

george sarah



Composer/arranger George Sarah has performed extensively in the Los Angeles area and has received a tremendous amount of airplay since he launched his music career in 1983. Sarah has garnered the attention of national press (*Thousand Words*, *Xlr8r*, *Outburn*, *LA Weekly*) and has collaborated with artists ranging from Swayzak, Lili Haydn, Q (of Überzone), John X, David J (Love & Rockets, Bauhaus), Gunter Schulz (KMFDM), among others.

In 1996, he released his first album, *Adagio*, on Brain Surgery Records. Sarah also has released a 12-inch single on Warner Brothers' F-111 label. He is now in production for a full-length album on Bob Records, distributed by CMH Records.

Sarah has opened for Crystal Method, Carl Cox, The Jungle Brothers, the Wiseguys, and in 1996, went on tour playing bass for Death Ride '69 supporting My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult. In 1992, Sarah toured Europe and the western United States with his pioneering electronic duo, Stereotaxic Device.

In November 1999, he performed four of his songs on *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, and his work has also been featured on the WB spin-off *Angel*. Sarah's music has been featured in four films including *Dead Man's Curve* (Artisan Pictures' release starring *Felicity's* Kerri Russell), *Mascara* (starring Lone Skye and Karen Black), *The Girl Next Door* and *Cleopatra's Second Husband* (directed by Jon Reiss, award-winning director of Nine Inch Nails' video for *Happiness In Slavery*). This year, MTV's series *Undressed* licensed 12 of his tracks.



Sarah's music has been defined as dark, ethereal drum n' bass/trip hop with gothic influences, at times incorporating a three-piece string section into his compositions and live shows. The eclectic nature of his live shows may include computer programming, live drumming, string trios, guest vocalists and Sarah on both bass and synthesizer.

"...Probably my favorite album in months."
– Luis Caballero of *Thousand Words* (about *Adagio*)



"See T.H.C.'s live show for greater intensity if you dare, when they are accompanied by members of the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra."
– Stacy Meyn of *Xlr8r*

"The content of this disc is expertly produced and has some of the best electronic compositions that have infiltrated the darkside in ages."
– Skippy Longstocking of *Outburn* (about *Adagio*)

"So far this is the best trip hop/drum n' bass band to send me anything."
– *NO-FI Magazine* (about *Adagio*)

"Sometimes it's trancy, sometimes it's classicoid, sometimes it's like the post-suicide soundtrack to some French art film, but the music George Sarah has been making for the last couple of years always has craft."
– Greg Burk at *LA Weekly*

HIGHWIRE DAZE ZINE, JUNE/JULY 2000, INTERVIEW BY BRET MILLER

George Sarah is an accomplished musician. Residing in the San Fernando Valley, George has previously gone by the band name T.H.C. and was a hard dance music producer. That has changed in the last four or so years, he now splits his time between orchestrated ambient pieces and more dance floor oriented material. Both styles of music contain piano by Sarah and strings played by local professionals. Why isn't George Sarah signed? After hearing his 1997 produced and 1999 released indie CD *Adagio*, you will wonder the same thing.

What is your earliest memory about music and how do you think this might have guided you to where you are today?

Well I would have to say my parents played me the soundtrack to *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* and I wasn't into it at all, I was about four or five. Then when I was about six years old they took me to the Hollywood Bowl to see and hear Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops and I was totally blown away! I just remember thinking, OK this is it, and then a few months later I heard the Beatles and knew I was going to be enveloped with music.

Who are a few of your favorite artists regardless of genre, art, pop, books, movies, culture etc.... Why?

Aphex Twin, because of his ability to keep up the quality with quantity. That goes the same with all the artists like Bjork, E.E. Cummings, Beethoven, Dali, Woody Allen, Richard Foreman, Stereolab, Steve Reich, Roni Size, Grantby, DJ Shadow and John Williams to name a few. Even local unsigned artists like Lexaunculpt.

Who have you collaborated with over the years and what about them made you click?

Well I have to say that a lot of my collaborations that end up creatively rewarding do not always end with personal relationships like longevity in friendships and such, some do but it is hard when two people are so passionate about their art it sometimes does not leave room for compromise. I have a tremendous amount of respect for Q aka Überzone, I recorded about nine or ten tracks with him but he's one passive aggressive. Lately I've been collaborating a lot with Lili Haydn, and I must say not only is she one of the most genuine people I've met, but is also a truly brilliant artist. One of the best collaborations I did was when I was chosen to be part of a composer/playwright workshop by the A.S.K. Theater projects at the Skirball Cultural center and that was unbelievably great in a vulnerable/spiritual sense.

Where can we find your music?

The T.H.C. stuff is available at some record stores, it is distributed through RED Distribution and my 12 inch single on F-111/Warner Bros. (Under George Sarah) is available on-line at places like CDNow, Amazon and Kabang. My new songs are available only at my shows and through personal email and Rhino in Westwood.

Are you happy about the exposure you have received in movies and TV? Did you enjoy performing on stage on Buffy (and with a werewolf singer to boot)?

It's a bit ironic; a lot of the film and TV people seem to be more passionate about music than the music biz guys. It seems when a music supervisor uses a song it's because they truly love a piece as opposed to trying to make or break their film/TV show cause of the song or source music, and, yes, performing on Buffy The Vampire Slayer was really a lot of fun. (George later mentioned that the part of the werewolf singer and probably that episode's storyline were inspired by his music and the song performed on the show.)

What instruments are you trained on, and what are some of your cherished electronic machines?

When I was 11 I started piano lessons and then at 12 I switched to bass and at 19 back to keyboards. The electronic instrument I cherish the most is my SY85 keyboard; I never leave home without it.

Can you tell us a little about how you put together a song?

It's always composed on my grand piano. Then I start writing the beats on my sampler, an Emu ESI 32. Then I layer it with older keyboards like a JX 8P, or a Juno 106 along with some added piano and synthetic violin/cello sounds. Lately I've been experimenting with slide guitar.

What is your favorite song of all time?

That's a real tuff one because it changes from time to time, but I would say right now it would have to be Samuel Barber's *Adagio For Strings*. I truly believe it is being performed and composed throughout the universe.

Who or what do you find most inspiring in life? Does this affect your music and how?

Yes, I think when you're true to yourself and absorb all that is around you that will have an effect. Just like how you treat other people will have an effect on you. I think I do have a tendency to have a minor key introspective on things, so my music may sound a bit more melancholy then it's supposed to. However, I find that everything in life is significant, everyone you ever meet, to the food you choose to eat to whether or not you smile at a stranger. I've written a lot of pieces that were inspired by the solitude I experience, so inspiration can also mean your ability to stay focused.

Can we find out about your upcoming projects and concerts? Is there a way to contact you for the latest info?

I've been nominated for my first award by the L.A. Weekly Music Awards in the category of "Best Dance Artist" and recently I was number one at KCRW, both on their play list and number one on their RPM list...

Do you have any messages for your fans in L.A. and abroad?

Don't ever let go of the child in you and stay true to what you believe in, don't let go of something because someone else says so, especially in the arts and imagination. I know that might sound cornball but it's true. I know a lot of composers who aren't even creating the shit they want to because they believe it's not commercial enough or they assume they won't make a living when all they're really doing is cutting themselves short of what could potentially be the most important thing in their life. There is a quote by Einstein that I go to from time to time and he said, "People with great and enduring visions will always face great oppositions from mediocre minds..."

LOTUS MAGAZINE, APRIL 1998, BY ELI STAR

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Los Angeles: Critical Mass

Mindspore Records US

"My favorite song has to be THC's 'Unsaid Warning.' It's hauntingly beautiful melodies are contagious from the first listen on."

B.P.M. CULTURE, APRIL 1997, BY MIKE PFEIFER

THC - "Consenting Guinea Pig"

Fifth Column

"What happens when electronic music doesn't fit into any of all those trendy slots? When somebody like George Sarah of THC comes along and just throws down a completely unique hard beat that isn't trance, jungle, and it definitely defies the constraints of hardcore? What happens is a total shaking of the senses. A nod towards playing electronic music that just sounds good. Consenting Guinea Pig takes another stab at animal rights activism by giving you a beat and liner notes to complete the thoughts. George then redefines THC with "Need to Destroy," a slower groove with female vocals. THC is the chemical in Marijuana that supposedly produces the hallucinatory effects. When I'm listening to THC I'm getting a vision of an electronic horizon filled with beautiful things to come."

ZYZXX, NOVEMBER 1997

THC - "8 song cassette"

"Eight excellent songs by a local band with a great sound! I was having a terrible day at work and on leaving the confines of my office and walking to my mailbox I found this tape sitting and waiting for me like a gift from the heavens. My day progressively got better as I went back to work and let THC's electric beauty surround me in a cocoon of soft synthesized sound and float me gently along an easy flowing trip-hop river. This is music that takes the mind places."

HIGHWIRE DAZE ZINE, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2000, BY BRET MILLER

Local electronic artist George Sarah enjoyed a residency at West L.A.'s The Mint on Thursdays in the month of July. Playing late on weekdays are a tough ordeal, but following after a diverse collection of bands regardless of genre, Sarah and his string trio took to the challenge with professionalism as well as a sense of fun. On the night of the 19th, George turned his keyboards towards the audience and played with more emotion while the string trio dug into their parts, improvising and adding much needed humanity into Sarah's moodier numbers. Sarah's set bounced back and forth between ambient orchestral arrangements such as KCRW listeners' favorite "Dusk" and his more uptempo dance tracks such as "Eyes And Goodbyes." The songs suffered a bit from the absence of the vocals that are included in his demos, but The Mint audience took it all in, and the focus moved over to the violin, cello and viola as the voices of the songs. Throughout, Sarah played strings on his keyboards and triggered beats with quiet intensity letting the players enjoy their parts. To close his third night at The Mint, George Sarah and band treated those of us smart enough to stay until midnight with a live performance of his F-111 single "Drag Ass." The driving beats and tasteful strings combined perfectly and made me wish I were at a dance club and not a sit-down nightclub. George Sarah has a bright future ahead of him with and without his string trio. Here's to seeing him signed and touring clubs all over the world. He's already had a career as hard-core dance producer T.H.C., but this is more mature music, sure to reach a wider audience. Catch him at one of his many club dates while you can, you're sure to have a great time.