

SESSION FILE: SATELLITE PARTY

Forging a Revolution Party

by Richard Buskin

Perry Farrell, the alternative rocker who fronted Jane's Addiction and Porno for Pyros, is pulling out all the stops for the self-titled debut of his latest project, *Satellite Party*, calling on the contributions of several special guests — both living and back from the grave.

Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas, Porno for Pyros guitarist Peter DiStefano, Joy Division/New Order bassist Peter Hook, Flea and John Frusciante of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, former Peppers and Pearl Jam drummer Jack Irons — all are lending their talents to the new album. However, it is the song "Woman in the Window" that is drawing most of the attention, thanks to portions of two-spoken word poems featuring the late Jim Morrison that "may have been" the last ever recordings of his voice. At least, that's what Farrell claims.

RESURRECTING JIM

"The only thing I can tell you about it is I have been granted permission by the Morrison estate to produce these two poems that may have been Jim's last recordings as far as anyone knows," he recently stated. "It comes in at an amazing time. When you hear these poems, it sounds as though Jim Morrison were watching us today and commenting on the world today. I'm very reluctant to call him a prophet, because I don't want to go that far. That would be really putting myself on the line. But the words he is speaking about are so speaking about the world today. It leaves a person almost dumb-struck. Why would this song surface today, and how would he know about what's going on in the world now?"

According to Farrell, Morrison's posthumous contribution is something of a dream come true.

"You could count on one hand the people who were important in my life, as far as musicians and singers," he says, "and he might be the middle finger. I loved his spirit and I loved his refusal to allow anybody to even suggest that he didn't own the world. And if nothing else, I feel that spirit has got to be preserved, and we have to consider it and never let it fall from our thoughts."

Farrell composed the music that complements Morrison's voice on the song, commencing with him intoning, "I am the woman in the window," and later singing the refrain, "Just try and stop us, we're going to love" . . . which kind of fits with Farrell's *Satellite Party* concept of a lavish extraterrestrial bash.

"Let's make believe we're going to be shot into space for the weekend," he suggested. "What would we be looking at? The Earth, from the vantage point of a satellite. We'd be dressed to the nines. We would have these great hors d'oeuvres. The music would be deep and soulful and sensual, and the interior decoration would be comfortable and slightly weightless and ecstatic and luxurious, because this would be a luxury flight."

ENTER NUNO

Farrell produced the *Satellite Party* album, with former

Extreme axe-man Nuno Bettencourt engineering at each of their home studios, mixing at The Village in L.A., and also playing guitar, bass and keyboards. In addition, there were sessions at other places, such as Henson (the former A&M Studios) in Hollywood.

"We worked for nearly three years on this project and I mixed largely as we went along, with everything being done in Pro Tools," Bettencourt says. "In the case of 'Woman in the Window,' Jim Morrison's vocal was great, like you'd expect. And as it was recorded at Sunset Sound in L.A., the tape was in very good shape. Not that I know where the tape is — we got his part as a sound file. Anyway, Perry went with Jim's melody and took that as the lead. He did some programming, we added guitar, bass, and drums, I played piano, Perry recorded his vocal with a [Neumann] U87, he and I did the backing vocals, and Harry Gregson-Williams came up with the 30-piece string arrangement."

THE RESTA ACCOUNT

Meanwhile, in order to help realize Farrell's otherworldly vision for the album, Bettencourt enlisted the services of his friend and sometime-collaborator, Anthony J. Resta. A self-described "sci-fi mambo poet," Resta has utilized his production, engineering, multi-instrumental, and programming skills to craft unique soundscapes for anyone from Duran Duran, Blondie, and Sir Elton John to Megadeth and Shawn Mullins, often melding obscure vinyl samples and twisted vintage analog synth sounds with the artists' performances. In this case, Farrell and Bettencourt sent some tracks to Resta's 4,000-square-foot Studio Bopnique Musique facility in Boston, and basically let him get on with it.

"I love pushing the boundaries and that's what Perry's all about," Resta says. "I gravitate towards sounds from my childhood, and I just love mixing futuristic sounds with the sounds of classic rock: Tube Wurlitzers, Rhodes 88s, you name it. All of this virtual stuff is okay if you haven't heard the real thing, but to me there's nothing like real instruments. Anyway, Perry and Nuno would send me a slave mix with vocals and music, and I'd then just load up the tracks, sometimes sending them as much as 48 tracks of really non-generic home-made soundscapes."

POWER-TOOLING

"I have these circuit bent drum machines," Resta discloses, "like the [Yamaha] DD110 from the early '80s that a guy in England modified for me — he basically added a patchbay and all these switches that make it malfunction in an infinite number of ways to create some really unusual beats. So, I used that, along with lots of analog keyboards, and I'd also run guitars through modular synths to create really unusual soundscapes. Then again, among the main tools that I'm excited about right now