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Steve Hackett

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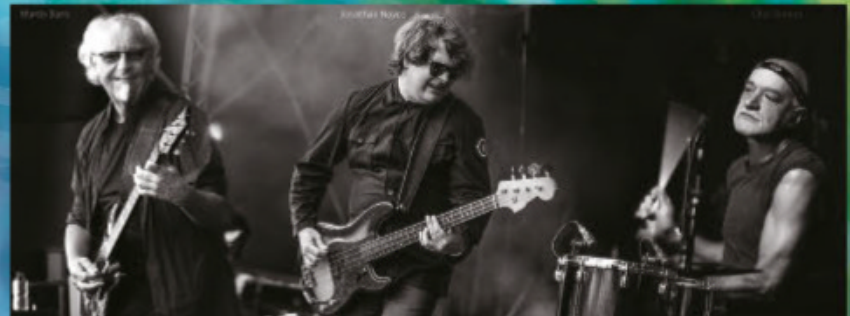
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I was
extremely
flattered...**

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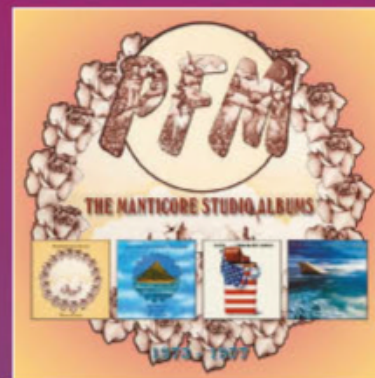


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GREENSLADE

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- A newly re-mastered and expanded CD & DVD edition of the classic self-titled debut album by GREENSLADE. Includes three previously unreleased bonus tracks on the CD of the band's BBC Radio One session recorded in October 1973, plus a bonus DVD featuring a recently discovered and previously unreleased Warner Bros. promotional film.



'SPYGLASS GUEST'

(2CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- A newly re-mastered and expanded 2 CD edition of the classic 1974 album, Spyglass Guest by GREENSLADE. Newly re-mastered from the original master tapes and features an illustrated booklet with many rare cuttings and includes an essay by Malcolm Dome and exclusive interviews with Dave Greenslade and Dave Lawson. Includes a bonus CD of previously unreleased recordings made for BBC Radio One's In Concert programme and Sounds of the Seventies in November 1974

PROCOL HARUM



'LIVE IN CONCERT WITH THE EDMONTON ORCHESTRA'

(REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- A re-mastered and expanded edition of the classic album Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra by Procol Harum. This edition has been newly re-mastered and includes five bonus tracks (two previously unreleased), drawn from the B-side of a single and the rehearsal sessions for the concert. The release also includes an illustrated booklet featuring material from Gary Brooker's personal archive and an essay by Procol Harum authority Roland Clare. VINYL ALSO AVAILABLE



'PROCOL'S NINTH'

(REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- An expanded 3CD edition of the acclaimed Procol Harum album "Procol's Ninth". Includes the original album with eight bonus tracks taken from the album sessions (five of which are previously unreleased), along with two additional bonus discs recorded in concert. Also includes a lavishly illustrated booklet featuring material from Gary Brooker's personal archive and an essay by Procol Harum authority Roland Clare.



"Whether it's film music or classical music or big band stuff or jazz, I feel that when I make an album I've got to honour all those gods, all those influences. That's the legacy of having worked with Genesis."

Steve Hackett



Ed's Letter



So it's the last issue of 2018, and as you will see from the illustration above, artist John Langton has once again created the *Prog* Xmas card, this year based on a seasonal classic.

This issue we cast our eyes back over the past 12 months as the writers vote for their albums of the year. It was a close run this year, and the results make for very interesting reading. We'll be asking you to do the same for the 2018 Readers' Poll for next issue. There's a form on page 97 for you to fill in and post, you can vote by email or you can also vote via the website. We look forward to seeing your choices as always.

We're already looking forward to 2019 with this issue's cover star Steve Hackett, whose new studio album *At The Edge Of Light* sees the guitarist on top form and is released in January. *Prog* magazine has a few things to look forward to in 2019, too. In March we'll be 10 years old. Yes indeed, it will be 10 whole years since *Prog* magazine first appeared on newsagent shelves. It's certainly been an interesting decade. And if that wasn't enough, next year we'll also reach our 100th issue. So there are two major milestones to celebrate.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and we wish you peace, happiness and a very proggy 2019.

Jerry Ewing - Editor

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A CRIMSON REVELATION

I would like to thank you all for producing a lovely and interesting magazine! I have read most of the November issue [*Prog* 92] and the articles re: King Crimson are excellent. I will never forget hearing *In The Court Of The Crimson King* back in 1969 on our new FM console. As a very naïve country-bred American teenager whose first 45 was *Rag Doll* by the Four Seasons, I was absolutely blown away by KC, Jimi Hendrix and Cream and Chicago. I do remember the British Invasion of the early 60s, especially the Animals and Rolling Stones, but KC was a revelation. I regret not seeing KC in December of 1973 at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, but I did have university final exams to prepare for!

Philadelphia in the 70s was a great place for all kinds of music, and I took advantage of that attending mostly rock concerts. Pink Floyd at the Spectrum in 1973 playing *The Dark Side Of The Moon* was a highlight. I do enjoy Rick Wakeman's column from month to month and I did see him and his band do *King Arthur* at the Spectrum in 1975. The gig was great as Larry Coryell's Eleventh House opened the show followed by Gentle Giant and then Rick and co. I really was there for GG as they are one of my favourite bands, but Larry Coryell was a superb guitarist and Rick's contribution to the evening was good.

I would pick Keith Emerson as the greatest prog keyboard player and it was a privilege to see ELP at the Spectrum in Philly. It was more than just a gig: it was an extravaganza. I could go on and on but I won't. These days I am more into jazz but the memories that I have of seeing Soft Machine, UK, Allan Holdsworth, ELP, Gentle Giant, Jethro Tull, Frank Zappa etc will remain with me forever. By the way, I did finally see King Crimson in Cardiff a couple of years ago, and they were superb. Robert Fripp is a genius and I am so glad that he is back making some amazing music with some very talented musicians.

Yours from Newport in South Wales (where the Police did their first ever gig supporting Cherry Vanilla).

Cliff Chonka



Above: *Prog* 92.

Robert Fripp:
"a genius".

Opeth: better than
Paul McCartney?



PRESS/SCARLET AGE

LIVE AND KICKING

I have recently returned from HRH Prog in Wales with fellow prog buddy Mark Feldon, and we had a great time. Headliners Martin Barre and Pendragon were amazing, and the artists further down the list really caught our eye. I Am The Manic Whale and This Winter Machine had opening slots over two days and they had great sets.

Luna Rossa were definitely a highlight for us, really great music and wonderful people too. The final run of bands on the last day on the second stage – Deafening Opera, Southern Empire, Exploring Birdsong, Kindred Spirit and Gandalf's

Fist – really made the weekend for us. Great musicians and great music.

We have booked to fly over from Ireland for Trinity 4 in Leamington Spa next May, looking forward to that with a great line-up so far.

Ollie McGahon

MUSIC TO MY EARS

Just arrived at my hotel in Birmingham having driven from Kent. Had to sit in the carpark to listen to your *Prog* 93 compilation CD right to the end for the second time: 90 minutes of excellence!

Did these tracks just drop in your lap? Whoever compiled this CD created an

TWEET TALK

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THE FIERCE & THE DEAD

@TFATD

Someone described our band as a secret society the other day, probably slightly less secret now.

NICK BEGGS

@NickBeggs

Sorry to hear about Pete Shelley from Buzzcocks. We did a festival with them this summer. Love to all who loved him.

JUDY DYBLE

@judydyble

proper rainy cold November day comfort food. @jothekendall #DibblesNibbles



RICK WAKEMAN

@GrumpyOldRick

Bexhill was fabulous last night. My favourite piano, fabulous audience, great crew at the theatre and pretty decent fish and chip shop over the road too.

LETTER

I read Martin Kielty's Paper Late article 'Six Degrees Of Inner Turbulence' [Prog 92], and he hit the nail on the head.

There are too many prog snobs out there who think that prog is only Yes, Genesis, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, King Crimson and Floyd. They think anything other than that isn't worthy. It's called prog for a reason: it should be forever reinventing itself, but carrying everything its invented in its wake.

I was watching Von Herten Brothers at a festival once. The man next to me said, "How are these prog? They dont



Modern prog: Von Herten Brothers.

sound anything like Yes!" I said they are more your newer, modern version of prog. His response was: "Prog can only be from the 70s." A very delusional prog snob.

At the opposite end of the scale, there are people who say they don't like prog (who don't realise what prog is), then proceed to say they like Tool, Floyd, A Perfect Circle, Dream Theater, Porcupine Tree, Hawkwind to name a few... but still say they don't like it?

I think prog should be as far reaching as any other music genre.

Phil Chelmsford

This issue's star letter wins a goodie bag from The Merch Desk at www.themerchdesk.com.

'album': from the start I was hooked. Your compilations always throw up something interesting, this one ticks all the boxes.

A tedious journey turned into a wonderful musical experience. For those who in the past have condemned the CD, I say open your ears to what's new.

Thank you for giving me a Christmas stocking of surprises each month, and for creating a Christmas present wish list from just this one album! Yes, it is an album, each track flowing gracefully into the next.

Your magazine revived and expanded my interest in 'prog' right from the off. The compilations inspire me to investigate new bands and sounds. I invariably read it from cover to cover, including all the ads. It introduced me to Trading Boundaries and many new and new(ish) bands, while giving me an insight into all my old favourites.



Above: the Prog93 CD.

The concert reviews always interest me, in particular those I've been to: Fish, Camel, Pineapple Thief (now I'm just name dropping!), Rambin' Man Fair, A New Day Festival.

Sometimes the reviewer takes a different slant to the concert. Recently I went to Kscope's 10th anniversary at Islington Union Chapel and was mesmerised by the sound and variety of the acts, also the ambience of the hall. The Church pews didn't bother me at all, perhaps my arse is more pew shaped!

I generally perceive my cup as half full. As a 61 year old it ought to be at least three quarters full! But music and your magazine with the accompanying compilation CDs fill it to overflowing.

Not too sycophantic I hope?

Carry on giving us the new stuff, as well as a smattering of what we know. Thanks for all the memories!

Martyn Holdsworth

Below: Anathema playing at Kscope's 10th anniversary show.



WILL IRELAND

MARJANA SEMKINA

@marjanasemkina

I'm not posting a lot because I'm working a lot and oh boy I'm excited. Will have to start doing handwritten lyrics soon to cover some expenses but trust me you'll like what I'm up to.

JAKKO M JAKSZYK

@JakkoJ

An ice cold glass Of Sapporo, in Sapporo! Who'd have thought.



OLIVER WAKEMAN

@OliverWakeman

I was playing Pink Floyd's Atom Heart Mother earlier & then went for dinner. I left it playing on my Mac as it started the soundscapes part. My Mac went to sleep & shortly after my son ran in & said, "Quick Dad, something's wrong with your computer, it's making weird noises..."

PROG

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INTRO

IF IT'S OUT THERE, IT'S IN HERE

STEVE HILLAGE BAND MAKE LIVE RETURN

Former Gong guitarist to revisit his seminal 70s albums for three UK shows in summer 2019.

► The Steve Hillage Band are to play three special shows this summer. They will take place at the Cambridge Junction on June 6, Manchester O2 Ritz on 7 and at the London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire the following night. What makes them so special is that Hillage and his band are to play a set that concentrates almost exclusively on the albums *Fish Rising*, *L*, *Motivation Radio* and *Green*, which span the period from 1975-8.

"It makes sense to do this now because 2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the last [full] UK tour done by The Steve Hillage Band," explains Steve Hillage to *Prog*. "It's been talked about for a while, and finally the opportunity has come up."

The last time The Steve Hillage Band played live was in 2009 and this time, the musician will be backed by the current line-up of his former band Gong.

"I've done a number of guest spots with them and there's definitely a good relationship between us. When we played in Japan in October [2018],

I talked to the guys about this, and they were very happy to be involved. All of them are high calibre musicians, which is what's needed, and Kavus Torabi is a strong singer in his own right, so he'll be helping me on that front."

The set itself won't be chronological, but will reflect those songs Hillage himself feels works best in this context.

"There are seven or eight that are obvious, like *The Salmon Song* and *It's All Too Much*. People will expect them to be included," says Hillage. "After that, I can assure everyone I'll put together a stonking set of songs that really shines. I think I know what the fans want. When I put out the *Searching For The Spark* box set in 2017 [which won Reissue Of The Year at the 2017 Prog Awards] that covered exactly this period, and from the feedback I got I know what people are keen for me to play. There's no need to canvas opinions on that score."

One thing that Hillage is fully aware of is that he'll need to work very hard on getting everything up to the required standard. And he's already begun to mentally prepare himself for the challenging task ahead.

"I know I have to get really match fit to pull this off," he says. "I have to reach the very highest standards, and I won't accept anything less from myself or anybody else involved."

I have commitments with System 7, my other band, until March. But from that point onwards, this is to have my full attention. I'll spend three months getting my vocals and guitar playing right up to scratch."

Although the main focus of the set will be on those early albums, Hillage hasn't ruled out including some later songs. He confirms one of those could be



Above: Steve Hillage's 2019 tour dates.



Gong, with Steve Hillage
third from left.

Talking To The Sun, which was on the studio side of 1979's *Live Herald* album. But purists can rest because the musician intends to play all the songs just as they'd expect.

"Why would I alter any of them?" he says. "I recall spending ages back then working on the arrangements, and I'm very proud of the way they turned out. However, there was always readiness for a little jamming, and that will apply now as well. *The Salmon Song*, for instance, starts with a heavy rock riff, then goes into a very complicated, psychedelic midsection. But right at the end it has room for a jam session, and we'll certainly do that."

As for the prospect of further dates beyond the trio already confirmed? Says Hillage, "If these go well then, yes, there will be more dates."

Tickets are available from bit.ly/HillageTour. **MD**



"I'll put together
a stonking set
of songs that
really shines."

Still feeling the
music... Steve Hillage.

ASHLEY JONES

RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

This month, Intro was compiled by

Malcolm Dome
Claudia Elliott
Jerry Ewing
Jo Kendall
Hannah May Kilroy
Dave Ling
Alex Lynham
Rhodri Marsden
Matt Parker
Natasha Scharf
Johnny Sharp
Rick Wakeman

SOLO ALBUM FOR PURSON FOUNDER

Rosalie Cunningham's new Beatles-influenced disc is due out in the spring.

Independent woman:
Rosalie Cunningham.



► **Purson's former powerhouse** is preparing to release her self-titled solo album this spring. Multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Rosalie Cunningham has broken her silence nearly two years after the psychedelic proggers split.

"I just needed some time out; I needed some time to reflect on where I wanted it to go because Purson ended quite messily for me and it just put me off jumping straight back into the industry," she reveals. "I was just writing cathartically, really, and [the songs] ended up sounding like a body of work."

Unsurprisingly the new material has echoes of Cunningham's previous band – some of the songs were originally intended for Purson's next album – but there are also a few surprises including an as yet untitled 15-minute prog epic.

"I probably would have never put it on a Purson album because I would have thought they'd never want to play this or be able to play this so there's no point doing it! I just let my imagination get carried away with doing this because I didn't have those restrictions," she says. "[Musically, the album is] a huge melting pot. There's a big Beatles stamp, there's prog and there's psych, there are elements of folk, some quite dark gothic bits; it's all sorts of things really."

Rosalie Cunningham also features contributions from her musical and romantic partner Rosco Levee. He forms part of her new band's "revolving" line-up, which she hopes to take out on the road.

Pre-order the album from <http://bit.ly/Rosalie4Pledge>. **NRS**

MORE ACTS FOR TRINITY IV

Beatrix Players side-project confirmed for charity all-dayer.

► **Birks & Kroon** will make their live debut at Trinity Live IV at Leamington Assembly on May 11. They'll be joined by Mostly Autumn, Godsticks, C:Live Collective, and Alan Reed & The Daughters Of Expediency.

The new project, featuring Beatrix Players' vocalist Amy Birks and Swedish violinist Maria Kroon, has also teamed up with Steve Hackett on the single *I Wish*, out this spring. A full-length album is due later in the year.

"We're thrilled to be working with such great musical minds," says Birks. "We loved what we heard at Trinity Live last year, it's for great causes and the best possible start to a big year for us."

The popular Trinity prog auction and aftershow will also be back, and this year they will raise money for Help Musicians UK and mental health charity MIND. Discounted early bird tickets are available until January 31 from www.seetickets.com/tour/trinity-4. **NRS**



Songs from the
wood: Amy Birks
and Maria Kroon.

2019 PREVIEW

What do your favourite bands and artists have lined up for the coming year? Read on to find out!

Compiled by Natasha Scharf

ALEX LIFESON AND MARCO MINNEMANN

While Rush are on indefinite hiatus, guitarist Alex Lifeson is working with multi-instrumentalist Marco Minnemann on an unnamed new venture. Very little is known about the project at this stage, although the pair previously collaborated on Minnemann's 2017 solo album *Borrego*. More hints are expected in 2019.

See www.marcominnemann.com.

THE ANCHORESS

Progressive Music Award winner Catherine Anne Davies, aka The Anchoress, is putting the finishing touches to her second album which is due out on Kscope this spring. *The Art Of Losing* sees the multi-instrumentalist exploring themes of loss and grief, asking the question: what do we gain from losing?

See www.iamtheanchoress.com.



BIG BIG TRAIN

The international collective are working on nine new tracks for their as yet untitled studio album which is due out on May 17. Says Greg Spawton, "Our music is known for featuring many songs about England and the English landscape. On our new album, our songs take flight to more distant destinations."

Big Big Train will follow the release with their first ever UK tour in the autumn. They'll play six shows starting in Edinburgh on October 26.

See www.bigbigtrain.com.

DEVIN TOWNSEND

This creative Canadian is currently working on four new albums outside The Devin Townsend Project. One of them, *Empath*, is due out on InsideOut in March. He describes it as "an exhaustive and fascinating experience for me". He'll also play a series of intimate acoustic shows across Europe next spring.

See www.hevydevy.com.

DREAM THEATER

Dream Theater have a busy year planned with the release of *Distance Over Time* through InsideOut on February 22. Keep an eye out for UK tour dates later in the year. Meanwhile, their keyboard virtuoso Jordan Rudess is preparing to release his new solo album around the spring.

See www.dreamtheater.net.

GHOST COMMUNITY

The supergroup, featuring former members of The Reasoning and Also Eden, are getting ready to release their second, currently untitled album. The five-track has a strong theme running throughout, although Ghost Community say it's not a concept album. They're currently scouting for a record deal.

See www.ghostcommunity.co.uk.

HEATHER FINDLAY

The British singer-songwriter releases her new solo album, *Wild White Horses* in the spring. It was recorded at Rockfield Studios with Thunder's Luke Morley. Says Findlay, "I was really encouraged by Luke to move beyond comfort zones and think outside of boxes." It also includes *Here's To You*, written in memory of Mostly Autumn guitarist Liam Davison. Findlay's also working on new Odin Dragonfly material with Angela Gordon. The duo's second album, *Sirens* is expected towards the end of 2019.

See www.heatherfindlay.co.uk.

HEXVESSEL

Anglo-Finnish collective Hexvessel are preparing to release *All Tree* through Century Media on February 15. The album draws inspiration from frontman Mat 'Kvohst' McNerney's celtic roots and the Canterbury scene. The six-piece already have a handful of live shows lined up for early next year with more on the way.

See www.hexvessel.com.

IQ

The long-awaited follow-up to 2014's *Road Of Bones* is due out later this year. The British neo-proggers have previously hinted that it'll continue some of the harder, more aggressive elements of its predecessor. IQ are now starting to fill up their 2019 calendar with gigs. Confirmed shows include festival appearances at Midsummer Prog and Night Of The Prog.

See www.iq-hq.co.uk.

KING CRIMSON

Fripp and co will be heading to London's Royal Albert Hall in June in celebration of their 50th anniversary. An Evening With King Crimson will take place at the prestigious venue on 18, 19 and 20. But that's not all: an in-depth documentary about the band, *Cosmike F*kc*, is also due out in 2019.

See www.dgmlive.com.



MARILLION

It's a very special year for the British five-piece who are busy prepping for their annual Marillion Weekends; 2019 is the 30th anniversary of Steve Hogarth joining Marillion and Steve Rothery's 40th year with the band. In honour, they'll be playing 13 UK shows with their "orchestral friends" from the string quartet In Praise Of Folly, plus Sam Morris on French horn and flutist Emma Halnan. In between touring, they're also working on new material for the studio follow-up to *FEAR*.

See www.marillion.com.

MICHAEL ROTHER

Neu!'s co-founder is releasing a box set that includes four of his early solo projects as well as unreleased material, soundtracks and remixes. *Solo* is due out on February 22 via Groenland. The krautrock hero is also lined up to perform at the Label Mates Festival in east London on January 25.

See www.michaelrother.de.

NEAL MORSE BAND

The American singer-songwriter has revisited John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* on *The Great Adventure* which is out via Radiant Records on January 25. The Neal Morse Band head out on tour in February with shows around North America and Europe, including a date at London's Islington Assembly Hall on March 24.

See www.nealmorse.com.



NIGHTKEEPER PRODUCTIONS

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Leader Of Men

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Available exclusively at Bandcamp

Other Gandalf's Fist releases by Nightkeeper Productions:



The Clockwork Fable

Cogtopolis, the city beneath the surface, no daylight has been seen by the inhabitants in living memory. The Sun: a whisper, a legend.

Features guest contributions from Blaze Bayley, Arjen Lucassen, Dave Oberlé as well as Mark Benton, Bill Fellows and many more...

3 CD, 8-panel DigiPak
24 page booklet



Road To Darkness

Road to Darkness is a sinister space-rock re-imagining of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Lyman Frank Baum, chronicling the tale of a young girl transported to the alien world of Io by an evil sorcerer. Freshly given the infamous "Reissue" re-record, remix and remaster treatment, this 2010 album fits in nicely with the latest Fist releases in terms of sound quality and musicianship.

4-panel DigiPak
12 page booklet



A Forest Of Fey

Named 3rd best prog album of 2014 by Classic Rock Magazine, it's the first release by the Fist as a four-piece and follows the psychedelic, folk-tinged journey of a young girl trapped in a malevolent woodland and features exciting guest contributions from Troy Donockley, John Mitchell, Dave Oberlé, Clive Nolan and Matt Stevens.

6-panel DigiPak
12 page booklet



The Lamplighter's Tale

All three "Lamplighter" songs from the 2016 triple-CD masterpiece "The Clockwork Fable", released on 180g heavy black vinyl. Mastered for vinyl by Sean Magee at Abbey Road Studios.

12" record,
180g heavy vinyl

...find these (and more) at gandalfsfist.bandcamp.com or at www.gandalfsfist.com

NICK MASON'S SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS

After their surprise formation in early 2018, the former Pink Floyd musician's early Floyd-inspired supergroup have been on a roll. They're touring North America in the spring before heading back to the UK with five dates in April, including two shows at London's Roundhouse in May.

See www.thesaucerfulofsecrets.com.



O.R.K.

The supergroup featuring vocalist Lorenzo Esposito Fornasari, King Crimson's Pat Mastelotto and Porcupine Tree's Colin Edwin return with their third album, *Ramagehead* via Kscope on Feb 22. It's inspired by uncertain times and written to reflect the unpredictability of their live shows. Catch O.R.k. on tour from February when they'll be supporting The Pineapple Thief in Europe. The band also have a series of their own headline shows lined up for the early part of 2019.

See www.orkband.com.



PAUL DRAPER

Mansun's former frontman is working with *Spooky Action* engineer and mixer Paul 'P-Dub' Walton on his second solo album. It's currently on track for a summer-autumn release. In the meantime, Mansun's *SIX* will be reissued via Kscope in March. The super deluxe package is still being put together but there are rumours it could contain a selection of B-sides and rarities. Draper is also busy planning a tour for later in the year which will include a full *SIX* set.

See www.pauldraperofficial.com.

STACIA BLAKE

Best known for her visual performances with Hawkwind in the early 1970s, Stacia Blake will return with her debut album in September. The spoken word recording will see her collaborate with a number of musicians but exactly who she's working with is currently shrouded in secrecy. Meanwhile, Blake is also writing her long-awaited autobiography.

See www.missstacia.bigcartel.com



STEVEN WILSON

Keep an eye out for the deluxe vinyl edition of *Home Invasion*, which is due out on March 22 via Caroline International. The five-vinyl box includes bonus tracks that were recorded during his Royal Albert Hall soundcheck as well as audio from the March 2018 shows. Meanwhile Steven Wilson's *To The Bone* tour continues into the new year and once he's back on home soil, he'll be heading into the studio to work on his next album. But that won't be out before 2020.

See www.stevenwilsonhq.com.

STEVE HACKETT

It's a big year for Hackett who's releasing *At The Edge Of Light* through InsideOut on January 25. A live DVD from the Genesis Revisited orchestral show at the Royal Festival Hall is also expected later in 2019. In November, Hackett will head back on the road to celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Spectral Mornings*.

See www.hackettsongs.com.

SUSANNA AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF OUR LADY

Norwegian singer-songwriter Susanna Wallumrød is exploring the work of medieval Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch on her new concept album *Garden Of Earthly Delights*, out on SusannaSonata on February 22. The score was originally commissioned for Vossa Jazz 2017 and was re-recorded at Norway's Ocean Sound Studio, where iamthemorning filmed their *Ocean Sounds* DVD.

See www.susannamagical.com.



TIM BOWNESS

No-Man's vocalist has teamed up with his former bandmate Steven Wilson on his fifth solo album. Tim Bowness describes the 11 track *Flowers At The Scene* as a "No-Man production" with Wilson at the mixing controls. It's out on March 1 via InsideOut and also includes contributions from Porcupine Tree's Colin Edwin, Dylan Howe, Peter Hammill and XTC's Andy Partridge, to name but a few. Once again, the cover artwork has been created by Jarrod Gosling (Regal Worm, Cobalt Chapel).

See www.timbowness.co.uk.

SWALLOW THE SUN

Those *Songs From The North* doomsters return with the sprawling *When A Shadow Is Forced Into The Light* on January 25 via Century Media. The upcoming eight-track is inspired by the death of guitarist Juha Raivio's partner, Aleah Starbridge. Finns Swallow The Sun will also head out on tour in 2019.

See www.swallowthesun.net

TOOL

If Maynard James Keenan's tweets are to be believed, the band's long-awaited new album could finally see light of day in 2019. Tool have already confirmed a string of European shows in June, including a slot at Download Festival in the UK so watch this space!

See www.toolband.com.

TREVOR HORN

Trevor Horn Reimagines The Eighties sees the spectacled popstar-turned-producer team up with The Sarm Orchestra, Steve Hogarth, Robbie Williams and Spandau Ballet's Tony Hadley to rework pop classics including *Owner Of A Lonely Heart* and *Everybody Wants To Rule The World*. Says Horn, "The best thing about making this album was all the fun and laughter that came from hanging out with musicians and artists that I haven't seen for years." It's out via BMG on January 25.

See www.trevorhorn.com.



STOP PRESS!

Look out for more new releases from: Bent Knee (pictured), Birks & Kroon, Chasing The Monsoon, Davy O'List, Frost*, Gong, Illuminae, Lonely Robot, The Mute Gods, Quantum Pig, Queensrÿche, Rosalie Cunningham, Sons Of Apollo, Nad Sylvan, UPF, Wheel and ZIO.

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Playing tracks from the new Dave
Foster Band album 'Nocebo'

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Playing tracks from his B612
album with a guest appearance
by JENNIFER ROTHERY

SYLF

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FAD GADGETS

Rhodri Marsden on three of the latest must-have gizmos currently putting the prog in progress...

BODYROCKS

If someone with a glazed look on their face ever asks you if you can “feel the music”, they’re not speaking literally.

BodyRocks, however, makes that a real possibility. “Let the music you’re hearing vibrate all over your body,” they urge us. How? By using adhesive tape to attach small wireless devices to our chest, limbs and goodness knows where else, and then assigning various frequencies in the

music to each device using an app. You’d like the bass drum to make your bicep twitch? No problem. Cymbals to massage your stomach? Done. How have we ever managed without them?

www.bodyrocksaudio.com

DNA ALBUM

Given that every cell in the human body holds genetic code that’s six billion letters long, it’s clear that nature is very good at squeezing information into a very small space. As a result, DNA is now being used as a storage medium; you could fit every movie ever made into a space the size of a sugar cube, all the information on the internet into a shoebox, and, more specifically, a million copies of the Massive Attack album *Mezzanine* in a spray paint can. Yes, it’s possible to encode an album in DNA, and spray it on a wall.

www.massiveattack.co.uk

DYNA MIC

Guitarists who wear a harmonica on a holder around their neck, rejoice! The distinctive sound of a hand-cupped blues harmonica, as demonstrated so beautifully by the Sonny Boy Williamsons of this world, has never been achievable by guitarists. The Dyna-Mic, a combined harmonica holder, microphone and

“gasket” (which simulates the cupped hands) is now available, thanks to a successful Kickstarter

campaign, and it promises to banish feedback-laden, weedy harmonica sounds to the dustbin of history.

www.dyna-mic.com



THE ART OF DECEPTION

There’s nothing like a tour to bring out the blaggers, says Rick.

By the time you read this, I’ll have just got back from my Piano Odyssey Tour. And there’s nothing like a tour to bring opportunists out of the woodwork. It’s amazing how many people you haven’t heard from for years suddenly claim to be your greatest friend. Most will get in touch by email, and the exchange usually goes something like this:

“Hi Rick, it’s been a long time since we last communicated but I know you’ve been really busy. As you may recall, we met backstage at the Hammersmith Odeon (as it was called then) in 1982. I was with the brother of one of your road crew who I lived next door to and you signed an album for me. Luckily Tim, your ex-roadie who I know doesn’t work for you anymore, still had your email address and so I thought I’d get back in touch. [At this point, I made a mental note to change my address at the earliest opportunity.] I notice that you’re playing a concert in [home town] on [date] and so if you could organise four complimentary tickets and aftershow passes that would be great. I look forward to catching up with you after the show. All best wishes, Ron.”

Usually what happens is that Ron gets a reply from my management as I have no recollection of him at all and no wish to meet him either. The office politely tells him that unfortunately there are no more complimentary tickets available as they have all been used up by family. However, Ron doesn’t give up that easily. He replies to say that he’s quite happy to sit anywhere or even

stand, and if we needed any help would be only too happy to offer his services.

Management are used to this kind of offer so politely decline his help and tell him that there are no seats available anywhere, nor any standing options.

But Ron tries one more attack. He sends a short but sweet message asking: “Could we meet for a coffee before the concert?”

Unfortunately, says management, that’s not an option as there are interviews and a sound check to do.

In desperation, Ron asks if there are any tickets anywhere on the tour that he can have. Sadly, this means that Ron hasn’t read

between the lines and now has to face reality. The final email from the office is blunter, and reads:

“Dear Ron, As we have explained many times now, there are no complimentary tickets available. These are always reserved for family and very close friends and you do not fit into either category anyway. The roadie Tim, who you refer to, only worked for Rick for three shows as he was useless. More importantly, Rick doesn’t remember you so I’m afraid we will not be entering into any further correspondence. Regards, United Stage Artists.”

Occasionally, I’ll get phone calls and they’re much easier to deal with. They usually open with: “Hi Rick! It must be a couple of years since we last spoke and...”

To which the standard reply is: “All the complimentary tickets have gone. Bye!”

If only everything in life was that simple!



MURMURMUR

Stop, hey, what's that sound? It's brand new psych from Down Under...

THIS LOT HAVE caught our ear very early on. A five-piece, in their 20s, with just one EP under their belt, unsigned and from Australia. So what's their name? Murmurmur? Eh? Say that again?

"It's a play on the word 'murmur,'" says frontman, guitarist and songwriter Will Fletcher on a very early morning call from his home in Melbourne. "I'd been doodling and had the word 'murmur' over and over on the top of a page so I took a section from that.

"Naming a band is a *nightmare*," he continues, "once I saw that, I knew I had it."

Things could have been a lot different. Fletcher grew up a heavy metal fan, inspired by Metallica, Judas Priest and Iron Maiden (you can see the NWOBHM/Kirk Hammett fringe in his haircut, to be frank) and liked the impact those names had. "They're outlandish, eye-catching and creative," he says. "People are drawn to that, it's interesting."

Words mean a lot to the 27-year-old. As chief songwriter for the one-year-old band, he's already putting personal experience into the four songs that feature on their new, self-titled EP. The sound you hear is colourful, complex psychedelia that veers from shoegazey haze (*Little Boy*) to bright, Beatlesy love songs, drenched in electronica (*Marmalade*).

"[Lead track] *Cable Car* is about the music business," he explains. "It's about depression and struggle as a musician... yeah, I've been there."

"The music business is hard," he elaborates, revealing how the band all met through music study in Melbourne and as session players for other outfits.

"We've all been playing nationally and internationally for a while, we know the industry pretty well."

With only five gigs to their name and while they find their feet, Fletcher has a day job ("in a really awful gourmet fancy supermarket for rich people"), also playing with local alt-pop trio City Calm Down when they tour. The band have a penchant for vintage analogue equipment — "high end amplification and guitars!" — so it's fortunate their rehearsal space costs absolutely zip, rehearsing in a bungalow in Fletcher's back garden.

And the band's current influences? "I've been into prog for a while," Fletcher says. "The musicianship is unbelievable. I'm a huge Radiohead fan and I love King Crimson. At the moment I'm listening to lots of Camel and Yes."

"Prog's a huge influence on us," he continues, "It's very exciting and theatrical, which is great."

With other Aussie bands such as Tame Impala opening doors for the continent's superb brand of sun-scorched psych, why does psychedelia still appeal?

"It's fun," says Fletcher. "It's upbeat, energetic and great to watch bands like King Gizzard play. It's what the world needs right now."

By the time this reaches the newsstands, murmurmur will have recorded another four songs and be looking to get playing beyond Oz. "We want nothing more than to tour, and get out of Australia."

"It's not for the money, although that would be nice," Fletcher laughs. "I'm doing this because I need to make music. I love it. I can't not do it." **JK**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

William Fletcher (vocals, guitar), **Alex Crosara** (guitar), **Fintan Bradley** (synths), **Jack Davies** (bass, vocals), **Luke Haaja** (drums)

SOUNDS LIKE

Colourful, sun-scorched guitar psych, companions to Pond and Temples

CURRENT RELEASE

murmurmur EP is out now via Inertia Music

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/murmurmurband



"Psychedelia is fun, upbeat and energetic. It's what the world needs right now."

murmurmur:
metal by name,
psych by nature...



TAN LAYDAW

SUPPER'S READY! HOW TO DINE IN 7/4 TIME

YOUR PROG CHEF: JUDY DYBLE

On the menu: Newborn Eat-ures
(Jude's mince pies)



“One of my earliest musical memories was of Auntie Ethel, a rather stout lady who would come over for Christmas tea and mince pies with the other two maiden aunts, Win and Lily. She'd play the piano and we'd all sing Christmas carols – one verse of each – with many a rolling chord and the sustain pedal pushed to the floor. The piano was always a bit out of tune after that.

“These mince pies are pretty simple to make (famous last words!), either using homemade pastry or ready-made.”

Ingredients (serves 4)

For pastry: 225g (8oz) self-raising flour, 110g (4oz) butter or vegetable fat, very cold water, a pinch of salt, jar of mincemeat, milk or egg to glaze, holly and tinsel to decorate.

Preparation

“Put the flour in a bowl with salt and fat, rub the fat into the flour, squishing it into the flour with the tips of your (newly-washed!) fingers until it looks like fine breadcrumbs.

Add the cold water a bit at a time and stir with a cold, flat blade knife until it all sticks together and leaves the bowl clean. If it's too sticky add more flour. Turn out onto a floured board and roll out thinly with a floured rolling pin. Using a pastry cutter, cut out a dozen rounds, and with a smaller cutter (I used a liqueur glass) a dozen smaller rounds. Place the large rounds in lightly greased tart tins and put a blob of mincemeat in each, placing smaller rounds on top and brushing with milk or a beaten egg. Place in the middle of a preheated oven at 200°C or gas mark 6 for about 20 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown.

Leave to cool and decorate with icing sugar and holly and/or tinsel – do not eat the holly and/or tinsel! Then change all your clothes because you'll be completely covered in flour and stuff.

I ate quite a few pies to test them – ahem! You can use any leftover pastry to make more mince pies or jam tarts.

My happiest Christmases were spent with my young family and husband, Simon. It's lovely to see the grandchildren get excited about it now – and also Jessie, my greyhound. She'll get a chicken treat that she loves on the day!” JK

MY PROG HERO Inspiring the wider music world...

Memory flash: superfan Jon Harvey [inset] and Eloy, as they were in 1976.



PRESS/ELOY ARCHIVE

MATTHEW GUIDO

JON HARVEY

The frontman of Canadian rock 'n' rollers Monster Truck had a musical *awakening* the first time he heard **Eloy**.

“My dad introduced me to Eloy's music. He has a humungous record collection and, as a kid, I was inundated with every style of music. He took an affinity to prog when I was in my mid to late teens and I got quite the education. Growing up in Canada, every radio station plays Rush the entire time – *Fly By Night* is a brilliant record, but there are other bands out there!

When I was young, I was all into Yes and King Crimson – just the normal poppy songs you hear on the radio – but I didn't get into most of the German prog until my early to mid 20s. I have tried to play their music, but you know how long I took with [Yes'] *Roundabout*?! I swear to God, it must have taken me about eight years to learn that bass line!

To me, Eloy are like a more complicated Pink Floyd. Their music has got more parts to it and it's a little more intense. They were a phenomenal band, probably one of Germany's best, and they really helped me discover that music doesn't always have to be straightforward.

Dawn is my favourite Eloy record. I just love it and I listen to it all the

time. The beginning basically starts with a symphony and within three minutes you're head-locked into a huge, heavy rock riff. They had a great balance on the record and I really enjoyed it. They produced most of it themselves as well. I think that really shows in their music and the way they paint a landscape with their songs.

I had kind of a prog band going before Monster Truck. We were called Who's Your Poet and we were into math rock. We had songs that had 20 riffs! The guitar player was a virtuoso and, for me to keep up on bass, I had to learn how to show off. It taught me how to jam with people and it taught me how to play.

When I'm not playing, I listen to thinking man's music. Porcupine

Tree were a good example of where prog is going musically now. I think Steven Wilson is really awesome. I really like Opeth as well. Prog is nice to play, but it's nicer to listen to.” NRS

True Rockers is out now via Mascot. See www.ilovemonstertruck.com for the latest tour dates.

“Eloy really helped me discover that music doesn't always have to be straightforward.”

PROG IN BRIEF

Caravan (right), Richard Thompson and Martin Barre are among the acts confirmed for the 40th anniversary of Cropredy. Fairport Convention's festival takes place between August 8-10, 2019. More acts are still to be announced.



Phil Collins releases remastered versions of *Serious Hits... Live!* and *A Hot Night In Paris* on February 1 via Atlantic/Rhino. The live albums are part of his ongoing reissues campaign and coincide with the next leg of his Not Dead Yet Live! tour.

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LOVE

DA CAPO

(ELEKTRA, 1966)

► In September 1966, Love went into RCA Studios on Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard to record the follow-up to their self-titled debut album. The LA group used the same engineer as the Rolling Stones, Dave Hassinger, but the record that emerged was light years away from mainstream contemporary rock. For *Da Capo*, lead singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Arthur Lee decided to sail uncharted territory. He confounded fans, record label Elektra and his own band in the process.

Lee expanded the line-up from five musicians to seven, bringing in Tjay Cantrelli on saxophone and Michael Stuart on drums. They sounded more like a small orchestra than a garage band. Lead guitarist Johnny Echols had played with Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis, while rhythm guitarist and songwriter Bryan MacLean had learnt everything he knew by association with The Byrds. It was a formidable crew.

Da Capo means 'from the head' and Lee was very much at the creative controls. *7 And 7 Is*, already out on 7-inch, was a ferocious shot across the bows. With its galloping pace, sustained drumming, harsh vocals and psychodramatic lyrics about Lee's childhood, it tore up the book on what a hit single could be. The title is never heard during the song and its controlled chaos ends in a gunshot slowed down to sound like an exploding bomb.

Stephanie Knows Who begins with similar urgency but softens into a jazzy free-for-all as guitars, sax and electric harpsichord all collide. Lee's aggression contradicts the dreamlike romanticism of *Orange Skies*, all Moody Blues-style flute and lyrics about carnivals and cotton candy. Another 'pretty' acoustic guitar-dominated song, *The Castle*, inspired by the band's communal residence, became the theme tune to a BBC travel show. Or perhaps it wasn't that far a stretch of the imagination from Laurel Canyon debauchery to British teatime TV. Side one's finale, *She Comes In Colors*, is an exquisite, delicate piece of psychedelia. Incidentally, given rough treatment by Malcolm Young's pre-AC/DC band, the UK Velvet Underground.

The most divisive aspect of *Da Capo* is *Revelation*, nearly 19 minutes long and taking up all of side two. The combination of electric harpsichord, John Lee Hooker-influenced blues jamming and a meandering melee of John Coltrane-style jazz honking inspired either devotion or derision. Only Bob Dylan and Frank Zappa had got away with similar. The imaginative intensity of *Da Capo* set in motion a seismic shift from the rock'n'roll framework, incorporating jazz, Latin, baroque, enigmatic lyrics and peculiar tempos. Most of Lee's crew jumped ship soon after. Other musicians were watching from the shore, however, ready to undertake their own voyages of musical discovery.

CLAUDIA ELLIOTT



ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Our far-out trip to far-flung prog



The improv men:
Amgala Temple.

AMGALA TEMPLE

Worship at the shape-shifting altar of Jaga Jazzist man **Lars Horntveth**'s free-jazz trio.

► To a trio from chilly Norway, an oasis town in the Western Sahara desert seems quite exotic. Exotic enough to name your band after it, and add a little more mystery with the inclusion of a sacred building. Say 'ahlan!' to Amgala Temple; the Arabian-perfumed jazz prog improv group made up of respected players Lars Horntveth (bass, winds, synths), Gard Nilssen (drums) and Amund Maarud (guitar).

Horntveth's brainchild, the band convened as a fun sideline to the members' regular stints with Jaga Jazzist, Susanne Sundfør, Bushman's Revenge, even a-ha.

"Me and Gard have played on a bunch of different things since 2008," Horntveth says. "We always talked about making a band together with a more open structure than usual. We just needed to find a guitarist."

After a try-out at the bassist's Oslo studios, Maarud was selected, his blues roots suiting the group's earthy, 60s tone. "We're inspired by the older wave of Norwegian jazz," says Horntveth, "Terje Rypdal and retro sounds, then Elephant9, of course."

After five live shows, the strength of this

collaboration has yielded enough material for a debut album, *Invisible Airships*, which they recently toured, alongside improvised sessions. And improv does seem a scary place.

"It depends who you're playing with," Horntveth laughs. "It's pretty risky and there's times I wanted to get the hell out of there. But when it's good it's can be *really* good. Luckily, when we started to play together we realised we had great chemistry."

To switch things up from the usual guitar-drums-bass combo, the trio bring *lots* more instruments into the mix. Horntveth, for example, is better known for his 25 years on winds in Jaga Jazzist. "What we all did in Jaga was learn new instruments as a challenge to ourselves," he says.

"I play sax and clarinet when the song needs that, but I also play what I can to make the song sound like I want it. In Amgala Temple, I'm on bass but

I go into electronics too.

"So we can be all-out Hendrix," he says, "or explore new things that surprise ourselves as well as the audience. Improv makes things exciting." JK

For more, visit the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/amgalatemple.



"When we started to play together we realised we had great chemistry."

PROG IN BRIEF

Keep an eye out for prog limited editions when **Record Store Day** returns to the UK on April 13. Hundreds of record shops are due to take part and 2019 sees the return of Sound Performance's Unsigned Competition. Visit http://bit.ly/Unsigned_Comp.



Karnataka have announced Anglo-Cypriot singer-songwriter Sertari (left) as their new lead vocalist and Maschine leader Luke Machin as their guest guitarist. Karnataka are currently working on new material with their revised line-up.

The string's the thing:
Jo Quail is a unique
force in music.

Limelight

SIMON KALLAS

JO QUAIL

Masterful cellist makes otherworldly, transformative avant-garde sounds...

IT MIGHT SEEM implausible that an avant-garde cellist could support bands like Boris, Myrkur and Mono, as well as play post-rock festivals like Dunk! and ArcTanGent, but that's exactly what Jo Quail has done. With new album *Exsolve*, she's cemented her reputation not only as a talented composer, but also as a master of her instrument, albeit an unconventional one, as she explains.

"I use a lot of extended techniques on the cello, for example col legno, where you use the wood of the bow to hit the strings and make a percussive sound," Quail says. "I do a lot of things very high; somebody called it, 'The arctic regions of the fingerboard,' full of rosin, you know?" Her use of an electric cello is crucial, as it allows for a greater breath of timbres and colours. "You can do [these techniques] on an acoustic cello as well... but if you start to add the most careful amount of overdrive, suddenly the sound will break, because it's not supposed to be on this instrument with all these harmonic overtones, so the result is fascinating."

Exsolve was inspired by a confluence of events. Firstly, an invitation to perform at a Barbara Hepworth exhibition near Bonn. Secondly, working with a master blacksmith to forge her cello stand. "I spent a lot of time at his forge," Quail recalls. "Now, I'm not interested in making a piece of music that sounds like someone's using an anvil, but what I am interested in is the manipulation of, in his case, the metal... becoming something new."

A recurring concept is that of divergent perception, and of the abstract music not only reflecting a different

form of creation, but also transformation – perhaps most keenly felt in the sprawling *Causleen's Wheel*. "I wanted to describe the effect of – if you and I were both looking either side of a sculpture, particularly something like a Barbara Hepworth. It would be the same sculpture. I would describe it to you [and vice versa], and we would say two completely different things, and yet we're looking at the same work."

Quail's writing process has been relatively stable across her albums. In order to maintain the ability to play the songs live, she composes with the aid of a looper to refine her ideas.

When it comes to recording, these ideas are used as scratch tracks to then record the 'real' versions of the loops and musical ideas. Crucially, however, the final tracks must be performable live.

"Obviously we do a lot of stuff in the studio, re-amping stuff using wizardry and dark arts to make things sound the way they do," Quail explains. "However, when I perform them live, they sound this way as well because I spend a hell of a lot of time with my BOSS GT-100 multi-effects, and I do very silly things to the signal chain." This feeds back into her extended technique: "That's how I create my percussion, and sometimes certain pieces will be built off a certain delay sound for example, because if you're a soloist and you're on your own, then delays are extremely handy, as are reverbs... that will give a real texture and depth to the sounds. If you were just playing the standard instrument, that wouldn't just be conveyed automatically, you'd probably want a string ensemble to do it." **AL**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Jo Quail (cello)

SOUNDS LIKE

Atmospheric, loop-based avant-garde music somewhere between post-metal and ambient

CURRENT RELEASE

Exsolve is out now and is self-released

WEBSITE

www.joquail.co.uk



"I use a lot of extended techniques on the cello, for example col legno, where you use the wood of the bow to hit the strings and make a percussive sound."



IN PRAISE OF THE HUMBLE CD

A Prog writer on the wonders of the compact disc.

Any prog fan knows you should never neglect something simply because it's fallen out of fashion. But that's what's happened to the humble CD, as its charms are challenged both by digital downloading and the continuing vinyl revival.

Should you care? After all, prog will always be associated with the golden age of vinyl and the gatefold sleeves it rode in on. What has the compact disc ever done for us?

In the first place, it made for a truer representation of each artist's musical vision. You don't think so? Still think vinyl sounds better, 'warmer', etc? That's odd, because the vast majority of musicians I spoke to 30 years ago welcomed their shiny, silvery, indestructible new overlords, because they felt they reproduced the sounds they made in the studio more faithfully.

Some advantages of the CD are blindingly obvious. Considering how often I hear prog musicians voice the wish that their albums be listened to "in one sitting", without interruption, often as a song cycle without gaps, would they really rather we got up and turned the record over every 20 minutes, and put up with dust, crappy styluses, scratches and jumps interrupting the immersive, intricately sculpted sounds they wanted us to hear?

Then there's the superior capacity, which, for a form of music built on extended expression, breaking the rules of the three-minute pop song and the 40-minute album, has to be a major advantage, right? And would there even be such a thing as the 'deluxe' reissue of your favourite albums if it wasn't for the advent of the CD and audio DVD? Steven Wilson might as well not bother with his regular 5.1 surround sound remixes of the classics.

Besides, a slightly awkward truth disregarded by vinyl loyalists is that a lot of younger rock fans now buy 'vinyls' but don't play them – when they want to actually listen they'll choose the digital version or CD, for practical, portable and quite probably audible reasons. The gatefold LP's place in their lives is somewhere between shelf decoration, memorabilia and coffee table book.

By all means let the vinyl revival continue apace. If it's another way of keeping the music industry alive, I'm all for it. But don't sneer if I'm just as fond of gazing through my racks of CDs as I am flicking through my LP shelves. And when it comes to actually putting the music on to listen to at home, there's no contest. Without sounding, well, like a stuck record, few of your favourite musicians would have it any other way.

JOHNNY SHARP

Got an opinion on the matter that you'd like to share? Please email us at: prog@futurenet.com. Opinions expressed in this column aren't necessarily those of the magazine.



HAVE A CIGAR

Saluting the scene's supporting crew



The change makers. L-R: Kevin O'Neil, Douglas Chapman MP, Brian Neeson.

PROG IN THE PARK

Brian Neeson and Kevin O'Neil are hoping to put a historical Scottish town on the prog map.

Dunfermline is just a half an hour train ride north of Edinburgh. The town is Ian Anderson's birthplace and was once Scotland's royal burgh, but its proximity to the more famous capital means it's often ignored by touring bands. Two local prog fans want to change that with a charity all-dayer at Pittencrieff Park's Glen Pavilion on April 6.

"We both love prog and there are other people in this area that love the genre as well," says Prog In The Park's co-promoter Kevin O'Neil, who was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer several years ago. "There are some really good venues for gigs, however, bands who could get maybe 500-1000 people bypass them. We just wanted to get out there and say, 'This can be done and we can attract bands to the area.'"

Helping O'Neil in this mammoth task is fellow progger Brian Neeson, who runs Chris Squire's Scottish Yes Network and was heavily involved in the 2018 Yes fan conventions in London and Philadelphia.

"Kevin and I have been friends on Facebook and Twitter for quite a while and the idea [for the event] came from both of us," says Neeson. "We

wanted to book tribute bands [for the first one] to raise interest. I knew the people from [Marillion tribute band] StillMarillion, Kevin knew the guys from [Genesis tribute acts] Afterglow, and then he suggested that we introduce a charity element given his medical history."

The inaugural Prog In The Park will feature both tribute bands alongside local instrumental act Altres, The Alan Reed Band and Twelfth Night frontman Mark Spencer. Proceeds will be split between Maggie's Centre and Sarcoma UK, two charities that directly supported O'Neil during his cancer diagnosis and treatment. There will also be an exhibition of Charlie Roy's prog portraits, and a charity auction – prizes include some treats from Marillion and artist Mark Wilkinson. Tickets are selling well and the pair hope Prog In The Park will become an annual event.

Says Neeson, "If it's successful, we'll open it up to a wider range of original music."

Maybe Dunfermline will end up on the prog map sooner than expected. NRS

Tickets are available from <http://bit.ly/ProginthePark>.



"We just wanted to get out there and say, 'This can be done.'"

PROG IN BRIEF

Eluviete off-shoot **Cellar Darling** release their as yet untitled concept album this spring via Nuclear Blast. It'll be accompanied by a series of animated videos. The band will also tour the UK in March with Blanket and Appearance Of Nothing.



That Joe Payne (left) will headline three UK shows this spring. The dates are: Hoxton Underbelly (March 16), Bristol's Exchange (31) and The Robin 2 in Bilston on April 14. He'll also play at the Marillion Weekend in Port Zelande on March 21.

I Am The Manic Whale release *New Forms Of Life* on February 1. The live album contains material recorded at their *Gathering The Waters* launch show in May 2018. A live DVD will follow later in the year. Their next show is in Southampton on January 20.

Post-rockers **A Swarm Of The Sun** release *The Woods* on January 11. The Swedish duo's fourth album contains three haunting 13-minute pieces mixed by their long-term collaborator and Crippled Black Phoenix producer Karl Daniel Lidén.

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US, THEM & YOU

What got us all
grooving this month...

Official Progressive Albums Chart

The prog top 30 albums

November 2018

Compiled by  Official
Charts Company

- 1 **MUSE** *Simulation Theory* (HELIUM 3/WARNER BROS)
- 2 **JEAN-MICHEL JARRE** *Equinoxe Infinity* (RCA)
- 3 **RICK WAKEMAN** *Piano Odyssey* (SONY CLASSICAL)
- 4 **MARILLION** *Clutching At Straws* (PARLOPHONE)
- 5 **RUSH** *Hemispheres* (UMC/VIRGIN)
- 6 **JETHRO TULL** *This Was* (RHINO)
- 7 **BE BOP DELUXE** *Sunburst Finish* (CHERRY RED/ESOTERIC)
- 8 **JEAN-MICHEL JARRE** *Planet Jarre* (SONY MUSIC CG)
- 9 **SPIRITUALIZED** *And Nothing Hurt* (BELLA UNION)
- 10 **MATT BERRY** *Television Themes* (ACID JAZZ)
- 11 **A PERFECT CIRCLE** *Eat The Elephant* (BMG)
- 12 **ROINE STOLT'S THE FLOWER KING** *Manifesto Of An Alchemist* (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 13 **COHEED & CAMBRIA** *The Unheavenly Creatures* (ROADRUNNER)
- 14 **WARDRUNA** *Skald* (BY NORSE MUSIC)
- 15 **MOODY BLUES** *In Search Of The Lost Chord* (UMC)
- 16 **TANGENT** *Proxy* (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 17 **HAKEN** *Vector* (INSIDE OUT)
- 18 **RUSH** *A Farewell To Kings* (UMC/VIRGIN)
- 19 **HAWKLORDS** *Brave New World* (HAWKLORDS)
- 20 **URIAH HEEP** *Living The Dream* (FRONTIERS)
- 21 **HAWKWIND** *Road To Utopia* (CHERRY RED)
- 22 **MOGWAI** *Kin OST* (ROCK ACTION)
- 23 **ROGER WATERS** *Is This The Life We Really Want* (COLUMBIA)
- 24 **RIVERSIDE** *Wasteland* (INSIDE OUT)
- 25 **LUNA ROSSA** *Atropa* (FIREFLY MUSIC)
- 26 **MASTODON** *Emperor Of Sand* (REPRISE)
- 27 **POLYPHIA** *New Levels New Devils* (RUDE RECORDS)
- 28 **PINEAPPLE THIEF** *Dissolution* (KSCOPE)
- 29 **BLACK PEAKS** *All That Divides* (RISE RECORDS)
- 30 **MOODY BLUES** *Days Of Future Passed* (DECCA)

Find out more at www.officialcharts.com

WIN! KING CRIMSON 1969-1972 BOX SET!



King Crimson 1969-1972 is a 6LP 200 gram vinyl limited edition boxed set featuring the band's studio albums from that period - *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, *In The Wake Of Poseidon*, *Lizard*, *Islands* - as mixed by Steven Wilson and Robert Fripp for the 40th anniversary series, on vinyl for the first time.

A 2LP set of rarities is also included, many mixed by Wilson, and presented in the sleeve art that was originally used for *The Young Person's Guide To King Crimson* and a replica of the booklet that accompanied that compilation. We have one set to give away, and the winner will also receive copies of *Meltdown: Live In Mexico* and *Uncertain Times*.

Meltdown: Live In Mexico is a 3CD/1Blu-Ray set featuring over three and a half hours of material performed during King Crimson's five night residency at Teatro Metropolitan, Mexico City in 2017 plus audio extras.

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For your chance to win, visit www.bit.ly/CrimsonComp and answer this question:

What month did King Crimson play in Mexico in 2017?

- A) July
- B) August
- C) September

See www.dgmlive.com for more information.

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Now our turn...

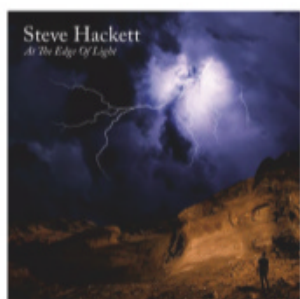
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At The Edge Of Light
INSIDEOUT

The Lone Office Lady
Hannah May Kilroy



KIKAGAKU MOYO

Masana Temples
GURUGURU BRAIN

The Musician
Steve Hackett



KING CRIMSON

**Lizard - 40th Anniversary
Edition**
DISCIPLINE

The Writer
Rich Wilson



PINK FLOYD

The Final Cut
EMI

The Reader
Mike Whitfield



ALL TRAPS ON EARTH

A Drop Of Light
BTF

ATLAS : EMPIRE

Glaswegian proggers accept no restrictions with their captivating debut.

THERE IS A scant line that exists between freedom and gluttony, and for some prog bands, it's a fatal flaw. Having the freedom to do anything, after all, is very different from doing *everything*. Glasgow's Atlas : Empire fall on the right side of this line.

"The idea behind the name is really just about doing whatever we feel as musicians," says vocalist/guitarist Steven Gillies. "That might sound pretentious, but I feel it's the opposite. I've always used the progressive tag because it doesn't pigeonhole us. There are no limitations."

Gillies caught the bug, like many, in his teens. "The first [progressive] band that I heard that connected with me was Soundgarden," he tells *Prog*. "A lot of people don't think of them as progressive, but I would argue that point. They were a band from the grunge scene that used loads of alternative tunings and weird time signatures, so that kind of blew my mind at the time. Especially learning guitar and going, 'So this is not 4/4!'"

From there flowed Oceansize, A Perfect Circle, Tool, Glassjaw, At The Drive-In, And So I Watch You From Afar — all of whom have fed into Atlas' white-hot sound. The effect was liberating to say the least.

"I find it dull as a form, if bands don't mix it up," says Gillies. "There are only so many times I can listen to bands sound like Explosions In The Sky. [For me], it's the freedom aspect. You know, two albums from now we could be super heavy, we could be chilled out,

we could be instrumental, acoustic, completely electronic. I like the fact that there are no restrictions."

Atlas' debut is *The Stratosphere Beneath Our Feet* is a mixture of all of the above. It is a shapeshifting sand demon of an album that runs the gamut from post-hardcore to prog metal to post-rock and into the new stream of modern British 'rock prog,' encapsulated by the likes of Black Peaks and Arcane Roots. At its heart is the concept that our sleepwalking state of online self-indulgence and increasing ignorance of genuine interpersonal connection can be taken to a logical yet frightening conclusion: societal collapse.

"As much as technological advances are great and connect people in a lot of ways, being completely reliant on it..." says Gillies, pausing. "What happens if it stops? What happens if it goes away? I think it is really dangerous."

The post-truth era, political extremes, the loneliness epidemic: Facebook has become Death, the destroyer of worlds. Still, at least, come the end, we'll be clutching our charred copy of *The Stratosphere Beneath Our Feet*.

"Yes, that can be the soundtrack to this digital apocalypse," agrees Gillies. "But hopefully not. The second album is going to be us apologising. That everybody got off their social media feeds and we're all good — it was all a false alarm!"

It's up to you then, prog community. Save the world. There are no limitations here, after all... **MP**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Steven Gillies (vocals, guitar), **Jamie Sturt** (vocals, guitar, keys, electronics), **Robert Hasebe** (bass)

SOUNDS LIKE

Black Peaks channeling The Mars Volta's caustic burn

CURRENT RELEASE

The Stratosphere Beneath Our Feet is out now and is self-released

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/atlasempire



"I've always used the progressive tag because it doesn't pigeonhole us. There are no limitations."

Atlas : Empire, L-R: Robert Hasebe, Jamie Sturt, Steven Gillies.



ABRAHAM MUSIC PROJECT

Mysterious musician marries AOR and prog in fine fashion, and with special guests.

PROGRESSIVE ROCK HAS always savoured the enigma, and Abraham fits squarely into such a category. Including his surname and age, very little is known of the California-based singer, songwriter, multi-musician and arranger, though there's no doubting the quality or appeal of his debut album, recently self-released under the handle of the Abraham Music Project.

Abraham's mother fuelled his lifelong love affair with music by showing him a photograph of The Beatles as they arrived for the first time in America, and at the age of 11 his sister taught him to play *Michael Row The Boat Ashore* on the guitar. Teenage worship of Pink Floyd, The Beatles and Jethro Tull led Abraham towards his current status via membership of the groups Blind Owl and Answer.

"As far as prog goes, my mind was totally blown by *Tales From Topographic Oceans*," Abraham reveals. "That album became such a huge influence on me."

Abraham not only voices the words and plays just about all of the instrumental parts on AMP's debut album, *First The Honesty, Then The Promise*, but he also wrote the orchestrations and handled its production. However, musicians of the calibre of Supertramp guitarist Carl Verheyen, Wings' Laurence Juber and Walfredo Reyes Jr of Santana fame are among those called upon to fill in the gaps.

"When I played the album's second track *Mr Mastermind* to Carl he replied, 'Cool song, all it needs is me,'" Abraham laughs of how he managed to entice Verheyen on board.

The Abraham Music Project's strain of prog is, at its core, deeply melodic. However, being conceptually based, the album begins in sugar sweet fashion before taking on a heavier style as its main character, known as Horizon, undergoes a spiritual evolution that leads him towards 16 minutes of pure prog nirvana with *The Glory Be Suite*.

"I hope that people won't simply listen to my music: I'd like them to experience it," he says. "I love to tell stories."

Aside from the artist's own name and the reference to *Michael Row The Boat Ashore*, the album is peppered with Biblical references, from Noah's Ark in *Two By Two* to *Resist The Devil* and of course *The Glory Be Suite*, and yet Abraham firmly denies the suggestion of any religious undercurrent to his music.

"I don't consider myself religious, and I struggle with that term," he baulks. "I consider myself very spiritual and I have studied the Bible, but I grew up in a Jewish family. None of my songs have an agenda: each was written because it was what I was thinking at the time."

AMP are yet to perform live but Abraham hopes that despite their fluid nature he might someday find a way to make it happen. Certainly, there are big plans for the future.

"I have enough music for around four albums," Abraham reveals. "One of those, to be titled *Making Progress*, will pursue more of traditional progressive rock sound in the vein of *The Glory Be Suite*."

Bring it on! **DML**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Abraham (guitar, vocals, keyboards, drums, bass, piano, virtual instruments, orchestrations)

SOUNDS LIKE

A colourful, tuneful mix of prog, AOR, orchestral and hard rock stylings

CURRENT RELEASE

First The Honesty, Then The Promise is out now via Sunlight Digital

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/abrahammusicproject

"My mind was totally blown by *Tales From Topographic Oceans*. That album became such a huge influence on me."

Mr Mastermind: Abraham, the man behind the music.

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DANNY KELLY

The former *Q* and *NME* editor turned *Football365* skipper and now talkSPORT staple plays keepie-uppie with myriad prog music styles, some loved at first sight, some he couldn't stand. Time, however, is the great revelator...

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** Ben Meadows

“As a teenager I was extraordinarily lucky. I was brought up in Islington so I was within walking distance of venues like the Rainbow and the Hope & Anchor or we could get the bus to the Marquee... from the age of 13 I was always at gigs. The first time I came across music that was a bit alternative was when I went to see Chris Spedding's band, Sharks, at an all-dayer at Camden Roundhouse. I was a meek teenager amid these funky folk, and then **Principal Edwards Magic Theatre** came on. I was a black music and blues rock nut, so rock music came at me from funny angles. I thought, 'This is different!' I had a Friday and Saturday job but I was always castigated by my mother for spending my wages on records. We had a new council house with a special cupboard at the front for the dustbins. I'd come home, put my records in with the bins, then when my mother went to work in the evening, bring them into the house. She must have noticed the collection growing. Prog would pop up at school, where the battle of the Sixth Form turntable would commence. I went to a very nice Catholic grammar school for working-class lads in Highgate. I liked **Emerson, Lake & Palmer** first and foremost. The stranger stuff of theirs I'd heard from a Friday night BBC radio show called *The Sequence*. It just played songs back-to-back. You had to find out from other people at school, or their older brothers, what the songs were and it would set you off on this great voyage of discovery.

My favourite ELP record is *Pictures At An Exhibition*. It's the most prog thing of all time – 45 minutes of banging away at a classical piece. I love the titles and have had fun with the them, especially when Chelsea started signing players whose names were very similar. I worked backwards, not knowing about **The Nice**, then I heard them. In their own mad way they're even more prog. Their version of *America* is astonishing.

ELP were also a source of great pain. Like all young men back then, I thought prog was a way to girls' hearts. This was a huge mistake. I took my girlfriend at the time to see them at Wembley Empire Pool – *that* tour with the revolving drum

kit. They played for two and half hours and it was *stupendous* – for me. Sylvana said, 'Can we go now, they've done two encores, they won't play any more.' So we left. At my Saturday job the next day my colleague Julie says, 'Weren't they fantastic? What about *Pictures*?' What?! They did the whole of *Pictures* after we'd gone. I've never seen them do it! There's my prog rock regret number one.

I pretended all my young life to hate classical music and jazz. I was afraid of the sheer volume of it, I had so much to listen to already. Prog rock regret number two is not getting into these sooner. I was friends with Richard Cook, Britain's greatest ever jazz writer. He got me writing for *NME*. I would sit in his house and he would play me Albert Ayler and Anthony Braxton, things I'm now paying £100 for obscurities, I don't care if there's no Christmas dinner. Prog helped me grow those ears to get into jazz and classical. But I didn't get into **Yes** at that point either, I could only hear the difficult guitar playing. Now I can hear what a brilliant harmony-based band they are; I really like *Time And A Word*.

Quite a few years after it was released, I heard **King Crimson's** *In The Court Of The Crimson King*. With due respect to The Clash and the Stone Roses, it might be the greatest British debut album. With due respect to everyone else it might be the greatest debut album ever made. It virtually invents prog rock and also – sorry, Black Sabbath – invents heavy metal in an afternoon, which they reinvent a few years later with *Red*. I used to write the lyrics to *Epitaph* in my exercise books at school. My history teacher, Mr Smith, asked, 'What's that?' He was fantastic; he couldn't have been more square, but a more inquisitive man you couldn't meet, and he insisted I brought the record in so he could look at it.

I've been on a weird journey with Crimson because I find them stumbly. I don't like *In The Wake Of Poseidon*, too many discords. Then I come back to them for *Starless And Bible Black*. I love *Nightwatch*. I wish they'd done that at the extraordinary Palladium show recently. *Court...* is in my top 10 records ever made, how nice for it to nestle next the The Congos' *Heart Of The Congos* and *Ascension* by John Coltrane. I never tire of hearing it.

Prog allowed me to loosen my musical corsets a bit; music didn't have to be bass and drums and guitar, and it didn't have to be Otis Redding. It took me to lovely places – and you shouldn't underestimate what Richard Branson did. He made his money with **Mike Oldfield**, yes, but what fantastic records *Tubular Bells*, *Ommadawn* and *Hergest Ridge* are. He also put out **Fred Frith** records, and I remember buying *Guitar Solos* and hating it! Now I clutch it to my bosom, I'm glad I never got rid of it. The other place he took me to was **Gong**, where prog, psychedelia and the European Kunst movement all come together. I love *Camembert Electrique*. Prog rock regret number three: I just moved to Ireland and something had to get broken in transit. What was it? My *Camembert Electrique* cheese plate! I've still got the teapot, though.

Without prog I wouldn't have listened to **Back Door's** *Back Door*. A bass, a sax and whatever else they've got. It's a mad record, powered by its own desire to be different and not make money. That makes me love these records.

I fell sideways into the Canterbury scene. Soft Machine, Caravan, that's all fine, but **Robert Wyatt's** *Rock Bottom* is one of the finest records ever made, and it's got Nick Mason producing. This record opened doors for me; the South African trumpeter and the drone on side two, I would never have allowed myself to listen to something as atonal as that until that record came along.

When everyone's finished banging on about Genesis and *Foxtrot* – always a bit too clever for me – there's **Hawkwind's** *In Search Of Space* is a classic, with a sleeve that could only come out of the 70s, a boom-time for album covers. That line of British bands playing what they imagine to be playing German music – Hawkwind, Spacemen 3, Spiritualized, Toy – I love all of those. Loop were as exciting to me as the Sex Pistols. It's boys and girls with their foot to the floor, pushing the extremes of prog. I wonder if, when My Bloody Valentine come onstage and they're using that flute sound [on *Loveless*], would they be doing that without The Moody Blues?"

Hear Danny Thursdays and Mondays at 7pm and Sundays at 9pm (for Trans-Europe Express) at www.talksport.com and find him on Twitter @dannykellywords.



"In The Court Of The Crimson King... might be the greatest debut album ever made."



Danny Kelly with
“the greatest debut
album ever made”.



WILLIAM SHATNER

Captain Kirk flies again – but this time it's to a soundtrack of his most-loved Christmas songs, on a cosmic, partly prog-fuelled sleigh. Here comes *Shatner Claus*...

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** Elizabeth Shatner

After 50 years as a recording artist and revealing his prog chops in 2013 with the Billy Sherwood-helmed *Ponder The Mystery*, *Star Trek* icon and actor-singer-animal rights activist William Shatner is back. This time he's donning the red suit of another great captain of the sky, Santa Claus, for his very first Christmas record, *Shatner Claus*. An anarchic mix that features guest appearances from Iggy Pop, Billy Gibbons and his old mucker Henry Rollins, it notches up a healthy prog quota with Ian Anderson, Rick Wakeman and Mel Collins also contributing to the 13-song collection. But amid a spruce-up of classic Christmas songs is one original composition, the poignant *One For You, One For Me*, written for the project by veteran soldier Blade Anthony.

***Shatner Claus* might just be one of the greatest album titles ever conceived.**

Why, thank you! It was an idea that was thrown in the air and I caught it.

You must really love Christmas if you've recorded a Christmas record...

Christmas is a joyful holiday. Where I come from in Canada it's usually white, so my memories are of crackling snow, carolling, bright stars, pine trees. As a young man, I would spend Christmas in the mountains, skiing. And that's what I'd do with my family until the children got older and the snow was limiting in the enjoyment of it, then we began to go to the tropics.

What's your favourite Christmas music?

I love the sound of horses with jingle bells on. That's what would be pulling Shatner's sleigh.

You've got some old friends on the album and a mix of rock, prog and punk guests. Who could refuse this opportunity with you?

We had a wish list and the record company sent out invites to the individual artists. In many cases they got back very enthusiastically. That's the magical part; they all wanted to contribute.

A yearly staple of the Prog office is the Jethro Tull Christmas album. It's lovely to hear Ian Anderson contribute flute to *Silver Bells*.

I'm a fan and his playing on the track is what we heard in our minds' eye imagination. He blew me away – he literally *blew* me away.

And Mel Collins from King Crimson is on *Twas The Night Before Christmas*...

He was suggested and we talked. The people I'm working with here are elegant people and when I'm making an album, I'm trying to make it unique enough so these wonderful musicians take a break out of making their own glorious music and come downtown [laughs] and see me to have a little fun.

Then there's Rick Wakeman on a grandiose *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. Why is prog so suited to Christmas music?

I've worked with Rick a few times. His arrangements are beautiful. Prog has an energy about it that attracts your eye and ear.

What's the high point of the record for you?

With every one of those numbers, I pondered the mystery [small laugh]. But I had a wonderful veteran – a former soldier, Blade Anthony, who was a poet – write a Christmas song for me and it's one of the major elements in the album, a song called *One For You, One For Me*. He was unable to write something with delight in it. Suffering battle fatigue, he wrote of asking what it's like back home because '*Over here there's nothing but fear*'. We set that to music, and it's epic. I told the poet that I would do my best with it, then I told all the musicians what I thought it should sound like – the pain and the anguish and the longing that soldiers must feel away from home for a holiday that was part of their childhood. I think the arrangement, delivery and music reflects that. I wanted to honour our soldiers with that poem.

Thinking about the *Star Wars Holiday Special*, was a *Star Trek* Christmas Special ever mooted?

Not as far as I recall... but it would have been fun to meet Santa Claus arcing over the galaxy, wouldn't it? Sadly, I don't think *Star Trek*'s producer was that playful.

What Christmas gift would Kirk have got for Spock?

[Laughs loudly, and not unlike Santa] That's a great question! I think he would have given him a Tribble. He would have done that just because it would have *annoyed* him.

And Spock for Kirk?

A new telescope. Something practical, thoughtful. Either that or a dog [laughs].

There's a missed commercial opportunity: Spocking fillers.

I think you're right! This idea is very cute.

You're now the very young age of 87, can that be correct?

I can hardly imagine that!

You seem to be the very essence of live long and prosper.

What's your secret?

Well, I've certainly fulfilled part of that, haven't I? What's the secret, hmmm... the secret is, first of all, genetic. [Thinks hard] It's something about the endings of your DNA... the telomeres! They keep reproducing cells and when they stop doing that, you age. So I had a good talk with my telomeres.

That's so scientific. We didn't expect an answer so... real.

The other part is to do a Christmas album [laughs].

Do you believe in Father Christmas?

I believe in the wonder and magic of Christmas, I certainly do. It reminds us idyllically what a man can, and should, be.

Shatner Claus is out now via Cleopatra Records.

See www.williamshatner.com for more information.





The Charge Of The Light Brigade

There are no January blues for **Steve Hackett**: he's about to drop his 26th album, and later on this year will head out on the road as Genesis Revisited, and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his solo album, *Spectral Mornings*. The prolific guitarist talks Brexit, the joys of contrast and communication, and just why he thinks Genesis' music is still so alive...

Words: Dom Lawson **New Portraits:** Carsten Windhorst

We can't prove it, but we're roughly 86% sure that someone has popped a couple of massive Duracell batteries into Steve Hackett's back. Perhaps due to the Genesis legend's affable and unassuming demeanour, the insane levels of activity that the 68-year-old has been putting in over the last decade (and many years before that) are seldom remarked upon with the intensity they deserve. Seemingly on the road more often than not but prolific in the studio too, he has slowly but stubbornly re-established himself as one of the prog world's most vital forces. Whether playing classic Genesis material or his own successful recent solo material (2017's *The Night Siren* was a Top 30 hit in the UK album charts), Hackett is riding a unique wave of accomplishment and creativity that has been a joy to witness.

A new year brings the release of Steve Hackett's 26th solo album, *At The Edge Of Light*. As with most of his recent records, it's a bewildering but endlessly fascinating tour-de-force of progressive ideas, spiningetling melodies and bravura musicianship,

delivered by a list of rock, prog and world music luminaries, with Hackett sharing the spotlight with typical humility. Almost certain to emulate *The Night Siren*'s unexpected chart success, it's an album that Hackett seems to feel he has plucked from the ether, as inspiration arrived from all directions.

"Well, the album came out of conversations and it's influenced by *everything*," he notes. "Each time I sit down and think about making a new album, it's a daunting task. I think, 'So people *really* liked the last one... oh dear!' But it all starts with a doodle, a bit of an idea, something that's unformed. If you can hang on to the spirit that informs any one particular song and not get hidebound with the *form* of it, not get too involved with the construction, that's the key. Of course you've got to play the right notes and bring all the nuts and bolts together that the machine requires, but beyond that you've got to be thinking, 'What's the *idea* of this one, in the end? What's this song about?'"





"I'm cautiously
optimistic about
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Steve Hackett, shot
exclusively for *Prog*
in December 2018,
holding his faithful
1957 Gibson Les Paul.

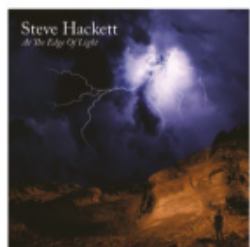
The most obvious result of this approach to composition is that *At The Edge Of Light* sounds unlike anything else happening in music right now. At times mischievously esoteric, with sounds ranging from the expected wall of guitars to sitar, cimbalom and (as Hackett notes with a chuckle) “drums put through a Marshall cabinet”, the album boasts many changes of mood, but the overriding feel is one of wide-eyed joy at music’s kaleidoscopic potential.

“There’s no reverential thinking here. Everything is grist for the mill,” Hackett says. “So many things appear in cameo, to be replaced by something else. There’s a tight turnover of events and that’s exciting. Whether it’s film music, classical, big band stuff or jazz, I feel that when I make an album I’ve got to honour all those gods, those influences, and I’ve got to go with those things that moved people to play in the first place. That’s the legacy of having worked with Genesis. If you can make all those things happily co-exist within the same album, why not? It’s a case of, ‘Dare I put this in? Will I get away with it?’”



2017's *The Night Siren*.

At The Edge Of Light.
Reviewed on page 103!



song like *Hungry Years*. I want to be controversial and say that it owes as much to Peter, Paul & Mary as it does to Clannad or The Beatles. There’s nothing remotely progressive about it whatsoever, but that’s the whole point: to not be afraid of contrasts. Not everything has to be an impenetrable equation. Contrasts are the best that the prog stuff has to offer.”

From the folksy gloom and soaring leads of *Beasts Of Our Time* and the blues-tinged clangour of *Underground Railroad* to its dazzling three-part finale, *Descent/Conflict/Peace*, *At The Edge Of Light* covers so much musical ground that, in less capable hands, it could’ve been a complete mess. Instead, it borders on a connoisseur’s guide to prog, both ancient and modern, replete with one song — *Under The Eye Of The Sun* — that boasts glorious vocal harmonies straight out of the Yes handbook.

“Yeah that’s funny because when those harmonies kick in, it’s really just one bloke and one girl,” Hackett grins. “It’s me and Amanda [Lehmann]. One

“Chris Squire asked me to join Yes when we were working together. I was extremely flattered for about five minutes, thinking that I could have ‘Guitarist for Genesis and Yes!’ on my CV.”

And does he think he will?

“Well I think there’s something for everyone on this one. If you’re familiar with what we’ve been doing, there’ll always be things that are typically progressive and there will be something like a simple, 60s-style pop

Yes man? Hackett
and Chris Squire.



MAURIZIO & ANGELA VICEDOMINI

reviewer said that it sounded like Crosby, Stills & Nash... not to mention Young! [Laughs] But it’s funny, because Jon Anderson has that androgynous quality to his voice, so there are times when there’s that whole other octave that I want to reach, and I think if you track up the vocals thickly enough it does end up sounding a little Yes-like.

“You know, Chris Squire asked me to join Yes when we were working together,” he says. “I was extremely flattered for about five minutes, thinking that I could have ‘Guitarist for Genesis and Yes!’ on my CV, but in the end I felt that Yes were very well served by a whole legion of great guitarists, most of whom I’ve worked with at some point! So that was a great compliment from Chris. But there’s an aspect of what I do where I think, ‘Well, if I *had* been working with Chris, that’s just the sort of song I might’ve presented to him!’ In all our thoughts, those of us who have been influenced by the great Chris Squire and his mega bass playing, it’s hard to pick up a Rickenbacker and not think of the wonderful things that he did with it. So in spirit, I’m *always* talking to Chris.”

One specific example of Chris Squire’s now-distant but essential influence on Hackett’s musical life is that the much-missed legend cannily foresaw his fellow musician’s large-scale orchestral endeavours. According to Hackett, Squire once pointed out that he was the only guitarist he knew with a sufficiently robust ego that genuinely enjoyed the idea of being surrounded by so many musicians.

“I might be doing a disservice to a few people here, but that’s truthfully what he said. I said, ‘Yeah, I don’t feel threatened by it. We’re all string players. We’re all musicians first of all and we all make a noise for a living and that’s what binds us.’ It’s safety in numbers and a case of ‘Why the hell not?’ I know Chris loved choral stuff and I have those aspects on this album, too. The solo singing, harmony singing, choral, gospel, improvised, fixed lines, it’s all there. They’re all different approaches and all designed to throw you off the scent, so if you say, ‘Well I don’t like *that* particular thing...’ well, here’s another one!”

Perhaps more so even than its much-hailed predecessors, *At The Edge Of Light* is an album that celebrates creative cooperation. A quick glance down the album’s roll call reveals contributions from Nick D’Virgilio (Big Big Train/ex-Spock’s Beard), Jonas Reingold (Flower Kings/Karmakanic), Simon Phillips (The Who/Toto), Pink Floyd vocalists Durga and Lorelei McBroom, sitar guru Sheema Mukherjee, saxophonist Rob Townsend and, of course, Hackett’s brother John, a mainstay of his live and studio work for decades. With several other eclectic protagonists thrown into the mix, it’s very much an album of ensemble and individual performances, all tastefully glued together with Hackett’s low-key charisma, elegant vocals and scorching leads. A heroic team effort, if you will.

“Oh yes, it’s all about the team and about everyone,” says Hackett. “I don’t take every solo. Whether I should take more or fewer solos, it all depends. If you’re coming from a heavy metal angle, you’d probably say there was a dearth of guitar solos on the album. Coming from the point of view from a pop songwriter, you’d say there was far too much guitar! But it’s what other people bring to it that makes the difference. And I find it *amazing*, the skills that others exhibit.”

It’s not hard to see how the late blossoming of Steve Hackett’s solo career has stemmed from his own delight at all the incredible musicians that are, unsurprisingly, eager to get involved. As he describes it, the long journey from adolescent dreaming in the 60s to nailed-on icon status has

Steve Hackett with the
Dobro guitar he used for
Underground Railroad
on his new album.





Hackett live with the orchestra on his recent tour. An army of generals!

been fuelled by a deep and profound fascination with what other musicians can do and how that, in turn, could make his own music bigger, better and more enduring.

"Many of these people are used to playing in improvised forms, perhaps much more than me," Hackett says. "I came out of a school of songwriters and I just happened to be a guitarist. The emphasis is slightly different. In the 1960s, I used to advertise myself as a blues guitarist and harmonica player, Blind Lemon Hackett! The blues boom had died on me by the end of the 1960s, music was on the change and was due to become fully comprehensive by the start of the 70s, and so, luckily, that's when I met Genesis. But, as I say, other people are very important to me and what they bring to it. We did the tour with the orchestra and it was like a small army onstage – it was about 50 people all going at it! How can that possibly be a solo performance? It just isn't."

whether it's some Philharmonic Orchestra or a collection of 20, 30 or 40 people that I might have on an album. It's *always* an orchestra. We might track people up 100 times in order to get the best out of them. But it's an army of generals, really. I guess I function the way Jeff Lynne has done with ELO, where it's a small team that's usually tracked up to sound like a very big team. If an orchestra's name is on the flyer, that's great, but didn't a lot of these progressive bands already sound like an orchestra in the first place?"

One of prog's most reliably adventurous souls, Steve Hackett has always assimilated a dizzying array of disparate influences into his music. It's clear evidence of an open-minded approach to life that is also reflected in his lyrics. Often world-weary but never devoid of hope, Hackett's worldview is another element that makes his music so inclusive. On *At The Edge Of Light*,

"Music changed the world – let's not forget this. And I think it can change the world again, for the better."

If you saw Steve Hackett's Genesis Revisited: Band with Orchestra tour earlier in 2018, you won't require any further evidence that the guitarist is thoroughly enjoying expanding and exploring the more ambitious end of his repertoire. Today, he admits that the experience has fed directly into *At The Edge Of Light*: not in terms of specific orchestral embellishments, although there are plenty of those too, but more in terms of providing a fresh perspective on what is generally some very complex music.

"Playing with the orchestra was inspiring. Just the challenge of seeing if you can pull it off, you know?" he notes. "But because I'm thinking globally and thinking about comprehensive and inclusive music that includes all known genres and every corner of the globe, one is *naturally* working with orchestras,

the grim spectres of war, conflict, social division and needless suffering all loom large amid the record's darker moments, and while he is reluctant to stick his head above the parapet to make specific political declarations, it doesn't take a genius to work out where he stands on the likes of Trump, Brexit and the rise of the far-right.

"I suppose I have to preface this by saying that I'm cautiously optimistic about the world's future!" he laughs. "I have to believe that we'll pull ourselves out of the current nosedive. We've got all this wonderful technology and all this knowledge, and it seems that populist thinking is going to lead us back to the caves, if not back to war. I think there are several songs on the album that address that. You can't pretend these things aren't happening. The truth is that *no* international musician wants Brexit. Why would you

want to go back to the days of carnets and delays at airports and not being sure that you can show up for a show, because that's how it was back in the early days? I remember we cancelled Genesis shows in Italy because we couldn't get the truck across the border. Do we want those days again? No. So I am critical and I am angry."

So does it feel even more important, at this precise moment in time, that *At The Edge Of Light* is such a proudly international record?

"Yes, it's an international album. I can't help that. I've tried to make it all bucket and spade, but it won't wash! As soon as you start taking a bite of a pizza, you become a European. If you're gonna be a true Euro-sceptic, then sorry, no more pizzas, no more coq au vin... it's fish and chips for you, if you're lucky!"

Does this album feel like a protest of sorts? It's certainly unequivocal about rejecting much of what's happening around the world at the moment.

"You know what, I noticed just the other day, I'd been into one shop to have a coffee and then into another shop to buy a new pair of shoes. We'd just had all the celebrations about commemorating the end of the First World War, and I noticed that in both places they were playing Dylan songs. *Blowin' In The Wind* was high on the agenda! It is the quintessential protest song and I've been saying for a while that the protest song as a genre is ever more necessary. I don't think that the Vietnam war would have ended if American students hadn't taken matters in hand themselves. It was about *communication*."

Communication is at the heart of everything Hackett does: communication between artist and fans, and between one musician and countless others. It might sound like old hippie nonsense, but advocating an ethos of peace, love and hope is something to be saluted. As he points out, it's just a shame that the world has taken such an ominous turn, making troubled but emotionally uplifting records like *At The Edge Of Light* all the more necessary.

"You'd think that world leaders wouldn't have to get to this point again," he states. "But I do feel that, for instance, refugees have been so demonised and are getting a rum deal. I think the whole concept of countries is completely outdated when you have technologies that enable people to work together, in much the same way that this album was constructed. I recorded Durga and Lorelei and others at my home studio, but equally Jonas and the drummers were sending their performances in, so there were no borders for those people."

A photograph of Steve Hackett, a man with long dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt, sitting and holding a gold-top electric guitar. He is positioned in front of a large, ornate, weathered statue of a Hindu deity, possibly Lord Venkateswara, which is seated and holding a mace. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting Hackett and the statue.

Steve Hackett:
a man of peace.

Despite the daily horror of the news, Steve Hackett is definitely having fun. *At The Edge Of Light* will emerge in January, presaging yet another extensive tour that takes in most of Europe, Canada and an impressive 20 dates in the UK. There aren't many rock veterans putting in that level of effort at this stage in their careers, but then most musicians aren't as profoundly happy with their lot as Steve Hackett. Thrilled to be both a relevant, contemporary musician and guardian of the Genesis catalogue, he simply can't wait to get back out there.

"I'm advertising that I will be playing *Selling England By The Pound* in its entirety, plus most of *Spectral Mornings*, plus new stuff and extra Genesis, too!" he beams. "So there's a lot to rehearse, put it that way. But I'm looking forward to it with absolute relish, in order to serve the best of the past, the present and the future. It's quite a task! But it's got to be done. I've got a terrific band that will involve all the guys that were onstage last time. We're going for a change of drummer — we have Craig Blundell, who'll be doing the majority of the gigs next year, but also some gigs with Marco Minnemann, who's going to be doing the two cruises we're doing. They're all great players, as indeed is Gary [O'Toole]. I'm looking forward to it all tremendously."

Does it surprise him that the Genesis material is still so *alive*? The demand for it seems to be growing...

"It was inspirational music back then and I was inspired by all the guys I worked with. But it's inspirational now, too. A lot of people say how much it means to them. The audience gets the chance to say that every night, and I know it moves people. Beyond that, I think I've been blessed to be able to bring that once more in front of people. It's beyond the museum doors for the glorious exhibits!"

His enthusiasm is infectious, his energy boundless. Maybe our Duracell theory is nonsense after all. All he needs to power him through another 12 months of triumph is the greatest energy source of all: music itself. Let the happiness and healing begin.

"Music still has the ability to set the world alight and lay a few ghosts to rest," he concludes. "Music changed the world — let's not forget this. And I think it can change the world again, for the better. Music can go to places that politicians can't, and it knows no borders. It's one of the greatest medicines in the world and it'll do you good. Honest, guy! It's the oxygen that we breathe and it's a great motivator. This has been a great journey and it's not over yet!" ☺

At The Edge Of Light is out January 25 via InsideOut. See www.hackettsongs.com.

TINA KORHONEN

"I was playing guitar in the
best band in the world."

— **Steve Hackett**

Steve Hackett on stage
with Genesis at London's
Theatre Royal in 1974.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Citizens Of Hope And Glory

There are obsessives for every Genesis album, but ***Selling England By The Pound***, released in 1973, resonates deeply across the spectrum of the group's admirers. To the point where **Steve Hackett**, who has become the *de facto* curator of Genesis' catalogue live, is recreating the album in full on tour later this year. But why, 45 years on, does this particular album endure?

Words: Daryl Easlea

In 1973, Britain was at a crossroads. The Conservative government seemed to be losing control of the various industrial disputes that raged in a union-dominated workplace; inflation was spiralling due to the increasing global economic crisis. Value Added Tax (VAT) had been introduced at the start of April 1973, and the cost of living seemed to be one of the premium topics

of conversation; credit cards were becoming ever more popular and national debt was spiralling. The United Kingdom was also engaged in a debate about whether they should remain in the 'Common Market' –

the European Economic Community – which it had joined on New Year's Day 1973. There was a feeling that the very nature of Britishness was being eroded. In short, it seemed as if we were all going to hell in a handcart. Sound familiar?

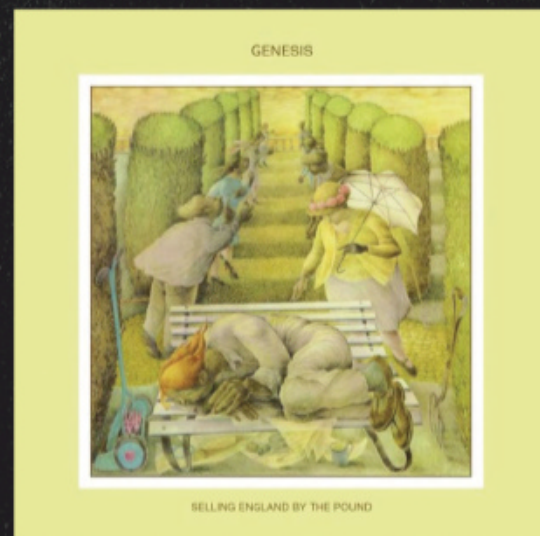
With all of this being played out across the media, for Genesis writing about beheadings during croquet games at once seemed perhaps too frivolous, too escapist. Taking its title from a slogan in the Labour Party's manifesto, *Selling England By The Pound*, the band's fifth studio album is infused with a whimsy, a Britain at sunset, assessing how to move forward in shifting times. The word 'pound' in its title was key; aside from the obvious pun between currency and weight, the pound sterling had been one of the hottest political topics in recent history. In the preceding decade it had been devalued, decimalised and floated. Harold Wilson's phrase, "the pound in your pocket," said in 1967 when the pound was devalued by 14% to foreign markets (but still worth the same in the UK) had stuck in popular consciousness, and with a collective focus on thrift and economy, set against the financial crisis, the album's title had a snappy, contemporary feel. "*Selling England* was very English," Steve Hackett says. "It wasn't bucket and spade English... it was this other sense."

The story of *Selling England By The Pound* begins with a paucity of material and delay. It's strange now to think that three months seemed an eternity then: but Genesis were blocked. Coming off the triumphant *Foxtrot* tour, a proposed gig at Wembley Empire Pool in May 1973 had to be nixed because tickets couldn't be printed in time. As the band didn't have a huge stock of material prepared, the stop-gap in-concert album *Genesis Live* was released that July to capitalise on their burgeoning success. Sold at a budget price, it became the group's first UK Top 10 album.

What was to become *Selling England By The Pound* was rehearsed in a friend's home near Chessington Zoo, Surrey, across early summer 1973. "We were literally in the living room of a family house," Steve Hackett says. "Inevitably, after a few days or so, the neighbours started to complain. It was so typically Genesis. The idea that we didn't want to work in a rehearsal room, we wanted to work somewhere that's friendly and had windows, contrary to rock'n'roll thinking. It adds to the quirkiness of it, I think that's



Album cover by Betty Swanwick. Peter Gabriel asked her to add the lawnmower to her painting, *The Dream*.



AL MURRAY on *Selling England By The Pound* Comedian and Progressive Music Awards host on the album's significance...



"This album is the band's sweet spot – Genesis' soaring creative ambition matched by their immaculate playing. Gabriel's finessed word games and more than anything else the big, big tunes that lie at its heart. The strange enduring topicality of *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* suggests there's more to prog than English whimsy – it's an unrepeatable lament for past, present and future."

See www.thepublandlord.com.

why that album has a smile." This smile was reinforced further by the group's move to one of their usual – and, again, improbable – haunts, the Una Billings School Of Dance in London's Shepherd's Bush to continue rehearsing. Phil Collins' mother, who ran the Barbara Speke Stage School in Acton, knew Billings, which is how the band ended up there.

"Una Billings was weird enough in itself," Hackett says. "You'd be downstairs with the gob-stopper machine and the girls dancing upstairs doing their first ballet steps, all going clippetty clump, clippetty clump, you'd have this rhythm going on. It's completely mad," Hackett laughs. Collins wrote in his autobiography, *Not Dead Yet*: "Where previously we could smell freshly cut grass, we're now high on the odour of ballet pumps." Even though the group were gaining traction, they were in debt, and struggling. "When you're a young band, much of living is at subsistence level," says Hackett. "We hope our contract is going to be renewed; we hope there'll be gigs, we hope people will like it. It was a very slow process." However, they now had the seeds of material that would become some of the most-loved in their career.

Selling *England...* was recorded in three weeks in August at Basing Street Studios in West London. The band asked John Burns to produce, who had worked as engineer on *Foxtrot*. Burns was of a similar age to them, and had already had considerable experience.

Genesis preparing to join Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on their *Selling England...* tour, 1973.



WARING ABBOTT/GETTY IMAGES

"John was great for a young band," Hackett continues. "He was very hands-on. His reassurance was key. He was also a guitarist and understood how guitars were supposed to sound. When I was doing *Foxtrot* I was using a small amp; this time I was using the full rig and giving it some welly. He was very good at capturing that – it's a very thick sound."

Although ostensibly an eight-track album, it hinges on five significant pieces, and none more so than its opener. *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* was originally called *Disney*, and Peter Gabriel wrote the opening section's melody, while the rest of the band contributed to its later sections. But the subject matter was the most overt in reflecting this commercialisation of a troubled Britain, with Gabriel singing a folk madrigal as Britannia, posing the simple but effective question at the album's very outset: 'Can you tell me

where my country lies?' Father Thames has drowned, but the population is too preoccupied to notice, as they digest their Wimpy burgers, spending pounds to gain pounds. The Arthurian legend is invoked, and the final cry of calling the 'Knights of the Green Shield' to 'stamp and shout' is a pun on the long defunct Green Shield stamp-and-spend reward system. This call for an uprising to reassert Britain's place in the world delivered forlornly by Britannia is one of Gabriel's most poignant (and pun-filled) lyrics.

Musically, it begins gently before heading off into battle, showcasing the road-rested confidence of the players. "It went from Scottish plainsong to something Elgarian, to something futuristic, touching on fusion and other forms that still haven't been named," Hackett affirms. "We weren't calling it progressive at the time... we were experimenting and letting it all hang out."



WWW.THEGENESISARCHIVE.CO.UK



Another reason for the album's enduring allure is that *Selling England...* had a snappy number that could act as an accessible calling card to the album's knottier core: *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*. Genesis always knew a good pop tune when they heard it. And *I Know What I Like...* is a fantastic pop song. Still unsure that he could compete with the Charterhouse core of the band, Steve Hackett decided to bring in riffs for the album rather than whole songs, as was Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks' way. "I thought that was the best way to go. I used to play it through a Leslie cabinet and Phil would join in. It was a *Foxtrot* reject, but a linchpin for *Selling England...*" Soon the other members joined in. Gabriel came up with a melody line and a lyric inspired by what was to become the album's cover painting, *The Dream*, by Betty Swanwick.

With its words wittily referencing the Garden Wall, Banks and Gabriel's Charterhouse band, *I Know What I Like...* is the tale of external pressure on Jacob, a young man (allegedly Genesis' roadie Jacob Finster) to conform. With Banks' irresistible chorus, Rutherford's electric sitar and Gabriel's to-die-for synthesiser riff to close, it all scuttles along with tremendous panache and

What Genesis did on their 'holidays'

by CHRIS WELCH

NOT many groups conduct their rehearsals squashed together in a Morris Mini. But if you are in the habit of strolling around the backwaters of Shepherd's Bush, you might come across the well-known beat group Genesis, parked outside a turf accountant, engaged in heated discussion.

Genesis have not retired, or vanished off the face of the earth, as I and many other fans have long suspected. It's many months since they last played in England, or anywhere else for that matter. They were supposed to play a huge prestige concert at the Empire Pool, Wembley, but that failed to materialise.

Last winter they were riding on the crest of a wave of popularity, and seemed on the verge of cracking America. Then came silence. Total withdrawal.

The truth is that Genesis have been far from inactive, and although the odd one about them taking long holidays can be heard bawling about the corridors of rock, in fact they have been working very hard on new music. And when that music gets heard, it will not only please their fans but will also land its rightful place at the top of the league tables.

Although the band were "too shy to actually play any of their new material this week when I heard them in their lab under the Una Billings School of Dancing, Phil Collins did play me cassette tapes of the rehearsals. Hence the trip out to parked car. It was the only place where a cassette player was available.

I concluded it was believed the band had retired. This was greeted with laughter. Said Tony: "The problem is, we just didn't have enough time to write new material. The results of the rehearsals have been great. The only



GENESIS: a degree of hostility

the Genesis workshop? Said Peter: "One of the pieces may be 'The Battle Of Epping Forest'. There is a story

"About two or three years ago I read a newspaper item about a gang battle that took place in Epping Forest. I like to collect cuttings from newspapers about any odd happenings. In this case I kept the cutting for ages, but could not find out anymore about the battle."

even put an ad in *The Times* and checked in newspaper libraries. But the story had disappeared off the face of the earth. Even my original cutting seems to have disappeared."

All the band agreed that their first proper American tour that followed their appearance in December, had achieved a good measure of success.

"We played some good gigs," said Peter, "including a couple with Lou Reed where we were greeted with some degree of hostility."

"It was good for us, because we had to work harder. It was like starting all over again. We seemed to produce a very violent reaction. Either they really hated us or liked us."

Tony Banks revealed that Genesis went through much the same treatment in England in their early days and Mike Rutherford thought: "It's most amusing when a lead voice takes the music." But said Peter: "If you play well after that, then you play really well. You've got to channel their approval."

"But you can feel, not so much embarrassed, just very silly when you get some guy yelling at you," said Phil. "I think it's good mind, because it's more of an achievement when they get to like our music. We did one gig in Chicago that was quiet. They really just didn't want to know. But other places like Cleveland were good. We want to go back to America and I think we'll be going in November."

In the meantime, did they think their sudden disappearance from the scene in England had done them any harm?

Said Peter: "Well you would probably know more about that than us. In some ways our career has been one of slow development. We tend to look at this period of rehearsal as our most creative stage."

"There is very little danger of us being over exposed now, but if we had worked incessantly, it would have done harm to us. They always refer to this period as our annual holiday but there is more strain on me physically during rehearsals than there is in being on the road."

Did Peter feel confident that the long rehearsal had worked?

"When we don't feel confident in what we're doing, that's when we'll stop."

To tide over the gap in appearances Genesis have a new Charisma album released "Genesis Live", and the group seemed well pleased with the results.

Said Steve: "I haven't got any original material on it, but it's a kind of collection piece."

"We tried to avoid too much audience noise," said Peter. "You can spend for too much time listening to clapping. There is a Marcel Marceau album which is absolutely silent, with clapping at the end."

Phil: "But who buys it?"

Genesis will probably be back on the road by October, and they are bound to keep old favourites like "Supper's Ready". They want to enlarge the repertoire enough to be able to drop and change their act, which is at present rather rigid. The last chance to hear all the old material will be at Reading Festival.

First hearing of the new music came when we adjourned to Phil's Mini. "I'll have the house," said Peter from the back seat, as the opening bars of "The Battle Of Epping Forest", filled the motor with clear sound.

The tracks had no vocals on them and Peter sang along, rapping the car from side to side. The "Battle" has a catchy march theme with typical Genesis drums and bass lines, clean and precise.

Most of the other stuff was unlisted and there was one piece that ended in a shambles, but basically it was fine music, dense, impetuous and demonstrative.

There is method in Genesis madness, and the band who once took phish hangers to play before someone told them about midway traffic, will soon be receiving their terrible equity before and send and receptive word.

After the levity comes the gravity. One of Banks' greatest and loftiest creations, *Firth Of Fifth* was stitched together from three separate pieces of music left over from *Foxtrot*, becoming one of the group's most-loved songs. After Banks' grand piano introduction, the power of the band's arrival still surprises. It features Hackett's single best guitar solo with the group. Although we return to the world of

Interview with Chris Welch in *Melody Maker's* July 28, 1973 issue. He listened to the new Genesis album on the cassette player of a Morris Minor that was parked outside the Una Billings' School Of Dance. High tech!

newer fans could visit that sounded most like the group they knew, none more so than on *More Fool Me*, a curio that pointed towards the future, with Phil Collins taking his second lead vocal for Genesis. The two-minute love song closed the first side, and was put on at the suggestion of producer Burns,

"In the early days there was a lot of comedy. Which may have been why John Lennon said that he liked us, the fact that we seemed so prepared to make complete arseholes of ourselves!" – Steve Hackett

humour; in fact, it makes a case for the miniscule sub-genre, glam-prog. Praised by *Sounds* for conjuring up "amazing visual possibilities with its childlike quality of far away images", it was taken from the album as a single, it reached the UK Top 40 in 1974. For many outside the cognoscenti, this was their first invitation to visit the idiosyncratic cottage industry of Genesis.

fantasy, the suggestions of the sands of time being eroded by the river of constant change echoes the uncertainty of *...Moonlit Knight*.

"There was a melody which had originated on piano, and seemed to only gain when it was played with

other instruments," Hackett says. "I remember when we were at Una Billings

it sounding like a record. I was able to improvise and come back to it –

it just seemed to play itself. Because the song was about the river and the sea, I had this

idea of a seagull floating above the surface, gliding, holding

the note, letting it become the melody, wait for it, the tension and the release of something that looks like a flight, ducking and weaving."

Another reason for *Selling...*'s appeal is that when Genesis finally hit the big time in the 80s, it was the album that

who thought it provided contrast to the high drama elsewhere.

The most problematic track on the album follows, but in a way it gives it its greatest charm, as it sits alone and frequently unloved in the group's catalogue. *The Battle Of Epping Forest* was simply one long showcase for Gabriel's voice and characterisation, a sort of modern Gilbert And Sullivan operetta. And as for subject matter, gangland warfare on the fringes of North East London was another resolute departure from the group's usual pastoral meanderings. This rich and vivid story – allegedly rooted in truth – seemed meat and drink to Gabriel, who constructed another musical comedy in the style of *Get 'Em Out By Friday*. Deceptively long at 11 minutes, it is akin to a Monty Python sketch set to music, complete with myriad voices, generous double-entendres, camp academic stereotypes (*'Harold Demure, from Art Literature'*, indeed) and little room for the instrumentation to breathe.

Tony Banks, for one, was never a fan. He told Armando Gallo in the late

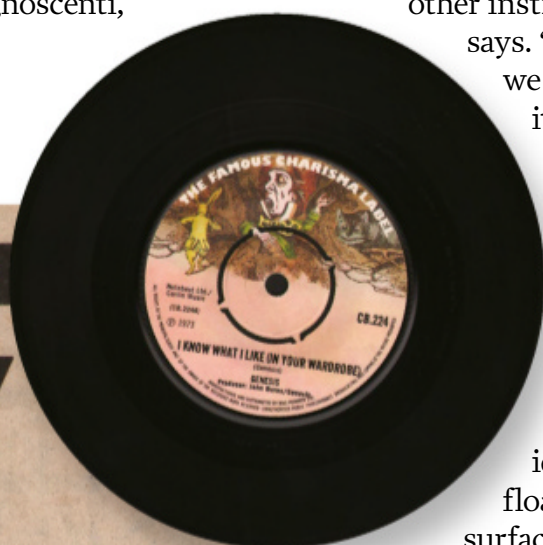
The *...Wardrobe* single and plea to hardcore Genesis fans to stop moaning about "selling out" and buy it, from *Disc*, February 1974.

8 Disc—February 9, 1974

Disc the single-minded music paper

We know what we like - Genesis

GENESIS "I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)" (Charisma CB 224). Well, what do you know? A single from Genesis, and a fine piece of music it is too. But then they specialise in that . . . This is not truly a single — but an album track that's been made into one — though it's still strong and compulsive listening. I'd love to see it in the charts, and if their hard core fans can stop mumbling about "Selling out" and just buy the record, we may find it up there before too long.



70s, “Although the vocals are very nice, they completely ruin the song because there’s too much happening – a complete battle between the vocals and the music all the way through.”

It also deals obliquely again with the search for a lost England, corrupt reverends, antique shops, judgments based on what a person owns as opposed to who they are, and increasing commercialisation, and a dig at the death of the hippie dream, with a new ‘pin-up guru’ every week, turning alternative lifestyles into simply another commodity, ‘Love, Peace & Truth Incorporated.’ It became a staple of the Genesis live set for the end of 1973 and into 1974, giving Gabriel the opportunity to don stocking masks and act out some violence. “Epping Forest died a death in America,” Hackett adds, ruefully. “Mainly because they’d never heard of Epping Forest or vicars talking like that; it’s very British, isn’t it? An elaborate joke but it’s got its moments, too. I think there’s aspects of the *Carry On* series, perhaps – it’s full of Sid James meeting Kenneth Connor; it’s Ealing as much as prog rock.”

After *The Ordeal* acts as light relief. It is amazing that such a pretty four-minute instrumental was to prove one of the hot potatoes of the album. When the album was being sequenced and edited, Banks and Rutherford did not want it. Hackett did. “I had to threaten to get *After The Ordeal* on the album, as was so often the case in Genesis,” he explains. In fact, to the point where he was going to leave if his idea wasn’t accepted.

“If they weren’t going to include all of my ideas on it, if it was going to be expurgated, I was off. I don’t think anyone was expecting me to be quite so forthright at that point. I nailed my colours to the mast.”

RICHARD MACPHAIL on *Selling England By The Pound*

Friend of the band and biographer on the album’s significance...



“Many of the fans who love Peter’s era cite it as the best album of all. It certainly is one of the best. It stands on the shoulders of *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot*; by the time they came to write and record *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, things were falling apart, and although it has many moments of staggering brilliance, I have always felt that it was flawed. For me, the two stand-out tracks are *Firth of Fifth* and *The Cinema Show*. *Selling England* is an album that truly stands the test of time and has moments that still send shivers up my spine.”

Richard Macphail’s *My Book Of Genesis* is available at www.mybookofgenesis.com.

Below: Disc finds tomorrow’s stars in November 1973. Below right: NME loves the new album. As well they should, frankly.



The 11-minute long *The Cinema Show* was originally intended to run as a side-long piece flowing in from *...Moonlit Knight*. “If we had done that, it would have been another *Supper’s Ready* and it might not have survived as well.” Hackett says. “Phil was adamant, and that was what put the kibosh on it.”

After a series of sweet verses from Gabriel, with lyrics largely written by Banks and Rutherford, at six minutes, the track abruptly shifts gear from its dreamy acoustic mid-tempo as the band move into a slow-building and soon-to-be free-wheeling jazz rock instrumental leading to a climatic close; recorded with just Banks, Collins and Rutherford, it was later to provide the encouragement needed for the group to continue as a trio after Hackett left the group in 1977.

The theme of the state of the UK comes into focus again with *Aisle Of Plenty*, a short reprise of the original melody of *...Moonlit Knight*.

The short verse offers a series of puns about contemporaneous UK supermarkets and concludes with Gabriel watching ‘the deadly nightshade grow’. Was England going to be left under a carpet of the alluring yet poisonous plant while everyone is busy buying stuff? He and Collins call out a series of prices of consumer goods on offer. This minute and a half drifts by and links the album back to where it began, the cash-strapped UK economy of ’73. This lyrical realism demonstrated that Genesis were aware of the state of the nation and their surroundings.

Selling England By The Pound was released in October 1973. Strikingly complex yet often deceptively simple, it heralded a different Genesis. The artefact itself looked different. It moved away

from the band’s now-trademark gatefold sleeve and Paul Whitehead illustrations. Its single sleeve with lyric sheet offered something more direct. Gabriel had persuaded Betty Swanwick to add a lawnmower to her painting, *The Dream*, which had inspired *I Know What I Like...* and for it to be used as the cover. It managed to pull off the perilous feat of retaining the English whimsy of the previous releases, while looking more in keeping with a modern jazz album.

It was also well-received. Barbara Charone wrote in *NME*: “Genesis stand head and shoulders above all those so-called progressive groups.” Genesis were progressive as they were reflecting on the state of the nation, be it the bully-boy gang warfare on the fringes of London, or the threat to national identity. Gabriel’s escapist vision, married with the increasingly impressive musicianship of the group



was providing a suitable antidote to the increasingly grim economic landscape in the UK. By the end of 1973, *Selling England By The Pound* was Top 10 in an album chart populated by Slade, David Cassidy, Status Quo and Peters and Lee.

The concerts that supported *Selling England By The Pound* saw Gabriel’s costumes and props getting ever more otherworldly and elaborate. There was now even a lawnmower brought on stage to assist in the narrative of *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*. The band themselves seemed to become ever more invisible; often looking like they were conducting an intense seated scientific experiment: “We were like the pit orchestra, Pete was the show,” Hackett recalls. “I used

Peter Gabriel as
Britannia in 1974.

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

to look up from time to time with a big smile on my face.”

The *Selling England By The Pound* UK tour saw the band comfortably filling 2,000-seater venues. Another reason for the enduring allure of the album is its accompanying promotional film, live at Shepperton Studios. The group’s foothold in America was getting stronger, too. After their short tour in December 1972, Genesis had returned in March 1973 before beginning a major North American

Boulevard. It went well: “It was one of the best welcomes we have ever had,” Gabriel said. “It was our first time on the West Coast and we found we had a sort of underground mystique.”

“I remember Phil saying to me very early on: to enjoy the work you do when you are playing live was really so very important,” Hackett says. “People aren’t going to worry about the odd gaff – what they want to know is that you’re in the moment, you’re doing it, you’re being authentic. At the time we

“It’s the album I’m proudest of in Genesis both as a player and for its unique quirkiness.”

– Steve Hackett

tour in November of that year. Genesis were treated with bemusement by sections of the rock audience, but the press sensed there was something afoot. They seemed to be offering a vision of exactly what British people should be: deeply eccentric, quirky. They were, if you will, selling this exaggerated version of England back to the US by the dollar.

From December 17, 1973, Genesis played six shows across three nights at the Roxy Club on Los Angeles’ Sunset

were doing *Selling England* we were playing the best of the two previous albums as well, I thought I was playing guitar in the best band in the world.” This was paying off – they were voted ‘Top Stage Band’ by readers of *NME*’s annual poll, placing them ahead of all the other bands they struggled for billing with several years previously, ahead of scene leaders such as The Who and Yes.

The band toured the US again in May 1974. The tour had been enlivened

SPECTRAL LIVE

40 years old next year, Steve Hackett’s *Spectral Mornings* gets a live celebration.



Steve Hackett enjoys the thrill of visiting different eras of his catalogue for his now-annual tours. This time, as well as playing *Selling England...* he’s looking at 1979’s *Spectral Mornings*.

“*Spectral Mornings* rides high in my affections and those of fans. It was the time when I was first touring under my own name,

with a great band. Something special happened. Every time you make an album you do the same thing: change the strings, plug in, play: even though all the ingredients might be the same, you don’t really know whether the album’s going to have legs or sprout wings. I was very lucky to work with a great team.”

Are there any particular challenges ahead with *Selling England*? “It stands extension and expansion well. Deleted scenes are now included. Peter brought a tune to the band in the early days; although it was a band reject, decades later, I told Peter that I’d like to finish it. Nad [Sylvan] said that he’d really like to sing it, because Paul Carrack had sung it [*Déjà Vu*] on *Genesis Revisited* in 1996; we’ll have that! So, the entire *Selling England...* will be part of it; most of *Spectral*, and some new stuff.”

Finally, a thought that many have – would he contemplate undertaking *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* as a piece live? Hackett thinks for a moment: “Possibly, but I see it as more appropriate for Peter in its entirety.” **DE**

by the news that John Lennon ‘loved’ *Selling England...*; Hackett recalled Gabriel dancing around the dressing room in response to the ex-Beatle’s comments on New York radio station WNEW. “In the early days there was a lot of comedy,” Hackett concludes. “Which may have been why Lennon said that he liked us, the fact that we seemed so prepared to make complete arseholes of ourselves!”

Selling England endures because it is the greatest and most commercial distillation of the ’70-’75 group. In a way, it is the direct predecessor to *A Trick Of The Tail*, with the following *The Lamb Lies Down On A Broadway* as a unique, insular, glorious curveball. *Selling England...* was key in so many ways: it gave them a taste of a hit single; demonstrated that Collins could handle lead vocals with élan and the seeds of both Hackett and Gabriel’s departure lay within (on their own they could make records full of *Epping Forests* and *After The Ordeals*). Most importantly, with their trio playing at the end of *The Cinema Show*, that Banks, Rutherford and Collins could play well with each other.

“*Selling England* is the album I’m proudest of in Genesis both as a player and for its unique quirkiness,” Steve Hackett concludes. “I think it was very heartfelt.”

Steve Hackett’s *Genesis Revisited* and *Spectral Mornings* tour starts in April. See www.hackettsongs.com/tour.html.

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

Jean-Michel Jarre has always been about creating music for the future. Now, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of *Equinoxe*, he's released the next phase, *Equinoxe Infinity*. Electronic music's first superstar discusses his past and future with *Prog*...

Watchman: Rob Hughes **Portrait:** Joel Saget/AFP/Getty Images

"I wasn't intending to revisit *Equinoxe*, but I've always been very intrigued by the album artwork," says Jean-Michel Jarre, referring to the banks of mysterious 'Watchmen' that peer out from the sleeve of his 1978 opus. "I've always felt that *Equinoxe* has one of the most iconic covers of the vinyl era. And I thought it would be interesting to imagine what happened to these beings over the past 40 years and what might happen to them 40 years from now."

The French maestro's next step was to recruit Filip Hodas ("a brilliant young artist from Prague who specialises in 3D computer graphics") to create some visuals that he had in mind. Jarre asked him to come up with two future settings for the Watchmen – one depicting mankind in harmony with nature and technology, the other a lurid nightmare in which machines have taken over the world.

With these opposite images in place, the next logical move was to create the accompanying music. The upshot is *Equinoxe Infinity*, a long-overdue sequel to the original *Equinoxe*. "I thought it would be interesting to have all the visuals before even going into the studio," explains Jarre, whose best works tend to exist at the interface between sound and vision. "I did the album like a soundtrack to this graphic project, an imaginary kind of scenario where these watchers would symbolise the evolution of technology since I began making music."

"You have this kind of machine-learning process," he continues, "where machines and computers are watching us, learning from us and then maybe one day taking over. It may happen with artificial intelligence. There's also this kind of attitude we have these days with technology, in that

we're watching our tablets and smartphones all the time, so there's this interesting connection that I thought could be fun to explore on *Equinoxe Infinity*. I really made the album as some kind of audio movie."

The album arrives on the back of 2016's *Oxygene 3*, which, as the title implies, completed the trilogy that Jarre had begun in 1976. If anything, *Equinoxe Infinity* is more

that makes the whole project have more impact, audio-wise. So I used a lot of not only analogue instruments, but digital sounds as well. The way we are listening to music today has really evolved since I made the first *Equinoxe*. It's almost unconscious. We are listening to music louder and the range and audiogram of the human ear has changed in the last 20 or 30 years – so much bass and

"You'd hear something like Soft Machine and realise that it wasn't that far away from what you were trying to do. That really gave me the desire to create a link between those two worlds."

melodic than any of the *Oxygene* projects. Comprising 10 movements designed as a continuous flow, moments of pastoral beauty like *Flying Totems* or *Robots Don't Cry* find contrast with the steely techno of *Machines Are Learning* or the pulsing beatronica of *The Opening*. It's the tension between these two representations of the future, between bliss and belligerence, that gives the album its cinematic power.

"I think *Equinoxe Infinity* is like *Equinoxe* on steroids," says Jarre, who was partly inspired by the soundtrack approach of *Blade Runner 2049*, another recent sequel. "It's like keeping the feeling and the mood of the analogue world, but with contemporary techniques

so little high frequencies. With *Equinoxe Infinity* I was very interested in creating this kind of very warm sound."

Jarre had become electronic music's first superstar by the time *Equinoxe* landed in November 1978. Its low-budget predecessor, *Oxygene* – powered by hit single *Oxygene (Part IV)* – had proved an international success after a difficult gestation period. Turned down by various record companies, all of whom failed to see the value of synth-based instrumental music, it was finally picked up by a small label, Les Disques Motors. They immediately understood its potential. It's since sold in excess of 12 million copies and is the biggest-shifting French album in history.

"With *Oxygene* I just finished it and nobody was waiting for it," Jarre recalls. "But with the massive success of that album, you suddenly have a lot of new friends and a lot of pressure with deadlines and so forth. So it was

Jarre's *Equinoxe Infinity* is out now.



Who will watch the Watchmen?
Jean-Michel Jarre in Paris,
October 2018.



Jean-Michel Jarre's first concert,
at Paris' Place De La Concorde.
Bastille Day, July 14, 1979.

DOUGLAS DOIG/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



a completely different challenge when it came time to do *Equinoxe*. I approached it as a kind of development of *Oxygene*, with more tracks and more equipment. It didn't necessarily mean that it was going to be better, but in that case *Equinoxe* developed what I'd wanted to say with *Oxygene* – this kind of impressionist and epic approach of electronic music. Not just track after track, but actually a concept like a movie."

Jarre's intention with *Equinoxe* was to create music for the future. While studying under Pierre Schaeffer in the GRM (Group for Musical Research) in the late 60s, he'd begun devising a series of electronic pieces. Further studies, this time with Stockhausen in Cologne, deepened his interest in the possibilities of the synthesiser. Jarre became the first composer to bring electronica into

CHRISTIAN CHARISIUS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



"I've always been interested in, and excited by, creating this bridge between pop culture and the experimental world."

Parisian opera society when he was commissioned for a ballet at The Palais Garnier in 1971. He swiftly found himself in demand to create scores for theatre, TV, soundtracks and festivals.

Equinoxe was his latest attempt to show that these different disciplines need not be mutually exclusive. "I've always been interested in, and excited by, creating this bridge between pop culture and the experimental world," he says. "I was frustrated with the serious contemporary music world at that time, which was full of all these intellectual, dogmatic types of people who had a condescending attitude regarding pop culture. But people were finding things that actually existed in a very intuitive and

Jarre, who doesn't seem to have got the memo about turning 70, pictured in November 2018.



exciting way in rock or pop culture. I'm talking about progressive music or prog rock. I consider myself part of that tribe as well, because we were doing that, too. And we were able to do it in a very effective way. Looking back at the kind of experimentation that was going on when I studied electronic music, you'd hear something like Soft Machine and realise that it wasn't that far away from what you were trying to do. That really gave me the desire to create a link between those two worlds. And then start pushing the boundaries. I always thought that melody was one of the most important parts of music, so I was interested in trying to mix a melodic approach with pure experimentation in sound. Even The Beatles had done that."

Equinoxe was Jarre's fourth album. Once again he called on artist Michel Granger, who had designed the memorable sleeve of *Oxygene*, to produce another striking image for the follow-up. Granger's artwork, a sea of identical Watchmen staring directly into a theatre stage, alluded to Jarre's unease with his own role as a performer. Not for nothing was the album originally going to be called 'Stage Fright'.

"After I'd done *Oxygene*, with the image of the skull inside planet Earth, I was working on

the next album and started talking to Michel Granger," Jarre remembers. "He came up with this very strange painting and I loved it. He went with this idea for the cover and gave it the original title, but we suddenly realised that it could be much more than that. It could be more mysterious, with this situation of the audience watching us. These watchers might be looking at natural phenomenon, but they're also linked with technology. So it was quite ahead of its time. It was also linked to this idea that I wanted to do a concert outdoors."

Equinoxe didn't sell quite as well as *Oxygene*, but it did big numbers nonetheless. Eight months after its release, Jarre finally put his plan into action and played his first ever show. The day and location — Bastille Day 1979 at the Place De La Concorde in Paris — were deliberately chosen to signify a major event. A million people turned up, earning him a berth in the *Guinness Book Of Records*. It was also broadcast live on French TV.

"It was prepared almost as an underground project, with very little promotion or PR," explains Jarre. "Something I'd had in mind for a while was to experiment with giant projections onto buildings and to try to find a vocabulary for electronic music in performance, in the days when it was impossible to put computers or synthesisers on stage. Then it struck me that the visuals — all the lights, lasers, videos and techniques — should be part of the grammar of the show. I did that in Paris and had no idea that so many people would turn up. At

sunset, I remember going on stage with my manager and one musician and seeing this dark shadow on the Champs-Élysées. I thought it was a sunset effect from the shadow of the buildings, but it was actually the audience. I couldn't believe it. That was a real shock."

Within two years, Jarre was playing to hundreds of thousands of people across five historic gigs in post-Mao China. In April 1986 he found himself back in the *Guinness Book Of Records* when his show in downtown Houston attracted what was then the biggest audience for an outdoor rock concert. The setlist, as with the Bastille Day event, was largely taken up with selections from *Oxygene* and *Equinoxe*.

Looking back on the height of his megastardom, Jarre says, "It was really like this 80s

syndrome of crazy rock star life, this very extreme approach where everything was possible. I was doing big shows and big concerts and doing all this mad touring. It was quite fun that it should happen with electronic music, because it was the kind of thing you would normally only see in rock."

Equinoxe Infinity was released on the 40th anniversary of *Equinoxe*. Back in 1978, technology was gaining pace, albeit at a rhythm that almost seems quaint in hindsight. Mainframe computers could hold up to 4GB of virtual memory (hundreds of times bigger than before), the ultra-basic WordStar became the first popular word

processing system and President Jimmy Carter installed a computer in the White House for the first time.

"We had this appetite for the future in a kind of innocent way when we thought about the year 2000 and so on," Jarre recalls of the late 70s. "That changed entirely at the beginning of this century, but now I think we're regaining our appetite for creating a vision of the

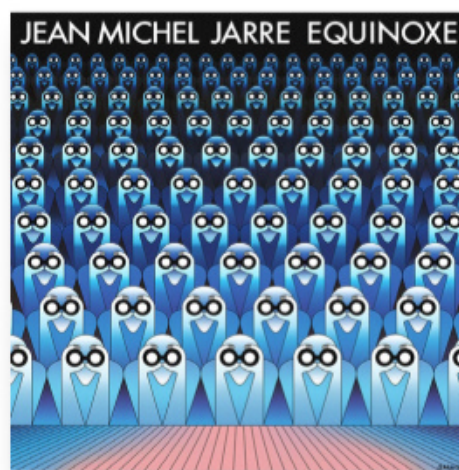
future, with Tesla, Elon Musk and SpaceX and movies like *Interstellar*, *Gravity* and *Ghost In The Shell*. There suddenly seems to be this greed for shaping the future with artificial intelligence. I think *Equinoxe Infinity* is linked to this phenomenon, to recreate an audio-visual link to the time I made the first *Equinoxe*. I'm convinced that we will only be able to survive in the 21st century if we can evolve in good faith with the environment, nature and new technology. That's what I tried to evoke through this new album."

Jarre also reveals that he's already working on another new project for 2019, though he's not in any position to divulge details. Given that *Equinoxe Infinity*, *Oxygene 3* and his two star-studded projects under the *Electronica* banner (*The Time Machine* and *The Heart Of Noise*) have arrived within the space of just four years, the 70-year-old is currently in a prolific run of form.

"A few years ago I was going through quite a dark moment," he explains of this late-career surge. "I lost both of my parents, then my publisher, and I was going through quite a painful divorce [he and French actress Anne Parillaud separated in November 2010]. It was really very difficult for me to go into the studio to do anything. Then I did the first *Electronica* album by meeting up with people and having a new team around me. It became a massive project and by going into the studio every day it gave me a training where I was able to go straight into *Oxygene 3* and *Equinoxe Infinity*, as well as touring at the same time. In life, you have to take advantage of this kind of prolific phase. I'm sure the public will soon be sick of me!" ☺

Equinoxe Infinity is out now via Columbia. See www.jeanmicheljarre.com for more information.

The original *Equinoxe* with Granger artwork.



Jarre in China, 1981, where he played five historic gigs.

A historic village located in the heart of Sherwood Forest, steeped in the myriad fables of Robin Hood, is an ideal location to meet a master storyteller. Tales from the childhood – and indeed, adulthood – of Forest dweller Peter Jones provide the overarching themes of three of the four albums released under his Tiger Moth Tales banner, the latest being *Story Tellers Part 2*.

His “mid-life crisis” breakthrough album, *Cocoon*, in 2014 was quickly followed up with *Story Tellers Part 1*, which was recorded in just 28 days in February 2015, and full of musical vignettes based on classic fairy tales such as *Sleeping Beauty*.

Having released the darkly seasonal *The Depths Of Winter* in late 2017, which focused on wintery concepts and themes and adopted a less personal approach, Jones yearned to return his *Story Telling* narrative. But time wasn’t on his side.

“I was going to look at it in 2016, and that didn’t happen... then again in 2017, and that didn’t happen. I also had a bee in my bonnet about doing *Part 2* in February like I did the first time – and also doing it in 28 days – but for whatever reason, that first album was a fluke. This time, February never seemed right, nor did I have the time or inspiration.”

Jones’ tight 2018 schedule was dictated by his busy touring calendar, that included live shows with his bands Tiger Moth Tales and Red Bazar, and also tours with Francis Dunnery and Camel.

“I was preparing for Camel, but rehearsals had not really started in earnest. I had just over two months and thought, ‘Let’s get cracking and get it done,’” Jones says. “I didn’t want to keep people waiting another two years, and I wanted to find some of that spontaneity from the first *Story Tellers*.”

Armed with storylines courtesy of Hans Christian Anderson, AA Milne, Aesop, *The Wind In The Willows* and *The Three Little Pigs*, Jones finally found a window of opportunity between March and May to record these next chapters.

A *Snow Queen* theme had already been mapped out in *Kai’s Journey*, on which his wife Kimberley and guide dog Darby both appear in “speaking” roles.

“One thing I love about prog is the musical changes that Tony Banks is so good at. A change of chord or instrument greatly changes the mood and that is what has gone into *Kai’s Journey*, which is a bit of a free-for-all with keyboards and noodling.

“My old friend Mark Wardle plays a trumpet solo on it, and then my darling wife does the *Snow Queen*’s voice – though I don’t think she’s forgiven me for putting in a vocoder to do weird stuff!” he laughs. “It is nice to have other people on it with me. This is unique to a Tiger Moth Tales album: something I don’t think will ever be repeated.”

Short Stories, Tall Tales

With a multitude of projects on the burner, **Tiger Moth Tales’ Pete Jones** has been busy. But he’s finally found the time to revisit his fairy tale-themed concept with *Story Tellers Part 2*, the follow-up to 2015’s *Part 1*. Jones discusses the art of balancing the silly with the serious, his DIY approach, and writing songs on the road with Andy Latimer...

Storytelling: Alison Reijman **Images:** Stuart Wood

The Palace, the other *Snow Queen* track, has an atmospheric style that strongly hints at a certain former Genesis guitarist.

“I will not mince my words: this is not the first time I have tried to do a Steve Hackett pastiche,” Jones admits. “You can hear it in *Sleigh Ride* on the last album and bits of *Cocoon* were very Hackett-inspired. All I will say in my defence is that you can never control what you write!”

The Boy Who Cried Wolf, based on Aesop’s fable, may also have familiar overtones. “I am very pleased with that one,” says Jones happily. “I thought that in the unlikely event of David Longdon or Greg Spawton wanting to cover the story, this is how they might do it: that’s one of the inspirations behind it!”

“I love doing serious tracks with sad endings like this one, then spoiling the entire ambience of the album by following it with *Three Little Pigs*,” he continues. “This is the one I thought would be too ridiculous to work, and if there is a sticky track on the album, this is it.”

Suffice to say, ...*Pigs* follows in a fine tradition of silliness that started with the ecclesiastically eccentric *The Merry Vicar* on *Cocoon*. Jones, as well as effecting Pinky and Perky style vocals, accompanies himself on the xaphoon (a hybrid of recorder and saxophone) and the trumpet “played very badly”.

Other characters who appear on the album include *Toad Of Toad Hall*. “I really went to town on that one with a Genesis style,” Jones says. “I am sure if prog had been around the same time as *Wind In The Willows*, Toad would have wanted to be ahead of the gang and get into it, even though he knew nothing about it.

“I felt *The Depths Of Winter* and *Tales From The Bookcase* [Red Bazar] were both very serious albums, and perhaps a bit too grown-up for me!” continues Jones. “When you listen to Big Big Train, it’s beautiful and moving, but terribly serious!”

This is the problem I had with *The Depths Of Winter* because, subconsciously, I was thinking it was going to be full of grown-up themes. Some people might say it was a real step up in maturity but now you have gone back to doing kids’ stories!

“I know that some might say that children’s stories are a shallow theme, but their sentiments are very dear to most people,” Jones says firmly. “But we can give these stories a different interpretation by making the music expressive and more complex.”

More ‘serious’ tracks on the new album include his reimagining of classic story *Match Girl* and the ballad *Eternity*, on which he reunites with singing partner Emma Friend. In 2004, Friend and Jones appeared on UK singing talent show *The X Factor* under the name 2 To Go. “I have never hidden the fact we were on *The X Factor* and went on the national arena tour afterwards,” Jones says of his popular TV past. “It was 14 years ago, but it now feels like a lifetime.”



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Pete Jones with Camel.

Now, Jones is concentrating on Red Bazar's new album, which he says is all but finished. "It is the most accessible of their albums so far as there is not quite so much death on it this time. We are happy with it and looking at releasing it in January."

Plans for 2019 so far comprise Francis Dunnery's Big Lad In The Windmill tour. "They have been fantastic. I used to think I was quite picky, but you put one note out of place and Francis is there, saying 'What are you doing? Don't do that!'"

Then Tiger Moth Tales and Red Bazar are back on the road for four more dates in the UK and Holland.

"I do have vague plans for new albums. But you must strike a balance because I don't want to keep people waiting another two years, but at the same time, I don't want to be putting out stuff every six months. I want to take it steady next year and see what transpires."



Jones in reflective mood at the piano.



It's certainly a world away musically, as now he's gone from Simon Cowell to Camel, having played live with the band since 2016. Jones says: "That tour really has been the dream. I wonder how many bands will get to do this in generations to come as the music industry becomes less and less long term."

"It was a tremendous experience and funnily enough, the year before, I went to the Phil Collins concert at the Royal Albert Hall," JoJones says. "So, there I am seeing Phil and the following year as it transpired, I was on the same stage. Life has taken some very strange turns. It was a great feeling to be in that hallowed hall and I simply relished it."

Tantalisingly he adds: "Andy [Latimer] and I have written a handful of songs together, two of which made it initially to the set and were played in Japan and Turkey. With hindsight, we should have waited until if — and when — we do an album together and present these songs as a package. It has been great to write with Andy and get some new stuff out there."

"One thing I love about prog is the musical changes that Tony Banks is so good at. A change of chord or instrument greatly changes the mood, and that is what has gone into *Kai's Journey*."

"You should also bear in mind that I do everything myself, which is a blessing and a curse. I am still using an eight-track cassette recorder that I combine with some software, so it is mostly analogue with a bit of digital thrown in there. However, a day will come when I will have to go into Rob Reed's studio and record in a state-of-the-art fashion. But for now, it is me sitting in a box room surrounded by instruments with a tape recorder."

Jones adds there are also a couple of projects with other people in the offing, about which he is currently keeping tight lipped. When pushed, however, he muses that Frost's main man may be a possible contender. "My dream collaboration would be me and Jem Godfrey, as I think we would get on quite well. Then I wonder if it might be a case of overkill as we are both keyboard players, we are both nutjobs — but he writes about marsupials and I write about pigs!" 🐷

Story Tellers Part 2 is out now via White Knight Records. See www.tigermothtales.com for more.

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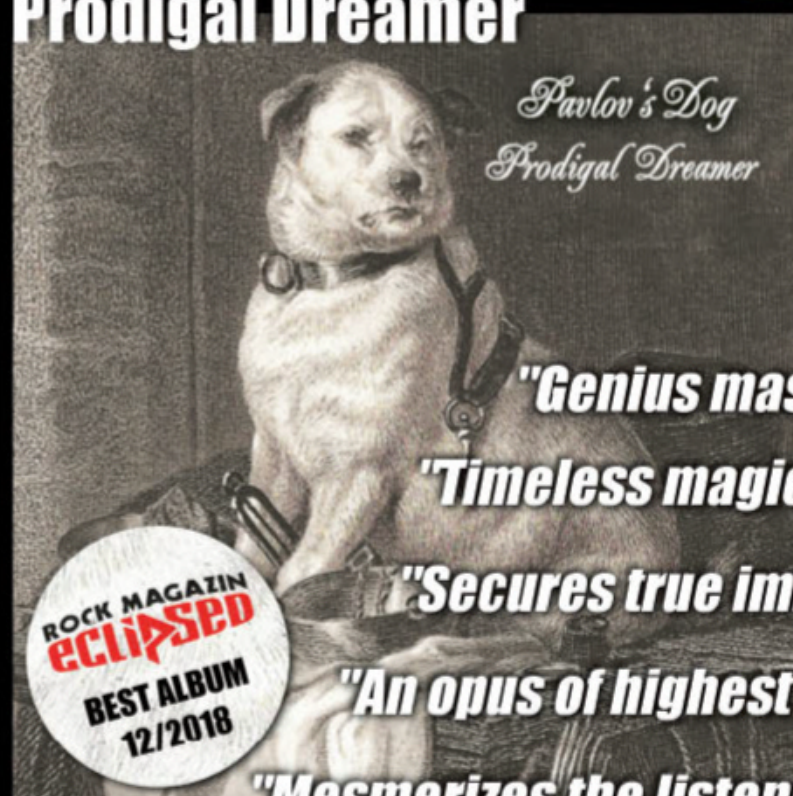
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25 YEARS OF INSIDEOUT. music

German record label **InsideOut**, home to such names as Spock's Beard, Steve Hackett and most recently Dream Theater, celebrated a quarter century of existence this year. *Prog* meets its founder to discuss the label's journey, and its future.

Words: Dave Everley **Portrait:** Kevin Nixon

Thomas Waber isn't a man given to unnecessary histrionics. The 48-year-old German is the model of Teutonic directness. His conversation is articulate and efficient, his answers blunt and honest. So when he describes something as "an existential crisis", you know he's not exaggerating.

The flashpoint he's referring to came in the summer of 2009. The label Waber spent 16 years building, InsideOut Music, had gone from fringe concern to progressive rock powerhouse. They had released records by Spock's Beard, Transatlantic, Symphony X, The Flower Kings, Devin Townsend and dozens more acts who helped shape the landscape of modern prog.

In the 1990s, the mainstream music industry viewed the prog scene with the same affection it would a leper colony — studiously keeping a safe distance. But the success of InsideOut took everyone by surprise. Everyone except Thomas Waber, at least.

In 2000, Waber signed a deal with a major German distribution company. The deal would extend InsideOut's reach hugely across Europe and into America. It meant they could put out more records, offer heftier advances, sign bigger names. But the upward swing shuddered to a halt in 2009 when InsideOut's parent company filed for

bankruptcy. It was no fault of Waber's, but the result was the same: one of prog's figurehead labels was perilously close to having the plug pulled on it.

"Was I worried? Of course," he says. "That was a very difficult time."

Thanks to a combination of business smarts, brinksmanship and sheer bloody-mindedness, Waber managed to save InsideOut. But he didn't just drag the label back from the edge of doom. He found a way to give it a new lease of life. Nearly a decade on from that near-extinction event, InsideOut are stronger than ever. And 25 years after the label was founded, it stands as one of the great bastions of the genre.

"InsideOut are 100 per cent responsible for prog's ongoing success over the last 25 years," says ex-Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy, who's known Waber since the early 90s and whose bands Transatlantic and Sons Of Apollo have both released albums on the label. "They carried the flag when nobody else would. So many bands have had an outlet because of InsideOut."

Thomas Waber is a child of the 80s. The first Genesis album he bought was *Abacab*, at the age of 11. He grew up feeling like he'd missed out on prog's golden era. "When I started listening to this kind of music in the early 80s, I thought, 'Wow,

I missed all the good stuff, because it all happened in the 70s,'" he says.

We're sitting in a boardroom in the London offices of InsideOut's parent company, Century Media, who are in turn owned by major label Sony Music. For someone who is an outlier on the bigger music industry spectrum, he looks at home here. But it's a role he's grown into. He's definitely a prog fan who started a label all those years ago,

"You've got people who like Yes and Genesis and Steve Hackett and everything else, and they're really snobbish about that. They would never check out Leprous or Haken or Animals As Leaders. Whether they'd like it or not, they wouldn't even give it a try."

Thomas Waber



Thomas Waber with his well-deserved Guiding Light Prog award in 2013.

rather than a record industry executive who spotted in niche in the market. He laughs at the thought of it being anything else. “If you were a record executive who wanted to make money in the 1990s, prog is *not* what you should have got into,” he says.

Waber may have felt that he missed out on prog’s glory days, but there was still plenty to keep him interested. He gravitated towards the neo-prog movement that blossomed in the UK, and Southampton’s IQ in particular. His early career would become inextricably linked with that of the band.

“I met Thomas when him and a few of his mates came along to a couple of IQ gigs on the *Are You Sitting Comfortably?* tour in Germany,” says

IQ guitarist Mike Holmes. “They just used to hang around. He wasn’t involved in the music industry at that point. He was a fan but he was very opinionated. I don’t mean that in a bad way — he had a lot to say, which was pretty good.”

Holmes points to a band rehearsal attended by Waber just after their second singer, Paul Menel had left, as indicative of his character. “Thomas encouraged us to go after our previous singer, Pete Nicholls. He was very vocal about that. And we did. And then we started talking about a new record, and how we would record and release it.”

IQ had recently parted company with their label, Phonogram. Rather than go through the arduous process of seeking out another deal, they decided to set up their own record company, Giant Electric Pea. Waber, who was studying economics, was brought into the fold. “It was myself, Thomas, our keyboard player Martin Orford and our lighting guy Laurence Dyer,” says Holmes.

Waber curtailed his studies to throw in his lot with GEP. “It was naïve,” he says. “But I guess it wasn’t the worst decision I made.”

The first album released on Giant Electric Pea was IQ’s *J’ai Pollette D’Arnu*, a collection of live tracks and B-sides that came out in June 1991. The initial plan was to focus on IQ’s own music, but the remit soon broadened. The label became home to fellow neo-prog outfit Jadis, rising Brit band Threshold, US nu-prog heroes Spock’s Beard and more. The music industry might not have been interested in prog, but Waber and the members of IQ figured that there were still plenty of people out there who were.

Waber himself was deeply embedded in the scene. He’d befriended the members of Dream Theater early in their career. “He was following us throughout Germany on that tour,” says Mike Portnoy. “He was like a Deadhead, going from show to show. I got to know him as a fellow prog fan, talking about Yes and Genesis and Pink Floyd and all that stuff.”

Waber had correctly spotted their crossover potential. “They opened up the heavy metal scene to prog,” he says now. “Before that, no one outside of that world would buy it, no magazines would write about it.”

Mike Holmes of IQ, whose career has been inextricably linked with Waber’s.



WILL IRELAND



Ice to see you:
Spock's Beard.

Dream Theater's against-the-grain success confirmed to Waber that there was a market for progressive music in the 1990s. What there wasn't was an infrastructure: there were few labels beyond the odd bedroom-run cottage industry, no professional distribution companies interested in dealing with the records that did come out. "There was a scene and infrastructure in the UK, but the rest of the world was dead as far as the genre was concerned," he says.

The situation needed rectifying. Giant Electric Pea were doing well, but they were based in Britain and didn't provide a steady income for Waber. In 1993, while still involved with GEP, he decided to set up a new company in Germany with a friend, Michael Scmitz, that would help get records that he liked into the hands of people who might also like them (Scmitz left the company amicably in 2006). For the name he took inspiration from an album by one of his favourite bands, The Tubes, that was lying on his desk. Its title was *Outside Inside*. Waber liked the sound of it, so he reversed the wording. InsideOut was born.

More than once, Waber pushes back hard at the suggestion that he's a figurehead for the prog scene. "It's never been about being on a mission for prog," he insists. "I grew up on 80s prog, but I'm not a prog nerd like some guys. It was more like, 'Why aren't IQ selling more albums?' or 'Hey, I like these bands, let's work with them.'"

That ethos drove InsideOut from its inception. Waber describes the label's early days "as a little convoluted, a little blurry". There was an overlap with

Giant Electric Pea, for whom he continued working. The new label initially distributed albums by GEP

The Tubes album that inspired InsideOut's company name.



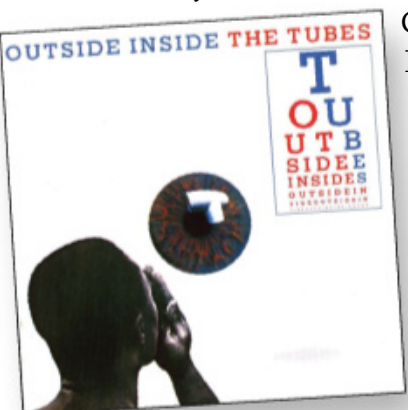
Symphony X in 2010.
Definitely deserving of
a bigger dressing room...

Mike Portnoy,
prog legend.

"InsideOut are 100 per cent responsible for prog's ongoing success over the last 25 years."

Mike Portnoy

WILL IRELAND





Thomas Waber and his colleagues.

bands such as IQ, Threshold and Spock's Beard. In 1994, Waber licensed former King Crimson violinist David Cross' solo album, *Testing To Destruction* after being given it at a music trade fair. "I was into King Crimson when I was young and I thought, 'That could be a cool thing to do.'"

Testing To Destruction – catalogue number IOM001 – became InsideOut's first proper release. Over the next few years, the label's identity began to coalesce around the bands Waber picked up: neo-prog (embodied by America's Enchant and Switzerland's Clepsydra) with a side order of prog metal (courtesy of the likes of Italy's Eldritch and New Jersey's Symphony X). Yet there was no InsideOut sound in Waber's head. The roster was built on entirely more pragmatic foundations.

"Signing bands is a mixture of availability, whether they're actually interested in working with you and whether you actually like those bands or see something in it that would work," he says. "It's always worked like that. You get presented with opportunities – you take some of them, You don't take some of them. Some of them you don't want to take."

He cites Symphony X as "the first significant actual signing we made". He had been tipped off about them by a PR company the label worked with. "I listened to them and thought, 'Wow,

that's pretty special.' And I could see how that would do well with the fans that liked Dream Theater." (He was proved right: Symphony X's 2007 album *Paradise Lost* is InsideOut's biggest-selling release.)

Conversely, Waber passed on the possibility of signing Porcupine Tree in the late 90s. The British group were still on their original label, Delerium, at the time, and were looking for a bigger home. "They were a different band back then," he says. "I did see the potential, but I didn't see that it would become as big as it did. It's not like those early Porcupine Tree albums weren't good, but they were more niche. Then they changed gears and all of a sudden they attracted a bigger audience." He shrugs. "You can't foresee something like that."

InsideOut did just fine without Porcupine Tree. For years, they operated under the radar of the mainstream music industry: big enough to thrive but small enough to not be interesting to what Waber calls "bigger players". That suited him fine.

"If the bigger players come in because they see an opportunity, you're going to have a problem," says Waber. "The thing with prog is that people in the mainstream music industry don't give a shit about it. Although there's always two or three people at a label that go,

'I've never really been able to talk about this here because it's really uncool, but I've always been a huge prog fan...'"

All that changed at the turn of the millennium. Waber had beefed up the label's roster with some established names: King's X guitarist Ty Tabor, the Mike Portnoy-led supergroup Transatlantic, Devin Townsend, Spock's

Beard. The latter's fifth album, 2000's *V*, had marked a significant step change for the label. "All of sudden things changed, because it sold really, really well," says Waber. "They were a band who were starting to break through to a more mainstream audience." He smiles wryly. "We had Spock's Beard and Transatlantic going like that, and Neal

[Morse, Spock's Beard frontman and Transatlantic keyboard player] called one morning and says, 'I've got to tell you, I've found God and I'm going to quit those bands.' You kind of go, 'What the fuck? It doesn't make sense.'"

The occasional bump didn't slow InsideOut down. They were becoming too big for the music industry to ignore. In 2000, heavyweight German distribution company SPV bought into the label. Suddenly, InsideOut had more reach, more money and more status.

Over the next nine years, the label flourished. With few genuine competitors, it owned the road when it came to contemporary progressive rock. It put

out albums by veterans (Steve Howe, Steve Hackett, Swedish pioneers Kaipa) and newer artists (Pain Of Salvation, The Tangent, Kino) alike. Its release schedule went from a handful of records every year to dozens. InsideOut was flying. And then everything nearly came crashing to the ground.



Symphony X's *Paradise Lost*: still InsideOut's biggest-selling release.



The first official release on InsideOut: David Cross' *Testing To Destruction*.



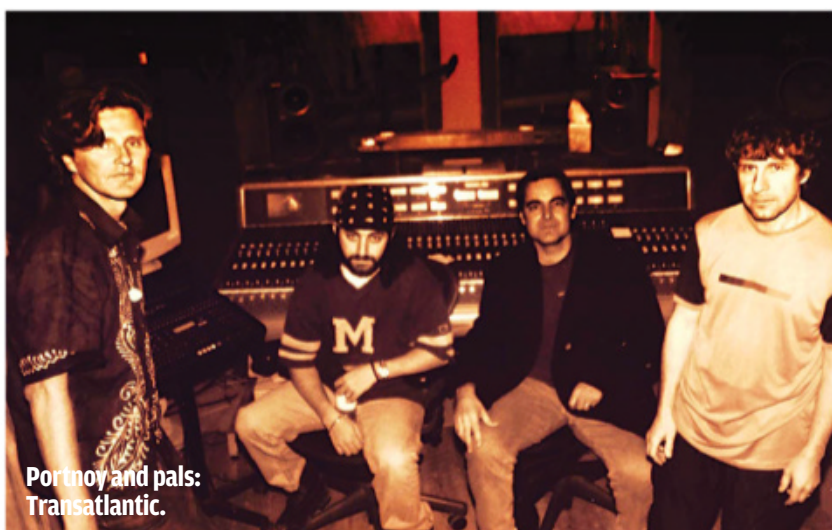
PRESS/SABINE AHRENS

Stairing contest: Kino.

Bankruptcy stories are complex and rarely interesting, and that of SPV is no exception. But when the company's owners began insolvency proceedings in May 2009, its impact on InsideOut was immediate. The administrators had frozen SPV's assets – and by extension, InsideOut's with them. Yet bills still needed paying, and Waber was liable for potentially ruinous personal damages if it they weren't.

"It happened so fast," recalls Waber. "You've got to do whatever you can to stay focused and try and sort out the situation."

The clock was ticking. As Waber tells it, InsideOut was an asset that SPV could have sold but they weren't ready to let go of it "because it didn't fit in with their plans".



Portnoy and pals: Transatlantic.



Right: Universal Music's ad congratulating Waber on his Prog awards win.

Waber decided he had only one option. He told SPV's owners that if they didn't cut InsideOut loose, he would hit the nuclear button. "It was, 'Okay, either, if you don't sell us in the next seven days, I'm going to go and declare bankruptcy myself.'"

It was a risky gamble that could have meant the end of everything Waber had spent the previous 16 years building. But he knew that if he could only extricate himself and his label from SPV's mess, there was still a future for InsideOut. "There was a feeling of, 'People are buying these records and listening to these bands,'" he says. "'There's something good here. Someone's going to help us out.'"

He held his nerve and his instincts proved right. SPV capitulated, and German label Century Media swooped in to save InsideOut. They had survived their existential crisis. The future was secure.

According to Waber, the last decade has been as smooth as it can be for a traditional record label in the digital age. There have been bumps: the departure of InsideOut mainstays Ayreon to Dutch label Mascot was one source of frustration. "You think, 'Did that have to happen?'" Then the next thing, you sign Kansas and go, "This is great.' You win some you lose some."

During the SPV years, Waber concentrated on the business side of things as much as he did scouting out bands. Since the turn of this decade, he's been able to concentrate on what he likes the most: signing and nurturing bands.

"Century Media said, 'Look, you should focus on what you do best and just get on with it.' I still have responsibilities, but I don't have responsibility for the whole company any more."

These days, the label's roster includes contemporary bands such as Riverside, Leprous, Bent Knee and Haken alongside the likes of Steve Hackett and Devin Townsend (via his Hevy Devy imprint). Yet Waber rarely signs brand new bands without a track. He thinks there has only been one in the label's history: Magnitude 9, who released their debut album on InsideOut in 1998. This is partly down to caution,



PRESS/MARK MARYANOVICH



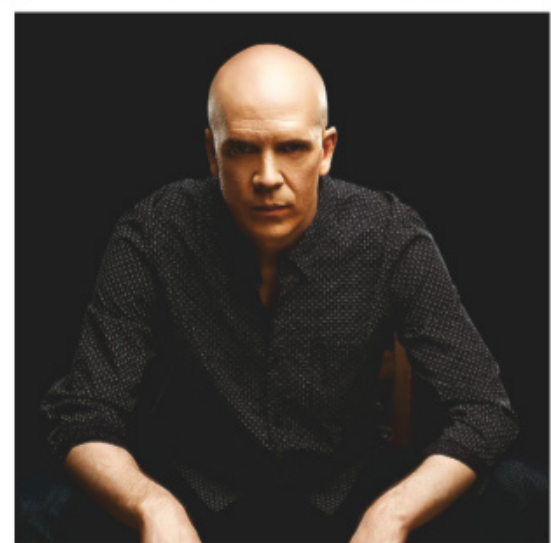
PRESS/MARK MARYANOVICH



PRESS/CHRIS ANDERSON



Clockwise from left: Roine Stolt, Bent Knee, Dream Theater, Devin Townsend, Haken, The Tangent, Pain Of Salvation, Frost*.



PRESS/TOM HAWKINS



"If you were a record executive who wanted to make money in the 1990s, prog is not what you should have got into."

Thomas Waber



That's not to say they don't believe in new music. In 2017, they signed US art rockers Bent Knee for their fourth album, *Land Animal*. "InsideOut are definitely the big label in that scene," says Bent Knee singer Courtney Swain. "I don't know if it's a holy grail for bands, but they have a muscle that other labels don't have. We definitely reached more people with them."

Waber estimates the label have released around 500 albums. Blind faith in whether or not a record would sell gave way a long time ago to accurate forecasts. Sometimes too accurate.

"You think, 'These bands should sell,' and then they sell exactly what you thought they would sell. It's never been, 'Wow, how did that happen?' It's always been, 'Why has nothing ever done better?'"

The answer, as he sees it, is simple: there's a ceiling on prog. "It's a niche genre. There aren't many bands that have managed to cross over: Dream Theater, Porcupine Tree, Spock's Beard before Neal found God. The prog scene has always been fairly insular."

He remains wary of that us-and-them mentality, especially when it's internalised within the scene. The barriers that have come up between fans of the genre's original masters and those who lean towards its new generation frustrate him. "You've got people who like Yes and Genesis and Steve Hackett and everything else, and they're really snobbish about that. They would never check out Leprous or Haken or Animals As Leaders. Whether they'd like it or not, they wouldn't even give it a try."

He's less frustrated at having to deal with the caprices of musicians. His no-bullshit conversational manner extends to his business practices.

"Dealing with bands is our daily bread and butter," he says. "I guess you sometimes wonder if you should have become a psychiatrist or worked in a kindergarten instead of setting up a record company, because that's what it's like with artists a lot of the time. But the way I work is that I'm very upfront and very blunt. People know that. And if they don't, they know it

within five minutes of being in a room with me. Some people are, like, 'Who's this idiot?' But most people appreciate honesty, because no one in the music business tells you the truth."

Are you on good terms with everyone who's left the label?

"I'm on speaking terms," he says. "When you start out, everyone is close, everything is a big family. But at some point you've got to be able to step back. If you can do that, you're fine."

"Oh, Thomas is very upfront with his opinions," says Bent Knee violinist Chris Baum with a laugh. "We've definitely had some interesting discussions with him. But his track record proves that he's right."

Mike Portnoy agrees: "Most of the time, I don't want to hear the opinion of someone who works at a record company," he says. "I usually go the opposite way. Thomas is one of the few people who I'll listen to, and what he says is usually spot on."

InsideOut's existential crisis is a distant memory today. The label is in as healthy a position as a modern record company can hope for in 2018. Over the past 12 months, they have released new albums by Spock's Beard, Kino, Riverside, Haken, Roine Stolt-fronted supergroup The Sea Within and Beardfish/Big Big Train guitarist Rikard Sjöblom's Gungfly, among others. Next year, there will be high-profile new albums from Steve Hackett, Devin Townsend, Nad Sylvan, Tim Bowness and Bent Knee.

Significantly, 2019 will see Dream Theater releasing their first ever album on InsideOut, more than a quarter of a century after Waber first met them. It does more than just bring their relationship full circle – it represents the convergence of two paths that have simultaneously but separately charted the journey of modern prog from the dark days of the early 1990s to its current bright renaissance.

Thomas Waber isn't the kind of person to oversell the part he or his label has played in the genre's resurgence. As he reiterates one last time: "I've never been on a mission for the prog scene." But if nothing else, the anniversary of the label he founded 25 years ago does occasionally give the man who once worried that he'd missed out on prog's golden era pause for thought.

"I look back on it and I realise that I've witnessed a lot of stuff first hand," he says. "Stuff that happened that people who are getting in the genre now, or even 10 years ago, didn't experience. That makes me think we've done something right." 

The InsideOut 25th Anniversary Compilation is out now. See www.insideoutmusic.com for more.

BUY, BEG, BORROW OR STEAL Ten essential InsideOut albums.



SYMPHONY X

The Divine Wings Of Tragedy (1997)

Released by Zero Corporation in Japan and InsideOut in Europe, the New Jersey outfit's third album revelled in its epicness: this was prog metal at its most bombastic, and all the more glorious for it.



SPOCK'S BEARD V (2000)

Thomas Waber cites the US band's fifth album as a key point in the label's success: it might have drawn on the genre's golden age for its influences, but stands as a high water mark of millennial prog.



PAIN OF SALVATION

The Perfect Element, Part 1 (2000)

Daniel Gildenlöw explores the tumult of childhood and adolescence on the Swedes' heavyweight third album. The sound of prog moving into the 21st century, and InsideOut with it.



TRANSATLANTIC

Bridge Across Forever (2001)

Thomas Waber was an early Dream Theater supporter, so it was inevitable that this Mike Portnoy-led supergroup would end up on his label. Their second album – featuring signature song *Stranger In Your Soul* – is one of the highlights of both Portnoy and InsideOut's back catalogues.



THE FLOWER KINGS

Unfold The Future (2002)

Prog lifer Roine Stolt has been making albums since the early 70s, but The Flower Kings' seventh (very) long player stands as their finest two hours and 20 minutes: it's equal parts symphonic grandeur and jazz-head freakouts.



AYREON

The Human Equation (2004)

Few other labels would have allowed maverick Dutchman Arjen Lucassen to spin his vision across countless albums, which goes some way to explaining InsideOut's success. Ayreon's sixth album remains as head-spinningly grandiose as it was the day it was released.



FROST*

Milliontown (2006)

Former Atomic Kitten backroom boffin Jem Godfrey made an unlikely prog figurehead, but his band's debut album dripped with class and atmosphere. A key staging post in the scene's mid-00s resurrection.



KINO

Picture (2006)

From Transatlantic to Sons Of Apollo, InsideOut specialise in nurturing supergroups. Excellent case in point: Kino, whose weapons-grade pedigree (Arena, It Bites, Marillion, Porcupine Tree) produced this bar-setting debut album.



DEVIN TOWNSEND PROJECT

Epicloud (2012)

The relationship between Townsend and InsideOut has been long and fruitful. The Canadian's 2012 album was a standout moment in his illustrious back catalogue: a wall of amped-up sci-fi noise that sealed his status as the Mad Scientist Of Modern Prog.



HAKEN

Affinity (2016)

Londoners Haken were already on their way to global success, but their fourth album sealed the deal. This was next-gen prog metal, right down to its 80s meets AI-themed semi-concept. And in the 15-minute *The Architect*, they served up a bona fide modern classic. **DEV**

Back with a second album from his electronic prog project **Shineback** alongside a slew of special guests, **Simon Godfrey** discusses stepping back into the spotlight with *Prog*.

SHINING ON...

Words: Dave Ling
Images: Sharon Miller



Simon Godfrey:
Shineback's mainman
had to step back to take
the band forward...

What a difference five years can make. Half a decade ago, with his other band, Tinyfish, seemingly on hiatus, Simon Godfrey's Shineback released their debut album, *Rise Up Forgotten, Return Destroyed*. At the time, mainman Godfrey spoke to *Prog* about "when" and not "if" Tinyfish would return, also ruminating upon the role that Shineback might play in such a process. "As long as the five of us are in the studio and making music together, Tinyfish is still alive and kicking," Godfrey said.

In 2018, while continuing to brandish the 'never say never' card that artists traditionally use as a get-out clause, Godfrey now admits that there's little likelihood of such a rebirth – certainly in a live capacity.

Simon Godfrey, and indeed life, have both moved on. In 2014, the London-based singer and multi-musician upped sticks and relocated to Philadelphia on America's East Coast. Besides Shineback, he has another group called Valdez.

"I've settled here and I like the place. There's a healthy prog scene – you even get paid!" he laughs down the transatlantic phone line. "That's always a nice perk of the job."

In an equally positive sense, the tinnitus cited by Godfrey among the reasons for the final dissolution of Tinyfish has now become manageable. "I still suffer from the condition, and I could write a book on it," he reveals. "Everyone's symptoms are different, but with me it was related to stress and caffeine. So I tried to reduce those things and it really helped."

Rise Up Forgotten, Return Destroyed represented not only Shineback's introductory statement but also the debut offering from an independent label called Bad Elephant Music. The label now houses almost 50 acts, from The Fierce & The Dead and Matt Stevens to The Gift.

"That first album was a joint venture between myself and David Elliott, who agreed



to release a record that was, for me, a real step into new territory," Godfrey explains. "If David was up for doing that, I was happy to let him work out the kinks of setting up a brand new venture on my album. The arrangement worked out well for both of us, both critically and commercially."

Nevertheless, its mix of pop, prog and electronic dance rhythms took some fans by surprise. Described in *Prog* 91 as "clever, engaging and thoroughly enjoyable", the follow-up, entitled *Dial*, retains those same ingredients.

"I'm a child of the early 1980s and I grew up on Depeche Mode and Japan, and also the trio of King Crimson albums from that decade that was so very different to the music of the previous decade," he states. "Myself and my brother Jem [of Frost* fame] have always been extremely interested in electronic music."

The element of EDM is utilised to colour Shineback's songs rather than in any jarring, intrusive sense, but for neo-prog purists it's bound to represent a stumbling block. Don't expect any form of apology from Godfrey.

"I'm not in this business to appease people, I'm here to make music that I find interesting," he states defiantly. "If I upset a few people, I don't really care. The whole idea of progressive rock is to progress, surely?"

Of equal significance, Shineback also play the melodic trump card to winning effect.

"Yeah," Godfrey agrees. "I like my tunes to have a mellifluous edge. At one end of the scale, I'm a fan of Godspeed You! Black Emperor and Throbbing Gristle, but neither of those bands even tickled the charts, and I also grew up on pop music. You should be able to hum a good pop tune in the car."

Godfrey began the process of writing a second Shineback album in 2015, only to realise he was repeating himself. He later referred to this period of frustration as "being trapped in a sonic maze". How was the exit discovered?

"I simply stopped walking further into that maze," he laughs. "Basically, I began the process too soon. There's always a temptation to bang songs out to order, but Shineback is a living thing. They come out of my own experiences, and the emotional and creative glass that I summon from had not fully replenished since the first album. So I stepped away again."

The upside was that Godfrey later remodelled four of those abandoned selections, using them last year on an EP entitled *Minotaur*, which served as a vital link in the chain to *Dial*. As ever, his partner in the rebooting of Shineback was Robert Ramsay, a long-time friend previously employed by Tinyfish as a lyricist and co-writer.

Asked why the arrangement works so well, Godfrey responds without hesitation: "Rob is a weirdo, that's the only way to describe him. But he's weird in the most beautiful and creative sense. Rob does and says things in ways that I would never, ever be able to anticipate. We were friends for a long, long time before becoming collaborators. Aside from writing lyrics he used to come onstage with Tinyfish in strange costumes and deliver these odd PeterGabriel-esque monologues."

Godfrey and Ramsay very much represent the yin and yang of Shineback.

"We're kindred souls," Simon believes. "One of the best things about him is that he's never dull. Rob is a cross between

"I'm a child of the early 1980s and I grew up on **Depeche Mode** and **Japan**, also the trio of **King Crimson** albums from that decade that was so very different to the **music** of the previous decade."

London calling: Godfrey is happy to have moved across the pond.

[graphic novelist] Alan Moore and the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, but he's an incredibly original thinker."

While *Rise Up...* was a full-blown conceptual piece (it was based around a central character named Dora who undertook a journey into her own dream world, encountering dark revelations buried in her subconscious), *Dial* is perhaps simpler to digest, its 11 songs linked by a broader theme of communication or, as Godfrey explains, "More often than not, failure to communicate."

After a quick wry chuckle he expands: "I'm fascinated by the whole element of ships that pass in the night, the 'nearly-but-never' factor that so often seems to send people's lives awry. Music exists to communicate and a musician writes a song and puts it out there but it's astonishing how regularly someone will come back with an interpretation that's completely different to how it was intended. But that's cool; you can believe whatever you like about the meaning of a particular song. It's another thing that I like about working with Rob — there is always a degree of in-built ambiguity."

Once again the record features an array of cast members. Some, such as Dec Burke, ex of Frost*, Touchstone/DeeExpus drummer Henry Rogers and Hywel Benett of the Dec Burke Band are returning from last time, while Ray Weston of Echolyn, We Are Kin's keyboardist Daniel Zambas, and the Valdez duo of Joe Cardillo and Tom Hyatt figure among the freshmen. It's another of the newbies — Karl Eisenhart of the US group Pinnacle — who provides an undoubted highlight of the album via an astonishing guitar duel with Godfrey on its 13-minute swansong, *Kill Devil Hills*, which was captured in a single take.

Though unwilling to single out anybody for special praise, Godfrey acknowledges the



importance of having retained Matt Stevens, guitarist of The Fierce And The Dead.

"Matt and I got to know each other in the days of the much-missed Peel," he states,

"I'm **fascinated** by the whole element of ships that pass in the night, the '**nearly-but-never**' factor that so often seems to send people's lives **awry**."

referencing the now demolished pub venue in Kingston upon Thames that staged many a prog concert. "We share a love of post-rock bands and his musical outlook, which ranges



from King Crimson to Voivod, very much resonates with my own. He's a gentle giant of a man. See him onstage and you'll never forget it. While up there he exudes violence and intensity, but encounter Matt away from that environment and he's not only a sweetheart but also very, very articulate."

Regrettably, there's very little chance of witnessing Godfrey and Stevens performing to an audience as Shineback.

"To get the kind of people with the technical and artistic facility to play this material live, it would be just too prohibitively expensive right now," Simon rues. "Further down the line, who knows... should the stars align maybe you will see Shineback live. I would love to do it but my bank manager would tell me in no uncertain terms that it isn't really pragmatic."

Might it be achieved by a small, swell-drilled core group that was unreliant upon the whole 'bells and whistles' approach?

"I don't think so. I could go down the Joe Jackson route and rearrange all of the music, but the bottom line is that with Valdez and the production and mixing work that I do, there's too

much other stuff on my plate."

So could we expect to hear anything further from Tinyfish?

"I wouldn't say it's impossible but the combination of geography and the fact that Paul [Worwood], our bassist, has retired from the music business means that coming back together wouldn't be very satisfying for me on a personal level," he responds. "The point of Tinyfish was that we were five friends who enjoyed each other's company. We are still in contact, but I don't see any realistic logistical way of making it happen." 

Dial is out now via Bad Elephant Music. See www.facebook.com/shinebackmusic for more information.

Happy chap: Godfrey has plenty of talented pals contributing to the album.

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In The Ascendancy

It may have began its inception in the 90s, but now **Andy Mackay**'s new music is finally coming to light, and though he takes inspiration from classical music and Psalms, he's adamant that it's still rock'n'roll. The Roxy Music founding member tells more to *Prog*...

Words: Sid Smith **Portrait:** Richard Piercy

“I was brought up a Methodist, so we sang a lot of hymns and went to chapel twice every Sunday when I was growing up in London. We sang hymns as they do in Welsh choirs, with lots of enthusiasm,” says Andy Mackay to *Prog* during a break in rehearsals for his *3 Psalms* concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall back in November (you can read our review on page 124). “Methodism was the Anglican or the British equivalent of gospel music really,” he continues. “I’m sure that was an influence on me.”

For Mackay, making and enjoying music has always been an act of inclusivity rather than something to be dogmatic about. His new album, *3 Psalms*, reflects this lifelong approach, and includes an almost kaleidoscopic swirl of stylistic traits and influences that feature elements of church music, electronica, classical music, jazzy daubings and a subtle rock undertow in places.

Utilising a string orchestra and choir – who also joined him at the live show – the album reflects Mackay’s love of classical music, which dates back to his days learning oboe and being a devotee of the Proms concerts at the Royal Albert Hall as a teenager in the early 60s.

“I still want to see this music in the context of rock’n’roll,” he explains. “I’m a rock musician.

I’m not actually a classical composer. They have a much more rigorous and disciplined approach to music than I do. I just write and play the music that feels right to me and it reflects my varied musical background. But I still feel that this is a rock album.”

3 Psalms may be recently released, but its genesis dates back to the mid-90s. It was also very much a personal challenge for Mackay.

“I was terribly excited because I’d got the new music software that was around then, Cubase, working on a second-generation Mac with a 1GB hard drive. It was considered quite miraculous at the time,” Mackay remembers. “So I got excited about the idea of samples and loops and so on. I wanted to work with a human voice so I wanted something that was speech-based. I’ve never been comfortable writing lyrics. I can’t quite get the balance and simplicity without it sounding a bit banal. I thought I’d use someone else’s words and it ended up with the Psalms. Initially, it was *Psalm 130*, ‘Out of the depths’, which appealed to me because it seemed like a movement from despair to hope. Which, in the mid-90s, seemed right. My personal life had been quite difficult at that time, and writing the music around *Psalm 130* was a good way to focus.

“Then I added the other two to sort of make a symphonic set-up so it has three movements. There’s a reflective, slightly doomier Psalm to start with, then *Psalm 90*, which is really about human mortality: ‘the days of our years are threescore years and 10’, and ‘you are dust and to dust you will return’, all of that stuff.”

Mackay came face to face with the spectre of his own mortality in 2017, when he was successfully operated on after being diagnosed with throat cancer. The addition of *Psalm 150*,

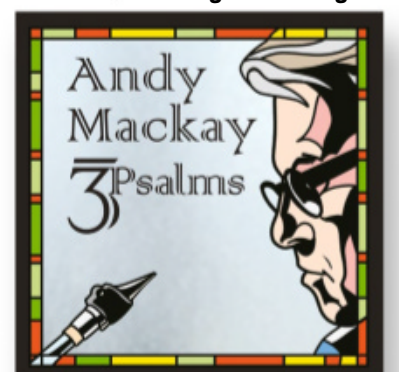
“I just write and play the music that feels right to me and it reflects my varied musical background. But I still feel that this is a rock album.”

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Andy Mackay: sax appeal.

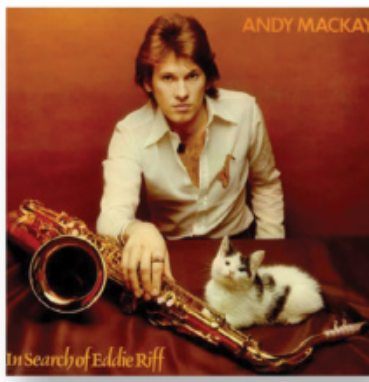
3 Psalms: a long time coming.



Andy Mackay: "I'm a rock musician,
not a classical composer."

which he says is basically about feeling part of a bigger universe, gave the piece a three-movement shape, and a running time of around 40 minutes felt right to him.

Outside of Bryan Ferry's career, when it comes to Roxy Music members, Phil Manzanera's solo work tends to garner the most attention. Albums such as Manzanera's 1975 solo album, *Diamond Head*, and his band Quiet Sun's sole album, *Mainstream* (both recorded alongside each other at the same time), as well as prog rock supergroup 801's 1976 release *801 Live*, have been rightly revered over the years. Mackay's solo output, by comparison, has been largely and unfairly overlooked. His commissions for television included theme music and the songs for Thames Television's *Rock Follies*, whose soundtrack promptly netted Mackay a No.1 hit album. Yet away from his work in television, his solo albums have



1974's *In Search Of Eddie Riff*.

of processed guitar, ethereal oboe, trickling piano and the tolling chimes of Big Ben create an ambient-style sound portrait of the city and the song's two star-crossed lovers that is both touching and revelatory. It's a project for which Mackay still harbours a great deal of affection.

"I was really enjoying it, but I'd intended to make that more of a live thing. But then, for various reasons, we couldn't quite get it working live due to logistical problems. I always seem to choose difficult instrumentations to work with because we had a concert harp player, another Roxy player Julia Thornton, who was with Roxy in 2001. So we were carrying a harp around as well as Paul Thompson's drums, and we had an experimental keyboard and synthesiser player. It ended up being more complicated because we were spread about:



GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Roxy Music, 1972, L-R: Paul Thompson, Bryan Ferry, Andy Mackay, Brian Eno, Phil Manzanera.

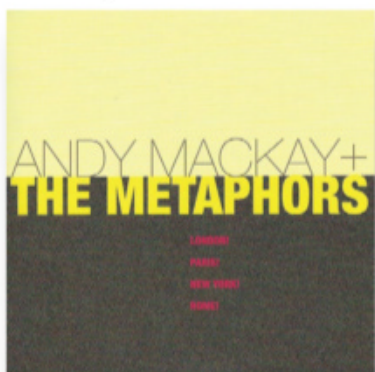
never yielded the attention they have deserved. 1974's *In Search Of Eddie Riff* was a glittering, glitzy and deliberately kitsch celebration in the style of a fictional 50s instrumental idol, and contained some fun rock'n'roll settings of Schubert and Wagner. Also lurking amongst the brash riffs, warbling organ and twangy guitar was the enigmatic, Proust-referencing *Time Regained*, in which a chorus of overlapping tape-looped saxes connected with Terry Riley's time-lag generator and Eno's *Discreet Music*.

Mackay's next solo album, 1978's *Resolving Contradictions*, offered a pan-cultural observation on life in China, inspired by his visit there. Alongside grand themes, orchestral strings and incipient funk-tinged grooves, Mackay's saxes and oboes described fiery lines in taut arrangements that reconciled notions of Western rock and Eastern sensibilities. While Mackay and Phil Manzanera's 1980s joint project, *Explorers*, veered towards the more mainstream songwriting avenues, the sax player's desire to bring wildly contrasting elements together was central to perhaps his most overlooked solo undertaking, Andy Mackay And The Metaphors. The six-tracker, *London! Paris! New York! Rome!*, released in 2008, was an exquisite post-rock travelogue of tunes from the American songbook, such as *Three Coins In The Fountain* and *New York, New York*, and a stunning, spacious resetting of The Kinks' classic, *Waterloo Sunset*. Shimmering waves



Rock Follies' Little Ladies.

The underrated *Metaphors* album.



BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Going green: Andy Mackay at the Royal College Of Art video studio in London, 1972.

Bristol, East Anglia, Newcastle and so on. So for various reasons I couldn't take it as far as I wanted."

Also included on the record is a darker arrangement of Roxy Music's *Love Is The Drug*. That song, which hit the top five in singles charts on both sides of the Atlantic, is being revisited once again by Mackay as part of his Queen Elizabeth Hall concert, along with other songs from Roxy Music's repertoire.

"I sketched out some of the ideas but largely it's down to Lucy Wilkins, who played violin in Roxy Music, and another old colleague of mine, Ray Russell, who worked with me on *Rock Follies*," Mackay explains. "They've come up with some arrangements which are much more unusual than most rock-meets-classic collaborations. Quite often in effect people will just play keyboard parts on strings, but what we've done are things that can only be done with real

strings: like playing with the back of the bow bouncing on the strings, playing without any vibrato and playing harmonics and very strong attack or very quietly. There's a whole range of sounds that you can get, and when there's a 16-piece string orchestra doing that you do get a big lift that you really can't reproduce on anything else."

The idea of adapting Roxy Music songs for *3 Psalms* live came fairly late in the day as the date for the concert began to loom on the horizon.

"Because Phil Manzanera was going to be guesting at the *3 Psalms* concert, I thought since we were all going to be in the same room I decided to use the choir and orchestra and work on Roxy Music songs," Mackay explains. "I think this is a great way of digging out some of the ways Roxy worked in the middle period, certainly. Quite a lot of the songs we're doing are the ones that I co-wrote. One of them

"If you ask me what it was like recording halfway through *Siren*, I would have to really struggle to remember. But the first album was all done in a daze and left a very strong impression."

is a version of *A Song For Europe*." The fact that the piece is being performed at a time of Britain's political antipathy towards the European Union is not lost on Mackay. Playing the tune now has an unmistakable melancholy resonance with the current situation, he says. "You think, 'Well, where are we going with Europe?' It looks like it's going to be a tragedy whatever happens. So there's a slightly tragic quality about it."

Talk of his adaptations of Roxy Music inevitably turns to the recent boxed set special edition of the band's 1972 debut. For many fans, Steven Wilson's surround sound mix was the jewel in that particular crown, though not for Mackay, who admits he doesn't possess a surround sound set-up at home. For him, it was returning to demo tapes from May 1971 that gave him a near-Proustian rush of remembrance.

"It was interesting, particularly listening to the demo tape, which we did in Eno's flat on a quarter-inch tape recorder," he remembers. "I think it was interesting how much oboe there was. I was an oboe player when I started, and learning sax as I went along. I didn't buy a tenor sax until we were in the studio recording the first album. I was really struck by how much Eno was playing on those tracks too, lots of synth and really quite strange, experimental stuff. I hadn't heard it, some of it, for 40 years, but I remembered it incredibly clearly."

"The first things you do, the first few gigs and albums, remain very strong in your mind," he continues. "If you ask me what it was like recording halfway through *Siren*, I would have to really struggle to remember, but the first album was all done in a daze and left a very strong impression."

"It was interesting to listen to it all again and hear some of the directions that we hinted at but didn't quite take. A kind of Roxy as it might have been, as I thought it was going to be originally. We thought it might be kind of more instrumental art school experimental band and it ended up much more of a mainstream rock'n'roll band. It's a mixture of our impatience and enthusiasm and naivety, I think. We weren't super young. We weren't 18. Bryan and I were both in our mid-20s and Phil and Eno were in their early 20s and Paul I think had only just turned 20, I think. We thought there wasn't any time to waste so we just hurled ourselves at it really," he laughs.



Andy Mackay:
Psalm reader.

Andy Mackay and
Phil Manzanera at
the 2018 Prog Awards.

Presenting the orchestral arrangements of Roxy Music and his *3 Psalms* in a single concert doesn't feel like any kind of contradiction to Mackay. In fact, it's all part of a continuum that he's been part of for all of his professional career. "The origins of the *3 Psalms* were definitely there in the very early days of Roxy. I brought some of that classical background to Roxy and then of course when Eddie Jobson joined he added another element of classical influence as well, which I think Bryan used quite well on some of the songs we co-wrote together, which expanded the whole harmonic range a great deal."

After such a long period of gestation, Mackay is pleased that the *3 Psalms* album will finally have found its way beyond a small coterie of friends and out into the wider public and the world at large. After such a long gestation period from start to finish, does Mackay feel that everything has now come full circle? "I'm very pleased to complete it. I think it has the best of my musical experience. I'm incredibly lucky to be able to use experimental music and rock'n'roll and classical music and church music, all of which have been a big part of my life, and sort of fighting each other and I've tried to put all that together in one piece, in one place." 

3 Psalms is out now via Good Deeds Music.
See www.andymackay.co.uk for more information.



Underworld

Prog and dance music? The idea may make you baulk, but these guys listened to ELP and Crimson, took tips from Hawkwind and Captain Beefheart and are hailed as true mavericks of music. So now we have to ask: **how prog are Underworld?** **Words:** Johnny Sharp

Multi-segmented 15-minute tracks. Rhythms that seem to trip you up, flip themselves inside out and then morph into a completely different beat. Impressionistic, cinematic soundscapes. Cryptic, surreal lyrics and found sounds. Co-opting of several different genres within the same track, including jazz, world and classical influences. Extended instrumental passages. Conceptually conceived sleeve artwork and thematically linked tracks.

Given all these characteristics in Underworld's music, it's hardly surprising that the first two genres listed on their Wikipedia entry begin with the word 'progressive'. But while they may have made progressive house, or progressive trance, or experimental, avant-garde techno, were they prog?

Not particularly, if you consider prog to be a simple contraction of the term progressive rock, because for all the myriad varieties of music Karl Hyde and Rick Smith have made since they were first in a band together playing dub-influenced, oddball synth-pop in the early 80s, you'd struggle to label any of them 'rock'.

But one thing Underworld have always been is true mavericks, of a kind that prog has always embraced and celebrated. And it turns out, once you

“We were both big ELP fans, and I’m sure if you look at our record collections back then you’d have seen Yes, Greenslade, King Crimson...”

get talking to their lyricist, vocalist and resident surrealist Karl Hyde, they have a lot more in common with the music elsewhere in this magazine than you might at first assume.

The first thing that disqualifies Underworld from true progress in some listeners' eyes is that they're a dance act. Because to some, dancing to prog is as sensible and desirable as hang gliding to astrophysics. And where are the guitars? Actually there are lots in Underworld's music, but their sound is invariably warped electronically and thrown into a larger mix. But even if they are an electronic act, didn't a huge boost to prog's early development come from the use of groundbreaking, experimental electronic instruments such as the Mellotron? And since when were synthesisers not an essential part of prog's classic sonic blueprint?



1994's interestingly titled *dubnobasswithmyheadman* album.

Hands up if you're a prog fan and you don't even know it! Underworld performing in Osaka, 2017.

We also shouldn't forget that early prog's fingerprints were all over the early electronic music scene. There are few bands in history more influential than Kraftwerk, and they began life as a progressive art rock act, even if they cut their hair and swapped 22-minute one-side-of-an-LP compositions for shorter pieces before they made their best-known records. Krautrock was also a huge influence on electronica just as it inspired progressive rock, and Hyde points to it as a major influence.

"We both grew up listening to John Peel," he explains, "and that encompassed everything from dub to prog to krautrock, so even when we began making electronic music, we brought all that stuff with us."

Both dipped their toes in prog as fans growing up in the 70s, with Hyde recalling, "I was a huge Hawkwind fan. To me, that was techno before techno, trance before trance."

"We were both big ELP fans, and I'm sure if you look at our record collections back then you'd have seen Yes, Greenslade, King Crimson..."

Yet for much of the 1980s, Hyde and Smith were pursuing a career as more of a mainstream synth-pop act, but even then they had a desire to emulate heroes that had blended pop sensibility with an urge to experiment and resist categorisation. "Our early sound was based around bands like The Tubes," he says, "but then our love of German electronic music took over, and that kind of spacey-sounding landscape music. Records like Bowie's *Low* and a lot of film music connected with us, and that led us towards techno."

According to Hyde, whenever they would find themselves "back on the dole" after another failed attempt at pop stardom, they would react by making "outsider music". And then they suddenly found themselves part of a huge underground movement

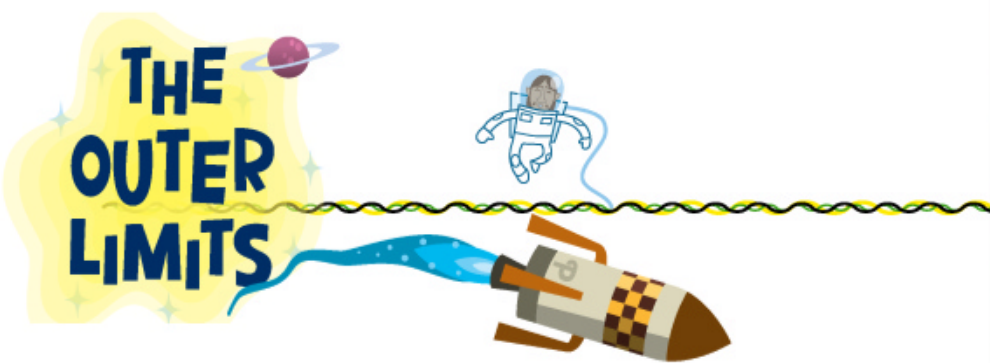


KAZUKI WATANABE

PAUL BERGEN/GETTY IMAGES

Underworld in 1996. This photo couldn't be from any other decade, really...





Underworld in 2010. Frankly, if this ain't prog, we don't know what is.



PEROU

of like minds: acid house. But even then, he says he heard prog in the mix, and "great similarities between Tangerine Dream and acid house".

The modern-day Underworld, referred to by band and fans, in distinctly progstastic style, as Underworld MkII, was born when DJ Darren Emerson joined them in 1990.

While he helped them develop a tighter techno basis to their sound, Smith and Hyde were inspired to try a different approach to writing music, one that broke them out of their previous generic shackles.

"I wanted to try a less traditional approach, so I started just wandering around writing what I saw, what I felt, as it occurred to me. Then Beefheart kept creeping in. I always loved the way he could use words. One of my favourite lyrics is on *Shiny Beast, Tropical Hot Dog Night*. The line 'steppin' out of a triangle into striped light' really resonated with me. I started to study Beefheart's view of the world, the way he paints, his lyrics, the things he describes, it just blows me away."

Those influences can be heard in the surreal, stream-of-consciousness lyrical snatches punctuating Underworld's music, an approach that first hit its stride on 1994's *dubnobasswithmyheadman*. By that point, it was clear that Underworld had an unfashionable yet very prog disregard for the constraints of the three-minute pop song or conventional pop or dance music templates. The album lifts off with the 13-minute journey through *Mmm Skyscraper I Love You*, which would end up being a favourite at the genre-agnostic Club Dog and Megadog rave nights that grew out of London then spread across the country in the early 90s. This scene fostered prog-friendly acts such



1996's *Second Toughest In The Infants*.



ANTHONY PIDGEON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

L-R: Darren Emerson, Karl Hyde, Rick Smith. October 1999.

as Ozric Tentacles and Eat Static as well as electronica legends such as Orbital.

"When we made *dubno...* and [1996 follow-up] *Second Toughest In The Infants*, our attitude was, would you ask Miles Davis to make a three-minute pop song? The music goes where it needs to go. The idea of a 'chorus' – what's that? A noise recurring? A peak of energy? Maybe it's a phrase, or a riff, but to us it was all part of the highs and lows of a journey, which we wanted to occur naturally, not have to turn up at rigidly determined intervals."

Another proggy characteristic of some of Underworld's best tracks is their penchant for unconventional, syncopated rhythms, and beats that mutate to disorientating yet hypnotic effect. Check out *Juanita* or *Spoonman, M.E.* It's part of an approach to music that is happy to reveal layers of melodies, sounds and beats that unfold on repeated listens.

"We always said the singer should play supporting role to the rhythm section," Hyde explains. "The vocalist

“We’d be on before Korn or Metallica and that was amazing because we knew our challenge was to turn them on, even though at some gigs the crowd would look at us as if they wanted us to die horribly and quickly. In the end, we’d invariably turn it round.”



PAUL BERGEN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

is an oscillator, because the human voice is an exciting instrument that can make any sound you want. So the first two things you were meant to hear was the groove, and the bass, then later all the other melodies, and later people would say, 'Oh, is that guy actually singing something there, oh wow! I've been listening to it for two years and I only just noticed that!'"

After a remix of *Born Slippy .N.U.X.X.* was included on the soundtrack to *Trainspotting* in 1996, Underworld were catapulted into dance music's big league. And although they continued to make acclaimed, experimental records such as 1999's *Beaucoup Fish*, Hyde feels they lost their way a little.

"As it got bigger and bigger, I think the dance scene lost this pirate spirit that was such a good aspect of outsider culture. We'd played in castles, up



Underworld today,
L-R: Rick Smith
and Karl Hyde.

ROB BAKER-ASHTON



It'll be all white on the
night! 2007 promo shot.

PEROU



Karl Hyde.
Suits you, sir.

1999's *Beaucoup Fish*.



mountains, and old gun turrets or on beaches, then all of a sudden we were in health and safety meetings and the spirit of adventure was lost."

Meanwhile, Hyde was finding that the party scene was having an adverse effect on him. "I was a performing alcoholic and it was killing me," he admits. But once he called time on the 24-hour party, Underworld would continue to broaden their creative horizons, despite Darren Emerson leaving the band in 2001. The jazz-inflected *Cups* that opened 1999's *Beaucoup Fish* was laced with classical-style orchestral motifs, while they were soon incorporating world music elements on 2002's *A Hundred Days Off*.

For Hyde, this was a reflection of a musical landscape that had opened up considerably since the turn of the 90s.

"It was great to play to audiences that didn't know anything about what genre we were from. That was fantastic — we'd be on before Korn or Metallica and that was amazing because we knew

our challenge was to turn them on, even though at some gigs, the crowd would look at us as if they wanted us to die horribly and quickly. In the end, we'd invariably turn it round."

He remains a big fan of genre-splicing, but belongs firmly to the 'talent borrows, genius steals' school of eclecticism. "When it's just a case of sticking guitars onto techno, or a dance beat on a guitar track, it doesn't do much for me. I like it when a band really hijack another genre. I grew up hearing progressive musicians using jazz or classical and incorporating German electronics into their sound. When you'd hear bands like Hawkwind or King Crimson, they took elements from lots of genres and assembled them together. If you like it, don't just nick it — subvert it and take it on a journey to somewhere else."

Above all, what Underworld have in common with prog musicians is their desire to challenge themselves and their audience. As *Prog* speaks to Hyde, he's working on a new piece with Smith, part of an ambitious plan to put out a new track every Thursday. Oh, and there's a concept behind it too...

"We're releasing tracks as a series with *Drift* as the title and main theme — whether that is the idea of drifting in the physical sense or, say, drifting as a car racing thing. It's audio-visual, with accompanying films, but it's really exciting because we have to come up with tracks every week — sometimes the day before release, we don't even have a track, so Rick and I are like, 'We've got to pull something out here.' I find it refreshing to change from the old way where six months in advance the album's done and you have to wait to put it out. Potentially, with this, we can release tracks whenever we want to, based on something we heard or an idea we had last night."

That also links in to Tomato, the design and film collective the duo are part of, which has come up with their album sleeves and other multimedia events they've been part of.

"It goes back to Robert Fripp talking about small, independent mobile networks of intelligent people sitting outside corporate structures and exchanging ideas," says Hyde. "We've taken that idea as a blueprint since 2000. So I guess we have Fripp to thank for how we do things. Is that prog enough for you?"

That'll do nicely, thanks. 🍷

For more information on Underworld and *Drift* see www.underworldlive.com/drift.

YOUR SHOUT!

They may have grown up listening to ELP, King Crimson, Greenslade and Hawkwind, but it's the *Prog* readers' views that matter: how prog were Underworld?

"I loved their predecessor, Freur."

James Griffiths

"If it's who I think they are, then possibly not, really..."

Andy Wyatt

"Freur's *Doot Doot* is a classic."

Andrew William Graham

"Progtronica, maybe?"

Joshua Creasey

"I bloody love Underworld."

Moray Macdonald

"I'd rather listen to Underworld than Van der Graaf Generator."

Jim

"Good choice! Definitely one of the more experimental and progressive bands in the EDM genre. They even have some proper songs!"

Neil Hopkins

"One of the best dance bands out there, constantly moving forward, still going strong. Songs like *Cowgirl*, *Rez*, *King Of Snake*, to name but a few, are awesome. Progressive dance music indeed."

James Shardlow

"I think with this choice I now know where my outer limit is."

Steve Hawkins

"For me they're a direct descendant of the likes of Tangerine Dream, but with a dance beat. The long pieces that gradually evolve carried the progressive ethos into new territory."

Martin Ingram

"Definitely proggy in da house and I very much enjoyed *Caliban's Dream* at da 'Limpics, though *Rez* is probably my favourite..."

Spike Worsley

"They are prog in spirit. Fearless and always intriguing."

Richard East

"Very cool music, everything I have heard by them sounds fantastic. The use of *Born Slippy* in *Trainspotting* was intense, I love 'em."

Buzz Elliott

"Karl Hyde's two albums with Eno and Rupert Hine's production of Underworld's debut (and subsequent work together) certainly points them in the direction of prog."

Phil Morris

"I know Mr Daryl Easlea extols their virtues as an underrated prog band. Have to say that I'm not convinced..."

Ian Pope

"They are in that progressive field of electronic music that stretches from Tangerine Dream, through The Orb to Lunatic Soul today."

Paul Leader

"Not for me, thank you."

Paul Swanton

Perchance To Dream

From finding joy in risk-taking to appearing on film soundtracks, **Pavlov's Dog's David Surkamp** assures *Prog* that there's life in the old dog yet as they celebrate the release of their sixth album...

Storytelling: Malcolm Dome

“Art should be dangerous. There is nothing to be gained by playing safe. If you do that, your music will be boring.”

Pavlov's Dog mainman David Surkamp knows how to make an artistic statement, and isn't afraid to take a risk or two, as evident on the band's new, sixth album *Prodigal Dreamer*.

“We started to do a mix of the song *Paris*,” continues Surkamp, referring to a track on said new album, “and it seemed to be missing something. What it obviously needed was a guitar solo at the end. So I picked up my guitar, went in and did it on the spot. It was purely spontaneous – one take.”

Surkamp has always stomped to the beat of his own drum. Ever since Pavlov's Dog first released their remarkable debut, *Pampered Menial*, in 1975, he and the various musicians

who have sashayed through the band have set out to make progressive statements that capture the spirit of the moment.

“I grew up in St Louis, where all you heard was blues and soul,” Surkamp remembers. “For me, seeing The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan* TV show in 1964 was a major turning point. But what really inspired me was seeing Procol Harum on their *Shine On Brightly* tour in 1968. I was 16 years old, and they made a massive impression [on me]. And they were supported by Nazzy, Todd Rundgren's band. Witnessing Rundgren and Robin Trower with Procol Harum made my mind up: I went straight out and bought my first Fender Telecaster. I still have it to this

day: that was the guitar I used to do the solo I mentioned on *Paris*.

“But what I learned very early on is that you should never copy somebody else,” he says.

“Those two bands were a big part of what propelled me towards being a musician. However, does my guitar style remind you of Rundgren, Trower or anyone else? No, it doesn't. My vocals are also unique, and so is the way I write. You either conform and become a faceless part of the crowd, or you live dangerously and go out on your own.”

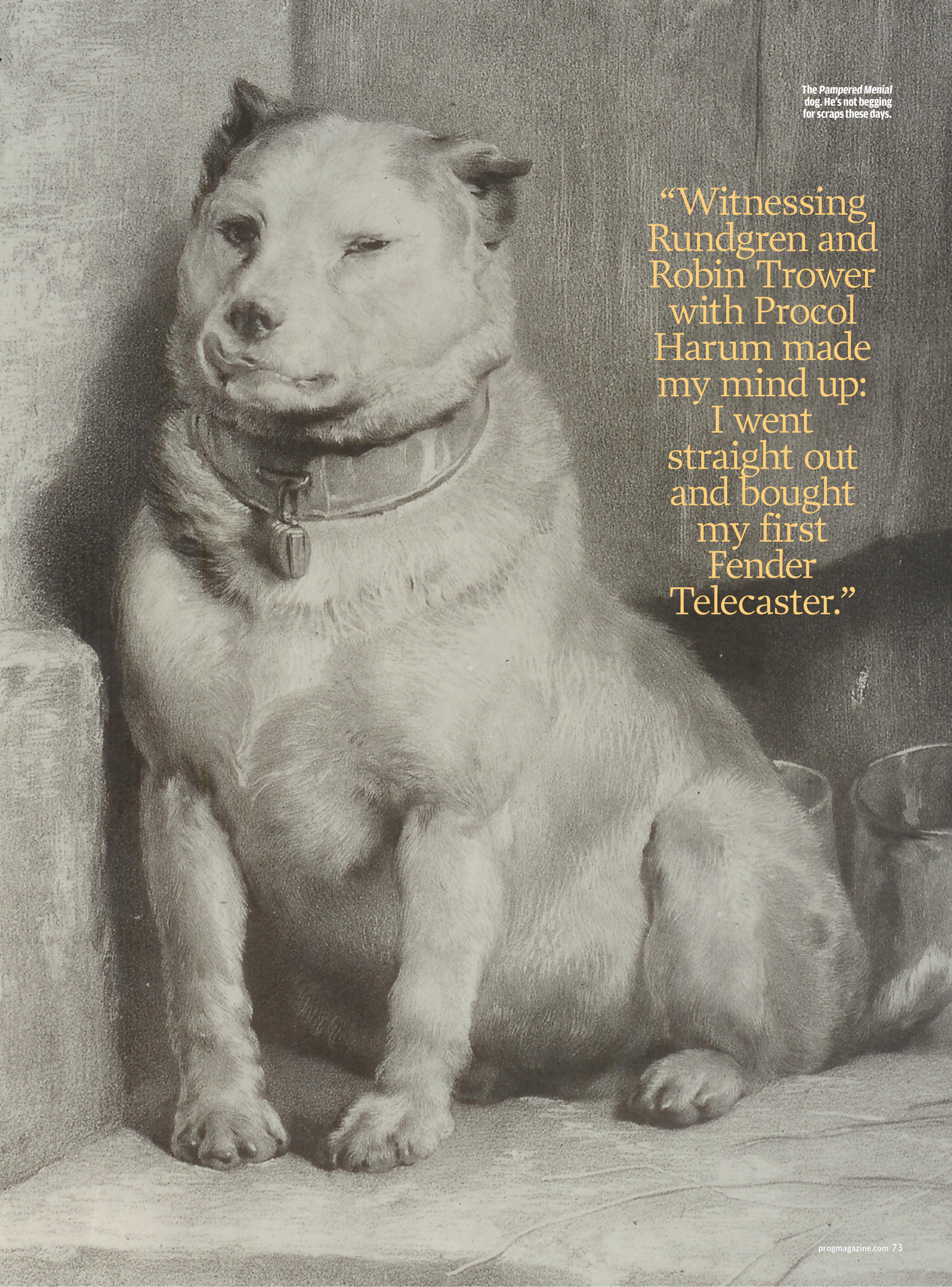
Surkamp is slowly beginning to reap rewards for a career that has earned him many critical plaudits, but little commercial reward. Yet, every studio album that Pavlov's Dog have



Pavlov's Dog's new album, *Prodigal Dreamer*.



Pavlov's Dog in 2018, with David Surkamp (centre).



The Pampered Menial
dog. He's not begging
for scraps these days.

“Witnessing
Rundgren and
Robin Trower
with Procol
Harum made
my mind up:
I went
straight out
and bought
my first
Fender
Telecaster.”

done — astonishingly only six in more than 40 years — offers a singular insight into the mind of the man who defines what they represent. And if you look at the cover of the new album, it clearly has more than a passing resemblance with the iconic sleeve of the aforementioned debut. That's no coincidence.

"Remember the butcher's dog on the cover of *Pampered Menial*?" Surkamp asks. "He was under the table trying to get scraps. Now, the dog on the new artwork is a lot healthier, and is picking off the meat from the butcher's table. I guess that represents who I am. I feel like I am finally getting more response for what I am doing than I have ever done before. It's not like I am seeking big record sales, or a Grammy. But it's a relief to know that all the heartache hasn't been for nothing."

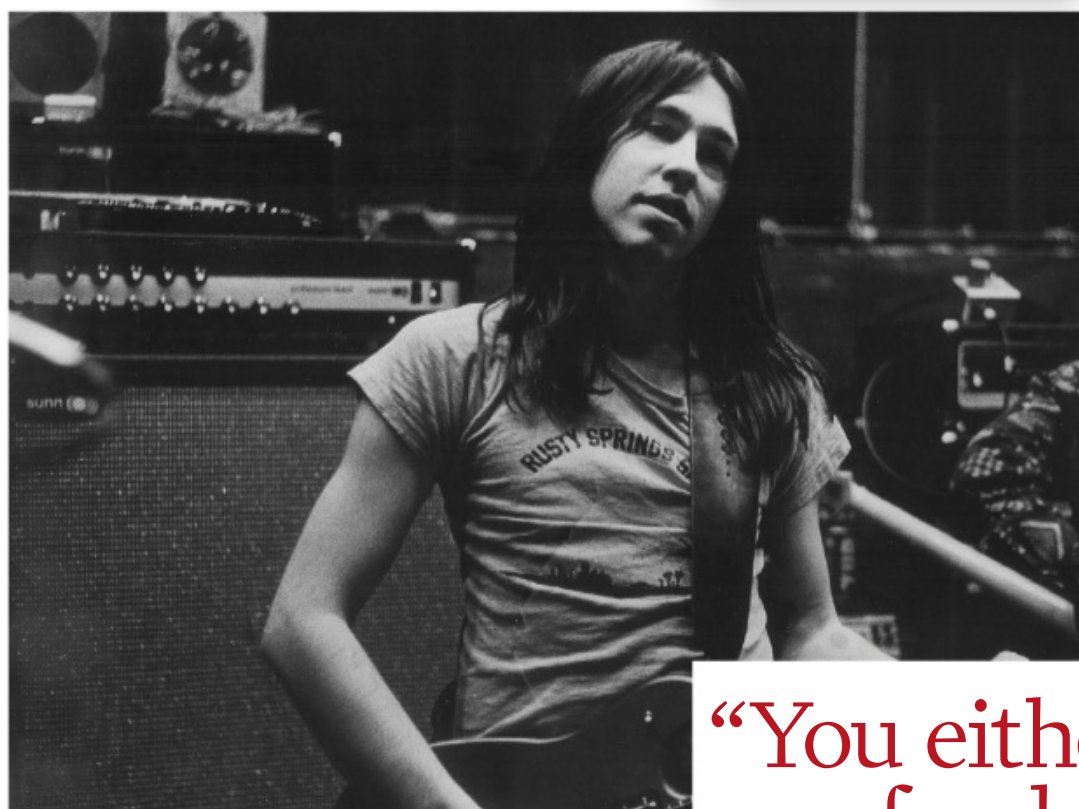
On the new album, Surkamp has brought together material that spans the decades. *Paris*, for instance was something he and original bandmember Doug Rayburn first worked on in the early 70s, while *Hard Times* is a lot more contemporary.

were done that way — which is really old school. But nothing beats having everyone in there looking at one another and bouncing off what we're all doing."

This is the first studio album that Pavlov's Dog have released since the deaths of three people who were closely associated with the band. Rayburn passed away in 2012, original bassist Rick Stockton died in 2015, and keyboard player Nathan Jatcko (who was in the band for three years from 2015) committed suicide earlier this year. Surkamp feels their loss heavily.



Clockwise from left: 1975's *Pampered Menial* album, Pavlov's Dog in 1975, and David Surkamp in 1974.



"The latter reflects the way I felt when Donald Trump was inaugurated as the president of the United States," Surkamp explains. "When I saw that happening, I felt so depressed. Not that the lyrics are specifically about him, but it represents how we are now living in dark times. I feel like what I did on this track was similar to what Woody Guthrie did in the 1930s. He had Roosevelt as president, and I have Trump!"

"I guess all my songs draw on my situation, although not everything is autobiographical. I suppose you won't get many laughs from my songs! Writing is very cathartic for me."

For *Prodigal Dreamer*, the band collaborated with engineer Paul Hennerich, who has worked with orchestras and on jazz projects.

"Paul is one of those people who knows how to get the best out of musicians," Surkamp says. "And he is a master at recording in a live environment, which is what I wanted this time. So we had all of the band in the same room playing together. Paul miked everything up to capture the ambience of what we were doing. All the basic tracks

Moreover, there's also talk of a movie based around Surkamp.

"There's a filmmaker in Missouri who apparently wants to do a movie inspired by the love story involving Sara [his wife, who is also in the band] and I," Surkamp explains. "It's still in the very early stages, and who knows whether or not it will happen. But they are also talking of re-recording some of our music for it using an orchestra. I think that will make for a very interesting project."

After more than 50 years in music, Surkamp remains adamant to do things his way.

"I am not someone who has ever been comfortable playing anything written by others," he says firmly. "In my earlier days, I could perform some of Bob Dylan's simpler compositions, but that's about it. I even have problems sometimes performing my own stuff

onstage. I always screw up certain songs when we do them live, even now.

"But there's a real joy for me in being out on a limb. *Shaking Me Down* [from *Prodigal Dreamer*] started off as a live performance. What happened was that at one concert we

"You either conform and become a faceless part of the crowd, or you live dangerously and go out on your own."

"It's very hard for me to come to terms with the fact they have gone," he says. "The album is not a morbid acknowledgement of their passing, but I hope to some extent it reflects on what they did for us. I am 66 now, and I know I have to get used to losing bandmates and former members this way. It's a fact of life.

It would appear that the band are beginning to get noticed by the wider community. Their track *Of Once And Future Kings* (from *Pampered Menial*) features on the soundtrack for new movie *Beautiful Boy*, alongside Bowie, Mogwai, Massive Attack and Sigur Rós.

"It's the latest movie from actor Steve Carell," Surkamp says. "I haven't seen it yet because the band have been busy recording and touring. I hope it's good and ends up winning an Oscar. Just think what that would do for the band's profile!"

needed to fill up some time, so the rest of the band pushed me out on the stage, and told me just to play something. Now that is pressure! I had literally nothing prepared, so I made it all up on the spot! I then forgot about what I'd done, until we were in the studio doing the new album, and someone said that I had to take what I'd done that night and turn this into a proper song. Which is where *Shaking Me Down* came from.

"This would never have happened without me standing in front of people with nothing to play, and having to rely on inspiration striking. That's what I mean by art for me coming from jumping off a cliff: not knowing if you're going to crash and burn." 🙄

Prodigal Dreamer is out now via Rockville Records. See www.facebook.com/pavlovsgogband for more.



★ CLASSIC ★ ROCK

HIGH VOLTAGE ⚡ ROCK'N'ROLL



www.classicrockmagazine.com

We can't imagine many things more prog than a concept album about a music lover who believes aliens are trying to communicate with him through the records he's listening to. But how on earth do you take that one step further? Glass Hammer managed to do so by revisiting the prog obsessive 18 years later, only to find him wanting to time travel back to the 1970s.

Welcome to Glass Hammer's new record, *Chrononaut*, that sees that protagonist, superfan Tom, start his own band in a ploy to go back in time in the hope of becoming a prog god. The Tennessee prog rockers have their tongues planted firmly in cheek throughout the 12 tracks as they follow up 2000's *Chronometree*, but there are deeper themes of loss and nostalgia seeping into the songs, too.

"I refer to something I call chronic nostalgia," says bassist Steve Babb, whose Chris Squire-esque punch resonates throughout the record.

"It's the idea that you can just look back: your favourite prog rock albums can take you back in time. Sometimes we romanticise the good old days, and that's another thing about the album. The story is that if you could go back in time, would it be what you thought it was?

"Tom finds out that it's not at all. We try to teach him a lesson as the story goes on, and it does reach a conclusion this time. I'm not sure there's anymore to tell of Tom's story. But he's found you have to move forward to get ahead."

Glass Hammer, it seems, are always moving ahead. The group – guided by Babb and venerable sidekick, keyboardist/guitarist Fred Schendel – have been on a steady journey upwards since forming in 1992, valiantly conjuring up an impressive 18 studio albums.

Their latest *Chrononaut* is more of the same melodic, symphonic prog rock, sprinkled with saxophone, that has one foot firmly planted back in the 1970s and 80s, and the other resolutely pointing forward.

Glass Hammer, L-R: Fred Schendel, Susie Bogdanowicz, Aaron Raulston, Steve Babb.



BACK TO THE

Glass Hammer's 2000 concept album, *Chronometree*, was an amusing tale of a music superfan who heard voices through prog rock records. The story is back - in impressive fashion - on the US group's 18th studio album. *Prog* joins in the fun...

Words: Chris Cope **Images:** Julie Babb



“I always knew instinctively that Jon Davison would be in Yes. I don’t know how I knew that, but he just fit so well.”

Steve Babb

FUTURE

The story of Tom cleverly pokes fun at prog rock and its many foibles and eccentricities, and it is perhaps about as ‘meta’ as you will get within these pages as it delves inside our beloved genre.

The character, though, isn’t some lyrical flight of fancy from Glass Hammer, with the narrative surprisingly based somewhat on real life.

“There was a person who I knew probably back when I was in my 20s in the early 80s, who was a big rock fan and wanted to be a musician, but never quite found the right vehicle for that to happen,” recalls Schendel.

“He was so deeply into his albums and the lyrics on the albums... I don’t know how much of it was real and how much of it was him putting things on for the sake of fun, but he took prog album lyrics and concept albums seriously to the point of conspiracy theories, and was finding hidden meanings and messages to himself.

“When we did the original *Chronometree* album back in 2000, we kind of loosely based a character on the notion of, what if somebody really became convinced that the music was a direct communication to him?”

“I thought enough time had gone by and enough things had happened in prog rock, mainly that a lot of the iconic musicians and writers and artists have passed away in the last few years, I thought, well, what would have happened to this character over time, what happens when he gets to his 40s or his 50s?” adds Babb.

“We made the whole thing a kind of a flip of the other album, and instead of wanting to time travel into the future, now he wants to go back to the past and try to live out the life of a prog rock god. He just kind of represents everybody at every level that’s involved in prog. From people like you to people like me, that just love the albums and stare at all the covers and read every lyric. Of course, he’s a little crazy... but aren’t we all?”

Babb and Schendel are speaking down the line from their recording studio, which they co-run as their day jobs, during a break in sessions. Later on in the day a “pop/industrial/goth” singer is due in to record, and it sounds as if the pair are going to try to do their bit for prog and gently push her towards a more experimental sound.

Chrononaut was mainly recorded in this studio, with the group doing most of the work in the spring. Babb and Schendel



“I don’t want to be impressed with music so much as I want to be moved.”

Steve Babb



brought demos in, with Aaron Raulston tracking drums and the pair then “adding the people where they needed to be added”. Susie Bogdanowicz returned to provide some flighted vocals, while Discipline’s Matthew Parmenter and Chris Herin both guest on the record, too.

“I’m thrilled to death that they said yes,” Schendel says as he recalls working with the Discipline duo.

“Matthew, in particular, was a case of where I kind of wrote that song hearing that voice in my head,” Babb adds. “I was like, ‘If he says no, I’m not really quite sure what we’re going to do.’”

The polished *Chrononaut*, which is likely to arouse the senses of fans of Ayreon’s folk meanderings and Pink Floyd’s lead guitar endeavours, feels a long way from Glass Hammer’s early material. Babb and Schendel first met in 1986 and later launched an electronic project after a number of years

twiddling thumbs, imbibing the sounds of Tangerine Dream for their first collaboration.

But it was a venture into their passion for *The Lord Of The Rings* that saw the pair release their first record, the Tolkien-themed *Journey Of The Dunadan*, under the Glass Hammer name in 1993.

They never expected, however, to soon have their 70-minute concept album showcased to tens of millions of people on TV in what could quite possibly be the most ‘un-prog’ piece of promotion ever to have fallen onto the laps of a fledgling rock band.

“We made the album having no idea what would happen, and frankly I didn’t expect anybody to buy it at all,” Babb admits. “But we did start with some advertising in magazines, and the internet was really useless at that point. But the magazine ad caught the attention of the QVC Shop At Home network here. People still spend lots of money and time trying to get on that show.

“In our case they called us and put us on TV for 15 minutes in front of 20 million or 30 million viewers, and boom, it happened.”

The unexpected exposure, with their CD no doubt rubbing shoulders with far-too-shiny jewellery, futuristic kitchen utensils and presenters so enthusiastic they’d probably knocked back five Red Bulls before going on set, gave Glass Hammer the financial backing to explore their true calling: prog. The sci-fi fantasy nods were stripped back in favour of indulgences in the vein of Yes, Genesis and ELP as the band began to cement their place in the progressive rock community.

The Yes links don’t end there, however. Jon Anderson provided some vocal textures on the band’s 2007 release, *Culture Of Ascent*, before Jon Davison joined a couple of years later to act as lead vocalist on a handful of albums. Davison, of course, went on to team up with Yes on a full-time basis in 2012, causing bittersweet feelings to cauldron up

Glass Hammer: they've come a long way from their shopping channel days...



with the group on Yes' Cruise To The Edge floating prog jamboree. "We'll probably do some more with him in the future," Babb hints. "I think he wants to."

Like Davison, various musicians have drifted in and out of the Glass Hammer machine, but its engine room has resolutely remained Babb and Schendel since day one. The dynamic duo admit they don't cradle many long-term plans in their palms – but the cogs are always turning. An often modest live schedule means that the band's nucleus places songwriting first, rather than performance.

"As a lyric writer and a storyteller, that part of me is already kind of thinking of revisiting a couple of other Glass Hammer albums that could stand with a part two," Babb says, attempting to gaze into the future. "I'm not sure that's what we'll do, but that's kind of what we're thinking. We've also talked about, not really a side project, but a supplemental album to *Chrononaut*, where we do more electronic, Tangerine Dream-influenced music that

to where they're going to do what they're supposed to do?"

One reason why Glass Hammer have endured since the early 1990s, where others may have slipped away, may rest with their knack for mustering up masterful melody. Susie Bogdanowicz's vocals help to bring extra finesse, and the band aren't ones for being technical for the sake of flexing their adroit muscles. Each note is considered, each vocal line measured.

"I don't want to be impressed with music so much as I want to be moved," Babb says. "I've been impressed before and, for me, it's boring after a while. I would rather have music that's meaningful. And if it can be technically impressive at the same time, great, I'm going to like it even

more. But for me it's about the emotional impact of the song and the music."

You wouldn't bet against Glass Hammer still churning out their symphonic prog rock



Chrononaut (above) is the sequel to 2000's *Chronometree* (top).

"He took prog album lyrics and concept albums seriously to the point of conspiracy theories, and was finding hidden meanings and messages to himself."

Fred Schendel

inside Glass Hammer as their vocalist left to graduate to bigger things.

"I always knew instinctively that he would be in Yes, and I don't know how I knew that, but he just fit so well and the reviews from the first album that we did with him were kind of head-turners," Babb says of his former bandmate. "Something had happened with Glass Hammer at that point. He's an incredible singer and a great person to work with. He had connections, but they would have found him like I found him. I found him watching him sing Yes on a YouTube video. We really only wanted him to sing one song, because we had worked with Jon Anderson too, but we got along so well it was like, 'Oh, let's continue on.' Susie [Bogdanowicz] had moved onto Florida at the same time and we didn't really know how we were going to make things work with her. But it was just timing."

Davison did revisit his Glass Hammer past earlier this year, though, performing finales

might come out next year – we'll just have to wait and see. Nothing's firm at the moment. We're kind of recuperating from the whole recording and producing phase."

At the time of writing, Glass Hammer have no shows locked into the schedule – a move which would be considered eyebrow-raising for many, seeing as they have a new product to promote. But it seems to fit. They are a band who don't write on the road, so downtime in the studio is the most fertile setting for inspiration.

"To go out and play live all the time and really function in that world requires a commitment of pretty much doing it constantly," Schendel adds. "It's hard to get the right mindset if you're doing it part-time, and with families and the studio and all the other things that demand attention in your life, I find myself very concerned every time we decide to play some live shows. Can I put my ageing brain and fingers into shape

when they reach their 30th anniversary in 2022. Who knows what number album they may be on then, but their songwriting nous doesn't look set to dissipate anytime soon.

"I think we've hit some spots in our music before that I'm really proud of," Babb reflects with some degree of satisfaction. "We did some things that were beyond us. I got to sit with Jon Anderson for a while years ago and I asked him about how Yes' *Awaken* was written. He said the same thing, that it was more than the band – something happened and it was more than they were capable of. That's how I feel about few of the things Fred and I have done with Glass Hammer, that it came from somewhere else and it feels like you're like a vehicle for something really amazing. I don't know really what it is, but that's how it feels." 🎵

Chrononaut is out now via Arion Records. See www.glasshammer.com for more information.

DOJENT-MICHELLE

Rémi Gallego (right)
with live drummer
Jean Ferry.





Since beginning in 2009, **The Algorithm** have pushed boundaries with their beautifully absurd electronic and progressive metal hybrid. Yet never before has their music been as emotionally colourful as it is on new album *Compiler Optimization Techniques*.

Rémi Gallego tells *Prog* why this time, things were different...

Words: Phil Weller **Images:** Vincent Grundke

Like many innovations, The Algorithm happened by chance. In 2009, a 20-year-old Rémi Gallego, the mastermind and musical anarchist behind The Algorithm's circuit board prog, found himself growing tired of trying to find people to form a new Dillinger Escape Plan-style band with, so he tried plugging his guitar into his computer and letting audio software complete his line-up. The first results, demos *The Doppler Effect* and *CRITICAL.ERROR* were harsh, discordant slabs of off-kilter metal, interspersed with synth-pricked left turns which, while inventive, left their USP a little malnourished. Their progressive elements still needed a capital P.

As time progressed, Gallego learned how to balance the electronic and prog metal genres that he loved so much. Blending King Crimson's garish experimentalism with ELP's oscillating keyboard textures and the polyrhythmic pick attack of Petrucci and Periphery, with fourth album *Compiler Optimization Techniques* there is the addition of one ingredient that Gallego never dared to season his music with before, but it is making all the difference: emotion.

"This time around, I wasn't creating an album as a product: I was putting a piece of myself out there," the Frenchman tells us, stepping away from his tour preparations to speak to *Prog*. "That's something I've never had the courage to do before." The weight of Gallego's voice hints at a reserved personality still coming to terms with what was a soul-revealing project for the 29-year-old.

"I write instrumental music as I feel like I can express a lot more through notes and sounds than I can with words," he explains. "This album might not be life-changing for most people, but to me, it is everything. In the past, I always seemed to focus on how technical and complicated whatever I was doing was, but this time I found myself focusing on the bigger picture and what story the album wanted to tell; what is its meaning and emotional core? I wanted the album to start with a sense of anger and power before going through something more evil before trying to break free: it tells the story of myself trying to break free from my own demons."

What these demons are, and in what manner they affected him, Gallego doesn't want to say. Regardless though, even without the context, you really can feel the gravity of these secret troubles stir

"I'm breaking the limits of what I can do on this record, and I think that's the best way to grow as a musician."

within this music, and to simply know that *Compiler Optimization Techniques* was an album that he *needed* to make is a beautiful thing that makes it so much more compelling.

Coming into this record with a renewed and outwardly transparent emotional approach, Gallego has breathed new life into The Algorithm. Written as one immense and sprawling track, *Compiler Optimization Techniques* breathlessly propels you forwards with a blurred flurry of notes and ideas, like the bastard son of Meshuggah's best Kraftwerk impression and *Tales From*



Topographic Oceans' wilder moments. Each track challenges stylistic boundaries, bringing 70s prog sounds and the modernistic polish of djent together. Look through Gallego's Spotify playlists and you'll find everything from Leprous, Vola and The Physics House Band to Phantogram, Jon Hopkins and Carpenter Brut. His tastes are as broad as his imagination, and Gallego's collision of dance music and djent sounds poignant and profound: he could be described as the 'Djent-Michel Jarre' of prog.

"I'm breaking the limits of what I can do on this record," he tells *Prog*, "and I think that's the best way to grow as a musician."

From the pounding metallic rage that characterises much of opening track *Cluster*'s existence to *Fragmentation*'s eerie, conflicted thought patterns, *Compiler Optimization Techniques* takes the listener through the wildly varying emotions Gallego dared himself to express: but the final message is one of positivity.

"As the album progresses, anger slowly transitions into hope," Gallego explains, expanding upon his drama-punctuated narrative. "Going through this process of all these emotions and then writing the tracks one after the other, it was very challenging, technically and emotionally, but I feel very, very happy with the outcome."

Indeed, as the album heads towards its final chapters, you really can feel something change in its air: anger blooms into positivity and a lust for life. The joyous Game Boy boogie of *Binary Space* successfully welds together 70s prog rock with the prog of contemporary artists. *Sentinel Node*'s soulful, glassy melodies float like butterflies atop a chugging guitar rhythm in uncommon time – a wonderful, poetic contrast in itself – as all the record's early tension and aggression gives way to liberation.

"Writing this album made me realise the power of music and how it can convey different things," says Gallego. "When something is done with passion and love you can always feel it, and I definitely feel liberated and closer to myself for it. To go through the process of making something that was this hard and come out on the other side like I did was extremely rewarding."

It isn't just his emotional transparency that has helped his latest release blossom, however. Gallego moved to Berlin around three years ago to be closer to his management, and the city's rich techno heritage has been a huge inspiration, too.

"In Berlin I am exposed to a lot of electronic music," Gallego explains. "It sounds like a cliché but there really is so much of it here. It's had a big impact on how I approach electronic music."

"I like to think that this is also a nod to some of the greatest prog albums of the 70s, namely by Emerson, Lake & Palmer or King Crimson."



Rémi Gallego is moving out of his comfort zone and we are reaping the benefits.

Walk through the streets of the German capital and you can hear the scene's impact on the city. Pouring out from clubs, coming from the phones of teenagers who roam the streets, you don't have to go far to hear a pulsating techno beat or the synthesised heartbeat of trance. Berlin has long since embraced the sounds now synonymous with the German capital and Gallego, in turn, has opened his arms to the city.

"Opening myself to new cultures and meeting new kinds of people is very inspiring," he continues. "It makes me feel and think about things I never felt or thought about before. I could be living anywhere, I could be living in Peru and it would still be the same; it's just so interesting to be exposed to a culture I didn't grow up with."

That excitement he gets from exploring new cultures, genres and songwriting approaches has helped make the electronic elements of the new album much more informed and authentic.

"I think it's extremely important to my musical and personal development that I keep exposing myself to new things," Gallego professes. "I think I will move to other

countries in the future as I like moving out of my comfort zone and getting inspiration from different things.

"For me, art is all about challenging expectations," Gallego says firmly. "Surprising the listener can be really difficult in 2018 but when you do it can be a really powerful thing."

What really resonates through *Compiler Optimization Techniques* is just how seamlessly Gallego has managed to humanise his music and turn it into something undeniably special. There are moments on the album that soar with passion, grace and drama, and there are others, too, where Gallego goes hell for leather: moments that are so over wildly the top that you can't help but smile.

"I like to think that this is also a nod to some of the greatest prog albums of the 70s, namely by Emerson, Lake & Palmer or King Crimson," Gallego concludes. "These have always been a great inspiration to me, as a typical 70s prog piece can go through many different atmospheres at once. This hasn't completely disappeared nowadays, but most bands and artists usually do not dare exploring this territory anymore: they chose catchiness instead."

There is no danger of that with one of the modern prog scene's biggest innovators, who is no doubt already setting his sights on his next challenge. We can't wait to see what he does next... 

Compiler Optimization Techniques is out now and is self-released. See www.the-algorithm.net for more information.



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THE PROG INTERVIEW

ASHLEY HUTCHINGS

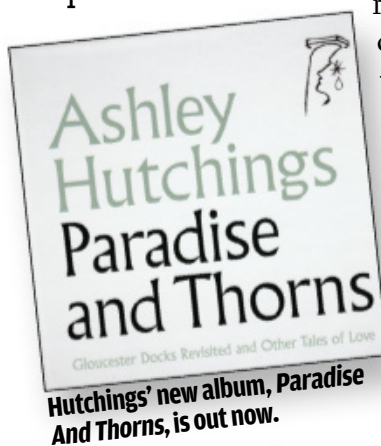
The *Prog* Interview is just that: every month we're going to get inside the minds of some of the biggest names in music. This issue, it's **Ashley Hutchings**, or, as Bob Dylan has described him, "the single most important figure in English folk rock". He played a role in founding Fairport Convention, Steeleye Span and The Albion Band, and has just released what could be his last ever album. Here, Hutchings tells *Prog* about a life that has embraced Eddie Cochran, Anton Chekhov, Tottenham Hotspur and personal notes from Dylan.

Words: Paul Sexton **Portrait:** Stuart Wood

It was a pilgrimage that began with a Luxembourg-trained transistor and Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel*. It reached both critical and creative mass with the monument to electric folk that was Fairport Convention's *Liege & Lief*. It now reaches what may be its recording conclusion

with the sage eloquence of *Paradise And Thorns*.

The six-decade musical expedition of Ashley Hutchings MBE has traversed this land and far beyond, and



Hutchings' new album, *Paradise And Thorns*, is out now.

now, at 73, he reaches what he thinks might be its final studio staging post. The new record, subtitled *Gloucester Docks Revisited And Other Tales of Love*, sees one of the founding fathers of progressive folk reopening the pages of an autobiographical love story he shared with us on 1987's *By Gloucester Docks I Sat Down And Wept*.

Founded, as was its predecessor, on a real-life affair with a still-unnamed paramour, the new record (reviewed in *Prog* 92) updates their narrative to its present-day postscript. Even more ambitiously, it offers a second disc that explores love in all of its manifestations. But then, Hutchings never was one for half measures.

The writer, vocalist, bassist and so much more, the man they came to call 'The Guv'nor' was born in Southgate, north London,

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I have to say, and I hope the others won't be offended, that Sandy Denny cannot be bettered, will never be bettered probably, in my lifetime. Sandy was just ace.

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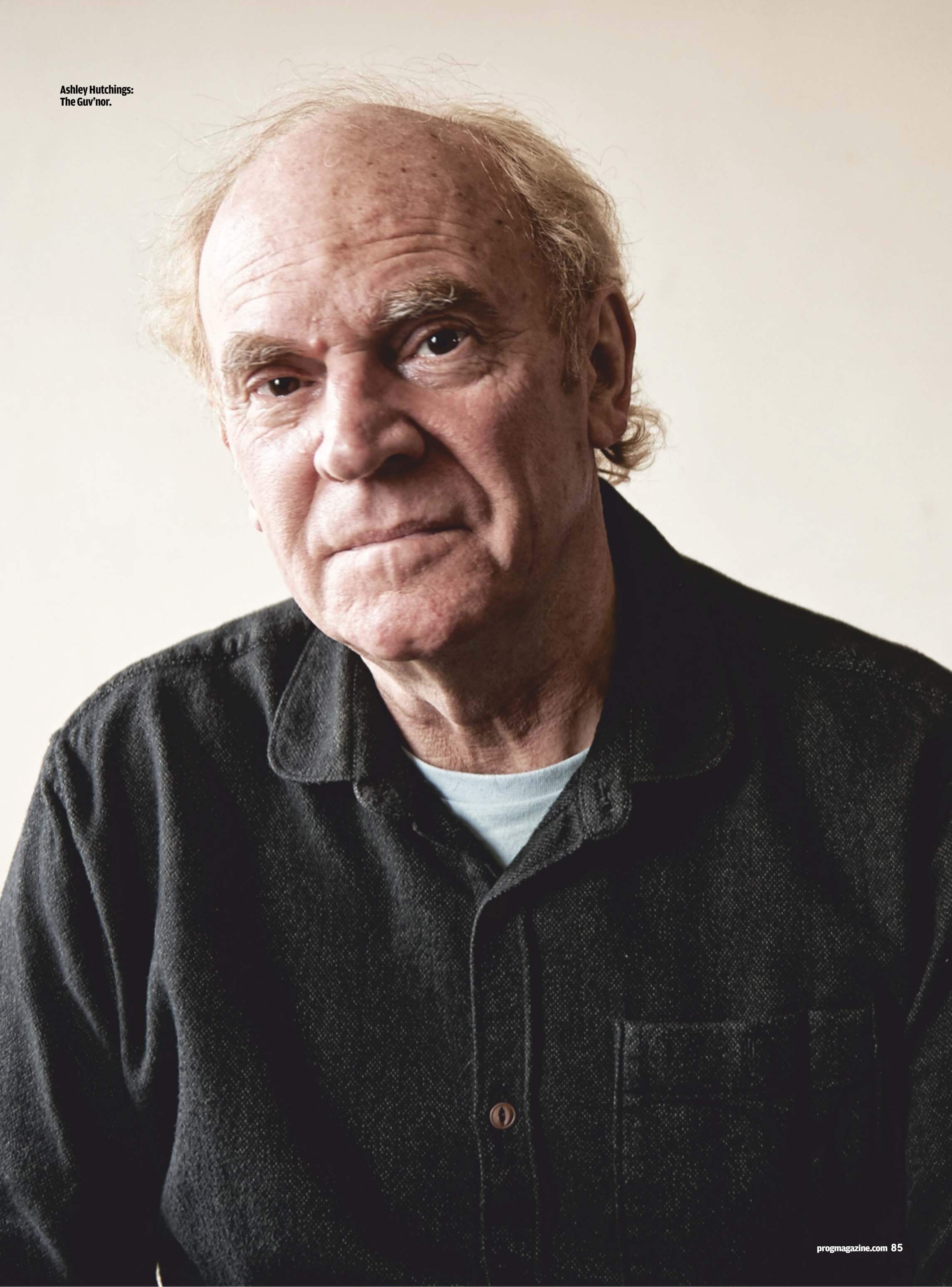
Fairport Convention in 1967, with Hutchings front centre.

in 1945. He mirrored a generation with his early devotion to skiffle and rock'n'roll before immersing himself in the blues, and in a 1960s arts scene expanding kaleidoscopically across the capital.

Thus to the fledgling Fairport, the group he co-founded after meeting guitarist Simon Nicol in 1966. They echoed their American heroes before finding an English voice that created modern folk's ground zero, but soon he was away to become a founding member of Steeleye Span. Three albums later, Hutchings was gone again, this time to erect the third pillar in his mighty artistic triumvirate, The Albion Band.

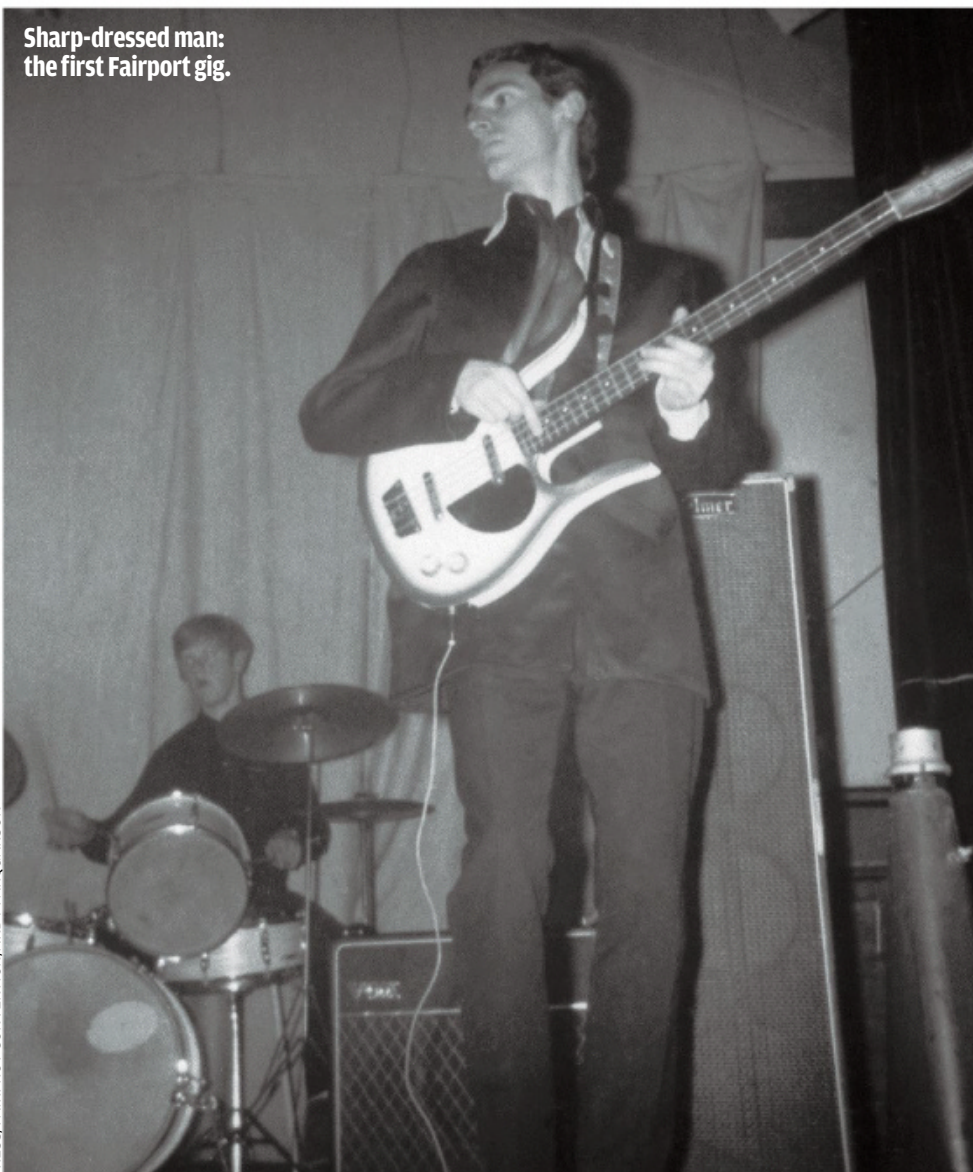
But those sturdy oaks only stand for part of a story that has embraced work with the National Theatre, one-man shows, radio projects and myriad other collaborations. As a collector, 

Ashley Hutchings:
The Guv'nor.



Sharp-dressed man:
the first Fairport gig.

PRESS/FAIRPORT CONVENTION/ANDY FARQUARSON



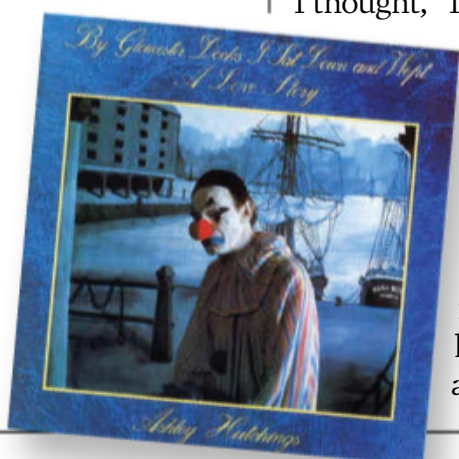
student and champion of musical tradition, he is literally the English song and dance man.

How did you come to make such a compelling return visit to the scene of Gloucester Docks?

Well, I had met the lady in question in 1986, and I had written a number of things during the relationship: poems, letters, some song lyrics, and I realised that if I put it in the right order and wrote a few new things, it could be an album. From that moment on, nothing could stop me and it did in fact become my favourite album, at that point. I had a fantastic group of people working on it. That band is one of the best I've ever worked with. I would say second after the *Liege & Lief* Fairport band, in my career.

So the album came out in 1987, and it died a death, because it was on the wrong label. But it did register with people and, down the years, a lot of people have come up to me and said, "Gloucester

1987's *By Gloucester Docks I Sat Down And Wept*.



Docks, that's my favourite album, when are you going to do another one?" So it'd come into my head to do another. Then I had a lot of illness problems, and I thought, "I must get the original out again," and Talking Elephant, bless them, who've supported me for many years, said they'd put it out again, and they did, in 2013.

How did that lead you to making the new album?

I had lost track of the woman – only 10 people or so know her identity – but I had her mobile phone number, and I rang to tell her that it was coming out again, because ultimately she loved the album. But I couldn't get through. Then I thought, "If I'm ever going to do this album, now is the time." Over the next week, it all came together, with the idea I'd had before of using film clips, because the whole thing is kind of like a movie. Then I thought, "I'll ring again," and

she answered. I was speechless. That just made it right in my mind that I was doing it. I was getting deep into the psychology of romantic love, and halfway through it all, in the winter, it

became a second album in my mind. I started to do that as well, and of course I had carte blanche. I could do anything about love, of any historical point, mythology, anything I wanted, and what you hear is what came out.

It does have the audio-visual nature of a lot of your work, almost like a stage production.

It started with the film clips. I kept coming up with ideas that were breaking the mould, for example having an entire short story by Chekhov, which I think is hilarious. I was thinking, "Who would do that... no, *do it*, put it on the album," and I'm so pleased I did. But yes, as well as the radio

“

It's one of the great pleasures of my life, the people I know I've helped along the way by bringing them into bands and recording with them.

”

work I've done, I did four years at the National Theatre working with actors in productions and music with the Albions. So yes, it's all come together.

From the present day, let's go all the way back to your growing up. What's the first music you can remember hearing?

My father playing. He was a wonderful pianist, and he had a grand piano in the house, even though it was a small house. He had been a band leader mainly in the 30s and 40s: Leonard Hutchings And His Embassy Five. The remarkable thing about my father was that he didn't read music, and he was a bandleader who led from the piano. I was in awe of him, and there was always

STEVE THORNE/REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Ashley Hutchings celebrating his 70th birthday in 2015.



the sound of the piano in the house, which was lovely. The first record I can remember was *Heartbreak Hotel*, which absolutely blew me away. I listened to it on Radio Luxembourg, late one night when I shouldn't have had the radio on. I loved rock'n'roll, I saw Eddie Cochran at the Finsbury Park Empire. Then I got deeply into the blues, the real stuff. Dr K's Blues Band was one of the earliest bands I formed. I always seemed to be the one that formed these bands, or the leading person. We really got into the obscure stuff, and I loved the blues for some time. Interesting that with all these early years, it's very much American music.

What was the scene like in the early- and mid-1960s?

I went everywhere. I was so lucky that I lived in London and I could go to all the blues clubs, folk clubs, the great rock packages like the Ronettes supported by The Rolling Stones and other English groups. I saw classical concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, saved up my money to go to Ronnie Scott's, so I was taking absolutely everything in. What I knew from early days was that jazzers and skiffle people were involved as well. You could go to a folk club and hear all kinds of stuff, and this predates Fairport. I remember going to [Les] Cousins in Soho and seeing Paul Simon, who came on stage and said, "I've just had a call from America, and *The Sound Of Silence* has just gone to No. 1." They'd overdubbed Fender guitars to it. So we can't take too much credit [as folk rock pioneers]. I've always felt that folk is all-embracing.

The early Fairport sound was very influenced by American artists, wasn't it?

Yes, the only thing that set us apart was that we found fairly obscure singer-songwriter material, like Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen, before they were well-known. We tended to do short, lyric-based songs. Then, bang — the light bulb went on in '69, and we invented a new genre with *Liege & Lief*.

That album is regularly cited as the British progressive folk record, and of course it was voted Most Influential British Folk Album Of All Time at the 2006 BBC Folk Awards. Do



Mime artists:
on *Top Of The Pops* in
1969 with Sandy Denny.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



you think that's deserved, or does it underestimate Fairport's other work?

Liege & Lief is Fairport's best by an absolute mile. It heralded a new genre, you can't say that about many records. I still love it to this day. Yes, there are other very good, even great Fairport albums, I think a few of the Fairport members would choose *Unhalfbricking*, but I would go for *Liege & Lief*, head and shoulders.

Do you think if you'd known that appetite for English electric folk was there, you'd have moved to it earlier?

We were capable of doing it sooner. I don't want to pin it on [Dave] Swarbrick, as songwriters have, or indeed Sandy [Denny], who brought folk influences into the band, because we all went to folk clubs — Simon, Richard [Thompson], Martin [Lamble], that just solidified it. I'll tell you one thing, though: it was a quiet disappointment to all of us that it wasn't taken up by the media more. We thought the music should become British pop music, like country music turned into country and western. There were a few copyists, a few other groups, but by the mid-70s it was obvious that it wasn't going to be as big as we thought it'd be.



Liege & Lief, the game-changer for British folk.

“Yes, we did see the inside of a television studio and a *Top Of The Pops* dressing room, for the one and only time. We mimed, definitely, because we all had silly instruments.

But you did have your pop moment in 1969, with the chart single *Si Tu Dois Partir*, which was the French language version of your mentor Bob Dylan's *If You Gotta Go, Go Now*. What are your

memories of doing that on *Top Of The Pops*?

Yes, we did see the inside of a television studio and a *Top Of The Pops* dressing room, for the one and only time. We mimed, definitely, because we all had silly instruments. Actually, we must have been one of the earliest to send it up. Later on, everyone did. It's very catchy, that song, got played on the radio, that's what made it a hit. But I don't think we did it on stage in those days. For so-called serious musicians, it was beside the point, and we didn't follow it up with anything.

You surprised a lot of people by moving on from Fairport after *Liege & Lief*, as did Sandy Denny. She started Fotheringay, and you co-formed Steeleye Span. What was in your mind at the time?

That was a strange thing. I think Richard said it very eloquently: we were still suffering from the crash [in which Fairport drummer Martin Lamble was killed in 1969]. The aftermath of it was still affecting us. When I decided to leave Fairport, I had a breakdown, even before Steeleye got going. No surprise, in retrospect. Also no surprise that Sandy left — in a weird state, she didn't like flying, but [she] overreacted enormously, fearing



Hutchings' favourite Steeleye Span album, *Please to See the King*.

Is it true to say that one of the joys of having influence as an experienced musician is giving a platform to up-and-coming musicians?

Absolutely, it's one of the great

pleasures of my life, the people I know I've helped along the way by bringing them into bands and recording with them. Ruth Angell, of course — terribly underrated singer — and, on this album, artists like Becky Mills and Kitty MacFarlane. I don't feel 73 when I'm in the studio with someone like Kitty, I feel like we're on the same level.

Then, after three albums, you were on the move again, but this time to something that would last in many configurations for decades.

Then off, yes, that's what I do! The Albion Band, of course, was next, it was The Albion Country Band to start with, but for many years, The Albion Band in many forms has allowed me — as the leader of the group and the owner of the name, unlike the other two groups — to do anything. Work in the theatre, words and music shows, go acoustic, become a Christmas band. That's lovely, that's like a reunion every year. It's the same four people every year and we love doing it. If you know nothing about it, you'd probably think, “Oh, they're just cashing in,” or “That's going to be pretty boring.” But we're continually changing the material that we do, like Fairport, and it's not boring... in fact, I'm quite artistically proud of a lot of the things we do.

death and so forth. It's a pivotal moment and it wasn't clear thinking on anyone's part, but two good groups came out of it. Fotheringay's a really good group and early Steeleye were unique. Mainly the second album [1971's *Please to See the King*], that was the real breakthrough. No drums, but electric instruments. Very proud of all that stuff. It wasn't very well recorded — we were still getting to grips, some of us, with electric instruments, but that's my favourite.



They do say that when one door closes... Hutchings has had an incredible career across many bands.

That's a tradition that goes all the way back to Sandy Denny.

I've been blessed to work with so many, probably about 20, wonderful female singers down the years, and obviously Maddy [Prior] is another one of them. But I have to say, and I hope the others won't be offended, that Sandy cannot be bettered, will never be bettered probably, in my lifetime. Sandy was just ace, and technically — let alone being Sandy, which was enough — she was able to sing with almost a whisper and move you to tears, but she was able to belt out a rock song. She did rocky things on stage as well. If she was around now? Well, she was already winning awards, wasn't she? Even in the mid-70s. So, she achieved a lot.

What do you think of the modern-day version of the groups you helped to create?

I haven't really kept in touch with Steeleye. Obviously they've changed out of all recognition, especially the line-up. But Maddy [Prior], she's still there, and she's still a great person and a great singer. With Fairport, it's great that we've formed this lifelong friendship, all of us, like a family, which is seen at Cropredy Festival to its best, where we're at one with the audience and with each other. We never fell apart, like so many bands. It's developed a lot, the music's changed. What I think is

their best legacy is that they're continuing to write and record new songs and new albums. Of the survivors, how many groups keep changing and keep playing new material? Fairport is a living, breathing entity.

How do you feel about being cited as an influence on the modern-day progressive scene?

Well, we knew some of the early prog bands, and played the same circuit, but by the early 70s I'd got the folk bug and was married to Shirley Collins and was completely obsessed with traditional folk music, so I missed prog. Some kind of full circle's gone on here, because a lot of young people like what we can call prog rock from those days. Jim Moray is a particular one

that comes to mind, very much influenced by prog even though he's the darling of the folk scene.

The guiding influence of Bob Dylan manifests itself again on your website, can you describe that?

Yes, I latched into him in the early 60s when his first record came out, so he was always there. When Fairport was formed, we heavily leaned on his songs, but we never knew that Dylan ever listened to us. It was silence, and life went on. Then, when I decided to have my own website, a friend of mine, Nigel Schofield, who writes and broadcasts, had developed a relationship with Dylan's management. He contacted them and said would Bob like to write

something for Ashley to put on his new website. Within two days, he got a reply from Bob to say, "Ashley Hutchings is the single most important figure in English folk rock." It was one of the greatest things that ever happened to me in my life. Messages would come through Nigel from Bob to me, which prompted me to send him the new album, and he wrote back. I feel like he's a friend.

How did it feel to be awarded an MBE in 2015?

A few years ago, I got a letter in the post from the English Folk Dance And Song Society saying they were awarding me the Gold Badge award, and I cried, because of how much traditional music and dance have meant to me. Then I got a letter saying I'd been awarded the MBE, and I laughed. I could not stop laughing, which wouldn't have happened, probably, if I hadn't had the Gold Badge award, so I kind of got all that emotion out of the way. I was really happy, obviously.

Your son, Blair Dunlop, is carrying on in your tradition, but he has very much his own troubadour voice, doesn't he?

I'm so proud of him. Not only has he made a living from doing what he wants to do, which is what I wanted to do back in the 60s, but he's a great guitarist, a great songwriter, right up there with the best, and now he's a great singer, because his voice has rounded out now. The only thing I'm not happy about is that he's not more successful.

So with Paradise And Thorns, do you feel you've reached a certain conclusion of your own?

I can't imagine making another album now. I really can't. The only other thing I've been thinking about in the last five years, album-wise, is a football album. Blair comes into this. Tottenham Hotspur is our team. That's the only thing not ticked off on my recording list, and it should either be a joint thing with Blair, or I'm happy for it to be in his name. But if this is to be my last album, I'm happy with that. 🍀



Like father, like son: Blair Dunlop and Ashley Hutchings at The Lunar Festival in 2012.

Paradise and Thorns — Gloucester Docks Revisited And Other Tales of Love is out now via Talking Elephant. See www.ashleyhutchings.co.uk for more information.

2018 PROG critics' choice

We started with a list as long as the headiest prog rock epic, and finally we've narrowed it down to a manageable, bona fide classic. Once again Prog's writers have had the unenviable task of whittling down 12 months' worth of fine proggy releases into their own Top 20s, from which we present the *Prog* master list...



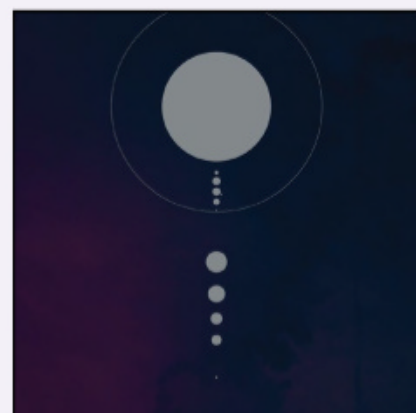
"We're so grateful that *Prog* magazine have supported us from the start of our career. To be awarded the No.1 spot is absolutely incredible, especially with so many other great albums released this year. Thank you all!"

1 HAKEN

Vector (INSIDEOUT)

WE SAID: "Dizzying instrumental and rhythmic complexity, alongside an intriguing lyrical tale."

– Johnny Sharp, *Prog* 91

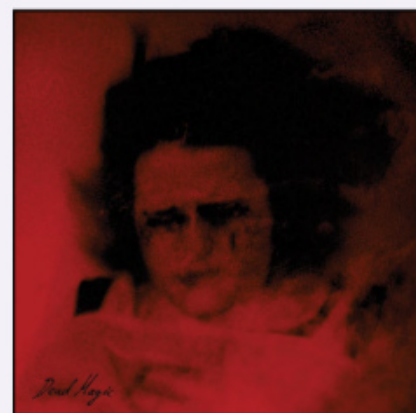


2 TESSERACT

Sonder (KSCOPE)

WE SAID: "There's no doubt that Tesseract are one of the UK's most prized heavy music exports."

– Chris Cope, *Prog* 86



3 ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF

Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)

WE SAID: "A remarkable journey through one woman's subconscious."

– Natasha Scharf, *Prog* 85



4 VOIVOD

The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)

WE SAID: "Roll over Bartók: Voivod are back at their uncompromising, progressive best."

– Chris McGarel, *Prog* 91



5 THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

DISSOLUTION (KSCOPE)

WE SAID: "Each note is polished and each melody beautifully rounded, even more so than on previous releases."

– Natasha Scharf, *Prog 90*



6 IHSAHN

ÁMR (CANDLELIGHT)

WE SAID: "Another glorious mesh of bible black notes, devilish invention and deep, all-encompassing melodies."

– Philip Wilding, *Prog 86*



7 RIVERSIDE

WASTELAND (INSIDEOUT)

WE SAID: "It's an emotional sucker punch that lays you out flat, but provides a flash of hope at the same time."

– Dave Everley, *Prog 91*



8 THE FIERCE & THE DEAD

THE EUPHORIC (BAD ELEPHANT)

WE SAID: "A diverse, dynamic and destabilising document. Post-rock truth for a post-truth era."

– Matt Parker, *Prog 87*



9 THUMPERMONKEY

MAKE ME YOUNG, ETC (ROCKSMOS)

WE SAID: "Wise words from a truly unique and increasingly powerful band."

– Dom Lawson, *Prog 91*



10 A PERFECT CIRCLE

EAT THE ELEPHANT (BMG)

WE SAID: "Just when you think you've got a handle on it it goes and confounds you."

– Dave Everley, *Prog 86*



11 TONY BANKS

FIVE (BMG)

WE SAID: "Glittering cascades often manifest into melodies that could elevate an imaginary Genesis classic."

– Kris Needs, *Prog 84*



12 ORPHANED LAND

UNsung PROPHETS & DEAD MESSIAHS (CENTURY MEDIA)

WE SAID: "An unwavering combination of broad brushstrokes and subtle details."

– Dom Lawson, *Prog 84*



13 COHEED AND CAMBRIA

VAXIS - ACT 1: THE UNHEAVENLY CREATURES (ROADRUNNER)

WE SAID: "They really are a tremendous prog rock band."

– Dom Lawson, *Prog 91*



14 SPIRITUALIZED

AND NOTHING HURT (BELLA UNION)

WE SAID: "Mixing rocks both garage and kraut with righteous blues and soul."

– Fraser Lewry, *Prog 90*



15 VENNART

TO CURE A BLIZZARD UPON A PLASTIC SEA (MEDIUM FORMAT)

WE SAID: "Vennart acknowledges that it's time 'to unleash his inner Trout Mask Replica...'"

– Matt Parker, *Prog 90*



16 SOFT MACHINE

HIDDEN DETAILS (MOONJUNE/DYAN)

WE SAID: "An incarnation of Soft Machine truly relevant to the 20th century. A remarkable achievement."

– Ian Fortnam, *Prog 90*

REISSUES



1. RUSH

HEMISPHERES (UMC)

2. **YES** THE STEVEN WILSON REMIXES (RHINO)

3. **MARILLION**

BRAVE (PARLOPHONE)

4. **CHRIS SQUIRE**

FISH OUT OF WATER

(CHERRY RED)

5. **ROXY MUSIC**

ROXY MUSIC (UMC)



GIGS

1. KING CRIMSON

UK TOUR

2. **STEVE**

HACKETT

UK TOUR

3. **ROGER WATERS**

HYDE PARK

4. **CAMEL**

UK TOUR

5. **YES FEAT. ARW**

UK TOUR

MULTIMEDIA



1. WONDEROUS STORIES

JERRY EWING (THE FLOOD GALLERY)

2. **MARILLION** ALL

ONE TONIGHT (EARMUSIC)

3. **OPETH** GARDEN OF

THE TITANS: LIVE AT RED

ROCKS AMPHITHEATRE

(NUCLEAR BLAST)

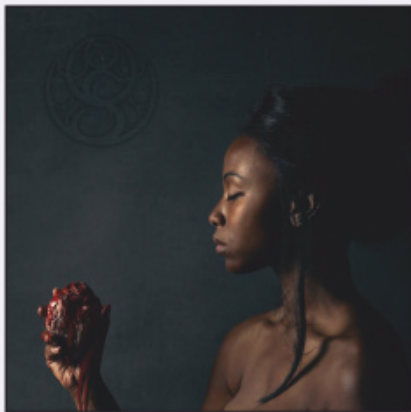
4. **CARDIACS** SOME

FAIRYTALES FROM THE

ROTTEN SHED (ALPHABET)

5. **IAMTHEMORNING**

OCEAN SOUNDS (KSCOPE)



17 OCEANS OF SLUMBER

THE BANISHED HEART (CENTURY MEDIA)

WE SAID: "Blending the dynamics of old-school death metal with modern progressive rock."

– Alex Lynham, *Prog 85*



18 IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK

HUGSJÁ (BY NORSE)

WE SAID: "Even those with no knowledge of Norwegian culture can enjoy its panoramic sweep."

– Mike Barnes, *Prog 86*



19 MIDAS FALL

EVAPORATE (MONOTREME)

WE SAID: "Forlorn yet full of hope, it encapsulates a yearning like no other record of recent times."

– Philip Wilding, *Prog 86*



20 KINO

RADIO VOLTAIRE (INSIDEOUT)

WE SAID: "The devil is in the details, and it's the messy bits that provide the richest flavours."

– Johnny Sharp, *Prog 85*

JERRY EWING (Editor)



- 1. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 2. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 3. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 4. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 5. IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK Hugsjá (BY NORSE)
- 6. GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT Epitaph (NAPALM)
- 7. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 8. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 9. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 10. BLANKET How To Let Go (MUSIC FOR NATIONS)
- 11. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 12. RIVERSIDE Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 13. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)
- 14. TONY BANKS Five (BMG)
- 15. VENNART To Cure A Blizzard Upon A Plastic Sea (MEDIUM FORMAT)
- 16. THOM YORKE Suspiria (XL)
- 17. GLEB KOLYADIN Gleb Kolyadin (KSCOPE)
- 18. GLASS HAMMER Chronomonaut (SOUND RESOURCES)
- 19. NOSOUND Allow Yourself (KSCOPE)
- 20. SPIRITUALIZED And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)

HANNAH MAY KILROY (Deputy Editor)



- 1. MALADY Toinen Toista (SVART)
- 2. EMMA RUTH RUNDLE On Dark Horses (SARGENT HOUSE)
- 3. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 4. KIKAGAKU MOYO Masana Temples (GURUGURU BRAIN)
- 5. COLDBONES Where It All Began (CROOKED NOISE)
- 6. LOUISE LEMÓN Purge (ICONS CREATING EVIL ART)
- 7. IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK Hugsjá (BY NORSE)
- 8. THE OSIRIS CLUB The Wine-Dark Sea (INDIE)
- 9. KONTINUUM No Need To Reason (SEASON OF MIST)
- 10. AWOOGA Conduit (ROCKOSMOS)
- 11. OCEANS OF SLUMBER The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 12. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 13. GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT Epitaph (NAPALM)
- 14. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 15. BLACK PEAKS All That Divides (RISE)
- 16. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 17. ANTIMATTER Black Market Enlightenment (MUSIC IN STONE)
- 18. THOM YORKE Suspiria (XL)
- 19. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)
- 20. MOGWAI Kin: Original Soundtrack (ROCK ACTION)

RUSSELL FAIRBROTHER (Art Editor)



- 1. UNKH Innerversion (FREYA)
- 2. HOLY All These Worlds Are Yours (PNKSLM)
- 3. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 4. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 5. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 6. ILSAHN Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 7. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 8. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 9. FIRE! The Hands (RUNE GRAMMOFON)
- 10. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 11. THE TANGENT Proxy (INSIDEOUT)
- 12. OSADA VIDA Variomatic (METAL MIND)
- 13. SONAR (WITH DAVID TORN) Vortex (RARENOISE)
- 14. GWENNO Le Kov (HEAVENLY)
- 15. RIVERSIDE Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 16. THE OSIRIS CLUB The Wine-Dark Sea (INDIE)
- 17. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 18. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)
- 19. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 20. BJØRN RIIS Coming Home (KARISMA)

THE BEST
THING I'VE
HEARD ALL
YEAR...



IAN ANDERSON
“William ‘Captain Kirk’ Shatner doing spoken-word Christmas repertoire on his new album, *Shatner Claus*. It features such artists as Henry Rollins, Todd Rundgren, Mel Collins, Rick Wakeman, Billy Gibbons, Iggy Pop, Judy Collins and... Ian Anderson. Delightfully cheesy but great fun. Very tongue-in-cheek.”



RIKARD SJÖBLOM (GUNGFLY)
“My pick is *ET EX* by Gösta Berlings Saga. Great keyboard playing with nice textures on synthesisers and glorious Fender Rhodes piano, with beautiful haunting melodies. It’s soft like a lullaby, then thunderous and majestic. Also the best use of a Mellotron I’ve heard in ages!”



HUW EDWARDS (KOYO)
“For me, it’s *Phase* by Mildlife. It’s got all the warmth and synthesiser sparkle of Tame Impala but with more groove and funky jazz fusion-esque guitars as well. Check out the first track *The Magnificent Moon*, and the music video. Lots of eye candy for the everyday prog nerd.”

LISA MARKLUND

NATASHA SCHARF (News Editor)



- 1. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 2. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 3. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 4. DEAD LETTER CIRCUS Dead Letter Circus (RISE/BMG)
- 5. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 6. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 7. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 8. RIVERSIDE Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 9. ORPHANED LAND Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 10. COHEED AND CAMBRIA Vaxis – Act I: The Unheavenly Creatures (ROADRUNNER)
- 11. ANTIMATTER Black Market Enlightenment (MUSIC IN STONE)
- 12. AURI Auri (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 13. GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT Epitaph (NAPALM)
- 14. GAZPACHO Soyuz (KSCOPE)
- 15. EMMA RUTH RUNDLE On Dark Horses (SARGENT HOUSE)
- 16. AMORPHIS Queen Of Time (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 17. KONTINUUM No Need To Reason (SEASON OF MIST)
- 18. SKYHARBOR Sunshine Dust (EONE/GOOD FIGHT)
- 19. AWOOGA Conduit (ROCKOSMOS)
- 20. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)

JO KENDALL (Reviews Editor)



- 1. FIELD MUSIC Open Here (MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES)
- 2. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 3. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 4. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 5. REGAL WORM Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB/QUARTERMASS)
- 6. THE OSIRIS CLUB The Wine-Dark Sea (INDIE)
- 7. AWOOGA Conduit (ROCKOSMOS)
- 8. CUSTARD FLUX Helium (SELF-RELEASED)
- 9. SZUN WAVES New Hymn To Freedom (LEAF)
- 10. GRYPHON Reinvention (TALKING ELEPHANT)
- 11. BIRDPEN There’s Something Wrong With Everything (JAR)
- 12. VENNART To Cure A Blizzard Upon A Plastic Sea (MEDIUM FORMAT)
- 13. JUDY DYBLE Earth Is Sleeping (ACID JAZZ)
- 14. KAVUS TORABI Solar Divination (BELIEVERS ROAST)
- 15. KIKAGAKU MOYO Masana Temples (GURUGURU BRAIN)
- 16. WAYNE SHORTER Emanon (BLUE NOTE)
- 17. WAND Perfume (DRAG CITY)
- 18. FORKTAIL Forktail (MENKI)
- 19. UNKH Innerversion (FREYA)
- 20. SLIFT La Planète Inexplorée (STOLEN BODY)

MALCOLM DOME (Lives Editor)



- 1. GRYPHON Reinvention (TALKING ELEPHANT)
- 2. HAWKWIND Road To Utopia (CHERRY RED)
- 3. AMORPHIS Queen Of Time (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 4. ORPHANED LAND Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 5. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 6. ILSAHN Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 7. JOHN GREAVES Life Size (MANTICORE)
- 8. ANDY MACKAY 3 Psalms (GOOD DEEDS)
- 9. TONY BANKS Five (BMG)
- 10. AL DI MEOLA Opus (EARMUSIC)
- 11. THE SEA WITHIN The Sea Within (INSIDEOUT)
- 12. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 13. OCEANS OF SLUMBER The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 14. GAZPACHO Soyuz (KSCOPE)
- 15. ROBERT REED Sanctuary III (TIGERMOTH)
- 16. DAVE SINCLAIR Out Of Sinc (DARK PEAK)
- 17. PAVLOV’S DOG Prodigal Dreamer (ROCKVILLE)
- 18. SOFT MACHINE Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 19. SIGH Heir To Despair (CANDLELIGHT)
- 20. THOM YORKE Suspiria (XL)

JOE BANKS (Writer)



- 1. ALEXANDER TUCKER Don't Look Away (THRILL JOCKEY)
- 2. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 3. AXIS: SOVA Shampoo You (DRAG CITY)
- 4. BEAK> >>> (INVADA/TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)
- 5. CAVE Allways (DRAG CITY)
- 6. CAVERN OF ANTI-MATTER Hormone Lemonade (DUOPHONIC)
- 7. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)
- 8. D. ROTHON Nightscapes (CLAY PIPE)
- 9. EVIL BLIZZARD The Worst Show On Earth (CRACKED ANKLES)
- 10. LUNATIC SOUL Under The Fragmented Sky (KSCOPE)
- 11. NIK TURNER AND YOUTH Pharaohs From Outer Space (PAINTED WORD)
- 12. OH SEES Smote Reverser (CASTLE FACE)
- 13. REGAL WORM Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB)
- 14. RYLEY WALKER Deafman Glance (DEAD OCEANS)
- 15. SOFT MACHINE Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 16. THE ADVISORY CIRCLE Ways Of Seeing (GHOST BOX)
- 17. THE C: LIVE COLLECTIVE The Age Of Insanity (BUMNOTE)
- 18. THE LEFT OUTSIDES All That Remains (CARDINAL FUZZ)
- 19. THE NATIONAL JAZZ TRIO OF SCOTLAND Standards Vol. IV (KARAOKE KALK)
- 20. THOM YORKE Suspiria (XL)

MIKE BARNES (Writer)



- 1. SONAR (WITH DAVID TORN) Vortex (RARENOISE)
- 2. JAN FELIX MAY Red Messiah (JAZZLINE)
- 3. GRYPHON Reinvention (TALKING ELEPHANT)
- 4. ROGER ENO Dust Of Stars (PAINTED WORD)
- 5. LAPIS LAZULI Brain (SELF-RELEASE)
- 6. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 7. SUSANNA Go Dig My Grave (SUSANNASONATA)
- 8. JUDY DYBLE Earth Is Sleeping (ACID JAZZ)
- 9. FAIRPORT CONVENTION What We Did On Our Saturday (MATTY GROOVES)
- 10. SOFT MACHINE Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 11. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 12. SANGUINE HUM Now We Have Power (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 13. TIGER MOTH TALES Story Tellers Part II (WHITE KNIGHT)
- 14. ANDREW HEATH Soundings (DISCO GECKO)
- 15. MARY LATTIMORE Hello From The Edge Of The Earth (GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL)
- 16. FUSION ORCHESTRA Live At The Marquee 1974 (SECRET)
- 17. ORCHESTRA OF SPHERES Mirror (FIRE)
- 18. FLYING MACHINES New Life (UBUNTU)
- 19. DHANI HARRISON IN///PARALLEL (BMG)
- 20. SPIRITUALIZED And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)

CHRIS COPE (Writer)



- 1. MAJOR PARKINSON Blackbox (KARISMA RECORDS)
- 2. GLEB KOLYADIN Gleb Kolyadin (KSCOPE)
- 3. STEVEN WILSON Last Day Of June (SW)
- 4. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 5. THEM MOOSE RUSH Don't Pick Your Noise (TMR)
- 6. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 7. FIELD MUSIC Open Here (MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES)
- 8. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME Automata II (SUMERIAN)
- 9. GÖSTA BERLINGS SAGA ET EX (INSIDEOUT)
- 10. THOMAS GILES Don't Touch The Outside (SUMERIAN)
- 11. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 12. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME Automata I (SUMERIAN)
- 13. UMPHREY'S MCGEE It's Not Us (NOTHING TOO FANCY)
- 14. BLACK BOOK LODGE Steeple And Spire (MIGHTY MUSIC)
- 15. BLACK PEAKS All That Divides (RISE)
- 16. RIVERSIDE Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 17. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 18. NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION Grind Show (VINELAND)
- 19. POLY-MATH House Of Wisdom/We Are The Devil (LONELY VOYAGE)
- 20. AZUSA Heavy Yoke (INDIE)

THE BEST
THING I'VE
HEARD ALL
YEAR...



TROY DONOCKLEY (NIGHTWISH)
“I'd have to go for *The Tide* from *Riversea*. It is so laidback, with unashamedly late Floyd stylings and consistently splendid vocals from the extremely underrated Marc Atkinson.”

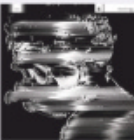


ANNEKE VAN GIERSBERGEN
“For me, it's *Ihsahn's Ámr*. I love this album and its eclectic feel. It's heavy, melodic, with clean vocals, screams, electronics. But the overall darkness seems to connect all these elements. I love it!”



JOHN MITCHELL
“*The Importance Of Mr Bedlam* by The Paradox Twin. Aside from being a ridiculously talented musician and writer, Danny Sorrell's fascination with otherworldly subject matter is a mutual one, so it ticks all my boxes. I look forward greatly to what he has to offer the world musically in the future.”

ISERE LLOYD-DAVIS (Writer)



- 1. ZOLA JESUS Okovi: Additions (SACRED BONES)
- 2. LOUISE LEMÓN Purge (ICONS CREATING EVIL ART)
- 3. GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT Epitaph (NAPALM)
- 4. IHSAHN Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 5. IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK Hugsjá (BY NORSE)
- 6. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 7. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 8. THOM YORKE Suspiria (XL)
- 9. COHEED AND CAMBRIA Vaxis – Act I: The Unheavenly Creatures (ROADRUNNER)
- 10. AMORPHIS Queen Of Time (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 11. BRIAN ENO Music For Installations (UMC)
- 12. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 13. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 14. ORPHANED LAND Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 15. OCEANS OF SLUMBER The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 16. STEVEN WILSON Last Day Of June (SW)
- 17. LUNATIC SOUL Under The Fragmented Sky (KSCOPE)
- 18. THE ORB No Sounds Are Out Of Bounds (COOKING VINYL)
- 19. HAWKWIND Road To Utopia (CHERRY RED)
- 20. LEGEND OF THE SEAGULLMEN Legend Of The Seagullmen (DINE ALONE)

DARYL EASLEA (Writer)



- 1. JONATHAN WILSON Rare Birds (BELLA UNION)
- 2. TONY BANKS Five (BMG)
- 3. SOFT MACHINE Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 4. MARK STOERMER Filthy Apes And Lions (ST. AUGUST)
- 5. PETER HAMMILL X/TEN (FIE!)
- 6. THE CURATOR Where The Stars Will Give Way... (CROMERZONE)
- 7. DHANI HARRISON IN///PARALLEL (BMG)
- 8. BRÜCKEN FROESE Beginn (CHERRY RED)
- 9. MIDAS FALL Evaporate (MONOTREME)
- 10. ANDY MACKAY 3 Psalms (GOOD DEEDS)
- 11. BRIAN ENO Music For Installations (UMC)
- 12. THE ORB No Sounds Are Out Of Bounds (COOKING VINYL)
- 13. SOUTHERN EMPIRE Civilisation (GIANT ELECTRIC PEA)
- 14. GRYPHON Reinvention (TALKING ELEPHANT)
- 15. JUDY DYBLE Earth Is Sleeping (ACID JAZZ)
- 16. THE PARADOX TWIN The Importance Of Mr. Bedlam (WHITE STAR)
- 17. DAVE SINCLAIR Out Of Sinc (DARK PEAK)
- 18. KAYAK Seventeen (INSIDE OUT)
- 19. STANLEY CLARKE BAND The Message (MACK AVENUE)
- 20. KLAUS SCHULZE Silhouettes (SPV/OBLIVION)

ROB HUGHES (Writer)



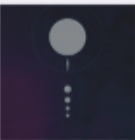
- 1. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 2. GUM The Underdog (SPINNING TOP)
- 3. KIKAGAKU MOYO Masana Temples (GURUGURU BRAIN)
- 4. BC CAMPLIGHT Deportation Blues (BELLA UNION)
- 5. BEAK> >>> (INVADA/TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)
- 6. REGAL WORM Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB/QUATERMASS)
- 7. SPIRITUALIZED And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)
- 8. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 9. BRIAN ENO Music For Installations (UMC)
- 10. KLAUS SCHULZE – Silhouettes (OBLIVION)
- 11. RING VAN MÖBIUS Past The Evening Sun (APOLLON)
- 12. MOGWAI Kin: Original Soundtrack (ROCK ACTION)
- 13. IRMIN SCHMIDT 5 Klavierstücke (MUTE)
- 14. HEN OGLEDD Mógic (WEIRD WORLD)
- 15. MELODY'S ECHO CHAMBER Bon Voyage (DOMINO)
- 16. PRAM Across The Meridian (DOMINO)
- 17. WOODEN SHJIPS V (THRILL JOCKEY)
- 18. RYLEY WALKER Deafman Glance (DEAD OCEANS)
- 19. SLUG Higgleddy Piggledy (MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES)
- 20. JOHN MAUS Addendum (DOMINO)

DOM LAWSON (Writer)



- 1. **CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX** Great Escape (SEASON OF MIST)
- 2. **RIKARD SJÖBLOM’S GUNGLY** Friendship (INSIDEOUT)
- 3. **VOIVOD** The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 4. **IHSAHN** Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 5. **BOSS KELOID** Melted On The Inch (HOLY ROAR)
- 6. **GÖSTA BERLINGS SAGA** ET EX (INSIDEOUT)
- 7. **SOLDAT HANS** Es Taut (WOLVES AND VIBRANCY)
- 8. **THE RESIDENTS** Intruders (CHERRY RED)
- 9. **RING VAN MÖBIUS** Past The Evening Sun (APOLLON)
- 10. **IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK** Hugsjá (BY NORSE)
- 11. **THUMPERMONKEY** Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 12. **VENNART** To Cure A Blizzard Upon A Plastic Sea (MEDIUM FORMAT)
- 13. **OCEANS OF SLUMBER** The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 14. **REGAL WORM** Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB/QUARTERMASS)
- 15. **LAURA MEADE** Remedium (DOONE)
- 16. **THE ORB** No Sounds Are Out Of Bounds (COOKING VINYL)
- 17. **THE FIERCE & THE DEAD** The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT MUSIC)
- 18. **AMORPHIS** Queen Of Time (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 19. **TESSERACT** Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 20. **MICHAEL ROMEO** War Of The Worlds Part 1 (MUSIC THEORIES/MASCOT)

DANNII LEIVERS (Writer)



- 1. **TESSERACT** Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 2. **VOICES FROM THE FUSELAGE** Odyssey: The Founder Of Dreams (WHITE STAR)
- 3. **THE OSIRIS CLUB** The Wine-Dark Sea (INDIE)
- 4. **SKYHARBOR** Sunshine Dust (EONE/GOOD FIGHT)
- 5. **SPIRITUALIZED** And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)
- 6. **RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 7. **THOM YORKE** Suspiria (XL)
- 8. **LOUISE LEMÓN** Purge (ICONS CREATING EVIL ART)
- 9. **TOUNDR** Vortex (INSIDEOUT)
- 10. **COHEED AND CAMBRIA** Vaxis – Act 1: The Unheavenly Creatures (ROADRUNNER)
- 11. **SHATTERED SKIES** Muted Neon (SELF-RELEASED)
- 12. **OCEANS OF SLUMBER** The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 13. **DEAD LETTER CIRCUS** Dead Letter Circus (RISE/BMG)
- 14. **SHADING** The Vanishing Of Our Lore (SELF-RELEASED)
- 15. **WITHIN TEMPTATION** Resist (SPINEFARM)
- 16. **VALIS ABLAZE** Boundless (LONG BRANCH)
- 17. **COLDBONES** Where It All Began (CROOKED NOISE)
- 18. **LUNATIC SOUL** Under The Fragmented Sky (KSCOPE)
- 19. **TALONS** We All Know (HOLY ROAR)
- 20. **A PERFECT CIRCLE** Eat The Elephant (BMG)

FRASER LEWRY (Writer)

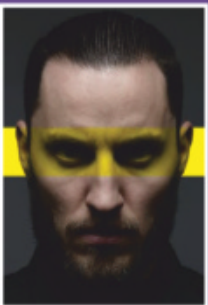


- 1. **REGAL WORM** Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB/QUARTERMASS)
- 2. **SPIRITUALIZED** And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)
- 3. **ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF** Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 4. **BIG BIG TRAIN** Merchants Of Light (ENGLISH ELECTRIC)
- 5. **IAMTHEMORNING** Ocean Sounds (KSCOPE)
- 6. **IVAR BJØRNSON & EINAR SELVIK** Hugsjá (BY NORSE)
- 7. **ZEAL & ARDOR** Stranger Fruit (MVKA)
- 8. **EVIL BLIZZARD** The Worst Show On Earth (CRACKED ANKLES)
- 9. **TESSERACT** Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 10. **THE LEMON TWIGS** Go To School (4AD)
- 11. **CHURCH OF THE COSMIC SKULL** Science Fiction (KOZMIK ARTIFACTZ)
- 12. **THE FIERCE & THE DEAD** The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 13. **THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** DISSOLUTION (KSCOPE)
- 14. **ORPHANED LAND** Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 15. **KYROS** Vox Humana (PLANE GROOVY)
- 16. **COHEED & CAMBRIA** Vaxis – Act 1:... (ROADRUNNER)
- 17. **ROBERT REED** Sanctuary III (TIGERMOTH)
- 18. **OSTURA** The Room (UNIVERSAL MUSIC MENA)
- 19. **THE NIGHT FLIGHT ORCHESTRA** Sometimes the World Ain’t Enough (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 20. **GAZPACHO** Soyuz (KSCOPE)

THE BEST THING I’VE HEARD ALL YEAR...



JOSH GRIFFIN (CALIGULA’S HORSE)
“Vector from Haken. One of the most innovative albums I’ve heard in a long time, and who knew they had this level of heavy in them?! The contrast from the 80s-soaked Affinity to this is staggering, but they still retain their unique sound while pumping out some dank riffs!”



JØRGEN MUNKEBY (SHINING)
“My favourite progressive album of 2018 is Planet Silver Screen by Four Stroke Baron. They’ve got great heavy grooves and riffs á la Mastodon, a dark electronic soundscape and awesome melodic vocals reminiscent of the coolest 80s synth bands.”



GAVIN BUSHELL (GODSTICKS)
“A Perfect Circle’s Eat The Elephant. This album is bold even by their standards, and it’s enjoyable to listen to. Not your average 70s prog-sounding album, but that’s why I like it. It’s probably the most progressive album released this year.”

DAVE LING (Writer)



- 1. **KINO** Radio Voltaire (INSIDEOUT)
- 2. **SPOCK’S BEARD** Noise Floor (INSIDEOUT)
- 3. **SOUTHERN EMPIRE** Civilisation (GIANT ELECTRIC PEA)
- 4. **GLASS HAMMER** Chronomonaut (SOUND RESOURCES)
- 5. **DAMANEK** In Flight (GIANT ELECTRIC PEA)
- 6. **HAWKLORDS** Brave New World (HAWKLORDS)
- 7. **RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 8. **VOIVOD** The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 9. **GALAHAD** Seas Of Change (AVALON)
- 10. **THE SEA WITHIN** The Sea Within (INSIDEOUT)
- 11. **THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 12. **HAKEN** Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 13. **ORPHANED LAND** Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 14. **HAWKWIND** Road To Utopia (CHERRY RED)
- 15. **DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN** The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour (BLACKLAKE)
- 16. **KAYAK** Seventeen (INSIDE OUT)
- 17. **DUKES OF THE ORIENT** Dukes Of The Orient (FRONTIERS)
- 18. **THE LEMON TWIGS** Go To School (4AD)
- 19. **SHINEBACK** Dial (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 20. **ABRAHAM MUSIC PROJECT** First The Honesty, Then The Promise (SUNLIGHT DIGITAL)

CHRIS MCGAREL (Writer)



- 1. **VOIVOD** The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 2. **PINIOL** Bran Coucou (DUR ET DOUX)
- 3. **A PERFECT CIRCLE** Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 4. **TOUNDR** Vortex (INSIDEOUT)
- 5. **RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 6. **VOLA** Applause Of A Distant Crowd (MASCOT)
- 7. **GAZPACHO** Soyuz (KSCOPE)
- 8. **THE FIERCE AND THE DEAD** The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 9. **VENNART** To Cure a Blizzard Upon a Plastic Sea (MEDIUM FORMAT)
- 10. **THE TANGENT** Proxy (INSIDEOUT)
- 11. **THUMPERMONKEY** Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 12. **TESSERACT** Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 13. **SANGUINE HUM** Now We Have Power (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 14. **JEAN-MICHEL JARRE** Equinoxe Infinity (COLUMBIA)
- 15. **NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION** Grind Show (VINELAND)
- 16. **SOFT MACHINE** Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 17. **IHSAHN** Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 18. **GOD IS AN ASTRONAUT** Epitaph (NAPALM)
- 19. **LUNATIC SOUL** Under The Fragmented Sky (KSCOPE)
- 20. **SUBSIGNAL** La Muerta (GENTLE ART OF MUSIC)

GIULIA MASCHERONI (Writer)



- 1. **HAKEN** Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 2. **VOIVOD** The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 3. **PFM** Emotional Tattoos (INSIDEOUT)
- 4. **EMMA RUTH RUNDLE** On Dark Horses (SARGENT HOUSE)
- 5. **SIMON PHILLIPS** Protocol IV (PHANTOM)
- 6. **ORPHANED LAND** Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 7. **STEVEN WILSON** Last Day Of June (SW)
- 8. **DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN** The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour (BLACKLAKE)
- 9. **TESSERACT** Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 10. **A PERFECT CIRCLE** Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 11. **IHSAHN** Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 12. **SPOCK’S BEARD** Noise Floor (INSIDEOUT)
- 13. **BRIAN ENO** Music For Installations (UMC)
- 14. **MICHAEL ROMEO** War Of The Worlds Part 1 (MUSIC THEORIES/MASCOT)
- 15. **THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 16. **HAWKWIND** Road To Utopia (CHERRY RED)
- 17. **TEMPLES ON MARS** Temples On Mars (PRIMORDIAL)
- 18. **ARENA** Double Vision (VERGLAS)
- 19. **MARTIN BARRE** Roads Less Travelled (CLEOPATRA)
- 20. **THOM YORKE** Suspiria (XL)

JULIAN MARSZALEK (Writer)



- 1. LONKER SEE One Eye Sees Red (INSTANT CLASSIC)
- 2. PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS King Of Cowards (ROCKET)
- 3. THE OSCILLATION Wasted Space (FUZZ CLUB)
- 4. CAVERN OF ANTI-MATTER Hormone Lemonade (DUOPHONIC)
- 5. SPIRITUALIZED And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)
- 6. MELTING HAND Faces Of Earth (HOMINID SOUNDS)
- 7. TVAM Psychic Data (PSYCHIC DATA)
- 8. BEAK> >>> (INVADA/TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)
- 9. ALAMEDA 4 Czarna Woda (INSTANT CLASSIC)
- 10. XENONY Polish Space Programme (SELF-RELEASED)
- 11. HOOKWORMS Microshift (DOMINO)
- 12. OH SEES Smote Reverser (CASTLE FACE)
- 13. THE LUCID DREAM Actualisation (HOLY YOU ARE)
- 14. POPPY ACKROYD Resolve (ONE LITTLE INDIAN)
- 15. THROW DOWN BONES Two (FUZZ CLUB)
- 16. GWENNO Le Kov (HEAVENLY)
- 17. GRUFF RHYS Babelsberg (ROUGH TRADE)
- 18. JO QUAIL Exsolve (SELF-RELEASED)
- 19. KAPITAL AND RICHARD PINHAS Flux (INSTANT CLASSIC)
- 20. WOODEN SHJIPS V (THRILL JOCKEY)

SOPHIE MAUGHAN (Writer)



- 1. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 2. OCEANS OF SLUMBER The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 3. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME Automata II (SUMERIAN)
- 4. SKYHARBOR Sunshine Dust (EONE/GOOD FIGHT)
- 5. THE ALGORITHM Compiler Optimization Techniques (SELF-RELEASE)
- 6. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)
- 7. LOUISE LEMÓN Purge (ICONS CREATING EVIL ART)
- 8. VOLA Applause Of A Distant Crowd (MASCOT)
- 9. MONUMENTS Phronesis (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 10. COHEED AND CAMBRIA Vaxis – Act I: The Unheavenly Creatures (ROADRUNNER)
- 11. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME Automata I (SUMERIAN)
- 12. BOSS KELOID Melted On The Inch (HOLY ROAR)
- 13. VALIS ABLAZE Boundless (LONG BRANCH)
- 14. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 15. IHSAHN Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 16. TEMPLES ON MARS Temples On Mars (PRIMORDIAL)
- 17. ZOLA JESUS Okovi: Additions (SACRED BONES)
- 18. INTERVALS The Way Forward (INTERVALS MUSIC)
- 19. SINISTRO Sanguine Cassia (SEASON OF MIST)
- 20. SHATTERED SKIES Muted Neon (SELF-RELEASED)

MATT MILLS (Writer)



- 1. IHSAHN Ámr (CANDLELIGHT)
- 2. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 3. ORPHANED LAND Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 4. PSYCROPTIC As the Kingdom Drowns (PROSTHETIC)
- 5. TESSERACT Sonder (KSCOPE)
- 6. AMORPHIS Queen Of Time (NUCLEAR BLAST)
- 7. GOOD TIGER We Will All Be Gone (METAL BLADE)
- 8. GALAHAD Seas Of Change (AVALON)
- 9. CIRCLES The Last One (SEASON OF MIST)
- 10. AWOOGA Conduit (ROCKOSMOS)
- 11. LONG DISTANCE CALLING Boundless (INSIDEOUT)
- 12. SKYHARBOR Sunshine Dust (EONE/GOOD FIGHT)
- 13. VOLA Applause Of A Distant Crowd (MASCOT)
- 14. LEGEND OF THE SEAGULLMEN Legend Of The Seagullmen (DINE ALONE)
- 15. TALONS We All Know (HOLY ROAR)
- 16. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 17. VLMV Stranded, Not Lost (FIERCE PANDA)
- 18. TEMPLES ON MARS Temples On Mars (PRIMORDIAL)
- 19. COHEED AND CAMBRIA Vaxis – Act 1...(ROADRUNNER)
- 20. OCEANS OF SLUMBER The Banished Heart (CENTURY MEDIA)

THE BEST
THING I'VE
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ASHLEY DOODKORTE (VOYAGER)
“Dir En Grey’s *The Insulated World*. They’ve turned into this eclectic agro-art-nu-prog cacophony that I find totally impenetrable in a way that keeps me coming back for more. It’s equal parts beautiful, scary, dense, and batshit insane!”



IVAR BJØRNSON (ENSLAVED)
“The Pineapple Thief’s *Dissolution*. I found the album when going through withdrawal after a King Crimson gig in Stockholm this summer. This album might seem quiet and mellow, but there are massive emotions and energies under the surface. The lyrics are also very powerful.”



TIM BOWNESS
“Devon Welsh’s self-released *Dream Songs* is the new album I’ve listened to most this year. His beautiful, vulnerable and emotional voice is backed by sensitive minimalist arrangements. A simultaneously dark and uplifting experience.”

GRANT MOON (Writer)



- 1. THE FIERCE & THE DEAD The Euphoric (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 2. LAZULI Saison 8 (L’ABELLE RÔDE)
- 3. VOIVOD The Wake (CENTURY MEDIA)
- 4. SANGUINE HUM Now We Have Power (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 5. THUMPERMONKEY Make Me Young, Etc (ROCKOSMOS)
- 6. US, TODAY Computant (IT.ME.MUSIC)
- 7. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 8. HAKEN Vector (INSIDEOUT)
- 9. KINO Radio Voltaire (INSIDEOUT)
- 10. ARENA Double Vision (VERGLAS MUSIC)
- 11. PINIOL Bran Coucou (DUR ET DOUX)
- 12. DILEMMA Random Acts Of Liberation (BUTLER/MUSIC ON VINYL)
- 13. REGAL WORM Pig Views (URANIUM CLUB/QUARTERMASS)
- 14. JUDY DYBLE Earth Is Sleeping (ACID JAZZ)
- 15. ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF Dead Magic (CITY SLANG)
- 16. AWOOGA Conduit (ROCKOSMOS)
- 17. LUX TERMINUS The Courage To Be (LUX TERMINUS)
- 18. MILD HIGH CLUB Skiptracing (STONES THROW)
- 19. SEALIONWOMAN Siren (ANTIGEN)
- 20. THE ALGORITHM Compiler Optimization Techniques (SELF-RELEASE)

CHRIS ROBERTS (Writer)



- 1. BIG BIG TRAIN Merchants Of Light (ENGLISH ELECTRIC)
- 2. ANNA CALVI Hunter (DOMINO)
- 3. RICHARD BARBIERI Variants (ORANGE ASYLUM)
- 4. EXIT NORTH Book Of Romance And Dust (SELF-RELEASED)
- 5. MODERN STUDIES Welcome Strangers (FIRE)
- 6. TONY BANKS Five (BMG)
- 7. LUNATIC SOUL Under The Fragmented Sky (KSCOPE)
- 8. COLIN EDWIN & LORENZO FELICIATI Twinscapes Vol 2: A Modern Approach To The Dancefloor (RARE NOISE)
- 9. PLENTY It Could Be Home (KARISMA)
- 10. SPIRITUALIZED And Nothing Hurt (BELLA UNION)
- 11. RIVERSIDE Wasteland (INSIDEOUT)
- 12. GRICE The Grey Of Granite Stone (HUNGERSLEEP)
- 13. DANIEL BLUMBERG Minus (MUTE)
- 14. ROBERT REED Sanctuary III (TIGERMOTH)
- 15. SOFT MACHINE Hidden Details (MOONJUNE/DYAN)
- 16. SANGUINE HUM Now We Have Power (BAD ELEPHANT)
- 17. JOHN MAUS Addendum (DOMINO)
- 18. MINT FIELD Pasar De Las Luces (INNOVATIVE LEISURE)
- 19. CRAYOLA LECTERN Happy Endings (ONOMATOPOEIA)
- 20. NEAR FUTURE Ideal Home (BLANC CHECK)

PAUL SEXTON (Writer)



- 1. KARINE POLWART Laws Of Motion (HUDSON)
- 2. LUKE DANIELS Singing Ways To Feel More Junior (GAEL MUSIC)
- 3. DHANI HARRISON IN///PARALLEL (BMG)
- 4. DARREN HAYMAN Thankful Villages, Vol. 3 (BELKA)
- 5. ASHLEY HUTCHINGS Paradise And Thorns... (TALKING ELEPHANT)
- 6. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF Dissolution (KSCOPE)
- 7. STANLEY CLARKE BAND The Message (MACK AVENUE)
- 8. STEVEN WILSON Last Day Of June (SW)
- 9. FAIRPORT CONVENTION What We Did On Our Saturday (MATTY GROOVES)
- 10. YVES LAMBERT TRIO Tentation (LA PRUCHE LIBRE)
- 11. LOCKS Skeletal Blues (ZEN TEN)
- 12. TONY BANKS Five (BMG)
- 13. AL DI MEOLA Opus (EARMUSIC)
- 14. JUDY DYBLE Earth Is Sleeping (ACID JAZZ)
- 15. ALASDAIR ROBERTS, AMBLE SKUSE & DAVID MCGUINNESS What News (DRAG CITY)
- 16. THE INNOCENCE MISSION Sun On The Square (BELLA UNION)
- 17. KELLY OLIVER Botany Bay (KELLY OLIVER)
- 18. EMMA TRICCA St. Peter (DELL’ORSO)
- 19. MARTIN BARRE Roads Less Travelled (CLEOPATRA)
- 20. A PERFECT CIRCLE Eat The Elephant (BMG)

JOHNNY SHARP (Writer)



- 1. KIKAGAKU MOYO** Masana Temples (*GURUGURU BRAIN*)
- 2. MARK STOERMER** Filthy Apes And Lions (*ST AUGUST*)
- 3. NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION** Grind Show (*VINELAND*)
- 4. STEVEN WILSON** Last Day Of June (*SW*)
- 5. ARENA** Double Vision (*VERGLAS MUSIC*)
- 6. ROBERT REED** Sanctuary III (*TIGERMOTH*)
- 7. HAWKWIND** Road To Utopia (*CHERRY RED*)
- 8. THOM YORKE** Suspiria (*XL*)
- 9. BC CAMPLIGHT** Deportation Blues (*BELLA UNION*)
- 10. GULP** All Good Wishes (*E.L.K*)
- 11. SHARRON KRAUS** Joy's Reflection Is Sorrow (*SUNSTONE/NIGHTSHADE*)
- 12. HAKEN** Vector (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 13. JACCO GARDNER** Somnium (*FULL TIME HOBBY*)
- 14. TWO MEDICINE** Astropsychosis (*BELLA UNION*)
- 15. ANTIMATTER** Black Market Enlightenment (*MUSIC IN STONE*)
- 16. 22** You Are Creating: Limb 2 (*LONG BRANCH*)
- 17. TOUNDRA** Vortex (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 18. HAWKLORDS** Brave New World (*HAWKLORDS*)
- 19. SPIRITUALIZED** And Nothing Hurt (*BELLA UNION*)
- 20. KONTINUUM** No Need To Reason (*SEASON OF MIST*)

NICK SHILTON (Writer)



- 1. GLASS HAMMER** Chronomonaut (*SOUND RESOURCES*)
- 2. SOUTHERN EMPIRE** Civilisation (*GIANT ELECTRIC PEA*)
- 3. PERFECT BEINGS** Vier (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 4. DAMANEK** In Flight (*GIANT ELECTRIC PEA*)
- 5. 3.2** The Rules Have Changed (*FRONTIERS*)
- 6. SPOCK'S BEARD** Noise Floor (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 7. MYSTERY** Lies And Butterflies (*UNICORN DIGITAL*)
- 8. DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN** The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour (*BLACKLAKE*)
- 9. DARWIN** Origin Of Species (*ORIGIN OF SPECIES*)
- 10. NEAL MORSE** Life And Times (*RADIANT/METAL BLADE*)
- 11. RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 12. GAZPACHO** Soyuz (*KSCOPE*)
- 13. ARENA** Double Vision (*VERGLAS MUSIC*)
- 14. TONY BANKS** Five (*BMG*)
- 15. GALAHAD** Seas Of Change (*AVALON*)
- 16. THE TANGENT** Proxy (*INSIDE OUT*)
- 17. LAZULI** Saison 8 (*L'ABEILLE RÔDE*)
- 18. PHIDEAUX** Infernal (*BLOODFISH*)
- 19. BRÜCKEN FROESE** Beginn (*CHERRY RED*)
- 20. ORPHANED LAND** Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (*CENTURY MEDIA*)

SID SMITH (Writer)



- 1. NIK BÄRTSCH'S RONIN** Awase (*ECM*)
- 2. SONAR (WITH DAVID TORN)** Vortex (*RARENOISE*)
- 3. SWEET BILLY PILGRIM** Wapentak (*SELF RELEASED*)
- 4. JOHN MCLAUGHLIN** Live In San Francisco (*ABSTRACT LOGIX*)
- 5. WAYNE SHORTER** Emanon (*BLUE NOTE*)
- 6. SOFT MACHINE** Hidden Details (*MOONJUNE/DYAN*)
- 7. JAKOB BRO** Bay Of Rainbows (*ECM*)
- 8. ORCHESTRA OF THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE** O4 (*DISCUS*)
- 9. REGAL WORM** Pig Views (*URANIUM CLUB/QUARTERMASS*)
- 10. BOBBY PREVITE** Rhapsody (*RARENOISE*)
- 11. SUSANNA** Go Dig My Grave (*SUSANNASONATA*)
- 12. FIRE!** The Hands (*RUNE GRAMMOFON*)
- 13. SKYDIVE TRIO** Sun Sparkle (*HUBRO*)
- 14. ELEPHANT9** Greatest Show On Earth (*RUNE GRAMMOFON*)
- 15. ISILDURS BANE** Off The Radar (*ATARAXIA*)
- 16. WINGFIELD REUTER SIRKIS** Lighthouse (*MOONJUNE*)
- 17. RICHARD BARBIERI** Variants (*ORANGE ASYLUM*)
- 18. MATT BABER** Suite For Piano and Electronics (*BAD ELEPHANT*)
- 19. KATE WESTBROOK** Granite (*WESTBROOK*)
- 20. ALEXANDER TUCKER** Don't Look Away (*THRILL JOCKEY*)

THE BEST
THING I'VE
HEARD ALL
YEAR...



BRUCE SOORD
(THE PINEAPPLE THIEF)

"The album I kept going back to was The Fierce & The Dead's *The Euphoric*. It's chock full of badass riffs and badass guitar tones, with a deliciously dirty bass guitar all put together by a band who sound like they've been jamming in a dark room for decades."



JOE PAYNE

"I'm going for *Save The World* by Daphne & Celeste. This album might not be welcomed by all prog heads, but it's weird as fuck, and I love it! It came out completely under the radar. Let's call it Disney on acid. My eyes dilate and teeth gurn when I listen to this. Not for the prude-hearted."



DANIEL TOMPKINS
(TESSERACT)

"Plini is one of the most tasteful modern guitarists around, and his new record *Sunhead* is nothing but ear candy from start to finish. It's complex enough to appeal to the technically minded but sweet enough to leave a smile on the unsuspecting listener."

PHIL WELLER (Writer)



- 1. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME** Automata II (*SUMERIAN*)
- 2. THE ALGORITHM** Compiler Optimization Techniques (*SELF-RELEASE*)
- 3. IHSAHN** Ámr (*CANDLELIGHT*)
- 4. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** Dissolution (*KSCOPE*)
- 5. VOIVOD** The Wake (*CENTURY MEDIA*)
- 6. KONTINUUM** No Need To Reason (*SEASON OF MIST*)
- 7. LUNATIC SOUL** Under The Fragmented Sky (*KSCOPE*)
- 8. TESSERACT** Sonder (*KSCOPE*)
- 9. GOOD TIGER** We Will All Be Done (*METAL BLADE*)
- 10. LEGEND OF THE SEAGULLMEN** Legend Of The Seagullmen (*DINE ALONE*)
- 11. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME** Automata I (*SUMERIAN*)
- 12. MUSE** Simulation Theory (*WARNER BROS*)
- 13. AMORPHIS** Queen Of Time (*NUCLEAR BLAST*)
- 14. GLEB KOLYADIN** Gleb Kolyadin (*KSCOPE*)
- 15. BOSS KELOID** Melted On The Inch (*HOLY ROAR*)
- 16. COHEED & CAMBRIA** Vaxis – Act I... (*ROADRUNNER*)
- 17. TALONS** We All Know (*HOLY ROAR*)
- 18. LONG DISTANCE CALLING** Boundless (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 19. A PERFECT CIRCLE** Eat The Elephant (*BMG*)
- 20. RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (*INSIDEOUT*)

DAVID WEST (Writer)



- 1. RIVERSIDE** Wasteland (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 2. VOLA** Applause Of A Distant Crowd (*MASCOT*)
- 3. JOHN MCLAUGHLIN & THE 4TH DIMENSION/ JIMMY HERRING & THE INVISIBLE WHIP** Live In San Francisco (*ABSTRACT LOGIX*)
- 4. HEDVIG MOLLESTAD TRIO** Smells Funny (*RUNE GRAMMOFON*)
- 5. RIKARD SJÖBLOM'S GUNGLY** Friendship (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 6. ARENA** Double Vision (*VERGLAS MUSIC*)
- 7. COHEED AND CAMBRIA** Vaxis – Act I: The Unheavenly Creatures (*ROADRUNNER*)
- 8. TOSKA** Fire By The Silos (*SELF-RELEASED*)
- 9. GLASS HAMMER** Chronomonaut (*SOUND RESOURCES*)
- 10. ANNEKE VAN GIERBERGEN** Symphonized (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 11. MYSTERY** Lies And Butterflies (*UNICORN DIGITAL*)
- 12. SOUTHERN EMPIRE** Civilisation (*GIANT ELECTRIC PEA*)
- 13. KINO** Radio Voltaire (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 14. HAKEN** Vector (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 15. SIMON PHILLIPS** Protocol IV (*PHANTOM*)
- 16. IO** Earth Solitude (*IO EARTH MUSIC*)
- 17. CHURCH OF THE COSMIC SKULL** Science Fiction (*KOZMIK ARTIFACTZ*)
- 18. JANE GETTER PREMONITION** ON Tour (*BIG FUN PRODUCTIONS*)
- 19. ORPHANED LAND** Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs (*CENTURY MEDIA*)
- 20. JUPITER HOLLOW** AHDOMN (*SELF-RELEASED*)

RICH WILSON (Writer)



- 1. HAKEN** Vector (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 2. THE SEA WITHIN** The Sea Within (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 3. KINO** Radio Voltaire (*INSIDEOUT*)
- 4. DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN** The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour (*BLACKLAKE*)
- 5. THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** Dissolution (*KSCOPE*)
- 6. NEAL MORSE** Life And Times (*RADIANT/METAL BLADE*)
- 7. TONY BANKS** Five (*BMG*)
- 8. LAZULI** Saison 8 (*L'ABEILLE RÔDE*)
- 9. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME** Automata I (*SUMERIAN*)
- 10. GALAHAD** Seas Of Change (*AVALON*)
- 11. WITHIN TEMPTATION** Resist (*SPINEFARM*)
- 12. ARENA** Double Vision (*VERGLAS MUSIC*)
- 13. GAZPACHO** Soyuz (*KSCOPE*)
- 14. CRIPPLED BLACK PHOENIX** Great Escape (*SEASON OF MIST*)
- 15. COHEED AND CAMBRIA** Vaxis – Act I: The Unheavenly Creatures (*ROADRUNNER*)
- 16. IHSAHN** Ámr (*CANDLELIGHT*)
- 17. ROBERT REED** Sanctuary III (*TIGERMOTH*)
- 18. LUNATIC SOUL** Under The Fragmented Sky (*KSCOPE*)
- 19. MICHAEL ROMEO** War Of The Worlds Part 1 (*MUSIC THEORIES/MASCOT*)
- 20. STEVEN WILSON** Last Day Of June (*SW*)

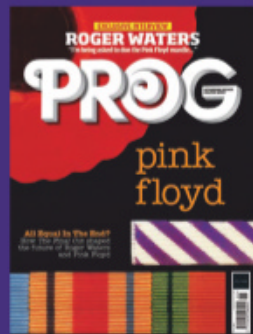
Vote in the PROG READERS' POLL

How was your 2018? Proggy enough? We think so. True, there weren't any new studio albums from big hitters like Steven Wilson, Opeth, Yes, Anathema or Marillion, but have a look at the Critics' Choice on page 90 and you'll see that there was plenty of fine progressive music released.

A reminder that Prog Person Of The Year is a category for the artist that you believe has gone above and beyond in their chosen field: not simply your favourite artist who may not have done that much this year (there are other categories for that). And Unsung Hero is there to honour those working behind the scenes but who still play a major role in helping the prog cause: they just do it away from the spotlight.

Finally, please don't vote for the passing of an artist in the Disappointment category. There are more respectful ways of paying tribute to the musicians who have passed and these votes won't be counted.

To vote you can fill in the form to the right and post it to us by **January 7** to **Prog, Future Publishing, The Emerson Building, 4-8 Emerson Street, London, SE1 9DU**. Or you can e-mail us your choices using the subject line 'Readers' Poll 2018' to prog@futurenet.com.



CATEGORIES

BEST BAND

Last year's winner - Anathema

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - Anathema, *The Optimist*

FEMALE VOCALIST

Last year's winner - Lee Douglas (Anathema)

MALE VOCALIST

Last year's winner - Vincent Cavanagh (Anathema)

GUITARIST

Last year's winner - Steve Hackett

BASSIST

Last year's winner - Nick Beggs

KEYBOARD PLAYER

Last year's winner - Andy Tillison (The Tangent)

DRUMMER

Last year's winner - Nick D'Virgilio (Big Big Train)

REISSUE OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - Marillion, *Misplaced Childhood*

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - Big Big Train, Cadogan Hall Concerts

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - John Wetton RIP

VENUE OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - Royal Albert Hall

BEST UNSIGNED BAND

Last year's winner - Schooltree

PROG PERSON OF THE YEAR

Last year's winner - Steven Wilson

PROG'S UNSUNG HERO

Last year's winner - Nellie Pitts (The Merch Desk)

New spins...

MARILLION

It's the album that most blurred the lines between poetic observation and autobiography for frontman Fish. The latest reissue of this dark masterpiece, refurbished with extensions, refuses to go under.

Words: Chris Roberts **Illustration:** Stuart Briers

'And if my owners let me have some free time some day / With all good intention I would probably run away' – *That Time Of The Night (The Short Straw)*

If Fish-era Marillion had been permitted six months off to recharge their frazzled batteries circa 1988, this may not have been the swansong. Yet – the singer has said – management pushed until Fish had to come up for air, and without him the band have forged a different path. Their evolution is now well established, but as the fourth and final chapter of Marillion: The Opening Series, *Clutching At Straws* is an almost flawless farewell: dark, dramatic, self-pitying and, of course, confessional. While Torch, the protagonist of the lyrics, is more rooted in reality than his forebear The Jester, he's still a vessel created for Fish to pour out his angst. An alcoholic absentee father, he drowns in despair, his couplets inspired by his heroes (Dylan Thomas, Kerouac, Burns) depicted on the album cover, or deploying the specific blend of rasping bitterness and raw, exposed vulnerability that is Fish's own trademark.

Musically it sacrifices some of the sparkle and pop-friendly punch of the mighty *Misplaced Childhood* to roll and loll in gloomier waves. It's still relatively compact: at six minutes *That Time Of The Night* is the longest straw, but maintains an overall mood that is both subtle and sad. If there's one department in which it surrenders supremacy to its predecessor, it's in lacking a big finish to match *Childhood's End*/ *White Feather*, but that feels deliberate.

Clutching... doesn't want to emerge on a triumphant high. It wants to wallow in its warm, wet circles. Yes, there are energetic, breakneck phases, with the vigorous *Incommunicado* sounding more like The Who than The Who. Yet from 'I've got no discipline, got no self-control' in *Just For The Record* to 'Your daddy took a raincheck' in *Sugar Mice*, it's more Leonard Cohen fatalism than redemptive arc. More country & western than cosmic

Clutching At Straws: Deluxe Edition

PARLOPHONE



Clutching At Straws doesn't want to emerge on a triumphant high. It wants to wallow in its warm, wet circles.

rock. The band, contrary to myths about neo-prog being overblown, are superbly restrained, letting the (sob) stories tell themselves while wrapping them in a gently troubled layer of uneasy listening.

Fish summons his last resources before exhaustion to delve into the soul of barroom losers, salvation seekers, bad habits and big 'empty gestures'. The lines between poetic observation and autobiography blur, his political comments through *White Russian* more a list of modern-day horrors than any active suggestions. *Torch Song* is almost scarily self-aware – 'Doctor says my liver looks like leaving with my lover' – while the swooning *Sugar Mice* is an exercise in self-flagellation

that melts the hardest resistance, its gorgeous refrains shifting the songcraft previously displayed on *Kayleigh* or *Lavender* into the no-frills basement of the human psyche. *Clutching At Straws* is not for the faint-hearted, but its strategy of sound, instead of alienating, coaxes you along its avenues and alleyways.

Three decades on from its June 1987 release (when its alluring misery went to No.2), this lush and literate landmark gets the deluxe four-CD plus Blu-ray box treatment. First there's a remix by Andy Bradfield and Avril Mackintosh. It doesn't sound a heck of a lot different from the original, but would we want it to? So you get what you know and love. Then (over two discs) there are contemporaneous live sets from Edinburgh Playhouse (portions of which appeared on '88's *The Thieving Magpie*). The most effective moments here include a fizzing *Fugazi*, a gritty *Garden Party* and a heaving-with-emotion *Heart Of Lothian*.

The fourth disc gathers the album's demos, most of which came out in 1999, adding four previously unheard. Elements of these, you'll know, were retooled for *Season's End*, and Fish's own solo debut (*Voice In The Crowd* coloured the motifs of *Vigil In A Wilderness Of Mirrors*). They also confirm that Marillion's rough sketches sound slicker than many bands' remasters, and catch Fish in nothing-to-lose flurries of eloquence. Finally, the Blu-ray offers prime audio (stereo) and master 5.1 mixes, a new one-hour documentary featuring band interviews by Mick Wall, and promo videos.

Debate will endure as to which album from this period is the definitive early Marillion creation. *Misplaced Childhood*, by no means a jolly party animal itself, has the ones anyone can sing along to; this one, by its very nature, demands more commitment and doesn't offer ultimate catharsis. Once you're under its spell, though, it's impossible to leave. Even if Fish did. This is a doughty deluxe honouring, which you couldn't accuse of clutching at straws: all that reasonably could be there, is. It burns a little brighter now.

MARILLION

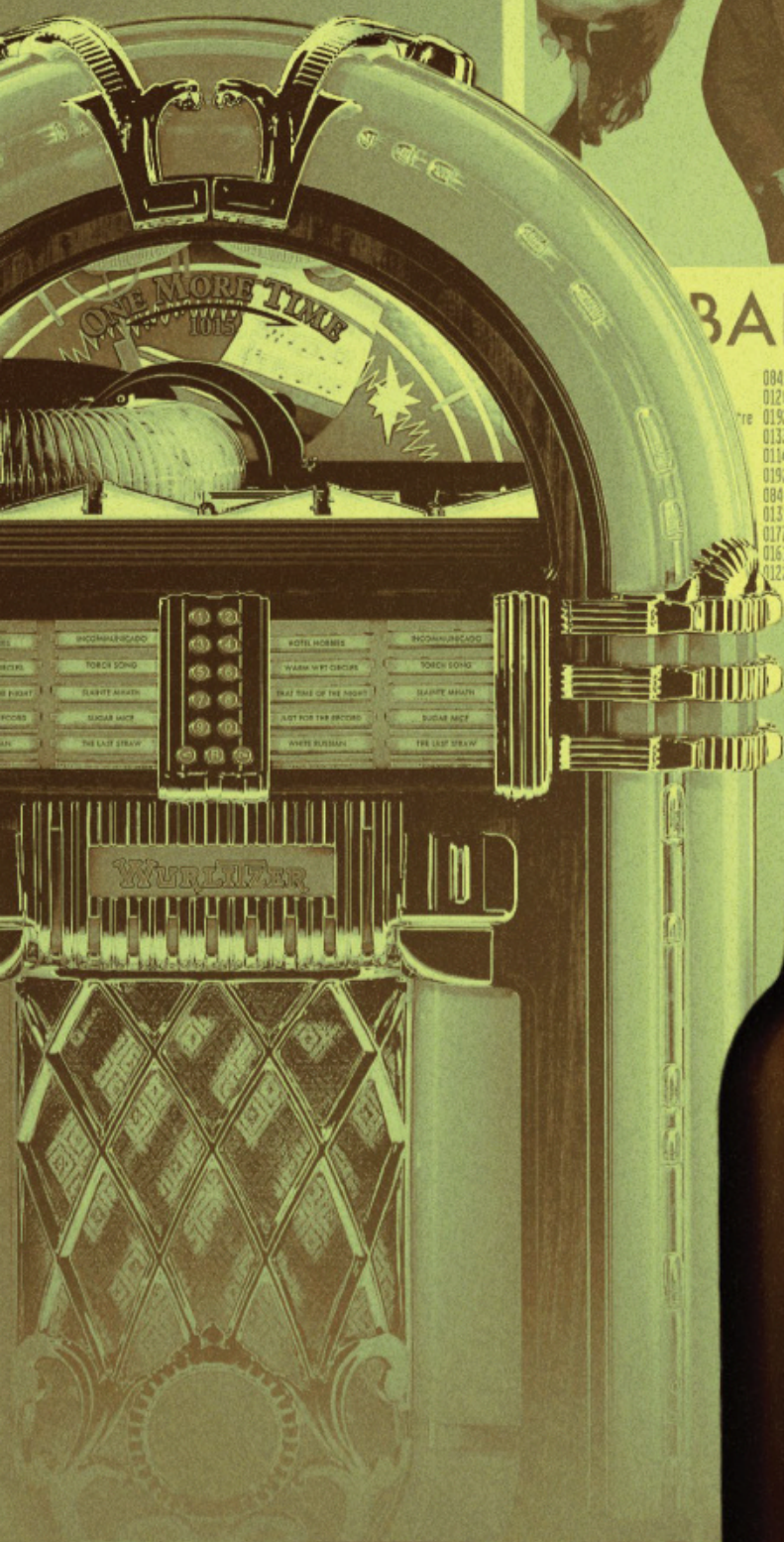


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FOCUS

Focus 11 IN AND OUT OF FOCUS

Saxondale favourites return with resilient charm.



It's six years since *Focus X*, which saw the venerable Dutch masters rediscovering a sense of playfulness. It felt then as if they'd remembered what people love about them: their undeniable virtuosity mixed with a tendency towards the truly bonkers.

Ever since *Hocus Pocus* and *Sylvia* became unlikely early 70s hits (the use of the former in a 2010 Nike ad brought the band new admirers), and albums like *Hamburger Concerto* hit on



Focus 11 starts with hunger and energy.



intriguing interfaces of fun and form, we associate Focus with a gleeful, jaunty twist on the tropes of jazz, classical and long and winding prog. It appears that mainstay Thijs van Leer is aware of this, a recent poem declaring: 'Wow my joy could not increase/To see this new release/Both angelic and a beast/It's Focus, to say the least!' Okay, TS Eliot wouldn't feel threatened, but then he couldn't play keyboards and flute like the 70-year-old Thijs.

The eleventh studio album since their 1970 debut (bear in mind that the name lay fallow between 1985 and 2002) is a brighter, more primary-coloured cousin to *X*, which was itself pretty upbeat. Roger Dean's artwork closely echoes its predecessor's. Van Leer's stepson has now left, but the line-up retains dazzling guitarist Menno Gootjes, who does a great job of making you forget Jan Akkerman isn't there, and original drummer Pierre van der Linden. Udo Pannekeet joins on bass. They're a tight, infectious happy unit, unburdened by overfamiliarity, who you can almost imagine smiling in encouragement whenever van Leer or Gootjes undertake a solo noodle. These solos are always lively and effective, and nothing waffles on too long: it's unusual for a track here to outlast five minutes.

From the crunchy guitar riff and percussive rush and rumble of opener *Who's Calling?* (which has a dash of Jeff Beck playing *Love Is Blue*) into the jazz funk chording of *Heaven*, the album starts with hunger and energy. While van Leer is always impressive, Gootjes all but steals the show with his sleight-of-hand switching between rhythm and lead flourishes.

How Many Miles? allows a rare vocal offering, which bangs on about ecstasy and harmony rather gauchely but won't scare the horses, and *Winnie*, where everything slows down and allows Gootjes to get a bit Mark Knopfler, is a warm-hearted winner. *Palindrome*, disappointingly, does not play the same backwards as forwards, unless it contains some clever technical musical phrasings beyond the layman's ken. The title track turns the house lights on and ushers us out with delicate whimsy. Focus still exude a cheerful clarity.

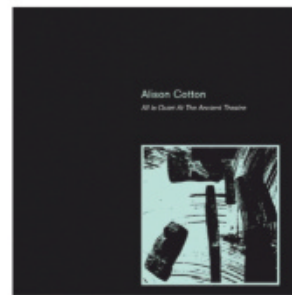
CHRIS ROBERTS

ALISON COTTON

All Is Quiet At The Ancient Theatre CARDINAL FUZZ

An autumnal symphony from the Left Outsides viola ace.

After two albums with husband Mark Nicholas in ongoing acid folk duo The Left Outsides, Alison Cotton abandons traditional song structures to embark on her first solo work. Following the heady path opened up on her collaborative cassette with Plinth's Michael Tanner, this is still essentially a folk record, but leaves usual tropes as distant specks. Over five lengthy tracks, Cotton creates a mesmerisingly atmospheric autumnal symphony, armed with just her viola and spectral voice, frequently multi-tracked. Perhaps the closest comparison is the frozen warnings and arcane European folk



spirits on Nico's 1968's shape-shifting *The Marble Index*; a haunting drone reverie set against stark backdrops of skeletal trees and ancient church ruins (even a deserted WW1 battlefield). Cotton's spell is cast from the first waves of mournful viola that bring

in the opening 10-minute title track, dueting with itself then joined by the pastoral strokes of her worldless vocals. This continues through *The Last Sense To Leave Us*, *The Bells Of St Agnes* - where her vocal resembles a medieval Nico - and *A Tragedy In The Tithe Barn*. A beautiful album that's perfect for the cold snap. **KN**

AZUSA

Heavy Yoke INDIE

Avant-metallers' debut shows there is life after Dillinger Escape Plan.

When mathy prog-core overlords The Dillinger Escape Plan called it quits last year after two decades, surprised fans were left pondering where their members might turn next. While singer Greg Puciato revisited electronic outfit The Black Queen, plectrum punishing bassist Liam Wilson was quick off the blocks to team with two comrades from Norway's Extol to form Azusa - and the result is an addictive, metallic cocktail of unexpected turns, jagged riffs and haunting melody. The stramash at the start of *Interstellar Islands* feels like being blindfolded and chucked on



a runaway train, but when it flits to the disjointed, swampy verse, brightened with singer Eleni Zafiriadou's sweet vocals, you know there's more in the band's DNA than just gung-ho hellery. Much like Dillinger, Azusa revel in contrasts, sounding both

like an impending apocalypse and a fresh dawn. The keyboard strains in *Fine Lines* juxtapose against the thrash-on-LSD adventurism of *Spellbinder*, while Zafiriadou - when not guttural - serves up indie-flecked melody on top of the spiky melee. When they find their groove, Azusa deliver some of the best prog metal moments of the year. **CC**

D. ROTHON

Nightscares CLAY PIPE MUSIC

A nocturnal journey in sound from south London multi-instrumentalist.

Nightfall and the way that it both changes our perceptions of the world and acts as a summons to sleep has inspired artists and musicians down through the ages, exercising a unique grip on our imaginations. On the wonderful *Nightscares*, multi-instrumentalist David Rothon captures the various moods of the hours after dark, a contemplative musical journey with a few surprises along the way. It begins with *The Midnight Bell/I Have Been Here Before*, chiming pedal steel notes lost in a warm pool of reverb, before Mellotron and harmonica



combine as twin heralds of sleep's little death. ...And *Breathe* perfectly mimics that sliding feeling as consciousness slips away, the chords pitch shifting through some misty veil. The minor key guitar figure and melancholic cor anglais of *Waldeinsamkeit* is

pregnant with pastoral longing; the retro futurist lounge music of *The Years Fall Away* is like hearing John Barry's theme to *Midnight Cowboy* on the Moon. But this isn't just the aural equivalent of a snuggle under the duvet - the tense, drifting drone of *Unwoken City* recalls Zeit-era Tangs, the night at its darkest just before dawn. **JB**

HAMMOCK

Universalis SELF-RELEASED

Effortlessly powerful LP from ambient classical masters.

Nashville duo Hammock have grown from a cult band into one of the most recognised and popular ambient groups in the world, yet they've never quite ascended to the heights of acts such as Sigur Rós, and it's not particularly clear why. With *Universalis*, their seventh record, they've doubled down on the orchestral side of their sound, occasionally to stunning effect, as on opener *Mouth To Dust...* *Waiting* and dramatic climax of the album *We Watched You Disappear*. Equally, they're happy to counterpoint that with almost concerto-like meditations based around a single



instrument, such as the cello-led title track. On past albums, there's been an air of celebration alongside the darker textures, but on *Universalis* the mood is dark and mournful and things barely lift beyond the muted defiance and rousing slide guitars of

Thirst. There's also very little percussion – however, that does mean that when a full drum kit is used on *We Are More Than We Are*, it's breathtaking. By the end of the LP, *Universalis* is almost unbearably sad, surely a sign of just how powerful their emotional heft is. It's a masterful piece of work, but not for a sunny day. **AL**

HATS OFF GENTLEMEN IT'S ADEQUATE

Out Of Mind GLASS CASTLE

Up and down fourth record from London prog rockers.

If you're new to Hats Off Gentlemen It's Adequate, the London band dub themselves "proggy, funky, defiant and sometimes poignant" – oh, and they're approved by Steve Hackett. This just about encapsulates their fourth record *Out Of Mind*, although the funk nod is perhaps over-egged – Sly & The Family Stone this ain't. The music, guided by vocalist/instrumentalist Malcolm Galloway and bassist/keyboardist Mark Gatland, is a stroll through cap-doffs to Pink Floyd and Marillion that underpin ruminations on the lyrical theme of memory. At best the album is an impressive palette of



colours, with *Defiance* a spunky, key-driven romp and *Maze* a dreamy brushstroke of broody riffs and synth swirls, while Kathryn Thomas' flute work is a vital injection of pizzaz. With lyrics pointing to pioneering sci-fi writer Philip K Dick, as well as

tunes covering topics like dementia, this is a cerebral affair, but it derails a little on tracks like *The Electric Ant*, which can feel limp with overbearing vocals and soggy music. Forget about the lulls of pallidity, though, and *Out Of Mind* definitely has its moments, although it remains to be seen if it's one that will stick in the memory. **CC**

HEDVIG MOLLESTAD TRIO

Smells Funny RUNE GRAMMOFON

Norway's guitar heroine delivers another musical thunderbolt.

For a country with a population smaller than London, Norway seems to produce an almost alarmingly high number of amazing bands. On their sixth album, the Hedvig Mollestad Trio continue to explore the fertile ground where jazz meets rock, then they get drunk together and jam until the neighbours call the police about the noise. The main riff of *Beastie*, *Beastie* seems inspired by the Beastie Boys' *Sabotage*, and features an outstanding guitar solo from bandleader Mollestad. *Bewitched*, *Dwarfed And Defeathered* is pure sonic malevolence, while in *First Thing To Pop Is The Eye*, Mollestad's



guitar breaks up into feedback, allowing bassist Ellen Brekken to launch an adventurous solo as Ivar Loe Bjørnstad fearlessly keeps pace on the drums. There's a moment of relative calm in *Jurasek*, but *Lucidness* is a freewheeling, volatile

jazz-rock exploration akin to the Mahavishnu Orchestra or Tony Williams' Lifetime at their most volcanic. *Smells Funny* provides the antithesis of the sanitised, elevator fusion of the 80s and 90s. This is not an album to play quietly in the background, but one to blast at a level somewhere between 'obnoxious' and 'likely to cause brain damage'. **DW**

THOMAS GILES

Don't Touch The Outside SUMERIAN

Between The Buried And Me man splits a record – with himself.



Thomas Giles, AKA Tommy Rogers, is the frontman of North Carolina's premier metallic proggers and all-round smart cookies Between The Buried And Me. He's already popped out a double album with his regular gig in the shape of this year's *Automata I & II* and now has somehow found time to write and produce his fourth solo album in seven years, *Don't Touch The Outside*. Acolytes of BTBAM will not automatically qualify as Giles' solo fans.



A place for exploration and experimentation.



This is a place for exploration and experimentation – predominantly in the electronic sphere, allowing the synths to shine. There's a base of underlying heavy menace, but he mostly refrains from pressing the metal pedal.

The band Ulver, however, have been a significant influence on Giles and that gothic electro prog backbone is especially clear on this record – unsurprising, we suppose, given that their frontman Kristoffer Rygg appears on *Milan*. The track has the mournful trip-hop quality of Rygg and co's turn of the millennium material and the two vocalists complement each other well, but it's a smouldering song that never truly ignites. Elsewhere, the stuttering heavy-ish prog rock of *Church Friends*, *Incomplet* and *Mr Sunshine* offer the closest links to his day job.

Radiate is a different matter altogether. There's something more dangerous and compelling in its wind-whipped synth sound and it wouldn't have been out of place on Hans Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch's *Blade Runner 2049* soundtrack. Like that film, it is beaten and moody, but slogs relentlessly on with a flickering, closely-guarded positivity.

While we're on soundtracks, *Take Your Seats*, *Time Gentlemen* would work backing a film noir. There's some Crippled Black Phoenix in its warehouse drum sound, overlaid with bolshy brass and hammered piano that descends to pandemonium. Closer, *Exordium* is the knock-out punch. There is an unashamed sense of *Avalon*-era Roxy Music in its crisp clarity and soothing, calculated melody – yet another example of a wider shift back toward the shimmering production quality that made, and then ultimately saturated and strangled, 80s music – but it does it beautifully. And when the drum and gliding top line break over a sustained piano chord, hairs are duly raised. Moments like this are all the more frustrating, though, because part of *Don't Touch The Outside* can be thought of as a decent collection of moody prog rock; while the other part is a touching yet dark exercise in intelligent electro-pop. Instead it tries to do both at once: to alternate between what would be two good, but ultimately opposing EPs, and call it an album.

MATT PARKER

JOHN GREAVES

Life Size MANTICORE

Henry Cow man's remarkable exercise in scabrous restraint.



With 50 years of esoteric musical endeavour on his frankly bewildering CV, John Greaves' status as one of art rock's most respected figures is hardly in doubt at this point. The former Henry Cow and National Health man has managed to contribute to a vast array of bands and projects over the years, not to mention his own impressive catalogue of solo material and countless collaborations with everyone from Robert Wyatt and Peter Dinklage to Michael Nyman and Penguin Café Orchestra.

Endearingly restrained, infused with questing bravado.

One heartening result of all that furious creativity is that *Life Size* arrives with a whispered promise that practically anything could happen here. In reality, this is an endearingly restrained affair but one infused with the same spirit of questing bravado that has informed so much of Greaves' work. A collection of elegantly downbeat songs sung (and spoken) in English, French and Italian by the bassist and feminine cohorts Valérie Gabail, Annie Barbazza and Himiko Paganotti, *Life Size* covers a huge amount of musical ground, albeit always shrouded in the monochrome shadows of early hours melancholy.

The opening *Air De La Lune* is worth the price of admission on its own: four minutes of gently eerie vocal harmony, it's a mesmerising entry point. Next, *The Same Thing* marries Greaves' tremulous baritone to a shimmering, shuffling backdrop of xylophone and upright bass, with fluid changes of tempo and time and an irresistible undercurrent of melodrama. There are more traditional songs here, too: *In Te* is a simple, folksy strum with a faint whiff of baroque horror and a dash of tasteful piano: it's not a million miles away from Nick Cave's life-ravaged balladry, and all the better for it. Meanwhile, *God Song* crisply asks the man in the sky, 'Is this some kind of joke you're playing?' before eviscerating said bearded deity across three minutes of sawing strings and undulating piano chords: the necessarily spiky work of an instinctive subversive, perhaps, but also one of the most unsettling things you will hear this year. Elsewhere, *Kew Rhône Is Real* is a skewed diatribe set to jittery, dancing skeleton rhythms that favour riveting tension over celebratory release, and *Earthly Powers* a wonderfully crusty campfire sing-along.

The album's emotionally raw zenith is provided by a new version of *How Beautiful You Are*, a song Greaves co-wrote with Peter Dinklage and that first appeared on the Slapp Happy man's 1983 solo album *The Naked Shakespeare*. Impossibly delicate, this stripped down, torchlit rendition may make you weep uncontrollably. But don't let that put you off.

DOM LAWSON

INDI

Precipice FLYING NUN

Kiwi composer blends folk, classical and prog on first solo LP.

Since rising to fame in her native New Zealand as teenage frontwoman of psychedelic trip hop collective Doprah, Indira Force has branched out into releasing tracks of her own online as well as composing soundtracks for an indie movie and a contemporary dance performance. But apart from a self-released compilation of her early work, this is the first LP she's released under her own name. She may wily term her music as "a transdimensional doorway which sly fairies have left slightly ajar for anyone to enter", but there's nothing ironic about the sounds she creates. In fact, there's frequently



an eerie quality about it that is positively unsettling. The childlike mandolin and cooing backing vocals of *Cair Paravel* owe a debt to Joanna Newsom, and the whispering openings of *Dementer* have a Björk-ish feel, but their accompaniment is unique,

full of disarming, complex rhythms, brooding electronica and atmospheric strings. She's not above throwing us a hook or two, either. *Airportal* has a softly yearning melancholic motif accompanied by ghostly handclaps that later mutate into crashes of thunder from distant horizons. A beautifully distinctive debut. **JS**

JADIS

Medium Rare II JADIS MUSIC

Second rarities collection from South Coast neo-proggers.

Three decades ago quartet Jadis were among the foremost contenders to break out beyond a niche prog audience. Awarded an eye-catching support slot on Marillion's Clutching At Straws tour and championed by Steve Rothery, they seemed primed for greater success. With refined musicianship overlaid by memorable and immediate songs, Jadis' future looked bright in the early 1990s. However, many are the trials and tribulations of a progressive band (most recently, guitarist/vocalist Gary Chandler's fractured shoulder kiboshing



a short tour in October). Jadis fell between two audiences; too fiddly for mainstream rockers but too straightforward for prog purists. Which is a pity, as the back catalogue is a rich one, albeit with limited diversions from a trusted formula. *Medium Rare II*

features several new tracks alongside assorted remixed and revamped versions of various Jadis favourites plus a distinctive cover of Genesis' *Your Own Special Way* and a live rendition of Floyd's *Comfortably Numb*. Jadis completists will enjoy much here; newcomers should investigate 1992's peerless *More Than Meets The Eye*. **NS**

KARIBOW

MONUMENTO ROCKWERK

Highly prolific Germans' second studio release of 2018.

For studio purposes, these days Karibow is essentially the increasingly productive German multi-instrumentalist Oliver Rüsing, *MONUMENTO* being the second Karibow album this year (and a double disc). Recent albums have featured assorted luminaries from Saga (Michael Sadler and Jim Gilmour) and Southern Empire/Damanek (Daniel Lopresto, Sean Timms and Marek Arnold). This time round he's enlisted former Karnataka singer Hayley Griffiths, Lifesigns mainman John Young and Mystery guitarist Michel St-Père, covering plenty of musical bases with a principal focus on melodic prog and



the odd foray into prog metal, reminiscent of their countrymen Sylvan and the sadly long-defunct Everon. The first disc, *Moments*, comprises shorter songs bookended by the longer opening title track and closing song *Elay*. *District Of Dignity* is the standout,

elevated by Griffiths who duets with Rüsing. The second disc, *Monuments*, finds Karibow stretching out on two multipart tracks and includes Rüsing slipping back into his native tongue on *A Fairy Tale*. Aside from some clunky lyrics and few Euros more needed to enhance the production, the ever-improving act merit a higher profile. **NS**

KISS KISS KING KONG

B/B APOLLON

Caught in a jam: the Norwegians' monstrous return.

By now, it should be clear to most that jam bands are responsible for the majority of society's ills. However, when they work – and we very much mean this with an emphasis is on *work* – the effect is electrifying. Prog and rock's old bones get stretched and pulled in their arthritic sockets, the blood starts pumping through those crisp veins and something resembling audacity emanates from the skeleton's jerking cartilage. Bergen's Kiss Kiss King Kong offer a little of that sensation. Their second album makes us think of White Denim. It is outrageous, in-the-pocket and builds to tottering



constructions of distortion, fuzz and rapacious rhythmic hammering – garage rock in its aesthetic, but much more jazzily ambitious in its aims. *Be Gone* turns-up Cream's galloping psychedelia, *Tensions* could, nay should, land

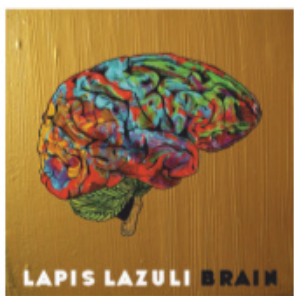
them a Black Keys – or better yet, Black Angels – support slot. While closer *Past Times* has no right – no right, we tell you – to make eight minutes and 51 seconds of dynamic desert rock pass in a blur of trippy hum and cymbal thrash, the prime primates deliver the record's clearest vocal, ringing out just before its close. **MP**

LAPIS LAZULI

Brain SELF-RELEASE

Fifth album from the Canterbury-based psych-proggers.

Any mention of *that* cathedral city prompts thoughts of a certain style of 70s music, but as few Canterbury Scene groups acknowledged that such a thing existed, it seems particularly tenuous now. But Lapis Lazuli reckon that on *Brain* their approach is more “modern” and less “vintage”, so it's interesting to make comparisons. If one Canterbury characteristic was a rolling momentum through odd time signatures, Lapis Lazuli, an instrumental quartet of guitar, keyboards, bass and drums, are rhythmically taut in the modern style and they typically state riffs and melodic figures, then suddenly



augment a phrase or stick in an odd unison pattern and veer off in a different direction. But these five lengthy compositions are rarely overcooked, showing inspired musical minds at work. The restless *And Stay Out!* employs Crimson-ish picking patterns, while

with its garish synths, *Falling Line* nods to the soundworld of 70s jazz funk, although it lurches over a few humpback bridges en route. The band refer to *Hired Soul* as their “disco/funk” track, which is stretching the term, but with some unexpected twists it's another fresh and invigorating take on a familiar form. **MB**

LOST CROWNS

Every Night Something Happens BAD ELEPHANT

Progressive pop royalty from Knifeworld, Prescott, NSRO and more.

The brainchild of singer-guitarist Richard Larcombe (Stars In Battledress/Cardiacs), Lost Crowns are being touted as an avant-psychedelic supergroup thanks to a roll-call including keyboardist Josh Perl (Knifeworld), bassist Charlie Cawood (Knifeworld, Tonochrome, My Trickys Spirit), singer-keyboardist Rhodri Marsden (Prescott, Scritti Politti), clarinetist Nicola Baigent (North Sea Radio Orchestra) and drummer Keepsie. The band follow a simple formula on most of the eight tracks, established from the off by 10-minute opener *Housemaid's Knees*, which sees the



keyboard players weigh in with big, jagged prog jazz riffs that often sound heisted from Mahavishnu Orchestra or certain Mothers albums, pulled every which way with discordant flourishes designed to disconcert. The overall vibe on *She Saved*

Me, *Midas X-Ray* or *Dandy Doesn't Know* is late 60s to early 70s with touches of Principal Edwards Magic Theatre in the bearded vocals and small furry animals in loincloths circle dancing on folkier, Incredible String Band-tinged outings such as *Sound As Colour*. They seem to be having a blast colliding these disparate styles. You may too. **KN**

STEVE HACKETT

At The Edge Of Light INSIDEOUT

Unstoppable brilliance from an old master.



The cover of Steve Hackett's 26th studio album features a man stood beneath a rocky escarpment. He looks up, as sheet lightning breaks through a black sky. At first glance, it would be easy to miss this man, overwhelmed by natural forces. However, whatever else might be said about *At The Edge of Light*, the little man in the corner of the cover should not be confused with Hackett himself. For if this follow-up to *The Night Siren* shows Hackett continuing to showcase some fine world musicians, there is no doubt who is front and centre. As he approaches his 70th year, Steve Hackett's spectacular talent is undiminished and *At The Edge Of Light* is a tour de force.



**Neat arpeggios,
dazzling solo runs...
Goodness, he can play.**



At The Edge Of Light finds Hackett exploring familiar themes: a world in decay in which the good might be overwhelmed by hate. The worldbeat elements found in the opening chords of *Fallen Walls And Pedestals* – which features tar player Malik Mansurov – weave beautifully into a neo-classical wig-out that puts Yngwie to shame. This opener flows into the deceptively sweet *Beasts Of Our Time*, featuring jazzier Rob Townsend's sublime sax.

This album is also a reminder that Hackett's voice has come on in leaps and bounds. There are fine performances, not least on *Under The Eye Of The Sun* – a spaced-out groover where Hackett's vocals are harmonised with Floyd backing singers, the MacBroom sisters. The Byrds-like *Hungry Years* also testifies to Hackett's vocal confidence. A shout-out should also be given to the MacBroom's stunning performance on *Underground Railroad*, a tribute to those who escaped slavery in the Antebellum Southern United States.

Arguably the beating heart of *Edge Of Light* is the 11 minute epic *Those Golden Wings*. It begins in almost bel canto classical mode, before heading into wintry pastoral. It's a questing love song that showcases the whole Hackett guitar armoury – neat arpeggios, dazzling solo runs and tasteful melody. Goodness, Hackett can play. On penultimate track *Conflict*, as he dances around the neck with fret-melting speed, he demonstrates why he's influenced everyone from Van Halen to Rothery to Lifeson.

This album shows that class really is timeless. As his solo output pushes into the second quarter-century of releases, one might reasonably expect a decline in quality, yet Hackett keeps getting better. His grasp of musical form and appreciation of how to blend instruments – from digeridoo to sax to sitar – is first-class. But, oh, that guitar tone and technique. It's enough to make you want to give up guitar; it's enough to make you want to try harder.

RACHEL MANN

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MONO

Nowhere Now Here PELAGIC

Enigmatic Tokyo instrumentalists, now with added drummer and Steve Albini.

There are few bands in the post-rock world that can command as much attention or anticipation as Mono. For this, their 10th album in 20 years, they've innovated quite radically. Recorded with Steve Albini, they've not only added drummer Dahm Majuri Cipolla to their core line-up but also started experimenting with electronics in earnest. Tracks such as *After You Comes The Flood* are reminiscent of two-drummer *Worlds Apart*-era ...Trail Of Dead, albeit instrumental. Other cuts are more sedate, however, with the brooding *Breathe* built on gauzy vocals and a bed of synth pads, rather than



dramatic dynamic shifts. The title track, *Sorrow and Meet Us Where The Night Ends* are more business-as-usual for the band, with atmospheric guitars, half-time drums, and orchestral ornamentation. Mono certainly do it better than their imitators, but the

by-the-numbers tunes are less exciting than their more innovative cuts, even if they carry emotional weight. The fact that Mono are still able to put out intelligent, evocative albums after all this time shows their growth as composers. *Nowhere Now Here* is an interesting evolution, with a few gentle surprises along the way. **AL**

NIEDERRAD 16

All Our Yesterdays GÖLLHEIM

Intriguing 'micro prog' LP from Bruce Soord's old partner-in-crime.

Back in the 90s, Bruce Soord revered his pal Neil Randall as something of a creative driving force. The two friends played in Vulgar Unicorn together, while Randall also cut tracks for another progressive band, Putain Media. Eventually they drifted apart, with Soord starting The Pineapple Thief while Randall moved away from music. Fast-forward a few years, while working for Nintendo in Germany, Randall met singer Julia Maul and began reworking some of the old Putain Media material and writing new tracks; the results are here. Randall's journey sounds pretty computer-heavy,



and that's reflected in this electronic, often quirky release. But there's melodious warmth, too (*Pittencrieff Park*), woven into clever layers of trip-hop, ambient and modern prog. Maul sounds rather like a less weird Sia, which enforces the pleasingly Zero

7-esque qualities that crop up in the likes of *Long-Wave Long Story* and *Soft Museum*. [*Brainjacked*] embraces more all-out jerky, experimental electronica, while Soord makes an appearance in the jazzy *Metro Transit Authority* (*Rulebreaker Arr.*), a commanding mix of fusiony guitar heroism and slightly trance-like beats. **PG**

OUZO BAZOOKA

Transporter STOLEN BODY

Garage psych exotica and rocking ragas from Israel.

Based out of Tel Aviv, Ouzo Bazooka are, according to their bio, "the undisputed champions of middle eastern psych rock". They certainly advance a fairly compelling case on third album *Transporter*, with a sound that nails the twangy but tough sweet spot between the 70s Anatolian rock scene and the 80s garage psych of bands such as The Steppes. There's a fun, almost cartoonish vibe throughout, the type of album to get a party started without being completely mindless. *It's A Sin* kicks it off in fine style, its gothic surf rock vibe and catchy melody



guaranteed to have you singing along by the second chorus. *Latest News* pushes the heaviness, its thumping riff laced with some nice horrorshow Vox organ, while *Trip Train* is one of several cuts here paying homage to the *Nuggets* bands and the British

Invasion sound of the Stones, the Kinks and Them. However, the undoubted highlight for prog fans is the wonderfully daft *Space Camel*, Mediterranean cosmic disco with spangly funk guitar and bouzouki, but also a synth line that could be straight off an early Marillion album. Eastern spirit at high velocity. **JB**

PETER HAMMILL

X/Ten FIE!

From the Trees sprouts bare-branched live companion.



There aren't many who could get away with releasing the same body of songs three times within the space of two years, but anyone who's seen Hammill live over the last five decades will appreciate the essential differences between his unfettered self-exorcism on stage and dogged perfectionism in the studio. As he explains on the cover of *X*, he was still in the early stages of writing and recording 2017's *From the Trees* when he toured Japan the previous November,



A soul obviously making peace with itself in public.



releasing a limited CD of five tracks in nascent form (V). Following Hammill's self-imposed proviso that he would start recording armed with an album's-worth of songs performable live with just voice, guitar and piano, he laid down some of his most sensitive vocal performances yet, overdubbing intricate chorales and subtly colouring the autumnal late life masterpiece that grappled fearlessly with advancing age.

X features those same 10 songs in the same order, captured at shows in Italy, Germany and (one in) the UK between November 2017 and May 2018. Now the radiant velvet foliage of tracks like *My Unintended* (reflecting on youthful impetuosity bugging a relationship, concluding *I've no regrets how it went*) is stripped back to barest branches to emphasise raw emotions that planted the song's original seed. Already PH classics, the agonised *Charm Alone* and bleak *Torpor* see him relive every self-examining syllable through his remarkably undulled voice. Alone at the piano, he's absolutely riveting.

As Hammill points out, "I'm clinging on by my fingertips at several moments in this collection. I'd much rather [have] elements of uncertainty, danger, instantaneity, than be measured and controlled." Fortunately, his songwriting is strong enough to allow such emotional twists, momentary silences or a sudden roar from the depths of a soul obviously making peace with itself in public. *Girl To The North Country* unlocks a seething torrent of ravaged reflection, grounded by the sombre resignation of *On Deaf Ears* concluding 'nobody's listening now', a theme of abandonment continued through the fading actor in *Milked*. As with many Hammill works, curtain-closing *The Descent* ties up any ends with beauty and, in this case, defiance and dignity. As far as he's concerned, age won't be getting his mind, muse or voice any time soon.

Hearing him soar, ruminate or falter once again positions Hammill as prog's grandest vocal passion and most brutally-eloquent songwriter. He's unflinchingly honest; thankfully, as he puts it, "still charged by this kind of shimmering electricity of life". Same as it ever was.

KRIS NEEDS

LUNA ROSSA

Atropa FIREFLY MUSIC

Lunas reveal new layers of wonder – and an ABBA cover – on their third.



Luna Rossa's third release takes its title from the Latin for Deadly Nightshade, aka Belladonna. The plant has been used as a medicine, a poison, and as the means for witches to transform themselves into flying beings. It's the perfect metaphor for an album that explores transformation, healing and pain, and humans' complex relationship with the natural world. Indeed, just when it seemed Panic Room's Anne-Marie Helder and Jon Edwards's side project couldn't garner any more plaudits, they drop *Atropa*. It is a wonder and the finest Luna Rossa record to date.



Bitter-sweet vocals and arrangements that could stop time.



If their last album *Secrets And Lies* explored the complexities of human relationships, especially the darkness of depression and betrayal, *Atropa* is no less moody. This time, however, the Lunas add a greater dose of hope and tenderness. *Atropa* begins in mystery and fractures: the opener *Midnight* features Clannad-like harmonies and harp from long-time collaborator Sarah Dean, and builds into a disconcerting longing for the night.

Yet, if Helder and co are no less afraid of the dark than on previous offerings – songs like *Deadly Nightshade* speak of poison and shadow – their overall tone is almost celebratory. The use of Panics' stickmeister Gavin John Griffiths brings rhythmic crispness to tracks like *Special One*. Edwards' chilled piano, Griffiths' drums and Helder's joyous voice join together to make a song for summer days and chilling out.

The use of a grittier and heavier effects – including Helder's percussive use of acoustic guitar on *Red Moon* – ensures that *Atropa* never feels one-paced or samey. No one has ever doubted Helder's luminous vocals, but on *Red Moon* the percussive interplay brings out new dimensions. *Invisible* is groovy and smooth without being bland and Edwards sits back on Griffiths' beat with the understanding that only years of playing together can bring.

Because this is the Lunas there are surprises, not least in the covers department. The take on Dave Stewart/Barbara Gaskin classic *Make Me Promises* is groovy and tender, but we're not sure anyone is prepared for the Lunas' version of ABBA's *Winner Takes It All*. Helder has had a life-long love of ABBA, and it shows: the Lunas' version is simple, melancholic and shattering. The vocal interplay between Helder and Dean is bittersweet and the arrangement could stop time.

Atropa, then, is a joy. On *Family Tree* – a paean to family relationships – Helder sings 'you are my family tree'. As she does so, it feels like she's singing just for you. This is no mere side project. This is a family all prog fans should wish to be part of.

RACHEL MANN

PALLAS

Courage And Other Songs Of War And Peace SELF-RELEASED

Graeme Murray and friends' 1918-themed free download.

Earlier this year it looked like curtains for Pallas. Founding member Graeme Murray admitted that they had "ceased to function" but, buoyed by a positive social media response to talk of solo material, Murray was spurred to write the title track of this new record, their first since 2014's *Wearewhowere*. He's combined the WW1-themed track with six other cuts from Pallas and guitarist Niall Mathewson's back catalogue that share a similar theme, and released it on a 'pay what you like' basis via Bandcamp. At first there are strong echoes of *The Final Cut* in the



melancholic, quiet desperation of *Courage's* opening passages, as Murray ponders, 'where did you get your courage from to climb those ladders and make that run?' But once a string section joins in and Mathewson's guitar is allowed to fly free overhead

it expands into a stirring, widescreen soundscape. *XXV Suite* sees a welcome marriage of the two side-ending pieces from the band's 2011 album, and a new Murray instrumental and a couple of Mathewson tracks from his 2015 solo collection also get a deserved airing. Frankly, you should feel guilty taking it for nothing. **JS**

PARADIGM SHIFT

Sammukh SELF-RELEASED

Bruce Soord-produced Mumbai proggers hit the right fusion.

Paradigm Shift's story is a testament to the way that the internet has facilitated the global progressive scene. Their second LP *Sammukh* is an accomplished affair, a slick fusion of Indian classical influences and modern progressive rock. More than anything else, it's a catchy record full of great riffs, as found on *Bekhabar*, in the groovy end section of *Khoye The Hum*, or all over the bombastic *Azaadi*. Hindi vocalist Kaushik Ramachandran has no problem carrying the material and providing additional hooks, although he's at his best when he moves out of his baritone range and fills out the



band's sound at the treble end. Example: the climax of *Wajah*, one of the most anthemic cuts on the record. It's a bit disjointed at times, with some of the sections not always gelling seamlessly, but when it works, it's genuinely fantastic. When some

progressive rock bands toy with 'eastern' ideas it can often come off as inauthentic, patronising or a simple pastiche. The most enjoyable thing about Paradigm Shift, and *Sammukh*, is that they're able to approach this fusion in an honest way that isn't just kitsch – it's a natural melding of two styles that they have every right to. **AL**

PURSER DEVERILL

Square One MIGHTY MUSIC

Former metal duo reunites in a pomp rock mood.

Thirty-seven years ago, singer Jon Deverill and guitarist Fred Purser worked together in New Wave Of British Heavy Metal band the Tygers Of Pan Tang on an album called *The Cage*. The Tygers were trying to escape the shackles of genre and *The Cage* was a melodic, pomp-tinged set that took them into the Top 20 before the line-up disintegrated. *Square One* represents a most unlikely yet oddly satisfying renewal of this lapsed partnership. It's prog in the loosest sense, but Deverill's divine, expressive tones are wrapped around a set of considered, cultivated and expertly



arranged tunes that will surely find favour with fans of Kansas or perhaps Saga. Among its neatest offerings, *Beat Them Join Them* certainly bears comparison to Michael Sadler and company – and that's a compliment. What we've got here, basically, is

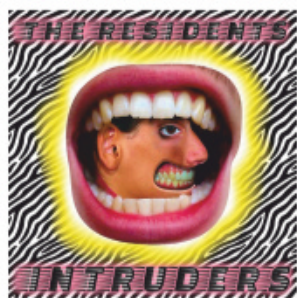
an AOR band that isn't afraid to think outside of the box; to investigate sound palettes and to ruffle the feathers of those that chose to inhabit one of rock music's most restrictive yet stubbornly enduring genres. It's going to be interesting to see how the purists of all things pink'n'fluffy react to Purser Deverill. **DML**

THE RESIDENTS

Intruders CHERRY RED

San Fran oddballs invade our heads.

Further evidence that The Residents are really enjoying themselves at the moment, *Intruders* concludes a year of feverish activity. Following the sublime 'pREserved' editions of their early albums and the perverse, cut 'n' shut splurge of *I Am A Resident!*, the masked mentalists' 34th studio album is as bewildering and absorbing as anything they've released in decades. A core theme of spectral, malevolent figures lurking on the fringes of our fragile, internal realities snakes its way through these 10 peculiar marriages of wonky art rock and cracked-mirror poetry, with so



many engaging musical ideas and moments of lyrical brilliance. Each song tells its own woozily unsettling story, ranging from *Voodoo Doll's* sleepy surf rock needlework saga to the anxious, philosophical churn of the darkly serene *Endless And Deep*. As with

last year's train crash-themed *The Ghost Of Hope*, this is a top-notch journey down The Residents' rabbit hole and one that stands tall alongside early classics like *Eskimo* and *Fingerprince*. It's all wildly evocative: as eerie show-closer *Shadows* ebbs away, you may find yourself checking over your shoulder for signs of your own ghoulish stalkers. **DL**

THE HARE & HOOFE

The Terror Of Melton SELF-RELEASED

Unhinged Brit psych splendour with a twinkle in its eye.

If you're one of the discerning few that thrilled to The Hare And Hoofe's *White Blindness* single from 2017, which sounded like a long lost Atomic Rooster gem with bonus acid folk flute, you'll already know that the future of eccentric psychedelic rock is in safe hands. In fact, that sneak preview gave little indication of the deeply unhinged splendour that unfurls across *The Terror Of Melton's* 25 mad-eyed minutes. A remorseless feast of fuzzed-up riffing, twinkling psych pop keys and Revillos-gone-prog vocal high-jinks, it's a masterclass in



rambunctious mini-symphonies; the Londoners' exuberance driving everything forward like a drugged-up wizard on a BMX. From the neurotic garage rock stomp of *I Was A Scientist (1892)* to the pulsating space rock attack of the title track and the

jaunty thud of *Chromium Dioxide And The Crazy Data*, everything is lysergic, tune-filled gold. Whether in episodic form or in one big chunk, it's all absurdly entertaining and deliciously weird. The fact that you can grab it for free from the band's Bandcamp page makes it an unmissable trip for fans of the fuzzy and far-out. **DL**

THE JINSY BOYS

Twignest BRAN & CHUBB

Spin-off LP from TV show *This Is Jinsy* in praise of three-colour biros and giant moths.

Chris Bran and Justin Chubb (aka The Jinsy Boys) are the creators of the surreal Sky Atlantic comedy series *This Is Jinsy* – basically, *The Mighty Boosh* set on *Father Ted's* Craggy Island and administered by Scarfolk Council. Suffice to say, it's very funny. Part of its charm is the inclusion in every episode of various bizarre yet toe-tapping songs, with Bran and Chubb also proving to be talented musicians. *Twignest* is an extension of this world, with unusual lyrical preoccupations and an atmosphere of cultish fervour throughout. But what makes it attractive for even non-converts is that



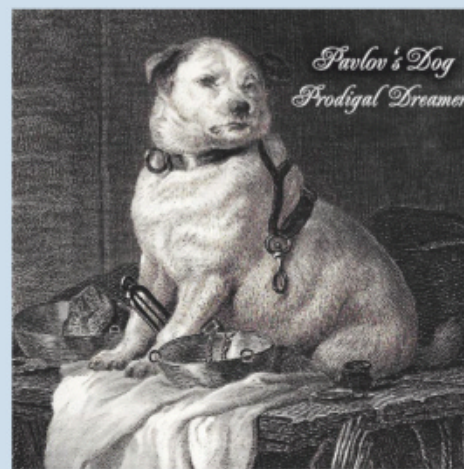
no matter how ridiculous the subject matter, the music is always played entirely straight and with some skill. Opening *Ceremoni* might resemble a mystical version of *Spitting Image's* *The Chicken Song*, but the instrumentation is spot-on, evoking the likes

of Comus, Forest, and of course, the pagan folk of *The Wicker Man*. Similarly, Matt Berry fans will enjoy the rather lovely acoustic guitar and flute ballad *Margery*. Other irresistibly daft highlights include the naughty music hall skit *I've Got Something*, the lilting psychedelic lullaby of *Astro Veg*, and the a capella chorale *String Vest*. **JB**

PAVLOV'S DOG

Prodigal Dreamer ROCKVILLE

A new album from these US veterans is always worth waiting for.



As our favourite bands reach their twilight years it's hard to resist viewing new music though rose-tinted spectacles. Even a mediocre record is better than no record at all, right? Well, fear not... no such lowering of the bar is required for *Prodigal Dreamer*. Eight long years may have elapsed since *Echo & Boo*, the second album released since Pavlov's Dog reunited back in 1990. Frontman David Surkamp has now reached his mid-60s but that remarkable helium-

Eloquence matched by gravitas, poetry set to music.

tinged voice – once described as a “choirboy on speed” – shows no sign of packing up, and *Prodigal Dreamer* is full of material that feels like it belongs in another century.

Hailed as America's first prog band back in the 1970s, Pavlov's Dog couldn't hold things together and fragmented after two quite extraordinary albums full of violin-charged, elaborate song structures and mystical, olde worlde lyrics. Though fame eluded them, the St Louis band attained cult status, something they have maintained during a second spell of existence.

The mystique that surrounds them is well-earned. Limiting their output to an album a decade maintains the feverish appetite of the fans and reduces the risk of tarnishing an estimable legacy. With one eye fixed on the past, *Prodigal Dreamer* arrives in a sleeve featuring a sombre-looking hound, just like the one that adorned their debut, *Pampered Menial*, back in 1975.

Their eloquence matched by gravitas, each of these 13 songs feels more than usual like a piece of poetry set to music. With its reference to '*Rembrandt-painted smiles*', opening track *Paris* shimmers courtesy of a deliciously mournful violin refrain by Abbie Steiling. *Hard Times* boasts the most immediate chorus, though it's the laid-back simplicity of *Easter Day* and *Hurting Kind* that will intoxicate, soothing their weariness.

For those unaccustomed to its unorthodoxy, Surkamp's delivery might be a little hard to swallow at first, though it soon becomes an instrument like all the rest. Along with his colourful use of words, David's storytelling is formidable. *Crying Forever* documents an unhappy break-up ('*The whole dream's shattered/Gone, gone, gone/Still I put a piece of you in this song*') but it's the final three songs – *Being In Love*, *Shaking Me Down* and the entrancingly beautiful *The Winds Wild Early* that confirm the true greatness of *Prodigal Dreamer*.

Pavlov's Dog overlooked the UK on their recently completed run though continental Europe, most likely due to sparse attendances here back in 2016. We can only hope for another record in eight years' time, and that next time they see fit to reverse that decision.

DAVE LING

THE WINDMILL

Tribus APOLLON

Solid third album puts wind in the sails of the Norwegians.



While their neighbours to the east in Sweden might be better known for producing and exporting numerous progressive rock bands around the globe, Norway maintains its own proud prog tradition with Gazpacho, Wobbler, White Willow and Motorpsycho among its premier exponents.

The aforementioned bands all sport extensive back catalogues to varying degrees. By contrast, the output from Oslo-based sextet The Windmill – not necessarily the most alluring of monikers – has been rather more modest to date, despite their 17-year history. *Tribus* is only their third album, and their first for the Apollon label, succeeding 2010's debut *To Be Continued* and 2013's *The Continuation*.



Clason's flute adds a welcome additional aspect.



The Windmill style themselves as a “symphonic neo-prog” band influenced by the likes of Genesis, Pink Floyd, Camel et al. During the course of the record, the band display those influences, and plenty of other neo-prog ones too, very overtly.

Choosing to open the release with the 24-minute *The Tree* is a pretty bold move, but it's not entirely a successful one. Building slowly, The ‘Mill risk stretching patience with the first quarter of the track consisting of an unremarkable instrumental before any vocals are to be heard. The song becomes considerably more engaging as it continues, greatly enlivened by Morten Clason's sax and a rollicking instrumental jazz fusion section before reaching its conclusion in real style.

Taking up almost half the album, *The Tree* dominates *Tribus*, but the other four songs have strong points too; for example there's some lovely fluid guitar on the 10-minute and highly evocative *Storm*. Two far shorter tracks, *Dendrophenia* and *Play With Fire*, offer some light relief from the lengthier material. The former recalls recent Deep Purple, while the acoustic guitar, lilting piano and flute of the latter is reminiscent of Jethro Tull. The only misfire is another 10-minute track, *Make Me Feel*, which veers into sounding like a half-baked version of Arena.

There's nothing on *Tribus* that actively breaks new ground or challenges the neo norm. However, what The Windmill lack in invention is compensated to a considerable extent by the passion, craftsmanship and sheer hard graft that has clearly been invested. Hats off to Clason again here; at various junctures, his flute adds a welcome additional aspect to what could well have ended up a little one-dimensional. Mixed and mastered by Threshold's Karl Groom, the sound sparkles too.

NICK SHILTON

TRANSMANIACON feat. Lydia Lunch & Maya Berlin

The Strange World Of Suzie Pellet NEW HEAVY SOUNDS

Hard riffing concept album inspired by dystopian graphic novel.

‘There's blood, death and pain,’ growls Lydia Lunch by way of introducing this concept album from mysterious London collective Transmaniacon – in other words, *The Sound Of Music* this ain't. *The Strange World Of Suzie Pellet* is based on an unreleased graphic novel from acclaimed fantasy artist Ian Miller, and is set in a post-apocalyptic world somewhere between *Mad Max* and Bowie's *Diamond Dogs*. Avant-rock veteran Lunch is the gravel-voiced narrator looking back on her life, while Maya Berlin – from doomy punks Cold In Berlin – provides the voice of the young



Suzie as she fights for survival in the ruins of civilisation. Transmaniacon set their stall out on *Inca Sunshine*, a choppy, foreboding riff combining with acidic electronics to create an early-90s industrial metal sound, while *Painted On Skin*

establishes their other major reference point, the sludgy groove of Uriah Heep. Best track is the pounding romp of *Dogs Of War*, with Berlin's powerful voice showcased on the catchy chorus. It's a little overwrought in places, and the stage show would surely feature dry ice and rollerskates, but fans of dystopian melodrama will find much to enjoy. **JB**

TWELFTH NIGHT

Sequences F2

Update on a neo-prog WWI classic that feels as potent as ever.

Twelfth Night update and reinterpret a song that has been in their repertoire, in one guise or another, for four decades. This new recording of *Sequences* coincides with the centennial of the First World War and the lyrics tell the story of a young army volunteer forever changed by his experiences. It's remarkable to think this is the first studio version with vocals, Mark Spencer rising to the challenge of filling the late Geoff Mann's role. The anger that informs the lyrics is worthy of any sneering punk band – ‘Our glorious leaders start a war to protect the whole of humankind/That's



why they always stay behind. What do you mean, ain't it wrong to kill?’ barks Mann, his voice recorded back in 1983. The playing is no less powerful, with exquisite guitar work from Andy Revell on acoustic and electric including a particularly rousing solo

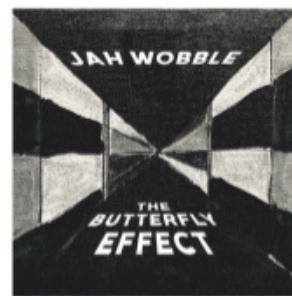
that captures the chaos of soldiers charging into battle. Longer than the concert performances on *Live And Let Live* and *Live At The Target*, this promises to be the definitive version of Twelfth Night's finest moment. The release includes an instrumental mix, and a selection of movements performed on piano. **DW**

JAH WOBBLE

The Butterfly Effect JAH WOBBLE

Ex-PiL man channels post-punk ire on incisive, topical exploration.

Anybody expecting the type of dance-friendly ethno-dub rock that Wobble has been most-readily associated with since the 90s will be in for a surprise upon hearing *The Butterfly Effect*. Over the past few years, Wobble has been reconnecting with his experimental post-punk roots in PiL, and spurred on by the chaos of our times, he's delivered an eclectic state-of-the-nation broadside that channels his erstwhile bandmate John Lydon's maxim that “anger is an energy”. His dense, elastic bass sound is still present, but the title track's spiky swagger of guitar and forceful drumming is



refreshingly acerbic. He's also in fine voice, reflecting on the interdependence of things in his distinctive sprechgesang, but it's less new age homily, more a wake-up call against division. His underrated qualities as a lyricist/poet come to the fore on *The*

Iron Lady Got Rust, a pointed dissection of Margaret Thatcher's legacy over a dubby, funereal groove, attacking a political class that's given up on culture. Wobble builds on this analysis in *The Post Modern Age*, calling out ‘the dim-witted masses’ and the bubble of cynicism we exist in. Righteous and necessary, avant-punk style. **JB**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

A Life In Yes: The Chris Squire Tribute PURPLE PYRAMID

Billy Sherwood and friends pay homage to a prog legend's finest moments.

It's one thing being brilliant at playing an instrument, but if you want to get on in the music world, you also have to be able to get on with people. Billy Sherwood is evidently both these things. Since his first stint with Yes in 1997, Sherwood has since worked with anyone and everyone in the prog world and beyond, and has now succeeded Squire in the ever-revolving Yes line-up. And now he's taken advantage of his thick contacts book to make this covers album with a celebrity cast, in homage to his old mentor. Vocalists as contrasting as Marillion's Steve Hogarth (tackling Squire solo



highlight *Hold Out Your Hand*) and Renaissance's Annie Haslam (crooning Tormato ballad *Onward*) revisit key Squire-centric tracks. That hyperactive Rickenbacker bass sound is recreated with loving attention to sonic detail, and the results remind you

of just how many diverse and intricate pieces of music it played a key role in. As such it's a highly enjoyable record; the only gripe is that, probably because of the understandable reverence for Squire's work, there are few new approaches to the songs. Then again, was anyone ever going to improve on genius? **JS**

YOU TELL ME

You Tell Me MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Folky Field Music side project talk fun, feelings and freedom.

After meeting at a Kate Bush celebration gig, Admiral Fallow vocalist Sarah Hayes and Field Music's Peter Brewis got on like a house on fire. Discovering a mutual love of The Blue Nile, Tortoise and Randy Newman among others, their subsequent collaboration takes strands of those interests and fashions them a short but content-rich album. Filled with off-kilter rhythms and ravishing stringwork that nuzzles close to the heart of their songs, the purity of Hayes' singing has an unadorned confessional quality that's utterly engrossing. Some of its motifs are reminiscent of Hayes' exquisite 2015



solo album, *Woven*, which offered a beguiling take on folk rock. That strength is also present here but complemented with a quirky pop dimension that echoes some of Brewis' inventiveness within Field Music's world. *Get Out Of The Room* is typical of the

sparse but well-chosen production. Finger-snapping rhythms, growling Mellotron brass, taut guitar, and whipcrack snare gradually accrue around a joint vocal that's initially passive but becoming increasingly acerbic as the narrators pick at the scabs of their respective resentments. Songs that deserve to be heard. **SS**

ZOFFF

IV - Live at the Green Door Store, Brighton, 03/09/17 FLASHBACK

Explosive reunion of Levitation guitarists Bic Hayes and Terry Bickers.

Zoff are a four-piece psych/kraut/cosmic/whatever improvising unit based out of Brighton. While each member has a long history in the indie/experimental underground, the band's most prominent player is guitarist Bic Hayes, previously of Cardiacs, Dark Star and Levitation. While these groups pushed the songwriting envelope, Zoff have cast off predetermined arrangements altogether, with each performance a unique exercise in spontaneous composition. *IV* captures them in fierce form, producing non-stop exploratory music that constantly fizzles with ideas yet is surprisingly cohesive.



But what really makes this special is the presence of ex-Levitation man Terry Bickers, the first time that he and Hayes had played together since 1993. The album plunges headfirst into a stretch of driving trance rock, with skittering, echoplexed guitars and contrails of cornet colouring the edges. The music breaks down into Floyd-ish ambient drift before the rhythm builds again, luminous twinkles of synth against a glommy shuffle beat. Inevitably, there are magical moments when the interplay can't help but recall Levitation, and the album climaxes in a spirit of anarchic overload. **JB**



AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Grant Moon has a rummage down the back of the *Progs* sofa for the ones that nearly got away...

They made their mark at 2017's Bloodstock, they've supported the likes of Sikth, and Cardiff's **Malum Sky** are now getting heard across south Wales and beyond. Their promising debut long player *Diatribes* (Sliptrick) demonstrates their clever, urgent and tightly composed brand of doomy prog metal. Fiddly and languid, *The Coil* shows off the chops of guitarists Jon Evans and Michael Jensen Després, and throughout their charismatic singer Ben Honebone pummels and emotes as required.

Until now Bristol trio **Siblings Of Us** have purveyed slightly edgy, synth-led power pop. Their compelling but uneven new EP *Gargantua* (Retrosynth) sees them crank up the axes, with lead vocalist Adam 'Fonzy' Armour adopting an ersatz 'rawk' falsetto. The Squawky Pizza Lisa and Chicago Glass Twin sound like piss-takes of The Mars Volta, but *A Gang Called Wonder* is all the richer for them dialling down the histrionics a tad. You're left wondering if this is a serious stab at a new style, a gloriously meta art experiment, or just a joke you're not in on. Maybe it's all three.



On his self-released *The Witches Of Finnmark II*, Norwegian guitarist **Anders Buass** continues his 'instrumental journey based on stories about the prosecution of witches in the 16th and 17th century'. He draws on folk, neo-classical and symphonic rock forms on an epic yet restrained album with some memorable compositions underpinned by Buass' superior musicianship. From opener *Letter 1609* to the stunning 18-minute closer *Cunningham*, he favours tone and lyricism in the Oldfield/Gilmour mould, with only the occasional lapse into Stratsturbation.



Bassist Jan Quednau and guitarist Fabian Chmielewski are **Stringmodulator**, and the title of the German duo's fascinating, accomplished album is as literal as it is proggy. *Manifesto: Noises Made By Guitar And Bass* (Submarine Broadcasting) comprises sounds created solely by their combined 10 strings. Cue much tonal, rhythmic and melodic experimentation alloyed by their love of kraut and electro. *Betwixt And Between* is like funky Fripp, *Growl* is Jeff Beck-esque industrial rock, and *A Quiet Place* is Metheny-beautiful. Gott in Himmel only knows what effects and treatments they used to craft this, but it's a leftfield work of relentless invention and passion.

And finally, how could we resist a band billed as 'Tool doing a tribute to Disney's *Aladdin*'? Spicy Australian unit **BaK** bring together Indian, Middle Eastern and western metal music on their self-released debut EP *Flower*. It's a shinily produced game of two halves, this. On opener *Too Soon* and *Life & Perception Pt 1* their ethno-fusion is blunt and artless enough to make Kula Shaker blush. But *Life And Perception Part 2* and *Dasha Hara* are more nuanced, and when BaK let each cultural strand breathe they're onto something pretty special.



MAN

Evolution PURPLE PYRAMID

Six-CD set of post-90s material and a banging vintage live show.



To put this set into perspective we need to start at CDs five and six, which feature the group live at The Keystone, Berkeley CA in 1976. Back in the day Man were known as a 'people's band': unpretentious, purveying a good time vibe, and fond of spliffing-up, as exemplified by the lyrics to *Bananas*. But they were also exceptional musicians purveying a homegrown quirkiness combined with a West Coast feel in the vocal harmonies by guitarists

The 17-minute *C'mon* comes over like a Welsh Grateful Dead.

Deke Leonard and Mickey Jones, and in their fluid live improvisations. On the 17-minute *C'mon* they come across like a Welsh Grateful Dead, their trip punctuated by drummer Terry Williams' taut repetitive patterns and updated by Phil Ryan's textural synth lines, while Leonard's lead guitar is flamboyant throughout. On the 12-minute, episodic *Many Are Called But Few Get Up*, they show their darkly psychedelic side.

Guitarist John Cipollina, formerly of Quicksilver Messenger Service and who had briefly been in Man, guests on a handful of tracks, including a dramatic *Babe I'm Gonna Leave You* and the full throttle rock'n'roll of *Hard Way To Live*.

Wind forward to 1992 and a reformed Man recorded *The Twang Dynasty*, their first new set for 15 years. Their approach was more focused, and with John Weathers, ex-of Gentle Giant, on drums it's rhythmically tight if a tad foursquare in places. But the standard is high, particularly *Fast And Dangerous*, with its rhythm and blues shuffle — spiced up by some spectacularly loopy guitar from Leonard — and closer *The Wings Of Mercury* with its sweeping vocal harmonies.

From 2000, *Endangered Species* saw Phil Ryan returning on keyboards. It has its share of highlights, particularly *Stuck Behind The Popemobile*, which shifts between haunting verses and droll choruses and the inspired instrumental passages of *Face To Face*.

Released two years later, *Undrugged* finds Leonard and Micky Jones mainly playing acoustic guitars, and kicks off in style with the intricate, fleet-footed *Scotch Corner* but overall is rather inconsistent, with so-so covers of *Georgia On My Mind* and Brian Wilson's *Sail On Sailor*.

By *Diamonds And Coal* (2006), bass guitarist Martin Ace was the only remaining member of the reformed band and took over lead vocals. The opening title track with its insistent chiming guitars bodes well, but overall it's patchy. It would be great to say that these later albums rival Man's glory days — and musicians change and develop so it would be pointless to replicate them — but although they are all solid affairs the magic was in shorter supply.

MIKE BARNES

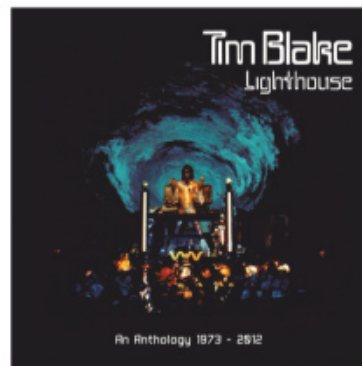
TIM BLAKE

Lighthouse: An Anthology 1973-2012 ESOTERIC

Blake's heaven.

A pioneering electronic warrior, Tim Blake cut his teeth supplying synth and keys to Gong's 70s debut trilogy, *Flying Teapot*, *Angel's Egg* and *You*. After his prog-flavoured fling with Saratoga Space Messengers, Blake teamed up with French lighting designer Patrice Warrener for his Crystal Machine project, forging a template for modern prog shows with lasers and synths that manifested in the pure electronic rhapsodies of 1977's self-titled debut album, then the following year's *Blake's New Jerusalem*. He joined Hawkwind for a year before 20 out of the spotlight, broken only by 1991's *Magick*, then enjoyed a 21st century rebirth, which included rejoining Hawkwind in 2007.

Even if the beautiful cosmic weirdness of the Gong years is relegated to three wiggled-out extrapolations, all bases are covered over three discs (and DVD of 1979 French TV footage) that comprise this astute summation of this often-undersung electronic trailblazer's idiosyncratic career. That first *Crystal*



Machine album is represented by the glistening *Midnight* and 15 shimmering minutes of *Synthese Intemporal*, showing how he beat Tangerine Dream at the snow-peaked sequencer pulsation game. Better still are the *New Jerusalem* pair, including its undulating title epic.

The first Hawkwind stint is reflected by *Lighthouse* and *Who's Gonna Win The War*, with a dash of *Magick* before his return in message-strewn space prog mode with 2000's *The Tide Of The Century*, 2002's *Caldea Music II* marking a return to pure instrumentals.

This is the mode that dominates disc three's previously-unreleased gems; three from *The Birth Of Crystal Machine* (including multi-layered 20-minute ambient monster *Forteresse/Crystal Mirrors To Infinity* displaying distinct Terry Riley influences), plus six from live shows in Amsterdam (2006) and Exeter (2009). As this set shows, Blake was best before the world caught up with him but still ploughing a fearless field up to 2012's most recent work *Noggi 'Tar*. **KN**

DAVID CROSS & ANDREW BOOKER

Ends Meeting NOISY

Prog stalwarts' unreleased 2006 collision.

As two examples of that strain of dogged prog dynamo who care more about creating music with like-minded souls than making the right career move, drummer Andrew Booker and electric violinist David Cross have an impressive array of band tenures and collaborations between them.

Cross was in the 1972-1974 King Crimson line-up that produced *Larks' Tongues...*, *Starless...* and *Red* (plus live albums from that time and reuniting with Fripp for 2015's *Starless Starlight*), before forming his own band (releasing eight albums) and collaborating widely along the way. Booker boasts a formidably active CV that, since 1996, has seen him bring his idiosyncratic electronic drums to bands including Tim Bowness and Steven Wilson's No-Man, Sanguine Hum and Peter Banks' Harmony In Diversity. In 2006, after Cross' band supported Banks on a tour, violinist and drummer found their musical wavelengths clicked sufficiently to demand a single recording session that has sat on the shelf until this



release on Cross' Noisy imprint.

Spread over seven tracks (including two *Loopscape* bookends), this is the sound of two musicians on a joint exploratory mission, Booker setting up subtly insidious pulses, its electronic timbre often creating dub-like

ambience. While adding mood-setting electronic keyboard brushstrokes, Cross mainly stretches his electric violin on spatial excursions like eastern-tinged *The Shakes Rattled* and slow-burning *Sleek*; often sounding more like a winding synth or amped-up sax, although there are effective moments when he reverts to virtuoso gut-scraping on *Worship The Gourds*, ending in a drizzle of pizzicato plucking. Booker rarely contents himself with straight timekeeping, his stringent experimental sparseness preferring to recreate electronic tablas on the eastern-flavoured *Spared Bhangra* or recall later work by Can's *Jaki Liebezit*.

While it's good to see this available, it begs the question why these two muses don't get together for a return bout. **KN**

MESHUGGAH

Vinyl Reissues NUCLEAR BLAST

Djent pioneers' early years, remastered on lovely, lovely vinyl.

For once, the term 'long-awaited' is entirely appropriate: Meshuggah's much acclaimed back catalogue has been crying out for a proper vinyl release for some time. Happily, this first batch of remastered revisits delivers the sought-after goods.

It all starts with the eye-frazzling artwork that adorns each of the five records: either reimagined from the original or entirely new, it's all stunning and truly adds to the experience. But it's the music that made Meshuggah into contemporary legends and each of these seminal albums has been tweaked to a state of sonic near-perfection.

Admittedly, 1989's self-titled EP and 1991's *Contradictions Collapse* are both snapshots of a young band in a state of eager flux. Effectively dismantling the progressive thrash that Metallica defined on 1988's classic *...And Justice For All*, removing all traces of the blues and feeding it through a wonky prism of King Crimson perversity, the Swedes' sound seemed to be evolving in real time, but despite occasional moments



of prescient complexity like *Abnegating Cecity* (from *Contradictions Collapse*), it wouldn't be until 1994's *None* EP that Meshuggah would truly hit their stride. From that moment on, they sounded like no one else and seemed to be single-handedly pushing metal into a future far beyond

most people's imaginations.

1995's *Destroy Erase Improve* sealed the deal. Remastered for vinyl, it has never sounded as vast or overwhelming as it does here. More importantly, songs like *Future Breed Machine* and *Soul Burn* still sound ahead of their time and genuinely subversive, too. The pick of the polyrhythmic bunch is *Chaosphere*, Meshuggah's 1996 masterpiece. Faster, harder, more wilfully impenetrable and yet more ruthlessly streamlined than before, it captured a band in full Eureka! mode, plugged into the cosmic mainframe and impervious to outside influence. It's one of the most absurdly exhilarating records ever made and, once again, it sounds astonishing on vinyl. One of these days, everyone else will catch up, right? **DL**

MYSTERY

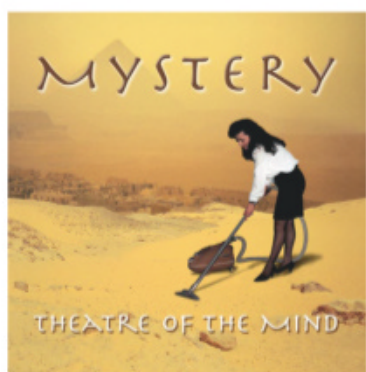
Theatre Of The Mind UNICORN DIGITAL

Beautifully bombastic reissue from Canadian proggers.

There is something wonderfully intriguing about time capsules. We hide them away and we forget what's inside. When we open them, they always surprise. This principle applies to the reissue of Canadian proggers Mystery's 1996 debut, *Theatre Of The Mind*.

Think of Mystery and images of bombastic, symphonic prog will likely come to mind, but that still doesn't do justice to this wonderfully over-the-top first offering. It is chock-full of the wide-open, bright production values typical of metallic prog of the era. Michel St-Père's stadium-sized guitar wig-outs and Stéphane Perreault's echoing drums write large a lost era of big hair and tight jeans. It's great fun, incredibly winsome and very accomplished.

Gary Savoie's vocals pitch somewhere between Jon Anderson and Geddy Lee, dominating the title track's satisfying slab of fist-pumping rock. If there are pleasingly cheesy power ballads such as *Lonely Heart*, there are also tracks which push deeper into



classic prog territory. *Peace Of Mind* mashes up *Farewell To King's* era Rush pastoralia with Rabin-era Yes pop rock, while the two-part *The Inner Journey* is as sweet a piece of melodic prog as you're likely to hear. *Black Roses* remains a mighty eight minutes of mystical prog, and

there is the added bonus of a previously unreleased track, *Heart Of Stone*.

Remixed by guitarist St-Père and remastered by original bassist Richard Addison, the reissue is fresh and bright, but faithful to the original album's 90s bombast. One element that does seem odd from the point of view of the sober late 2010s: the cover. We're not sure the image of a business woman in big hair hovering in the desert was ever one that worked. However, in a time when women's lives and expectations have come to be represented very differently, the image is more than a mystery: it's bewildering. Still, the measure of Mystery's reissued debut is the music. If it is a time capsule, it's one that is genuinely worth revisiting. **RM**

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

Balaklava DRAG CITY

Floridian acid folkers' songs of war and space, remastered.



Amid the militant rock missiles and sonic groundbreaking that was happening half a century ago, Florida ex-pats Pearls Before Swine's quietly mesmerising first two albums prompted Lilian Roxon to coin the "acid folk" term in 1969's *Rock Encyclopaedia*. Couched in mystery on New York's enigmatic ESP-Disk label, their leader Tom Rapp's surreally-tainted songs of war, love and space forged a rare balance between the era's freewheeling looseness and something deeper, darker and unfathomably ancient.



Its crystal clear message resonates loud as ever to chime perfectly with modern times.



After 1967's playfully haunted *One Nation Underground* debut (which was reissued last year by Drag City), the band started loosening around Rapp to include jazz musicians as he constructed *Balaklava*, 1968's most finely-crafted anti-war statement and arguably the greatest of the six Pearls Before Swine albums that he steered until he went solo in 1971.

Dedicated to the last US soldier executed for desertion in World War Two and swathed in hellish cover detail from Bruegel's *The Triumph Of Death*, Rapp's deftly-conceived song cycle begins with the field-recorded voice of Trumpeter Landfrey, whose bugle started the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava — chosen by Rapp to symbolise war's futility as the Vietnam war death toll stepped up. After its hallucinogenic tapestry has woven its course, the closing run exhumes Florence Nightingale's voice before *Ring Thing* headily reinterprets JRR Tolkien and spooling tape returns to Landfrey, illustrating war's endless cycle.

Sadly, Rapp succumbed to cancer this year, but thankfully he lived long enough to hear original producer Richard Alderson remaster his most cherished baby back to how he originally envisioned it, with textured intricacies and ectoplasmic textures shimmering like crystals in an opium den after being buried for decades. Now swoon to *Translucent Carriages'* whispered counter-vocal and swooshing waves, sumptuous strings drenching *I Saw The World*, summer birdsong haze coating *Images Of April* and jazz veteran Warren Smith's chamber arrangement garnishing the super strange *Guardian Angels* (doctored to sound like a 20s 78).

Although *Balaklava* still sounds like a hallucinogenic arcane broadcast from a long-lost world, its crystal clear message resonates loud as ever to chime perfectly with modern times.

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SMALL FACES

Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake 50th Anniversary Edition CHARLY

Rightful three-CD, one-DVD celebration of four ace faces turning prog. Deep joy.

An immediate (arf!) No. 1 album and classic upon its release in 1968, *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* lifted the Small Faces up into rock's highest echelons. Everything about *Ogdens'* was inventive, from the round Victorian tobacco tin sleeve to Happiness Stan's surreal search for the missing half of the moon on side two.

Signing with Immediate Records in 1967 allowed the writing partnership of Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane to flower. Most of the songs were written while messing about on a boat trip along the River Thames; as well as an escape from the frenzy of pop stardom, a week of drifting downstream imbued the material with a genuinely pastoral feel. Symphonic touches were added by the violinists and cellists from the London Philharmonic Orchestra and sprinkled throughout was the band's quirkiness, in-jokes and cheeky humour, captured in chuklodes by narrator Stanley Unwin.

This 'definitive' edition comes newly remastered from various sources, giving extra power and clarity to the alternately raucous and soul-searching side one



(comb and paper solos on *Lazy Sunday* perfectly preserved). CD three consists of an assortment of outtakes, including a track called *Kamikhazi* which sounds a lot like *Spooky* and a heavily phased version of *Ogdens'*, inspired by the same technique on Hendrix's *Are You*

Experienced?. The book includes contemporary quotes by sole surviving member Kenney Jones, archive clippings, photos by Gered Mankowitz and an essay by music biographer Mark Paytress.

Such is the joy and energy on songs like *Rollin Over* and *Song Of A Baker*, you almost forget that there was no fairytale ending. Marriott and Lane barely reached middle age, Ian McLagan died prematurely, leaving Kenney Jones to oversee their legacy. It's a task he's handled with aplomb.

The cherry on the bowl of All Bran is the DVD, a restoration of the *Ogdens'* themed *Colour Me Pop* show from 1968, including the brilliantly kaleidoscopic *Lazy Sunday* promo directed by Peter Whitehead, who also shot early clips for Pink Floyd. **CE**

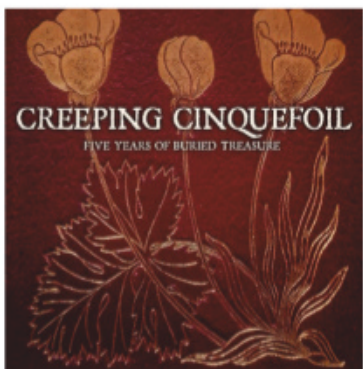
VARIOUS ARTISTS

Creeping Cinquefoil BURIED TREASURE

Berkshire indie celebrates five years of library-centric sounds.

Conceptually speaking, Buried Treasure exists somewhere between the haunted synthedelia of Ghost Box and the alternative nostalgia of Trunk Records. *Creeping Cinquefoil* (a yellow-flowered roadside weed, FYI), is the label's fifth anniversary compilation, a "20 track selection of 1970s and 1980s library music, 1960s radiophysics, spoken word, punk, funk, jazz, prog, psych, folk, experimental electronics & more." Given the broad sweep of their catalogue, you might expect a rather disjointed listening experience. But there's a thread that holds the whole thing together, an idea that genres are a fiction and eclecticism rules.

This is what makes library music so attractive. Moonlighting composers, jazz musicians and the occasional rock band would produce and anonymously release songs and idents, any of which might wind up in adverts, documentaries, public information films, or as theme tunes. BT has unearthed some fine examples: Jim Lawless' *Tribal Warfare* pits a grungy riff and pulsing bass



against a mesh of vibes and congas; John Baker's *The Ice Cream Man* is like wandering in fog with just chilly synth, atonal keys and nervous toms for company; Gerhard Narholz's *UFO Invasion* features crushed guitar, groovy organ and horn stabs, and is the epitome of library funk.

But Buried Treasure also releases contemporary artists who embrace a similar style of musical pick'n'mix. In-house band Revbjelde (helmed by label head Alan Gubby) feature throughout, from the swinging spy music with punky vocals of *Another Fake Production* to the John Barry-esque dulcimer and cooing maiden of *Brigantia Lufian*. Tongues Of Fire's *Lion* (*Jung Collective Rehash*) is the type of jazzy, brass-led trip hop that Mo'Wax might once have released. And Alan Moore & The Dandelion Set kick the album off in fine style with *Judy Switched Off The TV*, the bard of Northampton conjuring droll visions of an urban apocalypse over a jabbing keyboard riff.

There's still plenty of gold in them crates if you know where to dig. **JB**

PFM

The Manticore Studio Albums 1973-1977 ESOTERIC

Celebrating Italy's prog pioneers.



God bless Greg Lake for bringing PFM to the attention of an international audience through ELP's Manticore label. PFM were already a hit act in their native Italy, and Lake was savvy enough to know that the abundantly talented quintet could make a quality addition to his fledgling roster of artists. With Lake's ex-King Crimson bandmate Peter Sinfield producing and providing English lyrics, PFM's 1973 ethereal debut *Photos Of Ghosts* contained a winning mixture of instrumental brio and a jaunty humour shining through their ingenious and uplifting arrangements.



Instrumental brio and jaunty humour shining through.



Alongside *Photos Of Ghosts*, this clamshell box contains 1974's *The World Became The World*, 1975's *Chocolate Kings* and their final studio album for Manticore, 1977's *Jet Lag*. There's certainly plenty to dive into across these four albums. Very much a product of their times, PFM's journey from a mid-60s pop combo to homegrown prog heavyweights resulted from their expert assimilation of what was trending in the British progressive scene. Franz Di Cioccio's drumming echoes Michael Giles' sprightly snare work with early King Crimson and there's certainly more than a nod or two in the direction of Steve Howe found in Franco Mussida's expansive playing on *The World Became The World*. While there are also flashes of Genesis and Jethro Tull from this cornucopia of broad-brush influences, they fashion something that is distinctly their own. Grand themes like the stately *River Of Life* from their Manticore debut ache with a melancholic splendour made all the more poignant through the painterly use of Mellotron in order to create exquisite, dramatic backdrops.

The addition of vocalist Bernardo Lanzetti for *Chocolate Kings* gave the band a vocalist with an enhanced command of English and a more pronounced 'rawk' vocal style reminiscent of Family's Roger Chapman patented warble. This might have played better with the English-speaking audiences the band were chasing at the time, but it doesn't always sit entirely comfortably within the more reflective and intricate settings, which were still very much a PFM staple. That kind of easy agility makes *Jet Lag*'s move into more fusion-orientated territories feel natural and convincing.

Lacking any of the bonus tracks that accompanied Esoteric's previous reissues in 2010 and with no new material, save for a poster from the period of band members assembled in a tree and awkwardly gazing down at the camera lens, there's not a lot to tempt seasoned collectors here. That said, this box is surely ideal for curious newcomers wishing to find out why this act are so revered, and to immerse themselves into the symphonic soundworld PFM excelled at.

SID SMITH

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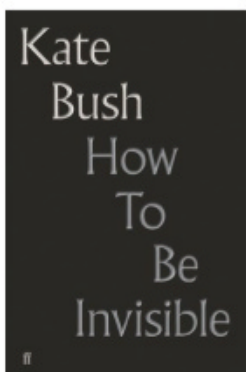
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KATE BUSH

How To Be Invisible: Selected Lyrics FABER & FABER

The Bic inside: Kate's words all alone on the page.

Few musicians' lyrics thrive separated from their music; it's the conjunction of the two elements, lent charisma by their creator, which gives the full effect. As poets, Paul Simon, Leonard Cohen and Lou Reed cut it. Lately, books compiling the writings of Nick Cave and Jarvis Cocker have been well-received, and Faber now bring out Kate Bush's linguistics in a cloth-bound edition. The introduction by *Cloud Atlas* novelist David Mitchell suggests that while her lyrics are "avowedly idiosyncratic", they "evoke emotions and sensations that feel universal". He has a point. Her anthems



- *Wuthering Heights*, *Hounds Of Love*, *Running Up That Hill* - might be wilfully eccentric and aren't "on paper" especially relatable, but here - actually on paper - they make a kind of sense. The unanswerable question is whether they'd move us if we weren't subconsciously associating them with their familiar music, and the years of deep affection for that music prompts within us. There are mild clunkers - the naivety of *Army Dreamers*, the cringe-fest blind date of *Babooshka* - but the heartbreaking candour of *Moments Of Pleasure* still floors you. Wow (times four), readable. **CR**

NIGHTWISH

End Of An Era NUCLEAR BLAST

Final Turunen-fronted show repackaged in Blu-ray, two-CD and three-LP set.

Given that this 2006 film of the Finnish symphonic metallers was reissued on Blu-ray in 2009 with all the extra content you'll find here, we can only presume that the three-LP version (in blue, lilac, purple and sparkle violet) is chiefly aimed at vinyl freaks who don't own a telly. If you're a newcomer to Nightwish, on its own merits this homecoming Helsinki show is a fine advert for the line-up that made their name. A sweepingly Wagnerian, operatic reading of *The Kinslayer* and a Maiden-esque gallop through *Planet Hell*, both replete with Tarja Turunen's brilliantly camp, back-and-forth vocal exchanges



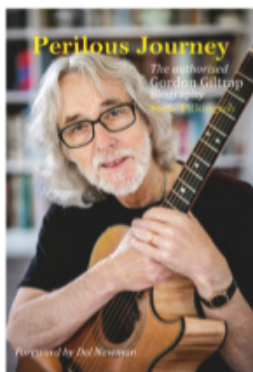
with Marco Hietala, are among the highlights, and their best songs still have a hairs-on-back-of-neck quality even without pictures to accompany them. Turunen would be sacked acrimoniously soon (some claim hours) after this October 2005 show, and the otherwise comically dull offstage video extras (clips of musicians carrying suitcases into hotels - we got 'em!) suggest that she, her manager/husband and the band weren't exactly close at this point. But she remains the seminal voice of Nightwish for many, and whether you listen on vinyl, Blu-ray or a YouTube clip, you can hear - and see - why. **JS**

PERILOUS JOURNEY: THE AUTHORISED GORDON GILTRAP BIOGRAPHY

Steve Pilkington WYMER PUBLISHING

A dream for completists and casual fans alike.

Perilous Journey will be familiar to Giltrap fans as his most famous album's title. It is also singularly apt for this book. He captures the ups-and-downs of Giltrap's career with a generous and passionate eye. It's all here - Giltrap's recent struggles with ill-health, his search for happiness in personal and professional relationships, his rejection of conventional faith, the twists and turns of his 50-year career. Giltrap has authorised a biography that doesn't shy away from struggle and it's all the better for that. Pilkington handles the material with kindness and love and



never loses sight of the fact that Giltrap's perilous journey is first and foremost a musical one: as a musicians' musician most of the chapters take a Giltrap album or tour as their leaping-off point. We hear about his encounters with a Who's Who of British music from Cliff Richard to John Entwistle, as well his strange and serendipitous encounters with figures like Miles Copeland. Pilkington reveals that Giltrap is no plaster saint, but someone whose career shifts and challenges could be anyone's. It makes for a charming and satisfying read. **RM**

BRAND X

Live From The Rites Of Spring Festival 2018 BRAND X LIVE

Close encounters of the musical kind.



Let's be honest. There's not really a lot to look at when it comes to Brand X. True, they might all well be handsome devils to a man but when it comes to their first-ever in-concert Blu-ray it's quickly apparent their stage show is non-existent. I mean, where are the costume changes and the choreographed dance moves? What about some crowd surfing or maybe riding across the stage on a Segway? Nope, nada, nothing. All you get is five guys playing their instruments. That's got to be dullsville, right? Wrong.



Like having Brand X playing in your living room.



With a quality that's nothing short of magnificent, watching this quintet animating a famously complex repertoire and breathing new life into it along the course of this hour-plus concert turns out to be absolutely riveting. With no extraneous, special FX or jerky jump-cuts what we get is a nicely presented multi-camera shoot. Edited together by Stephen W Tayler, whose work with this new incarnation of the band and their previous two live album releases has been so essential to their late-career renaissance, Tayler's mixes in stereo and surround here prove just as vital. Elegantly conveying the muscular power Brand X can generate without bashing the viewer/listener over the head with it, essentially this package is like having Brand X playing in your living room. The band's second album, *Moroccan Roll*, released in 1977, is the principal beneficiary, occupying four of the nine titles in a setlist that also touches upon tracks from *Unorthodox Behaviour*, *Product* and *Do They Hurt?*.

Understandably, founder members guitarist John Goodsall and bassist Percy Jones dominate the foreground, given the extent to which their signature sounds are so integral to Brand X's sound. Now in their 60s and 70s respectively, they both shine and drive the music with an undiminished intensity and authority. However, this is no mere two-hander supported by capable but supporting personnel. The textural depth keyboardist Chris Clark brings is significant and his vivacious soloing sometimes possesses a wry perspective evidenced by his nod to Keith Emerson's *Trilogy* in the middle of an eloquent piano interlude.

Percussionist Scott Weinberger and drummer Kenny Grohowski grasp not only the bigger picture but also the minutiae contained within, and it is frequently astounding. Nobody here is going through the motions or trotting out parts. The extent to which they listen to each other, and the degree to which this apparently simple act knit the music together so convincingly is partly what makes this so powerful. What's that you say? Watching people listening to each other? You'd be surprised how exciting it really is.

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Take a bow

Wilson and co give a stunning performance.



Wilson and Hutchings trade riffs.

STEVEN WILSON

VENUE THE FILLMORE, PHILADELPHIA
DATE 30/11/2018

Fresh off the release of his latest concert film, *Home Invasion*, progressive rock icon Steven Wilson returns to Philadelphia for the second time this year to reign with distinctive excellence. Pulling in tracks from his latest album, *To The Bone*, past selections and a fair amount of Porcupine Tree gems — as well as a surprise tribute track — tonight Wilson and company radiate unfaltering poise, variety and consistency with their characteristic merging of superlative sounds and provocative sights. It's an outstanding performance that cements his place among the best live acts in the genre.

Tonight is split into two sets, and, as expected, *To The Bone* is spread across both halves: *Nowhere Now*, *Pariah* and *The Same Asylum As Before* all occur before the intermission, with *Song Of I* and *Detonation* coming later on. Each track is replicated exceptionally (with keyboardist Adam

Holzman adding some extra flair to the end of *Detonation*), and even the irresistibly celebratory *Permanating* — perhaps Wilson's most polarising tune ever — seems unanimously well-received by the crowd, in-between those more introspective and sombre choices. This could be due in part to Wilson's preliminary defence of it, and a justified jab at followers who turn their backs on him for writing "joyous pop".

The quintet onstage tonight (completed by Alex Hutchings on guitar, Nick Beggs on bass and Craig Blundell on drums) also acknowledge greats from every previous Wilson solo record except for 2011's *Grace For Drowning*, such as *Regret #9*, a heavier take on *Home Invasion* and a slightly expanded *No Twilight Within The Courts Of The Sun*. There's also *Ancestral* (featuring back-up falsetto vocals from Beggs), *Vermillioncore* and *The Raven That Refused To Sing*, which closes on a splendidly bittersweet

note. Together, these pieces give a strong overview of how Wilson has changed as a solo artist over the preceding decade.

What's most wonderful and meaningful, however, are the nods to earlier entries. Naturally, several Porcupine Tree compositions — *The Creator Has A Mastertape*, *Don't Hate Me*, *Lazarus*, *Sleep Together* and

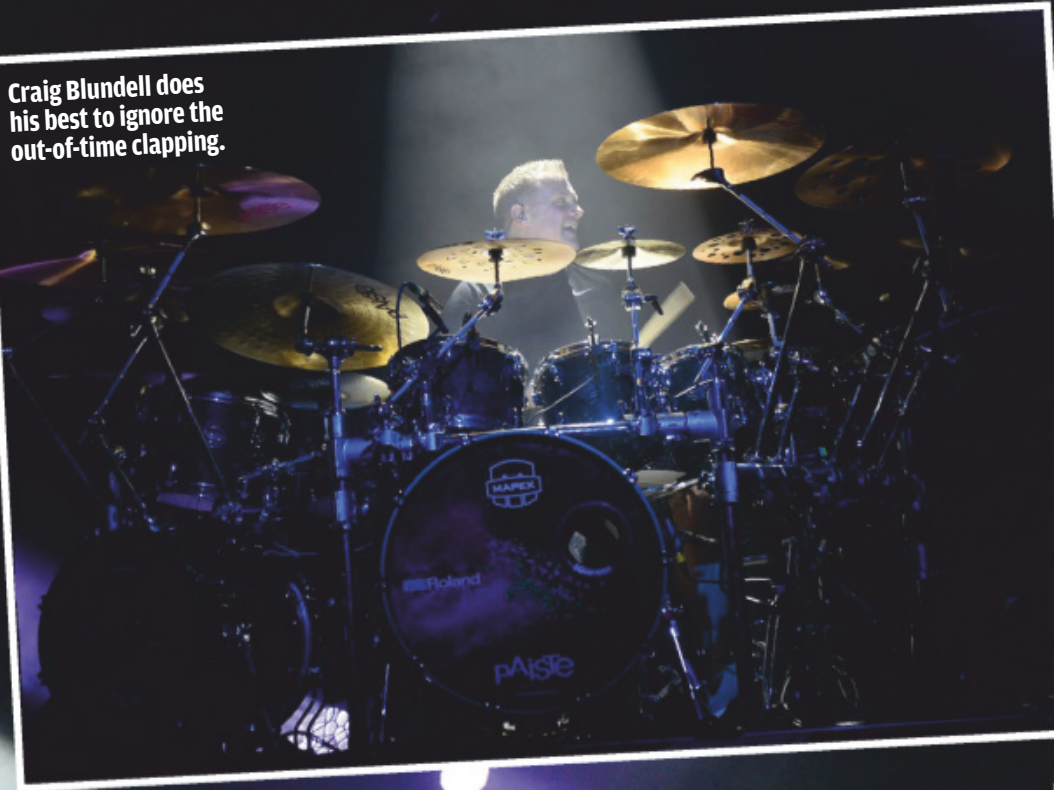
The Sound Of Muzak — receive reputable treatment (although Wilson's voice has clearly deepened a bit over time) and earn plenty of applause. That said, the two standouts from that era are the grungier take on *Even Less* (which Wilson plays on his own) and the awe-inspiring rendition of *Heartattack In A Layby*, that has Wilson, Beggs, and Hutchings trading vocals during its devastating finale.

Within the encore, Wilson also praises Prince before launching into a wholly unforeseen and faithful take on one of the late virtuoso's most beloved singles,

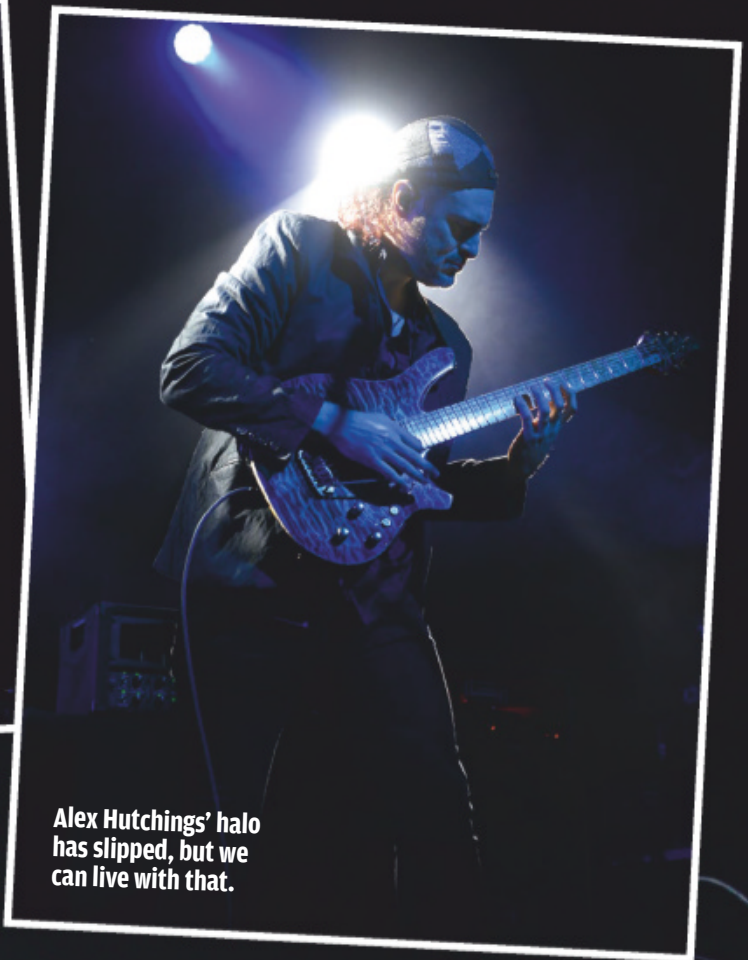


"Throughout the evening, his sardonic yet welcoming personality shines through."

Craig Blundell does his best to ignore the out-of-time clapping.



Alex Hutchings' halo has slipped, but we can live with that.



FRANK WHITE

Sign O' The Times. It's one of the most endearing moments of the night.

Wilson is known for making jokes and wry observations in-between songs, and tonight is no different. For instance, after acknowledging his penchant for melancholic material, he encourages the audience to "clap out of time" during the couplet of *Home Invasion* and *Regret #9*, just to annoy drummer Craig Blundell. Later, he chastises mainstream music by quipping that no one under 25 years old knows what an electric guitar is!

Without a doubt, Wilson's most salient remark comes before *Even Less*, when he references the absurd notion that his band do 'covers' of Porcupine Tree hits (as opposed to the truth: that Porcupine Tree simply recorded 'a version' of his songs). Throughout the evening, his sardonic yet welcoming personality shines through, both attracting his devotees and humanising himself in the midst of their reverie.

As always, the visuals accompanying the performance do a superb job of complementing the music. In addition to frenzied coloured light and smoke effects, Wilson wisely

uses the large screen behind him to display characteristically cryptic imagery, such as close-ups on a woman's face as she stands statically against changing backgrounds, blood-red clouds evoking the style of Lasse Hoile, and people with huge papier-mâché heads fighting in the woods.

A pre-recorded Ninet Tayeb appears for the chorus of *Pariah*, countless figures in either black or pink dance during *Detonation* and *Song Of I*, respectively, and the *Truth* short film, consisting of words like 'death', 'fiction' and 'grief' placed over striking pictures, opens the show. Once again, Wilson ensures that his fans' eyes are almost as captivated as their ears.

Having played this set-up dozens of times already, the band clearly have every note and nuance nailed down, yet they still bring renewed enthusiasm and focus to each bit of remarkable songwriting and instrumentation. Thus, they solidify Steven Wilson as a superlative artist whose live presence is as singular as his studio creations. Bravo, indeed.

JORDAN BLUM

Adam Holzman adds extra flair... and flare.



FISH

VENUE	02 RITZ, MANCHESTER
DATE	03/12/2018
SUPPORT	DORIS BRENDEL

It's never easy to be the opening act for an icon like Fish, but nothing seems to faze Doris Brendel. The woman who's been described as "the modern-day Janis Joplin" brings a quirky sense of purpose to her six-song set, adding touches of personality and staging to music that has elements of folk with an alternative rock tone. She has a bold steampunk dress sense, and uses intriguing items such as a glove sending out beams of laser light to enhance what is offered on a musical level. Brendel deserves a lot more attention, and the warmth of the audience reaction is encouraging: she clearly has the ability to appeal to a wide cross section of fans. This performance, though, is merely the start of the night for the lady. She's soon back onstage alongside Fish, as his backing singer.

The man himself is now showing signs of creeping age. He admits to having problems with his back and knees, and feels the presence of a bar stool to be a vital prop. Moreover, he has a book of lyrics on a lectern. But it's a refreshing honesty compared to those who hide worries about their memory by surreptitiously referring to a carefully concealed screen prompter.

But nobody here tonight cares that Fish isn't in his physical prime. The giant Scot has so much charisma and command, and

his voice still carries that narrative nuance through which he first made his impact. This is a performance that looks backwards in a reflective mood, while also striding forwards with confidence.

The latter comes through four tracks that are to appear on new album *Weltschmerz*, underlining that Fish retains the ability to tell human stories with dignity. *Man With A Stick* and *C Song* are especially convincing markers of his enduring and individual creativity: the latter even prompts an outbreak of — ulp! — dancing in certain sections of the crowd. What the new material proves is that the man has lost none of his innate ability to tell a story that holds everyone spellbound.

However, many are here to commemorate the 30th anniversary(ish) of *Clutching At Straws*. Fish knows people want to wallow in nostalgia, so he doesn't make the mistake of revamping these special songs, contenting himself with getting lost in the swirl of memories that they evoke for all of us. This approach is emphasised by old band footage playing on the screen behind him.

The album isn't played in sequence, but this hardly matters. Fish and his musicians offer more than effective renditions. He plays the *Clutching...* tracks in bundles, with each of these broken up by one of the new songs. This works well, giving fans a chance to catch their breath before the next batch. Both guitarist Robin Boulton and keyboard player Foss Paterson show throughout they are far from being faceless backing musicians.

Their input immeasurably adds to the joyous atmosphere here.

Fish shows an irritation with those who go along to gigs these days and spend their time filming the stage on their phones. In fact, he insists that those present should desist from such behaviour. "I want you to enjoy what you see and get into the spirit of what we do, not get distracted by technology."

Inevitably, *Warm Wet Circles* and *Sugar Mice* get a big reaction. And it's also good to hear songs from that period such as *Tux On*, which did not make it onto the original album. *Incommunicado*, saved for the encore, draws the biggest cheer and singalong. However, people leave not with a feeling of merely reliving the past, but celebrating a talent who's been unique for nearly four decades and is still out on his own. He may be suffering some aches and pains, but Fish is still a massive presence, both in stature and persona.

MALCOLM DOME

"He may be suffering some aches and pains, but Fish is still a massive presence, both in stature and persona."



Robin Boulton: far from faceless.



Fish: cane but able.

The lectern may remind us of school, but school was never this much fun...

HEATHER FINDLAY TRIO

VENUE	ACES & EIGHTS, LONDON
DATE	29/11/2018

Roughly a year and a half has passed since Heather Findlay first brought her trio, with Martin Ledger and Sarah Dean, to this venue to record her live DVD. On that occasion, it felt like the players were still finding their feet in the smaller

format of the three-piece. But tonight, the trio brim with an easy confidence, having grown into their own distinct sound.

The evening is split into two sets, the first of which inhabits that fertile ground where folk meets blues and rock, not far removed from Led Zeppelin in an acoustic mood. The opening *Unoriginal Sin* sets the tone with Findlay sounding superb. Last

time, Ledger's electric guitar tended to overpower the rest of the instruments, but the mix tonight is spot on. Findlay's voice and acoustic guitar take front and centre, with Ledger's Telecaster providing support and tasteful bluesy solos, while Dean switches between harp, harmonium, and various woodwind instruments to round out the orchestration.

"Here's something stompy for you," says Findlay, introducing *Caught In A Fold*, from Odin Dragonfly's *Offerings* album. Tonight's set picks freely from Findlay's catalogue, from *Mostly Autumn*, the *Mantra Vega* album with Dave Kerzner, *Odin Dragonfly*, and her solo releases.

Highlights from the first set include the glorious warmth of *Yellow Time*, *Magnolia*



MIKE GRAY

Flower power: Fish is still a commanding presence.

C:LIVE COLLECTIVE

VENUE	WATER RATS, LONDON
DATE	22/11/2018
SUPPORT	MELLOTRONANISM

Some pretty ugly characters have inhabited prog's more ambitious moments. Think of Roger Waters' tormented, abusive Pink from *The Wall*, or Marillion's deadbeat alcoholic Torch, the subject of *Clutching At Straws*. To that list you can add the voice of Clive Mitten's *The Fifth Estate*, a nasty piece of work who bemoans the demise of the Empire, wishes Britain was white, and misses the days when women couldn't vote. Such is the unpleasantness of this fellow that Mitten feels compelled to offer a disclaimer before his set begins, earnestly explaining that he only agrees with 20% of what his protagonist says.

It's a peculiar show. Only a third of opening act Mellotronism have shown up, in the shape of Ed Percival, formerly of East Anglian proggers Airbridge. Armed only with an acoustic guitar and a laptop that provides subtle orchestral grounding, he's engaging, and sings ragged versions of songs that would clearly benefit from the presence of more musicians. Shoestring prog, he calls it. He also has a song called either *Boris Johnson You're A Cunt* or *Jacob Rees Mogg You're A Cunt*, depending on which announcement you believe.

Back to the Clive Mitten and the C:Live Collective (dreadful name). When *The Age of Insanity* was released back in March, the four-part concept *The Fifth Estate* was largely instrumental. Now it has a vitriol-filled narration, the sharp end of its barbs dulled by the fact that they're rather buried in the mix and are being read from an iPad. Drummer Fudge Smith and guitarists Mark Spencer and Dave Donley come and go as the music demands, and it all feels a bit disjointed, only coming alive during *Part 3*, which kicks off as a four-to-the-floor disco banger before lurching sideways into darkly sinister commentary about trolling on the internet and ending with a seemingly sincere tribute to murdered MP Jo Cox. Some of it's unintentionally funny, as when Mitten asks, "Where is the next Martin Luther King? The next Nelson Mandela? The next Rosa Parks?" and peers hopefully around the room.

The highlights come as the set climaxes. A reworking of Twelfth Night's *This City* replaces the original's widescreen atmospherics with low-slung, skanking funk. It sounds like an enormous hit single, albeit one from another decade - David Bowie does Frankie Goes To Hollywood, perhaps - and features a soaring vocal from Spencer. And then there's *The Ceiling Speaks*, which has also been painted anew, but not so much that the small crowd can't bellow along with the chorus.

FRASER LEWRY

Half Moon, and *Evergreen*, with the latter receiving the loudest acclaim.

Set two sees the trio venturing deeper into the realm of folk, beginning with *I Am Snow*, wherein Findlay's high notes are pure as the proverbial driven. With Christmas on the horizon, the trio pull out some seasonally themed covers in the form of Sandy Denny's *Winter*

Winds, the folk song *The Snows They Melt The Soonest*, and the 16th century Latin Christmas carol *Gaudete*, which is mainly performed a cappella.

Out of the vaults comes Mostly Autumn's *Steal Away* - "Where it all began for me," says Findlay - and *Above The Blue*. These midtempo tunes allow Findlay plenty of space to give her voice

full rein, particularly with the stripped-back arrangements. They finish with *Shrinking Violet*, another elegant ballad, although one audience member is moved to headbang along as it builds to a crescendo. Perhaps it's not too soon for another live recording of this line-up, as they seem to be getting better.

DAVID WEST

CARAVAN

VENUE	ULU, LONDON
DATE	16/11/2018
SUPPORT	CURVED AIR

“**W**hew, it takes it out of you!” gasps Geoffrey Richardson after an enthusiastic spoons solo. As he also plays about nine other instruments with equal gusto tonight he’s entitled to take a breather, but as they celebrate their 50th anniversary, Caravan show few signs of taking any easy options.

Their music remains delightfully circuitous yet consistently groovy, and the 23-minute set-piece of *Nine Feet Underground*, to which everything else is a hors d’oeuvre, is as lovely a live moment (or stream of moments) as any set can offer. The line-up now may bear scant resemblance to the quartet who formed when exiting The Wilde Flowers in 1968, but Pye Hastings is still there, and Richardson joined in 1972. Keyboardist Jan Schelhaas did a three-year stint from 1975, then defected to Camel (there’s a jokey shout of “traitor!” when this is mentioned), then rejoined Caravan in 2002. Add in bassist Jim Leverton, who’s been with the band for over 20 years, and there’s an authentic amount of Caravan heritage here.

All of which they tap into instantly, beginning with *Memory Lain*, *Hugh/Headloss* and *I Wish I Were Stoned*. You couldn’t get more definitively Caravan than those whimsical spirals of psychedelia, gentle jazz and productive progressive meanderings. Look up ‘Canterbury Sound’ in the dictionary and the pages play these tracks. When they then glide into the sweet, summery pop of *Golf Girl* and *Love To Love You* from their classic 1971 album *In The Land Of Grey And Pink*, the mood is already established as one of uplifting bucolic charm. Not that Caravan sound fey or lightweight: it may be partly down to the compact but atmospheric venue, but they’re surprisingly chunky tonight, the full house’s heads nodding in approval.

But while Caravan’s newer material doesn’t reach the lofty levels of their heyday, the *Nine Feet Underground* journey isn’t just a lazy stroll down memory lane. For all Hastings’ onstage diffidence (he leaves the talking to Richardson), its wilful volte faces and three-point-turns still surprise as much as soothe. Caravan at 50 did it all over again, all over us.

Prior to Caravan’s arrival, their contemporaries Curved Air deliver a subtly mesmerising set of folk-and-fusion-tinged rock. Sonja Kristina still embeds herself in the heart of their music, spinning soulfully, her hands twirling in happy-hippie uninhibitedness. Compelling narratives emerge through songs like *Young Mother*, *Marie Antoinette* and *Vivaldi*, with Paul Sax’s violin to the fore. New young guitarist George Hudson is a find, his solos matching Sax’s all the way. Unlikely 1971 top four hit single *Backstreet Luv*, an odd, sinister serpent of sound even now, raises nostalgic smiles.

CHRIS ROBERTS



“Caravan’s music remains delightfully circuitous yet consistently groovy.”

Rollin’ on: Caravan’s Pye Hastings.

CARSTEN WINDHORST



Triumphant twirls: Sonja Kristina.



Caravan surprise and soothe.

KANSAS

VENUE	STATE THEATRE, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN
DATE	26/10/2018

It has been two years since Kansas' last studio offering, the acclaimed *The Prelude Implicit*. And while their fans eagerly await a new record, Kansas have remained busy by extensively touring.

Tonight's date is part of their *Point Of Know Return* 40th Anniversary Tour. The show starts out with a five-song acoustic set, with the band members sitting on stools, singing sweet harmonies that are beautifully aided by acoustic guitar, violin, and piano. The standout songs of this section include *People Of The South Wind* and *Hold On*.

After the acoustic offering, they play a somewhat eclectic mix of electric songs that include hits such as *The Wall*, *Song For America* and *Miracles Out Of Nowhere*.

The current Kansas line-up features founding members Rich Williams (guitar) and Phil Ehart (drums), long-timers Billy Greer (bass) and David Ragsdale (violin), and the freshest faces in the band, namely Ronnie Platt (vocals), David Manion (keyboards) and Zak Rizvi (guitar). It's a hybrid these days. Steve Walsh is no longer there belting out the tunes, but Platt gives it his all and does an admirable job filling Walsh's big shoes.

By the second half, when they play *Point Of Know Return* in order and in its entirety, the Michigan audience are rocking and rolling: their love for Kansas is more than evident, and they're standing a lot more than they're sitting.

The first half of the album is as good as any other they put out in the 70s, with the title track, *Paradox*, *The Spider*, *Portrait (He Knew)*, and *Closes Chronicles* all performed exquisitely tonight. And of course, there's the inevitable encore of *Carry On My Wayward Son*.

There may be two guitar players onstage, but tonight is definitely a Rich Williams-centric night as he handles nearly every lead, his guitar sound impressively heavy. He still sports that signature eye-patch and the serious presence he's grown famous for through the years, along with top-tier musicianship.

Ehart is still a force to be reckoned with behind the drums, playing with vigour and technical speed when required. An underrated performer who deserves serious praise and respect, he is the glue that has kept this band together over the years.

With six members on stage there's certainly a lot to digest, and the layers of sound are aplenty. There's the analog jamming of Manion on the keys, the soaring vocals and strong showmanship of Platt, the impressive violin performance from Ragsdale and the shredding from Rizvi that accompanies the aforementioned musicianship of Ehart and Williams. Tonight proves that Kansas can still command a crowd, and put on a show that's long, loud, and memorable.

TREVOR WOODS

KARMAMOI

VENUE	BOSTON MUSIC ROOM, LONDON	DATE	02/12/2018
SUPPORT	MIDNIGHT SUN		

A heady week of prog has seen the likes of the Hawklords and the double treat of Southern Empire and Damanek filling this venue just days apart... so perhaps there's just a little 'prog gig fatigue' setting in on this damp Sunday evening, since neither artists nor promoter can be too happy with the frankly pitiful audience numbers.

Gloucestershire-based Midnight Sun's set showcases their debut album, *Dark Tide Rising*, that's due out in early 2019. Navigating a path between melodic rock, metal and neo-prog, the band are tight and punchy during opener, and early highlight of the set, *Scheherazade*, with drummer Sam Slater especially impressing on his last appearance with the band. The material allows both guitarists to shine — Andy Gelband adds vibrancy and heft to tracks like *Scheherazade* and *Delirium*, while Ben Swanwick manages some frighteningly nifty fretboard wrangling during closer *Take Control*. Possibly the most effective and affecting song in the set is *Clouds*, with vocalist Huw Lloyd-Jones channelling the agony of losing a child with dramatic flair as the song builds. While perhaps lacking something distinctive that marks them out in a crowded market, tonight's show does suggest their recorded debut will be worth checking out.

London-based Italians Karmamoi have managed a bit of line-up disruption over the last couple of years, with vocalists coming and going, as well as losing their keyboard player, leaving drummer Daniele Giovannoni as the only original member. Tonight, playing much of their new album *The Day Is Done*, the band inhabit musical territory instantly familiar



Karmamoi, with guest vocalist Sara Rinaldi.

to fans of their recorded work, building intriguing soundscapes that veer from ambient introspection, as with large swathes of *Take Me Home*, to dirty guitar riffs like *If*. There are also jazz influences and songs like the new album title track, which can't be considered anything other than blues prog. Often sparse, dark passages will morph into odd-time workouts and beautiful Gilmour-esque soloing from the ever tasteful and considered Alex Massari as evidenced on *Atma*. Keeping up with the stylistic gear changes, vocalist Sara Rinaldi does a sterling job, capturing both the emotive vibe of songs like *Martes* and belting out the strident pop rock feel of songs such as *Your Name*.

While this varied confection of feels and styles is clearly something that the band deliberately court, sometimes the shifts in pace and mood are rather abrupt and there are points in the set, particularly towards the end of the show, where this combines with a couple of extended pauses between songs, making things start to feel a little disjointed. Such quibbles aside, Karmamoi turn in a terrific, majestic performance tonight; it's just a shame that more people aren't here to see it.

GARY MACKENZIE



"Often sparse, dark passages will morph into odd-time workouts and beautiful Gilmour-esque soloing."

Karmamoi: deserving of a bigger turn-out...



ANDY MACKAY

VENUE	QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL, LONDON
DATE	26/11/2018

You have to be either brave or foolhardy (or perhaps both) to premier an ambitious musical work in front of an audience who haven't heard a note of it yet. But that's exactly what Andy Mackay is doing here tonight, premiering his new album, *3 Psalms*, a few days before its release. For any artist, doing this would feel like jumping off a cliff and hoping to avoid the jagged rocks of apathy. But Mackay does more than get away with it: he emerges truly triumphant.

Of course, it helps that *3 Psalms* is saved until the second part of the evening, with the first half reserved for orchestral and choral interpretations of Roxy Music classics. Mackay and guitarist Phil Manzanera bookend the stage as the ensemble do a magnificent job reimagining the likes of *A Song For Europe* and *Out*

Of The Blue. The added musical dimensions help to accentuate the eerie and haunting qualities so often overlooked in Roxy material: this is especially true of *In Every Dream Home A Heartache*, which is mesmerising.

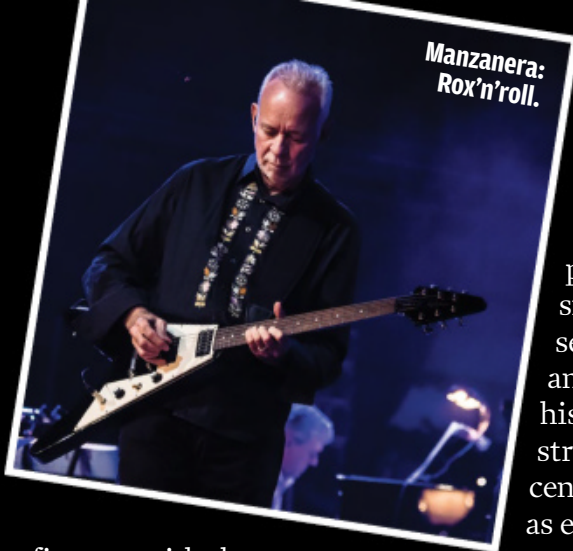
Just prior to concluding the first set with the inevitable *Love Is The Drug*, Mackay informs us that they will play *3 Psalms* right through after an interval, and asks the audience not to clap between the three movements. "Save the applause until the end," he says. "That is, if you feel like applauding." You can tell from this remark that he has a certain concern as to how this music will be received. Subsequently, nobody breaks ranks to cheer, as the whole auditorium is spellbound by what's being presented. The only sound between tracks is that of people clearing their throats; it feels like we're at a classical recital.

and with good reason. At a time when many mature progressive heroes are embracing the classical genre, he's come up with something magical.

Nobody is in any doubt that *3 Psalms* is a huge undertaking, especially for vocalist Harry Day-Lewis, who has to sing in English, Latin and Hebrew. But the engaging fluency of the performance is overpowering. Little wonder that, when it's all over, there's a vociferous standing ovation. The relief etched on Mackay's face says it all.

There's still one more song to come, as we return to the Roxy catalogue for encore *Tara*. This is a fitting way to wrap up an evening proving not only that Roxy Music classics belong in an orchestral setting, but that Mackay is still making valid new statements

MALCOLM DOME



Manzanera: Rox'n'roll.



Modest Mackay isn't one to blow his own trumpet. Sax, yes, but not trumpet.



Andy Mackay goes for the minimalist approach...

"Mackay emerges truly triumphant tonight."

SHATTERED SKIES

VENUE	THE BLACK HEART, LONDON
DATE	26/11/2018

Shattered Skies seem to thrive on upheaval. The last few years have seen them alter musical direction, move from Ireland to the UK, and change line-up several times, including changing their vocalist, a risky move for any band. During this they've still managed to self-release several EPs and a debut full-length, which got them attention in progressive metal circles. Tonight they're launching their second album, *Muted Neon*.

Gig (and album) opener *The Disaffected* starts with an ominous bass pulse, gentle picked guitar refrain and plaintive vocals. Shortly after, eastern string samples kick in and Gerry Brown's voice aims for the sky, making for an epic introduction to the set, given weight by the rhythm section.

Seemingly designed to appeal to the djent crowd, *You Will Know My Name* sidesteps us by quickly dropping the chugging guitars and replacing them with neo-prog keyboard sounds from Ian Rockett's guitar, as Chris Borland's bass and Ross McMahon's drums pound out stumbling rhythms and a complex series of stop-starts underneath.

A reverbed piano leads into *15 Minutes*, a song that plays with notions of stalker and voyeur, and brings an element of funk - but also an element that's disjointed and jarringly sinister. Rave scene keyboards grab the attention before the band settle into the groove metal of *Shut In*. Brown clutches at the air and prowls the lip of the stage, with the other band members adding backing vocals and snarls in the night's most straightforwardly metal number, but one that dips into 80s prog for its hybrid guitar/keyboard solo.

The band show a more sensitive side with *As The Sea Divides*, but punctuate the pastoral sections with pummelling

bursts until they can no longer hold back and everything comes crashing in. *Birth Of A Voyager* may have the most of that divisive growling, but it's an anthem in waiting. *The End And The Rebirth* turns the focus firmly back towards prog, with triggered keyboard run after keyboard run as the band sprint towards the finish.

Set-closer *Arisen* is dedicated to a friend who overcame tough times, and Brown emphasises how proud he is of who they have become. It's not a stretch to apply this to the band themselves. It looks like the hard times are over and there's much here to be proud of.

GAVIN HOBSON

SOFT MACHINE

VENUE	THE 1865, SOUTHAMPTON
DATE	22/11/2018

It's safe to say that 2018 has been an excellent year for jazz fusion experimentalists Soft Machine. First, the Canterbury troupe celebrated the 50th anniversary of their self-titled debut album. Then they released *Hidden Details* - their first LP under the 'Soft Machine' mantle since 1981 - before embarking on a worldwide tour.

Tonight is the final show of an extensive European run for John Etheridge, Roy Babbington, John Marshall and Theo Travis, and they are ending on a real high: playing two back-to-back sets of new tracks interwoven with 1970s classics.

From a visual perspective, there is very little to report as Soft Machine begin to play. All four members remain as firm-footed as possible, refusing to interact with the crowd during their complex and lengthy tunes. Clearly, this is a night where the music is all that matters, with no additional elements - apart from one or two spotlights - desired whatsoever.

The opening song of the evening is an off-kilter barrage of jazz rock musicianship, with technical and oft-fast-paced playing from everybody onstage. It establishes these men's instrumental talents from the very start before a more brief and soulful turn is made with the Mike Ratledge-penned classic *The Man Who Waved At Trains*.

Life On Bridges is another collection of unadulterated lunacy, beginning with a slow saxophone from Travis that is then juxtaposed with Marshall's drums blazing ferociously. The dissonant noise of the song's mid-section keeps this mania going, but is then undercut by the sweeter tones of *The Tale Of The Taliesin*.

The duology of *Heart Off Guard* and *Broken Hill* create a sweet contrast, while also displaying Etheridge's guitar skills front-and-centre. The former is a dulcet acoustic piece, while the latter is a more brazen electric guitar solo. *Gesolreut* concludes the first set, its union of piano, strings and saxophone making for a joyously harmonious conclusion.

After a brief interlude, *One Glove* and *Fourteen Hour Dream* welcome the audience back, before the 70s return once again in the form of *Out-Bloody-Rageous (Part 1)*. Etheridge takes to the microphone to humorously explain the title's connection to the Soft Machine biography of the same name: "If you want to get one, they're out of print, so they're only 60 quid," he laughs. *Kings And Queens* is the highlight of the evening, putting Babbington's chopping yet funky bass at the forefront in tribute to beloved Canterbury scene veteran Hugh Hopper.

A John Marshall drum solo followed by *Chloe And The Pirates* conclude this massive evening of experimental jazz fusion, sealing Soft Machine's glorious career renaissance during the past 12 months.

MATT MILLS

VENNART

VENUE	THE DOME, LONDON	DATE	22/11/2018
SUPPORT	PIJN		

Manchester's Pijn boast a unique instrumentation. Playing tonight as a sextet, guitar, bass and drums are augmented by violin, cello and lap steel. Their glacial chamber prog evokes loss and longing, which is fitting for a band named after the Dutch word for pain.

Swelling tides of plaintive strings and mournful glissandi crash on the shores of Pijn's pagan post-metal. Their painterly vistas are many miles away from the spiky hyper-modern cubism of the headline act, but they go down well with the appreciative crowd and there's a sense of sadness when it's all over too soon.

Keeping the northern theme, the lights dim and John Cooper Clarke's *Evidently Chickentown* provides the walk-on music for Vennart.

Drummer Denzel sparks like a live cable as he fires up the stuttering fizzing rhythm of *Binary* from current album *To Cure A Blizzard Upon A Plastic Sea*. With bass chords from ex-Oceansize cohort Richard 'Gambler' Ingram, its insistent stop-start awkwardness isn't conducive to filling a dance floor, but the infectious beat makes you want to try nonetheless.

Talking of awkward infectiousness, *Sentientia* channels Vennart's beloved Cardiacs. Its wall of noise is adorned by art pop flourishes and too many chord changes to ever attract radio play, but that's why we're here tonight.

Infatuate from 2015's debut album *The Demon Joke* is similarly poppy with a singalong chorus and a drum break that goes on way too long to make a prog-agnostic audience comfortable; the band are really



Mike Vennart has earned his stripes.



"Mike Vennart throws his impressive array of guitars around with gusto."



Watch that mic, Mike - it bites back.

Pijn: a pain that's so close to pleasure.

starting to sizzle now. Mike Vennart throws his impressive array of guitars around with gusto, clearly enjoying himself in his own intense way.

Spider Bones was made for live performance. Gambler's catchy bass line and that groove are irresistible. This is disco for krautrockers.

Robots In Disguise, co-written by ex-Oceansize and Amplifier guitarist Steve Durose, is slightly marred by a lack of concentration when Mike Vennart triggers a wrong patch. Adding injury to insult, an electric shock jumps from the microphone. Hey, it's live, folks. Thankfully, nobody dies and all is back on track with a storming *Donkey Kong*, the 'What the fuck's this button do?' lyric gaining extra resonance now.

That's Not Entertainment is a last chance for a slow dance, building to an anthem of epic proportions.

Having three original members of Oceansize onstage, it'd be rude to leave without giving the crowd a taste of their much-loved catalogue. *Part Cardiac* and *Build Us A Rocket Then...* from their final album *Self Preserved While The Bodies Float Up* are explosive reminders of that era. The brooding, Lynchian *Music For A Nurse* is the perfect way to close a gig that can be summed up as serious fun.

CHRIS MCGAREL

TESSERACT

VENUE	SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON
DATE	01/12/2018
SUPPORT	BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME, PLINI

“And now it’s time for some jazz,” says Plini Roessler-Holgate with a touch of awkward shyness as he stands in front of a heaving crowd. Jazz isn’t Plini’s mainstay: this is a wry introduction to his cinematic concoction of technical instrumental creations. They don’t hold the abrasion or anthemic sway of what’s to come, but the thickness and crescendos coupled with an acute attention to every hook, bassline and beat get a rapturous response.

Between The Buried And Me know no bounds when it comes to genre-shifting, splicing swing, jazz and mellow soundscapes with brazen metal. They can be brilliant and they can be clever, and tonight they lean towards the latter with a set that suffers from time constraint, noticeable fatigue and the omission of obvious fan favourites including recent hit *Condemned To The Gallows*, plus anything from *The Parallax II: Future Sequence* or *The Great Misdirect*. The shocking segue from the mellow outro of *Millions* into the onslaught of *Sun Of Nothing* is dramatic but not cohesive. Their saving grace, though, is *The Coma*

Machine, a rock opera-esque carnival of sounds with the mother of all choruses.

By contrast, Tesseract play the show of their career. Everything is honed, shaped and perfected, including the photogenic stage set-up (their huge glowing logo on the backdrop, a shifting explosion of multi-coloured mood-setting lights, figure-cutting smoke hazes), the unbelievably high spec sound output, a note-perfect performance from each of the five members and a celebratory exploration of their musical history that balances the exploratory, softer intricacies of their later melodies with plenty of robust favourites.

Fresh off the back of this year’s *Sonder*, they play *Juno*, *King*, *Luminary* and *Smile*. The hard hit of *Luminary* bursts with vivacity and spine-tingling depth, dropped in by guitarists Acle Kahney and James Monteith.

With a few tweaks to the octave range, Dan Tompkins makes songs from *Altered State* his own (the album was originally written for singer Ashe O’Hara), resulting in some of the most euphoric moments of the night. Equally, old



WILL IRELAND

favourites *Deception* and *The Impossible* are a jaw-dropping culmination of angular, percussive technicality and aching emotion, driven by the uneasy rumblings of drummer Jay Postones and bassist Amos Williams. Including a suite from *Polaris* (*Dystopia*, *Hexes*, *Phoenix* and *Survival*) leaves no stone unturned, completing the survey of their cerebral history.

Eight years ago, Tesseract debuted with an EP, *Concealing Fate*, conceptualising the stages of growing up through an allegorical hexology: *Acceptance*, *Deception*, *The Impossible*, *Perfection*, *Epiphany* and *Origin*. Feeling like they’ve come full circle, tonight is the ‘perfection’ in their own story.

HOLLY WRIGHT

Tesseract playing “the show of their career.”



“Feeling like they’ve come full circle, tonight is the ‘perfection’ in Tesseract’s own story.”

SONAR AND DAVID TORN

VENUE	THE VORTEX, LONDON
DATE	02/12/2018

It’s a move of genius. ‘Minimalist progressive groovers’ Sonar have been booked for two nights into Dalston jazz space The Vortex to launch their new album – which is called *Vortex*. It makes drummer Manuel Pasquinelli laugh shyly when he announces it onstage later, but right now it’s knowing smiles all round as their temporary fifth wheel steps up solo for tonight’s first set – guitarist, composer and producer David Torn.

To his right is a box of tricks that we can only see the back of: he manipulates this and his Ronin Mirari – strumming, sliding, tapping, picking, shaking it. The music soars, glides, oscillates and loops, at some points it’s the granular texture for a flying saucer lift-off that phases into a vibrato tunnel punctuated by tonal taps.

As the sound drifts off into the cosmos Torn grins, “I’d like to title that piece *Slow Night In Space Land*.” His second improv has more of a jazz twang to it – as well as some hard reverb – albeit in orbit around us again, a space age *Shadows* by way of Eno’s *Apollo* recordings, with the Whammy well wanged.

For set two, Sonar are up. At the opposite end to Torn, the quartet are effect-free and tightly knit. They start with *Tromsø*, which picks and plucks in familiar cycles that soon gets feet tapping. It’s insistent, insidious stuff that creates tension as it ticks away its 11 minutes.

Bringing Torn in for *Twofold Covering*, there’s an inverted Om riff afoot from Bernhard Wagner, in the Swiss quartet’s style, of course. Chicken-scratch figures get some Torn texture beneath to lift them; you can see how, when he began to jam with them in the studio for “just one or two numbers” a light went on as to how to switch up Sonar’s metric gears.

From here it’s the rest of *Vortex*; the clanging *Red Shift* with its unsettling psych bridge, the minimalist *Waves And Particles* with Torn twinkling away at the edges, and *Monolith*’s otherworldly descent into head-nodding metallics via a kind of modular science funk-tion.

Things get heavy by *Part 44*, when composer/guitarist Stephan Thelen’s math, Christian Kuntner’s bass and Pasquinelli’s time collide with Torn skronk, before *Lookface*’s cymbal-crashed dub repetition takes the roof off.

What a launch; even the band look stunned at their own endeavours.

JO KENDALL

A PERFECT CIRCLE

VENUE SSE ARENA, LONDON
DATE 05/12/2018

Tonight's show begins with a voiceover telling us to switch off our devices, and advising that anyone caught taking pictures or filming will be ejected. The same voiceover is repeated, and a last smattering of lights vanish. It's a liberated moment; a refreshingly old-school stance for a band who've made their name redrawing the boundary lines of rock and metal.

Following a 14-year break from new material, A Perfect Circle returned earlier this year with fourth album *Eat The Elephant* and reaffirmed their status as a supergroup of commanding weight and intrigue. Tonight this is enforced, even if the disappointingly half-full arena makes for a less electric atmosphere than what we've heard of their Brixton shows in June. As a band, they somehow seem to burst with intent while remaining relatively oblique on the lyrical front, though the Trump cartoons on our press passes leave less to the imagination...

It's a fantastic-looking stage, with a mix of soft and blazing blue-ish lights and projections that create the sense of some dark underwater realm (including fish for - surprise, surprise! - *So Long, And Thanks For All The Fish*). Singer/mastermind Maynard James Keenan spends almost the entire show on a platform, centre stage but shadowed - twisting and contorting between majestic croons and roars (triumphantly furious in early heavy-hitter *Rose*). But it's guitarist Billy Howerdel whose almost elfin presence (tall, bald, black-clad) really appeals. His angular yet meaty chops in the heavy likes of *The Hollow* call to mind his past life guitar teching for Nine Inch Nails, among others. As a unit they make a jagged but muscular noise that soars, whispers and pounds as required, peaking in the scorching likes of *TalkTalk*.

As the end approaches (involving an infectious cover of AC/DC's *Dog Eat Dog*), Keenan says, "You won't be seeing them for a while" - he has "Other things" coming up, he says with a twinkle. It's about as cryptic as a Christmas cracker joke for anyone with half an eye on Tool's 2019 plans, but the cheers are huge nonetheless.

A Perfect Circle's supergroup status is reaffirmed as Keenan introduces his bandmates (for example "from Eagles Of Death Metal and Puscifer...") except Howerdel ("from... New Jersey!"). So we're slightly thrown when he suddenly tenses up, throwing a water bottle over some unclear dispute and striding off in the final passage of *Delicious*, declaring, "You can take pictures now!" Smartphones shoot up and the rest of the band finish, smilingly waving, throwing plectrums and embracing one another.

Off-kilter elements, then, but for real progressive mystery and hard-hitting brawn, A Perfect Circle are still tough to beat.

POLLY GLASS

VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

VENUE THEKLA, BRISTOL
DATE 04/12/2018

It is a riddle on a par with the Sphinx that the Von Herten Brothers remain relatively unsung heroes in the UK. The fraternal trio's accessible blend of prog, melodic metal and muscular pop with Nordic good looks and multi-guitar virtuosity should be filling arenas around the globe by now, especially given the broad public thirst for Scandi cultural exports. So it is somewhat dispiriting to find these high-energy Finns playing to a thin crowd on a rainy December night in Bristol, even if they do their damndest to make it feel like they are headlining Wembley.

The band have had a bumpy ride recently. The tepid performance of their polished 2015 album *New Day Rising* plunged them into a brief hiatus, leading to a change of label and management. That album downplayed the band's knotty prog side, but they regained their baroque'n'roll mojo last year on *War Is Over*. Indeed, they begin tonight with its uncompromising title track, a symphony of vaulting, churning, horizon-expanding melodrama which feels like the last three Muse albums crammed into 12 minutes. "I hope you're not in a hurry," grins lead singer Mikko von Hertzen, "because we are going to stretch this place to the limits..."

Backed by drummer Sami Kuoppamäki and Swedish keyboard player Robert Engstrand, the brothers play almost two hours of tightly drilled and stylistically versatile material. With their stacked vocal harmonies and singalong chants, galloping pop rock anthems like *Long Lost Sailor* and *Sunday Child* have the streamlined populist thrust of vintage Foo

"The trio's accessible blend of prog elements, melodic metal and muscular pop should be filling arenas around the globe by now."



Scandi star: Mikko Von Hertzen.

Fighters or U2. *Freedom Fighter* starts a little spindly and underpowered, but then builds to a punchy punk pop stampede, while *Miracle* is an exhilarating Zepp-oid blues-riffing stomper.

"I guess we are also a little bit known for proggy stuff right?" grins Mikko. "Even though we hate prog..." He's joking, of course. This is the cue for *Kiss A Wish*, one of the trio's earliest and most unashamedly cosmic confections, a nine-minute jazz odyssey of kaleidoscopic, tempo-twisting, deep-space rumination. It is ripe, bombastic, ungainly and mostly fantastic, even if the cramped venue slightly dampens its grandiose effect.

Between the wholesome Scandi rock peaks are eyebrow-scorching blasts of sharp-angled prog punk in *Cardiacs vein*, ritualistic incantations with a sinewy jazz-fusion texture, and deceptively conventional power ballads that erupt with wiggly arpeggio maximalism. A few more of these more sonically extreme digressions would have been welcome. Still, this is an impressively energised performance overall, an arena-sized show in a pocket-sized venue. If the Von Hertzens ever find the big crowds they deserve, these monster tracks should blow the roof to Valhalla and beyond.

STEPHEN DALTON



Von Hertzen Bros bring "an arena-sized show in a pocket-sized venue..."

MIKE EVANS

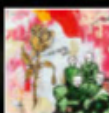
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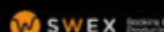
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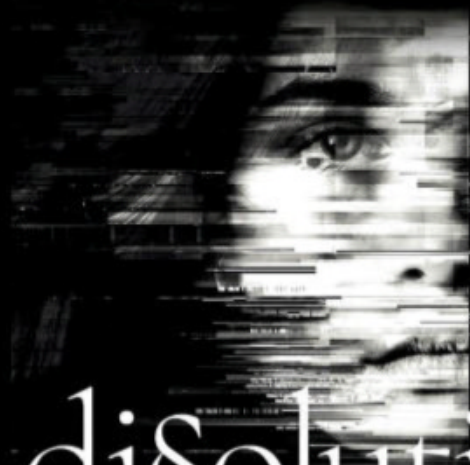
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Where's home?

Aberdeen, Washington. I'm the other Kur(d)t from Aberdeen!

Your first prog memory?

Listening to *Sgt. Pepper* and all that late 60s stuff as a young kid, and getting ELP's *Tarkus* for my tenth birthday.

The first prog record you bought?

Yes! *Close To The Edge* from a record store in Aberdeen called Bilbo Baggins Music Street!

First prog gig?

Queen at the Paramount Theater Seattle on the Sheer Heart Attack tour [1975]. Kansas opened up for them, and they cooked all our minds.

Favourite piece of technology?

iPods are great for when you're working out, and I have a computer because you have to. But I've shut off the Wi-Fi in my house and I've disconnected my iPhone, and I record to tape whenever I can.

Any guilty pleasures in your music collection?

Plenty – ABBA, Sex Pistols, Carly Simon, Joni Mitchell. I like a lot of different stuff.

What would be your Mastermind specialist subject?

The history of Kansas or Rush. I'm a total music nerd.

Your favourite venue?

The Paramount Theater in Seattle. That Queen and Kansas show, seeing Rush open for Kiss – I was pretty much there every weekend for a time. And playing the Whisky [a Go Go] in Los

Keith Emerson:
"Cool as fuck."



Kurt Vanderhoof

The great and good of progressive music give us a glimpse into their prog worlds. **As told to Grant Moon**

Angeles is always fun, because of the history.

Outside of prog, what else are you into?

Camping. I just bought a 1967 Streamline chrome camp trailer that I'm refurbishing for the spring. So in between tours I can go out and be a hippie in the woods, with no hair!

Who is your prog hero?

Keith Emerson. That guy was incredibly good and cool as fuck.

What do you collect?

Vintage analogue synthesisers, vintage guitars, old audio equipment like tube compressors and pre-amps, and I've started rebuilding my vinyl collection recently too.

The last album you bought?

The 2112 vinyl boxset reissue, with the red star hologram thing on it, which was really cool.

What was the last gig you went to?

Cruise To The Edge [in 2014]. Presto Ballet played, and it was

great to see UK, Renaissance, who I really love, and Steve Hackett was just amazing.

Ever had a prog date?

No. It's not really date rock, is it!? I did go on a date to a Neil Diamond concert once, and while I have nothing but respect for him as a songwriter, the whole night felt like a *Saturday Night Live* skit!

Who do you call in the prog community for a good night out?

I don't go out! I have no life! When I'm home I'm home and

Starcastle's first album cover sums up the whole prog mentality to me.

listening to records, and there's nowhere to go here anyway.

What's the most important prog song for you?

Close To The Edge. That mellow breakdown in the middle where they start spacing out, to me that's the high point of prog rock right there.

Which prog muso would you most like to work with?

I'd love to work with Kerry Livgren. To this day his writing blows my mind.

Which prog record always gets you in a good mood?

On The Threshold Of A Dream by The Moody Blues. A Sunday morning, coffee, The Moody Blues, and I'm 'gently swaying through the fairy-land of love...'

Who's the best prog artist you've ever seen?

Rush opening for Kiss that time [in '75]. I was 14 years old, they opened up with *Finding My Way* and by the time they finished their set I knew what I was going to do with the rest of my life.

Recommend us a good proggy read.

I've just finished *The Killing Of Uncle Sam* [by Rodney Howard-Browne], which explains what's going on politically and socially now, and how we got here. It's crazy out there, man.

What's your favourite album cover?

I always liked Starcastle's first album cover [*Starcastle*]. It sums up

the whole prog rock mentality to me. I can see it airbrushed on the side of a van in the 70s.

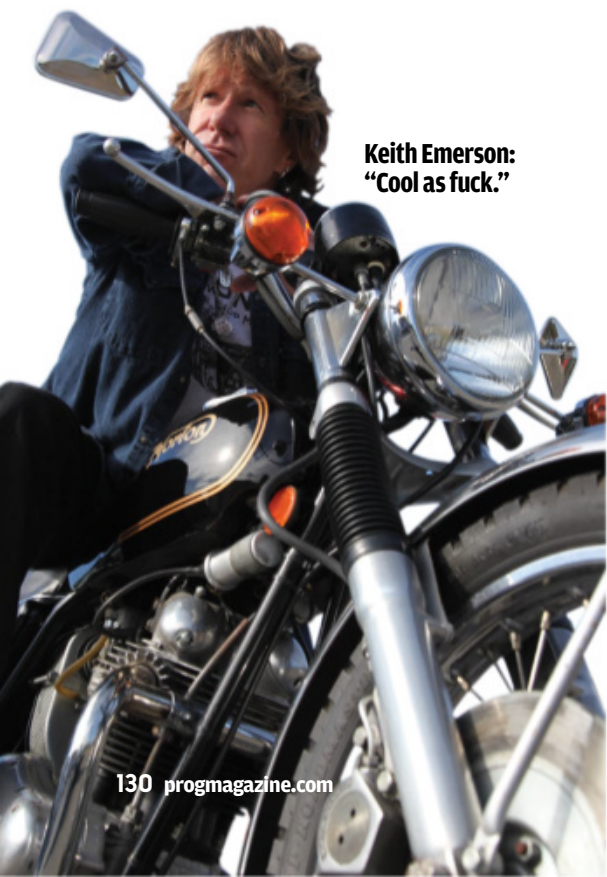
What are you up to at the moment?

Metal Church's album *Damned If You Do* is out now and we're touring that in the US in the spring, with festivals including Bloodstock to come in summer. Presto Ballet's new album *The Days Between* is out too, and we're hoping to play some shows in Europe later in 2019.

See www.prestoballet.com and www.metalchurchofficial.com.



MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES





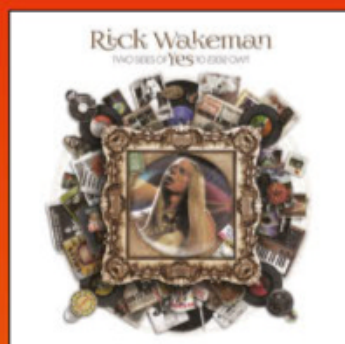
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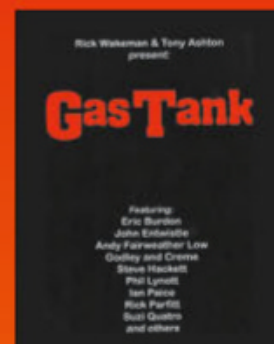
Live at Ronnie Scott's

Recorded live in 1997 in Birmingham
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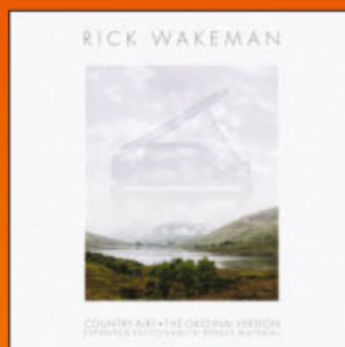
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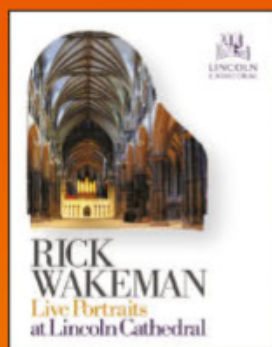
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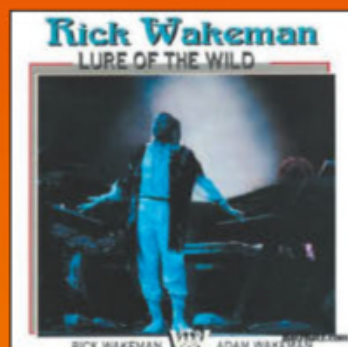
Country Airst

The original recording, with two new tracks
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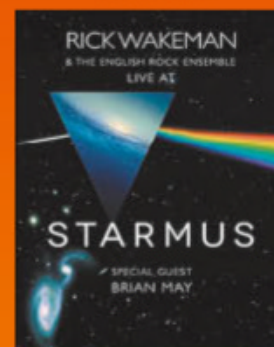
Live Portraits

Recorded live at Lincoln Cathedral – Truly glorious!
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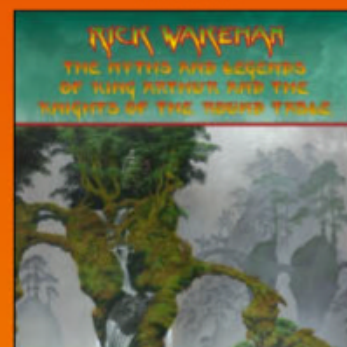
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