

Rex Biography

An early version of slowcore band rex originated in Maine in 1989, but then dissolved as some members moved to New York. Soon after, drummer Doug Scharin started devoting his time to slowcore innovators Codeine. In 1994, rex restarted in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. From the beginning the band, which at its core is a trio with Curtis Harvey on guitar and vocals and Phil Spirito on bass, wanted to include strings, specifically cello. Kirsten Maccord became the first of many string players to contribute to the band's unique sound. rex used a DIY 4 track recording approach more out of necessity than belief, with Doug handling the engineering duties. After a few live shows their self-titled debut was picked up by Southern Records and released that same year. This record fluctuates wildly between gentle meandering guitar lines, powerful emotive vocals and weird burnout psychedelic dreamscapes.

The follow up to the first album was a 10" vinyl only release called waltz. The EP brought in aspects of old time music to add to the already complex mix. The band's next album, C, recorded by Brian Deck at Idful studios in Chicago revealed a significantly more mature version of Rex. The slow, rolling nature of the band was augmented by the addition of string arrangements and more emotionally refined vocals with focused lyrics. Well received by the critics, C established rex's unique variety of slowcore/post rock.

The band's ties to Chicago incited a collaboration with Red Red Meat, released under the name of Loftus as well as the addition of Julie Liu on violin and viola. After many tours with this new quartet the band was ready to record their final record of that era. With the album 3 the band refined the steady, driving nature of C into a more complex soundscape. They successfully shifted their gritty grungy slowcore sound with a cleaner, gentler post-rock sound. The band's maturity signaled a further emphasis on clarity and composition, as opposed to previous efforts where crescendoing bursts of emotional power defined their art.

At the end of 1998, after several tours to support the album 3 the group dissolved as all three members focused on their own projects. Harvey under his own name, Scharin under the name HIM and Spirito under the name oRSo. Later on in 99 Spirito and Scharin moved to Chicago. The band had a summit in 2012 to play music, eat, hang out and strategize about rereleasing their records. After many attempts to get their masters back from Southern records failed, the three went back to their lives and other activities. In 2021 Rex was contacted by Numero Group to do a full re-release of all their records. Numero helped to negotiate the release of the masters and in 2022 rex's music is finally being released digitally for the first time. This positive movement built the momentum to get back together and play live again and start to record some new music together. Although Harvey, Spirito and Scharin live in three different corners of the country they are excited to be working together again although it is very different from when they lived in the same loft together in Brooklyn.