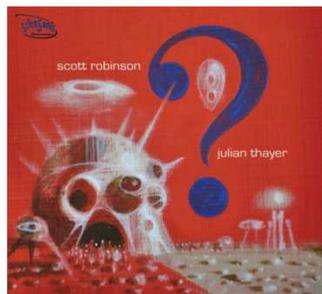




## June, 2015: ScienSonic Laboratories releases evocative new CD



Longtime musical colleagues **Scott Robinson and Julian Thayer** have teamed up to release their newest duo project on the ScienSonic label, following up on their previous ScienSonic recording, *Nucleus*. In the liner notes, Robinson has this to say about the theme of the new album: "I've given some thought to the question of what it is that really separates humans from the other animals. Some would say it's the use of tools; others would suggest language... (but) perhaps the one thing that truly defines humanity, and sets it apart, is the capacity to *wonder*. Curiosity, of course, abounds in the animal world... but the ability to stare into the heavens and wonder what it all really means, what our universe is made of and where it came from, and what's going to happen in a thousand years, or a million... this capability is, I think, uniquely human. I decided to dedicate an entire album to the capacity for wonderment, and to the essential humanity that it embodies." In keeping with this theme, the title of the new project is **?** -- simply a blue question mark. "Our first unpronounceable title!" Robinson exclaims.

Where *Nucleus* consisted entirely of improvised pieces - ranging from five and a half minutes down to just ten seconds in length, with no two alike - the new release also includes some improvised pieces that utilize a bit more advance planning, as well as unusual "cover" versions of Thelonious Monk's *Misterioso* and Sun Ra's *The Mystery of Two*. It marks a step forward for the duo, which has been collaborating on adventurous, improvisational music since 1977.

"Some of these pieces resulted from the original sessions that produced *Nucleus*," Robinson explains. "These pieces were of such a mysterious and questioning nature that I set them aside, realizing that we needed to record more such material and create a complete project in that vein. Over the next couple of years we got together in the Lab whenever possible and worked on more music specifically for this album." The result is an evocative and enigmatic listening experience, with 29 titles like *Dark Mystery*, *Rare Imaginings*, *What If?*, and *Who Goes There...* all laid out in the shape of a question mark on the

CD's back cover. As with ScienSonic's previous releases, the astonishing vintage sci-fi cover art is by renowned science fiction artist Richard Powers, used under an exclusive agreement with the estate.

Heard here, along with Scott's customary tenor and Jules' string bass, are some amazing instruments from ScienSonic's vast arsenal including slide sax, theremin, contrabass sarrusophone, phono-fiddle, and the bass flute that was previously owned and played by Scott's friend and mentor, Frank Wess. One piece, *Mysterium*, employs overdubbing to create an otherworldly orchestra effect from the improvisations of just two individuals, something new for the duo. "Playing this music always induces an altered state of consciousness" says Thayer, who, in addition to his music work, is also a world-famous and widely-published psychophysicologist. "I hear things and play things I never imagined before. When I listen back to the recordings it's as if I'm listening to someone else, because I can't believe that I had anything to do with it!"

Music which seems to come from nowhere, arriving fully-formed and aurally distinct with, in most cases, little or no discussion beforehand, is this duo's stock-in-trade and is the result of nearly forty years of working together in this way. "Jules and Scott gave me a night of music I'll never forget," says Grammy-winning composer Maria Schneider - in whose orchestra Scott has performed since the 1980s - after catching a New York City performance by the pair. "It was abstract, but at the same time felt utterly composed. I was blown away... Who needs a composer, with two masterful and connected individuals such as this?"

In an unusual move typical of ScienSonic's unique and forward-looking vision, avenues are now being explored to see if it is possible to get a piece from this CD played in space. Scott explains: "ScienSonic Laboratories, which specializes in otherworldly music, has a partnership with the Space Foundation under their Certification Program, which recognizes our CDs as Certified Space Imagination Products... and we contribute a portion of our proceeds to their Space Foundation Fund. They have shown considerable enthusiasm for our music!

Because of this relationship I was an invited guest (and performer) at their recent Space Symposium, where we received a plaque from the Foundation. At this event I had the chance to speak with a well-known shuttle astronaut and International Space Station Commander, expressing to him my long-held dream that one of our musical pieces could somehow be played in space, either on the ISS or elsewhere... and he put me in touch with someone at NASA who may be able to make that happen. I am thinking in particular of *Inexhaustible Mystery*, from the new CD. It would be a great honor to have one of our pieces played for the astronauts circling above, and I believe it would be a match made -- quite literally -- in heaven! Certainly I can think of no more fitting backdrop for this music than the majesty of space."

Whether in the vastness of outer space or in the living room, ? offers a truly transporting experience.

Visit ScienSonic Laboratories at [www.sciensonic.net](http://www.sciensonic.net).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Exposure to this product may induce feelings of awe and mystery, and could compel some listeners to question their perception of reality. This reaction is normal.