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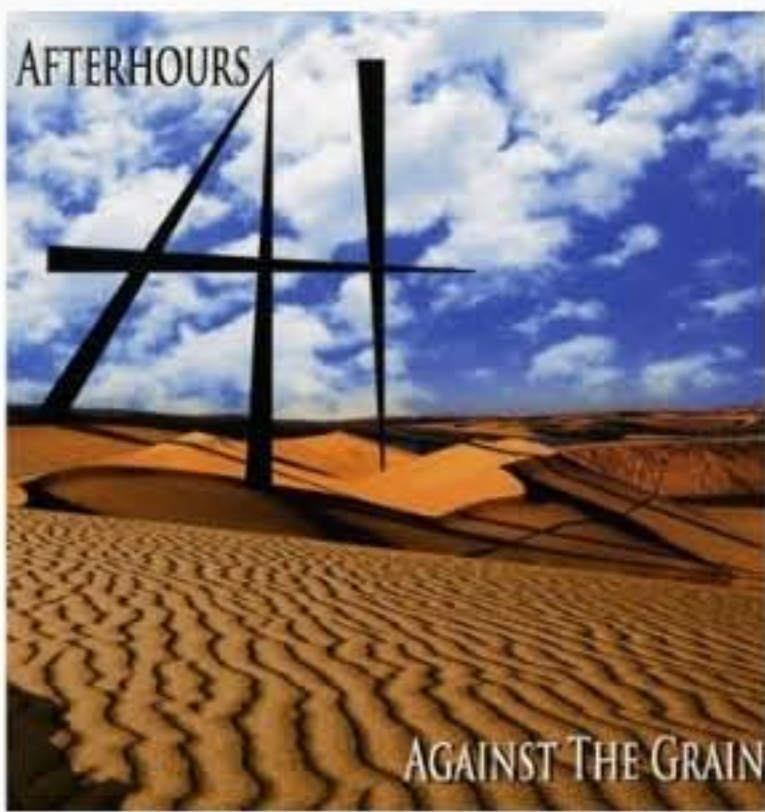
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AFTER HOURS - Against The Grain
 Posted by [zeitgeist](#) (Admin) at Today, 11:19 AM. [0 comments](#)

AFTER HOURS
Against The Grain
 AOR Heaven 2011



Blimey! That takes me back. From the grainy back pages of Kerrang! magazine, it's the ashes of eighties UK AORsters, After Hours. I have the vaguest of recollections of their one and only album, "Take Off", which has been reissued by AOR Heaven (rumours persist of a second album, but I don't know anyone who's heard it). But if you'd asked me to pick them out of an identity parade, I would have been toiling. I do seem to recall one time Michael Schenker Group man, Andy Nye, being in their ranks, but that's about it.

So, am I surprised to see that after a mere 23 years since their debut album, that After Hours are back for another go?. Well, yes I am. Am I surprised that it's so gosh darned good? Again, in the affirmative. A chance meeting between band members Martin Walls, Tim Payne and John Francis resulted in a flurry of what-ifs, and an agreement to write and record a tune for old time's sake. It went so well that they decided to stick it out for a whole album, and here it is, in all its glory.

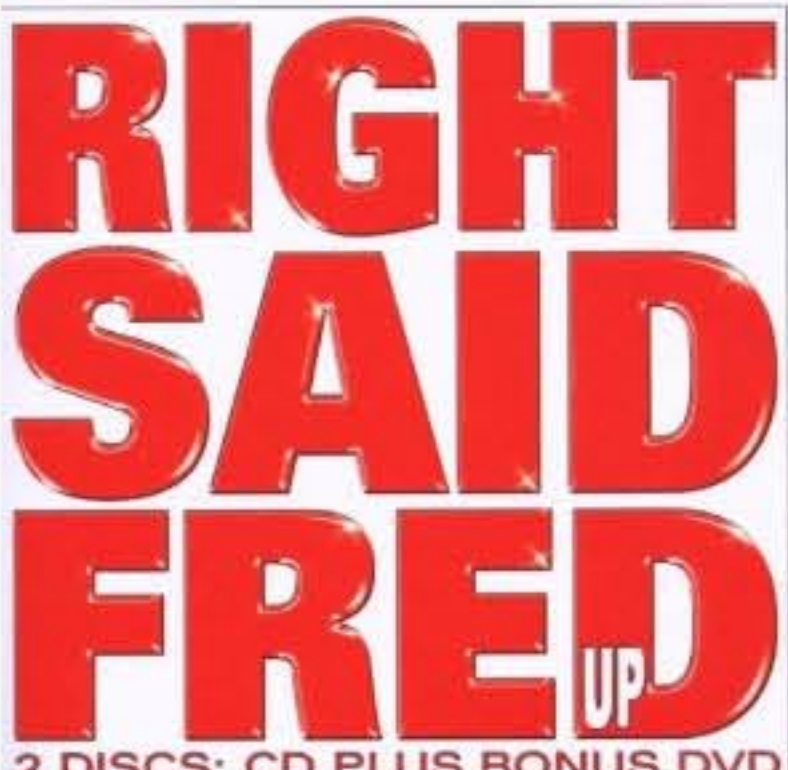
They might actually be the finest AOR group the UK has ever produced, something that will give all the Strangeways fans a funny turn, but that's only because they actual sound American. The songs, the production, the Perryesque tones of singer John Francis, it's all there. The music is firmly aimed at US radio programmers in the mid-eighties, and opener 'Stand Up' would have been a shoo-in for an Autograph loving public.

I'm hunting around for something that doesn't work, but after listening to great songs like 'Eleventh Hour', 'When You're Around' and 'Hold On', it's plain to hear that there's nothing. For sure, I would have tinkered with the running order slightly, but that's about it. They've even got the killer ballad, which is saved for last, in the shape of 'I Need Your Love'. It's actually quite shameful that the voice of John Francis has been hidden away for so long, but that time is over. AOR fans need this album, and they need it now.

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RIGHT SAID FRED - Up: Special Edition
 Posted by [zeitgeist](#) (Admin) at Yesterday, 9:29 AM. [0 comments](#)

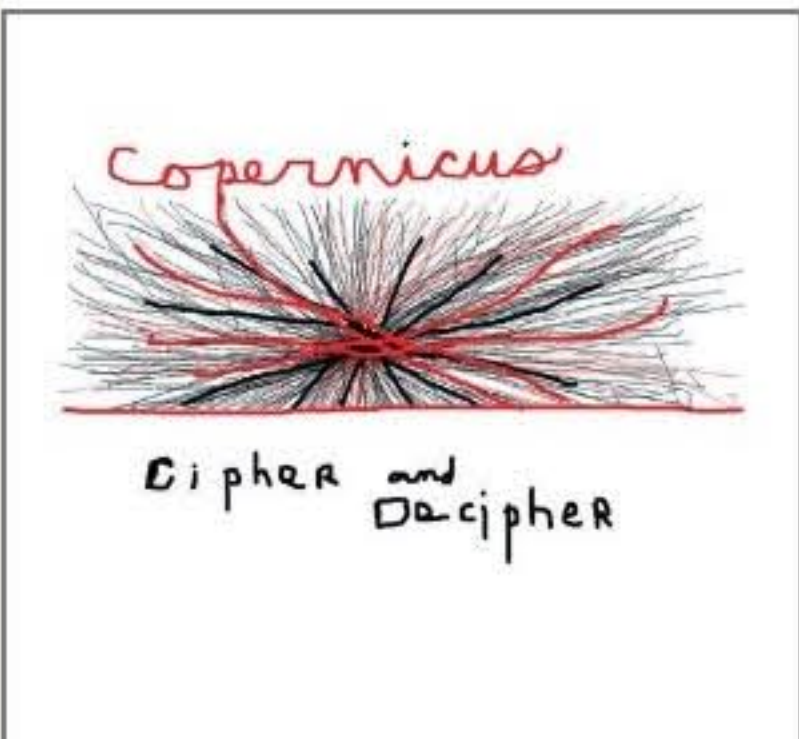
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COPERNICUS - CIPHER AND DECIPHER
 Posted by [zeitgeist](#) (Admin) at Mar 31 2011, 10:11 AM. [0 comments](#)

COPERNICUS
Cipher And Decipher
 Moonjune / Nevermore 2011



This Copernicus is a performance poet, whose been on the avante-garde scene since the early eighties. He vanished from music for the best part of a decade, but after re-releasing his very first record, "Nothing Exists", originally from 1985 and issuing his first set of new music in nigh on a decade, "Disappearance", Moonjune are putting out another new recording in the shape of "Cipher And Decipher". Born Joseph Smalkowski, Copernicus is by trade a keyboard player, although in finest avante-garde mode, he refuses to be categorised as a musician. Which is fair enough, as he has spent his, for the want of a better word, musical career in the world of improvisation. Or "making it up as he goes along".

If you're looking for a hook to hang your hat on, you're in trouble, as the album leaps about from avante-jazz to psych, to sheer noise terror, all overlaid by the slightly hysterical poetry of the main man himself. It's a throwback to the days of beat poetry, so if you have any desire for forms of music and lyrics, then best not to come here. Strange to relate, he's not short of people willing to collaborate with him, and this release sees a thirteen piece band, including members of Celtic rock band, Black 47, all chipping in. It's from the same sessions as his last album, but I reckon you can whap out a fair chunk, when you don't have to worry about words and music.

If you've ever heard some of the weirder work of Blacklight Braille, the lovechild of lyricist and conceptual artist, Thomas H. Owen Knight, who sprang out of Cincinnati's Bitter Blood Street Theatre, then added in some extra shouting and jazz licks, then you might have a notion of what's going on the likes of 'Into the Subatomic', 'Mud Becomes Mind', 'Step Out of your Body' and 'The Cauldron'. If you haven't then this might just be the thing that finally makes you tear your ears off.

Here's the man himself talking about his music. "The conceptual concerns of the New York performer-poet Copernicus address the Universe itself. He is not distracted by everyday matters. He is not penning couplets about the changing fortunes of human existence, other than on the grandest (or lowliest) scale. He speaks of subatomic matter, and refuses to bear any glad tidings." "Copernicus sees his job as philosophically interpreting the modern discoveries of professional physicists to the human situation." So, now you know!

All lyrics "written" of the moment by Copernicus, all music created in the zone by the accompanying musicians.

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