

Psychedelia is Back

Psychedelic Music: Music that attempts to recreate drug trips obtained on LSD.

Swirling colors, flashing lights, acid flashbacks, youths adorned in Prince Valiant haircuts, paisley shirts and Nehru jackets, day-glo mini-skirts and hippie beads. No, you're not back in the 1960's, this is 1985 and psychedelia is back.

Here's a little background on how it started. In Post-Punk England, in the late '70's and early '80's, many bands were digging their roots back to the '60's and mixing them with contemporary sounds. Bands such as Echo and the Bunnymen, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and the Psychedelic Furs pioneered the neo-60's revival. In 1980-81 a small American psychedelic revival was trying to raise its drugged-out head among the flooded ranks of synthesizer pop bands and the still ever-present punk noise. The American scene was different from the English one, however.

The American bands in general seemed to stand true to their 60's roots and not adapt to the more current sounds. The bands were trying to recreate the music that recreated the mind expanding drug trips using echoed vocals, farfisa organs, and vintage Vox guitars. The American youth of the 1980's have some unexplained romantic fixation on the culture of the 60's. They buy vintage instruments, records and clothing, and wear 60's style haircuts.

In 1980-81 the scene was a relative few bands with no critical acclaim playing to a very small cult following. In 1983 the American psychedelic scene had picked up a lot of momentum though, largely due to bands like the Fleshtones, and REM, and a whole west coast scene called the Paisley Underground. The Paisley Underground was getting considerable airplay on college stations with bands such as Rain Parade, Dream Syndicate, Bangles and the Three O'Clock.

By 1984 there were psychedelic and garage bands throughout the entire country. There are many garage bands now playing their own style of 60's punk music, influenced by the classics like the Standells, the Chocolate Watchband and the Music Machine. Some of these bands are the Vipers, from New York; the Miracle Workers, from Portland; Yard Trauma, from Arizona; and the whole new Paisley Underground scene in L.A., to name a few.

Currently the psychedelic music scene is on the verge of becoming the most powerful force in new music. Here at KCPR the likes of Plasticland, Rain Parade, the Prisoners and Thee Milkshakes have been found in current rotation. The record companies are pouring out the psychedelic records, especially the independent labels like Pink Dust, Voxx, Dionysus/Bona Fide and Frontier. So, KCPR will definitely be playing lots of new psychedelia during regular format hours, in addition to the 120 Minute Technicolor Dream [see the article].

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