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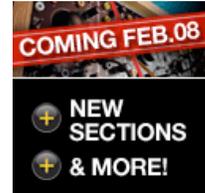
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Pro/File: No Barriers

Feb 1, 2008 12:00 PM, By Mike Levine

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Xenovibes' eclectic, electronic pop.

What do you get when you mix synthesizers, theremins, traditional folk instruments, and electronic drums with a multitalented, multicultural, classically trained keyboardist (with a degree in electronic music) and a New York jazz drummer? The answer is Xenovibes, an eclectic duo based in Dallas whose music can loosely be classified as synth pop.



Xenovibes
Photo credit: Shueh-li Ong

time member, John Anthony Martinez. He played acoustic drums on one song, "Robolution," but used a Yamaha DT-XTreme IIS electronic kit for the album's other eight tracks.

Ong took audio and MIDI feeds from Martinez's kit when he recorded his parts. The MIDI data allowed her to layer additional sounds. "Shueh-li will stack my MIDI information with her own creations," Martinez says. He describes Xenovibes' overall sound as "electronic music with no barriers."

Although mixing can be a frustrating process for many home recordists, Ong remembers the mix for *Xenovibes II* (for which she used Alesis M1 Active monitors) with supreme confidence. "I did it from the comfort of my living room," she says. Ong learned much of her mixing skills while studying for her postgraduate degree in sound engineering. "I had a really good ... I guess you could call him a tutor or a lecturer," she recalls, "and he made me aware of stereo, mono, small speakers, big speakers. So I got in the habit of looking out for transparency. Can everything be heard? Because you have various frequency bands you can fit things in — parts can be soft but still audible."

Ong's studio also includes a Yamaha 01X digital mixer. "I mLAN it to the PowerBook to do digital transfer. It works like a digital mixer through mLAN and as a standalone," she says. She recorded her vocals on an AKG C3000 mic.

Live, Ong and Martinez often play with local guest artists and improvise much of the time. "In the show situations, that's where I relinquish control," says Ong. "That's where the Xenovibes show takes a different route from the *Xenovibes* album." In the studio, Ong and Martinez stick more closely to parts they've worked out during performances. But occasionally, a mistake can turn into a whole new part. "You do something, like your finger slips or you press the wrong button," observes Ong, "and you have to go with the flow. Sometimes when you do that, you go, 'Wow!'"



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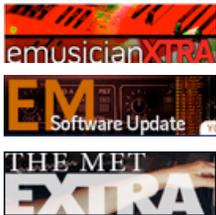
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Home base: Dallas, Texas
Sequencer of choice: Steinberg Cubase SX
Primary monitors: Alesis M1 Active
Web site: www.xenovibes.com

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Xenovibes II

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