

Trash Records Dot Org
Annual Report #0
Prospectus/Retrospectus



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Trash Records 1997-...
The History of an Experiment
Conducted by the Blind

Trash Records is old... far older than it has any right to be... far older than anyone who was ever involved in it should have expected.

Trash Records is a fiction. It was never a record company or anything resembling one. It was a fun and imaginative fiction that provided a name and collective identity under which, what was always a small group of people, released music (then music, video, writing, visual art, etc.). But as far as fictions go, it has been as long-lived and fruitful as I could ever have had any right to hope that it would be.

There were, of course, periods where I had higher and lower hopes for the fiction known as Trash Records and the various groups of people who gathered around that banner at one time or another. At certain points it felt like we could do anything... at others, nothing at all; and at a few of those moments I very nearly deleted our whole little world.

Trash Records began in 1998 as a name under which I released CDs by my band, Dumbass. This little fiction had its own geocities website. Everything grew from that. The rest, as they say, is history.

But what is history? An account of a set of relations, a narrative of a sequence of events... a story. How do you tell the history of a fiction? In this fictitious electronic world there hardly seems a point.

I think, if my memory serves me correctly, it was in 1999 or late 1998 that we put up our first MP3s for downloading. What I am certain about is that we only had enough storage space in our web-account for 3 (of extremely low quality). We still sold CDs for a number of years after that, but it was a start. We uploaded more to MP3.com (when did that come around? 98? 99?). As storage and bandwidth became more and more accessible we put more and more music up for downloading.

The idea of giving away our music for free was exciting and liberating for us... none of us thought we were going to make money at this anyways... we lost money for every CD we sold... and the ability to spread our music around to people for free was a great boon that served our ideals. (I will add that, when Radiohead released their "free" album in 2007 and the media spoke as if they were the first people on the planet to do this, we, and I'm sure other independent musicians around the world grumbled and bitched about dates like 1998.)

The internet, in those early years of Trash Records, was an exciting proposition. Indeed, the internet was an exiting place in the late 90s and early 2000s. We would go on a postering spree all over the local university campus, community colleges, and telephone poles downtown, and I would watch the page views spike over the following few days. When we released an album it was extremely satisfying to know that a couple hundred people downloaded it. In the early 2000s I was fortunate enough to participate in Herr K, a trans-national musical collaboration between Europe, South America, and North America. It seemed like the possibilities of the electronic world were limitless. But I already had concerns that they might be limiting as well.



[Banner Circa 2000]

Likewise, later, when Myspace first arose it was an exciting proposition. In the early days we encountered some great bands, chatted with them, and listened to their music as they listened to ours. We chatted back and forth about newly uploaded songs... but then the glut rose.

There is, in this internet world, a massive glut of information. It's no longer just a matter of determining the signal from the noise; certainly, there is a lot more noise out there now, but perhaps even more importantly, there is a massive and overwhelming overabundance of signals.

When we released the first Dumbass album on hand-dubbed cassette tape in 1996 we sold a decent number of copies. People were impressed: "Wow," they'd say, "you made your own records." Our first CD was, likewise, a feat that impressed.

10 years later no one was even interested in listening to our latest releases... they all had bands themselves. They wanted you to buy *their* CD or download *their* songs, and they were not particularly interested in even pretending to have a reciprocal interest in your music.

In the 90s we bought the tapes and CDs of our fellow bands. The number of other bands we met was small and the feeling of mutual support and solidarity was palpable. I'll always remember bands like Hollow Earth, Like Liquorice, and, especially, Typhus (whose drummer filled in for Dumbass, giving up his own time just to help us out when our own drummer quit on us.)

I don't think I have a sense of when it began to change, but I do remember coming into work with a new album (a stack of shiny CDs) and encountered 4 people who expressed no interest ("What sort of music is it?... Experimental?... No... I don't really like that... But..."), but told me that they'd bring in their albums for me to buy ("I'm not into that... but *you'd* love *my* album... it's *really* good.").

Suddenly bands were like assholes... everyone had one and they all stink (except for mine... *of course*).

Myspace went the same way. The personal connections between bands who listened to each other's work and communicated dried up. It turned into a strange and inhuman place of sheer numbers. Every time I logged in there were countless scores of "friend requests" from bands who were not listening to our music, they just wanted the #s of "friends."

And just as the early communication was reciprocal, so too was this lack of communication. The requests came in such large numbers that there was no way we could listen to them. Myspace became an economy where everyone was a producer and no one was a consumer. Such an economy is manifestly unsustainable. Myspace was over for us (and for many, many others as well).

The internet has provided a fantastic way to distribute media cheaply and broadly, but it has created a new problem... how to cut through the glut? How do we make our signal discernable over the noise, and, even more

importantly, how do we make it discernable amongst all of the myriad other signals? For, to say that *my* message is signal and the rest is noise is a ridiculous presumption.

The question is a difficult one... How do I get my art out there to the people who might enjoy it? It is manifestly more difficult when there are millions upon millions of others trying to do the same thing.

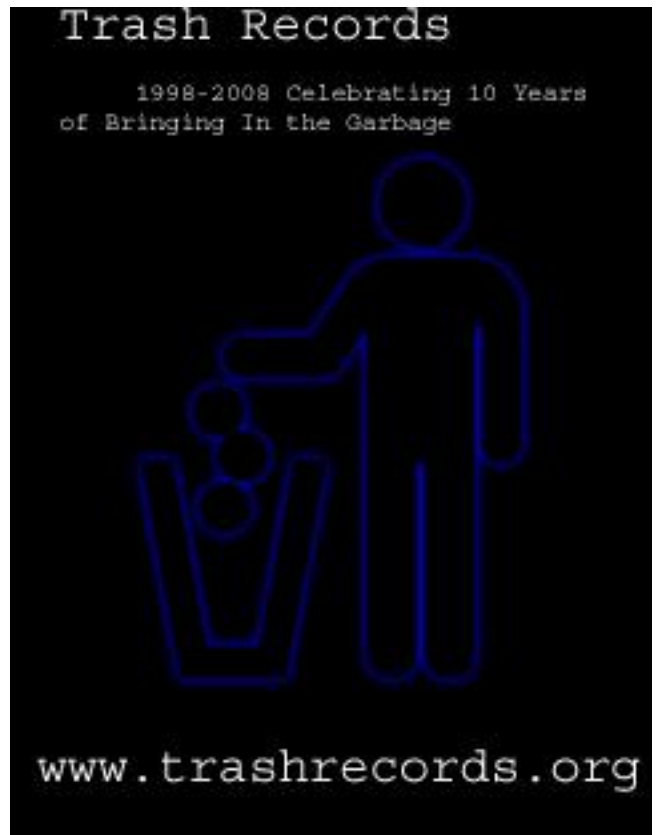
Is this just an out-dated, aristocratic fear of democracy in art that I am displaying here? Is it a fear of competition?

No, it's merely a reality.

Thinking about it in economic terms helps: It's harder to sell potatoes when there are a million other people at the market who each have a heaping pile of potatoes to sell. It's a reality of the media economy of our day (and it is an economy even if, like us, you are giving it away for free).

And yet, of course, yes, it is also an out-dated emotional response.

The reality is no less a fact, but I will admit that I do miss those days when there were far fewer potato farmers. One does feel that potato selling is somehow a bit less special with spud hawkers on every corner. And when a glut in the market drives the price of potatoes down, it's hard not to feel like the venerable potato has somehow been cheapened. This is not an easy thing to admit (though it should hardly be news that artists want to feel like their work is special), but even the history of fictions can uncover a truth or two.



[Poster, 2008]

There are, of course, a number of ways to approach the problem of getting your art out there to the people who might enjoy it. It's difficult to cut through the glut, but not impossible. A problem for us, however, lies in the fact that we are all older now. With jobs taking up much larger parts of our daily lives than they did in our 20's, pursuing time-intensive strategies can only be done to a very limited extent.

At the end of the day, after all of these years, I still enjoy making art. And, as frustrating and sometimes depressing as developments in the world of independent media production and distribution are for me at times, I don't see any reason to stop. I'd still be making music if no one listened to it. And if a very few people do listen, that makes me happy. I also have the privilege of still being able to work with fantastic, talented people and to enjoy the art that they make on their own.

My hopes and expectations for what can be done with the internet are certainly more modest than they have been in the past, but I'm willing to use it as a tool for whatever I can. I'm hampered by my lack of free time to devote to this (there is a new Dumbass album in the works, but it is progressing sloooooowly... I work on it when I have a moment here and there... how much less time will I spend on maintaining our twitter feed or putting up posters around town); but we're still doing things.

I've taken to thinking of Trash Records as a project-by-project entity... rather than the constant, daily, going concern that it was in the early 00s. This is a new phase in the life of this fiction, hence the retrospective mood that has come over me here.

It's been a long and strange experiment. We never really knew what we were doing or where it was going. We had hypotheses... ideas about what we were doing and were going to do, but, in reality, we were flying blind the whole time.

There was a fantastic period where we reached the height of our creative output and our circles were wide and varied. We released music, produced a web-zine (remember that idea?), had an online art gallery, produced DVDs, supported music from flamenco to death metal, and I loved it. But it was hard to maintain. The online art gallery featured work from myself, Fixer, and a handful of college art students, but without the time to constantly solicit new work from people (and to find new blood to replace people who dropped off the map) the gallery dried up. The "Trash Records Press" went the same way. We published poetry, short stories, comics, editorials from journalism students, and discussion pieces, but again, without the time to solicit new work and find new people, the press dried up. I tried to find people to act as editors for the press and gallery, to take over this function, but nothing panned out.



The music roster, once huge, has likewise shrunk. It once included: Dumbass, YPC, Vates Mortis, Pin, Triceratops, Dr. Roboto & The Hardcore Crisis, Mr. Spooky & The Mr. Spooky Band, Thorax, IMD, and bands that were friends and affiliates that we linked to like Herr K, Like Licorice, and Dos Amores. There were also countless other projects that we started that never completed releases... many weird and wild combinations of the same people, bizarre ideas, strange characters, combinations of real people and strange and beautiful fictions. Sadly, I'm sure I've forgotten some of them here. Some bands broke up, some people lost touch, some projects reached the end of their natural creative lives, side projects played out and lost their excitement, etc. etc. etc... It's all history now.

Some projects live on though.

2014 has already seen the long delayed release of YPC's magnificent album "A Place for Everything," an album that I absolutely love from a dear friend who is a master of the instrumental soundscape.

There will be new Pin releases in 2014.

I have another Zeke Mason solo album in the works that I may get finished this year.

YPC have more completed material that I would like to help see the light of day by the end of the year and there is new material being created.



And I would love to finally here the long-awaited Dr. Roboto album: "Dr. Roboto & The Hardcore Crisis Get Drunk."

Finally, Dumbass is working on new music... ambitious music...and I'm very pleased with it. But the going is slow. I'd like to get a portion finished and out by the end of the year but that may not happen. In the meantime though, we're going to make some music available that has never seen a web-release. We're going to upload

various things as the year progresses, starting with an album called “The Execution of Random Actions,” which only ever saw a CD release.

We’ve entered a new phase in the life of this fiction called Trash Records, but at the most basic level, we’re still going to be doing what we’ve always done: making art and putting it out there, adding more noise to the signal, more garbage to the ever-growing pile that is the world of contemporary independent art.

This may sound resigned and a bit glum and grim overall, and I don’t want to end this reflection without disabusing you of that picture. My hopes and expectations for the internet are certainly more modest than they were 16 years ago. But their shrinking occurred many years ago now. In fact, I’m more optimistic now than I have been in the past 7 or 8 years or so. There are people out there doing interesting things right now, particularly people younger than us, people in their early 20’s with the kind of enthusiasm we had back in our early 20’s... back in the early years.

This comes after a number of years of suffocating nothingness (or so it seems). The 2000’s were a terrible decade, particularly for music, where elevator music, in all its splendid variety from beige to taupe, reigned supreme. For years I longed for the inevitable reaction against the prevailing stultifying banality, but it took a long time. About 3 years ago though, I started to notice interesting things popping up. Then, suddenly... a sea change.

It’s incredibly exciting and invigorating. I’ve heard more interesting and exciting new bands in the last 2 years than I heard in the entire 10 years that preceded them. Some are made up of people of our generation (in their mid-30s now), but many are younger, in their early 20s and hungry like we were back then... full of promethean hubris and staring into the boundless.



There are moments when I wish I was starting Trash Records now, with the energy and free time I had back then. There were many times when we felt like a voice in the wilderness. It was hard to find people out there interested in arty, experimental, noisy music. Now, however, there seems to be a great burgeoning of noise, experiment, and yes, art. If we were 20 now, starting Trash Records... so many potential listeners... so many potential comrades...

But, of course... I am aware of the contrariety of my feelings. These are paradoxical feelings, but then we are paradoxical creatures. I grumble about too many cooks but envy the bustling kitchen. I wouldn’t trade the Trash Records story for another, but I do envy those starting now... Many truths from this fiction... I’m excited but also a bit jealous. I’m pessimistic and optimistic at the same time. I’m frustrating with the market but still satisfied with the job. I want as many people was possible to experience our art, but I’d still make it if no one did. I’m a confused ball of contradictions, as is our world.

The experiment continues.

The ship sails on.

The crew is blind and drunk, but still it sails on.

ZM,
2014

Dumbass: Past, Present, & Future

Dumbass too is old. It's an old band... older than Trash Records by several years. Dumbass started sometime in early 1994... twenty years ago now. Dumbass has had countless members, made days worth of music, presented many faces to the world, etc. etc. etc.

We started out with me, a guitar, my friend Jeff, and a collection of buckets and paint cans that he banged on with two very large screwdrivers. Our early recordings were made on thrift-store tape recorders, making sound on sound recordings by linking 3 decks together using an RCA y-cable that I got from a broken motorcycle helmet intercom at work (we used headphones plugged into the microphone jacks as mikes).

We have been, for most of the life of the band, an "experimental" project. We certainly started that way, and we are deep into another experimental phase at the moment, but there have also been times where we utilized the skills we developed through experiment to express certain ideas

without at the same time, working on new experiments. This is why I like to refer to Dumbass as primarily an "expressionist" band. We are *often* experimental – pushing ourselves into new creative territory, experimenting with technique, with the creative process, with ourselves – but we are *always* expressive, and, particularly, expressionist.

Our most important influences (though perhaps not the most obvious sonically) were artists like Bowie and Pink Floyd as well as Skinny Puppy and pre-thrash Ministry (these last two are easier to hear). Nearly every Dumbass album has been a concept album; we come up with an ideal (usually a philosophical discussion or exploration) and then try to express it sonically. This makes for a catalogue that varies widely as far as sound, feel, and even musical genre goes.



We've broken into scrap yards in the middle of the night with a portable tape recorder, made recordings high up in the mountains, hours and hours of driving away from civilization. We re-wired old computers and bashed drum kits. We programmed synthesizers and recorded raging rivers.

The most important moment in Dumbass' history occurred sometime in 2000 when Fixer joined the band. There have been more people in this band than I remember, but the band has been Fixer and I since 2000 or 2001 with a small number of people coming and going since then.

We are currently working on new material. It's a big project, and I think it's very good. But it's slow going. We're being very careful with it, and, unfortunately, we don't have much free time to work on it. *And* we live hundreds of miles away from each other at the moment. But the new material is progressing, in slow, meticulous little bits. This is an experimental project, and we are pushing ourselves hard. Central themes are difficulty and distance, which we are artificially *enhancing* rather than trying to alleviate and overcome. I hope we will have something to release by the end of the year, but

no promises.

In the meantime, as I mentioned in the Trash Records retrospective, we are going to upload some material that never saw a web release. The first thing will be *The Execution of Random Actions*, in which we explored the notion that human beings are no more able to be truly random than computers. We began each recording session with no pre-decided ideas or plans. We tried to do things randomly:

“I’ll record some drums.”

“I’ll record some bass.”

“I’ll chop up what you just recorded.”

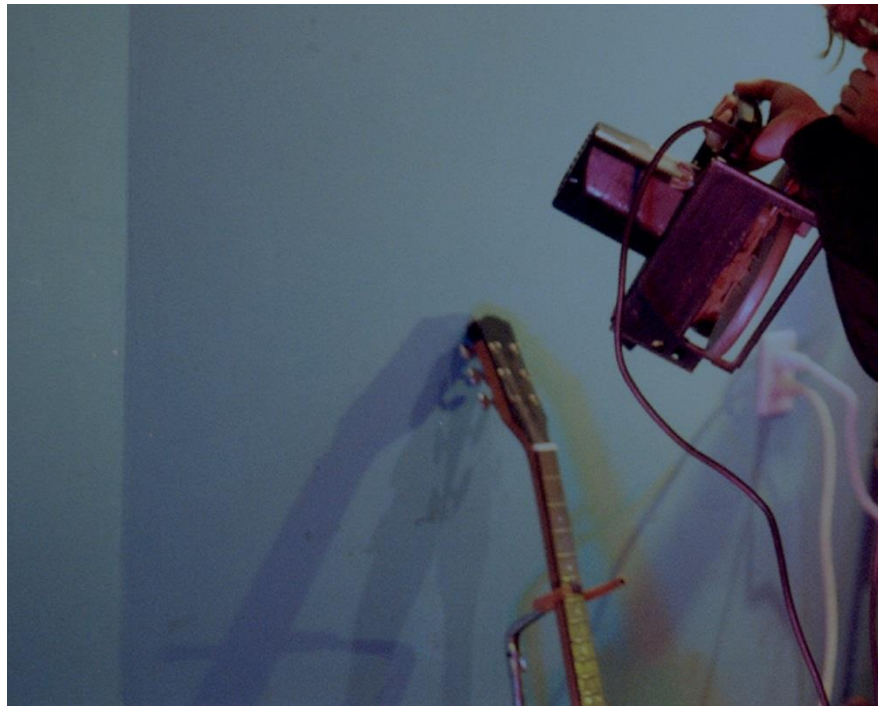
“I’ll chop up what you recorded a week ago.”

“I’ll slow this down.”

“I’ll delete the guitar.”

Etc. etc. etc.

We plugged instruments in or miked them up and just pressed “record.” Lyrics were written the same way: I would randomly decide to lay down a vocal. Sometimes I would open my notebook and just write whatever came out, sometimes I would decide to edit this or that text, sometimes I would just stand at the mike and make it up on the spot. At one point I flipped through my notebook, reading lines and words from songs from previous albums at random. And yet...



And yet, it’s all strangely musical. And yet, lyrical themes developed (a series of song texts that revolve around the seasons, for instance). Random things should surprise you... what surprised us was just how un-random it all sounded. We had an inkling that this is how it would turn out, but not the extent (did this inkling affect the outcome?).

I like this album a lot, but it got a bit lost between the bigger projects that preceded and succeeded it. It’s nice then to put it out now where it can breathe a bit more.



This is a noisy album, it’s sonically harsh at times, but it has, I think, a strangely deep musicality to it that I have a hard time explaining (a result, no doubt, of the “random actions” forcing our musical subconscious, instincts, muscle-memory, etc. to take the wheel as our conscious planning-minds tried to forsake the driver’s seat). It’s also a lively and, I would say, again, strangely joyous album.

Look for it in May.

And look for updates on the new project as it progresses.

ZM

YPC Q&A

YPC are back with a new album, *A Place for Everything*, a compelling and engrossing suite of instrumental soundscapes is available for free download now from:

www.trashrecords.org/ypc

Download it, watch the video, and stay tuned for more news on further releases. In the meantime, here is a brief Q&A with YPC:

Q: It's been a long time since the first YPC album. Are you working on new material at the moment?

A: Off and on, although more off than on, lately. My day job is actually a night job, and it gets tough to think or be creative when your brain and body are going directly against what should be happening. Sleeping during the day and never seeing the sun kinda fucks with your rhythms...



Q: I understand that there is another completed album ready to go called Total Information Awareness. Will you put that out later this year?

A: There is. Like *A Place For Everything*, it's an old album that was never really released to the general public. It was one of those things that I made and then just kinda hoarded out of... I dunno... anything from procrastination to insecurity. Total Information Awareness will be getting a few tweaks in the next little while, but should be out by summer.

Q: *A Place for Everything* feels really unified, can you describe the album as a whole for people who are not familiar with your music?

A: Well, since it was my first album in a studio setting (The Freeware Years was all done with, yes, free music making programs I'd found, like Buzz, Hammerhead, etc.), Zeke Mason produced it and helped me along with the process. For example,

he decided we should record drum samples for me, but not traditional drums. So a kick drum was a Doc Marten boot getting hit with a drumstick and tuned down, a snare was made from TV static, and so on. I still have those samples somewhere, I should dig them up, see if I can modify them and reuse them...



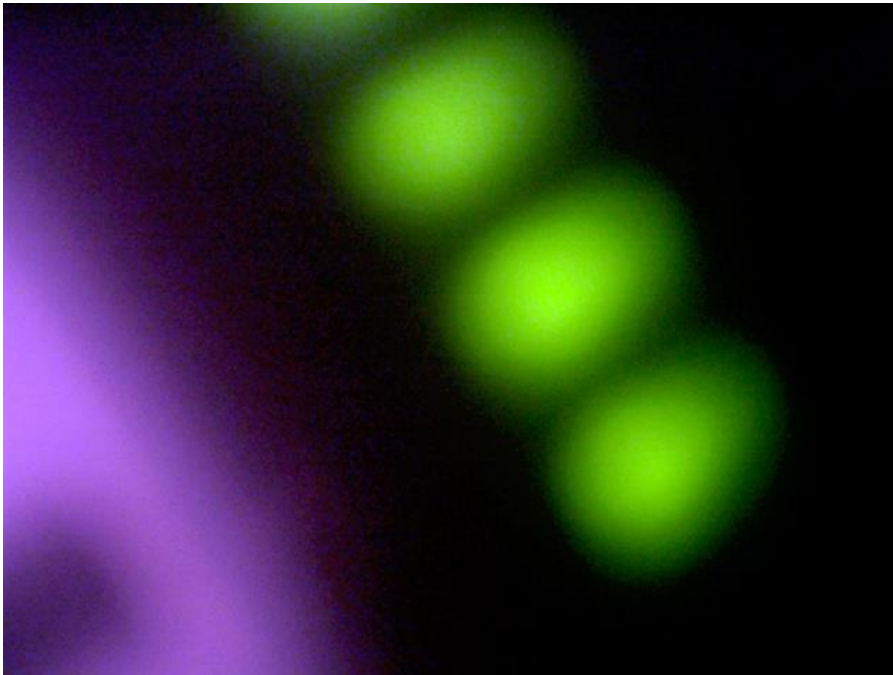
Q: How was the recording process for this album? Can you describe your approach to creating these songs?

A: The process was entirely experimental! I think I joined Dumbass about a year before doing this album, and prior to that my music experience was a couple piano lessons when I was under 10 and playing saxophone in elementary school band. I kept the sax up a bit here and there, and it showed up on some of the later Dumbass albums, but it was later stolen by a degenerate pervert named Johnny Devious, a member of the infamous Mr Spooky Band. Never forgave him for that..

Anyway, when I joined Dumbass at Zeke's request it was to play guitar. I told him I didn't know how, to which his reply was "It's okay, I'll teach you what you need to know!". So when I sat down to start making APFE it was a totally clean slate. I hadn't written anything, there were no plans, I just wanted to make a thing. It was an experiment in guitar, in sampling, in noise... Zeke was there with suggestions the whole time, edits, ideas for sounds, and he played some keyboard (at one point, on track 4- "Shattered", they aren't named anywhere but on my computer- we're playing the same keyboard at the same time!). So it was just a big... fun thing to try and do, and when it was done I was really proud of it.

Q: The tagline: "Soundtracks for films that don't exist" has been associated with YPC since the early days and seems incredibly apt. When writing do you think in terms of soundscapes, or moods, or narratives?

A: I didn't at the start. Like I said, I was just trying to experiment with sounds. But I've always been a lover of cinema, and directed a few short films in film school. I used a lot of my own music in them. I've always loved a well made music video, like what Rammstein have done, or some Queens of the Stone Age, or Depeche Mode. They kind of flip the idea, making a visual-track to fit the song instead of a soundtrack. Music can make or break a movie. Look at "The Devil's Rejects", Rob Zombie obviously has good taste in music, but he was so haphazard in placing it in the movie, with the exception of the gorgeous end credit sequence with Terry Reid's "Seed of Memory" playing.



Q: Does Total Information Awareness differ a lot from A Place for Everything?

A: Yes. I had Zeke Mason producing again, and playing guitar, some vocals, etc. on it, but this time it was mostly programmed beforehand, exported, and the audio files brought into the studio for the extra tracks to be layered on.

Q: When was the last time you listened to The Freeware Years?

A: Oh man, every year or so I'll drag a couple songs out! It's very primitive, compared to later stuff, and especially compared to what we were doing in Dumbass! I'd call it "grade 2" to Dumbass's "University"!


Q: If you were to make a video for one of your own songs how would you approach it?

A: It would have to be entirely visual! There's no lyrics to tell a story, so I'd have to rely on the visual element for any kind of narrative, if I wanted one... The Nine Inch Nails video for their song "Help Me I Am In Hell" is a good example of matching the mood of an instrumental.

Q: How do you see the overall trajectory of your work? What will people see when they have 3 albums and maybe even some new material on top of that?

A: I'm not exactly sure. I'm hoping to get some new stuff off the ground soon. I've had good response from music I've done for the movie "Easter Bunny Bloodbath" and web-series "Hibachi In The Rain", and I wouldn't mind doing more film-score work. I'm hoping to get to do some work with Christopher Henderson of Vancouver band Ultravillian sometime soon, I want to get him to record some vocals for me, but he'll be busy with his own stuff for the near future, I think!

I would very much like to get a week to record just WHATEVER with Zeke Mason, it's been far too long since we worked together. Looks like a trip to the passport office is in order. I just hope I don't get flagged at customs for my association with Mr Spooky and his pack of filth-mongers. Talented as they are, they still scare me...



YPC
A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

YPC
a place for everything

DOWNLOAD IT NOW FOR FREE

@

WWW.TRASHRECORDS.ORG

Current and Upcoming Releases:

YPC – *A Place for Everything* [Current]
YPC – *Total Information Awareness* [Upcoming]



Dumbass – *God's Garden* [Current]
Dumbass – *The Execution of Random Actions* [Upcoming]



Pin – *Product #8* [Current]
Pin – *Tack* [Single, Upcoming]
Pin – *Needle* [Single, upcoming]
Pin – *Single-Produced-for-Electronic-Download-Enjoyment* [Upcoming]



The Idiots' Club – Debut single this summer/fall

Misopogon – Debut single this summer/fall

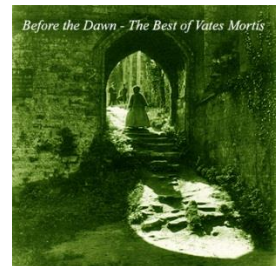


Zeke Mason – *Improbable and Certain* [Current]
Zeke Mason – New material this summer/fall



Mr. Spooky & The Mr. Spooky Band – *Knob* [Current]

Vates Mortis – *Before the Dawn... the Best of Vates Mortis* [Current]



Dr. Roboto & The Hardcore Crisis – *Dr. Roboto & The Hardcore Crisis Get Drunk* [??]

Trash Records Poster Gallery

And finally, for no reason other than sheer nostalgia for us, here is a gallery of old Trash Records posters. ...Enjoy!

Trash Records

1998-2008 - Celebrating 10 Years
of Bringing the Garbage In



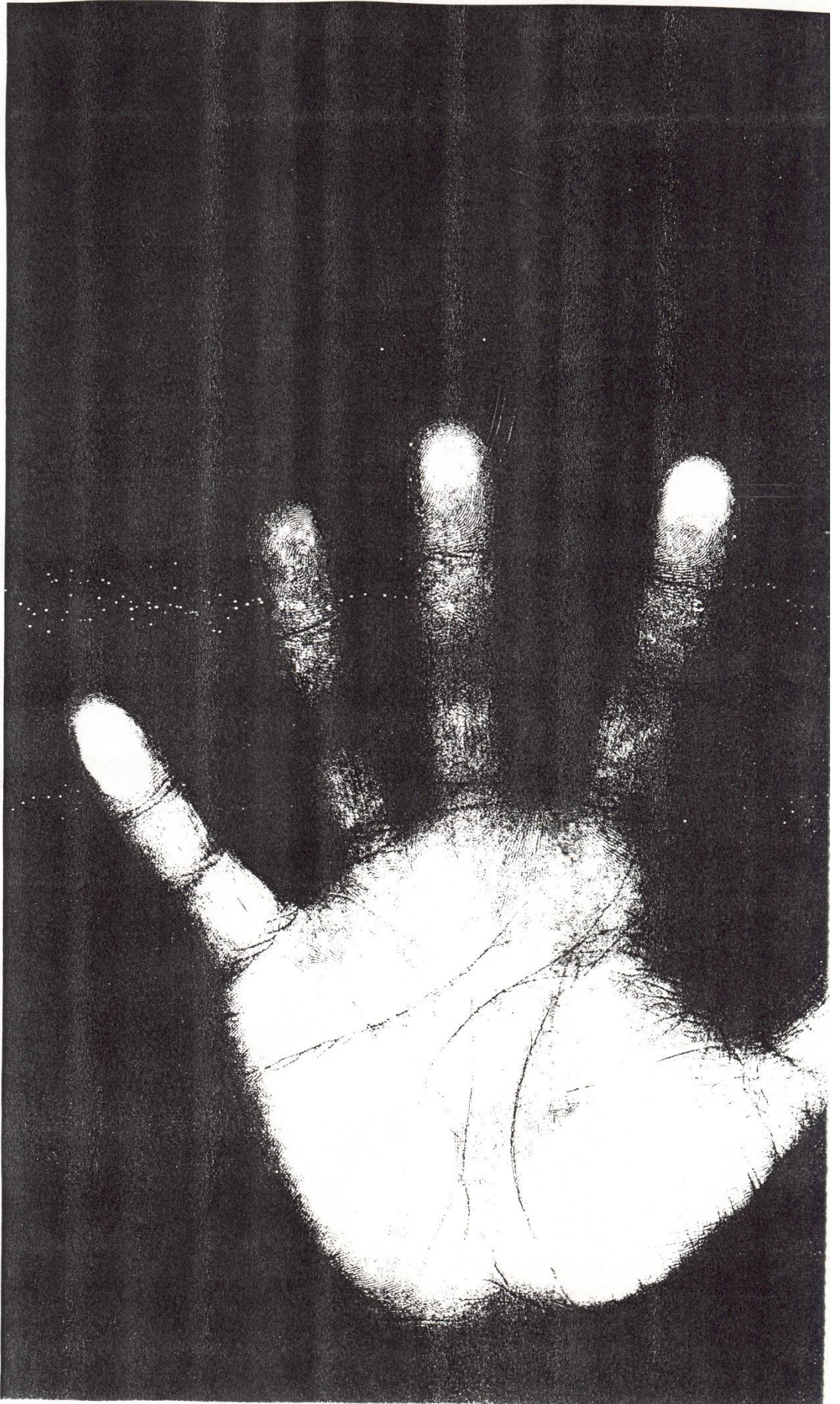
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free art, music, press...



done



audacity live



coper waste



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further



history live



jou2



jou 1



drum n bass jam



jou drums n guitar 1



jou drums n guitar 2



jou end





Trash Records

1998-2008 - Celebrating 10 Years
of Bringing the Garbage In



we are now in a period
of comfortable creative
mental stagnation.

we are apathetic + ~~indifferent~~
disinterested about art.

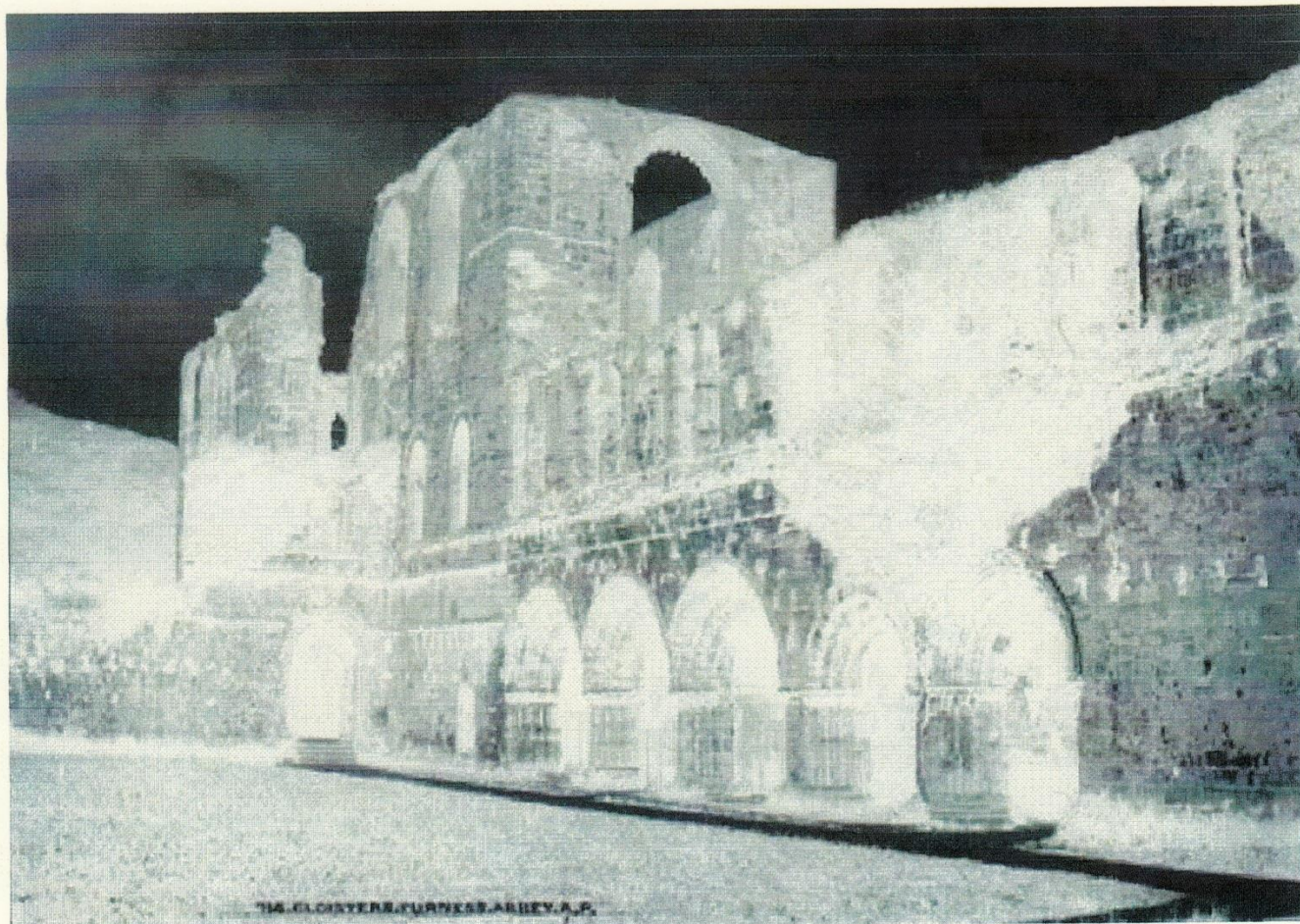
There is a depressing lack
of excitement among those
who are able to think outside
of mainstream patterns.

Nothing is happening.

You can not change the
world.

CHANGE YOURSELF.

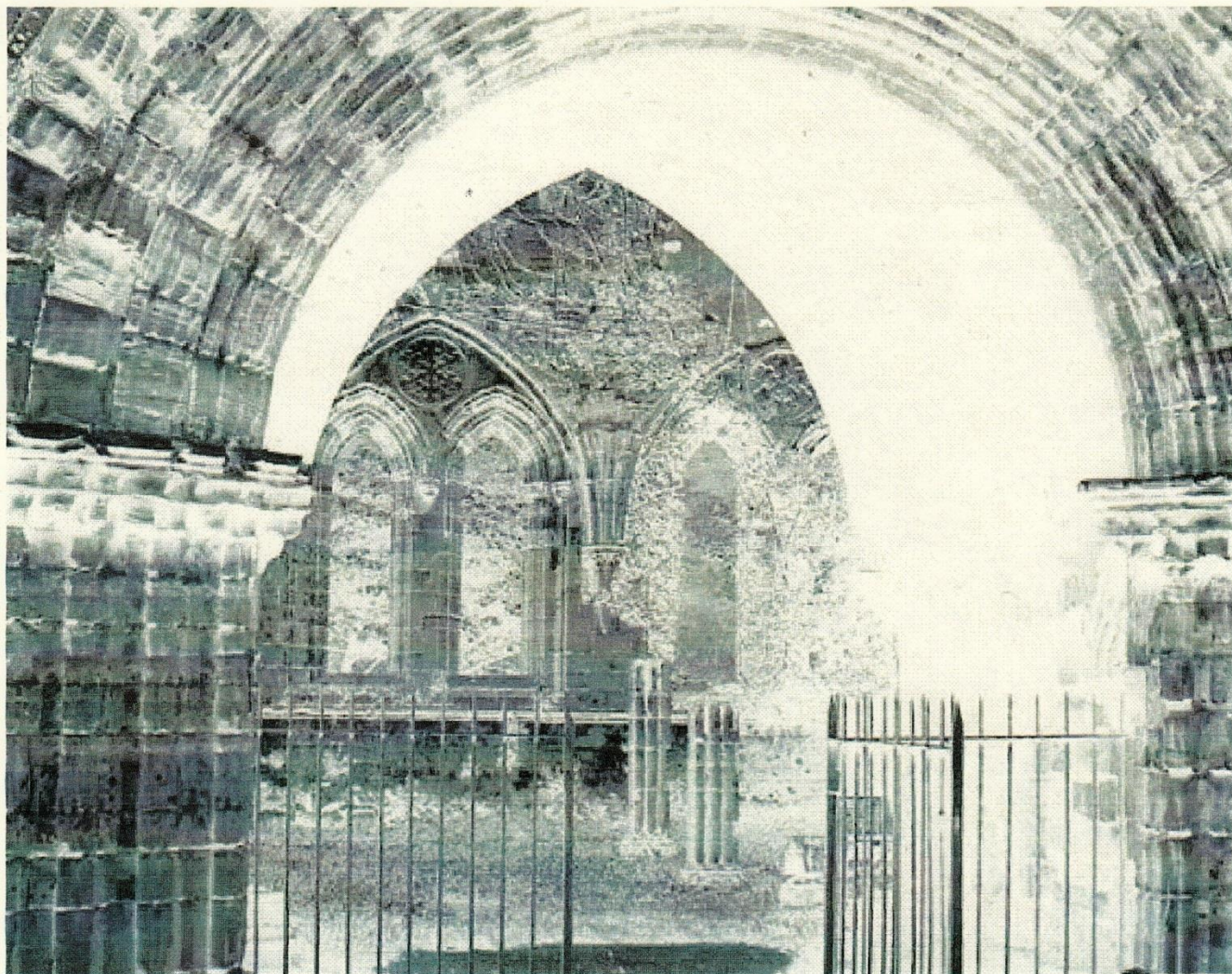
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