

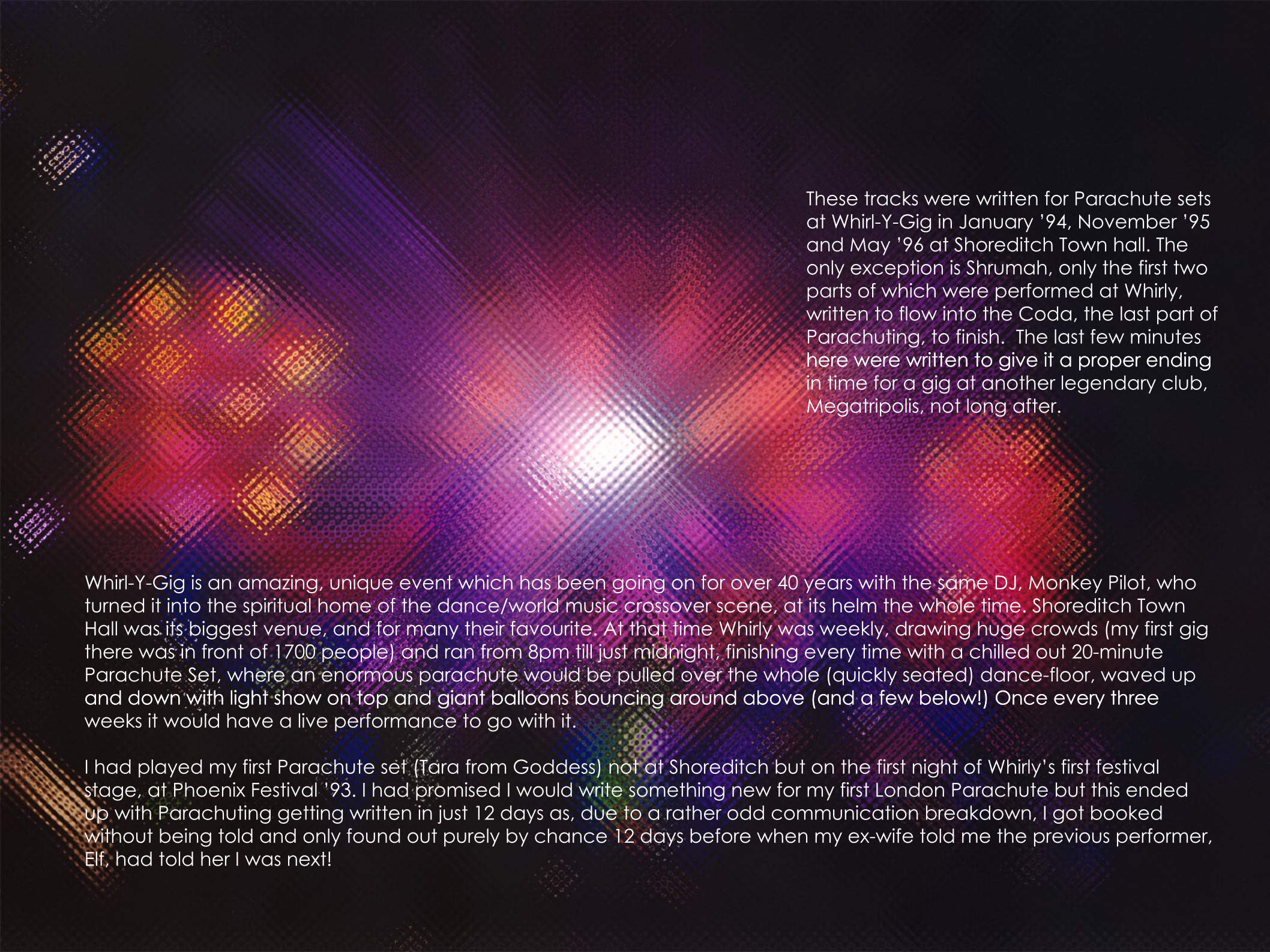
Pete Ardron

Hanging on Perfumed Air

music for the Whirl-D-Tig Parachute 1994-6

2023 re-recording

1. *Parachuting* 1994 (19:30)
for Richard and Mary and everyone else who helps to make Whirly such a unique place
2. *Strumab* 1995 (17:42)
for Sarah's birthday
3. *Bliss* 1996 (20:25)
for someone who reminded me of the meaning of the word



These tracks were written for Parachute sets at Whirl-Y-Gig in January '94, November '95 and May '96 at Shoreditch Town hall. The only exception is Shrumah, only the first two parts of which were performed at Whirly, written to flow into the Coda, the last part of Parachuting, to finish. The last few minutes here were written to give it a proper ending in time for a gig at another legendary club, Megatripolis, not long after.

Whirl-Y-Gig is an amazing, unique event which has been going on for over 40 years with the same DJ, Monkey Pilot, who turned it into the spiritual home of the dance/world music crossover scene, at its helm the whole time. Shoreditch Town Hall was its biggest venue, and for many their favourite. At that time Whirly was weekly, drawing huge crowds (my first gig there was in front of 1700 people) and ran from 8pm till just midnight, finishing every time with a chilled out 20-minute Parachute Set, where an enormous parachute would be pulled over the whole (quickly seated) dance-floor, waved up and down with light show on top and giant balloons bouncing around above (and a few below!) Once every three weeks it would have a live performance to go with it.

I had played my first Parachute set (Tara from Goddess) not at Shoreditch but on the first night of Whirly's first festival stage, at Phoenix Festival '93. I had promised I would write something new for my first London Parachute but this ended up with Parachuting getting written in just 12 days as, due to a rather odd communication breakdown, I got booked without being told and only found out purely by chance 12 days before when my ex-wife told me the previous performer, Elf, had told her I was next!

The long road to this version

I think the best way of describing my production skills at the time is 'blissfully unaware' - I only thought of myself as a writer, not a producer, and didn't even think about what gaps in my knowledge might benefit from being filled.

The original recordings I made were done as soon after the gigs as was possible and it was these recordings that I released, on home-produced CDs, as *Hanging on Perfumed Air*, in 2002, by which time I had at least learnt to master.

On *Parachuting* the kick drum was a flimsy thing coming out of the same box as most of the rest of the sounds with reverb added by both the box and myself. By the time I got to *Shrumah* I had learnt this was A BAD THING and someone had given me a single sample of a TR909 kick drum, which I could have on a separate channel and I made good, but quite excessive, use of this on both *Shrumah* and *Bliss*, to the extent that I didn't really notice that the bass parts were either very light in bass, or worse still on *Bliss* - non-existent for most of the track, the bass mostly coming just from the kick and low tablas. Mastering could improve but never cure these problems, or the excessive reverb on everything else.

When I got my Bandcamp page in 2017 I had another go at mastering them before including them there but I had become increasingly conscious of the poor quality of the mixes over the years and was not willing to give them a general release.

My next revisiting started in 2021 after reconstructing the first Glow album – Unavailable at all Good Record Shops, partially using old backing tracks which, where I had problems with the bottom end, I had improved by slicing it off and adding new sounds – mostly just kicks as there was live bass so I didn't have that to cure. I reckoned, without (as I thought) the possibility of re-recording everything, that I could improve things a lot that way. And I was able to, and by June '22 had all but convinced myself it was good enough, and if it hadn't been for one tiny bit of Shrumah that I just could not get sounding good I would have released that version. I decided that before doing so I would at least have a quick look at the idea of re-recording, but I was fairly certain I didn't have the data for Bliss and reckoned it was probably too much of a task to figure out what was there and play or programme it again. If I had known I also didn't have Shrumah I probably wouldn't have started at all but I had the old sequencer data for Parachuting and tape of the old Korg Poly 6 synth parts and within just a few hours it was obvious that I could get something far better than what I had on that at least.

That was enough that when I discovered I did have the data for Shrumah but for the wrong machine I decided to try and gauge how long it might take to reprogramme it. To my surprise rather than the couple of months I had been predicting it only took a few days to reconstruct the bulk of it, enough to know it could be done, enough to make me try Bliss, which made similar progress in the first couple of days so at that point I dropped the idea of releasing the 'boosted' original mixes. It's taken me another year to finish these new versions but for me it's finally laid a ghost to rest in a way the 'boosted' old mixes wouldn't quite have. Like with my other recent 90s recovery jobs – the Glow album and subsequent EP Lost Treasures, and my album Goddess - it's great to have version out there that I will no longer feel the need to explain or apologize for regarding my earlier deficiencies! As with the others, rather than producing this how I would have if I had written it now I have attempted to do it how I would have done if I had known more (and been better equipped) back then. There are a few small changes and addenda but they all keep very much to the spirit and sounds of the originals.

written, produced and mastered by Pete Ardron

photos by Greg Colley
design by Pete

in memory of
'Family' Dave Colley

