

= To the Stars (album) =

To the Stars is an album by American jazz fusion group the Chick Corea Elektric Band , released on August 24 , 2004 by Stretch Records . Jazz musician Chick Corea , a longtime member of the Church of Scientology , was inspired by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard 's science fiction 1954 novel To the Stars . Hubbard 's book tells the story of an interstellar crew which experiences the effects of time dilation due to traveling at near light speed . A few days experienced by the ship 's crew could amount to hundreds of years for their friends and family back on Earth .

Corea was influenced in particular by a scene from Hubbard 's work where one of the main characters plays the piano , and he created the album as a tone poem piece . It was the first time members of his group Chick Corea Elektric Band had gotten together since 1991 . Scientology @-@ owned Galaxy Press reissued the book at the same time as the album 's release as a form of cross @-@ marketing . Corea later produced another album , The Ultimate Adventure , also inspired by and named after a work by Hubbard .

The album received mostly positive reviews . Christopher Blagg of the Boston Herald commented : " Somewhere L. Ron Hubbard was smiling , " and Mike Hobart of the Financial Times described the album as " a fine programme of jazz @-@ fusion " . It reached number eight on the U.S. Top Contemporary Jazz charts in September 2004 , and garnered Corea a 2004 Grammy Award nomination for instrumental arrangement for the track " The Long Passage " .

= = Inspiration = =

Hubbard 's To the Stars depicts a future where an interstellar ship travelling at near light speed slows down time experienced for its occupants . The ship 's members are affected by Albert Einstein 's time dilation theory , and the Earth experiences hundreds of years while only a few days have passed for members of the ship . The crew have no family or friends on Earth due to the time that separates them . Of the album 's 17 tracks , 10 are directly based on characters or concepts from the book . The protagonist of the book (scientist Alan Corday) , the ship 's captain (Captain Jocelyn) , and the ship 's name (Hound of Heaven) are all titles of tracks on the album . The other seven tracks are " Port Views " , short musical interludes between the larger pieces .

Corea explains at his website how he was motivated to work on music inspired by To the Stars , commenting that he was inspired by a scene from the book in which Hubbard describes the Captain of the spaceship in the story playing a melody on a piano . He had read the book eight or nine times , and after writing down musical composition based on Hubbard 's work the album was created as a tone poem piece . Previous tone poem albums by Corea include The Leprechaun (1975) , My Spanish Heart (1976) , and The Mad Hatter (1978) . The piece is Corea 's first attempt at musical interpretation from one of Hubbard 's works .

" The attraction to me was not only the challenge of writing music portraying characters in a fiction book but the fact that I 've had such an intimate connection with L. Ron Hubbard and his work in Scientology for 40 years now . I 've been a fan of his fiction for 25 years , and once I started into the act of working with his creations , it had an extra special excitement to me , " he said in an interview with The Washington Post . " Aside from the content in his message , and the fact that he 's the founder of the Church of Scientology and Dianetics , the thing I loved about Hubbard was the aesthetics of his writing . There is a musical wavelength to what he does , " said Corea to The San Diego Union @-@ Tribune .

= = Production = =

Corea brought together the original members of Chick Corea Elektric Band for the first time since 1991 , including bassist John Patitucci , drummer Dave Weckl , saxophonist Eric Marienthal and guitarist Frank Gambale . Gambale 's electric guitar playing figures prominently in some of the tracks . In a statement in The Harvard Crimson , Corea commented that To the Stars represented a synergy of his three greatest passions : " My passion as a composer / performer , my passion for the

Elektric Band as a perfect orchestra , and my passion for L. Ron Hubbard as the ideal artist . " The album is his " favorite recording " out of his almost one hundred album discography .

Mike Manooogian designed the cover and book design for the 2004 hardcover edition of the novel To the Stars , and the artwork is copyrighted by the L. Ron Hubbard Library . The album cover utilizes the same design as the novel .

The novel To the Stars was reissued by Scientology @-@ owned Galaxy Press at the same time as the album as a form of cross @-@ marketing . According to Publishers Weekly , Corea 's soundtrack to the novel was issued by Galaxy Press to give the company 's " enormous marketing muscle " the ability to " tap into the vast Hubbard fan base " .

Corea 's 2004 piece " The Adventures of Hippocrates " was inspired by a robot like character named " Hippocrates " from Hubbard 's science fiction series Ole Doc Methuselah . Corea would go on to compose another album in 2006 , The Ultimate Adventure , also inspired by and named after a book by Hubbard , which earned him two Grammy Awards .

= = Reception = =

The album reached number eight on Billboard magazine 's Top Contemporary Jazz charts in September 2004 , and Corea earned a 2004 Grammy Award nomination for instrumental arrangement for the track " The Long Passage " . The album received a rating of three stars from Allmusic , three stars from The Observer , three and a half stars from The Star @-@ Ledger , and four stars from The Times . In a review of the work in The Washington Post , Geoffrey Himes writes that " Corea occasionally falls into his old bad habits of jazz @-@ rock fusion excess , substituting frenetic virtuosity for melodic content and emotional connection on tunes such as the album @-@ opening ' Check Blast ' and ' Hound of Heaven . ' " Himes highlights Corea 's compositions of the seven " Port View " interludes , and calls " Alan Corday " the best piece on the album . Mike Joyce of The Washington Post also appreciated the " flamenco @-@ tinged ballad " of the " Alan Corday " track . Christopher Blagg of the Boston Herald liked " the dense electrified samba of the joyous ' Mistress Luck - The Party ' " , and commented : " Somewhere L. Ron Hubbard was smiling . " Bob Young of the Boston Herald described the album as " music that shifts continually from bright , aggressive jazz fusion to melodic tranquility and back again " . James F. Collins gave the album a positive review in The Harvard Crimson , writing : " To The Stars is a testament to his [Corea 's] unflagging creativity and is a proud addition to his already expansive discography . " Mike Hobart reviewed the album for Financial Times , commenting that " once the band had delivered its first unison riff , the music 's inspirational source was irrelevant as a fine programme of jazz @-@ fusion poured out " .

In his review of the album , Ben Ratliff of The New York Times writes : " I did like the driving , collective muscle of the band , though , very much , " but he also describes its aesthetics as " cluttered and gaudy " . For PopMatters , Associate Music Editor Justin Cober @-@ Lake writes : " In many ways , it 's a supreme accomplishment with difficult technique passages and broad soundscapes ; on the other hand , it 's a journey that 's too long to take . " In his review of Corea 's later work The Ultimate Adventure , Will Friedwald of The New York Sun writes : " ' To the Stars ' was trite , electronic bubblegum music that sounded like a cheesy video @-@ game soundtrack . " Writing in The Times , John Bungey comments that " many of the pieces are straitjacketed into the cosmic concept " , concluding his review with : " If you prefer hi @-@ fi to sci @-@ fi , then you will be hoping that Corea leaves the space helmet at home next time . " John L. Walters gave the album a negative review in The Guardian , writing that the album " cries out for warning stickers - ' this album contains dangerously high levels of Scientology ' " , and that it " drags some perfectly fine jazz musicians ... through conceptual purgatory " .

= = Track listing = =

All music composed by Chick Corea .

= = Personnel = =

Band members

Frank Gambale ? guitar

Chick Corea ? piano , keyboards , producer , liner notes

Eric Marienthal ? saxophone

John Patitucci ? bass

Dave Weckl ? drums

Additional personnel

Bernard Alexander ? piano tuner

Brian Alexander ? keyboard technician

Bob Cetti ? assistant engineer

Bernie Grundman ? mastering

Joe Hesse ? equipment manager

Bernie Kirsh ? engineer

Rik Pekkonen ? mixing

Emanuele Ruffinengo ? assistant producer

Pernell Saturnino ? percussion , guest appearance

Steve Wilson ? saxophone

= = Chart performance = =