

# Kryptästhesie (Profile/Interview)

by [Jerry Kranitz](#)

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Kryptästhesie ("hidden senses") began life in the mid-1980's, releasing a couple of cassettes, a double LP set in 1992, and CD's on Delerium in 1996, and Mizmaze in 1999, the later being a label that band member Dario Antonetti runs in partnership with Giampiero Fleba. In between they contributed to numerous compilations, some of these consisting of music that would surprise those only knowing one of their releases. They band has evolved dramatically from their beginnings and subsequent projects reveal a variety of musical interests. I had long only known Kryptästhesie from their Inner Whirl CD on Delerium, one of the best space rock releases of the 90's. But when I receiving the No Age CD from Mizmaze some months ago, the differences from Inner Whirl were such that I decided to investigate the band a bit deeper.

**Shaken At The Sun** (Menhir Records 1992) was Kryptästhesie's first full length release, a 2-LP set that showed a band in the rough, yet still containing some excellent music and songs. The band at this time was a 4-piece of Dario on guitar, keyboards, and vocals, Fausto on bass, and Romeo on drums. The songs are all in English, though the album lists the lyrics in English and the bands native Italian. There's quite a stylistic variety on the album, the band shifting dramatically between thrashing psych-rock to folk-psych acoustic songs. The music is raw and you can tell this is a band in search of their identity. But there are nonetheless some stellar moments that foretell greater things to come.

Songs like "A Family In A Kitchen", "Aluminum Head", "Vis Matrix", "Liver", and "What a Surprise" represent the punky thrashing side of the band. "A Family In A Kitchen" is a standout track with killer bashing guitars. Dario's vocals have a punky but trippy chanting quality, and the keyboards help add the psychedelic edge to the music. "Aluminum Head" is a cool thrashing psych-rock tune that reminds me of Hawkwind's "Out Of The Shadows". "What A Surprise" is probably the most punked-out tune on the album. And "There Was A Car" is a total jam thrashing punky rocker which is about as raw as the band gets, kicking out 10 minutes of improvisational sounding garage psychedelia. As the song develops the guitars get seriously cosmic (and seriously brain-piercing), and while it's good fun and sounds great, it's feels a bit uncontrolled, much in contrast to the bands later work.

"Glass Window And Us" and "Charade" are a bit different featuring keyboards that give a progressive rock feel to the music, and shimmering space-psych guitar that make for an exciting marriage of the symphonic and the acidic. Things get especially intense in the last minutes of "Glass Window And Us" and we get a full dose of the manic freakout guitars that would so dominate Inner Whirl. "Any Water Knows" is another prog rock tune that has a folksy sound but rocks hard and I really dig the raw but beautiful 60's sounding psychedelic keyboards. "Green" is similar sounding much like The Byrds, only extra raw and acidic. There are also several acoustic guitar and vocal songs that dwell in the folk-psych realm, with "Mountain Song" standing out in particular as something of a good-time Irish pub song.

With the release of **Inner Whirl** (Delerium 1996), Kryptästhesie was now a quintet (with the addition of Cosma on percussion). Inner Whirl was released four years after Shaken At The Sun (though recorded much earlier), and features a band that had grown exponentially in terms of instrumental proficiency, composition, and pure undiluted space rock aggression. Inner Whirl easily makes my top 10 best-of-the-90's space rock CD's, being similar in power and spirit to the self-titled Omnia Opera disc, also on Delerium. An ESSENTIAL addition to any space rock fan's collection.

"Flying Saucer", "An Evening Following A Cuttle-Fish", "His Golden Guitar", "Chocolate Queen", and "Then My Left Eye Began Again" are among space rock's heaviest and most intense songs. "Flying Saucer" and "Then My Left Eye Began Again" are the two that most reminded me of Omnia Opera. But all feature dual guitar assaults, heavy pounding rhythm sections, and the most brain blistering space rock you can imagine.

At the other end of the spectrum are "Watching The Sky", "Pictor H.H.", "The Intruder", and "Secret Power", which demonstrate Kryptästhesie's more acoustic side. On "Watching The Sky", electric and acoustic instruments combine to create a gorgeously floating psychedelic song with Eastern ragas, jazzy saxophone, and an overall trippy atmosphere. "Pictor H.H." features similar saxophone contributions and a rare piano appearance. "The Intruder" is a short acoustic song, but with potent vocals from Dario. And "Secret Power" consists of more acoustic psychedelia with Eastern percussion and trippy synth lines.

At over 12 minutes, "The Tree" is Inner Whirl's epic track. It opens with a slowly developing minimalist synth pattern. This soon fades and the drums start to lay down a steady beat while Maurizio's more purely spacey synth takes over. Then a droning guitar kicks in along with a pulsating bass, and the band jams along for a bit while the synth simulates a whirling flying saucer. When Dario starts to sing it has a droning chanting didgeridoo quality, but is also powerful and passionate. It's a nice lengthy jam song that has a loose improvised feel, is HEAVY on the space electronics, and numerous influences come to mind from ultra spaced out Pink Floyd, to Hawkwind, and all manner of progressive rock.

Kryptästhesie third, and sadly their final, full-length release was **No Age** (Mizmaze Records 1999), their first release with lyrics completely in their native Italian. No Age is quite a change for Kryptästhesie. The space rock and psychedelic influences are very much in evidence, but the combinations of style and influence defy easy labels and descriptions. The best analogy I can think of is Finnish rockers Circle. The music on No Age is highly intense, heavy on the ROCK, and has guitars and electronics that will thrill space fans. But the songs include varied layers of guitars, sounds and rhythms that give an elusive complexity to the music, making it an impressive space progressive rock, or perhaps post-rock work. I don't know what to call it, but that of course is the beauty and challenge of the album. Born during the Balkan crisis when NATO planes were bombing Belgrade, No Age reflects the bands condemnation of war, a war that was all too close in proximity to Italy.

"Il Tao Della Violenza" opens the set and immediately establishes the differences from Kryptästhesie's earlier works. It's an 8 minute continual buildup piece consisting of bashing guitar chords, heavy psych guitar, subtle spacey synths, and high tension percussion. It's a lengthy intro track but the tension builds so gradually and steadily that I didn't realize in the last minutes that it had erupted until I was engulfed in the lava. "Tetano" is another rocker, completely spaced, but with a garagey techno pulse and electronic Eastern dance ragas. And Dario sings in a frenzied style that sounds like a Mullah at a rave. "Stella-Macchina-Guerra" continues to surprise us, being a carnival-like collage of hip-hoppy beats, chaotic space electronics, crazed voicings, and a calming melodic synth line that totally contrasts with it all. VERY different from what we've heard previously from Kryptästhesie. "Aleph" heads down a different path. Ambient space soundscapes and tinkling bells back droning chanting vocals that are slightly eff'd, giving a robotic electronic feel to the otherwise spiritual chants. But there's also a more Laurie Anderson styled vocal bit that adds a strange contrast to this somewhat more experimental track.

Though it's misleading to call it space rock, these sounds and influences are heard in abundance on tracks like "Prima Poesia Dell'Anno", a heavier rockin' space tune, much like the music heard on Inner Whirl, but it's more varied than the more straight ahead rock structures heard on that album. The percussion is intricate and varied and there are a number of thematic shifts that take place quite smoothly for a 5 minute track. And "Ent(h)omologia" is probably the most overtly space psychedelic track on the disc. Flying saucer synths and totally mind melting guitar licks provide the cosmic foundation. But a second metallic guitar and the slowly evolving repetitive pounding rhythms give it a more post-rocking edge, once again taking it a step beyond the recognizable space rock heard on Inner Whirl. An INTENSE piece of rock music.

It's a shame that No Age marked the end of Kryptästhesie's career, as the music on the album, though offering much to appeal to the bands earlier fans, is far more varied and adventurous than their earlier works. However, the members of Kryptästhesie, particularly Dario and Fausto have hardly been inactive, and, in fact, have found other outlets for the musical interests (radically different from Kryptästhesie) that led to No Age's diversity, though ultimately to the bands dissolution.

**Gastel Etzwane** and **Olographic Landscapes** are separate band projects and the two shared a split cassette release called **Tandem Trance** (On/Off Records 1997). Gastel Etzwane is a band of Dario's, and includes some of the most abstract and experimental of any music from the Kryptästhesie camp. Strings are raked and attacked, forced to produce all manner of eerie frightening sounds, the result being a harsh ambience that roars over the sonic landscape. Several tracks do the minimalist thing with repetitive vocal patterns, one highlight track accompanied by other more anguished voices, all backed by a rumbling drone. A bit of Phillip Glass, a dash of Laurie Anderson, but somehow retaining an ambient quality. I like the way Dario makes such full use of the human voice as part of the whole. Interesting music.

Olographic Landscapes is a side project from Fausto. Lots of variety here. The opening track on their side of the cassette is a combination of chamber, Renaissance music, and drifting psychedelia. The flutes and acoustic instruments are simultaneously melodic and meditative. Eastern ragas make their way into the mix, though still retaining the chamber music feel. Subsequent tracks remain in the electro-acoustic realm, while including spacey ambient electronics and more experimental explorations that focus on atmosphere and sound. Adding even more variety, I hear a tripped out Eastern psychedelic call-to-prayer with a hip-hop beat taking charge of the rhythm department. I also took notice of a spacey experimental track with a repetitive minimalist synth pattern. The music develops impressively around the repeating synth line, taking a simple theme on a variety of twists and turns.

Olographic Landscapes also released a full-length CD called **Shui** (Aua Records 1999). The music on Shui is much like that heard on the Tandem Trance cassette. The band here is a quartet of Fausto on guitar, saz, keyboards, percussion, sampler, and drum machine, Maria Antonietta on violincello, Stefania Puggioni on flute, keyboards, and vocals, and Vincenzo Romeo on percussion and a few other instruments that I wasn't clear on from the Italian. But the result is a diversity of styles including beautiful acoustic chamber music with a strong Renaissance feel, some ethnic influences, a bit of jazz, and some classical progressive rock. Lots happening here really. The moods range from joyfully uplifting to melancholy, and the musicians perform impressively as an ensemble.

The band also makes occasional detours into the avant-garde. On "Glycyrrhiza Glabra", dark dancey drum 'n bass rhythms hold down the beats, but alternate with strange mechanical electronics and voice sampled segments that remind me a bit of The Residents. The effect is intriguing and all manner of subtle freaky electronics help to keep things interesting. "Rebis" is a somewhat minimalist piece with brief but entrancing vocals from Stefania. But Olographic Landscapes include space influences in their music as well, two of my favorites being "Katmandu News" and "Assenzio". The former is a symphonic space track similar to Vangelis but with far more fun and strange electronic embellishments. And "Assenzio" is another spacey track with angelic vocal chants and a bit of a drum 'n bass backbone. Overall a very interesting variety of music.

**Etere-o** is another project from Fausto that released a 20 minute CDR-EP called Pulviscolo (Aria 2000). Pulviscolo consists of four tracks in the 4-5 minute range, and the music is characterized by floating space ambient soundscapes, though Fausto keeps things interesting by focusing as closely on the subtle use of sound as the atmosphere itself. "Open Air" was my favorite because I liked the droning guitar chord that intermittently made its presence known, providing an interesting contrast to the steady ambient landscape that Fausto is creating. Etere-o is ambient space music that pretty much just "happens", rather than being concerned with development or direction. And it's to Fausto's credit that he keeps the tracks short because this kind of music can too easily become quite boring if the artist isn't careful. As it stands, Fausto's creations make for the meditative listening when you're in the mood to relax but still want music that deserves your attention.

Finally, it's worth mentioning Dario's current project, **Effetto Doppler**, which doesn't have a full length release out yet. But two songs were made available to me and what I heard has me hungry for more. Both are very song-oriented, with lyrics in Italian. The first has a nice strumming combination of acoustic and electric guitars, with the electric guitar having a rough garagey feel that I liked. The second song is even more garagey in it's sound, but also includes several shifting rhythmic patterns and themes. Far more rock 'n roll than any of the music from the Kryptästhesie camp and beyond. Wanting to know more about all this music we conducted a Cyberspace interview with Dario Antonetti:

**AI:** The Kryptästhesie discography indicates you started releasing tapes in 1985. The first Kryptästhesie album I heard was Inner Whirl. Tell me how the music started (stylistically) and evolved from the beginning through the Inner While period.

**Dario:** At the beginning we had the problem of learning how to play. Our first tape is technically very rough. What we were interested in at that time was to be able to record our songs as we were playing them live. Later on, with "Any Water Knows", we had a melodic change introducing acoustic and middle-east sounds but keeping always as a main characteristic ultra-electric expressions. The following developments go under different phases as our sound was progressively changing: we started giving more and more importance to the long sessions of improvisation. During our live concerts we used to change our songs, adding long improvised parts and experimenting new sounds (testing the tolerance of our listeners). The recordings on records and CDS give a partial idea of what Kryptästhesie are. The only exception could be the last CD No Age.

**AI:** What was the band doing between the cassette releases in the mid-1980's and the release of Shaken At The Sun in 1992?

**Dario:** Between the release of the second tape "Any Water Knows" and the album "Shaken at the Sun" five years passed, during which we gave several concerts in the north of Italy. We spent a lot of time in our practice space, evolving our sound and composing new songs. At the beginning we didn't think of releasing a double LP but simply a third tape. Then things changed so that in 1989 we had the opportunity to put three of these new songs on a 7" single enclosed in the fanzine "Snowdonia" (Torino, Italy). The record made us known abroad, especially thanks to the Freakbeat Emporium. During 1990 we tried new sounds having in the group our friend Giovanni Russo, expert player of ethnic instruments and sound engineer of all our productions starting from the debut up to "Shaken At The Sun". The following year we began working in the studio for the recordings of new songs and in April 1992, finally, the album came out.

**AI:** Inner Whirl is a killer heavy space rock album with a strong resemblance to the British psychedelic "festie" bands. Did Kryptästhesie feel a part of this scene or did your sound develop independent of the British scene? Any travels to play festivals?

**Dario:** I must say that anything produced by Kryptästhesie developed absolutely free from any kind of musical scene either Italian or foreign. We would have liked to participate in festivals but we haven't been asked to.

**AI:** Does Inner Whirl (perhaps due to wider distribution from Delerium) remain your best known release?

**Dario:** I don't know. I can only say that we had a better result with "Shaken At The Sun" as regards contacts, interviews, concerts, etc. "Inner Whirl", though it had good reviews and a first place in the chart of the Italian magazine Rockerilla as best record of the year, didn't improve our notoriety and for sure didn't give us as many chances to play live as the previous album. Admiration letters and insult letters fill two drawers in my house; Inner Whirl letters don't even fill one.

**AI:** No Age includes space rock and psychedelia, but also progressive, experimental, and some ethnic influences. It's more stylistically diverse. It sounds like the band went through some dramatic changes in the few years since Inner Whirl (and certainly seems to explain the path toward the more experimental music on your separate band projects).

**Dario:** No Age is a difficult album. When we were working at it, for months and months, all the conditions that led to the end of the band arose and so, inevitably, our music shows these feelings. No Age is the apex of Kryptästhesie's sound evolution, expressed through a natural evolution of the band, the confluence of our parallel experiences as soloists, the non-premeditated recovery of the rough spontaneity we had at the beginning. In No Age you can feel the intolerance we had with any external attempt to confine our music within strict limits (space-rock, psychedelia, progressive). No Age was thought and recorded during the Balcanic crisis; NATO was bombing Belgrade and the media reduced everything to a shameful show. During the weekends, families crowded the fields around the military bases looking at the jets full of bombs as if they were part of a sport event. No Age is a cry of anger and sorrow to condemn all wars and the people who try to make us believe that there are right wars.

**AI:** I see the band members were the same on Inner Whirl and No Age. Was the band lineup consistent since the beginning?

**Dario:** At first there was a band called "Wall Of Death" with Roberto (bass guitar), Fausto (guitar), Romeo (drums) and Maurizio (synth). I joined them in December '84 as a singer. Starting from January '85 we changed our name to Kryptasthesie and the band continued together until spring '87 when Roberto left us. So we continued as a quartet with me and Fausto playing alternately the bass and the guitar. In 1990 Giovanni joined us. He was already an external collaborator but we only played together for a few concerts. Already in "Shaken At The Sun" Giovanni appears only as a guest. Cosma (percussions), with whom I had already played before in an anonymous rock-blues band, joined us in spring '94, a few weeks before entering the studio for Inner Whirl.

**AI:** Did Kryptästhesie get to play live much? How about your more recent projects, Gastel Etzwane and Effetto Doppler? Any live performances?

**Dario:** Kryptästhesie, despite the long carrier, didn't collect that many live performances. We had intense periods (around the end of the 80's and after the release of "Shaken At The Sun" 'till a year before "Inner Whirl") and long periods closed in the practice space. Gastel Etzwane started essentially as a studio project; either as a form of free-play or a workshop where I wanted to find new sounds for the voice for Kryptästhesie. Despite this, in a couple of performances I appeared to the audience like that and the result was both laughter and panic. Effetto Doppler is at the moment working for the production of an album and for live concerts. Starting from January 2002 we'll be ready to play anywhere.

**AI:** I've searched around the internet without success for Shaken At The Sun. Any plans for a reissue? [note: I've since found a copy]

**Dario:** No. I don't think that any of us is at the moment interested in a work like that.

**AI:** Is Effetto Doppler your main focus now? The two songs I heard have hints of progressive rock and a sense of good old heavy rock and roll. Is a full length release coming out soon, and are these songs representative of what the style will be like?

**Dario:** Yes, Effetto Doppler is now the only projects I'm working at as a musician and I hope it will be like this for a long time. Before the summer we recorded, with a 8 tracks, our first five songs. Two of these were to be included in two compilations: "Floralia vol.4" and another one that I don't mention because I'm not completely sure of our participation. The aim was to listen to the result and possibly to collect opinions from a restrict number of people. The idea is obviously to record in the next months all our songs in the best way possible and to release our first album. The two songs you heard are representative of the kind of sound we are developing, even if in the list of the songs there are some quieter and some definitely more... strange.

**AI:** Tell me about Gastel Etzwane. The focus seems to be on electronics and pure sound with a somewhat minimalist approach.

**Dario:** Regarding the motivations at the base of the project, as I have already said, I had a desire of a provocative playing with sounds, especially vocal ones, and the intention of trying new solutions to be used with Kryptästhesie. I was tired of my usual way of using the voice and together with the need of starting singing in Italian, I wanted to fuse my voice with the other instruments (as I tried in the last Kryptästhesie's album). Talking about influences, I remember that at the time I was interested in the research on the voice done by Demetrio Stratos (singer of Area) and in the vocal sounds used by all sort of different tribal populations.

**AI:** You clearly have many different musical interests. What types are music influenced you, and/or what current music or bands most interest you?

**Dario:** I think that all the music that has crossed my brain since I was born had an influence on me; even what we don't like, after all, has an influence showing us what ways not to follow. Anyway, I learnt how to play on Rolling Stones and Beatles songs; I grew up being fed by Syd Barrett, Pink Floyd, Kevin Ayers, Brian Eno and many others. I have a deep devotion for Mike Gunn and for the Houston scene around them. Among my favourites these last years I could name Stereolab, Flying Saucer Attack, Labradford, Beck, Skunk Anansie, Blonde Redhead, Morcheeba, Gonillaz, Radiohead, Schwarz and who knows how many more. I can't do without Velvet Underground...

**AI:** Any other future news you would like to share?

**Dario:** I have recently written the script of a short film and the shots started in August. I am the director. It's about a group of young musicians who try to form a band but they don't succeed. Everything is ironic and surreal and so I hope hilarious. The cast is made up of some friends and the best thing until now has been realizing how great they are as actors. We are having fun. As soon as we finish, I'll make a version with subtitles especially for you.

For information on ordering Kryptästhesie's No Age CD you can email Mizmaze Records at [mizmaze@tiscalinet.it](mailto:mizmaze@tiscalinet.it). You can also inquire about finding the various solo project releases. Also note that Mizmaze Records is responsible for the amazing [Floralia compilations](#) (also reviewed this issue) and several other releases that they'll be happy to tell you about.

## Kryptästhesie Discography:

### Cassettes

- Leaves Laughters (self-released 1985)
- Any Water Knows (self-released 1987)

### Singles

- Kryptasthesie 7" EP (Snowdonia 1989)
- The Bodynaut/Dream Machine 10" yellow vinyl (self-released 1996)
- Dark Lady Incontra il suo Fantasma Preferito/Tonno Morto 7" (Mizmaze Records 1999 - split single with Linus Pauling Quartet)

### Albums

- Shaken At The Sun double LP (Menhir Records 1992)
- Inner Whirl CD (Delerium Records 1996)
- No Age CD (Mizmaze Records 1999)

### Compilations

- Faces Vol. 1 CD (Face Records 1992) includes "Then My Left Eye Began Again"
- Apocalisse di Diamante (Toast 1993) includes "An Evening Following A Cattle Fish"
- Pick 'n' Mix CD (Delerium 1995) includes "Watching The Sky"
- Floralia Vol. 1 CD (On/Off Records 1996) includes "Mara e la Macchina del Tempo"
- Electronic Age CD (20th Century Music 1997) includes "Idrogeno"
- Floralia Vol. 2 CD (On/Off Records 1997) includes "Brevi Anniesie"
- SBIM SBAM CD (Snowdonia 1998) includes "Syd-Erai"

### Miscellaneous

- "A Little Contribution For A Free World" 3" mini CD (1996) given away with Magic Fuzz

### Side Projects

- Gastel Etzwane/Olographic Landscapes - Tandem Trance Cassette (On/Off Records 1997)
- Olographic Landscapes - Shui CD (Aua Records 1999)
- Etere-o - Pulviscolo CDR (Aria 2000)

