

# PROGULATOR

A MUSIC BLOG FOR THE PSEUDO SOPHISTICATED LISTENER

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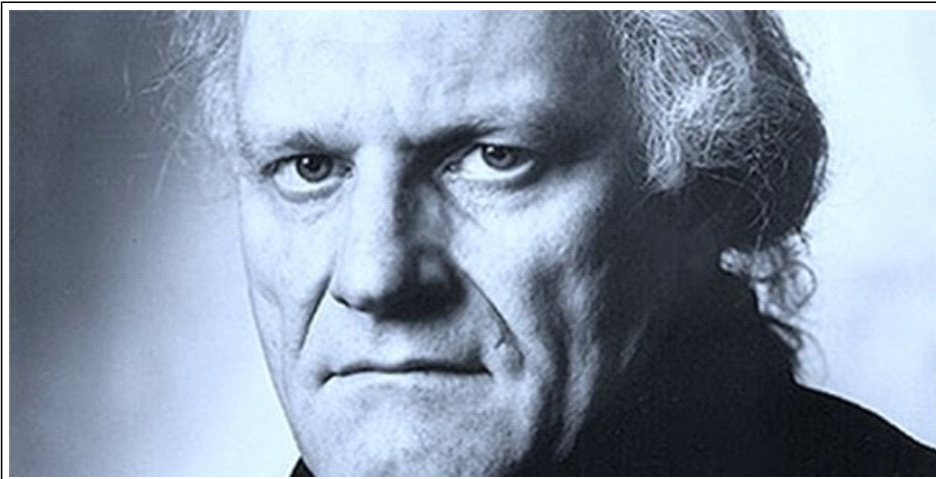
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## Copernicus: Worthless

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Curtis Smith September 12, 2013

Reviews



The words you are reading. The screen you are seeing. The air you are breathing. The sound of this album; everything you think you are sensing is atoms. And deep inside those atoms is truth. This post and your perceived “reading” or “agreement” or “disagreement” is—the lie. Because deep down in the quantum of matter the atoms swirl and boil and what is on this page one moment is something completely rearranged and different the next. This review does not exist. Your screen does not exist. You, me, society—nothing exists. Nothingness. Where is its worth? It has none. It is all *probably* worthless.

But, since we’re still experiencing something, albeit lies and/or non-existence. Let’s connect one moment’s atoms to the next’s. We’ll have to take what we can get and for lack of a more truthful word we’ll call it sentience. Maybe I’m lying to you about the illusion or the unnamable but it’ll have to do for the time being if we’re going to get through this review.

A chronological discography sums up Copernicus’s unflinching cosmological philosophy and lays to rest any notions that he’s just putting on a show: *Nothing Exists* (1985), *Victim of the Sky* (1986), *Deeper* (1987), *Null* (1990), *No Borderline* (1993), *Immediate Eternity* (2001), *Disappearance* (2009), *Cipher and Decipher* (2011).

His latest album, *Worthless* (MoonJune, 2012), continues the nearly 30-year struggle. Like many earlier works, *Worthless* is a monologue mixed with singing and backing vocals that are supported by art-rock-inspired improvisation and instrumental interludes. This 17-member ensemble wields an eclectic arsenal of about forty instruments ranging from the standard electric guitars and keyboards to less common accouterments like the siku-flute and slide trumpet. The vocals begin with a conversational tone and build to a gravelly crescendo of passionate, and often violent, pleading—with the band following suit. Sari Schorr’s lyrical interjections and impressive vocal facility play a vital role as the melodic foil to Copernicus’s spoken presence.

The album unfolds like a liturgy—Minister Copernicus delivering a sermon to the backdrop of a praise band. It begins with Copernicus’s views of the quantum as truth in tracks 1-3 (Quantum Mechanics, You Are not Your

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Composition	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Musicianship	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Production	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Originality	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Nothingness	

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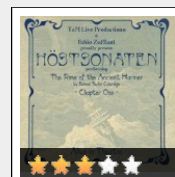
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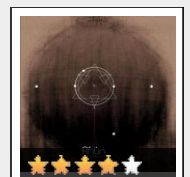
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### HOW WE RATE THINGS

Progulator uses a 5 Star system (similar to [progarchives](#)) to rate the albums we review. Half stars should be self explanatory.

★★★★★ - An essential addition to anyone's prog collection. This album is probably on the "who's who" of prog albums, or will be in the future.

★★★★☆ - A great addition to any prog collection. Recommended to all, but non-essential.

★★★☆☆ - A good album, especially if you are into the

Body, You are the Subatomic). The opening moments of “Quantum Mechanics” give a good idea of the overall musical textures that the band will stick with throughout. From the quantum view of truth the subject becomes the illusion of existence in tracks 4-5 (What is Existence, You Are the Illusion I Perceive). The music continues its function as a collectively improvised vocal support and there some moments, particularly in “You Are the Illusion I Perceive” where the band gets into a groove that locks in with the message and feel of the spoken words. From the recognition of illusion comes the realization of futility and worthlessness in tracks 6-8 (Everlasting Freedom, A Hundred Trillion Years, Worthless). These feel very similar to the preceding 5 tracks. “A Hundred Trillion Years is probably the height of Copernicus’s passion. I can’t describe it. You just have to hear it to get the full effect.

Throughout this album there is a general disconnect between the improvisation of the band and the vocals. The improvisation is constant and interesting but my ear craves more structure and interaction between the band and the monologue. It is as if Copernicus is writing his message in giant letters, over and over and over again, on a monochrome surface. When the band and the vocals interact, the rhetoric, although thoroughly didactic, becomes more palatable and I am more inclined to focus the message of the lyrics. For example, in track 5, “You Are the Illusion I Perceive,” the band moves from collective improvisation into a quasi gospel-country style ballad, led by Sari’s vocal ostinato, that is peppered with interjections and melodies played in distant keys. You can feel the two worlds in pulling apart as Copernicus tells the sad story of a conflicted, love-struck non-entity’s realization that even love is an illusion. There, in that moment I caught get a glimpse of what he was getting at these last 30 years: Nothingness. Atoms. Emptiness.

But we’ve made it to the end of the review somehow—despite the swirl of atoms and the chaos of the subatomic. Remember what I said in those middle paragraphs about the band having all those members, the music feeling like a sermon, and the disconnect between the improvisation and the vocals? I’d like to think that they exist. I hope this paragraph exists as well because it’s where I’ll wrap things up. I think *Worthless* is worth listening to—regardless of your musical inclinations or the fact that it may or may not exist. And that whole existence issue. I’ll just keep connecting one moment’s subatomic chaos to the next, paragraph after paragraph, album after album, and find joy somewhere in the mix. Call it the illusion I perceive or life or sentience or what you will. That call is your own review to write.

## About the Author



If it's out there—whatever that means—he'll dig it. With a few degrees in music and a doctorate in the works (Composition, IU, Bloomington) Curtis Smith is always on the lookout for something that balances the cerebral and visceral.

## Related Posts



specific style. Recommended for fans of the band or style. Non-essential.

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ - A mediocre album, best left to fans of the band/style, or hardcore collectors. Not recommended.

★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ - A very poor album, not recommended for anyone except hardcore fans or completionists.

★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ - Probably going to end up in next year's "Biggest Fails" category.

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