

## Mp3 Paul Helfrich - Mindscapes



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From the sublime to the ridiculous, the sacred to the profane, Mindscapes are a collection of electronic, techno, ambient instrumentals that mirror the boundless world of dreams and the soul. 22 MP3 Songs

ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes, NEW AGE: Ambient Details: An interview with Paul Helfrich on his new CD: Mindscapes (By Wildfire Media, March 11, 2003) [Paul Helfrich has many interests that reflect his multidisciplinary background. He's studied and taught music at the university level, science education at a leading science museum, and conscious creation through lectures, and online Discussion Forums and essays. He's also writing his first book, Integral Conscious Creation and can be reached at [helfrich@newworldview.com](mailto:helfrich@newworldview.com). We caught up with him on a sunny afternoon at his home studio in Castaic, California, near Los Angeles.] WM: So let's begin with Mindscapes. What are they and how did you come up with the idea? PH: When I studied music back in the 1970s and early 80s, I explored something I called soundscapes - music that was very abstract and didn't really tell a story. But I always knew that my music was full of emotions and feelings, too. And all along I had been studying the work of Jane Roberts and the Seth material, which promoted a cornerstone New Age idea: we each create our own realities. So Mindscapes were born when it finally dawned on me that we each create our own personalized soundscapes regardless of what "the composer" intends. Mindscapes honor the listener since he or she are the one who ultimately bring meaning to the music. Since each person uses his or her own filters, he or she will create something unique, regardless of what I may intend. WM: These are all instrumental pieces, yes? PH: Yes, it's the kind of music that works as background "while you work" music, or crank-it-up-loud music, or even headphone music. Even though I've written songs with lyrics, the mindscapes concept really tailors itself to the imagination of the listener. So they can fill in the gaps, in terms of visual imagery and feeling tones without the bias of language. For example, Mindscapes will

map to a Chinese, Spanish, or German person since they're not dependent on English lyrics. In this sense, Mindscapes aspire to use music as a universal language. WM: But you still use titles that are in English. PH: Well, OK, touch. I can't really escape my own English-speaking roots, but they're only intended to provide a suggestive framework and the titles can be translated into most languages, too. And in the era of the Internet, there's no telling who might enjoy listening to Mindscapes. WM: We do live in an age now where we see indigenous peoples listening to Walkmans and MPEG players, or watching MTV. PH: And I think that's all great. WM: OK, so where did you come up with a title like "Careful with that Ax, Max"? PH: (laughs) Well, that's a personal story. You see I had the unique distinction, when growing up, of having two grandfathers who had both lost their right index fingers at the middle joint. Seriously! One lost his in a middle-aged bakery accident, and the other in a teenage wood chopping accident. We used to joke about it as kids, though we knew had to have been very painful. But chopping off your own finger! You have to laugh to keep from crying. WM: Tell us more about some of the tracks, say "Before the Beginning" and "pi." PH: Well, I already mentioned my interest in the work of Jane Roberts and Seth. "Before the beginning" was a type of Zen koan - intentional paradox to force the rational mind beyond its limits - used by Seth to talk about the creation of our universe. The idea is that it really is, was, and will be created anew in every moment and that ultimately there is no beginning or no end. How can there be a "before" to "the beginning"? Now that's something to get your intellect around! And that's why the track fades in already "in process" and doesn't really have a firm ending, to suggest the eternal nature of human consciousness, while acknowledging that our conscious minds are constantly in flux. WM: What about "pi"? PH: Oh, that's one of my favorites. It's based on the mathematical concept of pi, which is the ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle. In metaphysical terms, the circle is a symbol of divine perfection and eternity. And there are sacred numbers and ratios that can be found in all sorts of levels, from the quantum to the galactic. So this idea of "pi" loosely relates to the formal structure of the track. It modulates through a musical "circle" of keys and returns "home," sonically suggesting an eternal circle. WM: That's pretty subtle. PH: Yes it is, but it's present at an almost subconscious level. It's not something that you have to listen for, though anyone with a classically "trained" ear can hear it. It still works on multiple levels, sort of like circles within circles within circles. WM: That would be like a musical fractal? PH: Exactly! WM: Now I noticed that there are twenty-two tracks on the CD. PH: Yup, over sixty-eight minutes worth of original music. Back in the days of vinyl, all you had to come up with was

around forty minutes. But with CD technology, you have to fill an hour so that folks think they're getting their money's worth. WM: When I first listened to the entire CD, I also noticed that there's a wide range of musical styles present. PH: Yes, that's because I spent a lot of years studying and teaching music, so I learned to love many different types of music. WM: And while there are some tracks that sound like New Age-type music, there are others that sound orchestral, and some that sound like rock music. PH: Exactly. And that suits my eclectic tastes perfectly. My music is hard to label, it doesn't fit in any of the mainstream categories because it wasn't written as a product for the record companies to vanilla-ize or flavor of the month-itize. I'll leave it up to others to pigeonhole. I also didn't want to create another mellow New Age harp and synthesizer CD, though there are some tracks of what I call "ambient music" on Mindscapes. But you see, this is where the mindscapes concept allows me to explore wherever my mind and the listener's mind can go. And there's really no limit, only my imagination and ability as a composer. WM: So what are some of your biggest musical influences? PH: I always say the six B's - Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Bartok, Bernstein, and the Beatles. That generally covers modern and postmodern music. But I've also been influenced by Stravinsky and progressive rock, particularly Kansas, Yes, ELP, Jethro Tull, and 90's grunge. And of course, I enjoy listening to many different kinds of music - World, Motown, Classical, New Age, Rock, Metal, Techno, Jazz, and so on. WM: Now, there are a couple of tracks on the CD that use some dissonant harmonies. I mean it's not something that you're going to hum or dance or meditate to. PH: If you're referring to "Shadows Know" or "Cancer Man"... WM: Yes... PH: Well, it's important for any artistic statement I make to deal with the fact that life is not all love and light, though those are certainly noble ideals to aspire to. But all light comes with shadows, and the shadows are part of the whole experience, so I don't want to gloss them over. I want to honor them, too. So "Shadows Know" is an exploration of the mystery of the subconscious mind and those parts of our conscious minds that seem automatic. They have to be to ensure survival of the body and make the conscious mind possible in the first place. WM: What about "Cancer Man"? PH: Well, I loved the Chris Carter TV show The X-Files. And there was this "bad guy" character who was all too human, and did his best within his own values, but was really consumed by unspeakable evil. And he chain smoked cigarettes, hence the name Cancer Man. So that track is a musical depiction of the jagged, bent, unharmonious nature of evil. WM: So it's an homage to ... I don't know, Satan? (imitating the Saturday Night Live comedian Dana Carvey.) PH: (laughs) Don't even go there, though I realize that it's the nature

of the mindscapes concept to allow for that kind of interpretation. But personally, I don't believe in a humanized Ultimate Bad Guy. That's a childhood fairy tale, but doesn't negate the reality that people and Nature participate in some horrific creations. WM: I really liked "Do Robots Dream?" and "Road to Valhalla." PH: Well, those are two of my favorites, too. The "Do Robots Dream?" mindscapes are loosely based upon the work of Phillip K. Dick, who inspired one of my top five all time favorite movies Blade Runner, and Ken Wilber's Boomeritis. The whole idea of AI (artificial intelligence) and silicon-based life forms evolving along side of humans is very evocative and something we'll see played out in our lifetimes. And "Road to Valhalla" explores that whole adolescent warrior vibe that says in no uncertain terms, "F\*\*k with me, and I will kick your ass!" WM: Well, I won't do that! PH: (laughing) It's just a mindscape... WM: Ok, whew! Let's move on now to the CD cover. Why the chicken crossing a road? PH: Exactly! WM: .... PH: (Smiling) It's intended to simply make you ask "Why?" That's the basic question we ask over and over. It's part of what makes us distinctly human and fuels every mindscape. "Why am I here?" Why did do things work the way they do?" "Why do I ask why?" Even though it's a childhood joke, it's also a Zen koan in terms of basic existence. "Why do I cross the road?" One of my teachers would say, "For the experience!" And that always leads to further questions, which is also fundamental to the mindscape concept. WM: Well it looks like the chicken makes to the other side on the inside cover. PH: And so life goes. WM: And so does our time. Thanks a lot and best of luck with your new CD! PH: Thank you, and be sure to tell all your friends that the Mindscapes website is at [cafemuse.com/mindscapes](http://cafemuse.com/mindscapes). You can listen to forty-five-second previews of all twenty-two tracks and then buy it if you like it.

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