

THE RISE, FALL AND RISE OF WORM

TOM TEELEY

Here's a little bit of back story on my album WORM. Over the years I've written a lot of different kinds of music: songs in all sorts of styles, music for the piano, guitar, etc.

Back in 1983, I was signed as a solo artist to the then-great A&M records, and I recorded an album called Tales of Glamour and Distress. I remember my trips out to the compound style A&M lot on La Brea in Hollywood. What I noticed first was the giant billboard of the hot new wonder boy Bryan Adams, and it was clear to me that his record was going to get the big push from the label, in my mind he was my competition ... competition for that slot as sort of the new male artist in the roster, and that he had apparently already won round 1. Needless to say, his record took off big-time, and he became a huge act worldwide, and my record, although well reviewed, barely made a dent in the music world. I blamed lots of factors, like Bryan Adams, the Reagan Administration, but today I know that the record not breaking was actually my own doing, in that I decided that I would not go out to perform and promote the release, which was a prerequisite to getting buzz and airplay. I remember fancying myself more like a Steely Dan act [hey, they never play live ... so I don't need to either!]

I did record another album with the label after Tales came and went, but that never got completed, and subsequently the plug was pulled on the project, which suffered from mismanagement, a terrible producer, misappropriation of budget funds by said producer, etc. ... and by mid-1985, I was once again a singer/songwriter without a deal or label.

After that tire blew out under my career, I continued writing and recording material out of my home studio, and starting working with other artists as a touring and recording guitarist through the rest of the 80s and 90s.

Which brings me to the mid 90's — and the album that I call WORM. By 1996 I'd recorded a lot of material in my studio that I tried to get other recording deals going, but had no success. Most of these songs were cut from the same cloth as what I'd done in the early 80s: pop/rock songs with usually a little twist thrown in. [I still plan on exhuming some of these tracks and doing a refurb on the best ones ... cuz I still like 'em.]

The music from WORM I started working on after coming across a reel-to-reel demo I had done in 1973 of a piece of music inspired entirely by my fixation of the day: Mahavishnu Orchestra, with the great John McLaughlin at the helm. This little demo I'd done so many years earlier completely surprised me with its dark, complex swirling chords, and wicked harmonies. I quickly got to work on it as a new piece, a ferocious alternative rock tirade, with as many Mahavishnu nods as I could find space for. I felt

like I had found my own unique niche, and I tried to push the envelope of intensity and complexity as far as I could.

Animals is what that first track ended up being called, and I consider it the cornerstone of the **WORM** music. Another song, **Seventh Heaven**, also was written around a complicated piano piece of mine from 1974. Over the next couple of years I continued working on this collection, and kept strictly within the stylistic frame of dark, loud, sinister, and harmonically deep music. At the time I started recording **WORM**, I had fortunately upgraded to a digital 8-track format called ADAT, moving up from funky old 4-track reel-to-reel, which was my standard previously. When I considered the project completed, I began to take it around and got a lot of great reaction as well as some raised eyebrows and confused looks, and, as usual, with anything that is at all different, the question of where something like **WORM** fit into the marketplace sent most of the record biz wieners running for the hills. My great pal Cliff Cultreri, founder of Relativity Records [home to some of the great latter day guitar wizards] became a champion of my project and I will always be grateful to him for that. **WORM** in that original incarnation came close to finding its home and release on one of the aforementioned guitar hero's fledgling indie labels, but by mysterious happenstance I found myself once again surprised by this deal coming apart in spite of this great guitarist's unforgettable comment to me, that this work of mine was so fantastic, it made him feel like 'giving up music.'

I put the album on the shelf at that point in 2001 where it has remained dormant for this last decade.

After a musical hiatus from actively writing, I started considering over this last year the idea of producing some new music and songs for a new album to market and put out myself on the web, and I started preliminary recordings with that intention. But over this last summer of 2010, I went back and gave a listen to the **WORM** music after a long break from hearing it. I realized that there was still nothing else that I've heard over the last fourteen years that sounds anything like it, and it also seemed that the apocalyptic sound of the words and music seemed perfect for the moment we're in today.

So I decided that before I can complete or put out anything new, **WORM** must have its due. A refurb and some remixes would be in order for a good portion of it, to bring it up to today's standards, so after dumping the tracks and re-syncing them, I have remixed, remastered and brought life back to my **WORM** project and it is now available at [iTunes](#) and [CDBaby](#) ([click here](#) to listen to some short samples). I guess that makes it my followup to [Tales!](#)

What I like most about this music is that it represents over 37 years of a musical process [!@%\$, that makes me sound old] from my first demo to remixes and completion. That represents a lot of changing tides, an arc of my lifetime in those tracks, and I really really like that.