

www.kowtowpopof.com

A singer/songwriter from the Washington, DC area, **Kowtow Popof** has released 6 CDs of original music. He also collaborated with pop electronica band Hitchcock Blonde on their 2006 debut CD "Soul Button," co-writing and singing lead on six of the band's original tunes. He's also appeared on the Wampus tributes "After Hours: a Tribute to the Music of Lou Reed" (2003), and "If I Were a (Jonathan) Richman" (2001).

## Kowtow Popof's Exalted Headband: Journey to the Soundtrack at the Center of Your Mind

In space, no one can hear you . . . *sing*? Well, at least that's been the case with Kowtow Popof, who, like a mute mad scientist has been quietly concocting his latest release on, **Exalted Headband** (Wampus Multimedia), the follow-up and instrumental companion piece to 2007's *End of Greatness*.

*Headband* mixes elements of rock and electronica with classical and folk touches to create a personal soundtrack of moody pop. Like its companion, *Headband* unfolds against a cosmic backdrop, each song a constellation of sounds collected from the stardust of some parallel musical universe. But where *Greatness* sang about a romantic break-up within a broader sense of celestial disintegration, *Headband* vibrates voicelessly like cosmic microwave background radiation, perhaps content just to exist, rather than to remark.

The origin of how Kowtow came to strap on *Headband* started with 2003's *Kowtow Drops the Pop Off*, an EP featuring four vocal songs and four instrumentals. The vocal songs evolved into the full-fledged, ether-shattering long-player *Greatness*. In the meantime, Kowtow had become increasingly fond of soundtracks by composers like John Barry and Bernard Hermann, had always been a huge fan of folks like Ryuichi Sakamoto and Bill Nelson, not to mention having a lifelong soft spot for all kinds of instrumentals, from "Popcorn" to "Summer of '42" to "Keem-O-Sabe" to "Rock'n'Roll Pt. 2" to "Frankenstein." From these various musical currents, one thing that stuck in Kowtow's brain was the soundtrack format, where a few related motifs are presented in variations to support a film's story or mood. But rather than a collection of theme songs and incidental music, *Headband* is intended to be a group of stand-alone songs, laced with shared musical themes, which work together like your more traditional pop rock concept album.

Think the instrumental pieces of Bowie's *Low*, cross-pollinated with the soundtrack of *You Only Live Twice* or the *Prisoner*, performed by Moby fronting the *Moody Blues*, or perhaps Harry Nilsson collaborating with Gary Numan. *Headband* features electronica-flavored acoustic rock ("Swimming Downhill," "Enigma of the Spokes"), playful prog pop ("Kung Fu Sunset," "Run to Daylight"), funk-inflected grooves ("Children of the Teeth," "Rebreather"), and practically everything in-between, woven together with orchestral flourishes, primal folk, swirling samples, and machine drones. The album title's variations-on-a-theme runs the gamut: "Exalted Headband (Funkspiel Fringe)" sports a lounge-y pulse behind tv-show-theme-song horns, as in, perhaps, *It Takes a Thief* meets *Thievery Corporation*; "Towhead's Lament (Loose Chaconne)" waltzes in the mist of a *Morricone* soundtrack set somewhere in the Appalachians; "Braids at Blue Hour (Zero Time)" expands along primitive synthetic beats and warbles, echoing electronic pioneers.

In addition to the Exalted Headband motif, two other distinct themes thread through the record. The Daylight theme, introduced by "Swimming Downhill," gets a more immediate presentation in "Run to Daylight," followed by an excursion into symphonic electro-rock with "Balloon Bazooka," before fluttering away in the ambient-tinged, acoustic epilogue "Floaters." The *Lucky Guy* theme, which launches with the baroque-tronic "Enigma of the Spokes," goes creepy with the operatic/spoken-sample hypnotic blues of "Deep & Deeper," then propels along with the guitar-driven sci-fi of "Theme from *Lucky Guy*," before finally climaxing with the tribal space funk of "Children of the Teeth."

Other twists along the way are the conflicted "Rebreather," whose android walk over a primeval beat devolves into pastoral folk, and the binary "Kairos '77" which mixes march with dirge, driven by a plaintive piano air. "Chronos" chimes with dulcimer over burbling electronics, while "Fractal Dust's" reverb-drenched

ambience is occasionally disturbed by squawky oboe, music-box ping, and theatrical piano peaks.

Maybe this all leaves you at a loss for words. Don't fret—that could be the point. Perhaps you can't put a finger on it, but your feet tapping along with the beat and that tune you find yourself humming might be telling you something. You are digging *Exalted Headband*.



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Mastered by Eamon Loftus



### Track Listing:

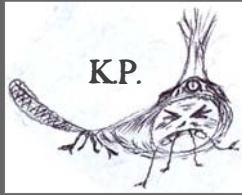
1. Swimming Downhill\*
2. Enigma of the Spokes
3. Kairos '77
4. Kung Fu Sunset\*
5. Fractal Dust
6. Run to Daylight
7. Deep & Deeper
8. Exalted Headband (Funkspiel Fringe)\*
9. Theme from *Lucky Guy*
10. Balloon Bazooka
11. Rebreather
12. Towhead's Lament (Loose Chaconne)
13. Chronos
14. Children of the Teeth\*
15. Braids at Blue Hour (Zero Time)
16. Floaters

\*Suggested Listening

Available @ CD Baby, iTunes, Digstation

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**Exalted Headband** is the instrumental companion piece to Kowtow's last vocal record, *End of Greatness*. Headband's title comes from the Luiseno Indian phrase for the Milky Way, "Piiwish Ahuutax," which characterizes the galaxy as a ritual headband.

## Press:

### End of Greatness (2006):

"... intoxicating enough in its strangeness that it should almost certainly come with a warning label of some kind. . . . a fresh new universe of post-modernist art-pop." – Jason Warburg, *The Daily Vault*, March 2, 2007

"Though the title may portend doom, Popof shows no fear, flying through this full-length while displaying a confident and unabashed approach . . . [End of Greatness] is an intelligent and delightful affair." – Wes Barker, *Amplifier Magazine*, April 3, 2007

"Popof effortlessly spins sugary webs of pop-rock wonder, Beatlesque in daring and whimsy, and Chilton-esque in power-chord skronk . . . these bright and inspired gems, amazing in their simplicity and deep absorption of influences, do not confuse. They say their piece and move on, and you follow along for the ride." – Mike Wood, *Foxy Digitalis*, April 30, 2007

"... Popof's voice has rock cred with a bit of Lou Reed/David Bowie swagger. This is a complex and sophisticated rock album that's still easily inviting and appealing . . . Very intriguing." – Jennifer Layton, *Indie-Music.com*, April 7, 2007

### Kowtow Drops the Pop Off (2003):

"Kowtow Popof (cool name) writes great little pop songs and dresses them up in his very singular fashion: a little electronica, a little folk, a little just plain weirdness." – Norman Famous, *Normanfamous.com*

"Simple, clean songs that don't work too hard to bring out the emotional and occasionally transcendental nature of a gifted songwriter." – Heidi Drockelman, *Indie-Music.com*

### Eat My Dust (1999):

"These clever, fast-talking tunes rock resolutely, but also clean up real nice. Vast, open-sky guitars render the ballads absolutely heart-breaking." – Listen.com

"This record reeled me in like a helpless fish . . . This is one of few really good driving records that I've heard in a while." – Heidi Drockelman, *Indie-Music.com*

### Coaster (1996):

"The title track has definite hit single potential, so don't be surprised if you hear this small masterpiece on your radio. Kowtow keeps surprising you track after track with his talent for witty turns of phrase and creative musical craftwork. *Coaster* is an all 'round joyride" – *The Incredibly Small Concert Hall*

"*Coaster* is full of lively acoustic/electric folk and rock . . . The title track is an impeccable pop classic." – *Time and a Word Music News*

"*Coaster* lopes along a moody undercurrent of warmth and grace, carefully constructed to reap the maximum reward from minimal sonics." – J. Doug Gill, *Music Monthly*

### Songs from the Pointless Forest (1994):

"I'm having a helluva time convincing myself to take this one out of the CD player!" – Jim Testa, *Jersey Beat*

"Makes a lyrical statement on alienation as bleak, powerful and dead-on as Pink Floyd ever did." – Ian Koss, *Ink Nineteen*



### Musical description:

Acoustic electro-rock; Moby fronts the Moody Blues; David Bowie meets John Barry in Beck's basement.

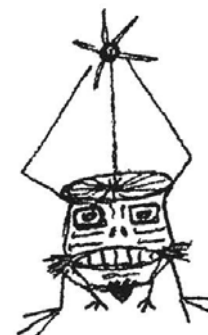
"...K.P. is a skilled songwriter, arranger and producer. Neither a rock purist nor a electronica zealot, he crafts music that balances songcraft with samples and swooshes..Any guy who can invoke Dylan's "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" while singing about "Slim Jims & Tab" over a tick-tock electrobeat is not about to be typecast. – Mark Jenkins, *the Washington Post*

### Live:

Kowtow performs live with electric guitarist Rob Santos. Shows in support of *Exalted Headband* this summer will feature live remixes of tunes from the new album as well as acoustic performances of songs from the Kowtow catalog. Previous appearances include the Dewey Beach Music Conference, Harrisburg PA's Millennium Music Conference, The Birchmere in Alexandria, VA, Galaxy Hut and Iota Club & Cafe in Arlington VA.

### Format:

AAA, Modern Pop, Alternative Rock, Modern Folk



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