

Quotes from Upsilon Acrux's Paul Lai, excerpted from Etan Rosenbloom's "Mapping the path to obscurity" in *Prefix Magazine*, October 18, 2006:

"We feel 7/4 the way that most people feel a 4/4 pocket. It's just a downbeat -- it's like you wanna rock, but so much shit is rocked in 4. And it's rad. But I can't do that shit again -- I'd like to hear something else. That's why I like Meshuggah and other bands that step out of the standard time signatures. "

"...we are a rock band, we just try not to do typical things. We listen to enough music, we're big enough music geeks, that we wouldn't want to play something cool that had already been done by ten thousand bands. It works in music and it works in art: If you have something to say, then say it in your own way. If you don't have anything to say, shut the fuck up, go home and be a consumer. ... Most bands these days sound like they're working at Kinko's, just carbon copies of other bands. ...
... Ultimately, I'm looking for singularity. We strive for unprecedented music. ..."

"...I think Faust, especially, is one of the most creative bands ever: You can't really pinpoint what they exactly do. That's what all bands should strive for, creativity above genres or styles. It should be about trying to be as creative possible. ... If you're not reaching out to someone, creating a personal bridge with lyrics and vocals,...then you should be insanely creative in a completely different way. "

"... Be true to yourself, and if you want to do something creative or do something public, try to be singular, try to do something nobody else has done."

EXCERPTS FROM WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT UPSILON ACRUX:

GALAPAGOS MOMENTUM

Lineup: Jesse Appelhans (drums); Eric Kiersnowski (bass); Paul Lai (guitar); Braden Miller (guitar)

CUNEIFORM

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"Galapagos Momentum, the new full-length recording from San Diego's Upsilon Acrux comes through the speakers without introduction and at full ramming speed. Instantly the listener is taunted by frantic guitar-tapped triplets and manic snare drum syncopation. ... Cerebral and intuitive bass lines are punctuated by spastic bursts of a free-jazz nature.

... they represent a growing faction of instrumental neo-prog/hardcore outfits bent on creating the most feverish amplified equations possible. Bands like Upsilon seem perversely fueled by aurally discordant mind spaces. Without turning to any vocal imagery or expression, they construct songs as a series of vignettes, snapshots into a tortured and primal self beyond language. ...

...possessing enough balance to warp time and space while still drawing in the average listener. Suspense is built at the outset by a dark bass guitar raga... later they're in Minutemen territory, kicking out fast-paced slink and jive before descending into sparse, clean-toned doom. ..."

— Geoff Shiner, *PerformerMag.com*, www.performermag.com

"What do you get when you combine elements of Red-era King Crimson, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, Henry Cow, Magma, Univers Zero, John Coltrane, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Don Caballero, and Hella? Probably something close to Galapagos Momentum by Upsilon Acrux, a brash four piece band featuring dual guitars, bass, and drums, who play a complex brand of instrumental rock that is part prog, part fusion, part metal, and part post-punk. Sound interesting? It sure is. **...this CD sizzles from start to finish, ten tracks of complex interplay that is bound to knock you on your ass in awe of these four dudes' knack for telepathic interplay.** As they weave their intricate lines and melodies through complex ditties...you can't help but be impressed with the dexterity of it all, especially the deft guitar work of **Paul Lai and Braden Miller. These two have perfectly channeled some warped hybrid of Robert Fripp, Adrien Belew, Fred Frith, and John McLaughlin, and, coupled with the amazing rhythms from drummer Jesse Appelhans and bassist Eric Kiersnowski, turn pieces...into what could be long lost tracks from Crimson's Larks Tongues in Aspic album.** ... All of this insanity is funneled through a punk attitude and sense of aggression, making *Galapagos Momentum* one hell of an exciting listening experience. ... [Score: 4 stars]"

— Pete Pardo, *Sea of Tranquility*, June 27th 2007, seaoftranquility.org

"... If he were alive today, Mozart could just join a "brutal prog" band and play all the notes he wanted. ...the band's into four-man hardcore alien sex, using warp-speed guitar tapping and athletic drum/bass maneuvers to lock in and then orgasmically bust out of rhythmic and harmonic prog pretzels.

...Galapagos Momentum can go toe to toe with Sleeping People, Zs and Ahleuchatistas in terms of the complexity of the material. But despite all the unpredictable switches between harmony and dissonance, space and clutter, groove and anti-groove, Upsilon Acrux wants to connect. New guitarist Brady Miller applies the kooky melodicism of his other band, Bad Dudes, to songs...resulting in some beautiful, finely textured passages the likes of which we've never heard from...any other instrumental rock band... save perhaps Don Caballero... **Seldom is music so challenging also so easy to listen to.**

...these ten hyper-composed tracks come off as elastic, almost spontaneous. Maybe the culprit is the ultra-clean guitar tone employed by Miller and Paul Lai... Maybe the way that Eric Kiersnowski stubbornly refuses to accept his role as bassist and instead finds his way into the contrapuntal guitar matrix, keeps things from getting stale. Perhaps it's drummer Jesse Appelhans's aversion to conventional fills and pickups that gives the album such a fresh rhythmic drive. **...Galapagos Momentum is weird and playful and glowing, a much-needed antidote to the normally sober world of instrumental progressive rock."**

— Etan Rosenbloom, *Prefix*, June 26, 2007, www.prefixmag.com

"Punk and prog aren't the most natural pairing, but a small number of bands have been finding the connections—among them, Hella, Flying Luttenbachers, and Upsilon Acrux, a San Diego outfit of variable size... Their fifth full-length is a work of dazzling complexity, moving at blink speed over pixilated landscapes of fractured sound. In opener "Who's Running Shit (Son of Destiny's Child)", guitar and drums move in linked, but distinct patterns, occasionally joining in unison, but mostly using each other's forays as jump-off points; during a lyrical middle section, guitar notes turn liquid and less frantic, while the drums surge and splatter and burst explosively underneath. Points for funniest title go to "Touched by God (In Appropriately)", and **the music, too, seems to grin a little, staccato bursts of guitar and synth setting off clash and stutter of drums, everybody exulting in sheer speed and difficulty.** ... Consider these compositions as odd-sided polygons, not quite fitting into the square slots assigned to them, a bit alien in their geometrical precision, yet utterly true to their own difficult nature. [Rating: 7/10]"

— Jennifer Kelly, *Popmatters*, September 21, 2007, www.popmatters.com

"Unlike the swath of bands making avant-garde punk noise these days. Upsilon Acrux have been paying their dues with recordings up and down since 1997. ...the execution makes for an album that doesn't sound like random shit thrown together... for fans of the style and those initiated

to varying degrees, the album is considerably more enjoyable...due to GM having stronger nods to traditional rock structures. ...the best moment on GM comes with the opening song "Who's Running Shit (Son of Destiny's Child)" – specifically, the atmospheric guitar attack towards the end. Rock."

– *ExoDuster*, March 2008, www.exoduster.com

"... Even folks who despised math in school will be able to appreciate these incredibly intricate yet undeniably satisfying performances. The lines unleashed by guitarists Paul Lai and Braden Miller throughout "Touched by God (Inappropriately)" and the rest of these **sonic outbursts** are **the aural equivalent of a double helix: complex, well-constructed, essential.**"

– Michael Roberts, *Denver Westword*, November 6, 2007, www.westword.com

"... Upsilon Acrux have toned done their metal/brutal edge and honed their skills even more, if that's possible. ... "Who's Running Shit (Son of Destiny's Child)" is a stunning example of both virtuosity and clever composition: guitar parts are interlaced and full of intricacies, while the drums take on a modular approach, with a new pattern every four bars. It's **quite a head rush.** "Expiration Date..." and "Touched by God (Inappropriately)" are also just as dense and masterful. "Hiking Up Feel Good Mountain..." ...showcases a softer side to the band, with cyclical guitar motives evoking Heldon... **However, singling out a few cuts does no justice to this amazing, and amazingly consistent, album.** And here, the group strikes a convincing balance between the aggressiveness of bands like Ruins and the Flying Luttenbachers, and the lighter feel of Miriodor and Forever Einstein. ... How fitting that it turns out to be **their best and (relatively) most accessible release to date. [Rating: 4 stars]"**

– François Couture, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

"Upsilon Acrux, according to...The Wire are "free-jazz and hard-core fusion dominated by an astonishing kind of Splatter Prog" which kind of makes sense, although **there's a lot more rock here, and even some dangerous teeters close to thrash metal.** But it is also **very precise, complex and dazzlingly arranged really.** And, **woah, it's so in-yer-face and frantic that you could end up panting just by listening to it!** The guitarist is in that crazy French punk meets Robert Fripp type of style, and the rhythmic structures are often totally John French / Jerry Handley (Magic Band), and there's a surprise around every corner, rhythm break, chord changes, etc. ..."

– Alan Freeman, *Audion*, Issue #54

"... Upsilon Acrux's music is quite reminiscent of "Five Percent for Nothing" from Yes's *Fragile*. ...the herky-jerky asymmetrical meters, loose feel, relatively clean guitar sound, slight buzz of the bass, dissonant harmonies with a lax tonal framework, and meandering, contrary lines approaching...polyphony. ...**atypical of the Yes oeuvre, but indicative of its edgier possibilities.**

... Like Yes, Upsilon Acrux's musicianship, craft and technique is of the highest order, belying the casual, but energized, almost garage-band sound and **attitude. It is not without good reason that Upsilon Acrux has been associated with the post-punk scene, winning high praise from Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, as well as Renaissance guitar man Nels Cline. When Upsilon Acrux acknowledges the influence of Magma, Henry Cow, Ornette Coleman, Faust, Messhugah, and Ruins, it all makes sense."**

– Dean Suzuki, *Progression*, Fall 2007, Issue 52

"TOP 2007 ... PROGRESSIVE ROCK SECTION ... UPSILON ACRUX Galapagos momentum (CUNEIFORM RECORDS)

– 'Symphony of Silence', Radio Onde Furlane

"It's no surprise that San Diego's Upsilon Acrux have found their way to the Cuneiform roster; after all, the Californian quartet are one of the better domestic prog acts currently working, and Cuneiform's long been one of North America's premiere depots for the best of prog, past and present. ... Recorded in LA with Jay Pellicci, *Galapagos Momentum* is the smoothest of Upsilon Acrux's efforts, both in songwriting and in production. ... **The fidelity of *Galapagos Momentum* is clean and clear, offering a sonic experience as yet unattained in Upsilon Acrux's label-hopping discography in tandem with forty minutes of music that constitutes the band's best effort to date. Melodies abound amidst the cleverly tangled musical lines...Paul Lai and company infuse their compositions with enough slivers of charm as to offset the rather perplexing algebra that usually constitutes the arc of their songwriting.** ...Upsilon Acrux have comfortably loosed themselves from the moors of their forefathers... Nintendo soundtracks seem as salient an influence as anything perpetrated by the likes of Henry Cow, King Crimson, or Magma. **This is still unquestionably prog, however, and some of the best contemporary music made of the ilk. ...Upsilon Acrux...will be a band indubitably worth checking out."**

– Adam Strohm, *FakeJazz.com*, July 08, 2007, www.fakejazz.com

"Organ top 50 albums of the year – the list is up... [#]2: UPSILON ACRUX – Galapagos Momentum (Cuneiform)"

– *Organ*, December 17, 2007, www.organart.com

"... Accurately described in the promo blurb as 'aggressive, intricate, athletic, complex and composed post-punk, instrumental rock', they...take a variety of influences – a handful would include (fellow post-rock instrumentalists) Don Caballero, Neu, Magma, The Mahavishnu Orchestra and King Crimson...yet manage to integrate them into a sound which is easily identifiable as their own.

The opening track, the catchily-titled *Who's Running Shit (Son Of Destiny's Child)*, sets the tone for the album; initially very frenetic, with lots of shifts in tempo (predominantly fast!) and time signatures, complex rhythms and chord structures the order of the day – **the band may revisit certain melodies and rhythms throughout a song but are never content to stand still. Somehow they manage to give the impression of both being able to lock into an almost impossibly tight groove whilst simultaneously being on the verge of chaos – in this, you can see both the influences of modern jazz and punk/ hardcore...**

...when guitarist Paul Lai is given room to express himself at a more leisurely pace, such as with his adventurous yet languorous playing on the likes of *Expiration Date* and *Hiking Up Feel Good Mountain* bringing to mind fellow US avant-garde post-rockers **Tortoise** circa their late 90's incarnation.

Overall this is at the very least a refreshingly original listen...and those into the avant-garde, edgy side of post-rock could do worse than to investigate further."

– Tom De Val, *Dutch Progressive Rock Page*, 2008, Volume 12, www.dprp.net

"For those who think that Progressive Music is for old lads, you should pay better attention... Avantgarde Progressive Music is one of the most controversial sub-genres of Prog. ... This Post-Punk movement is...dominated by really young bands. ...Cuneiform Records...are trying their best to show these bands to the world and recently signed with Upsilon Acrux. ... "Galapagos Momentum" is their fifth studio album... **WHO'S RUNNING SHIT (SON OF DESTINY'S CHILD)** features a **raw, intricate and somehow complex rhythmic game, showing some flashes of earlier King Crimson on acid!** ... This track, as most of the album, doesn't stick to a pattern for more than 30 seconds... be prepared to let the music guide you through an intense journey! PETROVICH follows...**complete but controlled madness!** Sometimes the music seems to be too much ruled by maths but then you'll find them doing the most crazy improvisation...guided by their own feelings. ...This album took two days to record so now you may guess how raw the overall sound is. ...no major effects and production artifacts. ... **They play great..."**

– Spulit, *Prog-PT*, September 12, 2007

“...this very disciplined combo. ...are comparable to bands like The Flying Luttenbachers and Ahleuchatistas: bands that try to combine the energy and directness of punk with the compositional complexity and technical ability that we find in progressive and metal music. ...they are also closely linked to postrock guitarbands. ... All 10 pieces on this CD are very speed-driven exercises and highly complex compositions with many breaks and twists. Sometimes we hear echoes of Beefheart, at other moments they recall the spirit of King Crimson. **Listening to this album it is impossible not to be impressed by their disciplined and athletic playing. With incredible polyrhythmic structures, unison playing at moments, etc., they play some very powerful music....**”

– Dolf Mulder, *VITAL WEEKLY*, number 602, week 47