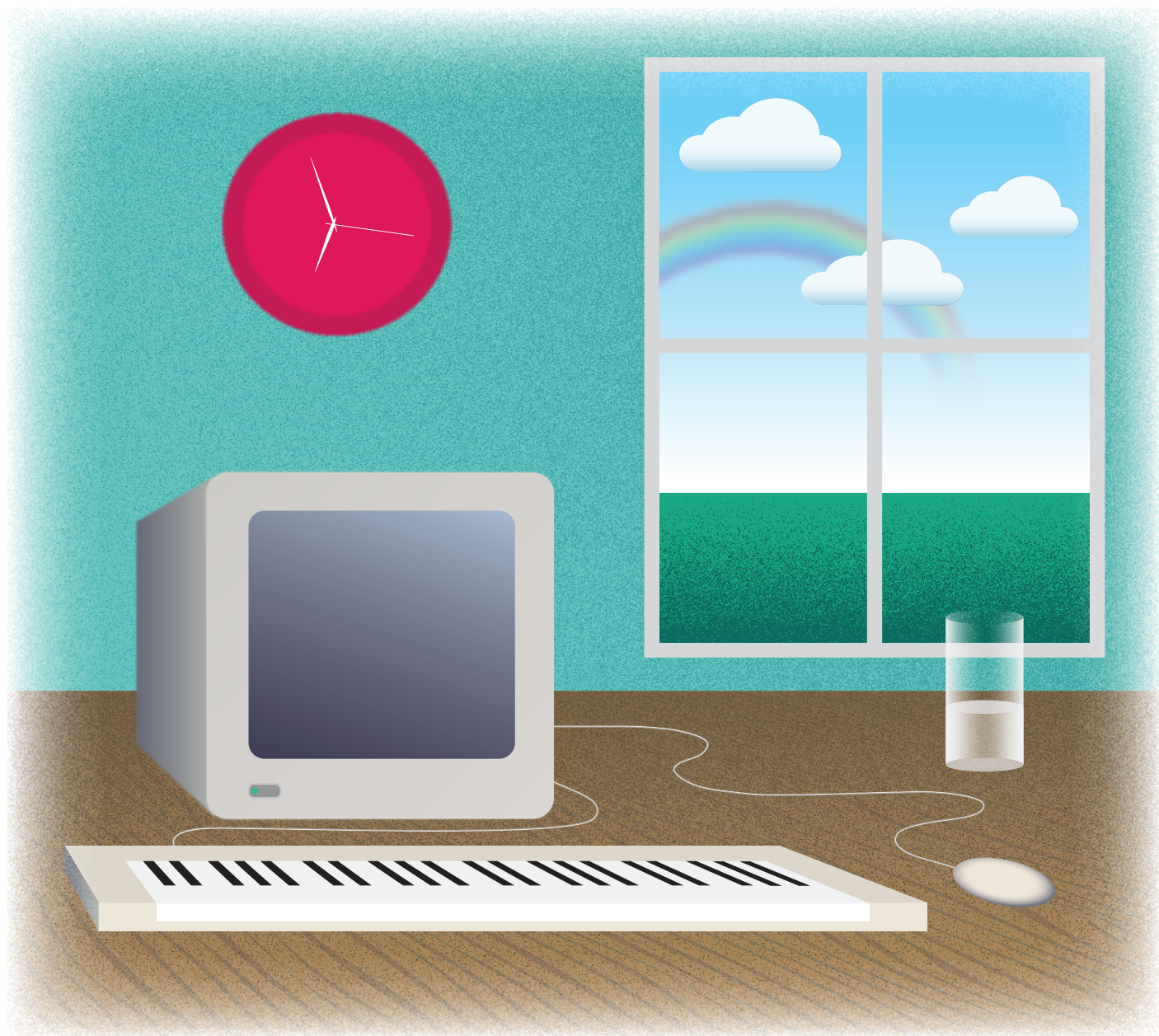


Subscriber Exclusive

Spring 2025

FM Skyline Midiwave Quarterly





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SPRING '25



Spring 2025

Spring is here again, ushering in the third year of FM Skyline Midiwave Industries! I spent this past winter all through January and February addressing a much needed studio and workflow overhaul. My space had become extremely cluttered and nonsensical over the last few years, and I hadn't really addressed any of the mess since before I started doing the Quarterly. When I get locked into working it gets hard for me to change anything since I'm so immersed in what I'm doing, and everything gets arranged into a sort of "functional mess." So I focused on removing clutter, changing some furniture, and creating a more streamlined and flexible works space with much less visual noise and precarious arrangements. It feels a lot better now.

Two other big important things have been added to my workflow - I invested in a new main synth, the Korg M1, and I'm finally upgrading my computer from the old 2015 Macbook Pro that I've used since the beginning, to a newer Mac M1 Mini. I'm looking forward to being able to run the newest Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, and trying out the the newest Blender (although I will probably still use the old 2.79 version that I love for more vintage looks). I had been stuck using macOS High Sierra forever because I didn't want to disturb my system, so it was just time to get up to date. And on the new synth I've had dozens of new ideas and sketches that I'm excited to work on, I was using my Yamaha SY55 all the way since right before Illuminations, so it's fun to have a new "axe" to fall in love with and find inspiration in. I'm sure you will be hearing tons of new music from this classic beast very soon.

MUSIC 2

The collaborative album
by
FM Skyline & Equip



The notion of a collaborative album with Equip goes back to about 2021 - we had been in contact as friends and colleagues for a few years, and then when I released "Illuminations" in fall of 2021 he played my sold out album release show at El Cid in LA and surprised everyone with his new "Live in LA" set, a radical new dream-trance style he was working on. And at the time I had a couple of trance and drum and bass (see "Webinar") ideas I was playing with, so when we got to talking soon after about how it would be fun to do a collaboration at some point, it clicked in my mind to give him those ideas I was working on and let him approach them with the context he was working in for his "Live in LA" material.

Initially I just sent over one of the tracks I had in mind by email and he tinkered with it briefly, but we quickly came to the consensus that we could get a lot more work done and have more fun with the process if I came out to Chicago with my synth so that we could just write in person. And so I did exactly that the following June 2022. We booked a show at Cole's Bar to give the trip an anchor and make some money to cover the flight, and got to work on what would become "Megablast" and a couple of others that were very easy to work on. And so we realized that our theory was correct and that we could get a lot done in a few multiple-day trips of full work days.

So we continued that way, with me making a few more trips as I could over the next year or so, and each time we were able to crank out a few more new tunes and finish some others, until we had a core of nine tracks that we felt made for a good flow and compliment to each other, and we did the final mix and master together at his place.

The album was mastered to tape, which gave it a warm sound and nice ambient soft hiss, with one final digital pass of gentler digital mastering after that.

Along the way we had collected a huge mood board of obscure old box art from Famicon and PC Engine and others, and we coalesced on a very specific and forgotten genre of box art that featured clay models of game characters. After discussing a few artists who might be able to help us, we decided to ask our friend, the great Keith Rankin, who along with his partner Ellen Thomas designed and created amazing original clay characters and laid out some digital design elements, including the logo.



At that point, we were very close to having the art we needed, but knowing that Keith's time is very valuable and in demand, and us wanting to find a way to bring the art as close as possible to the vision we had, we decided the best way to wrap it up was for me to make one final trip out to Chicago so that we could tackle some diorama photography for singles and secondary art, and truly capture the spirit of the vintage artwork we were admiring.

After that final successful trip and week of hard work building dioramas and setting up difficult close cropped photos, incorporating various backgrounds, lighting, and effects (we used a fog machine for the photo you see for the 'Megablast' single), we were able to quickly wrap up all the digital designs for the singles and album artwork remotely at home.

And the rest is history. It's a feast, a fairly broad survey over a range of styles, and a joyous music party. I'm really proud of our hard work, and in general with this snapshot of music from our unique point of view that I think, in retrospect, is something that's very important for us to record into posterity - this weirdo electronic music that to us is very obvious and makes sense, but in reality is probably only so obvious to a few.



FM SKYLINE + EQUIP

PRESENT

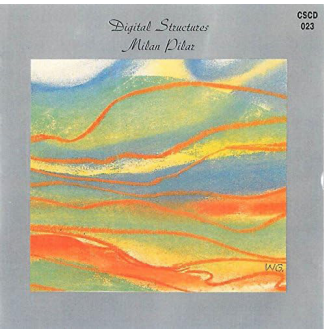
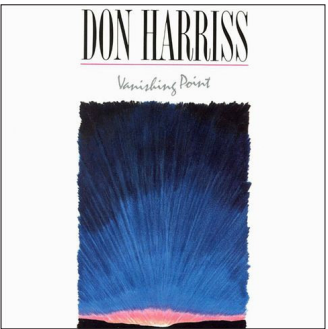
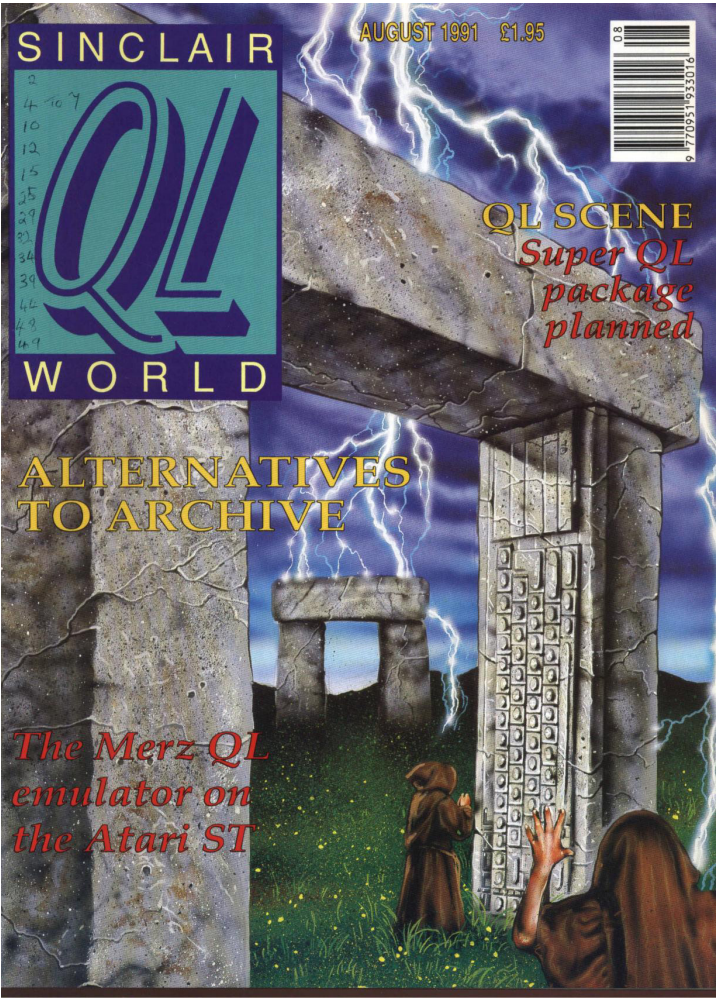
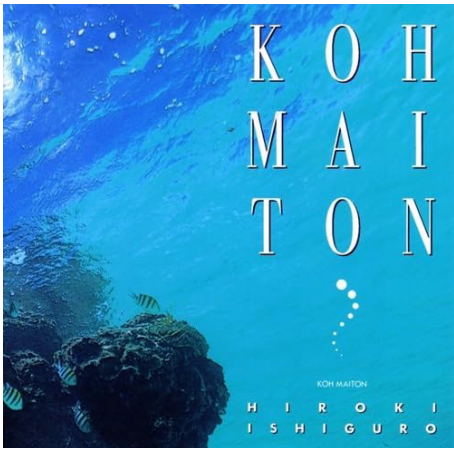
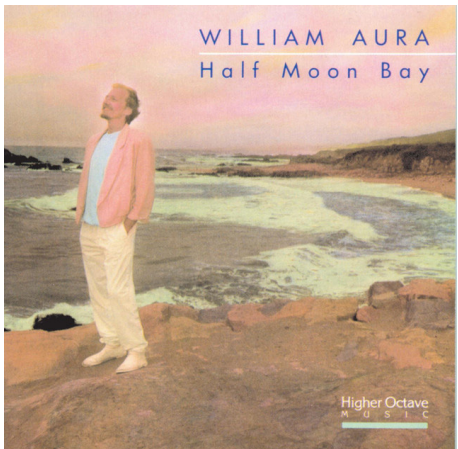
MUSIC



MEGABLAST • CIMA.JPG • JABURO • GOATMAN • SKINNER
PIPELAND • NARCJOB • ROPE MAN • SLIPPY

Some items from the

Mood Board



On this CD



Blue #6 ("Snowglobe")

This little nocturne has become one of my personal favorites, and easily one of the best of the "Blue" series. It began as a spontaneous gesture one night as snow starting falling here in Richmond back in January (the snow would later shut down the city's water for a week lol). As I let the tune naturally develop over the following couple of weeks it grew into this strange beautiful thing that perfectly encapsulates a mysterious longing, lonely existential emotions dreaming and reaching out into the deep night of winter. This is also a unique recording in my catalog in that it's a single live performance - no midi, no editing, just one take, planned and carried out by me alone at my keyboard.

"Webinar"

Sound familiar? This is a track I was playing around with in 2021 soon after "Illuminations" came out, a fun experiment in breakbeat, kind of a classic jungle vibe, built around chops of the "Amen" break. It would later serve as a catalyst for the Music 2 project and be turned into the track "Megablast" on that album, the first track we did.

"Breakbeat Demo"

This is another track from a couple of years ago that experiments with breakbeat a little bit, although here it is a programmed version of the "Amen" and the structure is more of a song form than a dance form. I had just recently gotten an Alesis HR-16 drum machine at the time and was playing around with it, programming various beats I liked (see "Circles" for another track born from that), and here was the result of trying out a break pattern on it. It's a fun and energetic demo, perhaps I will return to it, but stylistically I don't see it in any larger picture that I have in mind at the moment, just a fun little guy.

"Surface" & "Homeworld"

These two tracks are part of an incomplete sequel to "EarthSim" that I was working on in early 2019 after "Advanced Memory Suite" had come out, right before I started working with 100% Electronica and the first two Electronicon festivals. There's about nine tracks, which include the "Ambient Mini-EP" you all have in your private collection. There are some cool tracks, but I was trying lots of different ideas around then, and I was also starting work on 'liteware' around this time, and that wound up being the one I focused on instead.

In "Surface" you might be able to hear a sense of minimalism that I was becoming interested in, which is in large part what the basis for 'liteware' would be - part of my meaning in 'lite' was a description of lightness, keeping things clean & tidy, embracing negative space.

"Point of Focus"

I've been hanging on to this for a couple of years, a really intense and almost overwhelming dancey tune that pre-dates tunes that started to become the "Images" project. I actually played this outside at Knockdown Center for Electronicon 2022, and it was really fun there, it's definitely a floor heater and almost resembles a classic dance tune of some sort. I might have a home for it in the works, there's a set of tunes I've been planning on working around that could include it, and it might very well be a single in the future. It's really a very cathartic tune for me, the bridge especailly has a lot pain and drama running through it, I really love that section and the release that follows it through the end.



