



FRENCH BAND

MOON SAFARI

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



MOON SAFARI AT 25

Two students of astrophysics and architecture walk into a bar on the moon. This sounds like the beginning of a joke — but in the waning light of the 20th century, it really happened, leaving a serious imprint on pop culture.

On January 16th 1998, Air released *Moon Safari*, an album which catapulted Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel to the uppermost rung of electronic music's ladder. Their sound — Fender Rhodes trills, loping basslines and sensual-yet-playful vocal hooks, all woven into a texture as fine and luxe as chiffon — conjured the sensation of a space-age cocktail designed to be sipped at leisurely pace. It's not challenging to see how this curious little record became a global sensation.

"The hype was a violent experience," reflects Jean-Benoît Dunckel, 25 years later. "Air's music is not accessible or easy to discern: The format is strange, the voices are strange, the subjects are strange. Even 'Sexy Boy' *sounds* strange. We were a duo doing some electronic thing, dreaming of selling 10,000 copies and being recognised by other musicians as cool. Then suddenly, we met the world. Personally, it took me time to see that we could be a big, important band."

Formed in 1995 from the remnants of prior rock outfit Orange, Air's debut album was a paradox made flesh. Here were two 20-somethings with just a single prior EP under their belts, yet they exuded on tape the confidence and pedigree of seasoned pros.

The English press deemed them acutely French; meanwhile, the French press pondered if they might actually be English. Although their influences were unusual and ambitions were avowedly anti-commercial, Godin and Dunckel were blessed with the ability to intuit pop songcraft which could, and did, captivate mass media.

In short, *Moon Safari* was a nest of contradictions. Today, the record's legacy is canonical, but at the time of release, its multi-million success was far from assured.

"This kind of bedroom music was all about fantasy," says Nicolas Godin. "In my mind, I was picturing myself at Capitol Records, surrounded by all the best musicians, feeling like Burt Bacharach. In reality, I was in the fucking 18th arrondissement of Paris, with a sampler, singing into one microphone. But when your fantasy is so strong, I think it goes in the wires and through the speakers. The power of *Moon Safari* was to make people believe in what we believed in."

During *Moon Safari*'s gestation in 1996-97, a "new wind of freedom and creativity was carrying through the same creative part of Paris," recalls Dunckel. "And it was not only in music — graphic design, cinema and fashion were alive." This spark of youthfulness and sense of renewed pride in French creation encouraged Air to push beyond the proggy Moog-fixation exhibited by stars of the previous generation, such as Jean-Michel Jarre and Magma, while also simultaneously avoiding the aromanticism of cheap, raved-up synthesiser zaps.

Instead, according to Godin, Air's own mirepoix boiled down to a few core ingredients. Ravel and Debussy informed the "dreaminess, floating chords and heritage of pre-rock music" you might be able to detect. That sense of silver-screen flair came from the grooves of John Barry and Ennio Morricone. As for the tempo? Portishead.

"Suddenly, all the things I liked and was good at — slow, downtempo soundtrack music — could bring success. We were not formulating success itself. But until 1994, I was listening to the radio and thinking, 'There's no way I will make it; whatever this sound of today is, it is not me.' But then, I heard Portishead's *Dummy* on the radio — and thought to myself: '...I *can* make that.'"

Though far from club hounds, Godin and Dunckel were still attuned to the sensation of riding out a night's highs into the vaporous sprawl of mid-morning. *Moon Safari* found as much purchase as the comedown record du jour as it did for any other function. In no time at all, Air's downtempo influence was easy to detect all around.

From the mellowed-out sketches of late-period Stereolab and departure-lounge exotica of The Avalanches to — at the other end of the valorous scale — ten-a-penny chillout compilations, the relative peace which marked the late 1990s and early 2000s offered a moment to slow down and reflect; to lean into a sonic mode which Dunckel now summarises as "a deep, universal spell, full of love and mystery."

While Air's precise alchemy and absence of geographical anchoring placed *Moon Safari* outside the grip of temporality or trend, the album happened to be an orbiting satellite which intersected with the world below's revolutions at precisely the right moment.

Through *Moon Safari*, Air transfixed some of the great visionaries of the late 20th century — David Bowie, Madonna, Beck — as well as influencing preeminent aesthetes of the incoming age — including Charlotte Gainsbourg, Kevin Parker and Sofia Coppola, whose creative relationship with Air became as synergetic as that of Angelo Badalamenti and David Lynch (another fan, while we're here.)

Air helped fan the flames of a rare Francophilia which surging through the typically native British charts in 1998. *Moon Safari* birthed three hit singles in "Kelly Watch The Stars," "All I Need" and "Sexy Boy," shifted over half a million copies in the UK, and pushed Air into headline contention at banner festivals such as Glastonbury. This in turn brought American, European and even hesitant French audiences and critics in line, a ripple effect which continued into the mid-2000s, with a string of successive top 10 albums for Air, at home and abroad.

It also bundled Air into a promotional game they were, by their own accounts, rather unequipped for. Enlisting a young Phoenix to thrash around as their backing band for TV appearances was, with the benefit of a quarter-century's wisdom, perhaps an unwise decision. This moment of vibe vandalism,

Thomas Mars has since said with impish delight, "kind of ruined Air...we destroyed their sound." (Smiles on both Dunckel and Godin's faces confirm there are no hard feelings.)

25 years on, it's not hard to alight upon why *Moon Safari* has stood the test of time. Air's unique grasp of pace and mood, surety of direction, and earworm hooks compelled the world toward it, and in turn propelled Air on toward posterity.

The duo's early surprise that their outerzonal fantasies might capture international hearts and minds has since melted into a sense of deep gratification. Unbeknownst to them, millions stood by their televisions, radios and record players, waiting to receive this particular longwave transmission from somewhere in the cosmos.

But moreover, the satisfaction arises from executing such a precise studio vision with zero concessions. On an artistic level, Air achieved exactly what they set out to do; their mission was a resoundingly successful one.

"To me," Godin concludes, "*Moon Safari* is perfect."

Gabriel Szatan



Sexy Boy

Sexy Boy Sexy Boy

Où sont tes héros aux corps d'athlètes

Où sont tes idoles mal rasées, bien habillées

Sexy Boy Sexy Boy

Dans leurs yeux des dollars

Dans leurs sourires des diamants

Moi aussi un jour je serai beau comme un dieu

Sexy Boy Sexy Boy

Apollon 2000 zéro défaut vingt et un an

C'est l'homme idéal charme au masculin

Sexy Boy Sexy Boy





All I need

All I need is a little time
To get behind this sun and cast my weight
All I need is a peace of this mind
Then I can celebrate

All in all there's something to give
All in all there's something to do
All in all there's something to live
With you...

All I need is a little sign
To get behind this sun and cast this weight of mine
All I need is the place to find
And there I'll celebrate

All in all there's something to give
All in all there's something to do
All in all there's something to live
With you...





Remember

Remember together remember forever
Souviens toi ce jour là toi et moi

New Star in the sky

My baby blue is a new star
In the sky

The world the world the world the world
Just for you for nobody else

You make it easy

« Never been here- How about you ? »
You smile at my answer
You've given me the chance
To be held and understood

You leave me laughing without crying
There's no use denying
For many times I've tried
Love has never felt as good

Be it downtown or way up in the air
When your heart's pounding
You know that I'm aware

You make it easy to watch the world with love
You make it easy to let the past be done
You make it easy

How'd you do it ? How'd you find me ?
How did I find you ?
How can this be true ?
To be held and understood





Keep it coming- no one's running
The lesson I'm learning
Cause blessings are deserved
By the trust that always could

Be it downtown or way up in the air
When your heart's pounding
You know that I'm aware

You make it easy to watch the world with love
You make it easy to let the past be done
You make it easy

You make it easy to watch the world with love
You make it easy to let the past be done
You make it easy



CD1: ORIGINAL ALBUM

1- LA FEMME D'ARGENT 7:08

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N. Godin : basse, mini moog, chœurs, tambourin /
J.B. Dunckel : rhodes, solina, chœurs, orgue, piano,
MS20, syrxn, moog solo / Eric Regert : orgue solo
/ N. Godin, Alf, J.B.Dunckel, Caroline L.: hand claps.

2 - SEXY BOY 4:57

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N. Godin : chant, basse, guitare électrique, talk box,
syrinx, tambourin, Korg MS20, moog solo / J.B.
Dunckel : chant, rhodes, orgue, solina strings, syrxn,
moog solo / Marlon : batterie

3 - ALL I NEED 4:28

BETH HIRSCH / J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

Avec Beth Hirsch

Beth Hirsch : chant / N.Godin : basse, guitare
acoustique, mini moog, korg MS20, orgue, batterie,
solina string ensemble / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes,
orgue, wurlitzer, Korg MS20 (intro)
P. Woodcock : guitare acoustique.

4 - KELLY WATCH THE STARS 03:44

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N. Godin : vocoder, moog basse, hand claps,
casiotone, glockenspiel / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes,
vocoder, piano, solina string ensemble, glockenspiel,
moog solo, syrxn, Korg MS20, clavinet, minimooog,
hand claps / Marlon : batterie

5 - TALISMAN 04:16

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

Arrangement cordes et direction orchestre : David
Whitaker / N.Godin : wurlitzer, basse, boîte à
rythmes / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes, minimooog, solina
string ensemble, MS20 / Marlon : batterie.

6 - REMEMBER 02:34

J-J PERREY - J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN /

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N.Godin : voix talkbox, vocoder, string ensemble
roland, basse, tambourin, guitare électrique,
minimooog / J.B. Dunckel : vocoder, rhodes, solina
string ensemble, orgue, chœurs, wurlitzer, Korg
MS20.

7 - YOU MAKE IT EASY 04:00

BETH HIRSCH / J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

Avec Beth Hirsch

Arrangements cordes et direction d'orchestre :
David Whitaker / Beth Hirsch : chant, chœurs /
N.Godin : guitare acoustique, boîte à rythme,
percussions, glockenspiel, harmonica, vague moog,
basse, reverse ride, frottements de mains /
J.B.Dunckel : rhodes, piano, solina string ensemble,
orgue, casiotone, frottements de mains.

8 - CE MATIN LÀ 03:38

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN - P.WOODCOCK

Arrangements cordes et direction d'orchestre :
David Whitaker / N.Godin : guitare acoustique et
électrique, rhodes refrain, basse, shaker, harmonica,
reverse ride, chœurs / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes
couplets, solina string ensemble, chœurs, clavinet,
syrinx, minimooog / P.Woodcock : tuba.

9 - NEW STAR IN THE SKY

(chanson pour SOLAL) 05:38

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N.Godin : vocoder, basse, guitare acoustique, talk box, minimoog / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes, solina string ensemble, melotron, vocoder, piano, Korg MS20 / Enfants square Burcq : rires.

10 - LE VOYAGE DE PENELOPE 03:10

J-B DUNCKEL - N. GODIN

N.Godin : piano, basse, Korg MS20, boîte à rythme, hand claps, minimoog / J.B. Dunckel : rhodes, orgue, solina string ensemble, clavier, minimoog, hand claps.

Album réalisé par Jean-Benoît DUNCKEL et Nicolas GODIN

Enregistré par Jean-Benoît DUNCKEL et Nicolas GODIN au studio "Around the Golf" et par Stéphane "Alf" Briat au studio Gang (Paris, assisté de Jérôme Kerner).

Cordes enregistrées à Abbey Road Studios (Londres) par Peter Cobbin.

Arrangements et direction : David Whitaker †.

Mixé par Stéphane "Alf" Briat aux studios Plus XXX (Paris), assisté de Jérôme Blondel.
Masterisé par Nilesh Patel à The Exchange (Londres).

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N. Chouleur & D. Dutreuil

CD2: BONUS

1 - NENEH CHERRY 'KOOTCHI' (AIR REMIX)

Vocals: Neneh Cherry. Producers: Dave Allen (for Z Productions) and Booga Bear. Additional production by Johnny Dollar. Recorded by Dave Allen. Remix and additional production by AIR. Bass, Guitar, Mini Moog, Beats : Nicolas Godin. Publisher: EMI Music Publishing Ltd/EMI Virgin Music Ltd/Sony Music Publishing
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2 - CRUSTATION 'PURPLE'

(LA FEMME D'ARGENT MIX)

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Additional Production by Air. Mixed by Stephane 'Alf' Briat' assisted by Oliver Dulion

3 - DIRTY HIROSHIMA (DEMO)

Produced by Air at Around The Golf in 1997
Label Parlophone © 2024 Warner Music France

4 - NEW STAR (DEMO)

Produced by Air at home in 1997
Label Parlophone © 2024 Warner Music France

5 - CE MATIN LÀ (DEMO)

Produced by Air at home in 1997
Label Parlophone © 2024 Warner Music France

6 - MAGGOT BRAIN (LIVE)

Recorded live at Paradiso (Amsterdam) in 1998 with: Brian Reitzell (drums), Deck d'Arcy (bass), Brian Kehew (keyboards) & Roger Joseph Manning Jr. (keyboards)
Label Parlophone © 2024 Warner Music France

7- J'AI DORMI SOUS L'EAU (BBC LIVE SESSION)

Recorded for the evening session with Mary Ann Hobbs on BBC Radio 1 with: Deck d'Arcy (bass), Christian Mazzalai (guitar), Thomas Mars (drums and voice transformer) & Laurent Brancowitz (guitar). First broadcast on 20th May 1998
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8 - SEXY BOY (BBC LIVE SESSION)

Recorded for the evening session with Mary Ann Hobbs on BBC Radio 1 with: Deck d'Arcy (bass), Christian Mazzalai (guitar), Thomas Mars (drums and voice transformer) & Laurent Brancowitz (guitar). First broadcast on 20th May 1998
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9 - KELLY WATCH THE STARS

(BBC LIVE SESSION)

Recorded for the evening session with Mary Ann Hobbs on BBC Radio 1 with: Deck d'Arcy (bass), Christian Mazzalai (guitar), Thomas Mars (drums and voice transformer) & Laurent Brancowitz (guitar). First broadcast on 20th May 1998
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10 - KELLY WATCH THE STARS (EXTENDED)

Produced by Etienne de Crécy
Label Parlophone © 1998 Warner Music France

11 - REMEMBER (DAVID WHITAKER VERSION)

Arranged by David Whitaker. Mixed by Stephane 'Alf' Briat
Label Parlophone © 1998 Warner Music France

All songs written by Nicolas Godin & Jean-Benoit Dunckel except 1. written by Neneh Cherry, Cameron McVey, Cia Berg & Steve Hopwood. 2. written by Ian Dark, Stig Manley, Bronagh Slevin, Mark Taylor. 6. written by Edward Hazel & George Clinton Jr

BLU RAY:

AUDIO

**FULL ALBUM IN DOLBY ATMOS
& STEREO HD**

(Stéréo 192Khz 24 Bit -

Dolby Atmos 48KHZ 24 Bit 24 Frames)

- 1 - LA FEMME D'ARGENT 07:06
- 2 - SEXY BOY 04:58
- 3 - ALL I NEED (FEAT. BETH HIRSCH) 04:28
- 4 - KELLY WATCH THE STARS 03:46
- 5 - TALISMAN 04:16
- 6 - REMEMBER 02:34
- 7 - YOU MAKE IT EASY 04:01
- 8 - CE MATIN LÀ 03:39
- 9 - NEW STAR IN THE SKY 05:40
- 10 - LE VOYAGE DE PENELOPE 03:10
- 11 - REMEMBER
(DAVID WHITAKER VERSION) 02:21

Dolby Atmos mix by Bruce Keen
& Gildas Lointier

Stereo HD Mastering by Gildas Lointier

Film and video clips remastered by Level
Paris

VIDEO

***EATING, SLEEPING, WAITING
AND PLAYING***

**A FILM ABOUT AIR ON TOUR
BY MIKE MILLS**

A ONE-HOUR DOCUMENTARY ABOUT
AIR'S 1998 TOUR, SHOT IN NEW-YORK,
LONDON AND PARIS.

AIR VIDEOS BY MIKE MILLS:

1 - SEXY BOY

Label Parlophone © 1997 Warner Music France

2 - KELLY WATCH THE STARS

Label Parlophone © 1998 Warner Music France

3 - ALL I NEED

Label Parlophone © 1998 Warner Music France

4 - LE SOLEIL EST PRÈS DE MOI

Label Parlophone © 1998 Warner Music France

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