

# Heptadecaphilia

By

**Chris Vaisvil**

**A retrospective album of 17 note per octave derived music.**

released July 2011

## Track 1

### 17 ET Jazz



**This is a hybrid performance / scored piece using Kontakt 3, pianoteq, sonar 8.5, and a Korg MS2000 as a midi controller.**

Kontakt contributes drums, upright bass, sax section, and trumpet.

Pianoteq 2.3 contributes the jazz piano.

The drums were scored first, bass second and then other instruments played along with that. The goal was to keep the composition to 60 seconds or less since this is a submission to the Chicago 60×60 event (not selected at this time).

The main motive is a 17 ET analog to a suspended 4th to major 3rd in common practice 12 edo tuning.

This composition was selected by Vox Novus for the 60×60 event that premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. After that event the composition was played at many international cities in [2010 as part of the 60×60 Untwelve mix tour](#).

## Track 2

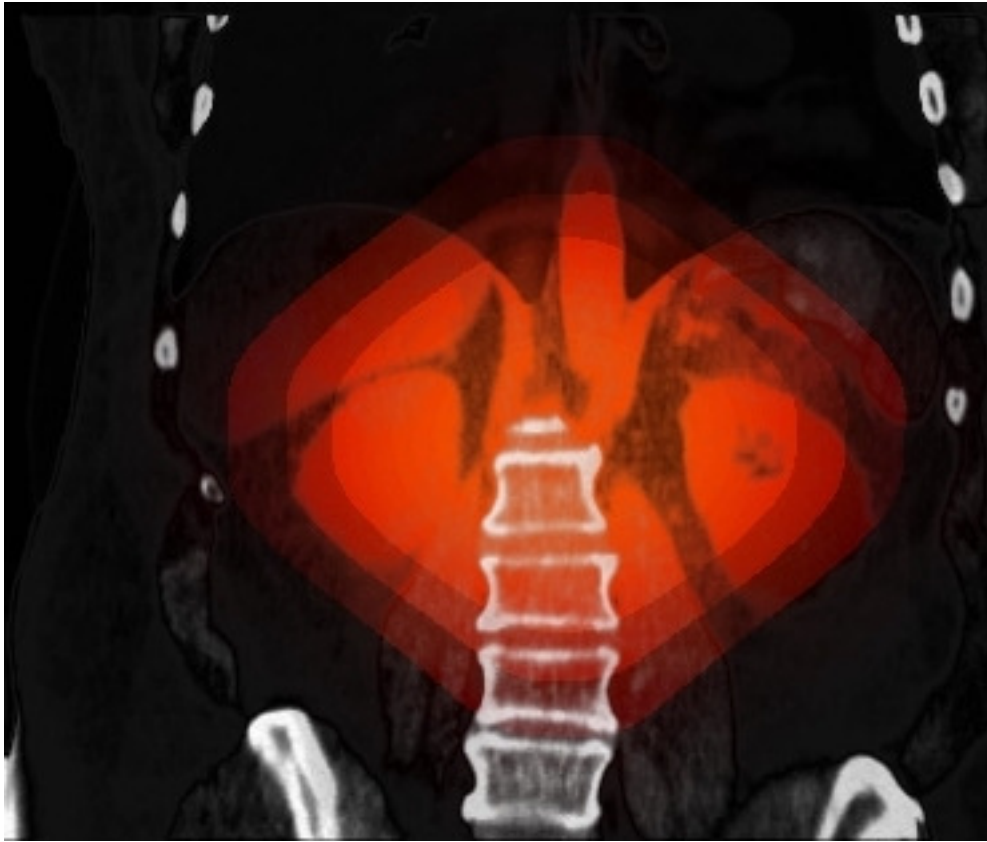
### 17 Pink Tuxedos

This is an experiment where I slowed down Norm Harris' percussion track "[7th Son](#)" and slowed it down by a factor of five and ran it through effects and such – and then played along with my 17 note per octave guitar and several instances of synthesizer in 17 notes per octave. It is not so much a final result as a direction to explore.



## Track 3

### CT Scan



It's me in a way you've never seen me before. The music is in 17 note per octave (17 et , 17 edo) with 4 lines of Albino synthesizer, Indian percussion, Chinese percussion, Hand Drum, Bodhran, Bass Drum, 17 note per octave electric guitar fingered and ebowed. There is a video for this music based off of my real CT-Scan playable online here <http://youtu.be/ZEEuytYwtbo>

or download here: <http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/ct-scan2.wmv>

## Track 4

### On the Shores of the Dead Sea



This is a guitar piece in classical style in 17 notes per octave using the 17 version of the Phrygian mode using my Marshall amp and Zoom H2 recorder. In normal 12 equal tuning Phrygian mode starts on E and has no sharps or flats. For the composition, I developed a framework the previous night and morning and in the evening I improvised around the pre-determined framework. You can see me perform this piece in this video online at Youtube <http://youtu.be/D39MVFhb0Ho>

Or download

[http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/Dead\\_Sea.wmv](http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/Dead_Sea.wmv)

## Track 05

### Devil in the Deep Blue Sea

This is a blues collaboration between The Two Regs (vocals / lyrics) and Norm Harris (percussion) and myself (17 note per octave electric guitar and fretless bass).

We hope you enjoy it.



#### Devil in the deep Blue Sea

*A hush in the Darkness  
A silence that's seen  
Be quiet now baby and come to me*

*A nightmare dream  
Where the Darkness Screams  
I need to love, oh, woman come to me*

*I know you're the Devil in the deep blue sea  
I know you're the Devil come for me  
I need you to feed, feed on my scream  
Come to me baby let's feed*

*The Ocean holds the Darkness  
The Darkness holds the key  
Unlock my heart babe, oh, woman come to me*

*I know you're the Devil  
Whose come up from the sea  
I'm living in the Darkness, I'm living in the scream*

*I know you're the Devil, Come up from the sea  
I know you're the Devil, Whose come to feed on  
my scream  
I've seen you in Nightmares  
In my Darkest Dreams  
But, I need your Love, So, woman come to me*

*A hush in the Darkness  
A silence that's seen  
Be quiet now baby, just, come to me*

*Is it a Dream*

*I can feel myself scream*

*There's nothing but Darkness*

*I need your love*

*I need you to love*

*I need, I need, I need you*

## Track 6

### A Cast of Billions

A Cast of Billions, poetry by Evan K. Harrington. Music in 17 equal by Chris Vaisvil and percussion by Norm Harris

I made a conscious effort to try to sound different from 12 equal and compose music that was quite microtonal. A good friend and percussionist Norm Harris contributed percussion to this track. It seems my vocals are much worse than I heard them as – it is hard (still) for me to sing microtonally. So I used effects and buried them in the mix. Nonetheless here is Evan's poem and picture.



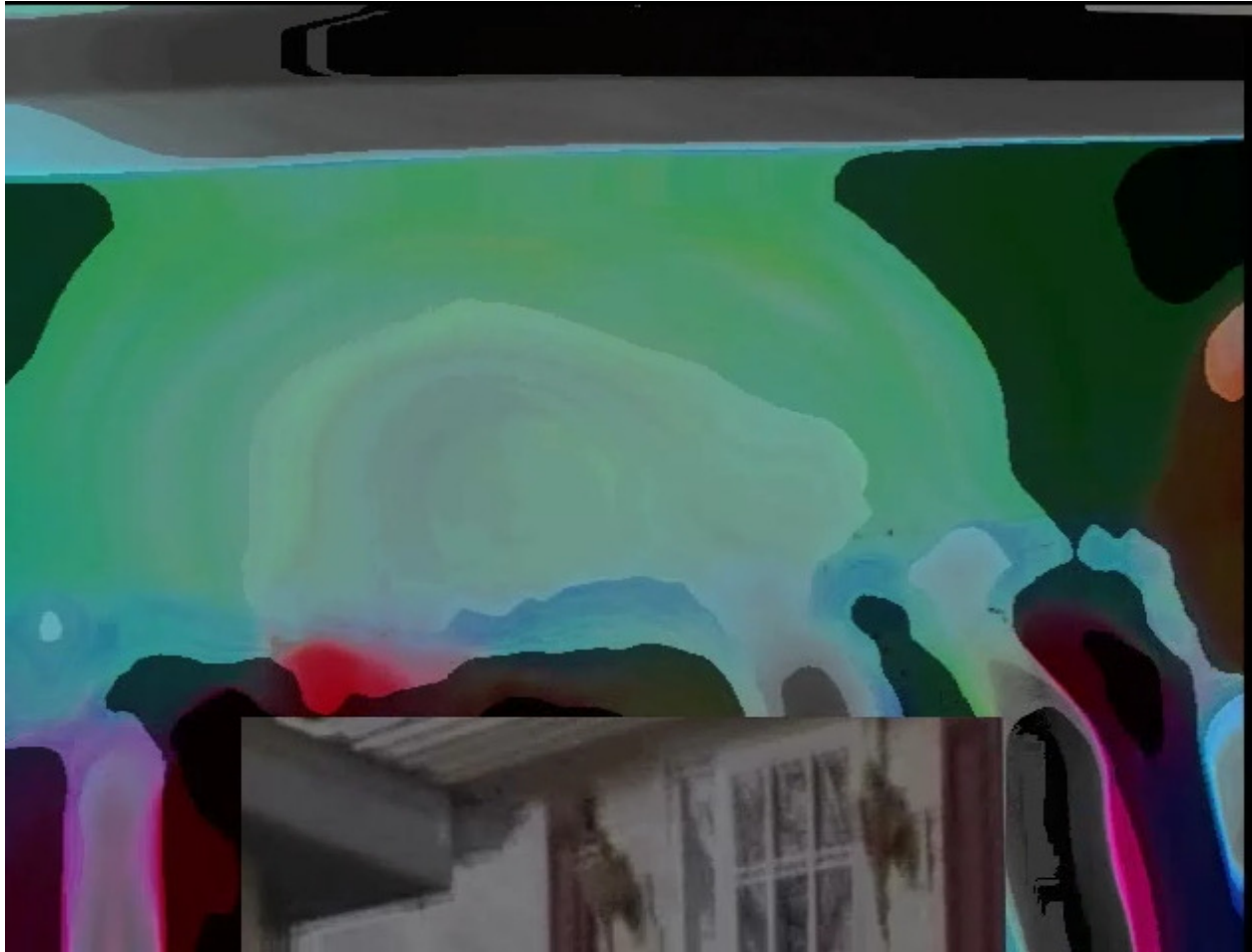
#### A Cast of Billions

*on the dispassionate shore  
on the longitude of recursive naught  
on a formal lacity overlooking the deep end  
of your swimming pool of thought  
and wherewithal without, I am a native  
of the repository of selfless abandon  
and you a radiation of the contemplative  
comb which filters the streaming random  
fractured days of redundant indiscipline  
cannot weight against the globes  
stalwart artists can pencil in  
orgasmic frenzies of the lobes*

*where camouflage rages gain  
if we love it is from fear  
but that is nature's game  
returning from detouring years  
applaud the cast of billions  
for the splendid production  
in all of its revisions  
in all of its conduction  
all of this amorphously to say  
we've still not drained the pool  
although it's often murky  
and quite the abode of fools*

EKH 4/14/92

**Track 7**  
**17 Unsteady Hands**



I made a video of a microtonal piece to go along with the ImprovFriday video event weekend. Online play of the video here <http://youtu.be/rAKHCqBNhfc>

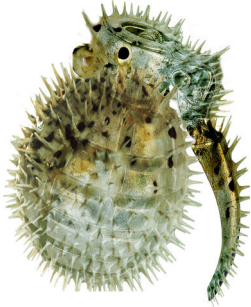
Download video here <http://micro.soonlabel.com/17-ET/daily20110303-17-unsteady-hands.wmv>

I used my 17 note per octave guitar – doubled as a bass by using my (original) whammy pedal and of course looped to infinity via the loop station. I throw in using the viola bow and steel slide to keep from being board.



## Track 8

### A Fish and a Grenade



A musical setting of [CA Conrad's reading of his poem](#) "Say it With Green Paint for the Comfort and Healing of Their Wounds" posted on PennSound.

This piece has a Parental Advisory for language.  
My first advisory actually.

Title and concept credit: Jake Freivald

This piece is in 17 notes per octave and uses 2 hang drum tracks in 17 notes per octave, session 3 drummer drum kit (with and without "electro" effects), two 17 note per octave electric guitar tracks, one finger picked and the other with ebow, fretless Washburn bass through effects (3 simultaneous octaves; 0, 1, and 2 below), piano in 17 notes per octave and Z3TA+ in 17 notes per octave. Various effects, compression, and whatnot recorded in Sonar X1 and 2 samples from [www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org):

By [daveincamas](#)  
[Splash.wav](#)

By [sandyrb](#)  
[USAT BOMB.wav](#)

## Track 9

### Only in Disneyland



Only in Disneyland is a 17 note per octave guitar solo in a hybrid progressive rock / classical style. This was recorded direct in with a Alesis multimix 8 into Sonar X1 with Lexicon reverb and Sonitus multiband EQ / compression.

## Track 10

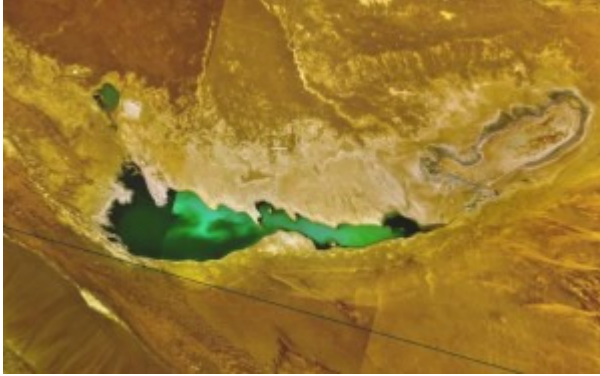
### 17 Reasons I Hate the Blues



This piece is a serial improvisation with edits recorded in a combination of Sonar 8.5 and Sonar X1. The instruments used are my newly converted 17 edo electric guitar (3 tracks) and newly converted fretless bass, vocal, session drummer 3 + garritan world library percussion all of which I used various digital effects on.

## Track 11

### Godzareh Depression



This is my entry for the [2010 Untwelve microtonal composition contest](#). I almost didn't enter since there were just so many things happening in Real Life at the time I lacked energy and time. My intention when I first entered was to contribute a chamber orchestra piece. That didn't work so all I came up with was a solo piano piece in Gene Ward Smith's 17 note Semimarvelous equal beating drawf – one of my very favorite tunings. I would like to give a very big thank you to Aaron Krister

Johnson for all of the work that goes into organizing an event like this – and also a thank you to the judges and other contestants who are essential as well!

Details of the tuning is with the semimarvelous dwarf piece below.

## Track 12

### A Parking Lot Thought in 17 EDO



A Parking Lot Thought is a motet in 12 equal I wrote in my first semester of music theory. I had entered the score into Sonar some time ago and grabbed it to try making a choral piece that sounded drone-ish for the ImprovFriday drone theme this week. The name of the video is Cross over Styx. Youtube <http://youtu.be/MWdaTYKBMEM> or download

[http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/on\\_over\\_styx.wmv](http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/on_over_styx.wmv)

At the same time I have been starting to study 17 edo in a more systematic fashion. So I decided to “translate” the 12 edo motet into 17 edo. This is not a simple retune. First to make life easy I chose 12 notes out of 17 that I was going to use. This way I kept a 1:1 relationship with score. The tuning I chose follows with the 17 edo scale degree in (parentheses):

```
! C:\Cakewalk\scales\17et.scl
!  
12 of 17 c/v ET  
12  
!  
70.58824 (1)  
211.76471 (3)  
352.94118 (5)  
423.52941 (6)  
494.11765 (7)  
635.29412 (9)  
705.88235 (10)  
847.05882 (12)  
917.64706 (13)  
1058.82353 (15)  
1129.41176 (16)  
2/1 (17)
```

Since the motet stays in one key this type of translation was not much of a problem. As I listened to the piece and edited the score the biggest change I made was to change the C3#’s to C naturals. The score [as a PDF file is here](#). Since this is in 4 piece part writing the piece is contrapuntal and I made some changes to make more of the harmony functional in 17 – even in 12 at this point in my classical composing career some of the progressions in 12 equal didn’t work quite right. Nonetheless this is a step in the direction I wish to go in with 17 edo – analyzing and developing 17 edo harmonic / melodic contrapuntal technique.

## Track 13

### Klingon Opera Overture



This an improvisation in 17 notes per octave with layered software synthesizers. Specifically, various percussion ensembles, french horn, piano, and two synthesizers. At one point I forgot what in the world I was doing because I transposed the arpeggio synth down 12 notes when I meant it to be an octave – which would mean 17 notes of course.

I like how alien it sounds in places and that aspect I will follow up because that is truly the microtonal music I wish to compose.

## Track 14

### I Gave up Thinking for Better Things



A composition in Gene Ward Smith's 17 per octave equal beating dwarf (<17 27 40| tuning details below) for amplified voice, amplified piano, fretless electric guitar, amplified jazz drum kit and amplified Asian percussion. Words by William Newbold and Visual by Emily.

The piece was realized by first improvising the piano + percussion by layering virtual instruments. Then I added fretless guitar by matching pitches by ear. This required a few takes to learn where the pitches were. Lastly I recorded the voice – but since that is really non-pitched it was pretty easy to do.

The dialog composed by William Newbold:

### I Gave up Thinking for Better Things

*thing is – a minor chord is only what you want it to be Sunday. if you bitter my eye by twisting the son – well my gurgle is a fine mess indeed for a lost goose fat on the egg of the sand don't cha think?*

*minors need less lung fish then most they say sunday is after Monday but money is always the last thing to change anything really...*

*"The son is not yellow he is chicken" like dylan but millin about is not the chord or the knot at the end..? I gave up thinking for better things but I just don't No what is next yet making a goose egg sandwich is next to the list of half-lives eateries left on atomic scales and fish heads alike..*

*social realities that might ..., consider the tao of hypocrisies hyper critical during this week that is starting tomorrow or tada(y) we never ever end on the last word but soon the first of many words to long to remember where to put the period or stop the flowing streams of music./video views of mind and matter spirit spit and spatter like ever thing needs to be organized like everything needs a category or section and level*

*to be realized at @ the being of now we find the time of tao and the tao of time lies like rude flamboyances in the echo chambers of becoming becomes more. of or limited to. those that were in art and arts of what will. 15 million years later we still have not changed but what is time and half of that behind us now. but you have not accounted for the fact that we are not here*

*Dont spoon my gas or i'll wipe your Mars Bar with my motorcycle*

*given now as the eternal experience of being would I consider myself half a being when I get some kind of half life... (don't mind me this is mid-life crisis starting this week) the week ending on the beginning of thought and then what is there a floor plan for what we can think and cannot think -(with a bugs bunny accent here)*

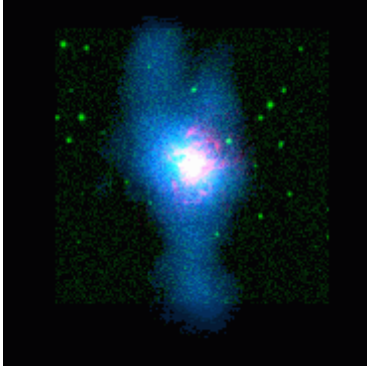
*the war of thinkin mom can help at this point with the rent ... what the rent is due again... made in like the way past, when? where we get along with the sky people as they eat whatever is left of the sky and then there are the left overs compared to right over there the piece of pie in the mind of thinking small is compact and big is what adults remind us that the last of the half life is funny this is going in the wrong direction*

*again ... define artist then define the artist that we want to be then make something up totally different and think that the ear-lob-star earring is almost opening in to tears of forced art creations that mean sad is good and makes money but then they take that money like it never existed because it never did just plastic forks they make with the credit bugs that eat the spiders in the mars hotel for talking wait for telling the MAN that they bit the ziggy thumb so his hand was flushed down the subspace time lab experiment in social realities that might ... that is another story for the next post in the thread maybe... I can't go on but will still be here for the moment of truth for now half the time i write nonsense that hurts my knee from hidden thoughts that mean anything that values what ??*



## Track 15

### Semimarvelous Blue Dwarf



This is a solo piano piece performed on a M-Audio 88es driving pianoteq which was re-tuned to Gene Ward Smith's 17 per octave equal beating dwarf(<17 27 40|). The piece was originally recorded in pianoteq using the standalone mode and then brought into Sonar 8.5 to edit some stray notes, change a chord, and correct some timing issues (some of those still exist).

I am finding this tuning to be really rich with extended chords and I'm enjoying the time I have been spending with it. The scala format for Gene's tuning follows:

```
! dwarf17marveq.scl
Semimarvelous dwarf: equal beating dwarf(<17 27 40|)
17
!
70.247930173690388400
115.13195688812420070
185.37988706181458910
269.90670087373119520
314.79072758816500750
385.03865776185539590
500.17061464997959660
570.41854482366998500
615.30257153810379730
699.82938535002040340
770.07731552371079180
814.96134223814460410
885.20927241183499250
955.45720258552538090
1000.3412292999591932
1084.8680431118757993
1200.0000000000000000
! eight tetrads/pentads, representible by [[0, -1, 0], [0, -1, 1],
! [1, -1, 1], [1, -1, 2], [0, 0, 2], [0, -1, -2], [0, 0, 1], [0, -1, -1]]
```

## Track 16

### A Piano Study in 17 ET



The genesis of this piece was a piano improvisation which was recorded via midi and used a M-Audio keystation 88 es, pianoteq 3.5, and sonar 8.5.

Once recorded the improvisation was heavily edited - mostly moving notes (not times) and removing hesitations I judged to be too long. Also the tempo was increased by two. One of the interesting aspects of this piece is that the voice leading is starting to work and I stumbled upon a real progression with resolution that occurs about 1:42. When playing this configuration the main challenge was remembering the relationships of 17 ET mapped to a 12 ET keyboard – for instance a minor 7th becomes a 5th. Many of the chord changes are abrupt since I was moving a pattern of notes in a parallel motion up and down the keyboard as a main generator of the piece. The piece has some decidedly xenharmonic passages. The compositional choices lean towards a balance of consonance and dissonance analogous to 12 ET common practice.

## Track 17

### The Pond



This piano composition was an improvisation in 17 note per octave equal temperament performed in September of this 2009. On my way to the Odd Music Convergence performance yesterday I was listening to this in the car and started to hear a bit of oriental influence in the melodies. So today I dug out the pictures from a 2006 trip to a Japanese Garden and married the two.

Online play of the video is here: [http://youtu.be/25sC3\\_uheyA](http://youtu.be/25sC3_uheyA)

Download the video [http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/the\\_pond.wmv](http://clones.soonlabel.com/public/video/the_pond.wmv)

## Track 18

### 17 Selfless Notes



When I received my AXiS 49 midi controller from [C-Thru Music](#) I had to give it a go immediately. It is excellent and has a groovy “selfless” mode that gives one 98 individual notes – more than a standard piano. I couldn’t resist trying my hand at an improvisation.

The music is in 17 notes per octave. Since the AXiS 49 does not have a sustain pedal port I used my M-Audio 88es to provide a sustain pedal by putting both software synths into OMNI mode to accept MIDI input from any source. The two synths I chose were pianoteq and Z3TA+. The midi performance was recorded live in Sonar 8.5 – there is no editing since that would defeat the point of the demonstration.

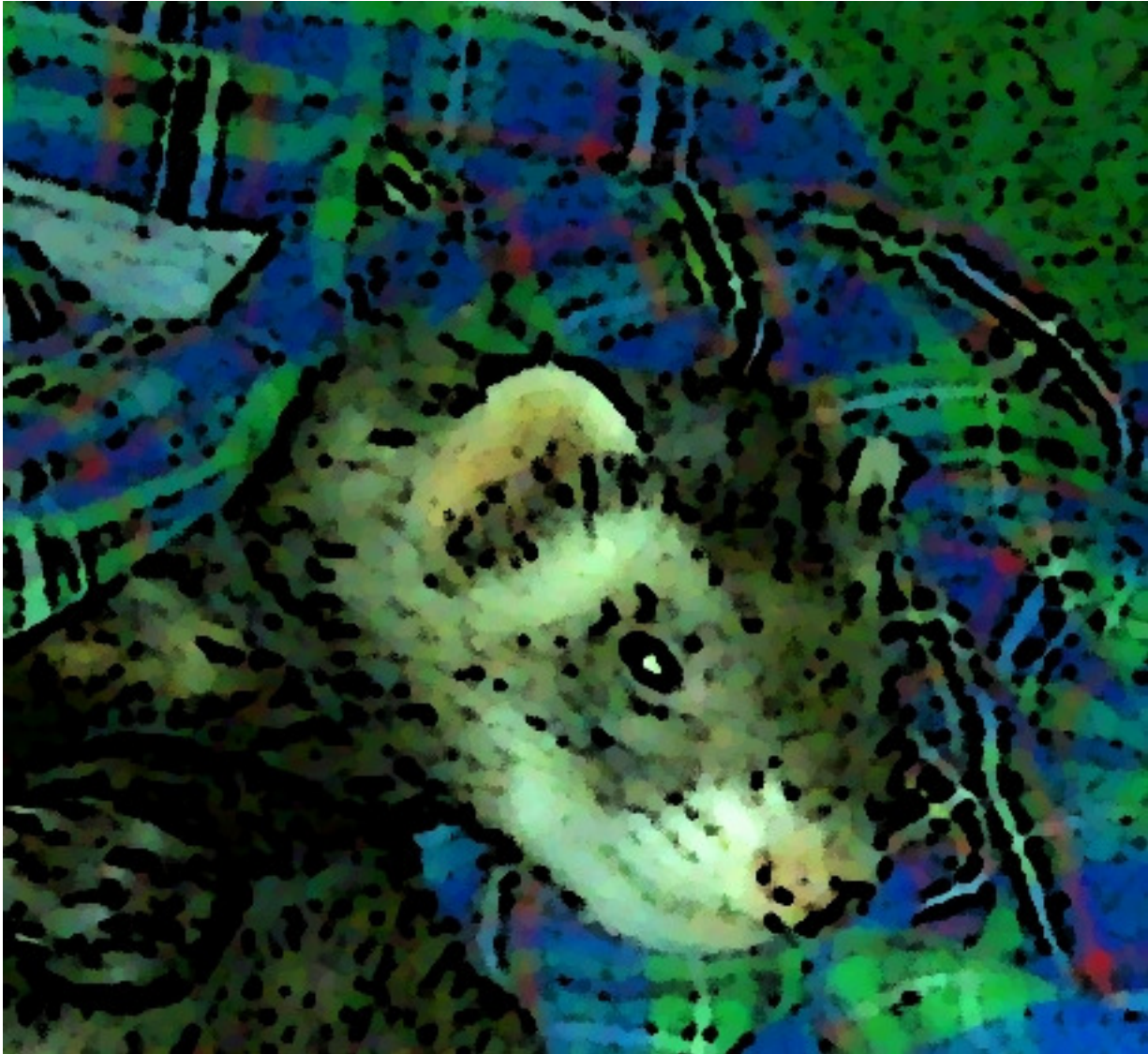
**Track 19**  
**Mars News at 17ET**



This is my first piece written in 17 notes per octave tuning.

## Track 20

### Seventeen Years in the Sixties



For this recording I performed 17 edo guitar lead and drone via loop station, 12 edo 5 string bass and drums from a box of cracker jack.

Just something I felt I had to do one night that is firmly in a rock idiom with a live performance sound.