

Notes for Podcast 4

'Astral Navigations' released 1971

A second album was planned 'Astral Navigations', this time round the concept of time and space. It was to have two different sides, on the first it was tracks from Mike collaborating with Brian Calvert, and Chris Coombs adding his own tracks; on the second side it was tracks from Thundermother, a band from Preston.

Brian's own description of working on these tracks is on a separate podcast. He was tasked with arranging the music for string players (once again from Bretton) and other instruments. He did this by looking up the musical range of each instrument, and writing accordingly, which meant that the musicians were sometimes challenged by the score, although the result was remarkably successful.

Chris had a wide experience of different genres of music, and like Mike was interested in innovation. He worked with Mike and Brian on the concept of the album. He, too, was impressed by Bill Nelson's guitar playing, and Bill worked with him to produce some remarkable tracks.

The original contact with Thundermother was through a neighbour at Cass Yard who had lived in Preston and knew the band. Thundermother were all experienced musicians, some of whom had had record contracts and played in prestigious venues such as the Marquee in London. 'Miffy', David John, was the singer with David John and the Move, 'Ginner', Dave Millen played with the Puppets who had backed many famous musicians, (Brenda Lee, the Ronettes amongst others) and were managed by legendary producer Joe Meek. Frank Newbould played with Little Free Rock, and Fred Kelly with Rare Bird. David Smith (Daz) had played with Dave Millen in 3D. They often stayed at Cass Yard over whole weekends, sleeping on the floor. They clearly found Holyground a good place to record, perhaps because of the freedom it gave them as there was no commercial aspect, it was free, and they respected Mike's recording and production. Several of the other tracks that Mike recorded at this time were later released on CD in 1995 as 'No Red Rowan'.

More information: [No Red Rowan](#)

A booklet was produced with artwork by Dave Wood. Images of another ex-Bretton student were used to become the many-armed logo of Holyground. These were added as stickers to the plain white sleeve. A wrapper was added to the sleeve with artwork also by Dave Wood. These features and the initial release of only 250 led to the album becoming collectible.

More information: <https://holyground.co.uk/astral/astraltrack.html>

Please note that this information is about the CD which was released as part of 'The Works' series and may differ from the original vinyl release.



*Mike Levon and Dave Wood at 5 Cass Yard
with the cover of Astral Navigations*



Brian Calvert in the studio at Cass Yard