

# THE CHANGELINGS

*With vocalist Regeana Morris, who radiates with the aura of a silent screen vamp, and whose serpentine voice intertwines with the dervish sounds of her close caravan of musicians (Chandler Rentz - Percussion and Bass Guitar, Damon Young - Guitar and Sitar, Nick Pagan - Keyboards, and Paul Mercer - Violin and Viola), The Changelings are indeed capable of transformation as they carry the devoted listener to far away lands.*

*Paying homage to your band's name, if indeed it were possible, what would each member wish to magically transform into?*

*Regeana:* Either a pampered cat or something with wings so I can fly --or, of course, the Lady Galadriel.

*Nick:* I'm actually quite happy being who I am.

*Damon:* An Elf of Rivendell, if the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal is taken...

*Paul:* The Frogemoth from Expedition to the Barrier Peaks

*Chandler:* I'm quite content being human.

*How did you manage to pull together such a talented and enthusiastic ensemble of musicians?*

*Regeana:* Amazingly enough, the local newspaper brought us (Nick and myself) wonderfully talented people.

*Nick:* I think when everyone (with the exception of Regeana and myself) auditioned, there was a realization that this would be an opportunity to make some quality music. Since Regeana and I had worked together in Trio Nocturna together for a few years, we actually had a number of complete songs worked out. It's rare to walk into an audition for a new group and be presented with evidence of that kind of capability...and of course, when the guys heard Regeana's voice, well...

*Damon:* Good fortune.

*Paul:* Pure Coincidence.

*Chandler:* Chance.

*Are there any instruments which any of you do not know how to play, but would like to learn?*

*Regeana:* I've been working on the cello for some time, but I recently started learning to play the santoor, one of the bell-like instruments in a Javanese Gamelan.

*Nick:* Not really. I could work 24/7 and still not be as good a

keyboardist as I'd like to be.

*Damon:* Right now I'm interested in learning the suburhar and the Mohn Bhatt Indian slide guitar. Suburhar is like a "bass" sitar. Its lower range gives it a full, majestic quality.

*Paul:* The violin is a full-time commitment for me, and something of an obsession. I would love to learn a number of different instruments, particularly the viola d'amore and hardanger fiddle, but for now I am content to explore different styles and forms on the instruments I already play.

*Chandler:* I would like to be able to play the piano.

*Though your music is already rich in texture and fullness, would you ever consider adding a bass player to add even more power to your sound?*

*Regeana:* I'd like to play it on a few more songs. Nick does a great keyboard bass though, so we hardly need it. I wouldn't want to risk the group dynamics with another player either.

*Nick:* I'll go with Ray Manzarek on that one. He always attributed some of the hypnotic power of The Doors to the fact that NO bass player would ever play the same lines as a keyboard player's left hand would. Aside from the songs for which bass guitar would be completely inappropriate (our Middle Eastern and Classically inspired pieces come to mind), we all play in such a way that another instrument could easily clutter or muddy the sound. I think that not having a bass guitarist gives us a unique kind of sound and the "rocker" in me loves being able to connect to Chandler when we play live. By the way, our upcoming disc is the first that I did separate bass tracks for, and I may be biased, but I think they sound pretty good! Actually, when we play live shows, when we have a good soundman, I've heard that the bass from my boards is pretty kickin'.

*Damon:* The bass range is generally taken by Nick's left hand. He maps his keys for independent bass sounds on the left side. We use a bass guitar on some songs (Ferra Firma, For Endymion, Cherchez La Femme, Orbit, etc..). Regeana and Chandler play it live when we do these songs.

*One could easily picture The Changelings performing in the court of King Herod, or in an opulently-draped den on a side street in Zanzibar. Are there any "dream performances" which you might envision as the most appropriate setting for your music and personalities?*

*Regeana:* Maybe a naturally reverberant gem-lined cave, complete with pool, stalagites and stalagmites.

*Nick:* I like playing in picturesque theatres with balconies and velvet curtains, but one of my favorite shows was in this little basement club without a stage where the crowd was almost on top of us! Having someone blowing huge fireballs INCHES

from my head also helped to make it a memorable evening. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the surroundings are unimportant--if the "vibe" and sound are right; a "dream performance" can take place anywhere.

**Damon:** Ok, aside from the Zanzibar Opium Den idea. For the upcoming space opera-esque CD I can envision: "The Changelings: Live at the Moon Base Monolith Excavation." (With respect to Clarke and Kubrick's 2001). We'll all be wearing those cool space suits and have cordless instrument setups, drum triggers, headsets... I just hope we can get through the set before that ear-piercing alarm goes off.

**Paul:** Perhaps the Ventura Theatre again, with all of the resident ghosts visible.

**Chandler:** I must concur with Paul, but expand by saying any place like the Majestic Ventura Theater. Clubs can be a drag at

times. Opera house-style theaters really provide the perfect scenario.

*I think if someone were to hear your music for the first time, it might take them by surprise that you are based in Atlanta, GA. What do you like best about the city?*



**Regeana:** There are lots of nice trees - and my childhood memories are here.

**Nick:** Believe it or not, the city actually has a pretty good Britpop scene. There's a VJ named Dennis who shows wonderful videos from Pulp, Supergrass, Radiohead... I could go on. There's also a great DJ who plays Britpop, 60's Mod, Glam (REAL GLAM i.e. Bowie, Sweet, T. Rex) at a pretty groovy club called MJQ. As America (and its music industry) has chosen to COMPLETELY ignore this incredible music, the rarity of such a scene has not been lost on me. It's a beautiful thing.

**Paul:** The past, which is fascinating and rapidly disappearing. Atlantans don't think twice about tearing down an old building to build a new one. All those PR campaigns about the "phoenix of the south" have left us holding ashes and waiting for the mundane replacement of a thousand beautiful and priceless things.

**Chandler:** The ever-growing British music scene. There are some great nights, as Nick has mentioned. Also, the weather never really gets too out of hand if you can take a little heat.

*There is such an authentic Middle Eastern feeling and sound to much of your exotic music. Are there any groups or musicians from that area of the world who strike a chord with you and who*

*you might recommend to your listeners?*

**Nick:** I'm the mod/pop/anglophile chap. I defer to the more culturally-edified and diverse members for this one.

**Damon:** There is a lot of great Middle Eastern music out there of which I know some...As Indian/Classical masters go, a few greats are: Ali Akbar Khan (sitar), Nakiel Banerjee and Ravi Shankar on sitar. The Last Temptation of Christ (Passion), Little Buddha and Ghazal soundtrack have some great music. Try Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan for Qawali. For bitchin' fusion try John McLaughlin, Zakir Hussain and violinist L. Shankar's group Shakti (and Remember Shakti).

**Paul:** Indian classical music is a vast genre with many incredible performers. There are a number of "Eastern" sounding artists who I like as well, who work in other genres. Hesperion XX is a project featuring the unsurpassable soprano Montserrat Figueras

and the viol da gamba maestro Jordi Savall, that plays Spanish music from the middle ages and the early renaissance. Jordi Savall also has an album called "L'Alcazar de D'Alcazar" where he plays troubadour music on medieval fiddle, bowed rebab and viol da gamba that is incredible.

**Chandler:** A friend made a tape for me that really blew me away. The artist/performer's name is Soer Marie Keurouz. Sweeping, mesmerizing vocals with dervish-like music behind it. Another CD I highly recommend, although it has no middle eastern sound to it, is "Lost Souls" by Doves. It sounds like a mixture of the early Sid Barret days of Pink Floyd, early Catherine Wheel (before they started rockin' out too much), Slowdive, and the Verve (earlier stuff).

*Tell us a bit about your upcoming new full-length. Will it include the tracks which were released on the EP "Epicycles" or will it be all new material?*

**Regeana:** We really hope you like it!

**Nick:** With the exception of a cover of Pink Floyd's "See Emily Play" which was written in 1966 and a new version of "Orbit" which was on NAM's excellent *Towards The Sky* comp, it's all new stuff! I believe the disc is somewhat like our debut; a diverse exploration of different music forms, only with a LOT more experience, studio and otherwise, exhibiting itself...and how should I should put this? A more definite thrust.