


Designed by Jarridiah

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rockets (rocketz)



When I was scouring the music papers for singers wanted in 1979, I came across an advert from an Italian record company saying interesting singers would be invited to Italy, expenses paid. I didn't want to join an Italian band, but I had never been to Italy at the time, and fancied the idea of a foreign holiday, so duly sent my photo and demo tape. I was invited over, and they said rather than joining the band they were advertising for, they wanted to offer me a deal of my own. I did not accept their offer, but did discover for the first time one of their two biggest bands in Italy, Rockets, who sold around one and a half million records there, although they were actually French. We had bald heads in common, and a certain liking for electronic sounds. But their painted silver faces and space suits were a little further than even I would have been prepared to go! Strangely enough, they did have one song which sometimes got played in the New Romantic clubs of London. It was a very electronic version of an old blues song by Canned Heat called On The Road Again. I remember Boy George once telling me he liked it. The lead vocal was a vocoder.

When Classix Nouveaux formed, the Italian company, CGD, made an offer, which of course we didn't take up, but we kept in touch. After my San Damiano pilgrimage in 1983, I stopped into their office for a visit, and they played me the latest from the Rockets. They were now trying to develop a more international appeal and had been doing some work with an English producer. However the problem was with the English vocals. They had always sung in English, but the pronunciation and lyrics which might be acceptable to an Italian audience was unlikely to appeal to British or American listeners. They asked if I would guest with them at least for a few tracks on their forthcoming album. The album was called Imperception and a single, Under the Sun, went Top 20 in Italy, accompanied by a video and tour. For the tour, the Classix Nouveaux drummer of the time, Paul Turley, was brought in, and we performed two or three songs from the Classix repertoire.

By this time the band had thankfully decided to ditch the silver face paint and space suits, and a kind of futuristic uniform seemed acceptable to all. But for the next album, they wanted to go one stage further, and they all stopped shaving their heads, and chose a rather glam manner of dressing instead. The name changed to Roketz and an album, One Way, was recorded in London with a British producer, consisting mainly of melodic electro-pop songs. This all seemed too much of a change for their usual fans, and Rockets (Roketz) never again regained their massive popularity in Italy, although they still remain a household name to a generation.

In 1992, an attempt was made by the original French producer to remake some of the old Rockets hits, and add a new funk dimension for the nineties. I was brought to Paris to do vocals and lyrics for a number of tracks, and some others featured rap from Mike 'Clip' Payne, who played

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with George Clinton and Funkadelic. An album, *Another Future*, was released by Polydor in Italy. A couple of extra members were brought in for photos, including former Kajagoogoo Nick Beggs, but no video, TV appearances, or tour dates accompanied that release. It is probably safe to say that was the end of Rockets (Roketz).

DISCOGRAPHY ROCKETS/ROKETZ with SAL SOLO

- 1985 single UNDER THE SUN(CGD) album IMPERCEPTION (CGD)
- 1986 single DONT GIVE UP (CGD) album ONE WAY (CGD)
- 1992 album ANOTHER FUTURE (Polydor)