

HELIOS CREED

The legendary guitarist of San Francisco's proto-industrial acid-punk band Chrome, Helios Creed's psychedelic guitar work has influenced bands such as The Jesus Lizard, Prong, Butthole Surfers, and Clone.

Helios Creed joined San Francisco's Chrome in 1977 to record their 2nd album *Alien Soundtracks*. Helios' mastery of sustained, distorted guitar effects and deep, crooning vocals noticeably changed Chrome's direction and made them the science fiction inspired, avant-garde acid-punk that Chrome is best known for. After seven albums, the creative relationship between Helios and Chrome founder Damon Edge dissolved. Damon moved to Europe, taking the Chrome name with him.

After forming his own band, Helios released his first solo record *X-Rated Fairy Tales* in 1985 on the San Francisco based Subterranean label. This album vaguely followed in the style where Chrome had left off, at least more so than the albums Damon was producing overseas under the Chrome name. After a hiatus of a few years, Helios was back with *Superior Catholic Finger* in 1989. Also released on Subterranean, this album saw a return to Helios' noisier heritage with early Chrome, and coincided with the rising popularity of the noise and grunge sounds. Helios was quickly grabbed by Tom Hazelmeyer's

Amphetamine Reptile label, resulting in a succession of releases over the next 5 years, including *The Last Laugh*, *Boxing the Clown*, *Lactating Purple*, *Kiss to the Brain*, and *Planet-X*.

Never afraid to go on the road, Helios is no stranger to touring. Helios and his varying group of musicians have toured extensively since 1985 and have two live albums as a result. The first was recorded on a tour of Europe in 1993 for the *Your Choice Live* series. Seven years later came the release of *On Tour 1999* which was recorded in California at the end of that year's U.S. tour. Incorporating tape loops, a multitude of FX boxes, and even a telephone handset, Helios' live shows expand upon his talents, demonstrating that his layering of multiple sounds isn't just studio trickery.

Perhaps influenced by touring as a guitarist with Hawkwind's Nik Turner in 1994, Helios' later records combined a noise-rock style with the hazy soundscapes of space rock. Released on Man's Ruin, Cleopatra, and Germany's Dossier labels, these records include *Cosmic Assault*, "NUGG" *The Transport*, *Activated Condition*, *Chromagnum Man*, *Colors of Light*, and *Spider Prophecy*.

As well as releasing titles under his own name, Helios also brought together several musicians in the

later half of the 1990s to form Dark Matter, which created two albums of the electronic/ambient genre. He has also collaborated on projects with Nik Turner, Hawkwind, Butthole Surfers, Jack Endino's Skin Yard, Genesis P-Orridge, and Bill Laswell.

After Damon Edge's death in 1995, Helios re-assembled Chrome, enlisting former band-mates John and Hillary Stench among others. More albums were released, and a touring version of the group made their way around the U.S. in 1998, performing to incredulous fans who most likely had missed the single American live performance of Chrome nearly 17 years earlier. In 2002 Helios was re-united posthumously with Damon on the album *Angel of the Clouds*, in which he completed some of Damon's unfinished work culled from the Dossier archives.

With his latest solo release, *On the Dark Side of the Sun*, Helios has ventured back to the darker, guitar driven sounds of Chrome. Pulling some of the cold industrial-psychedelic themes from the past, he incorporates new ideas in a way that may signify a new direction. And judging from the overwhelmingly positive response he has received with the new material while on tour this summer, this change can only be a good thing.

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