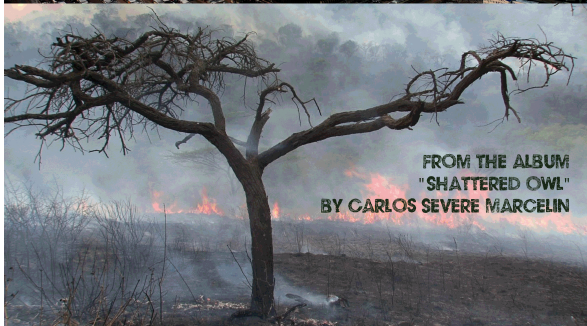


## Film Awards

In the Stream of Consciousness  
from "Shattered Owl"



## Film Awards

The Pulsar of Eightbit from  
"Dance Your Body"



## Reviews, Radio



### RADIO HOT TUB

#### UNCLE SCOTTY

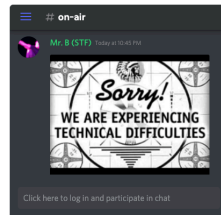
FRIDAY 8AM-10AM

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APRIL 22, 2022

carlos severe marcelin "earth" [single]  
[single]  
robots of the ancient world "in my head" [single]

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### Last Week's Playlist!



Jessica Lynne Witty

Greg Nestler - Burn  
Jaws of Brooklyn  
- Don't Give Up On My Love  
Eldon "T" Jones & N Touch - T's Jam  
Red Bird - There With You  
Jess Pillay - Telling You The Truth  
Limberlost - Long Way From Home  
Jessica Lynne Witty - Memphis Anymore  
Rich Swanger & The Little Known Band  
- Didn't Make A Sound  
Zach Kleinsinger - Feeling Like This  
Siena Christie - Northern Lights  
Salvatore Manalo - Dreaming  
Love, DEAN - Fool  
Swin For Free - The Road  
Carlos Severe Marcelin  
- For Ashlin

## EAR TO THE GROUND

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

[E2TG 6-23-2020 - Be Afraid, but Do Not Fear - Happy Enough Mix \(Joe! Remix\)](#)

22. "One Heart (Cognificent)" by Carlos Severe Marcelin, Alicia Jo Rabins, The Poseurs  
*Next, we have the first of two pandemic related songs. This one is a collaboration on many different levels. It is the brainchild of Portland, Oregon based artist Carlos Severe Marcelin. The track features a spoken-word piece by Alicia Jo Rabins, a verse by Portland band The Poseurs, and a chorus recorded by friends, family, fans, and musicians from around the country recorded on their phones and submitted. It is a remarkably complex and fascinating recording.*





## **Carlos Severe Marcelin** **Impressionist**

April 2020

### **Review by Gary Hill**

This new album features multi-instrumentalist Carlos Severe Marcelin who is part of the Sally Tomato band. The album is instrumental except for one cut. That tune is all about the current pandemic era, and really serves as a great statement for our time. The whole set features exceptionally inventive and compelling music. It's never redundant or tired. This is quite an effective release that captures a lot of styles. It's modern, and yet rooted in classic sounds and vintage styles. It truly is a release for our age.

#### **Track by Track Review**

##### **The Emerald Tablets**

Sedate, trippy elements bring this in with some delicate acoustic guitar. The tune drifts outward from there with some real psychedelia in the mix. As it continues to evolve there are electronic percussive elements added to the mix. Overall, this is a psychedelic exploration that leans on space rock and includes some things that are more modern.

##### **Ultima Thule**

A different tone is heard immediately as electric guitar leads this off. There is a cool processed guitar sound. This is more traditional progressive rock based, leaning toward things like Tangerine Dream and Synergy. It definitely has an electronic edge and a definite fusion leaning to it. I really love some of the musical passages on this, and the melodies that ensue. .

##### **Akhenaten's Plight**

There is some great stereo separation built into this track. The number has a bit more metallic crunch than its predecessors, too. It's a little more rocking. The guitar work is particularly expressive. The tune really drives. It has some exceptionally powerful musical passages. There is a cool shift toward keyboard based sounds late in the track, too.

##### **Xoanon of Polias**

More along those Tangerine Dream and Synergy lines, there are some hints of world music in some of the melodies here. This has a bit of a dreamy vibe to it, and also manages to lean toward psychedelia. It's an intriguing piece of music. It's also definitely classy stuff.

### **Ramanujan Summation**

There is a slightly psychotic vibe as this more freeform fusion styled piece gets underway. The number has some unsettling moments and intriguing explorations. This is definitely not the most accessible thing here, but it's so meaty and interesting. As it continues there are some space rock elements and even some hints of old school rock and roll. Don't get too comfortable, though, because it moves out into even weirder spaceyness as it continues.

### **Tillstrom Valley Hop**

This is a pleasant guitar based musical excursion that really feels like a drive along a highway. It's melodic and expressive. It includes a bit of a percussion showcase and some slight wanderings into space. It's arguably the most mainstream piece to this point of the set.

### **One Heart (Cognificent)**

Percussive based electronic textures serve as the backdrop for a spoken section talking about the anxiety connection of the current pandemic. From there, the album's most mainstream cut emerges. It has a folk rock styled texture. The vocals are hopeful and uniting. This was recorded remotely as people were all under "stay at home" orders. The spoken word part returns, talking more about getting through this. The music is more a bit more rock oriented this time, though. From there some killer guitar rocking sound emerges to move it forward. That instrumental movement gives way to a mellower movement, over which we get news coverage about reactions to the pandemic. There is a short reprise of the vocal movement to bring it all home. This is definitely one of the standouts here.

### **Hovercopter**

There is an electronic angle to the percussion on this piece. The track has an exploratory magic to it. This is another song where comparisons to Tangerine Dream and Synergy are appropriate. The piece is effective and a satisfying closer. I really love some of the keyboard sounds in particular, but everything about this works well.



**Tourists Go Home**

By Carlos Severe Marcelin

From "The Traveling Tomatoes" film series



**Drones Follow**

By the Infinity Zoo

From "ForeverScape EPisode 1"

**Alternate Routes**

By Carlos Severe Marcelin

from "Forth"



**Strange Divinity**

By Sally Tomato



# Strange Divinity



By CULT CRITIC

April 7, 2018



## **Strange Divinity**

Directed by **Carlos Severe Marcelin** | Review by **Nabadipa Talukder**

"Trying to understand the way nature works involves a most terrible test of human reasoning ability. It involves subtle trickery, beautiful tightropes of logic on which one has to walk in order not to make a mistake in predicting what will happen. The

quantum mechanical and the relativity ideas are examples of this.” – Richard Feynman.

Quantum mechanics is and always has been an elusive subject. The unpredictability of how humans work, of how nature works and all of its anomalies and to be able to predict with accuracy the outcome, is an infinitesimal part of it. Every situation has infinite possibilities and outcomes. And of all those infinite possibilities you choose one and that one choice changes the entire course of your life. If it were possible to choose your destiny and choose at every situation the most favorable result, then the unpredictability of life would completely disappear. What if there existed a device, which could decipher all of the outcomes beforehand and you could choose the situation of your liking? What if you could alter the stream of time, make it do your bidding?

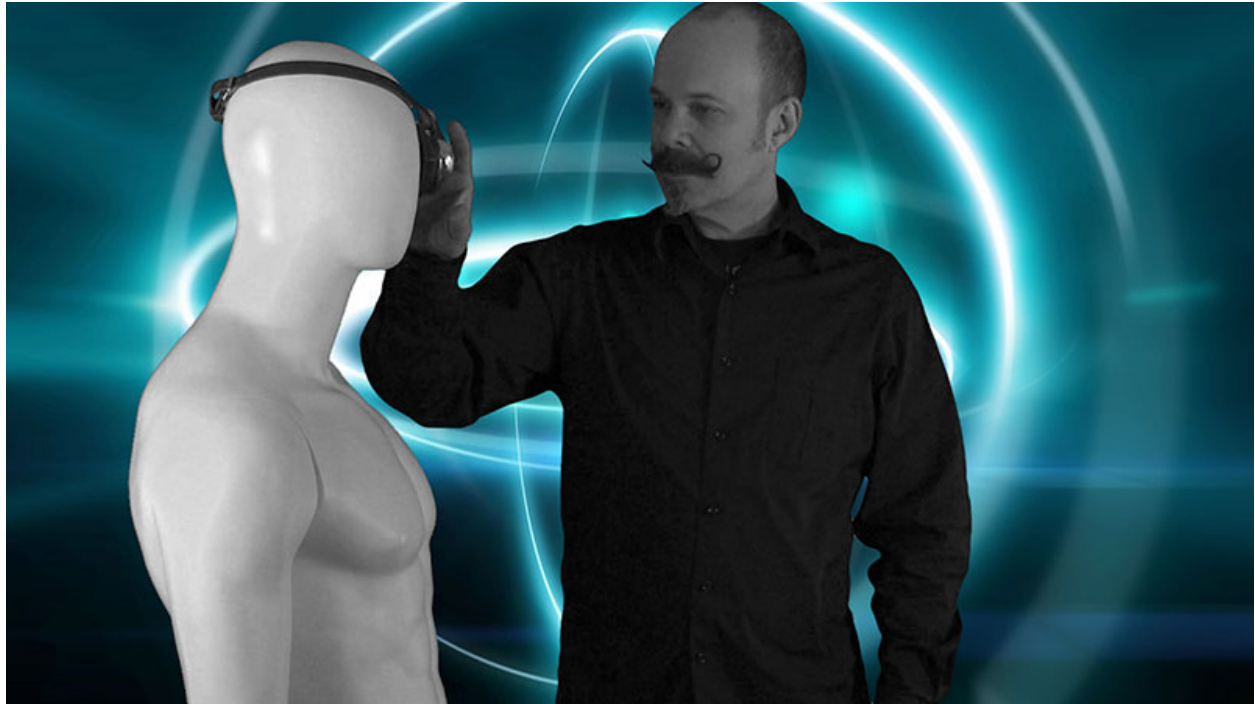


The film begins with the invention of the device, the C – Nitizer, by Professor Otto Von Grunberg who works for the FBI in the Department of Quantum mechanics. He is helped by Sally the Demi-god who helps him with his book of knowledge; she is sent by Orb Nadia who is a higher state of being, free from the shackles of time to assist humankind with this power as humans can only sense time in a linear fashion.

The story that ensues is one that will stimulate and keep you guessing the fate of the protagonist. The film dances between the realm of mysticism and the living world,



mixing the obscure with real. Since the film has no dialogue, the onus of the storytelling falls completely on the visuals, acting and the background score. And it doesn't fail to match your expectations as it manages to thrill and enthrall you with its visuals and keep your attention fixed. The film is monochrome for the most part of its narrative, which is the part where the act of the main protagonist is in play, but there are bursts of psychedelic colors in a kaleidoscope-like fashion and sepia tones depending on the character present on the screen. The colors and abstractions used have a very seventies vibe to it.



The characters in the film are very distinct and eccentric, even. The cast is small and even though the omission of dialogues, they manage to effectively bring the story to life without making you miss the undertones of a conversation. The protagonist, Otto Jr., has managed to emote effectively without making it seem over the top or obtuse. The Demi-Goddess Sally is the one guiding the protagonist's path through the whole journey, while Goddess Destiny plays along with the story making it dreamlike. Even though the production value of the film doesn't seem very high, the storytelling and the acting makes the film what it is.

The music in this film plays a very important role as the entire film runs on the different songs and the background score. The genre of the music is rock and one would think that it impedes the storytelling, rather it helps facilitate the journey of the film. Through the songs you learn more about the characters, the situations that they

are in, the emotions that they are going through and the background story.



This is a film which even after the credits makes you pause and ponder about life and how much we don't appreciate the fact that life can be unpredictable. Yes, sometimes life doesn't go our way, but in moments of happiness, we find joy like we've never known before. If life got predictable would you be able to feel the full extent of euphoria that you are supposed to feel? How would it feel to have everything go your way? Would you still be able to appreciate fully, anything good that happens? Would life's experiences like this be as fascinating and attractive or would it just turn monotonous? What if a device this dangerous, fell into the wrong hands? Surely, it would lead to a catastrophe.

The way the story plays out with the music in the background is fascinating to watch as the director has played with the visuals beautifully. It's a bizarre rock opera without dialogues interspersed with a mirage of colors and filters that bind cohesively, bringing out the narrative making it surreal and thought-provoking.



**September 2012**

**Sally Tomato's Pidgin  
Planets**

**Review by G. W. Hill**

The quickest explanation would be “progressive rock,” but within that heading, this covers a lot of material. Some of it is instrumental, some vocal and some spoken. Space elements are heard at places, fusion in others. Frank Zappa and Yes both arrive as references. The point is, this is diverse progressive rock that’s quite effective.

*Track by Track Review*

**Sol**

Starting with dramatic, atmospheric elements, spoken words come over the top in airy, artistic way. Then it starts to rock out more from there as this continues. A more traditional progressive rock sound begins to dominate. As it builds and evolves this turns to more space rock oriented music and gets into some great jamming. It drops back to atmosphere for more speaking at the end.

**Mercury**

More fusion-like in sound, this is a cool jam that really soars at times. We’re taken through a number of changes and parts of this become more jam band like, while others have more of that space rock element. The vocals on this are more sung and kind of spacey in nature.

**Venus**

There are some great funky fusion sounds on this killer piece. This one stays reasonably constant and is a purely instrumental tune.

**Luna**

Weird bits of tuned percussion and other sounds make up this short (22 seconds) cut.

**Earth**

The musical motif that opens this makes me think a bit of Yes, but as the spoken vocals come over the top it definitely feels like Frank Zappa. Still, this is melodic progressive rock that’s quite cool. It’s just those spoken bits remind me a lot of Zappa. The female vocals bring more of that melodic prog to the table, too. All in all, it’s a pretty intriguing musical ride.

**Mars**

Starting mysterious and yet beautiful, this cut builds gradually. Another instrumental, this gets turned into some cool fusion.

**Pallas**

Here we get a short bit of atmosphere.

**Main Belt**

Pounding out heavy, while this is metallic, it’s not metal, but rather killer instrumental prog. It’s a fairly short piece of music. It does have one short mellow interlude.



## Ceres

Here we have another instrumental fusion jam.

## Io

This is mysterious and atmospheric and also quite short.

## Jupiter

A longer cut - but come on, a song about Jupiter can't be small, right? – there are heavier moments here, but also sedate and quite pretty ones. At times I'm reminded of Starcastle on this thing. A jam later features both some cool keyboard sounds and an almost Yes-like arrangement. It works out to a mellow section later.

## Titan

Starting with control to ship chatter, keyboards rise up in fine electronic space fashion. That's the motif of this short instrumental.

## Saturn

More melodic and fully realized progressive rock makes up the sound of this tune. Around the minute and a half minute it drops down to atmosphere and we get some radio chatter. Then it works out into another melodic prog jam. While related to the previous one, it's also rather different. When it gets mellow again for the next chatter section, it feels a bit like Pink Floyd. As it turns back to the melodic prog jam that comparison remains rather accurate. It powers out further down the road into a section that has hints of both Yes and Pink Floyd in the mix. It continues to change and evolve with some great layers of sound emerging over the top of the arrangement here and there.

## Dione

This number is made up of ambient, drone-like sounds. It's another short one.

## Neptune

With mellow and intricate acoustic guitar sounds bringing this in amidst atmospheric music, Pink Floyd is certainly a valid reference on this introduction. Then it works its way out to a different movement that's more like melodic fusion. Some dramatic motifs are heard at times as icing on the cake. There's a tasty melodic guitar solo later in the piece. Different themes return here and there as this continues and it's one of the most effective numbers on show here.

## Oberon

Mellow atmosphere serves as the backdrop for the echoey spoken recitation.

## Uranus

Starting off with more of a rocking sound, there are some distorted, almost extreme metal vocals in place on this piece. They are spoken, but also very weird. This cut has melodic moments (I can swear I make out some Jimi Hendrix quotes in terms of the melody lines) but it also has some of the weirdest music of the whole disc. There's a bouncy little circus like section to this, too. Later in the piece we get a section that even feels a bit like Metallica.

## Pluto

Strange atmospheric music includes a spoken section that's distorted, processed and echoed. It has plenty of weird space.

## Haumea

Piano and weird world type vocals make up this short cut.

## Eris

Processed spoken vocals open this before it works out into a cool melodic space rock jam. There are more of those spoken vocals and some cool bits of science fiction like keyboards along with tasty guitar work and more. Those spoken bits are the robot from "Lost in Space." This is a fun, driving jam. It works out to a weird, rather off-kilter jam later.



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**Band:** Sally Tomato's Pidgin

**CD Title:** "Planets"

**Band Website:** [www.sallytomato.com](http://www.sallytomato.com)

**Label:** Independent Release

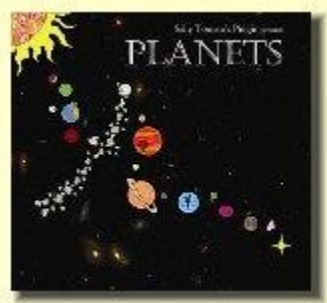
**Label Website:**

**Release Date:** 2012

When we think of the setting music to the planets many will think of Gustav Holst, some may think of Manfred Mann's Earth Band, but I have a new one for you: **Sally Tomato's Pidgin**! Yes, it's an interesting name and the music is wonderful. Working with a number of key support players the group is basically a trio consisting of Sally Tomato, Eric Flint (drums, percussion) and Carlos Severe Marcelin (guitar, bass, keyboards). Entitled simply *Planets*, this is a fascinating CD; some might call a song-cycle as all the songs are themed around the objects floating in our solar system.

*Planets* is a total of 60-minutes with twenty tracks most of which are instrumental running anywhere from under one-minute to as long as a little over six. Some of the tracks may feature "vocals" sung in a dreamy fashion or more likely some spoken-word support. I particularly enjoyed the tongue-in-cheek nature of some of this stuff, such as the tune supporting the idea of keeping Pluto as a planet. That was funny, but I'm with them 100%. Let me also say this is a great sounding disc, the drums are crisp and provide a solid driving foundation. Marcelin, who provides lots of varied eclectic guitar sounds and styles, has really brought the music to life in his production. There are layers of effects, voices, instruments and vocals and the overall sound is clean and engaging. Musically the feel is a subtle mixture of art-rock, progressive flourishes blended with a hook-driven pop sensibility. I hear snippets of Beatles, Klaatu, Earth Band, and even a bit of Frank Zappa, all smashed together to create a very unique vibe. Each tune will run through a number of musical change-ups, fast to slow, or tempo. Plenty of dynamic movements allow for the music to ebb and flow from loud to soft and yet hang together around some wonderfully melodic hook lines. Seriously I only had heard the track "Mercury" [5:16] once and yet the second time I heard it on the disc itself it seemed oh-so familiar, I was instantly humming it. Other tunes like "Mars" [3:46] begin with some nice drama and hesitation that draws you in. One of my favorite tracks is the more aggressive "Main Belt" [1:47]; what it lacks in length is made up in creative aggression and repeating theme. Cool Stuff.

**Sally Tomato's Pidgin** is arty and fun. The music on *Planets* has plenty to recommend to fans of both symphonic progressive rock and Art Rock in general. The general tone, even with the more dramatic moments is upbeat and totally captivating. The music has depth and flows from one track to the next creating a panoramic listening experience. Recommended.



the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

By SP Clarke "I listen, so you don't have to."



[blog.buko.net/gbu](http://blog.buko.net/gbu)

Sally Tomato's Pidgin

Posted on June 5th, 2012



Planets

Severe Recordings

It seems like every century some composer decides he wants to take a crack at the solar system as artistic inspiration. Over the years this has gotten successively more difficult to create. In 1916 when Gustav Holst completed his orchestral suite, *The Planets*, Pluto hadn't even been discovered yet. So his view of our little corner of the universe was decidedly incomplete and a tad bit smaller than our more enlightened satellitelian digital vantage point of today. In the past 90 years or so, Pluto has undergone the indignation of being batted about like a cosmic badminton birdie. Today it's a planet, tomorrow maybe not. Actually, today it's not a planet (I don't think). However that is the topic of another story.

Holst crafted his planetary vision from an astrological standpoint, most likely owing to the fact that astronomy hadn't really changed a whole lot in the preceding three hundred years since Galileo. Certainly William Herschel (a composer himself whose interest in mathematics actually led him to astronomy from music) livened things up at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century spotting Uranus and its two largest moons, Titania and Oberon—he had a thing for Shakespeare. But that was about it until 1930 when the new generation of telescopes allowed young Clyde Tombaugh to confirm “Planet X” at the Lowell Observatory in Kansas.

## Pluto

After a big contest it was decided that Pluto was its name-o. Now, after like twenty-five years spent searching for the damn thing throughout the early 1900's, the International Astronomy Union has determined that Pluto should be demoted to the status of “dwarf-planet,” as if it were some *asteroid* like Ceres or Eris (granted, Eris is slightly larger than Pluto and even farther out there—but hey—maybe Eris should be a planet too! No, no, no. The IAU has its rules, even though they shift polarity every so often). There may be extreme pressure from the astrology lobby. Who can say?

So it's hard to guess if Holst would have made a run at today's solar system. Hell, at first he didn't even name *The Planets*, *The Planets*. That didn't come until late in the game. At first the suite was called *Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra* and referred not at all to the planets in play but only to their astrological presentations. Strange how these things evolve.

## Carlos Severe Marcelin

That brings us to Carlos Severe Marcelin. Carlos has been playing around our happy little mizzle-stop for the better part of twenty years. In the '90s he was lead guitarist for intellirockers, Silkenseed. Then, in the early Oughts he married fortunes with Sally Tomato, whose eponymously named band has been the source for a lot of strangely inimitable artiness over the years—Carlos responsible for a great deal of it. As a guitarist especially, but also as a controller of keyboards, Carlos has consolidated his considerable talents for the formidable task at hand.





## Earth

Carlos wrote “Earth” about ten years ago, as a stand-alone piece. It’s pretty obvious that most of us don’t think of Earth as a planet necessarily. It’s simply the only place we know. It’s just *here*. Planets are out there, out yonder. Look, there’s Venus in transit across the sun! Carlos had always admired Holst’s attempt at the subject. About three years ago, he started to launch various pieces into orbit. And from there things seemed to slowly fall in line. Voila. A concept album was born.

## Eric Flint and Carlos Severe Marcelin

Thus Carlos created the planets and the firmament. But he didn’t do it completely alone (although he probably could have). He is joined in places by Ms. Tomato herself (as well as by a few other special guests). And longtime Sally Tomato drummer Eric Flint dispenses his usual spot-on sonic rocketry. But even by Tomato standards, this project is pretty impressive. In this configuration they call themselves Sally Tomato’s Pidgin. I don’t know why.

## Andrew Latimer of Camel

Though he professes not much familiarity with the genre (and at age forty he is too young to have been around for the original manifestations) of *prog*, Marcelin’s work has much in common with the artistic leaning of many well-known prog guitarists—including, especially, Andrew Latimer of Camel.

## Robert Fripp

But one can hear stylistic similarities to the work of Robert Fripp (King Crimson), Martin Barre (Jethro Tull), David Gilmour (Pink Floyd), Robin Trower (Procol Harum and solo), John McLaughlin (Mahavishnu Orchestra), Steve Hackett (Genesis) and the two guys from Wishbone Ash (Andy Powell and Ted Turner).

## Steve Morse

Subsequent guitar heroes, such as Steve Morse (Dixie Dregs, Deep Purple), Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and Yngwie (of course) are also represented, it would seem, in one way or another. Carlos touches all the bases without being in the least bit imitative. He’s his own player.

## Sun with Venus in Transit

In a display of acute astronomical awareness Carlos elects to begin our journey with the sun—old “Sol.” He could have, of course, followed Holst’s lead, which was astrologically Copernican in construct. But Carlos chose the more accepted course, unless you are among those yayhoos who believe that the earth is the center of the universe, and only six thousand years old, and man walked with the dinosaurs etc. If that is the case, you probably aren’t reading this masterpiece in the first place.

As might be expected, Sol is a rather bright and majestic object of real gravity in the musical construct. After a brief spoken prologue, intoned by Ms. Tomato, Carlos launches a fiery flare on guitar, evoking the prog-ish nature of *Hot Rats* era Zappa. Zappa would seem on the surface to be a touchstone influence—but that is hard to fully ascertain. I know for a fact that Carlos has never heard of Camel or Andrew Latimer. So there you go. In this context the theme is a soulful one delivered with great élan.

## Venus

The next stop on our trek would be “Mercury.” Over Flint’s merciless polyrhythms, Carlos wields the sound of twin guitars (cue the Wishbone Ash reference), which soar in close precision. “Venus” is given a more exotic treatment—squishy guitar-synth driving the piece—possibly elementally derived from somewhere around *Discipline* era King Crimson. The brief “Luna” could easily have been composed from random frequencies generated by the cold, cold orb. Talk about trickle down!

## Terra Firma

A compendium of detritus is carefully inventoried (“Lepers, cartoons, and spiders. Men and women in intimate positions”) on “Earth.” Reverend Tony Hughes (Jesus Presley) delivers the benediction, sounding not unlike Fee Waybill of the Tubes: “Welcome to our not so humble abode in the cosmos—a flying chunk of dirt called Earth.” His observations are alternately punctuated by a chorus singing “We have it all” like an ad for an all-night convenience store. Reverend Hughes further elaborates. “It’s the human condition. Life after death: the ultimate mission. Black velvet paintings. Corn dogs and cotton candy. Mysterious scenes, novels, theater and TV in 3-D!”

The Reverend later returns, reporting “World of Now, twenty-four, three sixty-five. We all come back for a sigh or a laugh or something we lack. It’s the missing link. It’s hard core funky. Come on down and see the singular monkey.” From there the bugs come out and tell a tiny story of their own, while a disinterested voice injects, “Infinity is not a destination, it’s a state of mind.” Au revoir.

## Mars

Concluding our tour of the four “inner planets” Marcelin’s portrayal of Mars as less martial in intensity and more reflective of rivers of red dust and perhaps a civilization long ago gone by. Dense keyboard pads and Flint’s precisely complex drumming underscore Carlos’ ornate pointillistic riffs and staccato lead figures. For some reason the Denny Dias/Jeff “Skunk Baxter twin-guitar solo intro of Steely Dan’s “Bodhisattva” comes to mind. You be the judge.

## Asteroid Belt

Next up: the asteroid belt. Honestly, I would have plotted the asteroid belt out farther, out around Neptune. But then, I have always thought Michigan lay east of Wisconsin and that Indiana and Iowa abutted, so what the hell do I know about geography, earthly or terrestrial? Anyway, the asteroid belt officially circuits between Mars and Jupiter. Deal with it.

As asteroids go, most of them are pretty damn flimsy and only of interest if we need to get one out of our way, or if there is some mineral or ice deposit worth going after. Profit motive, etc. But there are some (four) larger asteroids out there. They’re not *that* big—the largest being about a quarter the size of the moon (or of Pluto, for that matter). But Ceres and Pallas are two that often draw the most attention.

## Ceres

Ceres, the largest chunk in the asteroid belt—at six hundred miles across (Earth is about 8,000 miles in diameter)—was discovered in 1801 by Giuseppe Piazza and became designated as a planet not long after that. Assigning planet status was pretty much the only alternative to calling these bright objects in the sky comets or stars, until William Herschel coined the term (and concept) “asteroid.” And *voilà!* Pallas was spotted in 1802 and was also given the planetary nod until the mid 1800s when astronomers cleared the deck—setting ground rules for planethood and the like. Always so formal, those sky guys.

All three brief “roid” sections interlock among the debris. Carlos introduces us first to “Pallas,” which can be found sort of in the middle of that spatial spread. The rest of the belt follows, en masse. Then “Ceres” concludes the excursion. All three pieces are quite regal and chipper in their own right, showcasing in spots Carlos’ more metallic persuasions.

## Io

As we journey on toward Jupiter, we stop off at Io, the largest of the “Galilean moons” and nearest to the giant gasbag; the fourth largest moon in our solar system (vying with our very own moon). The volcanic nature of that orb is given ethereal treatment: a ghostly instrument—e-bow? sax? synth? all three? interprets the subtle colors of the clouds of dust and ash.

## Jupiter

The scope of “Jupiter” befits the massive planet known since antiquity. A giant red spot of distorted guitar rumble lumbers across the sparse atmosphere of helium and hydrogen. It’s a big body with no density. Ephemeral. Somewhere past mid-point a whizzy fizzy synth comes in to effervesce the scene, before resolving into a pensive mist, which recalls Mozart’s “Jupiter” *Symphony No. 41*.

Onward we fly toward “Titan,” the largest of Saturn’s fifty-three known moons. It’s thought that life could possibly exist on Titan, speculation underscored by the stately dignity of Ray Woods’ keys on the short piece. Emerson, Lake and Palmer’s take on “Picture’s at an Exhibition” is reflected here.

## Saturn

Soaring intervals bound across “Saturn.” Endless guitar sustain (Ebow?) swirls and slides like a siren call, glissading from one note into the next. A second section chords its way through a little Pete Townshendish (circa *Tommy*) sort of endeavor.

## Dione and Saturn

Leaving Saturn we pass by another of his many moons, “Dione.” As a composition, the short piece is rooted in a sound-collage derived from signals sent back by the Cassini spacecraft in 2007. Again Ray Woods adds subtle keyboard support.

Slowly approaching the blue ice giant “Neptune,” we note in awe its windy surface. Carlos offers a pastoral depiction — indistinct as hydrogen and helium, sketching parameters upon a lighter than air acoustic guitar—evolving into a more orchestral pastiche augmented by synth strings.

## Neptune

Now, I know what you’re asking right about now. Why is Neptune portrayed here in planetary order before Uranus, when in actuality it lies beyond? I asked Carlos Marcelin this very question.

*Some people think they switched about a billion years after the formation of our solar system. We have them in this primordial order on the album for thematic purposes—it was more fluid to have Neptune follow Jupiter before moving into the chaos and weirdness that is Uranus and Pluto.*

In (what many will recognize as) a tremendous show of restraint, I will forgo my usual litany of Uranus jokes and just move along. Nothing to see here. Except Uranus.

## Uranus

With a short statement from our sponsors we fly swiftly by big, old, hard and chilly Oberon, the Uranian moon mentioned earlier, discovered by composer William Herschel. Uranus is atypical in that its axis is tilted sideways in relation to the sun. So its poles are where our equators are, and vice versa. Trying to work that out in your head will freeze it up pretty good.

Flint's crazy, Phil Selway-influenced, cross-time drumming neatly sums up the arcane perturbations that comprise the planetary components of the coldest spot in all the solar system: Uranus. Carlos steers us with a strange, perky permutating theme. Overblown guitar skips merrily at times in the planet's rarified atmosphere, before going all magisterial in the alternating passages. A schizophrenic piece, to be sure.

Approaching the outer reaches of our little corner of the galaxy, here comes poor, much-maligned Pluto. Pluto is a planet, a dwarf-planet, a plutoid, a plutino—or just a big ball of rock spinning around, way the hell out there, pick yer poison. Pluto's orbit is so eccentric that sometimes it slides inside that of Neptune. I'm telling you: it's a wacky galaxy. To capture Pluto's mood (low self-esteem?) Carlos employs a music box scenario to back the other-worldly voice (text borrowed from the Society for the Preservation of Pluto as a Planet) that delineates the belief structure surrounding what used to be the ninth planet. It's very confusing out there.

## Kuiper Belt and the Oort Cloud

Pluto spins around in the Kuiper belt. The Kuiper belt is similar in construct to the asteroid belt, but it's quite a bit more massive. And it's located three times the distance from Earth as Pluto! Way the hell out there. The belt is about as far from the sun as it gets in our neighborhood. Most of the stuff floating around out there is either ice balls, or chunks of planet-like items that got smashed up once upon a time, long ago. There are a few more "dwarf planets" drifting around out there too.

## Haumea and moons

One of those dwarves is called Haumea, a potato-shaped object with two irregular moons. Carlos gives "Haumea" an exotic voice—mystical. Yoko Ono-esque. Another of the dwarves is Eris, the final stop on our trip. Eris is bigger than Pluto, so for a long time there were astronomers who wanted to bring Eris into planethood. But that opened up the can of worms that eventually got Pluto kicked out of the club, so there you go.

## Eris and moon Dysnomia

Anyway, Eris (formerly known as Xena) is possibly involved in the upcoming Nibiru cataclysm, accepted as gospel by Doomsday fans everywhere, and occasionally linked to the whole Mayan calendar deal on December 21<sup>st</sup> of this year. So Eris has been presumed to be lurking out there, just waiting for the big day so it can come on in and pop earth a good shot. At least that explanation would account for *why* the Mayans decided to cut things off at that date. "Oh yeah, that mystery planet's going to smash into earth on that day, so why bother?"

But back in 2003, just when the typical American sense of mindless, groundless fear generated by some unfounded rumor was about to ramp up, grumpy Mister E.C. Krupp, director of the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, stepped in to quell the hysteria.

*In particular, several threads of irrational thought have created an internet phantom, the secret planet Nibiru. It's the bowling ball, and Earth is the pin. There is no such planet, though it is often equated with Eris, a plutoid orbiting safely and permanently beyond Pluto. Some insist, however, that a NASA conspiracy is in play and that Nibiru, looming in on the approach, can already be seen in broad daylight from the Southern Hemisphere. It was supposed to become visible from the Northern Hemisphere, too, by last May, but like a fickle blind date, it stood up those awaiting it.*

## Class M-3 B9 Robot and Will Robinson

Damn fickle planets of Doom. If you can't count on them, who can you count on? For Carlos' part, he decided to go *Lost in Space* with "Eris," lots of actual loops of the original Class M-3 Model B9 exclaiming. "Danger, danger, Will Robinson. Warning, warning." Idiosyncratic guitar stylings, reminiscent of Adrian Belew, color the piece.

As ambitious as this project is, Carlos Severe Marcelin can only go outward if he wishes to continue along these thematic lines. The Milky Way. Norma and Outer Arm. Perseus and Cygna. Although, one would suppose, he could go inward and explore theoretical physics or cells, molecules and atoms and all the sub-atomic particles. Quarks and Bosons and Hadrons. Oh my!

Mention must be made of engineer Diamond Dave Friedlander's contribution to the sonic grandeur here. Clean and pristine, his mix is as uncluttered as space itself. The perfect complement—truly spatially open and expansive.

## Carlos Severe Marcelin

*Planets* is certainly grand in scope. Big. Real big! Carlos combines the familiar with the futuristic in uncommon ways, approaching this mission with musical exuberance and lucidity, sounding as the culmination of forty years of progressive rock guitar exposition. He isn't showy. But he is consistently diverse and ineluctably imaginative in embroidering each of the twenty tracks with a distinctive design, while maintaining a cohesive conceptual aggregate. Not easily done.

But he does it almost effortlessly. The fluid sureness of his execution, supplemented by Eric Flint's always compelling drum accompaniment, makes for a robustly stellar experience—difficult to compare in a rock context. Far more comprehensive than Gustav Holst's treatment of the subject, Carlos Marcelin finds the music in the spheres that astronomer/composers such as Herschel always sought. This is a worthy effort toward that aim.

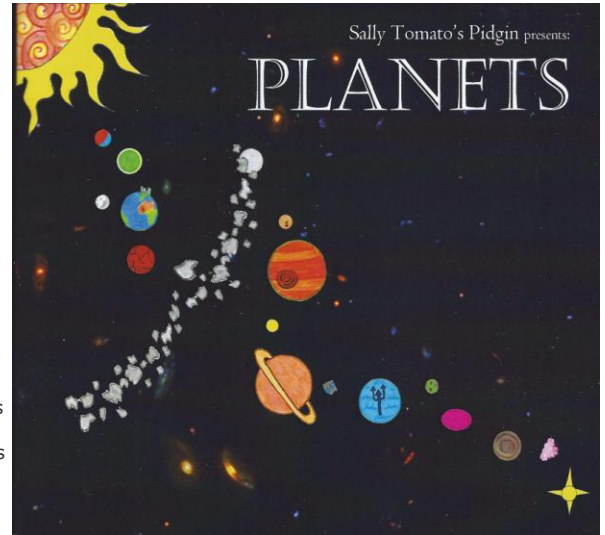




## Sally Tomato's Pidgin – "Planets" (Severe Recordings 2012)

May 15, 2012 Aural Innovations

When looking for spacerock inspiration, what better place to start than right here in our own solar system? In the early 1900's Gustav Holst brought us a musical meditation on "The Planets", and almost a hundred years later the subject is revisited with *Planets* by Sally Tomato's Pidgin (a less spacerocking name would be hard to imagine!). Conceptualist and vocalist Sally Pidgin (who has starred in autobiographical rock opera/movie *Toy Room* in 2010) is backed up by Eric Flint on drums and percussion, and Carlos Severe Marcelin on "everything else" (Sally's enigmatic contribution on the CD sleeve is to play "herself"). Although taking inspiration from that same subject matter as Holst, *Planets* is not a rock adaption of that classical work, but rather an original (or nearly so) song cycle that takes the listener on a trip outwards from the sun and into the void. Not only that, Sally and co have provided an even bigger bang for your buck; Holst worked his way through only seven planets, while she has included all nine of them, plus other heavenly bodies including the asteroid belt, sun, dwarf planets and assorted moons across 20 mostly instrumental tracks in just under 60 minutes.



The journey starts with *Sol*, with Sally's ethereal whisper floating above gentle keyboards and finger-picked acoustic guitar, swiftly joined by harmonised electrics and stately electronic backing. In spite of its weighty subject matter, the music does not come across like some overblown prog-metal epic, but rather bright and clear moments of pop music, focusing more on melody than heaviness or musical virtuosity. This feeling is continued across *Mercury*, before some slightly harder-edged guitars kick in. *Venus* continues in a similar vein, followed by a brief 30 second percussive stopover on Earth's Moon (here entitled *Luna*). Arriving on *Earth*, we are greeted with a rather intentionally-cheesy '50's movie voiceover selling us a budget travel tour of the planet, featuring "men and women in unusual positions", and sound bites from satisfied customers ("They have all the best recipes figured out"). The acoustic guitars recall visions of Steve Howe, and its four minutes make it one of the longer tracks on the album. *Mars* eschews any of "Bringer of War" heaviness, but does feature some cutting harmonised electric guitars. *Main Belt* manages to get closer to heavy metal across its two minute duration with shredding guitars and double kick drums, which cut out a little too early, although I guess there is still a lot of space left to travel. Trips to smaller moon and asteroids – *Pallas*, *Ceres*, the beatless and purely electronic *Io* and *Titan* – are generally compact soundbites, whistle stops between the main destinations. *Jupiter* has more of a pop/rock fusion feel, and is inspired by Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony No. 41*, which predated Holst's work by over a century; five minutes in length, it feels like one of the more fully realised tracks on the album. The tuneful *Saturn* sounds like mid-'70's style Genesis with multi-layered keyboard parts and acoustic strummed guitars, again with a duration befitting one of the largest planets in the system. *Neptune* has a precise '80's prog feel to it, while *Oberon* features a rather cosmic voiceover by Sally. The tricky time signatures and jarring voices of *Uranus* contain elements of King Crimson mathrock as played by a Victorian amusement park roundabout! *Pluto* features a press statement from the Society for the Preservation of Pluto as a Planet ([www.plutoisaplanet.org](http://www.plutoisaplanet.org)). The journey ends with dwarf planets *Haumea* (brief Eno-esque piano notes and wordless keening vocals) and *Eris*, which features samples from such sci-fi gems as *Lost in Space*, before the infinite void is reached.

*Planets* lacks the heavy instrumental jams that have come to be typically associated with the genre known as spacerock; however, its carefully composed and tastefully executed themes make it worthy of exploration by fans of the more dreamier and pop-oriented side of classic progressive rock.

For more information on the band, go to <http://www.SallyTomato.com>  
 Visit the Severe Recordings website at <http://www.SevereEnterprises.com>

Reviewed by Pat Albertson



**blog.buko.net/gbu**

### [The World of T,E,D. and How You're Probably In It](#)

Posted on January 17th, 2012



Number 9 Guy

I have seen the future of art. I wasn't expecting it and I certainly didn't anticipate it coming from the mouths of talking teddy bears, but such are the cumulative quintessences of kismet and epiphany. Ephemeral. Ethereal. Evanescent. Temporal. All exists in the moment. Like a room full of talking teddy bears venting their deepest, darkest secrets.

Eighty of them. Eighty Teddy Ruxpin toy teddy bears offering sentiments and observations from a wide spectrum of emotional perspectives. Well, a spectrum twenty-four emotions wide, actually. And not wide so much as a conical vortex of colliding feelings and sensations. And then there's the amorphously abstract dreamlike sound track.

The talking teddy bears are the stars of a project referred to as T,E,D. — which stands for Transformations, Emotional Deconstruction. It debuted as part of the BYTE ME 2012 exhibition at Launch Pad Gallery (<http://launchpadgallery.org/>), on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The press release describes the production as a “large work [which] features 80 customized [Teddy Ruxpin](#) dolls wired together, delivering real-time emotional content from the internet in discreet 1-minute ‘packages’ based on the Emotion Wheel developed by the psychologist Robert Plutchik. Additional interactive real-time input can also be received from text messaging or an on-site user interface.”

Whew! Okay, fine.

T.E.D. is the brainchild of conceptual artist Sean Hathaway, with Carlos Severe Marcelin of Sally Tomato providing the imaginatively unique soundtrack. The result of their collaboration is a technological achievement of some dense specific gravity, the ramifications of which extend exponentially throughout the art and music worlds, their impact not yet fully determined.



Teddy Ruxpin

It's probably been 25 years since the real heyday of the Ruxpin empire. For those unfamiliar (and I'm no expert, to be sure), the Teddy Ruxpin line were the teddy bears of choice for discerning four-year-olds in the mid-80s. The cache was that the Ruxpin bears talked. They told stories. They moved their eyes and mouths as they told stories. With the mere slip of a cassette into the accessible backside port, the toys could change their stories, and ostensibly, change their limited range of facial expressions as well.

And so the technology slumbered for two decades, until 2005, when Backpack Toys produced Teddy Ruxpin 4.0, which finally exchanged analog technology for thum thar new-fangled digital ROM cartridges. But Backpack eventually discontinued production and the remaining dolls were left to languish in outpost warehouses scattered around the nation. There is nothing so inexpensive as a load of unwanted Teddy Ruxpin dolls. But alas, there it is.

When Sean Hathaway was just a kid, Teddy Ruxpin was all the rage. He says he was *"scared of those bears...for their vague and gross mechanical representation of a living thing."* Considering what he ended up doing with the bears, that's a presciently fortuitous choice of words.

What inspired his experimentation with Teddy Ruxpin dolls, anyway?

*"Having a palette of Teddy Ruxpins in my basement,"* he giggles.

Well, yes. That would seem to be a determining feature: a basement full of teddy bears.

*"There was this old surplus store called Wacky Willie's—it went out of business. They'd had these for years. I'd been looking at them since I was a kid. And I said okay, I'll give you twenty-five cents apiece for them. I got a hundred of them, so..."*

A hundred. Sure. Who'd ever pass up the opportunity at a hundred Teddy Ruxpin dolls? A no-brainer. And so how long has Sean been working on this venture?

*"Off and on for about three years. It's just been my evening project. It started out like 'what am I gonna do with all these dolls?' But it started to take on a life of its own. I could make them talk. Okay, now that I can make them talk, what are they going to say?"*

Yeah. Now that you can make them talk. Way way way...Wait a minute. "Make them talk?" "What are they gonna say?" Is this going to be like one of those stories you hear about where some Asian porn flick is coming out of the mouths of Ruxpins, or something like that?



HAL

Hardly.

*"I was playing around with voice synthesis and realized I could get basic info about phonemes, which I could use to animate their mouths in sync with the speech synthesis. So now I have this creepy sort of animatronic puppet that'd speak any text I give it. Okay, that's pretty fun but now what should it say? What's worth saying? Then I remembered the excellent web site /online art piece [www.wefeelfine.org](http://www.wefeelfine.org) by Jonathan Harris and Sep Kamvar, which aggregates emotional content out of people's blogs in real time. They invite other artists to use their data and offer a mechanism to query it."*

Uh, aggregates emotional content? Gee...

*"That part just came about on its own over time. At first I started with a bunch of bears that I wanted to make sing in some sort of chorus. I thought maybe an opera where the bears would burst into flames as characters died. But as I explored the bears and technology, and as I made some fortunate mistakes playing with them, they presented me with a series of decisions that led to the final piece."*

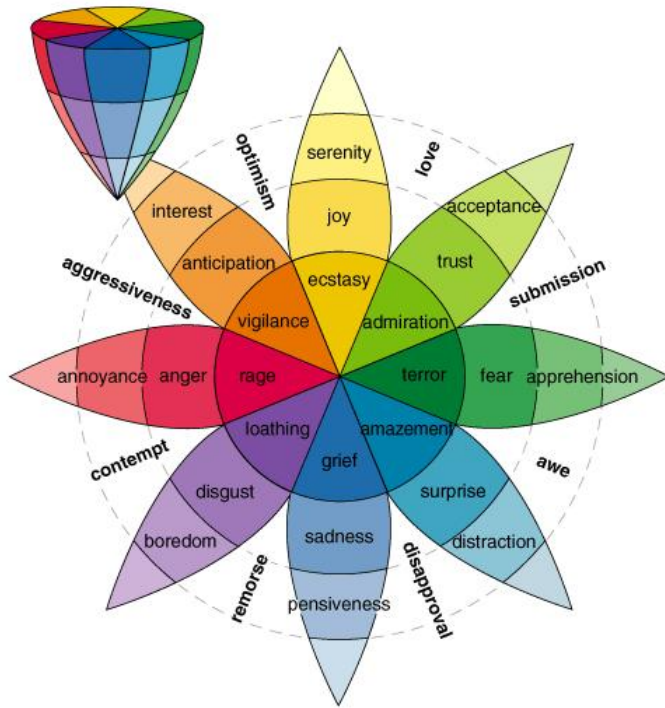
The [www.wefeelfine.org](http://www.wefeelfine.org) site is a work of genius in its own right. Their manifesto states:

"Since August 2005, We Feel Fine has been harvesting human feelings from a large number of weblogs. Every few minutes, the system searches the world's newly posted blog entries for occurrences of the phrases 'I feel' and 'I am feeling'. When it finds such a phrase, it records the full sentence, up to the period, and identifies the 'feeling' expressed in that sentence (e.g. sad, happy, depressed, etc.). Because blogs are structured in largely standard ways, the age, gender, and geographical location of the author can often be extracted and saved along with the sentence, as can be the local weather conditions at the time the sentence was written. All of this information is saved. The result is a database of several million human feelings, increasing by 15,000-20,000 new feelings per day. Using a series of playful interfaces, the feelings can be searched and sorted across a number of demographic slices, offering responses to specific questions."

If you're asking yourself, "Gosh, I wonder if this technology could be used for evildoing?" you and I are on the same page. And that's just the tip of the creative emotional sno-cone in this particular case. There's much more to the story. Robert Plutchik's Emotion Wheel.

Robert Plutchik conceived of a system for exploring the full range of human emotions and how they are related. In 1980, he developed a twenty-four-color, two-dimensional, emotion "wheel," as well as a three-dimensional conic version, to illustrate the complex inter-relationship between positive and negative emotions, demonstrating that human feelings were an intricate combination of emotions. A veritable rainbow stew.





Plutchik Emotion Wheel

In Plutchik's system there are eight principal emotions, four pairs of polar opposites, found at the primary and secondary intercardinal points of the wheel: Joy/Sadness and Fear/Anger at the primary points. Trust/Disgust and Surprise/Anticipation at the secondary points. The three primary colors/emotions are: Red/Rage, Blue/Grief, and Yellow/Ecstasy. Everything else builds from there, I guess. Seems reasonable. Pretty much covers it in my world.

Though innovative, Plutchik's union of emotions with colors was, obviously, not a novel idea. Red with rage, blue with sadness, and green with envy have been with us since...since colors and analogies, I suppose. Similar correlations to the western musical octave and the twelve-tone scale are certainly appropriate, although as yet not fully explored, as far as I know. And then there's the Lüscher-Color-Diagnostic, of course. Put that all together and you've got a real concept, although I am unable to conceive of it at this time.

But with three intensities of eight spectral colors (there are two shades of green in Plutchik's spectrum), all primary, secondary and tertiary colors and related hues are represented, twenty-four in all, twenty-four gradations of emotions, each within fifteen degrees of the next. There are a few *specialty items*, such as a very pretty, salmon-colored "Annoyance" and a verdant, meadowy, chartreuse "Acceptance." But all the color/emotion combinations seem to fit, somehow. Pastels. Mix and match colors and emotions and you've got Freudian Feng Shui 101. Is that a thing? Sign me up.

How did the Plutchik Emotion Wheel come to play in Sean's grand design?

*"Close to the end of the initial concept development I knew I wanted Ted's performances to be self-generative based on what was happening emotionally online at any given moment, but I found that just letting it run in a totally random way was really confusing and displeasing. I didn't want to force or drive what the installation was doing as that would kill the generative aspect of it. So I needed a way to enforce a set of basic rules from which just the right amount of order would emerge out of an otherwise cacophonous mass of content."*

We all hate those cacophonous masses of content.

*"Since I was working with emotional content an emotional classification system seemed a natural choice. And after reviewing a few different constructs, the Plutchik schema seemed to be the most natural and intuitive one. It allows for an infinite array of subtle emotional expression while still maintaining a simple and atomic foundation that worked very well for setting up a simple classification algorithm that would give the piece its randomness—its lacking sense of underlying order."*

Dude. What the hell are you talking about?



Sean Hathaway and Carlos Marcelin

*"It was the music Carlos composed that really brought this part to life. I had originally intended to have a series of several five-minute-long background musical pieces to accompany the speech, but with the Plutchik scheme this rapidly evolved into a set of twenty-four one-minute pieces on a single theme that represent each of the twenty-four foundational emotions in the Plutchik schema."*

So it's like a real-time play. But, I'm not sure how that differs from real life. Isn't life a real time play, after all?

*"The product is a generative installation that drifts about through whatever emotional states are most pervasive at any moment but presented as an endless stream of doglegging one minute sets where not only the content within the set is relational, but so is the underlying musical theme backing it up."*

Okay: it's real life with a musical soundtrack, then. Obviously, Sean comes from an extensively hardwired electronics background, right?

*"I didn't have any experience with electronics in the beginning, but learned what I needed to in order to put the project together. My education is mainly scientific and technical in nature and I think that puts me at a slight advantage to be able to pick-up on new technical skills at a fairly rapid rate. Over the past few years, I have been greatly inspired by sources such as **Make Magazine** and [www.instructables.com/](http://www.instructables.com/) that provide a venue for sharing knowledge and skills. There's a growing collection of open-source software tools, and collective skill-sharing clubs."*



Stephen Hawking

Sean makes it sound like pretty much anybody could fill a room with inanimate teddy bears, make them talk, give them facial expressions and emotions culled from some bunch of guys “harvesting human feelings” and make it work in real time with an unusual music soundtrack in accompaniment. Really?

*“It’s possible for any novice hobbyist or artist to do vacuum forming, 3D printing, physical computing or in my case designing a circuit board that could be sent to a fabrication shop for production. Just click a button to send the files, and two weeks later, you have a hundred circuit boards showing up in the mail ready for you and your friends to start soldering parts to. It really is an amazing time to be a maker of things.”*

Vacuum forming? 3D printing? What’s “physical computing?” Circuit board design? You bet. Sounds like no big deal. Just make things. No problem. Run it. But, what does it all mean? What do all these emoting bears say about the human condition?

*“To me the piece represents a celebration of a global level of human emotional expression that would not be possible without the technological age in which we live. These are tough questions. Our species is on a steppingstone of the evolving Information Age. Each of us has the ability to broadcast and share every part of our lives with nearly the entire world community. Like Dylan said, ‘ten thousand people talking but nobody listening’, but it’s really more like a billion people talking. I guess that’s a big part of what I was trying to say with this. I wanted to pull pieces of this collective state-sharing out of the void and give it a real presence and audience.”*



SIRI

Doesn’t it all seem sort of lonely and impersonal?

*“Everything you hear in the installation is something that somebody somewhere in the world wanted you to hear. Right at this moment somebody in Montana has lost a love and someone in New Jersey has found one, and they want you to know about it. Isolation of one form or another is universal human truth. But how is that truth altered by such complete and intimate connectivity? That’s a question I ponder quite a bit when thinking about this installation.”*

Well, the world has changed pretty dramatically over the past 20 years. There’s no denying that. It’s hard to say where it might go from here.

*“I constantly contemplate the notion that my one-year-old daughter will never know a world where she can’t share how she feels about the bowl of soup she’s eating with people in New York, Paris, Bangkok or Tokyo—before it has a chance to get cold. But what does that mean exactly? Will anyone be listening or care? I do feel pride and a greater sense of connectivity to humanity knowing that when someone’s daughter somewhere in the world was pleased with her bowl of soup, for a small group of people on a Friday night in Portland, Oregon, that message was received loud and clear and for at least a moment acknowledged.”*

Picture a darkened room, maybe about the size of your living room. On two adjacent walls eighty teddy bears are hung in neat rows, all linked by a network of thin wires. Suddenly a spotlight shines on one of the bears, and it opens its eyes, begins to move its lips

and to speak, sounding a bit like Stephen Hawking. It expresses some vague feeling of distress in that robot-voiced monotone, then the spotlight is extinguished to light upon a different teddy, where the voice of, say, Australian Karen GPS lady conveys a gathering sense of anxiety. A British-voiced male teddy bear, like the Beatles' "Number 9" guy, makes a brief, succinct statement and vanishes. HAL enters the scene and registers to any "Dave" his wary apprehensions. It's a familiar cast of characters. The juxtaposition of cheery Ruxpin faces and morbid human sensibilities makes for a jarring experience among all who witness.

Meanwhile, Carlos Severe Marcelin's cinematic soundtrack whirs and whines enigmatic dejection in one instance, orchestrates desperate symphonic alienation in others. The experience is very much like being inside a Luis Bunuel film, with Federico Fellini directing. Even though they are lifeless bears whose eyes and mouths are responding to mere electrical impulses, their sentiments are all too human, desperate for contact and intimacy. To stand among all those bears baring their souls—like a Ruxpin AA meeting—is a surprisingly wrenching encounter. Hypnotic. Haunting. It's nearly impossible to walk away from the exhibit without having a visceral response.

Out in the vast expanse of world, at any moment, millions and millions of people are transmitting their impressions online, to be culled and categorized into segmented channels like an emotional Pachinko machine. It would never occur to anyone to think that their random introspections might be transformed into the script for two walls of talking teddy bears. But as Sean Hathaway said:

"For a small group of people on a Friday night in Portland, Oregon, that message was received loud and clear and for at least a moment acknowledged."

Find me dimstricken. Where next? Okay, all right then, so what color would Sean be on the Plutchik wheel? What would his bear say?

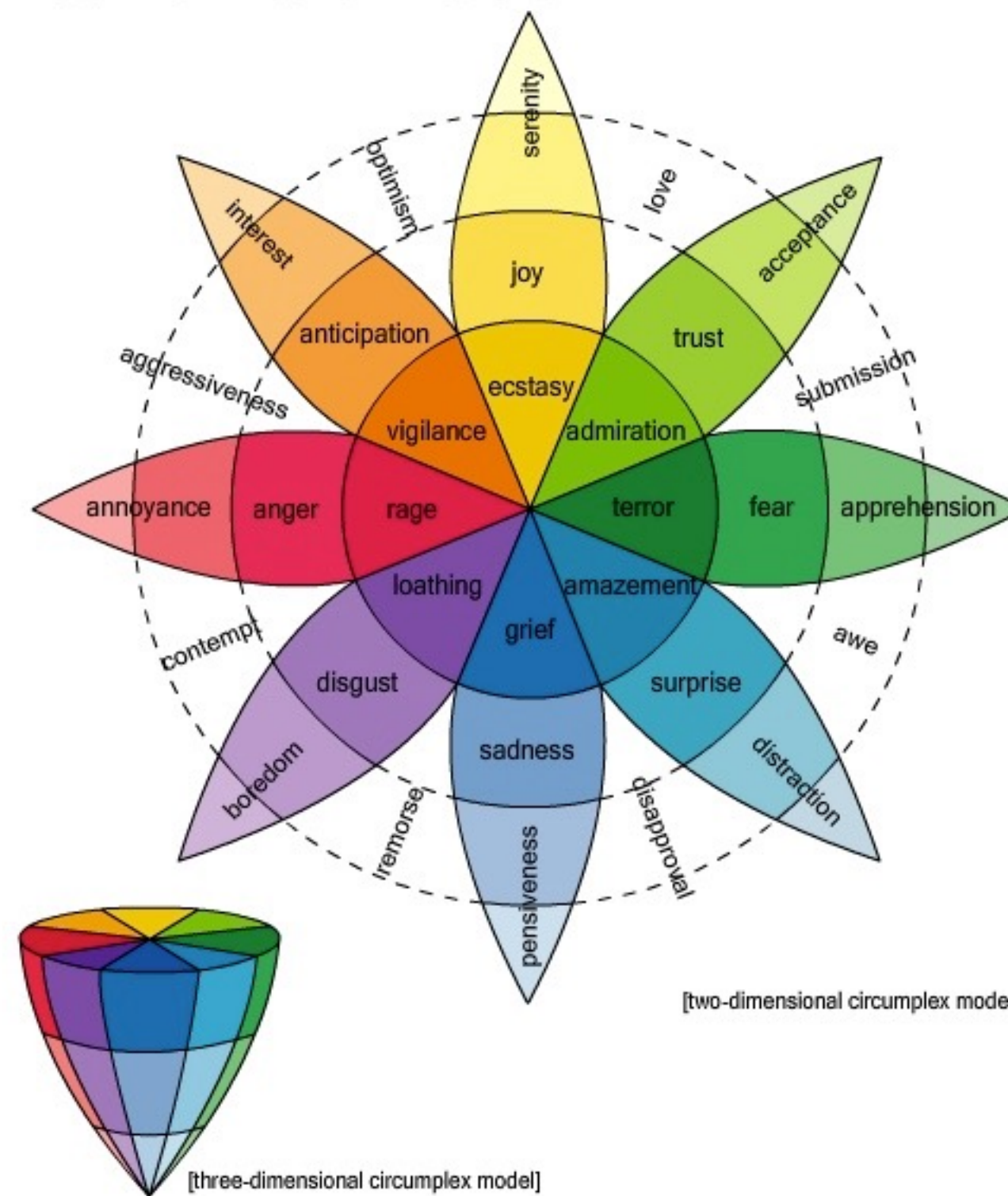
*"I would have a blue-green color [Surprise and Apprehension, perhaps?], and my bear would say: 'I feel humbled that my work was as well received as it was'.*



# T,E.D. (Transformations, Emotional Deconstruction)

Maker Faire Bay Area 2013

## Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions



T,E.D. is a large, wall-based installation consisting of an array of Teddy Ruxpin dolls that speak emotional content gathered from the web via synthetic speech with animated mouths, with music by Carlos Severe Marcelin.

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# Airplay Direct Spotlight Artist, May 2012

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11:05 AM



**Sally Tomato's Toy Room: A Rock Opera In Four Acts**  
**Directed by Wesley J. Turner**  
**Music by Sally Tomato And Carlos Severe Marcelin**  
**Severe Enterprises 2010**

Rock operas in the tradition of the Who's Tommy are frequently attempted and translated into album format, and frequently they are watered down versions of a former classic, but few are as ambitious and introspective as Toy Room seems to be here. Few writers of any art ever dare to look so deeply into themselves and thrive enough to emerge as spiritually evolved as the character Sally seems to have done. Friends and colleagues have successfully attempted smaller personal projects to process and to heal, showing only a few friends or writing a song or two, but Toy Room, in the expanded form of a musical is something rarely seen and even more rarely attempted.

But it's not just epic. Toy Room is revelatory with personal revelations that would have been difficult for anyone to discuss in front of a large audience, not to mention amongst friends. Toy Room turns it all into a cathartic release for the character of Sally Tomato as well as the audience watching from the sidelines.

The opera is divided into four acts and twenty-nine chapters and several musical numbers ranging from Invisible Child to Time to Be Brave. Invisible Child begins by introducing Sally and her Toy Room to rationalize the world around her through "Beyond The Stares". Here her imagination roams free from the prying and disapproving eyes of grown ups and introduces us to her imaginary friends or additional imagined personalities to compensate for her isolation and loneliness.

Throughout, the narrative is carried forward through the musical numbers and the action, but more than occasionally there is a male narrator. On a rare occasion, even Sally herself enters the voice over to explain a critical point or two. Occasional interruptions would have been welcome, especially by Sally herself if it had been minimal, but that isn't the case here. The musical numbers are generally enough to ponder some of the themes of safety and escape. Additional action would have been enough to flesh out the storyline. Take this as a wonderful first draft of a refreshingly cathartic rock opera for us the audience as well as the performers on stage.

"Nightmare" is especially cathartic in it's parody, using country guitar licks, trailer park imagery, and particularly telling icons from what we all recognize as lower income neighborhoods. "Broken Machine" engages in a particularly techno backbeat and background imagery that releases a full onslaught of humorous venom to counter the abuse received from her stage husband. It illustrates the especial healing from laughing at others problems that helps us deal with our own.

Musicals such as Toy Room rarely make it to the stage because they are particularly difficult to produce, emotionally as well as physically. The artists here as well as the production team should be particularly commended for their effort as well as for making the translation particularly entertaining.

Our very own Toy Room or whatever we choose to call it will always be that safe place that we have always had and always go back to. For me, books and then music was and is my security blanket. What's yours?

The soundtrack and DVD of the performance are available at [www.toyroomrockopera.com](http://www.toyroomrockopera.com) should you decide to support the artist.

**RadioMike**  
**17 March 2011**



Review of "Toy Room" by *Ben McVicker* (05/22/2009)

Arguably one of the most pleasing indie releases in recent years, Sally Tomato's *Toy Room* is an ambitious and diverse experiment. A rock opera in four acts, it follows the life and development of Sally Tomato, drawing on familiar themes of childhood innocence, the difficult transition to adulthood, and the impact on imagination and personality that comes with it. The standout achievement of *Toy Room* is the manner in which it blends a rather conventional storyline with a rich and impressive mélange of songs, making for a unique listening experience.

From the opening track, one gets a sense of the band's creative touch. The bright, crisp tone of guitarist Carlos Severe Marcelin's introductory notes kicks off the involving "Overture," a cosmic affair. Sally's spoken-word narrative and gentle choruses of "In the dark there is only one light / No one can touch me here" draped in recurring vocal effects round out an opening number that instantly draws you in.

The album progresses such a manner that it is near-impossible to place the songs in a generalized category. "Beyond the Stares," Sally's account of her childhood sanctuary in the Toy Room, is a gentle, melodic piece, almost like a lullaby. "Bad Seed" kicks off with a wonderfully smooth guitar lick and quickly settles into a catchy groove, nicely carried by some solid drumming courtesy of Eric Flint. The production of this record is quite striking by this point; each instrument packs a great deal of punch, with everything from overdubs to background effects crystal clear in the mix. The last song covering Sally's childhood years, "No Crying Here," expands on the vibe of the previous track quite nicely, with the jazzy character of Marcelin's guitar and Sally's vocals making a great pairing.

Act 2 is a markedly different affair, musically and thematically, as Sally's life hits a downward spiral after marrying a white trash husband and being relegated to a life of trailer park living. It's all a bit deadpan as Sally details her "personal nightmare." Though lacking the spaciness and variety of Act 1, tracks like "Broken Machine" and "Air" are quite nice. The contrast between Sally's pouty lyrical reflections on her situation and the upbeat music is well done.

Our main protagonist's escape from the situation in Act 3 makes for some of the most entertaining tracks on the CD. Things take a much more rockin' style in "Saturday Night," while "Night Scene" has the catchiness of Steve Miller's "Abracadabra" with its oddly infectious digital loops and Sally's galloping, quirky vocals. Act 4, meanwhile, is a dreamweaving collection of songs highlighted by the nine-minutes long "Crowded," which effectively captures the sense of imagination and unreality associated with childhood.

Save for a spoken narrative that occasionally interrupts the flow of the songs, this is an exceptionally well-crafted album. With its rich array of sounds, sparkling production, and fresh take on old themes, *Toy Room* is an immensely satisfying work.

Rating: **A-**



## ROCK OPERA: 'TOY ROOM'

### Artist finds safety hidden in memories

**R**ocker and performance artist Sally Tomato is reluctant to reveal her real name, her age or too much about where she came from beyond admitting that she grew up in a small Oregon town.

But she dug deep for the raw material behind the multimedia rock opera that premieres this weekend.

"Toy Room," named for the place where the young Tomato would find peace as the last of six children, also is the name of the CD recently released by her band, which also goes by Sally Tomato.

The music is the work of guitarist Carlos Severe Marcelin, but the stories are pure Tomato: her difficult childhood, an abusive husband, a period of dangerous debauchery.

"The hardest part was dragging the story out of Sally because a lot of this stuff was difficult to come to terms with," Marcelin says. "It was a victory for her."

Friends told the band the tale needed to be told in a theatrical way, and a rock opera was born.

"We talked about it as a band and said, 'Yeah, that sounds great,'" Marcelin says.

In five performances, actors will portray Sally in various stages of her life while images are projected on video screens and the band calls on musical styles ranging from blues to punk to electronica.

Marcelin, 35, admits the narrative is conventional enough: lost innocence followed by poor choices and then a redemptive return to authenticity.

"It has a lot of classic symbolism," he says. "The fact



©2008 H. RIGGS PHOTOGRAPHY

Performance artist Sally Tomato (front) gets support from Innocence (Tricia Beck, right) and Destiny (Cynthia Chimienti) in the rock opera "Toy Room."

that it delivers a solution and a message at the end makes it worthy of being told."

"There is a message," Tomato says. "What we're trying to tell people is when you're in an unfamiliar place in your life that isn't comfortable, go back in your imagination and remember who you are."

"I learned to make the best of any situation. I never feel like I had a bad life. Other people told me I did."

While the band didn't set out to make a rock opera, Marcelin is confident in the product. The

Florida native studied classical composition and theory in college, but also has been in rock bands since he was 12.

"It's a risky genre, but we're doing it because we need to," he says. "I'm amazed at how cohesive and powerful it is. It's hard to be objective, but I cry when I listen to it."

—Eric Bartels

7 p.m. and 9 p.m. FRIDAY and SATURDAY, 1 p.m. SUNDAY (all ages), Wonder Ballroom, 128 N.E. Russell St., 503-284-8686, \$19



# Portland monthly

## on the town

### Sally Tomato's Toy Room

**Apr 4-6** Portland musician/performance artist Sally Tomato and her band mount a multimedia rock opera about an isolated, imaginative child who grows into an unhappy adult. Can Sally overcome the effects of a dismal marriage by rediscovering the quirky child

she once was? The answer unfolds in songs and vivid production numbers reminiscent of a female-centric version of *Tommy*. *Fri-Sat at 7 & 9; Sun at 1. \$19. Wonder Ballroom, 128 NE Russell St. 503-284-8686. www.wonderballroom.com*



## five live

Promising shows coming your way

**1 "The Toy Room"** Portland songwriter Sally Tomato and her band stage an ambitious multimedia rock opera about the usual rock opera themes: imagination, personal freedom and growing up. *7 and 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 1 p.m. Sunday, Wonder Ballroom, 128 N.E. Russell St.; \$19, www.ticketmaster.com*



### WWJ Toy Room

Local Björk-ish performer Sally Tomato premieres her new rock opera. Or, more accurately, her world-jam/alt-country/prog-pop opera, about (what else?) Tomato's childhood, chaotic adolescence and struggle to regain lost innocence. Proceeds from the show benefit Portland Women's Crisis Line. *Wonder Ballroom, 128 NE Russell St., 284-8686. 7 and 9 pm Friday-Saturday (21+), 1 pm Sunday (all ages). Closes April 6. \$19.*

## Sally Tomato toy room

the rock opera

### PREMIERES:

April 4th 7:00 and 9:00 PM  
April 5th 7:00 and 9:00 PM  
April 6th 1:00 PM (All Ages)

### Wonder Ballroom

128 NE Russell

Tickets \$19 + service charge through Ticketmaster or Music Millennium

[www.sallytomato.com](http://www.sallytomato.com)

[www.myspace.com/toyroompdx](http://www.myspace.com/toyroompdx)



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## just out

**Sally Tomato** presents *Toy Room*, a rock opera that chronicles the enigmatic performance artist's chaotic life story, from an imaginative youth to an abusive marriage, April 4-6 at Wonder Ballroom. Proceeds benefit Portland Women's Crisis Line. *(7 and 9 pm Friday and Saturday, 1 pm Sunday. 128 NE Russell St. \$19 from box office or Ticketmaster.)*



Wednesday, April 02, 2008

[This week's LivePDX.com music blog](#)

Think that rock operas are dead? A new one called [Toy Room](#) by performance artist [Sally Tomato](#) premieres April 4-6 at the [Wonder Ballroom](#). A soundtrack album has already been released and a DVD of the performance will be released in the fall. Proceeds go to [Portland Women's Crisis Line](#).

According to what they sent me, the show "chronicles the life story of the enigmatic Sally Tomato. Touching on her childhood and hurtling into a chaotic adult life, the story line moves through an abusive marriage on its way to rediscovering the innocence of youth. Throughout the play, Sally struggles to regain the ability she had as a child to rise above the mundane via her imagination. In the end she triumphs, finding that the toy room has always existed in her own mind – and reminding us that it exists in ours as well."

Sounds like a chick thing.

One of the happiest elements of the show is the return to the dance world of [Clynthia Chimienti](#) who came out of the late great PSU dance program and who hasn't been active for the past few years while getting her masters and launching her counseling practice. She does the choreography and plays the part of "Destiny."

Posted by Tom D'Antoni at [10:14 AM](#) 

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 4 - SUNDAY, APRIL 6 - Sally Tomato's [Toy Room](#) at Wonder Ballroom**

I have to admit I don't know much about Sally Tomato (perhaps that's why the press materials call her "enigmatic"). But I've been hearing buzz about this "ambitious multimedia performance" for weeks, and the message of Tomato's autobiographical story intrigues me on a personal level: rediscovering the power of imagination to triumph over hardships. Just like spending time with children, this is a wake-up call all adults could use. Fittingly, the no-holds-barred combination of music, film, dance, performance and visual set design will bring our (perhaps a bit too stagnant) imaginations to a new level. Plus, I just can't resist anything called a "rock opera." Shows are Friday and Saturday at 7:00 & 9:00pm, plus an all-ages matinee on Sunday at 1:00pm. Tickets are \$19.

Liz Hummer, *Editor*

# Toy Room

## Film Awards



**Monday, April 7, 2008**

**Artsy Review: *Toy Room***

**Posted by Abe Ingle on Mon, Apr 7 at 2:28 PM**



[Sally Tomato](#) are a local rock band. An ambitious local rock band who decided to go big and make a rock opera, and then actually did it. *Toy Room* offers a tasteful use of props, multiple projection screens, and live camera work. The only fault in the show, unfortunately, is a lack of experience. The original rock opera, in four acts, follows the star, Sally Tomato, from her childhood to her middle age, as she moves through various psychological and physical traumas. These acts, while making good use of video, lighting, and props, would have been better served by richer characterization and more focused acts.

In the first act we are introduced to Sally as a little girl, and given the circumstances that will set her on her path. Unfortunately, we only see three characters, and all of them are Sally. This lack of characters hurts not only the plot, but also the choreography, for throughout most of the show, Sally (or multiple Sallys) is the only one on stage, and thus has very little to interact with. In their defense, choreographing psychological issues is one of the harder things to pull off, and I don't think that Sally Tomato, as a theater company, is quite there yet. The video work for the first act, however, was actually quite impressive, and when combined with the narrator, gave the video-heavy scenes a *Virgin Suicides* quality that served the story very strongly.

The non-Sally characters, including her husband, don't even have names, and when they do enter, they are only around for a few scenes and tend to represent stereotypes rather than individual characters with depth. Most of the scenes and characters seem to be tools to get from point A to point B, rather than important elements in and of themselves. These unfinished elements, combined with quite a few instances of feedback and video malfunction, led me to the conclusion that *Toy Room* isn't ready for prime time. My friend, who saw the show with me, liked it quite a bit, and put forth the argument that I was unfair to hold a rock band to professional theater standards, but I argue that it would be unfair not to. Sally Tomato obviously cares about this project quite a bit, and put a lot into it—probably everything they had. Unfortunately, that doesn't include experience.

*Toy Room* ran April 4-6 at the Wonder Ballroom

How would *you* tell your life story?

*By Dr. David Conant-Norville*

As a psychiatrist, I have been asking children and adults to share their memories for over 25 years. Toy Room is Sally Tomato's expressive reflection on her personal life experiences and choices presented as a bold and creative rock opera. The emotion, honesty, and humor of Toy Room is fresh, engaging, accessible to all, yet psychodynamically complex. Having experienced the rock opera, viewed the video, as well as listening to the sound track for more than 20 times, I am struck by the fact that I seem to learn something new with each visit to the Toy Room.

Sally is the youngest of a large family, "the forgotten child." She is "loved and cared for", but not given much direction. As a shy child, she experiences confidence and happiness in the Toy Room where she is free to express herself and create her own imaginary world "with her own explanation for what she observes." She describes herself as being "by myself but never alone." She has a chance to try on different characters during her play. One of her favorite characters is "a little girl who has a perfect home life but who is decidedly and secretly evil."

Life is good until the onset of puberty, as signaled by her final chance to have a new doll for Christmas. Sally receives pressure to pick the beautiful and glamorous doll her mother would want, but she spies a lonely doll in a dusty box in the corner of the store. This doll has big eyes and a frozen tear, emblematic of Sally's future life.

Sally's shyness and naivety during her adolescence sets her up to become a follower and an outsider as she tries to fit in. No longer can she literally escape to the Toy Room for solace. She is victimized by the first guy that she cares about but is unable to talk to others. Her solution to this dilemma is to retreat to the "Toy Room" in her mind, again, a place where she is safe and is in control.

Into adulthood, Sally idealizes a young man who saves her from her adolescent experience and then she marries him. Soon her fantasy of an ideal marriage is dashed and she finds herself trapped, depressed and in her "personal nightmare" with an alcoholic husband. Even when the couple is able to move out of the trailer park and buy a middleclass home, Sally seems unhappy. She plays the role of a dutiful wife, all the time wishing that she was free. She seems to cope by "walking on air", a reference to a mental escape to the fantasies she previously enjoyed in The Toy Room. After several years of psychotherapy she develops the courage and makes the decision to divorce and start a new chapter in her life.

Sally moves to "The Big City", finds a new set of friends and enters the exciting and frenetic singles nightlife. Unfortunately, this life does not make Sally happy so she goes on long drives in the country. During one of these trips she runs off the road and is injured. The delirium caused by head injury puts Sally into a dreamlike fight for survival and life's meaning. The inner child from The Toy Room urges her to recover and find new meaning in life. Sally eventually recovers to write and share her story with all of us.

While the story is compelling and honest, the presentation is genius. The group has created rock opera with rich and meaningful lyrics, supported by a creative and innovative musical score. The play and video adds a visual experience component of dance, costume and drama. The Toy Room is a constantly moving and engaging work of art. Humor and sadness, irony and reconciliation keep the audience's attention while the eclectic musical score pulls it all together and gives the production its underlying emotional context. Sally's vocals and Carlos' instrumentals blend in a perfect marriage to create a production with staying power. Every time I listen to the sound track I discover new symbolism in the music and lyrics. I feel as if I am receiving little gifts from Sally and Carlos.

The Toy Room is a tribute to the creative need to tell one's own story. On a shoe-string budget and fuelled by passion, many friends, and volunteer commitment, the rock opera was presented to great reviews in Portland, Oregon, and the movie will soon be out on DVD. Toy Room is suitable and understandable to children from age 12 to 102 but really appeals to the most adult traits in all of us, wanting to care for and nurture our "inner child".

Bravo Sally and Carlos,

Dr. David Conant-Norville, MD



Sky PDX Internet Radio plays Toy Room soundtrack in its entirety

May 2008



August 2005

**Pabst Blue Ribbon**

**SALLY TOMATO**

To be honest, Sally Tomato is quite possibly off her rocker.

With multi-instrumentalist Carlos Marcelin tossing off Mark Ribot-like guitar flourishes, Sally appears to be half Kate Pierson, and half the character that Glenn Close played in *Fatal Attraction*. Their newest release *Concentration* is a kitsch filled romp with songs about dolls, aliens, and the Feline Research Institute. It's a group well worth seeing, but you might want to hide the rabbits.

For more info go to: [severeenterprises.com](http://severeenterprises.com)

[PabstBlueRibbon.com](http://PabstBlueRibbon.com)

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sept 9, 10, 11, 2004

# musicfestnw

PRESENTED BY BRIDGEPORT AND WILLAMETTE WEEK



## <>Sally Tomato

Sally Tomato is more complex than introspective, acoustic folk-rock. This is a band capable of smart lyrical left turns and a full sound that swings from rock to folk to salsa barrages. (RS)  
**[Alternative]**

*Sally Tomato plays at **Lolas** at 10:00, **Saturday Sept. 11***

**A&E Oregonian**  
**October 2004**

**Sally Tomato:** Expanding the lineup to include drummer Eric Flint, Sally Tomato has also gone electric and is appearing in Portland, to support the new album "Concentration".



*The Fevered Brain of Radio Mike*

*Sep 19, 05 | 10:55 pm*

My Darlin' Neurons:

Sally Tomato is Strange Antifolk and Great Lyrics, Obsessively great lyrics. Listen to the Amazingly Clean and erotic Nosferatu. It will leave you Wondering where All of this came from. Here's a Musician that definitely needs to Play at the Sidewalk in NYC. And then It's the World.

<http://thefeveredbrainofradiomike.com/>

*Googlism*

## sally tomato

sally tomato is quite the story

sally tomato is compiled by the most friendly aldo and covers a lot of girliebands such as the muffs

sally tomato is playing catch

sally tomato is clear and present

sally tomato is the most original poet/singer/songwriter to hit town since earl benson retired

sally tomato is all of the above and more



## Soup – Sally Tomato

*Self-Produced*

Many people know of Carlos Marcelin's brilliant work as guitarist for the band Silkenseed. His brilliance is no less effulgent here. However, let it be said right now that Carlos hit a grand slam home run the day he ran into Sally Tomato. Sally Tomato. Is she the product of Artificial Intelligence? Is she a figment of some deranged scientist's libidinally twisted mentation? Is she the 21st century uberfrau? Is she all of the above? Indeed she is, and more. Sally Tomato is all of the above and more. Much, much more.

Sally Tomato was born a million years ago on the Jovian moon Io. Her mother was Dorothy Parker. Her father: Lenny Bruce. Her brother is Wild Man Fischer. Her sister is Maggie Roche. Her uncle is Pee Wee Herman. Her aunt is Laurie Anderson. She is the only child of an only child. She created herself in the breakroom of a Goodyear tire factory in Akron, Ohio. She cannot see the color orange. She picks up the signals of high-powered Mexican radio station in the fillings of her teeth. She once helped a chimpanzee to memorize the first three acts of Hamlet. Sally Tomato once ate a jar of Miracle Gro, and it was a miracle! She grew. She once ate dirt and shat a brick. Sally Tomato has three hearts. Sally Tomato once made an asshole disappear. It reappeared in Bogota, Columbia, working for a provisional military junta: which was overthrown the following year. Sally Tomato hears all your thoughts. She writes them down on small pieces of rice paper and sets them afloat upon the Willamette River. Sally Tomato sleeps with one eye open.

Sally Tomato is the most original poet/singer/songwriter to hit town since Earl Benson retired. She is hip. She is raunchy. She is totally on the money. She wants to be your Nutty Buddy. That could be a problem. Sally Tomato has a way with words. She is one of a kind. They threw away the mold. Sally Tomato is a fine addition to soups and salads. Ask for Sally Tomato aspic.

Put Sally Tomato on your Christmas gift list. Ask Santa for Sally Tomato. She is not unbreakable. She is not returnable. There are no refunds or exchanges. Do not remove tag. Buy Sally Tomato. Be Sally Tomato. Sally Tomato. She is one of a kind.

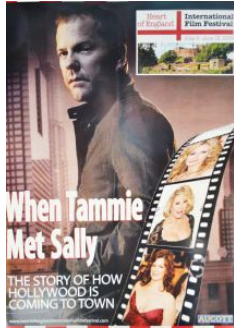
And Carlos Marcelin is a truly brilliant guitarist.



Sally Tomato is clear and present. More speak-sing ballads than music nuggets, it is their story-hour lyrics that are front and center. Oh sure, there are angry flamenco guitars and occasional wailing harmonicas, but her matter-of-fact voice creates a palatable yearning.

## April 2013

### Look At The Muck On 'Ere!



April 5, 2013

*CROWN PRINCE OF INDEPENDENT FILM: When Tammie Met Sally at the Tamworth Tinseltown movie festival in 2009*

DUNCAN DANLEY GIVES IT TO YOU STRAIGHT

Ready, T.E.D.-dy, go for a Transformations, Emotional Deconstruction film trailer

THE Internet is either 42 or a shade over 30 years old, depending which you consider was the most influential – the ARPAnet or TCP/IP protocol.

The ARPAnet, the 'predecessor' of the actual Internet, was born in November 1969. But it wasn't until January 1983 that ARPAnet shifted to TCP/IP.

Now, thanks to the interconnectivity of convenience provided by the Internet, we can all express our emotions to the world community in ways we never thought possible.

Each day millions use a myriad of blogs and other online outlets to discuss how they are feeling on an endless array of topics ranging from superficial thoughts on the quality of one's 'hair day' to cringing, intimate considerations of love and betrayal.

There are even cries for help on saving a life when someone's contemplating trying to end their stay on Earth.

Every subtle increment on the scale of the human emotional condition is expressed but sadly, due to the enormity of information available, many of these expressions are buried within a sea of noise.

Following that internet theme, I've picked up on something from an old acquaintance who I met on my travels in a 'former life' where, incredibly, I found myself taking over and running the largest independent film-makers festival in the UK.

And the Heart of England International Film Festival (HEIFF) was held just down the Watling Street from my current home.

For one week in the early part of June 2009, Tamworth – more than 1,000 years ago the unofficial Saxon capital of Britain – was able to claim a new crown as the movie festival head of the UK.

The week-long festival began at Tamworth's ancient castle, which was founded by King Alfred's daughter Etheelfeda and the credits rolled on 5,000 minutes of movie magic in 150 screenings – binding the continents with celluloid from Cambodia through Croatia to Costa Rica and beyond.

Some 62 directors representing 31 different countries showed up to see their films – starring such luminaries as Keifer Sutherland, Nick Nolte, Pierce Brosnan, Joan Rivers, even son of Superman – Matthew Reeve.

Special gala guest was Market Harborough's most famous actor Jeremy Bullock – twice playing Q's assistant Smithers in Bond films For Your Eyes Only and Octopussy plus Boba Fett in Star Wars.

The town's Odeon cinema staged a movie premiere starring EastEnders actress Tamzin Outhwaite and Bosworth Battlefield, where a king lost his crown, made a dramatic late entrance as the venue for the festival's final day.

Tamworth became Tinseltown as the area's own budding film-makers – including Crust writer and director Mark Locke – got the chance to touch the Hollywood stardust.

And Tamworth got a Hollywood dream factory shoe-in when the legendary creators of Toy Room – one of the few rock opera films ever made – graced the week with their presence.

The main cast member – Sally Tomato – gave me the chance to promote the whole event as When Tammie Met Sally, inserting the name given to the residents of the Staffordshire town in place of 'Harry'.

The rock opera's writer Carlos Severe Marcelin collected one of the 25 Heartys for Best Feature Under 75 Minutes at the festival's 'Oscars' gala night

Which brings me nicely – four years on – back to today. Carlos is still hard at work with his Severe Enterprises business <http://www.severeenterprises.com/>

And now he's created T,E.D. (if you like Teddy bears you'll love it) where he aims to give a literal voice and physical presence to a portion of content expressed in real-time.

Let's see if I can explain. T,E.D. (Transformations, Emotional Deconstruction) is a large, wall-based installation consisting of an array of up to 80 Teddy Ruxpin dolls that speak emotional content gathered from the web via synthetic speech with animated mouths.

CARLOS SEVERE MARCELIN: Award-winning writer and director

The speaking of the content is accompanied by one of 24 musical vignettes written by Carlos – each composed in such a way that the beginnings and ends of the short pieces will seamlessly dogleg in any possible configuration and stream endlessly as a unified whole.

The installation is allowed to drift about freely through the emotional landscape being driven only by those who are contributing content to the piece whether unwittingly or consciously.

As such, the overall presentation of the piece can vary greatly – based on external conditions such as seasons, world events and even time of day.

The instantaneous emotional pulse of the internet, like a human one, varies over time.

See for yourself and watch the T,E.D. promotional video on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=yJ6tcq4n9EU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=yJ6tcq4n9EU)

Are you ready, T,E.D.-dy . . . GO.



sept 9, 10, 11, 2004

# musicfestnw

PRESENTED BY BRIDGEPORT AND WILLAMETTE WEEK



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### **Billboard Magazine- May 15th, 1999**

"Sowing Seeds: If you combine the best elements of Hootie & the Blowfish and matchbox 20, you'd get something mighty close to Silkenseed-: A Portland OR outfit that glides through its fine self-made disc "Hurry Home" with equal parts strumming acoustic-soul and aggressive modern rock.

At the core of the band is Hamilton Sims, the primary singer/tunesmith, who possesses a worldly baritone that belies his youth. He's particularly strong on the hit-worthy "Dead Letter" waxing poetic in the best troubadour tradition. Elsewhere, tunes like 'Benchwarming' and 'The Well-Adjusted Horse' have the kind of instant, concise pop hooks and tight guitar/rhythm interplay that mainstream rock has begun to embrace. Having honed its live chops for several years now, Silkenseed-whose lineup includes Edwin Paroissien (guitar), Carlos Marcelin (guitar), Monica Arce (flute), Randy Montgomery (bass) and Eric Flint (drums) - has an earthy free-form vibe that cult followings are made of.

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### **North by Northwest**

#### **NxNW 1998 Critics picks**

THE ROCKET The new album from Silkenseed is called Hurry Home and it's as broken in and comfortable as its name implies, like an easy chair in front of the fire. The Seed don't stress or strain; their music pours out of the woofers with a relaxed sincerity. On songs like "Benchwarming" and "The Well-Adjusted Horse," the band demonstrates a grown-up hippy ease with melody and dynamics that should play well with alt-rockers fed up with faceless grunge clones.(JC)

---

WILLAMETTE WEEK Silkenseed and Marcy Playgound may spark chicken and egg debates amongst future KNRK listeners. At once airy and intense, this Portland six-piece is a more intricate and subtle alternative to the already popular, aforementioned band. Come see them perform songs off their recent release Hurry Home (Rainforest) before they, too start drawing the big crowds.(JF)

---

THE OREGONIAN Too bad not all prog rock can be as inviting as that of these New Orleans-to-Portland transplants. Arty closet folkies with a hippie jam-band aesthetic, Silkenseed has a fluid, freewheeling music that makes for fascinating listening. The formula isn't without its faults, but this sextet hits many more targets that it misses, as reflected on its remarkable sophomore release "Hurry Home."(ME)

# IN MUSIC WE TRUST

Silkenseed  
Hurry Home (Rainforest Records)  
By: Alex Steininger

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Part of Portland, Oregon's ever-increasing pop-rock scene, Silkenseed blends an array of emotions with a down-to-earth pop sound. Able to rock you one minute, and then tap a nerve the next, the songs they've constructed have blossomed into a mature collection on HURRY HOME.

"Benchwarming" starts off with a pop center, soft and gentle in nature, then builds on top of that. The guitars lean towards a rock platform one minute, and the next minute they too embrace the top-40 pop sound. Hamilton Sims' vocals are the emotional drive here, bringing to life the lyrics with every painful release. Even lines that aren't that emotional feel emotional when coming from his mouth. His voice is pain-stricken and torn, yet still manages to leave the angst at home and paint the sky with truth and realism.

"Typhoid Mary" shows an even gentler sound of the band. Focusing on the pop side of their pop-rock sound, this time around the guitars eagerly follow the pace of the song and stay on the gentle side. The band seems to be at harmony with each other -- the band sounds very tight, carrying themselves nicely through each hook-filled journey.

"Safeway" reflects the band's love of the Dave Matthews Band. If you aren't careful, you could mistake this as a Dave Matthews original. The diverse instrumentation found throughout a Dave Matthews album is present, and the zany flavor Dave brings to his music is also common place on this song (as well as throughout the album).

Jumping into some hard rock, "Virlie Graves" finds the band too far out of their comfort zone. The song is loud and obnoxious, almost as if the band is trying to be something totally different than what is presented on the album. The hard rock format completely alienates the listener from the pop melodies on the album, and will quickly turn your good experiences sour. The same is true for "Heartburn." Although, this time they get a little softer and more pop-driven. But the guitars still spit out the thick, crunchy riffs, which don't mix with the rest of the song. After hearing this song you get the feeling these guys are all ex-metalheads and are trying to go soft due to the changing tides of the musical waves. Not a good feeling to get when you're listening to emotional pop.

Off to a good start, Silkenseed was able to keep the momentum alive for a good portion of the disc. Near the end though, they drifted down hill. They went from crafty hooks and an emotional appeal to your standard pop formula. They tried to bring themselves out of a ditch by mixing things up a bit, but their attempts at hard rock found them face first in the dirt. I'll give this disc a B-.







## **The Oregonian, Oregon/Washington- June 26, 1998**

### **Sprouting Wings**

*Silkenseed keeps it simple on its second CD, and its new; smart sound simply soars*

During that quiet lull between happy hour and the noisy bustle that signals the start of the evening proper, Silkenseed vocalist Hamilton Sims sums up his musical philosophy over a margarita in a Northwest Portland jazz club.

"It's very American to put yourself into a box and say, 'This is who I am and this is what I do and that's all.'"

"I don't buy it. There are a lot of colors to choose from. It doesn't matter if you use them or not, you owe it to yourself as a musician to know that they exist."

Guitarist Carlos Marcelin agrees: "As a band, our catch phrase for '98 is 'cosmopolitan.' We don't want to be limited by anything."

That eclectic declaration is the guiding premise behind Silkenseed's second CD, "Hurry Home", out now on Portland's Rainforest Records. A deft collection of modern rock songs, "Hurry home" has an intimate sense of discovery and a thoughtful delivery that was less prominent on the group's debut album, last year's self-released "Spawn."

Where "Spawn" suffered from an overload of blustery and bombastic anthems, with the band reaching deep to fill up every possible square inch of sonic space, "Hurry Home" is a more compact and focused record.

The drums and percussion are crisply centered in the mix, and the guitars and amps have been turned down from the ever-popular Spinal Tap volume of "11" to more discernible levels. Most noticeably, Monica Arce's flute work has been transformed from the sharp tones that earned Silkenseed a lot of easy Jethro Tull references into a more versatile range of sounds. Her piping is treated almost like a keyboard on the CD, a great leap forward for the group. Originally known as "Geraldine Fischer" in their hometown of New Orleans- the name change was prompted by the existence of the West Coast act the Geraldine Fibbers- the members of Silkenseed were students at New Orleans' Tulane University, playing together in various configurations since 1990.

"Musically, New Orleans is an intense town," Sims says. "But unless you're in a big name funk band, or you're a blues player, there aren't a lot of venues to play. It's not a big rock scene."

So after graduation, the band packed up and headed west, arriving in Portland at the end of the summer of '94. Says guitarist Edwin Paroissien: "We wanted to go from the urban swamp to the greener outdoors."

Picking up bass player Randy Montgomery in town, Silkenseed continued to hone its distinctive sound, knotty song structures and all.

"Hurry Home" is the end product of that journey and a fair illustration of the group's drive to find that certain balance of musical colors, of "Frank Zappa to Frank Sinatra to Franz Schubert," as Marcelin puts it. As with their promising-if-slightly-awkward first album, the new CD follows similar songwriting patterns and themes about the fearless dissection of human nature.

Songs begin pensively, getting their footing before building in complexity. The opening track, "Dead Letter," sets up a gentle mood counterpointed by the big guitar hooks of "Benchwarming." "Typhoid Mary" is an exercise in adult contemporary pop, and "Stress for Breakfast" is a rainy-day reflection with arty prog-rock touches. "Virile Graves" is a rousing, metal-tinged raveup, with Sims practicing his best stadium-sized fireworks.

The final number, "Windowsong", is the calm after the storm, a lilting flute and acoustic guitar epilogue.

Scattered throughout "Hurry Home" are flourishes of brightness alternating with sparse open spaces, proof that the band has learned how to pare songs down to essentials without losing any of the musical shades available to them.

As Paroissien puts it, "The songwriting has gotten more direct. Every musician figures out sooner or later: Simplicity is golden"

Curt Schulz