



## [ABOUT THE BAND]

ARP of the Covenant is a maniacal improvisation trio utilizing acoustic and electronic instruments, along with other miscellaneous gadgets. We don't subscribe to categorizations, but some people have described us as "Electro-Funk" and "Avant Jazz". ARP of the Covenant has been an active member of music scenes in several midwest cities including Ann Arbor, Detroit, Dubuque, Iowa City, Minneapolis, and Eau Claire, and we have had feature articles in Jazziz magazine and the University of Michigan's "The Daily Page" newspaper. Here's our official bio:

Containing three members this group uses a variety of electronic and acoustic gizmos to create sounds with. Almost cult-like in their approach to making music, Arp of the Covenant insists that once they sit down at their instruments, they have no control over what they will play. They, in fact, become instruments for a mystical synthesizer that they found in a crudely fashioned tomb in the magical forests of northern Wisconsin.... The ARP. When asked to identify themselves in the presence of the ARP they respond only with a slack jawed blank stare. Once the ARP is engaged it takes mere seconds for it to take control of their motor functions and command them what to do.

## [ABOUT THE MEMBERS]

### ->MARK SIEGENTHALER<-

composer, piano/keyboard player, technophile. ARP certified. went to the university of wisconsin at platteville. got a bachelor's degree in piano performance. went to the university of michigan. got a master's degree in improvisation. has a cat that can easily destroy your computer. is forming a secret society of super intelligent kittens who's ultimate goal is to enslave the human race. has no opinion on sentence fragments. has a minivan. lived in Wisconsin as a child. works for sony. knows more about computers than you do. worked on a mink farm when he was sixteen. got peed on a lot when he was there. Pissed off Mick Fleetwood. quit smoking cigarettes. makes a martini without any vermouth or olive. plays with a guy who's dad was Prince's mom's boss. is married. his wife (who is on the terrorist watch list) is best friends with mike wallace, bitter enemies with lamonte young (who is also on the terrorist watch list).

### ->BRAD TOWNSEND<-

composer, bass player, lover. Bradley Townsend teaches both jazz and classical double bass at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. He holds a Masters of Music degree in Improvisation from the University of Michigan and a Bachelors degree in Music Performance from the University of Iowa. Mr. Townsend is also a freelance artist in the Madison area and performs with such groups as the Madison Symphony Orchestra, Madison Jazz Orchestra, and the Rountree Ensemble, as well as various touring artists. His most recent honors include an invitation to perform at the Spark Festival of Electronic Music in the Twin Cities and a feature in Jazziz magazine with his University of Michigan jazz trio. Townsend has performed and recorded with such artists as: Oliver Lake, Jeff Coffin, Chris Potter, Hank Jones, Cashew, Arp of the Covenant, Executive Tea Set and many others.

### ->NICK ZIELINSKI<-

composer, drummer, fighter. Born March 11, 1977 in Wadena, Minnesota. Knows how to use parenthesis. inconsistently uses capital letters. Son of a social worker and a minister. One brother, one sister. Likes sentence fragments. Bachelor of music in percussion performance from U of MN Duluth (2000). Master of music in improvisation from U of MI (2004). currently teaches percussion and improvisation at the u of mn in duluth. once owned a honda civic hatchback. he misses it dearly. Has taken part in many independent music projects such as: Arp of the Covenant, about Ouch!, tanya and the holsum family fiscal planner, brenda and the holsum family fiscal planner, eduardo and the holsum family fiscal planner, juan miguel sanchez and the holsum family fiscal planner, kilometers davis, Enzo Trio, The Hopscotch Filament, Hard Core-tet, Marginalized and Whoopsy, The I in Team, The Number F, Gay Cop Mustache, 33 Husky, Young Little Meat and Skul Raydr. His dad was Prince's mom's boss. He has also taken part in many subsidized musical endeavors, which aren't as cleverly named so they wont be listed.

## [REVIEWS AND ACCOLADES]

### From the October 2005 issue of Jazziz Magazine, CD Track Description:

NICK ZIELINSKI, MARK SIEGENTHALER & BRAD TOWNSEND form ARP of the Covenant, a graduate trio from the University of Michigan's Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation. During its live shows, the multimedia group uses a combination of prepared video loops and abstract computer-generated images to create an audio-visual concert experience. But keyboardist Siegenthaler, bassist Townsend, and drummer Zielinski prove they don't need the added visual element on "Mr. Li Poses With His American Birthday Cake." The ethereal composition shifts in both tempo and volume throughout, as Siegenthaler uses a variety of electronic keyboards to blend the 1970s influence of Herbie Hancock with modern trio Medeski, Martin & Wood.

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### Local rockers find solace with ARP - Michigan Daily

By Lloyd Cargo, Daily Arts Writer

April 07, 2005

To understand the greatness of the band ARP of the Covenant, you have to try and wrap your head around what exactly the ARP itself is. The problem with that is, the ARP is an undefinable entity. Sure, it looks like a keyboard, but it's so much more than that. The men controlled by this keyboard-like instrument christened the ARP (after the company that manufactures them) are almost as mysterious as the instrument itself. All that's really known about them are their names and some vague background history. Nicolai Zielinski (percussion), Brad Townsend (bass) and Mark Siegenthaler (keyboards, ARP), met as graduate students in the University's Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation Department. Finding that they had a few friends in common, they began playing as a jazz piano trio in Brad's basement in October of 2003. Humble beginnings for sure, but what happened next would change their lives. One fateful weekend, the group decided to go camping in Wisconsin. "We were hiking along an old abandoned railroad and came upon what looked like some sort of tomb. Inside the tomb was a crude altar, and atop the altar, a small keyboard instrument. Since that day, our lives have never been the same," explained Zielinski.

So what exactly is the ARP? Well, what isn't the ARP might be a better question. "The ARP is a spiritual guide. A sensei. A master. A teacher. A provider. A mystic. The ARP is the lone synthesizer of the apocalypse. Think of it when you look to the night sky," Zielinski preached. The thing about the ARP is that you can't play it, it plays you. When asked to describe the process of making music with the ARP, the band replied with the 5,000-yard stare. First-hand accounts of ARP of the Covenant's live shows confirm their servitude to this magical instrument. Only seconds after being flicked on by Siegenthaler, the group's motor functions are seized, putting them at the mercy of the all-powerful instrument.

Siegenthaler, known among his peers for his Mensa-worthy intelligence as well as his ability to piss off Mick Fleetwood (of Fleetwood Mac fame), is the man who gets to sit behind the ARP. Well acquainted with technology, Siegenthaler has been working with a program called Milkdrop that uses the sounds the band makes to manipulate images on a screen behind them. This cutting-edge technology will be on display Sunday, April 24 at 2 p.m. in the video studio of the Duderstadt Center. As well as a set with Milkdrop, the band will play a set as an acoustic piano trio, a format that'll give Siegenthaler's considerable keyboard chops a chance to shine. Providing the low harmonies for the group is Iowa's finest, Brad Townsend. Townsend has many skills, among them not caring about his parents making him get a job at McDonald's when his was 16, and bass playing. Townsend also purports to have "toured with many, many bands playing all styles of music - styles you didn't even know existed." When not waiting for the drummer in AC/DC to die so he can carry out his seven-step

plot to take over the world, Zielinski mans the drum kit in ARP of the Covenant. A Minnesota native, Zielinski is not only jovial but boasts that his dad was Prince's mom's boss. An experienced drummer, Zielinski has been in dozens of bands, most notably Gay Cop Mustache, Mario Speedwagon, The Number F, The I in Team, Hard Core-tet and Skul Raydr. Indeed, all of those influences are fused with countless more to create the ARP of the Covenant's highly stylized brand of electro-funk.

Some of their professed musical inspirations include Warp Records, Cecil Taylor and the Depeche Mode. Alongside rip-rocking and raving originals such as personal favorites "Turbo Christians" and "Mr Li Poses With His American Birthday Cake" the group has been known to bust out covers as diverse as Kraftwerk, The Eurythmics and Sigur Ros. The ARP of the Covenant has future plans to spread their unique combination of space funk and soul-jazz throughout the Midwest in May after their aforementioned Duderstadt Center gig. Recently signed to independent label Rock is Dead Records, the group has plans to release a CD and DVD sometime this summer. For more information on the band as well as some mp3s, check out their website: [www.arpofthecovenant.com](http://www.arpofthecovenant.com). You will do this, and you will bask in the gloriousness; the ARP commands you.

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### **ARP of the Covenant**

**Stephanie Rearick**

**Benefit for Wendy Schneider's "Cut" documentary - Rick's Cafe**

Story and photos by Rick Tvedt

I'd heard whispers about this new band, ARP of the Covenant, and when I got the press release from Wendy Schneider about a fundraiser for her documentary that had the band on the bill, I immediately linked to their site. Their brief bio states it best: Almost cult-like in their approach to making music, ARP of the Covenant insists that once they sit down at their instruments, they have no control over what they will play. They, in fact, become instruments for a mystical synthesizer that they found in a crudely fashioned tomb in the magical forests of northern Wisconsin... The ARP. When asked to identify themselves in the presence of the ARP they respond only with a slack-jawed, blank stare. Once the ARP is engaged it takes mere seconds for it to take control of their motor functions and command them what to do. Okay, now this was a must-see.

ARP of the Covenant is simply one of the best bands I've seen in town for some time (this was their first Madison performance). All three have degrees in music; two of them master's. The band consists of Mark Siegenthaler on keys and ARP (for the record, an ARP is an analog synthesizer that was popular in the seventies), Brad Townsend on bass and Nick Zielinski on drums and rhythm programming. This trio's level of musicianship is through the roof. They received an enthusiastic response from the small crowd and just as I was feeling they might launch into ELP's Tarkus, a woman requested their Karn Evil 9. Although they are probably fully capable of pulling this off musically, they possess neither the pomposity nor the requisite bombast for such an undertaking. Instead they displayed a humble, almost surprised demeanor at the crowd's reaction. Completely instrumental, their music was far from uncontrolled. The band moved seamlessly from melodic passages of beauty to jazzy improvs to manic, all-out space rock. They played several cover songs including the Eurythmics Jennifer, Stripped by Depeche Mode, and the set-closer a spot-on cover of Sigur Ros' Untitled 1 track from their untitled album Between songs Zielinski entertained the audience with his hilarious banter, delivered in a deadpan, almost stoner fashion, as if his mind were weary from being so damn intelligent and creative. They played much, if not all, of the selections from their new, self-titled CD as well. Set opener Bad Alternator was fantastic, with Siegenthaler flailing wildly at his Fender Rhodes. Triple Tree was also stellar, with Townsend repeating an impossibly fast and complex phrase on bass. Zielinski excelled on the drums, at times using brushes and mallets, at times filling wildly.

The incomparable Stephanie Rearick opened the show with a solo set using Siegenthaler's keyboards, and it was fun to watch her try her tunes on the ARP and the Rhodes. She brought along her trumpet, too, and played my two favorites: Baker Street and Small Hairs. Her use of the looping effect on her voice is mesmerizing to watch and hear. Rearick remains one of our fair city's purest and most notable artists.>

**[CONTACT INFORMATION]**

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