

the crystal method

For nearly three decades, The Crystal Method has remained one of the most influential and well-respected acts in electronic music. Co-founded by Scott Kirkland and Ken Jordan in 1993, the GRAMMY®-nominated duo defined the sound of a generation—pioneering the big beat genre, popularizing electronic music with mainstream audiences, and establishing America as a force in the widely European and British scene. While Kirkland reimaged The Crystal Method as a solo act in 2017, following Jordan’s retirement, the momentum has never slowed—even during a pandemic. Now, after an unprecedented year, the innovative musician, producer, and DJ continues the evolution with The Crystal Method’s seventh studio album, and his second solo outing, *The Trip Out*.

A follow-up to 2018’s acclaimed *The Trip Home*—which took fans on a nostalgic, sonic journey—*The Trip Out* finds Kirkland looking to the future and embarking on collaborations with some of today’s most exciting, and musically diverse, artists. Primarily written in 2020, the album loosely centers around the idea of escapism—a timely theme, amid a year of shuttered venues, canceled tours, and global lockdowns.

That thread runs particularly deep in the soaring lead single, “House Broken,” which features a soulful performance by the GRAMMY®-nominated singer and songwriter, Naz Tokio. Written alongside the Los Angeles-based producer Mark Evans, the up-tempo song was born out of a shared feeling of isolation. “Naz and I talked about how we were feeling trapped—how we just wanted to express ourselves and share experiences with others,” recalls Kirkland. Nearly two years later, as he returns to touring, Kirkland notes that the song profoundly resonates with fans. “It’s a great release for the pent-up energy that we all felt.”

The futuristic “Let’s Trip Out,” featuring the Haitian-American rapper King Green, also builds upon that theme. Alternating between high-energy beats and spacey, expansive breakdowns, the song finds Green inviting listeners to emerge—from their homes, their minds, and their current state of being. “There is no doubt you need this,” he declares.

Another hip-hop artist making a big impact on *The Trip Out* is Billy Dean Thomas. The self-proclaimed “Queer B.I.G.” offers a fierce performance on the gritty “Act Right,” rapping over a menacing, reverb-soaked drum and synth loop. “Billy is a genius,” proclaims Kirkland, who recalls that their “diabolically rhythmic” vocals were delivered in mere hours. The spontaneous track, he adds, “was one of those magic moments.”

The Trip Out spotlights a new generation of electronic stars as well, including DJ Taylor Chung (aka Wenzday), who co-produced the pulsating “Chemical Mentalist.” The mid-tempo song, says Kirkland, “perfectly blends our two sounds. Taylor flipped the track on its side and gave it a modern sensibility.” Additionally, producer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist David Mårtensson (known professionally as VAAAL) contributed to several tracks on the album, including “Act Right” and the riotous album opener, “Watch Me Now,” which features cathartic vocals from rising singer-songwriter, Koda.

Throughout the recording process, Kirkland also reunited with old friends. Among them was guitarist Jim Davies (The Prodigy, Pitchshifter), who joined Kirkland for the high-octane instrumental track, “Friction,” alongside the venerable producer Glen Nicholls, whose credits include *The Trip Home*, as well as projects for Nine Inch Nails, Sia, and Depeche Mode. The brooding album closer “Post Punk,” meanwhile, was co-produced by the celebrated British DJ, Hyper. Borrowing a soundbite from Jim Jarmusch’s Stooges documentary, *Gimme Danger*, the mid-tempo song is built upon distorted synths and heavy drums, while Iggy Pop—in his signature, gravelly voice—asserts his individuality. “I don’t want to be a punk. I don’t want to belong to any of it,” he pronounces. “I just want to be.”

As *The Trip Out* began to materialize, Kirkland’s mind often traveled to the 64-bit video games of the late ‘90s. While fine-tuning each track, he imagined race cars, spaceships, and otherworldly vehicles zooming from level-to-level, as players escaped from their own realities. That cinematic quality has long been an integral part of The Crystal Method’s music, which has appeared in more than 100 film, TV, and video game soundtracks over the last 25 years. As The Crystal Method, Kirkland has also composed original material for a variety of projects, including the theme to the long-running Fox TV series, *Bones*, and the score to the 2017 documentary, *Hired Gun: Out of the Shadows, Into the Spotlight*. Most recently, he was tapped by the Academy Award-winning director Guillermo del Toro to score the animated series *3Below: Tales of Arcadia* and *Trollhunters: Rise of the Titans*.

It’s been a long and thrilling journey for Kirkland, who rose to fame with The Crystal Method’s 1997 debut, *Vegas*. The seminal title became the second-ever platinum electronic album in the US, while today, it remains a perennial best-seller. Over the next two decades, The Crystal Method continued to ascend: topping the charts with *Tweekend* (2001) and earning GRAMMY® nods for *Legion of Boom* (2004) and *Divided by Night* (2009)—both of which were included in the Best Dance/Electronic Album category. Kirkland and Jordan further revolutionized the genre with their *Community Service* continuous mix albums—and then parlayed that format into the fitness space, partnering with Nike and Apple to create the groundbreaking *Drive: Nike + Original Run* LP. They released their final album as a duo, *The Crystal Method*, in 2014.

Along the way, The Crystal Method has played more than 1300 shows across the world—headlining such legendary festivals as EDC, Lollapalooza, and Ultra Miami and touring with an array of acts: from Guns N’ Roses and Tool to The Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers. That musical versatility also extends to an extensive discography of official remix partners, including Linkin Park, New Order, Hans Zimmer, and the Doors.

“It’s really humbling,” says Kirkland, reflecting on his career to date. “I can’t really express how amazed I am that we’ve been able to take this idea of two hungry individuals with some synths, some drum machines, and a love for electronic music and transform it into a career that has lasted over 25 years.” He adds, “Above all, I’m very fortunate to have an enthusiastic fan base that continues to show up and support The Crystal Method’s legacy.”