

# ALPHA LEONIS

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## Short Bio

Alpha Leonis started out as the solo project of Atticus Reynard, who recorded *Shadows of Men* in several locations across Southern California as well as in Portland, Oregon. Upon completing the album in late 2009, he began assembling a group of ambitious musicians to bring *Shadows of Men* to life and help develop a visionary approach to music as a pseudo-cinematic medium. Alpha Leonis is now a full six-piece ensemble currently performing in the Pacific Northwest.

## Long Version

Like many contemporary art projects, Alpha Leonis began in a crowded college apartment, where a young Atticus Reynard first began recording the melodic thoughts that had been previously been confined to his curious hominid cerebrum. These first recordings, crude and primitive skeletons at best, were initially intended only for personal use and evaluation, but gradually made their way into the hands of a few close friends and family members who encouraged Atticus to continue his new hobby. Over the next few years amid a variety of internships, jobs, extended world travel and personal pursuits, Atticus slowly began amassing a collection of recordings with only the distant intention of one day releasing an album. Finally, in 2009, more than six years after those first, primordial explorations into the world of recorded sounds, Atticus decided to fully commit himself to the idea of publicly releasing his work.

In developing the ideas that comprise *Shadows of Men*, Atticus sought to create a world through music that was revealed through its intimate details, with a literate foundation of powerful imagery and metaphorical layering that would continue to present new perspectives on each repeated listen. As he experimented with different styles and textures, he gravitated toward a sound that he imagined would vaguely represent the dystopian near futures depicted in popular science fiction by blending elements of the familiar with a retro, pre-digital age vision – as if creating an operatic rock version of *Blade Runner*. As a result, spacey, swirling synthesized sounds seamlessly coexist on the album along with acoustic guitars and anthemic choruses that spiral toward a well-coordinated illusion of universal sonic chaos and collapse.

The collection of songs that comprised the basis for the *Shadows of Men* all started with the opening track on the album, the aptly themed “Erasing Me”, originally recorded in 2005. It wasn't until 2008 though that Atticus began to compose the bulk of the album, and sifted through his collection of demos and notes to rework earlier tracks like “Erasing Me”, “How to Throw Knives” and “Lunar Lullaby”. In the summer of 2009, in a sweltering garage just outside of Los Angeles, Atticus wrote a flurry of new songs and gradually refined the specifics of the album before moving up to Portland, Oregon where he completed it, and began a new chapter in his life. He founded a record label, Planet Ceres Enterprises, and set out to find a group of talented and impassioned musicians with which to perform.

## Booking/Press Contact

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## **The Shadows of Alpha Leonis**

First to join Atticus' crusade, drummer Adam Bencen, was also a recent Portland transplant with ambitions of a music career. Adam had just relocated from Orlando where he completed a degree in Music Production and Sound Technology, and After hearing the album's driving crescendo, the tempestuous Orchestra of Bells, he contacted Atticus and offered his talents. Adam's mastery of the drum kit was immediately apparent, after interpreting the sequenced percussive outline that Atticus programmed on the album and expanding its creative vision, Adam brought new life to the music and gave it a beating heart.

Over the next few months, Atticus and Adam worked with a variety of accomplished musicians in the greater Portland area, during which time Atticus came across Bekah Cohen's sweet vocal harmonies and asked her to join his still developing band of rebel musicians. Bekah, an experienced guitar player, also turned out to have a natural aptitude with other instruments, but eventually settled into a role on bass where she translated her magnetic personality into rolling bass lines and floating vocal layers.

Just before the summer of 2010, the rest of Alpha Leonis finally came together.

With a wide range of influences, from '60s psychedelia, late '70s new wave, and early '80s post-punk, up through to his uncompromising work on his own solo project, The Heatheners, Brenden Mandzuk brought his bag full of otherworldly guitar effects and settled right in to the lineup as the lead guitar player.

With a master's degree in music, Christy Kuiken has experience performing in a variety of symphony orchestras, performing across the United States and Europe, as well as event bands, contemporary rock bands, and jazz ensembles. Her striking piano melodies and ethereal vocals are a fantastic compliment to Adam's angular beats and Brenden's winding guitar lines.

With a degree in Music and a growing disdain for the grind of the professional working world, Spencer Finnan joined the group to add sonic texture. His experience playing in a multitude of bands from jazz to prog rock, as well as his growing interest in synthesizers, led him to Atticus' doorstep, slinging his keyboard like western gunmen of yore.

## **Reviews**

"incredibly gentle yet powerful" - Jason Avery, **The Examiner**

"a well crafted blend of light melodies and great vocals" - **Dirty Sexy Music**

"...I was hooked. For those five-and-a-half minutes, I was no longer thinking about the hecticness of my day – I was simply enjoying a great song. I was also late for work. YOU ALMOST GOT ME FIRED, ALPHA LEONIS!!!!" - **The Opening Acts**