ur' sound a little like Uriah Heep?". Generally I could list now twenty-five bands, but I think every rock-fan knows all these bands who inspired us when we were young and in the end if you listen to Space Debris, there will be something new and different because we fit the ideas of four musicians together and the styles are sometimes from everywhere.



**TOMMY GORNY (guitar):** Yes, Hendrix, Blackmore, Townshend: my teachers. Townshend for being intelligent and creative but also aggressive and intense, enormous power play, Blackmore for a combination of finest melodic playing, strong riffs and a very moody style between maximum guitar work (Gates of Babylon, Rainbow) and pure rubbish and Hendrix always stays fascinating for this very free, detached playing. After fifty years hopefully everybody knows what I mean. And the bands you named: of course. Let me add Vanilla Fudge, Mountain, Ten Years After, Black Sabbath, Santana, King Crimson. You will find more than 1000 records in my collection and so I could name quite a lot of bands, I really love. but the influence on my playing in Space Debris bases mostly on the here named guitarists and bands. And not to forget: myself: the guitar player I became in the last four decades, influenced by those guys named here.

**AD:** 'Dump Diver' lets the rhythmic qualities of the band (Janni and Christian) shine through before flowing electric piano and an idiosyncratically funky synth break and an outrageous guitar/ synth/ piano question answer intervenes and there is a cheeky return to a Hendrix riff. The title track has a formidable drum groove, shimmering electric piano, guitar right up the fretboard and a nice mellow coda to finish. 'Into the Hall' has an Allmans like start, rhythmic, danceable (Yes!!), a solid backbeat and a frenzied ending. Hendrix is definitely on the radar again. **QUESTIONS:** The tape and double LP are both live- this is

your preferred medium of working. Do you think of trying a more studio based approach with less improvisation and more structure?

**CHRISTIAN:** The Concert with the song Dump Diver ("Spacedelic Odyssey") is with Janni on bass guitar we just made a studio double LP "Back To Universe" in 2017 as you might know and you can listen there to totally improvised music, too, because we never 'write' songs.

**AD:** The record is a treasure- vielen dank! 'Transhuman' sounds a little like Radiohead just briefly before catapulting back into 70s classic rock. Do you have modern influences or is Space Debris very much focused on the seventies?

**WINNIE:** All of us play with different bands through all genres from Irish Folk to Hip-hop or Electro-Pop. We agreed on a common musical language for Space Debris but none of us can unlearn our influences. And the good thing is that we don't have to! Space Debris uses the approach of 70s Jam Bands and (mostly) the sounds of the era, but we don't exclude good ideas from other times and 'worlds'. For me as keyboardist for example, I sometimes like to take a polyrhythmic pattern and loop it for as long as it feels right and alter the sound, rather than to constantly change the notes. This is of course not a new idea, but I personally know it better from electronic music or indie pop than from 70s era bands. And while minimal house or dubstep artists would use a synth or a sample, I use a filtered, distorted Hammond. So that's the idea. We go out into the world shopping for spices, and then we come home and cook our own meals with them. On the other hand though, 70s classic rock is the main ingredient and this will always stay true.

**TOMMY:** Less modern influences. Fifteen years ago Christian said, there's some Rammstein in my style...I'm not really sure about that!

**CHRISTIAN:** Tommy, this was only in the song 'Second Sight' and more a joke, because you liked this terrible stuff as we recorded this song, and I think you can still hear some Rammstein-emotions between if you listen to the guitar riffs in this song.

**AD:** The mighty 'Interstellar Rex' starts with a classic heavy rock riff but there are a lot of subtle variations within it. Do you guys ever listen to jazz? Who comes up with the ideas anyway?

**VRONI FRISCH (bass):** Yes, we listen to Jazz music, and some of us play in jazz bands. Apart from various jazz styles it is improvisation and variation that are the connecting elements that basically define Space Debris. Every band member is equal and we aim at creating a piece of art together. As each song is created live on stage it is crucial to each of us to first listen to our fellow band



members and then to decide in the very moment: Will I join in? Will I accompany? Will I leave space? Will I deliberately play something contrary? Of course, each instrument has a certain basic function in the band though each band member has the freedom to join a part as he or she feels and as how to best serve the music. It is important to have some confidence in one's own musical abilities but also in the abilities of one's fellow musicians. Everyone can share an idea or support

the idea of another band member. This is how we ideally inspire each other during a moment of live music.

**TOMMY:** The ideas come along the way, Veronika described it. It helps to feel a little bored quickly, when you play so you always search for a change in every beat, a small variation so that stuff arises from somewhere within. It also helps to think that the audience might be bored from your playing. That keeps you aware of the things happening and develop them further. After a while the playing gets more subconscious. The band starts floating...than things become magical, the „flow“ takes control. The state, every real artist searches for. The

reason for all human art, I believe.



**AD:** 'Mountain Ultimate' is an amazing piece, definitely Hendrix influenced at the start- sorry I keep saying this-a mind boggling question answer between guitar and organ, that tight rhythm section expansive when it feels it needs to be. Winnie has a colorful palette of organ sounds and refined technique- he knows when to do the simple thing like hold onto a note and when the spirit takes him to go onto

a run! As a keyboard player myself I am a bit fussy but he is right up there in my estimation. I thought I was listening to Keith Emerson for a few moments during 'Mountain Ultimate'. It must be great working with such musicians?

**CHRISTIAN:** It's a dream to play with such fine musicians like Winnie, he is a wonder of all styles! And of course also with Vroni and Tommy! I'm a big fan of my band-members. To say it a little bit too simple: Winnie and Vroni are knowing more how to play Jazz and Tommy and me more how to play hard rock! That's the reason why the result is like it is.

**WINNIE:** Thanks for the compliment! Less is more and sometimes more is more. And everything is nothing and the other way around. And if you can say what you want to say with a single note or no note at all, then you're there!

**TOMMY:** More than great. It's an honour. Vroni for me is Space Debris' Tal Wilkenfeld, and there's no doubt, that she's one of the finest bass players in Germany. She's very aware of the musicians surrounding her, has a large variety of styles and a great technique All that can also be said about Winnie and his keyboard playing, except being Tal Wilkenfeld. The playing and the ideas of both of them are always fresh, new somehow and completely unexpected, without drifting in some boring „virtuoso“-stuff, always playing in the band and for the band. Christian and I were playing in various Space Debris-constellations now for nearly 20 Years. He's always creative in everything, in drumming, creating the incredible covers, the sound-work. We share a large variety of bands and musicians, we both loved for our whole life. I was lucky with nearly all drummers I played with in life, but he's the finest, the drummer with the largest range in style and creativity.

**AD:** I think we have given our readers a good flavour of what Space Debris is about and I urge them to check you out on Bandcamp and please keep buying records- it is what keeps our beloved 'industry' going! So what does the future hold for Space Debris and is there anything else you would like to say?

**CHRISTIAN:** In November we will offer a deluxe-version of the 2013-'She's A Temple' double LP (Great news!) and I've just found some amazing recordings from 2006/2007 and just mastered the 2012 live concert at 'Freak Valley Festival', these are the next activities. Big Thanx to you Phil, for interviewing us!



And greetings to your readers! Please correct our bad wording here, because we are krauts...;-)

**AD:** No worries, Christian your English is excellent, much better than my German for sure despite having studied the language! I do hope those of our readers who haven't checked out your music will do so and support the cause. Thanks to you and the other band members for offering such great insights- it was very interesting to hear what they had to say and, finally, all the very best for the future.