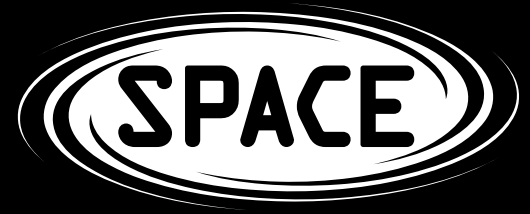


# DOGS IN SPACE



DOGS IN SPACE was conceived in 2005 to address the lack of a dedicated 'chillout' space at Solfest, a yearly weekend festival that is staged every August Bank Holiday weekend in Cumbria. Solfest is the largest alternative (as opposed to large commercial-style) festival in the North of England. We have run a dedicated chillout space at Solfest for the last 3 years, this year running the space 24 hours for the duration of the festival.

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=DA5feKdwC00>  
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=gdE9IH-A7HM>

From the festival's point of view, Dogs In Space offers a non-stop comfortable and relaxing space that provides an antidote or retreat from the madness of the rest of the festival and a consistent focal point for people to meet friends or just have a break at, where there is always a convivial atmosphere and good entertainment.

From the point of view of the Dogs in Space crew, our venue offers the opportunity to program a diverse range of downtempo entertainment encompassing live music, theatre, performance, video and DJs and create a show that is ever-changing but not limited by style or genre, set in an attractively decorated and relaxing environment.

Programmed by Michael Dog, with decor and production provided by Carmarthen's Space production crew (hence Dogs In Space) and cafe facilities provided by Manchester's Cafe Ooh La La, the venue's style and diverse content is based on the 2nd performance space (better known as the Poodle Lounge) at London's Club Dog, which ran from 1986 till 1993 at The George Robey in Finsbury Park, the aim being to provide a large but still intimate, 'living-room' styled environment.

## PRESENTATION

Dogs In Space is staged in a large carpeted 'wedding-style' marquee, with the cafe area joined to the main tent in a second smaller marquee set adjacent to one of the main tent's back corners.

The back 3rd of the tent has a comfortable seating area comprised of old sofas and easy chairs, set out in a way that groups of people can sit together in a 'living-room' environment. The main body of the tent offers floor seating (hence the carpet) based around a number of low round tables. The stage and DJ area is situated at the shorter end of the tent opposite the living-room area and the mixing desk, lighting and video control areas are situated within 2 scaffolding towers placed along the sides within the tent around halfway down its length.

The ceiling and walls are decorated with a selection of hangings, objects and ornaments and there is a large video screen set along the back wall of the tent, above and behind the stage.

The inside of the tent is lit at night by an array of Optikinetics Solar 250 rotating colour wheel projectors with rotating prisms mounted on their lenses which scatter the projected images around the space creating ever-changing patterns and moving beams of light on the walls and ceiling. The lighting is augmented by a few UV tubes, a small stage lighting rig and a high power video projector.

Sound is provided by Space Productions' custom-built PA system, which was designed and built specifically for use in a chillout environment, tuned especially to provide a 'warm' quality to the sound in the tent and run at a listenable rather than ear-splitting volume.

Light meals, cakes, tea, coffee and soft drinks as well as a

sympathetic cafe ambience and friendly staff, who also provide an extra seating area alongside their serving space, making Dogs In Space essentially a self-contained retreat from the rest of the festival.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment consists of a mix of live music, theatre/circus/spoken word performance and video interspersed with downtempo DJ sets.

The DJs who play in Dogs In Space are encouraged to work to a brief of offering the audience a diverse mix of downtempo music, steering away from anything consistently danceable, full on or discordant and aiming to provide the sort of soundtrack that they might like to listen to at home with friends.

The live music aspect of the tent features a diverse range of music styles encompassing, folk/roots, world music, jazz and electronica, again linked by a downtempo thread that gets a bit livelier during the day and more relaxed as the night rolls on. Artists who have previously performed at Dogs In Space include: electronic superstars Mirror System, Eat Static (playing chillout sets!), Another Green World, Nodens Ictus, O.V.N.I., Orchid Star, Solarquest, and Tetchi, glitch experimenters Buntyface and 2.2 Killavolt Cables, world music artists Templehedz, jazz ensembles Glee Pathos, Trezfez and The Bonsai Big Band, virtuoso guitarist Lee Westwood, master hurdy gurdy and dulcimer players Amanda Lowe and Quentin Budworth, wordsmith Excentral Tempest and the master of cocktail jazz piano Steve Rowlands.

One of the aims of the music programming is to showcase musical styles that aren't often seen together in more exclusively electronica-based festival chillout areas, consequently exposing people to music that they may not have otherwise encountered.

The musical entertainment is complemented by shorter slots given over to stage-based circus and theatre performances, again trying to move away from the brief of a solely music-based program and offering more of a 'psychedelic cabaret' feel to the proceedings. Previous years have featured UV circus skill/movement performer 'Ultravision' and performance poet Kate Tempest amongst others. We hope to expand this aspect of the show more this coming year, with the inclusion of more slam/performance poets and hopefully, a series of short light-hearted playlets written and performed especially for the show by The Curious Company.

Video has come to play an important part in the show's programming with a number of bands working with their own VJ. We also programme slots for VJs to showcase their work alongside the night-time DJ sets, the video screen being quite a dominant aspect of the visual effect in the tent. The VJs treat their sets as bespoke performances rather than just providing visual wallpaper, particularly as they are obliged to essentially 'slow down' their visual style to fit in with the downtempo style of the space. The result is an ever-changing creative video aspect to the night-time atmosphere as each VJ works through their own visual material and then hands over to the next.

We also programme a half hour's worth of short independent films every night which are played with their soundtracks clearly audible, adding a cinema feel to the space from time to time as part of the psychedelic cabaret effect.

The overall effect on the audience is that whenever they spend some time in Dogs In Space, the vibe is always consistently comfortable and convivial but the type and style of entertainment on offer is always changing and unpredictable. The perfect retreat from the festival madness!!