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A look into the history of **Information Society** is a peek at the evolution of electronic music. From their first self-released album in 1983 to their brand new 2014 album *_hello world*, InSoc (as they're affectionately known), have grown from a young electronic band, mutating the sum total of their influences, to a veteran collective influencing a new generation of electronic musicians. One important thing remains constant: The music is distinctly Information Society, monster electro bass and beats topped with lush, poppy vocal hooks.

Led by founder/producer Paul Robb, the group, including vocalist Kurt Larson and bassist James Cassidy, stormed the club charts in the mid '80s with their Freestyle classic "Running". Inspired by the worldwide response to the single, the group seized the opportunity and moved to New York to record their major label debut, *Information Society*, for Tommy Boy/Reprise. Producer Fred Maher was brought in, fresh from his work on Kraftwerk's *Electric Café* album, and helped Robb & co. craft a tight pop sound. Initial buzz was intense, and proved to be accurate; by the time the group got to its first in-store appearance, two days after the record's release, the album was sold out.

After a whirlwind series of live dates throughout the world, supporting the self-titled album, the group went on to release the albums *Hack* and *Peace And Love, Inc.* and numerous Top 40 hits, notably the #1 smash "What's on Your Mind (Pure Energy)," as well as "Walking Away," "Think," "Repetition," and "Peace and Love, Inc." Numerous national and international tours followed; outside the United States the group is particularly popular in South America, Spain, and Japan.

Departing Tommy Boy/Reprise Records in the mid-'90s, the group returned to its electro-industrial roots on several independent releases. Kurt Larson took the artistic helm of the group in 1997, and released *Don't Be Afraid*, which explored the darker recesses of the band's musical imagination. Meanwhile, Paul Robb released a series of industrial techno records under his nom de disco, **Think Tank**. During this period, members also pursued musical interests as diverse as video game music, television scoring, and even commercial jingles, a goal the group had announced in one of their earliest manifestos in 1983!

In the early 2000s, re-releases of both "Running" and "What's on Your Mind" reached #1 on the Billboard Dance/Club chart. This renewed interest in the band served as a catalyst for a new round of songwriting, and an EP of new material, entitled *Oscillator* was released in 2005, followed by the full-length album *Synthesizer* in 2007.

Since then, the band has enjoyed something of a renaissance, performing both domestically and abroad, including a 25th Anniversary performance in Philadelphia which was memorialized on the DVD release,

It Is Useless to Resist Us: 25 Years of Information Society. A companion digital-only release, *Modulator*, offered easy access to the hidden tracks and Easter eggs sprinkled throughout the DVD release.

2010 saw the release of *Apocryphon: Electro Roots*, a collection of the group's earliest releases, along with ultra-rare live concert recordings and outtakes. The limited edition, signed release was sold out within days.

In 2011, HAKATAK International, the group's longtime label, released a well-received collection of remixes, entitled *Energize! Classic Remixes, Vol. 1* (and its 2014 companion collection *Engage! Classic Remixes, Vol. 2*), which included the first digital release of several underground hits from the early years. Summer 2013 found INSOC in the company of Andy Bell (Erasure), Howard Jones and Men Without Hats for dates on The Regeneration Tour at The Greek Theater in Los Angeles and Mountain Winery in the Bay Area, and creative juices were stirred.

Shortly after the Regeneration dates, the three original members - Kurt, Paul and James - reunited to discuss working on a new album and the result, *_hello world* is the offspring. With its release set for September, 2014, *_hello world* is rife with songs that have one foot firmly planted in their past and one foot confidently resting in the present. The new album is filled with classic INSOC dance floor fodder like "Get Back", soaring epics like "Jonestown", and cinematic textures like "Creatures of Light and Darkness". Embracing the many faces of synthetic music while remaining organically Information Society, *_hello world* isn't as much a rebirth of INSOC as it is a nuclear-powered version that ups the ante. The first single, "Land of the Blind," is a swirling, propulsive track that hearkens back to their signature sound yet infuses it with state of the art production values. Longtime InSoc hero Gerald V. Casale adds his vocals in a duet with Kurt on their cover of "Beautiful World" which adds a modern splash to the Devo classic.

Surrounding the release of new material in 2014, INSOC's former label Tommy Boy has commissioned new remixes of their original club anthem "Running" by such luminaries as Eric Kupper, Marcos Carnaval, Todd Terry, and many others. In addition, seminal German label Mannequin Records is re-releasing the very first INSOC EP from 1983. Long out of print, the newly remastered EP includes an instrumental bonus track from that era that has never before been released.

With the new album almost complete, the Tommy Boy "Running" remix package, the Mannequin Records EP reissue and a tour in the works, 2014 is proving to be quite a year for the band. With history's tendency to repeat itself, it appears INSOC are poised for another takeover. *_Hello World*, indeed.

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