

# POTENTIA

Potentia House,  
12 Martell Street,  
Fforestfach,  
Swansea,  
SA5 8HX

United Kingdom

Tel.No.: +44 (0)1792 417656

e-mail: [mail@potentia-zone.com](mailto:mail@potentia-zone.com)

web site: <http://www.potentia-zone.com>

## Music Reviews

Contact: Andrew Cadmore

8<sup>th</sup> July 2005

E-mail: [andrewcadmore@potentia-zone.com](mailto:andrewcadmore@potentia-zone.com)

Phone: +44 (0)1792 417656

### Artist: ZONE

*Alan Freeman*

*Audion #9*

*August 1988*

A time capsule has opened and out of the past comes a lost sound, resurrected with new found vitality! Entering the Zone one finds a music we once called "industrial" accompanied by the atmosphere of post-apocalyptic terror. Dark and mysterious this music lurks, casts cold stark shadows and moves most strangely.

Placing frames of reference on this album could well do more harm than good, as Zone's style of instrumental electronic music is quite individual, but having said that, actual description is most difficult. So take, for instance the stark spacious instrumental music of Throbbing Gristle, add a little bit of Asmus Tietchens weirdness, a tinge of ethnic and neo-classical music, and you've got some of the most devastatingly glamorous music to appear on record since...?

Shamefully, the LP is a limited edition of 100 numbered copies, so make sure you're quick in ordering (unless you're happy with it on tape) if you don't want to miss out: it's only £6.25 (Inc. P&P) anyway! [Potentia]

*Dean Suzuki*

*Option Magazine*

Excellent debut recording from a Welsh outfit whose music fits loosely in the ambient/industrial, electro-acoustic vein, with heavy processed, muted, and muffled sounds which are looped and repeated. The raw materials include taped or sampled found sounds, as well as electronically generated tones. As with all good repetitive music, Zone layers other sonic material over the incessant ostinatos, providing different levels of interest and varying textures: more depths to plumb. The music often has a menacing and mysterious quality, as well as a somewhat exotic feel. Thus, one can find elements of Throbbing Gristle, recent Asmus Tietchens, Peter Frohmader, J. Greinke, Jon Flassel, and Brian Eno mixed into a weird, eerie, wonderful, and most satisfying whole. This is available as a cassette, and for you collectors, also as a limited edition vinyl disc of only 100 numbered copies.

*Lance Johnson*

*Offbeat #Two*

*October 1988*

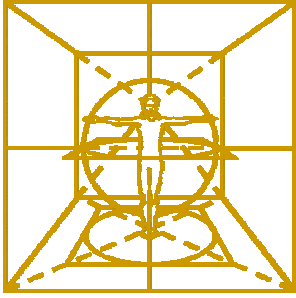
From Swansea with tales of religious cults and music being sacred, Zone make an album's worth of ambience, punctuated by rhythmic chants and emotive movements. This is the kind of album that people profess to enjoy strange sexual endeavours to, or even visualise their God after. Not as heated and debatable as Scorsese's *The Temptation Of Christ* but moving in the same area and answering no questions. \*\*\*

*Biba Kopf*

*The Wire - Round Up The Usual Suspects*

Electronic Music for the mind and body. The hoariest argument ever produced by the propagandists of the tyranny of rhythm ruling the popular culture is the one claiming a music can only be physical when it's walked all over by a four-square dance rhythm. The statement is invariably backed up with the somewhat dubious contention that anything refusing severe dance regimentation is somehow abstract head music totally lacking in feeling. Well, here's a new sine wave of cottage industry-produced electronic music that severs at the neck once and for all those who insist on a separation of head and heart...

Journey Through A Body was the title of an infamous Throbbing Gristle bootleg. It is also a most apt description of Zone's *Sword Of The Sun* (Potentia Records, Potentia House, 12 Martell Street, Fforestfach, Swansea, SA5 8HX or from Rough Trade Shop). Zone are a (presumably) Welsh group who generate the most elemental noises this side of a volcanic eruption and organise them into great blasting pieces like "Stopping The World" (it's all over within seconds) or into deep reverberating tone patterns capable of agitating less than secure structures to the point where they collapse ("To The Centre Of The Cyclone"). Impressive party tricks you'll agree. But what really makes Zone's record so exemplary is their compositional range. Some pieces take shelter under a great yawning umbrella of noise



# POTENTIA

Potentia House,  
12 Martell Street,  
Fforestfach,  
Swansea,  
SA5 8HX  
United Kingdom

Tel.No.: +44 (0)1792 417656  
e-mail: [mail@potentia-zone.com](mailto:mail@potentia-zone.com)

web site: <http://www.potentia-zone.com>

electronically expanded from a single source, while others tap nervous energies to fuel pulsing rhythm workouts. The sort of record Tarkovsky's *Stalker* might dance to.

*Edwin Pouncey*  
*New Musical Express*  
*April 1991*

Zone are a two-man team from Swansea who have a musical vision that is mysterious and their own. Their first record was an LP entitled 'Sword Of The Sun', a work which the pair decided to release on the day that Swansea officially became a nuclear free zone. Their second project was a hand-bound volume of graphics, a grimoire of sorts which explained pictorially the entire Zone philosophy.

'Born Of Fire' is the follow up to 'Sword Of The Sun' where the general themes of Awakening, Struggle, Humility and Unity are given more musical and atmospheric scope. All very strange stuff you may well be thinking. But there is a pulse to Zone's work and a kind of hideous beauty which reveals itself slowly to the careful listener.

Huge slabs of gothic atmosphere are erected during 'Beautiful Machine' only to be torn down and replaced by something more delicate on 'The Butterfly Effect'.

'Born Of Fire' is meant to be listened to as a complete piece, but individual sections can be singled out without too much damage being caused. Zone are a strange and powerful force that you should plug into as soon as possible. (7)

*Vittore Baroni*  
*Rockerolla No. 125*

*Translated from the original Italian text*

Of course, opinions differ over the diverse post-industrial experience as to whether it proceeds along the path of consumerism or goes down the blind alley of noise, repetition and self-indulgence. In reality, the most recent recordings rooted in "industrial culture" have learnt to develop in new and (fortunately?) unclassifiable directions, taking on board both traditional music and more apparently irreconcilable cultural stimuli to create potentially enjoyable works to anyone who applies their sincere intellectual curiosity. The Welsh group 'Zone' are certainly more eligible to make this assertion and, without taking away the rough charm of 'Sleep Chamber' permit me to advise, with particular enthusiasm, to listen to the CD 'Born Of Fire' that follows the LP 'Sword Of The Sun', released a couple of years ago in an ultra-limited edition. "Zone is a creative unit, based in the United Kingdom, who recognise the apparently differing individual, social and religious needs inherent in all cultures as permutations upon the central NEED for Love, Life and Light." is what is stated on the cover of this work produced by Andrew Cadmore and Chris Brandrick, with the help of their guests: a work not at all "negative" and unlistenable, but which moves from the measured techno-ethnology of 'Heart Of The Atom' to the very ambient electronic mysticism of 'Born Of Fire', from the sumptuous Gregorian chants of 'Beautiful Machine' to the unexpected acoustic folk of the 'Butterfly Effect' (with female lead vocal and Celtic melody similar to the Incredible String Band!), it all pulls together into an admirable spiritual severity on an invisible thread that binds the Arabic monastery represented on the front cover of the package with the Atomic Bomb Memorial Dome on the back. Don't be afraid of the sacred fire of Zone, listen and absorb what is communicated.

*Albert Durand*  
*Revue Et Corrsgee No. 7*

*Translated from the original French Text*

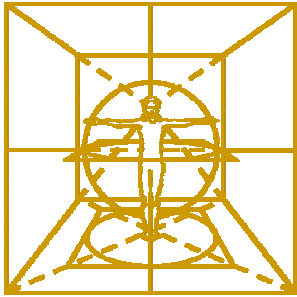
'Born Of Fire' is the second album from Zone after 'Sword Of The Sun' [100 copies (?)] released in 1988. The new recording from these Englishmen from Swansea all at once deceives and seduces. It appears to be out of its time in displaying freshness and clarity. Four pieces in complete musical opposition composed of:

1. Religious chants sung by a core of men and the spontaneous pealing of bells. 'Beautiful Machine'.
2. Rhythmic progression (explosion) by the gradual grafting of new timbres up to a final rupture. 'Heart Of The Atom'.
3. Duet of mixed vocal's for a Spring-like ballad, founded on acoustic guitar, violin and percussion. 'The Butterfly Effect'.
4. Slow rise in harmonic power generated by synthesisers. 'Born Of Fire'.

Zone thus mark their interest in diversity, crossing four themes which in themselves have nothing in opposition: 'Awakening', 'Struggle', 'Humility' and 'Unity'. This impeccable production writes itself into a musical trilogy and makes from Zone a remarkable work that perfectly masters (keeps control of) its subjects with/by a poetic language going right to the body (heart?).

*Music From The Empty Quarter #2*  
*August 1991*

Zone's Born of Fire is a musical interpretation of their book Beautiful Machine. The recordings represent the themes of Awakening, Struggle, Humility and Unity, apparent in their writings. The music itself attains an air of religious splendour, a grandeur only attained through a cleansing of the mind. Many would class the opening Beautiful Machine in classical circles, with its use of clear, open spaces and neo-religious singing. Heart Of The Atom (Ground Zero) is a delicate binding of soft voice and oriental synth motifs and rhythms, while the acoustic guitar of The Butterfly Effect is as flickering, as the creature portrayed. The title track reminds of Vasilisk, with murmuring synth and hypnotic percussion, but they close with (Reprise), a shimmering of past beauty. Zone are two people, sharing in their intentment of a need for expression and communication. Though their creativeness is not only musical, the side of their output as expressed here, is a joyous existence.



# POTENTIA

Potentia House,  
12 Martell Street,  
Fforestfach,  
Swansea,  
SA5 8HX  
United Kingdom

Tel.No.: +44 (0)1792 417656

e-mail: [mail@potentia-zone.com](mailto:mail@potentia-zone.com)

web site: <http://www.potentia-zone.com>

*Dean Suzuki*

*Background Issue #33*

*February 1993*

To say that Zone creates some truly stunning music is an understatement. Though worlds apart from their first, limited edition LP, which focused on dark, gothic electronics, this CD lives up to the standards set by their initial effort.

It opens with 'Beautiful Machine', a simply devastatingly gorgeous work. This eleven plus minute work combines a most exquisite, polyphonic medieval sounding Kyrie with piano and electronics in a way that is at once sumptuous, yet merely ostentatious or overblown. As befitting a mass movement, it exudes a reverent majesty and ecclesiastical solemnity, underscored by the church bells and organ-like timbres of the electronics.

'Heart Of The Atom (Ground Zero)' is quite different with its world music samplings and borrowings, which range from energetic African poly-rhythms to doleful Asian modes along with a plethora of exotic instruments such as strange double reed instruments, flutes, gongs, drums and bells, that seem to be derived from Japanese Gagaku, Moroccan dervish ceremonies, and other ritual music, not to mention some kind of Middle Eastern incantation and other non-Western singing. The resultant music is a rich multi-cultural bleed which is at once timeless and contemporary. universal and quite Western.

Only in the title-track does ZONE spotlight sinister and luxuriant electronics, though even here the approach is more rhythmic, if not a bit more accessible. The only miscue on the recording is 'The Butterfly Effect' and its reprise at the very end which features a kind of poor man's 'Dead Can Dance' style, though the primary melody is rather banal and overworked and the singing without strength or conviction. Otherwise this is a splendid recording worth seeking out.

*Brian Duguid*

*ESTWeb Index*

*1995*

Zone tell us that their one aim is to communicate to the listener Love, Light and Life. Yes, it does sound a little bit twee. But, against all expectation Born of Fire succeeds. This is a mature, perfectly poised album. At times it's serene and delightful, as on Beautiful Machine, which announces itself with a single bold chord, going on to combine Gregorian chant, bright, clear piano, bells and soft synths to create something refreshing and beautiful. At others, it becomes more intense, creating a shimmer of wailing sound via peculiarly harmonised synths and rhythmic percussion, although it's never overbearing. Miles from New Age nonsense or shapeless soundtrack noodling, this is purposeful, emotive, expressive music. My only criticism is that there simply isn't enough of it.

*Chris Twomey*

*New Powers Music*

*Autumn 1994*

3rd CD from mystically-influenced British duo, their first new recordings in 4 years. Their previous CD, Born Of Fire (just reissued), had samples of Asian music, Tibetan horns, Gregorian chant, church bells, with their music on piano, synths, drums and female/male vocals. The new one has 2 long tracks over 46 minutes, which add more World chants, tribal drumming and guitar feedback to the neo-classical mix. Desert Winds and The Wisdom Of The Prophets are made up of shifting sections, with the drumming coming in and out of the mix. 'A' for the effort and production, 'B' for the results. Nice booklet and picture disc of photos from religious sites.

*John Marshall*

*Flux Europa*

*May 1997*

The Divine Simplicity (1994 ZONE CD004) by Zone provides powerful ambient music for conjuring spells from the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

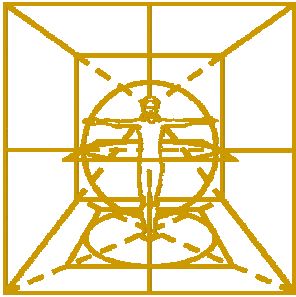
John Marshall writes: Lots of different styles fade into one another. Some of it is pretty hypnotic: other times it's eerie. Some of it would sound good in a wildlife documentary or on a film soundtrack. Track 2 starts out a bit like something from Clockwork Orange, but underwater! Then, when the piano comes in, it's a bit like Lydia Lunch's Drowning of Lucy Hamilton but more unnerving, less aggressive.

*Gregory Samson*

*Abstract Review*

*Sept 1997*

A great deal is said and written now about the 'inner' life, but forgotten almost entirely is what is 'innerly', or - as defined in one old dictionary - 'more within'. Their fascination with pan-cultural expressions of mystical and spiritual sentiment and sound already established on their first two albums, Zone here go deeper. Yes, there is the industrial edge, but perhaps only as a boundary or container for a search in music through the innerly qualities of space, time and life that hold us hostage to love. Divided into two nearly equal parts, the first of which, Desert Winds, is a strange drifting and gyrating sandstorm of sound that comes to rest only after some minutes of purposeful agitation. Then segueing into a more pastoral but proactive section characterised by religious chanting and plaintive piano, it becomes more meditative and patient with itself. As with everything Zone do, there is an attention to detail and genuine sense of not just searching but also finding, and it is this rare latter expression that makes their sometimes lonely and even troubled music as potent as it can be poignant. It is hard not to be moved by this very human music, informed as it is by the nervous modernity of machines and too much thought, that moves at times hesitantly to a declaration of, if not freedom, then independence. When Desert Winds resumes its more powerful motion, it is with a feeling of confidence, a propulsive snare underpinning a strangely detached sample of mystic chanting that makes you stand back and listen with a peculiar clarity.



# POTENTIA

Potentia House,  
12 Martell Street,  
Fforestfach,  
Swansea,  
SA5 8HX  
United Kingdom

Tel.No.: +44 (0)1792 417656

e-mail: [mail@potentia-zone.com](mailto:mail@potentia-zone.com)

web site: <http://www.potentia-zone.com>

The Wisdom of the Prophets, which constitutes the second half of the album, once again builds a kind of sonic sacred geometry upon a shifting, modern soundscape. At first more gentle, it soon accelerates into competing layers of strident and syncopated rhythms generated by a number of instruments harking us back, paradoxically, to a timeless place. It is this conscious, engineered collision of the apparent past and notional future in a present rendered real that makes Zone's music and approach at once enervating and intimidating and, at times, elusive. Saturated with so many cultural influences and traditions as to make fixity of origin a futile pursuit, this is music that is made at once for its own sake and for that of all who listen to it.

From the inner to the innerly, not wider, but deeper, Zone continue to bring their mind into their music with marvelous focus. Not for fake-hearted.

*RIK*

*Flux Europa*

*25th July 2000*

It's been six long years since Zone's last - and sublime - album, *The Divine Simplicity*. This new CD from Chris Brandrick and Andrew Cadmore reflects a more varied approach with some strongly song-based material and some progressive jazz sax courtesy of Roland Ellis. The title track is a pleasant ambient instrumental with filmic qualities, 'Golden Rain' has a Celtic sound, whilst 'Frozen In Heaven' is soft mood music with an Andean theme inspired by a TV archaeology program about an Inca sacrifice.

A collaboration with Jeremy S Gluck reading his own poetry reaches its fullest expression on the 21-minute final track, 'Scavenging Soul (The Benefactor)'.

*Gregory Samson*

*Abstract Review*

*Feb 2001*

In the six years since their last release, *The Divine Simplicity*, music has changed. The first Zone album to be recorded entirely digitally, it is also - after the seductive discovery phase which witnessed so much of it for the band - one that is not at all dependent on sampling. In sense this is Zone's most direct and conventional album, its unifying theme of the motivation through love to freedom and enlightenment sublimated to the music itself, which is not as explicitly religious as it had been on its predecessor, where two long pieces forced the listener to co-operate in an exploration of its mystic, mythic themes. Paradoxically, through its very structure and discipline, *Angel of Freedom* is the more liberating of the two albums; *The Divine Simplicity* had sweep and a peculiar grandeur, but lacked the variety of this album, which veers from intimations of jazz to flashes of idiosyncratic brilliance more reminiscent of Robert Fripp than *Psychic TV*.

Beginning with *Other Lives*, a mixed meditation on the intertwining of lives through time, with Jeremy Gluck on vocals, the album then jumps to the clattering but harmonious *Totality*, featuring some sinuous saxophone from Roland Ellis that sets the tone for the bemusing journey this album represents, being a soundtrack of sorts for a Europe lost in itself to the East and surrendered to its fate. Indeed, this sense of the Occident and Orient in uneasy mutual recognition and collaboration often visits this work, which poised on the 21st century is bound to contain elements of its timestamp of a transition full for some of foreboding. What will be sacrificed, seems to be the keynote question at times, as - on *Exorcising Attachment*, for example - wordless vocals sounding Japanese in nature bring into close contact the feeling of the East and West on a middle ground of uncertain assignation. Clever, perverse, and even witty, this is part of the new Zone, with band's enduring duo of Andrew Cadmore and Chris Brandrick more at ease and effortless than usual, the cerebral pursuits of wonder now transformed to a gentler but more incisive flux rendered tangible on the gorgeous *Herald Of Coming Good*, a sprightly effusion of chastened wonder. Eros, whose face - in the form of a treated image of an ancient statue - graces the album's cover, is again gentle, but with that subtext of energetic shedding of the superficial that here makes Zone more prescient than pleasant, a perception confirmed by the closing track, *Scavenging Soul (The Benefactor)* a lengthy piece hosting a spoken word journey over crisp, mechanical loops. The graduated, small tension of the title track, a slip of a song based on acoustic instruments, that moves from a shy suggestion of the possibilities of growth to a more expansive assertiveness is what this strange and powerful album is really all about: big on the inside.

Experimental \* Avant Garde \* Electronic \* Ambient \* Gothic \* Industrial \* Ethereal \* World

-End-