

**An Oral History of
Alvin and the Chipmunks
and
Their Last Album:
SLUDGEFEST**

FOR MATURE READERS

NOT FOR SALE

Chipmunks On 16 Speed - Sludgefest (Full Album)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TU-MYe0SL9Q>

[0:00](#) “Call Me” [6:12](#) “Walk Like an Egyptian” [13:01](#)
“Heaven is a Place on Earth” [20:59](#) “Diamond Dolls”
[27:17](#) “You Keep Me Hanging On” [35:28](#) “My
Sharona” [43:26](#) “Always on My Mind” [50:15](#) “Refugee”

Sludge metal is a sort of fusion of late-80s doom metal and hardcore punk, with strong Southern and punk aesthetics tied in. — Urban Dictionary

Some critics have argued that *Sludgefest* is actually a Goth Rock album rather than sludge metal.

This document has not been fact-checked. People forget things or misremember things, so expect some inconsistencies. Some errors, however, have been corrected.

Quite possibly, new errors have been made while correcting old errors.

Sludgefest, in fact, did NOT sell 250 million copies. That is a slight exaggeration.

The year of Alvin’s death is usually stated to be 1991, but that is disputed. Some people think that he faked his death.

Some sources list Alvin's dates as 1967 – 1991, but other sources state that he was born much earlier. Apparently, in interviews Alvin gave different dates just to mess with people.

The dates for *Sludgefest* vary because it was an EP before it became a full album with the same title a few years later.

This document has been lightly proofread.

By the way, I don't believe any of the bad stuff about Dave.

The Oral History

RIP, Alvin. Saw him live only once. Cleveland, 81. Will never forget that sound. So young. Full of piss and vinegar. The smile he had when he walked up to the mic and told the group of us that he was gonna “blow your fucking minds” — it would have been cocky if he hadn’t backed it up. Mom threw all my records away after Grenada. (She was an old school hippie, hated that I joined the Army after high school.) Forgot about the Chipmunks until I saw the news reports about the overdose. Friend was able to copy an old cassette for me. A copy of a copy. Shit was scratchy as hell. Sound quality was garbage. But god, it was just what I remembered. Their early stuff was so packed with promise. The righteous anger of youth. I know it’s their later sound that gets all the praise, when they started experimenting (in every sense of the word), but for me? I still remember that grin before he rocked our world.

— Dee Oh Dee

So sad. You can hear the pain in Alvin’s voice, the drugs and mental health decline taking their toll on him, while Simon and Theodore no doubt knew what was coming but they came together to record this last album before Alvin overdosed. Bumped into Dave a few years ago at a bar in Philly, and I could tell Alvin’s death really took a toll on him. He had very clearly been drinking heavily, and we got to talking and he said his biggest regret was not getting Alvin the help he needed. Theodore and Simon apparently don’t even talk anymore, and I heard Theodore’s divorce from Eleanor was really hard on him, happening not long after Alvin passed. In many interviews since, she mentioned that Theodore simply wasn’t the same man she fell in love with after Alvin died, and the constant emotional distance and coldness on his part just led to a

natural decay in their marriage. Simon has been on a steep mental decline and has apparently been battling schizophrenic episodes and violent outbursts for years. It's amazing how music conveys so much emotion, and I can't help but wonder what could have been if Alvin was saved in time. *Sludgefest* is legitimately lightning in a bottle. It will never be repeated. Its sludgy, doom-laden aesthetic towers over the relatively poppy and accessible past material. It's simply a shame that it came out of such sadness and pain, but *Sludgefest* will ultimately stand up as one of the greatest and most emotive records ever recorded. Thank you, Alvin.

— Count Crow's Horror-Torium

Great album and a great band. All the sexual violence they are accused of doesn't overshadow their music, in my opinion.

— Jack Anghof

Saw them in 1989, Alvin was having trouble standing and was nearly incoherent for most the set. But his voice became crystal clear once again, while singing "Heaven is a Place on Earth." I could've sworn I saw a tear in his eye.

— SleepyCove ASMR

Saw these guys open for Danzig in 1989, unforgettable experience. Alvin was really messed up; you have to remember that this was right in the middle of his worst period of PCP and alcohol abuse. He kept asking the crowd really random, bizarre questions in a slurred voice, sometimes even in the middle of songs. At the end of the

set, he knocked himself out with a beer bottle over the head. Theodore and Simon had to drag his limp body off stage.

— Somethingclever

I was there at Woodstock '84 for the first concert after the album released. They were playing on the main stage. The boys backlit the stage in all black and began with “Call Me.” No instruments, no cheering, just absolute chilling silence around the whole festival and 3 spotlights on Alvin, Simon, and Theodore. They did the entire first verse a capella. The entire crowd was on edge. Then the chorus burst out and they all began playing with all their might. The crowd burst into cheering and Alvin was smirking with ambition. Greatest night of my life. And in that moment, he knew he had made it, and thus, he began to let himself go. *Sludgefest* is truly unique.

— Meowmyr

When I was first breaking into radio as an audio engineer in the late '90s, I bumped into Simon at the first station I ever worked at. We were setting up a small recording area for demos and interviews, and turns out Simon was tagging along with the guy we hired for some extra help as they were friends back in the early '80s. These guys were pure magic. They had our booth set up almost instantly, and Simon was all too quick to test out the monitor speakers. We had a little keyboard and he showed us how he made some of the sounds for this album. He really was a quiet guy, but we were all drawn to him and held on every word he said, and every note he played. I went out and bought an old Yamaha PSR from a pawn shop that weekend because of him. It's so sad. Even with all he had, and how down to

earth he was, you could tell there was a hole in his heart. Towards the end of the day, Simon was smoking a cig out back. It was snowing by this time of the year, but I still wanted some fresh air (ever run wires for a mixing board? You almost need scuba gear when you get deep enough into the rat's nest of wires), so I stood outside with him.

I forgot how we got on the topic, but I asked him if he enjoyed touring in the north because we had all the snow on the ground for half the year. His calm demeanor snapped into something between anger and an almost vengeful face as he stared at me with intent for a moment. He took a breath and managed to not bite my head off, but I'll never forget what he said next. As he gripped his cig between his fingers, he pointed at me and dropped the rawest lines I've ever heard from anyone. With just one breath, he spits out, "Take a look around you. What is all of this? It's death. Trees? Dead. Plants? Dead. World? DEAD! But you are given a PRIVILEGE — you get to see life return. Spring comes and brings everything back. Take heart in that, kid, because it ain't how the world works. You look at this scene before you and you appreciate it! Cause death isn't something that is so easily undone, or ignored."

He went back and took a drag, before following up with "People aren't like the plants. It takes effort to see Spring. It takes effort to make it out of the Winter. Out of the darkness ..." He trailed off for a bit and it was just us standing there. Snow was beginning to pile on the ground. But then Simon walked over ... and put his hand on my shoulder. I turned and looked at him and he asked, "You got any siblings? Any family?" and I told him about my little brother and my parents for a moment. He cracked a small smile, before delivering his final lines ... "Promise this to them, kid — promise them that you'll see Spring. Don't promise yourself, that's just you being a selfish

asshole. Promise THEM. And then, even if they can't make that promise back? You do it anyways. You fight. Every year as Winter comes, you fight through it to see that Springtime sunrise ... for them," and ... that was it. We cleaned up for the next hour and then Simon and his friend took off. Little did I know, I'd heed Simon's words sooner rather than later ... Just 3 months after that, my brother made an attempt on his own life. I spent the next 5 days with him in the hospital, and we talked about a lot of things. Some of it was stupid shit, like reminiscing of childhood, or of our parents. But I made the promise to him — we were going to see Springtime again, even if it's just one year at a time. My bro has his demons, but it's been over 20 years and he's still here. So, thanks, Simon.

For everyone just ... just keep that in mind. Please. Fight like hell to see Spring. For Alvin. For Simon. For Theodore.

— themanwithsauce

This rendition of "Heaven is a Place on Earth" is legitimately, shockingly, achingly good. It has been a long time since a song has brought everything to a standstill and all I could do was just listen in captive awe.

— Esper the Bard

I was a roadie for the Chipmunks back in '82, and was present during the infamous nightclub fire in Boston. Pyrotechnics malfunctioned during the song "Walk like an Egyptian," and the whole place burned down in a span of 30 minutes. I just remember Alvin refusing to leave the stage during the fire and staring down the crowd as they trampled over each other to get to the only exit in the

building. He just kept shouting in the mic “Whaaaooohh whaooohh. Walk. Like. An. Egyptian.” I don’t know if he was drugged out or what but by the time he was dragged off the stage he had suffered second-degree burns. Over 300 people died that night.

— Lord Chancellor Hatton

Alvin’s voice really changed from his earlier stuff after losing his father in that tragic anti-rodent terror attack of ’83. One can truly hear the desperation and anger against an indifferent and violent society... Undoubtedly one of the most touching pieces of music in our time.

— [邱士哲](#)

If you had blindfolded me and told me this was an amazing, obscure post-punk band’s covers album from 1988, I’d have totally believed you.

— G L

I’m gobsmacked at how amazing “Walk Like An Egyptian” sounds. It’s practically a different song.

— Fleshmount

This brings back memories. My sister and I drove all the way down from Colorado and snuck across the border to catch their show in Tijuana in the Summer of ’89. The energy at that festival was unhinged. The heat was unbearable and sanitation was a disaster. Fights kept breaking out and someone in the audience was passing

around these shots of coffee and mescaline. My sister made out with this “roadie” trying to get us backstage, but it turns out it was just some guy in a security t-shirt and we got chased by the actual roadies outside of the green room. I never did get to meet the band, but I’m pretty sure I saw Dave. Well, the back of his head. Looking back now, with everything that happened that weekend, it’s a miracle we didn’t end up in a Mexican prison or stuck at the border. Still, when the band took the stage, all of that chaotic energy suddenly snapped into focus and the air was electric. I’ve never seen another show like it. When we got home, we both got grounded for the rest of the Summer, but I wouldn’t have traded it for anything.

— Claire Celestine

Legitimately wish this album was on Spotify. I’d love it.

— Hobo Hunter Rik

The harmonies at the end of “My Sharona” sound like the warning sirens before a nuclear blast. The Chipmunks are truly unmatched in the existential horror they could provoke without even saying a word. Truly great artists. So sad that we lost Alvin.

— Gunnar Hopson

I think everyone should know the guy behind this masterpiece. His name is Brian Borchardt.

Lots of people know him because of Holy Fuck, but what they do not know is that he basically founded one of my favourite music scenes of all time in a very small little

fishing town in Nova Scotia. Brian was the singer for a grunge band called Burnt Black back in the '90s that got no attention outside of the province, but they're still one of my favourite bands of all time. As a teenager he made a bunch of these tapes with very grungy, lo-fi acoustic songs and crazy soundscapes like nothing I've ever heard before ... They are the most depressingly beautiful songs I've ever heard. I grew up on a lot of his stuff as well as artists from his scene, and it's a shame literally none of it is on the internet. I'm not surprised he's behind this though. Brian is an underrated musical genius.

— Blue Skies

This is the soundtrack to being a 4-year-old locked in a hot car.

— Isaac Fullerton

The life of the Chipmunks on 16 Speed was a hectic, nightmarish hellscape of a career. They were a grungy, suburban trio that just happened to be overwhelmingly talented. When they formed in Simon's garage one hot day in Illinois and decided to record their debut album, *Don't Shoot the Messenger*, none of them, nor the world, knew what was coming. Alvin was lucky; he was born into a pretty wealthy family and his father was a professional musician and producer, well-established in the music industry. He'd be the true unsung hero of this tale. Simon was the strung-out, experimental bassist, always at odds with Alvin and his father about artistic decisions and licensing. He would hardly take no for an answer, but the crew kept him around because he wrote songs like nobody ever could compete against, catchy and firm. Simon was a genius, despite his hot-headedness, and often Alvin and

Theo would conform to his demands. Theodore was there to lay down the beat; keep the band together, and he was known for his extensive marijuana use.

“Sometimes,” as Alvin recalls, “he’d be all geeked out on some weird strain he just found and try to get us all to try it. [He wouldn’t] stop pestering us for a long time until we just knocked the joint out of his hand and threw his, albeit expensive, weed away. Sometimes he made the studio smell for months. I did notice Simon get calmer when Theo would light up, though ... ”

Their first five albums were extremely outrageous and major critical releases, rivaling only the classic rock artists of times before (while covering many of them). The Chipmunks on *16 Speed* had a unique, and dark sound. They were impossible to replicate, but many bands after and during their rule of the industry would rise up to try and capture their stardom.

Their sixth album, *Scapegoat of Dreams*, was a very experimental and primarily instrumental album, with elements of Ambient and Muzak. It was a hard commercial flop, so they decided to cut it back on the experimentation and begin recording their next album, which focused on popular music at the time. It was at first titled, eponymously, “Chipmunks.” It wasn’t until later Alvin found out that Simon had worked with [censored for legal reasons] and completely uprooted the advertising and promotion that was supposed to go out for the album.

Many a scandal were had, due to petty issues that even the most pressing of journalists never could crack open and reveal. It was Theodore, ultimately, who brought the band back together after that album’s failure, and finally was able to get it up to just be a small hiccup in the career, investing his own money into the promotion and touring

that followed, and *Scapegoat* remains a cult classic to this day.

But, as for the next album, it was still known as *Chipmunks*. The first track recorded was “Walk Like an Egyptian,” which sought to crumble the conventions of the original song, and completely upend the drama in the band that had seemingly doomed them. When a heavy snowstorm and subsequent melt trapped Theodore’s car on the side of the road on the way to the studio one day, he was rumored to have called Alvin and uttered “This damn road is a Sludgefest! I can’t make it today.” Simon and Alvin immediately renamed the album *Sludgefest* as a result of this incidental statement.

“Lame story, yeah, but it’s like what Paul McCartney said about the *White Album*,” Simon later recalled. “He said something to the effect of ‘Well, it’s the bloody white album, it worked, shut up.’ Wise man, he was.” The other tracks were recorded smoothly, and the boys sent the release date to the papers.

Originally debuted on August 3, 1987, precisely 35 years ago, *Sludgefest* was a sleeper hit. “Call Me” was the lead single off the album, and it proved to be the group’s biggest hit in their career. The album went on to sell an unprecedented 250 million copies, on every single possible recording medium, from 8-track tapes to quadrophonic vinyl, with even a later special pressing made of solid gold and signatures on the covers of the album given to the artists covered on it.

Needless to say, when streaming services came along later, the first company in the 21st century to get the rights to the album would be holding one of the biggest cash cows of modern music, and would have been lucky, but the squabble over streaming rights is primarily why the album

is not on Spotify and has since gone on to be released in underground sects in the Dark Web of the Internet.

Still, the legal debate for the rights holder of the album remains strong, and the only widely-available online copy of the album is this video, a vinyl rip.

The Chipmunks on 16 Speed fell apart after this album, exhausted by fame and, wisely, some say, ultimately chose to quit after this peak. They had broken several world records, made some really great ones, and had done their job well. Alvin went on to an unsuccessful solo career until his overdose, Simon worked in the underground Jazz scene as a session musician, and Theo quietly slipped from the public mind, spending his life in the countryside.

The last time the boys performed live was June 3, 2002, as a small reunion at a bar in Detroit. Nobody captured this last reunion, and Alvin died from a drug-induced heart attack the next month. Simon and Theo are still semi-good friends, but don't really record anymore because of how volatile their creative differences are. They both left the music scene afterwar and are happily living with their families in Illinois, near where they first met up.

— The Blu Jay

I was too young to see Chipmunks in concert, but my dad did back in '89. He said that he had to stand in line for a whole day just to see them in concert and watched Alvin knock himself out by smashing a bottle over his head. What a performance.

— AgentSmithsCookies

Okay I originally saw this as jokey and funny. Now the album has sucked me in, and I'm obsessed with it.

— OneBagTravel

If this had come out in 1987, the Chipmunks would be heralded with the Replacements, Fugazi, and the Pixies as one of the most interesting post-punk bands happening in the world.

— Benjamin Pilgrim

Alvin always had such a beautifully unique voice. Such a shame about the drug overdose, and so early in his life and career, too. RIP, Alvin. I'm glad that Simon recovered with the help of some rehab, looks like he's doing well for himself now. I saw an interview with Theodore from a couple years ago and he was looking pretty rough, though. We haven't heard from Dave in about a decade. Considering how much he used the boys to profit off their fame as adorable teen idols and the way he treated them while this album was being recorded, I hope that we never hear from him again.

— Lego Frog

How can this possibly work so well? This transcends humor into some kind of mad brilliance.

— williehopscotch

I heard this album back in 2015, and "Walk Like an Egyptian" still blows my mind. Who knew Alvin and the

Chipmunks secretly invented industrial sludge metal in the 80s? Sheer brilliance.

— Alexandria Dorner

My parents were both huge Chipmunks fans, so they actually took me to one of their shows when I was a kid. I was only 7 years old at the time and I remember I didn't really like the music because it was just way too loud for me. It was, in fact, their fourth-to-last show the Chipmunks would ever do together before Alvin died from an overdose in '91, something nobody there at the time knew, of course.

Of course, that show was over 30 years ago so my memory of it isn't the greatest, plus I was pretty tired for a good portion of it. (In my memory they played all night, but my parents assure me the concert was only about three hours long, which evidently was pretty standard for a Chipmunks show. But three hours is a pretty long time for a 7 year old kid.)

I remember they did some songs I DID like towards the end of the show, some of their experimental, live-show-only stuff that I don't know if there are any recordings of, even bootlegs, but I was tired and cranky at the time so I don't remember anything very specific about those songs, just that I liked them more than the other stuff.

My most vivid memory of that show, honestly, is when the guys all just sat down on the edge of the stage and talked to the crowd for a few minutes. The only part of THAT I recall very clearly was when they talked to a woman named Linda who said she'd hitchhiked over 600 miles just to see them in person. Alvin took off his shirt and gave it to her as a souvenir. Jesus, can you imagine what that must have

been like for her? To see one of their last shows, ever, live, and to get a souvenir like that? I wonder if she still has his shirt.

— Xenu4life

I went to only one of their shows. They came out on stage, started playing the start of ‘Walk like an Egyptian’ and I got bottled to the head. Woke up five hours later outside in some puddle. Best night of my life.

— Garthdon

Even though the band’s collapse was fast approaching when *Sludgefest* dropped, there are moments on this record that seem to speak on the state of the band itself.

Theodore’s passionate, crooning vocal delivery on

“Refugee” speaks eerily on his view of Alvin at the peak of the latter’s drug abuse, but clearly the other members don’t recognize exactly what he’s trying to communicate. I’ve read interviews with Theo where he says despite the band’s influence, he can’t listen to many of their tracks because of “Refugee” and the trauma associated. Losing a brother to the lifestyle you begged him to abandon. He got really emotional. I feel bad for the guy, but the silver lining is Simon’s solo avant-garde work earning him critical success and allowing him to heal at least a few wounds from that era.

EDIT: Noticed fellow enthusiasts in this comments section. Do any of you happen to have the *Chip on Your Shoulder* bootleg? It was a pretty big deal back in the day, but I’m still attempting to find a copy. Seems lost to time.

— KingSandwich

I'll always remember the tribute show in Montreal back in '92. David Bowie, Robert Smith, Morrissey, so many amazing names joining Simon and Theodore on stage to remember Alvin. That final encore with the Chipettes joining them was absolutely haunting.

— David Pratt

This is the best alternative album to come out in decades ... and what is it? Slowed-down Chipmunksgenius.

— Warpig Johnson

Man, just heard about Alvin's death... RIP to the legend.

I grew up with their music. *Sludgefest* was one of my favorites. (My original cassette of the album was lost years ago.) I can still remember popping it into the player and listening to Alvin's painful vocals calling out. I recently tried to pick it up on vinyl finally, but I couldn't find a copy for the life of me. Never got to see them live, but Simon was always a great drummer! Rock on, Chipmunks, you'll be missed...

— Ioni

Unironically, the cover of "You Keep Me Hanging On" in this is particularly amazing. The lyrics being slower makes them even more devastating.

— Zoe McDermott-Adler

Rest in peace, Alvin. I hate myself for never having gone and seen one of their shows, but it was the early eighties and I was still in my junior year of high school. But even then, I was infatuated. I bought their EP when they dropped it on a 7-inch and later the whole vinyl when they finally released the album, I bought merch, I even bought bootleg tapes of shows just to remotely experience what it would've been like to have been there.

The shitbucket, man — that made me sick, but I just couldn't look away. Something about an infatuation with the macabre, which I think makes sense looking back since Alvin became a walking corpse on stage in his later years.

But I think the most important thing is that I managed to meet Simon. Fucking Simon of all people. It was before the schizophrenia took him fully. I wanna say back between '90 and '92 when I was sneaking into bars with friends — now that I type it out, I remember it being this shitty little dive bar, with a stage that had as much standing room as a cubicle and blaring neon lights that let you see the bags under his eyes.

Man was rough after Alvin's death, but god damn could he play bass like no other. I'd argue he'd give someone like Les Claypool a run for his money. I managed to catch him after the show and bought him a drink, but I wouldn't be able to tell you what we talked about to save my life — I ended up trashed that night. I don't really think he said much. A lot of rambling, a lot of it incoherent, but there's one thing he said that kinda stuck out like a sore thumb, and it stayed with me even when I was as fucked up as I was.

He wished he could've saved Alvin. Maybe then he'd still be here, still rocking. Chilling, honestly.

'67 – '91. RIP, Alvin.

— Vernon Forgione

The fact that so much real effort and talent was put into a Chipmunks album, only for it to be speeded into being unrecognizable.

It really says something, don't know what it says, but it does.

— El Cuy

Brings me back to my army days, Kuwait 1990-1991. 1st SGT Miller would always complain about how “horrid” of a band the Chipmunks were. But the boys in my M1 Abrams crew loved this shit. We'd blast this album day and night as we skimmed that desert. I actually got to meet Alvin back in '88 at a concert in Houston, Texas. (I was on a trip with my then girlfriend at the time) Pretty nice guy, really down to earth and relatable. I knew he had a drug problem at the time, but it wasn't until I met him in person that I realized how bad it was. His eyes were bloodshot red, he was twitching a little, and boy, was his speech slurred. I bought him a beer that night to hopefully balance out the drugs. When they announced his death, it was only a few months after I had gotten back from my deployment in Kuwait. I was devastated. No other musician had more of an impact on me more than him. I somehow ran into Theodore and Simon a few years after Alvin's death at a local bar in Galveston. They told that he OD'd on heroin and meth after he found out that his girl cheated on him with some other prick from out of town.

RIP Alvin Seville 1969-1991. Will never forget you, man. God bless.

— Brayton747 Ch.

This whole album is mind blowing, but “Call Me” in particular is genuinely one of the best songs I’ve heard in a long time.

Who would’ve thought one of the best, most melancholic pieces of sludge out there has been around for 40 years, just waiting to be unlocked by an artist (Brian Borcherdt) in the future.

— Chance Kimber

In my opinion, this version of “Heaven is a Place on Earth” is the most beautifully haunting smirk at the original. Truly inspired songcraft. Sarcasm oozes out of this version and makes it a truly unique work. RIP, Alvin.

— Royal Sonsalla

I don’t know how no one’s mentioned it yet (at least from what I’ve seen) but “You Keep Me Hanging On” goes fucking HARD. The higher vocals? Oh, my god! I need this album in a physical copy.

— Entr3 Nou5

The chorus of “Diamond Dolls” is actually making my eyes well up. Legit incredible.

— Molotov Cockatiel

I'm glad I live in a universe where it's possible to have a deep emotional response to a slowed-down cover by Alvin and the Chipmunks.

— Pinkacrash

I'd have killed to be there. I know Simon gets flak for his solo work, but his second album really hits home.

— Vernon Forgione

It's great to hear the Chipmunks fresh out of rehab for their prior amphetamine addiction. It's easier to appreciate their lyrics when everything's played at normal speed.

— Nathan Whitmer

That bass drop on "Walk Like an Egyptian" gives me goosebumps. No wonder Alvin was strung out while recording.

— Samuel Groethe

The melancholy vocals and deep, washy guitar tones on "Call Me" make it my favorite.

— MuntTheDibious_9

This is unironically the best album I've heard all year and the comments are also worth your time. <3

— LHH

This album is melting the paint off of my walls.

— Wolf397

I went to their concert in '86 and it was truly life changing.

— BlizyBlaize

It's really one of those things where you've got to separate the art from the artist. Never thought I'd come back here, but watching Alvin's trial really made me want to look for answers in his music. I've found them, and I'm still trying to figure out if it's a good or bad thing.

— Lola J

Theo coming in for the second part on "You Keep Me Hanging On" will ALWAYS take me back to when I saw them play live in '88. Shitty little club but they held the attention of everyone in there. I remember getting chills from the energy they gave off. Always thought Theo deserved more shine.

— VeryRare444

Damn, this is amazing.. especially the cover of "Always on My Mind" at [43:26](#). Huge fan of the Pet Shop Boys cover even if I feel it's a little too fast. They manage to cover it perfectly in that speed, but this slowed-down version honestly is beautiful. It works great as a slow version, but it

oddly has a lot of heart and soul to it. Talk about my mind being blown! Wow! I love it!

— Tyler Beamer

Seeing them back in their heyday was absolutely chaos but the best night of my life. Long live, *Sludgefest*.

— Vampy

This album is where the fractures caused by Alvin’s heroin use really started to become unavoidable. They were also clearly uncomfortable with the MTV coverage but had outgrown the homegrown-style Portland scene that made them, and the outcome was a really gritty cassette that everyone had in their car that Summer of ’87.

— Jason M.

I remember when they played “Call Me” in the final show before Alvin’s untimely passing. Dude could barely walk on stage, but he seemed to sober up enough to get through that song. He then began crying and left to go to his room — tragic what would happen to him just a couple of days later. I’ll never forget the way Simon looked at him. Absolutely devastating to see one of the greatest of our time ruined with drugs and alcohol. Imagine if Alvin was still here. Him, Theo, and Simon wouldn’t even need to make more music. Just to see Simon happy again would be worth it.

I’m tearing up writing this knowing what the loss of Alvin had done to Theo and Simon. Simon’s solo career was just purely sad as he lost his passion. Theo never even picked

up an instrument again as far as I know. Haven't seen any of them in a long time. Last time I saw Simon, he was playing a few of the band's songs alone in a small show. His last performance as of now. I hope he can rebound and create some magic. Or just find happiness again. He and Theo deserve to find the happiness that Alvin so longed for, and that they all sang about. Musical geniuses. Absolutely beautiful.

Edit: Just saw Simon again and we talked for a bit. I never brought up music. He seemed to appreciate that.

— HuberSaysHello

The first two tracks are genuinely bone chilling, unironically a masterpiece.

— ducks

I've always wondered what the Chipmunks sounded like slowed down. It's WAYYY cooler than I thought it would be!

— Marc Brown Music

This is genuinely kind of unsettling. Makes me think of being a kid in the early 2000s and hearing the actual versions of these songs on the radio, having a very loose, abstract grasp on the time before I was born. The idea that things and places existed before me caused my mind to imagine these strange, discolored, broken, empty environments, like something you'd see in a dream that's turning into a nightmare. One- or two-room buildings in the middle of fields surrounded by nothing, an empty highway

leading directly into a parking lot just as unpopulated, purple skies, and very few people. Morbid thoughts, fear of the unknown, listening to time-damaged works from the past when it's dark out and the world is dead. This album comes from that metaphysical space.

— AortaPlatinum

I saw the Chipmunks live at a show in Toronto in 1986. Great performance but Alvin would not stop making eye contact with one of the audio engineers. He was definitely on some shit during that show, and it completely ruined the vibe at the club. Right after I was at a bar around the corner when all of the Chipmunks came in, and Alvin made a bee-line for me. He got in my face and said, "If I ever see you in an audience again, I will choke you to death in front of everyone." Simon came up right after and apologised, and he offered to buy me a round. He and Theodore were stand-up guys, but Alvin clearly always had a few screws loose. After that interaction, it came as no surprise to me when Alvin committed suicide by drug overdose. I really just wished he had gotten the help he needed.

— Discord The Physical Entity

I think what really stands out about this to me is how good the lead guy's vocals actually are. Like, yeah, it would probably still be funny if they couldn't actually sing, but they can, so whenever you slow it down you get proto-Joy Division.

— Liam White

Never thought this would be a great gleam of both unhinged musical genius and writing exercises all around!

— immameatpopsicle

I genuinely hope that sounds like this get popular so I can have more than just this to listen to over and over again.

— Dahlia DeCarlo

Oh, I remember this. Got this cassette when I joined the marines. We had it playing in the wagon when we and the rest of 3 Commando moved up on San Carlos. God, that was back in 1982, when I still had hair and all of my fingers. Losing Alvin was tragic, though. My sister was cut up because she never got to see their UK tour.

— Lorelai Turner

One of the greatest sludge metal albums of all time, fight me.

— PlebianGoth

I can't tell if this album is killing my brain cells, or just removing the ones I never knew I didn't need. 10/10.

— ObjectAndItemRemover

I remember catching their *MTV Unplugged* performance when it first aired, when I was just a teenage boy with few responsibilities. I was immediately hooked, but Alvin was

in rough shape — eyes sunken in, long-sleeve shirt and gloves to cover up the needle marks. Pale, almost grey skin. He'd lost so much weight in such a short time. In spite of that, the band managed to put on one of the best performances I'd ever seen. Looking back, it's hard to watch after his passing. It was like he was playing at his own funeral. I knew he probably didn't have much time, but god, I wish he got the help he needed. Such a beautiful, tormented soul, gone way too soon. I hope he's found the peace that he couldn't seem to find in his lifetime.

— CTheRevillusionsS

Solidly one of the best albums of the 2010s.

— Black Frosting

I remember when these guys preformed. They were off the lines, man, the definition of unlawful chaos. All of their shows would either turn into orgies or war zones. They hosted parties in the middle of bumble-fuck nowhere and they were crazy, man. Drugs, hookers, booze, sometimes even guns. What a time to be alive.

— John

This is incredible.

It was hiding there under our noses for all of these years

— MichaelLevi

“Diamond Dolls” is a certified banger and a band with female vocalists need to cover it.

— rivid

I remember in Saratov 1986 when it was Winter, Alvin and the Chipmunks were on their worldwide tour. After popularity of *Sludgefest* in '84. Their studio didn't want to come to Moscow during Cold War, but Alvin convinced them. My girlfriend was very excited after hearing news they were coming. We worked extra hard that year to travel to Moscow and buy the tickets.

It was magical in those moments when we Soviets were standing in front of such talented Americans. We didn't even know English, but it was so touching, united with music. Then it happened. Alvin made the two-finger sign of peace while singing and was shot in the arm by a nationalist in the crowd. Concert and tour were over just like that. So sad what happened after with drugs. We soviets never heard of the band again after incident.

I apologize for poor English. I speak it only to communicate with grandchildren.

— Oliver Bertrand

What an incredible band. I was too young to see all three members alive but my ol' dad used to be super into underground music scenes and ended up seeing them live once — he was hooked immediately. He was a roadie for them for maybe a month or two back around 82-83 and recorded every show he saw and copied them onto a few beat-up cassettes. He gave them to me for my 16th birthday because he thought I was old enough to appreciate their

work by then, and he was right. It borderline changed my brain chemistry right then and there. Apparently, my dad even got a pic with Alvin and himself, but he doesn't like to talk about it because it was towards the end, around 1989. Dad never got a coherent sentence out of him; the guy was so constantly doped up by then. To be blunt, I am genuinely surprised he didn't OD sooner. evidently the photo was a Polaroid that got lost. I did get to see pics of Dad with Simon and Theo, though.

Regardless, I'm so glad to see their best work uploaded here in the best quality one can get of their stuff. My dad's tapes hit different but listening to this, it's nice to hear it clearer. They were truly life-changing musicians. Rest in peace, Alvin. You deserved better.

— mook

I was a photographer for their 1982 tour; doing the normal promotional photos that every corporate band gets until Alvin began to start seizing during a folded-arms shot, leaving him rocking back and forth while shaking and drowning in his own saliva for a time until he passed out a few moments later. Theodore and Simon were, of course, surprised when he first hit the ground but acted casually while carrying him into their trailer. He did the Tempe show later that day and seemed perfectly fine aside from a small, dried blood patch on his shoulder. Dave paid me \$1700 to keep my mouth shut about everything, so I just took his money and left. I remembered this story only because of hearing about Alvin's drug problems and connecting the dots.

— Raiden

Knew a guy who went to the first *Sludgefest* concert in 1987. He said the crowd waited for about two and a half hours before the band came on stage. Simon and Theodore looked like they hadn't gotten sleep in days. And Alvin — holy shit! Zthe guy I knew said, and I quote, "Alvin literally had bloodshot eyes and baggy clothes and acted like he didn't care there was a crowd of about 800 in front of him."

Simon and Theodore were clearly disturbed by Alvin after he came on stage. The guy said that despite their horrible state, they played the entire album without any mishaps like those that occurred in their later shows. Anyways, the guy said that after the show on his way out he saw Alvin nagging Dave to give him a bottle of beer. Of course, the guy I know was the only one who saw this before Dave started yelling at Alvin. And of course, everyone saw Dave yelling and that just ruined Dave's name, making it seem like Dave was the controlling one.

And that's pretty much all he can remember. I'll talk to him tomorrow and see what he thinks about Alvin's OD.

— JRWELLS

Just came back to this album after I read the recent news Theodore might be suffering from early-onset Alzheimer. I'll never listen to "You're Always on My Mind" the same way again without feeling emotional — the lyrics hit too hard. It's almost as if Alvin meant the track to be a posthumous message to Theo, telling him he's being looked after from wherever Alvin's at right now.

Wrote this as a reply for another comment, but I'm emotional right now so I'm posting it again. Don't abuse drugs, people.

— Giulianosse

I met Simon outside a bar in Abbot, Maine in 1992 not long after the band broke up. My band had just finished our set, and I wanted to smoke a cigarette to relax. When I stepped out, I saw him sitting there with a cig in hand. He offered me a light and we talked about the music industry. He told me something that I will never forget, “In music you learn to appreciate today because you don’t know if you’ll wake up tomorrow.”

I saw his new band in concert a few years later in '97. He looked much healthier than when I last saw him. The rockstar life takes a toll on everyone.

— Schmeckle

I remember meeting Alvin when I was just a kid. My parents were roadies in their 70’s who met on the Chipmunks’ third reunion tour. He looked me straight into my eyes and spit on my face. My parents loved it and got the date it happened tattooed onto both of their ankles.

— prawn Sauce

It hurts looking back at what happened to them, especially reading all of the comments about everyone who got a glimpse at them throughout the years. Truthfully, I was sitting at my own booth in the local diner when the three sat down and began discussing ideas to form this very band. I was close enough that I could listen in, and they were bouncing ideas off of each other for what felt like hours.

The part I'll never forget was the happiness and excitement in their eyes, especially Alvin's. He had so much hope and had so many great ideas about what the band could be — many of his ideas brought them to the level of fame they reached. He never stopped grinning and being optimistic. I miss that grin, man.

Truthfully, I never thought they'd go beyond just playing local gigs in the area. I wonder sometimes if maybe Alvin would still be around if that was the case.

— Secone00

I will never forget the time I saw Simon live in Dallas, way back in 1994, after the band's demise following Alvin's death. Simon went solo, and while his work never really hit it off in the way the Chipmunks' original endeavor did, you could really see he had heart. Even though Alvin was front and center, I really think Simon held the band together. Theodore was in the crowd, too, and he cried his eyes out when they performed "Heaven is a Place on Earth." I really think they could've gone triple platinum if they just had more time, but there truly was no replacing what they had lost when Alvin died.

— Toon The WindWaker

I'll never forget seeing these guys open for Bauhaus back in the day. Alvin was clearly high and kicked me in the face after I requested "Call Me." Apparently, they were getting tired of the hits. Can't say I blame him.

— Terry Johnson

I had never truly *HEARD* “Always On My Mind” until Alvin crooned it out in his slow, dirty, soulful way. I admit that as the song hit the bridge, I felt the deep longing, and the heartsick regret ... I found myself weeping ...

— KyssedByFyre

Oh, wow! I remember my dad mentioning the Chipmunks when I was a kid and just how wild they were. He would never admit it now, but when he was a kid growing up in the '80s he owned all of their albums. My older brother even found an old 8-track of theirs in a storage bin in the basement when I was in 8th grade. We couldn't play it (because come on ... it was the early 2000's, who had an 8-track player anymore?). With a little digging we found a website — this was before YouTube — that had a few songs uploaded on it. Back then I didn't get it, but now ... man ... they were really ahead of their time. It's sad Alvin died before they got the recognition they deserved.

— J. L.

Never forgot their last show. Alvin covered himself in shit, stage dived, and walked right out the front doors. Simon and Theodore kept playing their sets and invited people to sing on stage. It was chaos that night, but it was a magic you don't see anymore.

— ProtoClone

Hey, Theodore here. I've been reading the comments and wanted to say it warms my heart to see how much this album has touched all of you. Sadly, it didn't do too well when it came out but I'm sure Alvin would be glad today to

see how much people respect something we put so much of our heart into.

Not everyone gets the facts right; in fact, there are some people that definitely, uh ... misunderstood Alvin. But what I got to talk to you about doesn't involve him ... it involves my other brother ... well ... mainly his ex: Janette. Ever since she got clean, she and my brother Simon didn't get along too well. She didn't want to be around him while he's using so she wouldn't feel tempted to relapse. But he tells her he just can't handle being anywhere or being near anyone without it. He tried a few times to be with her, but it was clear he always took it ahead of time which upset her dearly. She'd cry next to me about him, saying, "I thought he'd love me enough to stop. I did!"

Anyway, right now she's struggling to find a new home she can afford. I'm tight on cash at the moment prepping for my new home (washed-up artists don't make much heheheh ...) but later I'm gonna post a Go Fund Me to help Janette find a good home until she can get a job.

Thank you all so much. Your words have touched my heart very deeply.

— Rusty the Robot (Theodore)