

2019

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Recommended Citation

(2019). Duquesne Graduates' Band, 'Starship Mantis' Releases New Album. *TEMPO*, 16 (1). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/tempo/vol16/iss1/9>

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Duquesne Graduates' Band, 'Starship Mantis' Releases New Album



Founded in 2016 by Duquesne graduate Beni Rossman (B.M. Performance, 2015), Starship Mantis released a new album called *Trapped in the 9th Dimension*. With Rossman, the band includes saxophonist and vocalist Langston Kelly (B.M. Performance, 2011), guitarist Spencer Geer (B.M. Performance, 2014), percussionist Ross Antonich (B.M. Performance, 2016), and keyboardist Christopher Potter (B.M. Music Technology, 2017). Julz Powell, a recent graduate of the Berkeley College of Music, buttresses the Duquesne contingent on percussion.

From start to finish, the album took almost a year to design, compose, record, engineer, and produce. Assisted by multi-GRAMMY Award-winning Duquesne Adjunct Professor of Music Technology, Jay Dudd, the band recorded and mixed their album in Pittsburgh. According to Rossman, the band hopes to encourage “people to enjoy themselves in a mentally and physically stimulating way, while also maintaining the integrity and complexity of the music itself.”

With its crisp and imaginative melange of funk, pop, EDM, and jazz styles, along with its sharp and witty lyrics, *Trapped in the 9th Dimension* charts a metaphorical transformation of its band members into otherworldly beings. In this way, the essential message is one of empowerment and self-determination. Songs such as *Intergalactic Love* celebrate an endless search for cosmic adventure, while *Drop Your Color* reminds us of how difficult it is to overcome our own inherent prejudices towards others who look or behave differently.

In their live shows, the band wears flamboyant alien costumes and encourages the audience to do the same, promoting a vibrant and energetic atmosphere. Sartorial choices aside, their music exudes a maturity that bodes well both for the individual members of the band, and the group as a whole. Logging performances at major venues in Vermont, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and New York City, Starship Mantis has been very much in demand in the regional concert circuit.

Its youngest member, keyboardist Chris Potter, described the taxing process of creating the album as equal parts performer and co-producer. Potter learned a valuable lesson about how easy it is to keep “fine tuning” in the mixing room, and how necessary it is to wrap things up and finalize myriad editing choices. At his home studio, Potter produced some of the overdubs with other band members, and then worked with Professor Dudd to integrate them into the final mix. In addition to his



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growing professional career in and around Pittsburgh, Potter currently brings his considerable skills directly to Duquesne students as a collaborative pianist working in the jazz studio of Kelley Krepin DeFade, Adjunct Professor of Voice.

The band’s album can be downloaded on major streaming services. The CD itself can be had at one of Starship Mantis’s live shows, which are listed on their web site (starshipmantis.com). ■