

## Mp3 Touchxtone - Three



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Cinematic electronic music ranging from light to dark ambient to Berlin School to deep atmospheres. 7 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Down Tempo, ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes Details: On April 23rd and April 26th of 2003, TouchXtone spent many hours spontaneously composing directly into the recorder. Fast forward to the end of 2003 and Jim embarks on a month-long editing spree that includes not only the April sessions, but the many live recordings the band has done during 2003. "We made a decision to keep the studio and live recordings separate because the moods and recordings themselves are different when you compare the two," explains Combs. "It's quiet in the studio and we have room to finesse the dynamics and tiny sonic details. We do it differently at a live venue where we compete with a live audience. As a result, 'Three' is a very cinematic presentation with lots of depth of field." Michael continues, "Much has been made about the improvisatory nature of TouchXtone music, which is not entirely true, as I find the melodies and sounds I realize are and have been 'lurking' for a while. It's usually just a matter of time and place for the ideas to finally surface. On this CD, I was able to hone in on some samples and loops I had been bandying about, and to contribute some unusual atmospherics. The results are, to me, tremendously satisfying." Michael Thomas Roe A life-long Atlanta resident, Michael Thomas Roe grew up in the wilds of suburbia during the 1970's. Born to rock and born to rule, began playing drums, and thus music, at the tender age of 12. Played garage drum rock supreme through high school, settling in to Athens, Georgia in 1982 for a degree in Telecommunication Arts. Roe played drums in various outfits ("White House China" and "Subject to Change"), catching a glimmer of the then burgeoning Athens scene. Says Michael, "I never met Michael Stipe, but his mother and sister sure are nice." Discovered synthesizers ("Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy" by Brian Eno being a huge influence) early in college and began to piece together strange and personal compositions. He also scored music for local Athens

radio commemorating University of Georgia's Bicentennial (1984). Upon eventual return to Atlanta in 1985, commenced keyboard playing thanks to the ready-made encouragement of other transplanted Athens-mates. Did dance performance accompaniment and free jazz with band labeled "100th Monkey". Other Athens connections bore fruit. He did music scores for, among others, the independent film "Call Waiting" (1991) with cinematographer/director friend Jim Hunter and met his future (now ex) wife. Future ex-wife led to music projects with Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts, "Xperimental Theatre" being one of them, which led to collaboration with local talent (and super nice guy) Barry Suttle. The band "CIN" was born but, like all good things, didn't last. Full frontal attack on the "new age" market in the early 90's led to recording and publishing contract with Atlanta label Rising Star Records. Valuable lessons in record label behavior were eagerly sought and readily delivered. Three CD's were produced which featured Michael: "Forest Cathedrals" (1993), "Seashore Solitude" (1993) and "Lake Infinity" (1996). A period of relative inactivity in the late 90's was highlighted by contributions to two "tribute" CD's to Greek synthesizer king Vangelis, "Threads 1" (1997) and "Threads 2" (1997), and another "tribute" CD to English singer/guitarist/synthesist Bill Nelson, "Confessions of Young Moderns" (2000). Also in 1999, completed original score for radio drama "The Moonlit Road". Has a penchant for random acts, hence responding in 2002 to one Jim Combs, who acted like he knew what he was doing (a rarity these days) and TouchXtone, a synthesized improvised ambient space band, was born. Extolling the virtues of "spontaneous creation" or, more succinctly, "automatic writing", TouchXtone managed to produce two complete CD's of material out of three jam sessions. A head-turning feat, if ever, especially if one considers the results were actually good! Michael's keyboard influences range from the cinematic (Francis Lai, Ennio Morricone) to the experimental electronic (Conrad Schnitzler) and the not so experimental electronic (Hans Joachim Roedelius, Vangelis). He fearlessly continues to play rock drums, citing his other penchant for the wildly extravagant. In addition to 12 TouchXtone releases, Michael has recently completed a collaboration with Tangerine Dream/Kluster founding member Conrad Schnitzler entitled Mi.T.-CON 04 and has several solo works recorded including the electronic classical piece "Cathedral" (2003), which he hopes to issue one day. Jim Combs Jim Combs is an Oklahoma-born and Texas-raised keyboardist/composer, recording producer/engineer and multimedia artist who began his musical forays in the early '70s both playing piano and manipulating tape machines while recording feedback. Synthesizers entered his life in 1974 when he built a PAIA synthesizer kit and heard Rick

Wakeman for the first time on a quadraphonic 8-track copy of *The Six Wives Of Henry VIII*. He has been making noise and music with synthesizers and recording gear ever since. His love of electronics and creative arts led him to a Bachelors of Arts degree in Journalism: Radio, TV, Film from the University of Oklahoma (with several semesters spent in the School Of Music's Electronic Music lab) and a Masters in Interactive Telecommunications from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Along his winding career path, Combs has produced for video, audio, computer-based multimedia, interactive television, and the web. He started his career at CBS Records where he held positions of College Marketing Manager and Single Records Coordinator and got to hang out with just about every late '70s/early '80s music icon on the road at the time. Jim produced his first independent record in 1982 with the post-punk/neo-reggae/power pop Dallas band New Jetz, also playing synthesizers and organ. This led to a "Best Unsigned Band" nod from the Dallas Observer. Jim packed up his keyboards and moved to New York City when a chance arose to learn from famed New York dance producer Boris Midney. Combs engineered sessions for former New Jetz songwriter Kendall Marsh, as well as downtown performers One X One and Steppin' Razor. He also mixed live sound at venues as diverse as Studio 54 and CBGBs. The remaining 12 years in New York saw independent record productions and keyboard sessions for Laura Toy (1986), Major Minor (1989), John Harvey (1991) and The Martians (1993), all the while continuing to compose and produce over 60 of his own eclectic synthesizer music pieces. While moving to Atlanta in 1997, Combs had most of his recording studio and instruments stolen out of the moving van by the moving van drivers. Luckily, insurance covered replacement equipment and with the bevy of new high tech gear, he immediately completed an ambient music and spoken word album for new age spiritualist Katheline Curry. In 2001, Jim produced and performed keyboards and electronic percussion for Atlanta alternative rock newcomer Natasha Goddard's first single. Most recently, as part of TouchXtone, Combs has returned to his first true musical love, making beautiful noise with synthesizers.

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