



MARTIN REV

STRANGEWORLD

Reissue (originally released 2000)

CD / LP / Digital

Out: October 16th 2020



A strange world

Martin Rev's fifth solo album – Strangeworld – was released on the cusp of the new millennium. The label responsible was Puu, a Finnish imprint belonging to Tommi Grönlund and Mika Vainio's Sähkö Recordings which came to fame in the 1990s on the strength of its uncompromising minimalist sound.

Four years earlier, in 1996, Rev had unleashed See Me Ridin, an album which surprised its listeners with keyboard melody sketches and distilled doo-wop compositions. It was also the first solo album to feature Martin Rev on vocals.

Strangeworld started where its predecessor left off. Melodic passages dissolved into a thicket of fragments and set pieces, coalescing in a celestial shimmer between rhythm loops and Rev's voice, which assumed the role of an additional instrument rather than a standard singing part.

Martin Rev's familiar murmurs and hums are there, but the music on Strangeworld no longer feeds on the furious rumbling of the electrified city. Instead we hear wonderfully naive singing, lost in reverie, Martin Rev's condensed teenage memories of days when young hearts were breaking to the sound of doo-wop melodies on the transistor radio. There are still flashes of contemporary music and traces of dance elements, but Rev maintains these entered his musical spectrum subconsciously:

»Techno wasn't specifically on my mind while recording but for sure it was already part of the musical environment at that time so easily may have become added to some of the nuances that were revealing themselves in the album's process.«

Rev took charge of the album production himself in his home city of New York:

»Strangeworld was mostly produced at a private studio that I booked as much as couple of days a week. It was the beginning of engineers setting up rental studios even in their homes since digital, then in the form of ADAT, and early computerization had suddenly made it possible.«

If Sähkö seems an unlikely partner to release the record, there is, on closer examination, a certain congruity between Rev's work and the radical minimalism of the Finnish label's sound.

How did Martin Rev and label boss Tommi Grönlund meet?

»Tommi called me to introduce himself when apparently on a visit to New York requesting a meeting to talk about collaborating with an artist he was working with on his label. That was the first time I met him or became aware of Sähkö.«

Around this time, Martin Rev had finished the demo versions of Strangeworld, so he offered the album to Grönlund. He only heard back from him a few years later, however, when Grönlund called him out of the blue to ask if the material was still available and to propose a deal.

»Apparently Mika from Panasonic heard he had the demo and after listening to it told Tommi he should try to sign it at once.«

Twenty years have passed since Strangeworld was first released, but the world it revealed remains as strange and enigmatic as ever.

Daniel Jahn, May 2020



Promotion

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Tracklisting

1. My Strange World
2. Sparks
3. Solitude
4. Funny
5. Ramblin'
6. Trouble
7. Splinters
8. Cartoons
9. One Track Mind
10. Chalky
11. Jacks And Aces
12. Reading My Mind
13. Day And Night