MOODY BLUES

The prog legends bid farewell to Ray Thomas

PROG

ASTOUNDING SOUNDS
AMAZING MUSIC

Jethro Tull at 50

The eye-opening story of how Tull topped the world of prog for half a century

Every Tull Studio Album REVIEWED by Ian Anderson

TONY BANKS
"Genesis were always a divisive band. I've always liked that."

ROXY MUSIC
The inside story of their electrifying debut album

SIMON PHILLIPS
"The problem with jazz is sometimes the melody is secondary."

+

Art Zoyd
Good Tiger
Orphaned Land
Claire Hamill
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JESSE HUGHES	JOHNNY WINTER	KIRK WINDSTEIN	GLENN HUGHES	SERGIO VEGA	TIM SULT	MATT PIKE

ISSUE 85 01.03.18

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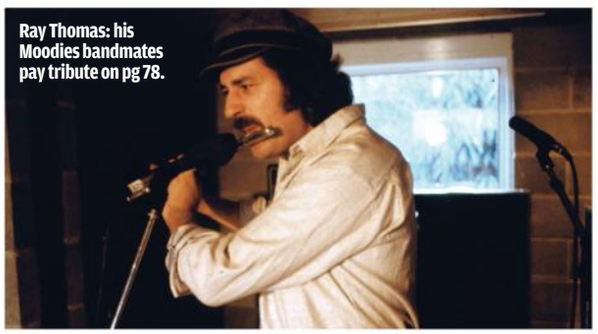
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They're a Welsh cottage industry and possibly prog's best-kept secret.

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THE RISING SOULS

SPEAKEASY

GLENN WOOL • CHRIS BETTS

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- A newly re-mastered original stereo mix with four bonus tracks; "Lucky Seven" (single version), "Silently Falling" (single version) and "Run With The Fox" & "Return Of The Fox" by Chris Squire & Alan White.

TODD RUNDGREN

'ALL SIDES OF THE ROXY'

- A 3 CD official clamshell boxed set of Todd Rundgren's legendary performances at the Roxy Theater in West Hollywood in May 1978.
- The latest volume of the Todd Rundgren Archives Series.
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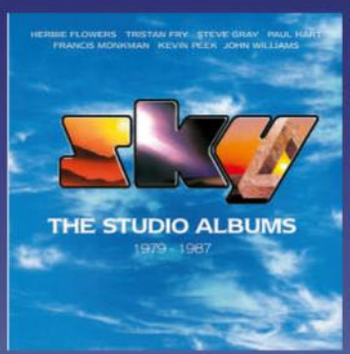
- Includes an illustrated book with an essay by Malcolm Dome and featuring archive interviews with band members.



SKY

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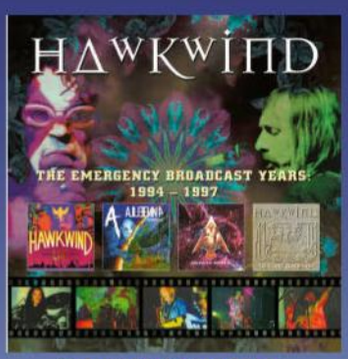
(8 DISC CLAMSHELL BOX SET)

- Esoteric Recordings is pleased to announce the release of "The Studio Albums 1979 – 1987", a new clamshell boxed set that gathers together all seven studio albums released by the legendary classical rock band SKY over a nine year period. Includes a bonus remastered DVD (NTSC / Region Free) – "Sky – Live in Nottingham 1990" with two previously unreleased & un-broadcast tracks. CDs remastered from the original master tapes.



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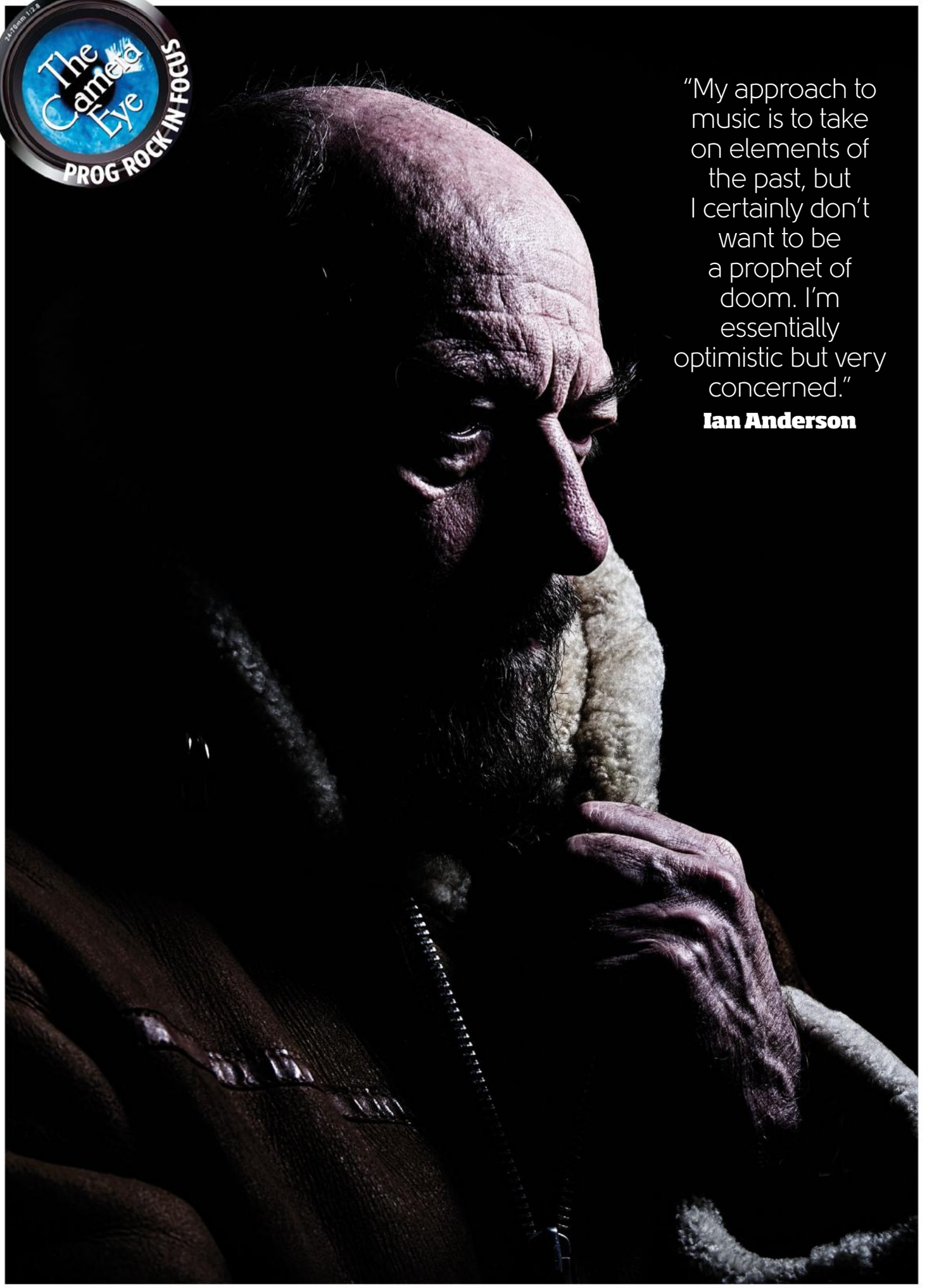


"My approach to music is to take on elements of the past, but I certainly don't want to be a prophet of doom. I'm essentially optimistic but very concerned."

Ian Anderson

STUART WOOD

Ed's Letter

Welcome to the latest issue of *Prog* magazine. The big news in the music world as I write seems to be the impending retirements of some of the music world's most-loved characters. Paul Simon, Elton John, Neil Diamond, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Slayer have all announced that the end of the road is nigh, in some form or another.

And here is *Prog* magazine, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Jethro Tull on the front cover. Shunting the semantics aside for a minute, Tull in the form of mainman Ian Anderson are still a going concern, as he makes patently clear in Philip Wilding's excellent examination of the enduring appeal of Jethro Tull, which begins on page 34. If you think about what the band achieved in their first decade alone, it is truly remarkable.

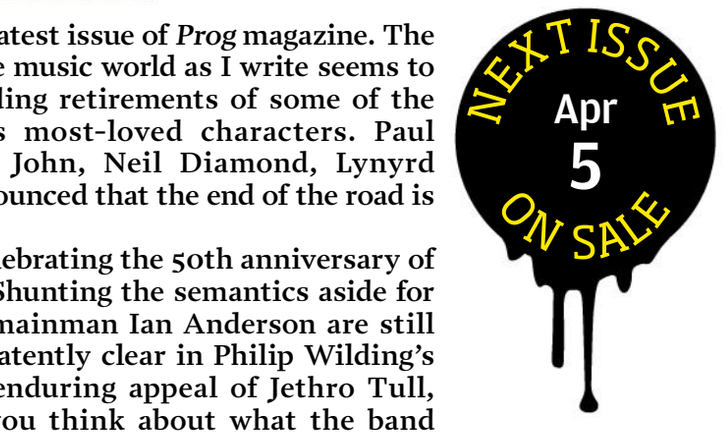
Yet Tull's is not the only 50th anniversary that progressive music will be celebrating this year. Yes is the obvious one, of course, and it's also worth noting that King Crimson, Caravan, Can, Amon Düül II, Henry Cow and Rush all formed in 1968, while Soft Machine, Fairport Convention and Family all released their debut albums. Oh, and a French band by the name of Art Zoyd also formed. We catch up with those early exponents of Rock In Opposition for the first ever time on page 82.

In fact, there are more than a few of the original progressive rockers still with us in some form or another, making music and playing gigs. And that's something I believe we should be inherently proud of. After all, didn't the media try to tell us that punk rock swept prog under the carpet a long time ago?

So I doff my cap to those artists notching up a 50th anniversary for something this year. Well done. You make us all incredibly proud to support such a bold and adventurous musical genre.

Looks like we're going to have a busy 2018 making sure we celebrate with you all. Let's do this...

Jerry Ewing - Editor



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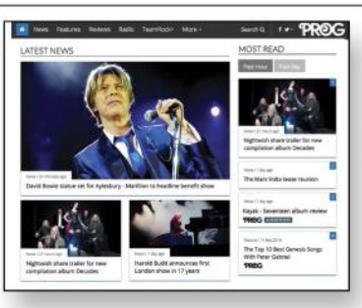

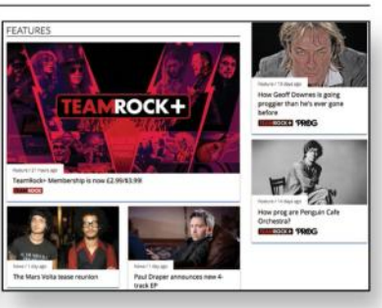

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BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

It's always great to look through the *Prog* Readers' Poll results to see if your vote made it to the top 10!

It goes without saying that live music needs a forum, a space in which it can be appreciated properly. Sometimes these can be iconic spaces like the Royal Albert Hall or the Hammy Odeon (not Apollo!) but more often, especially in the world of prog, they are more prosaic and humble. Like one of my other loves, beer, the experience is always enhanced by the right environment, and pubs and music venues, of course, do often go hand in hand...

So it's great to see, in amongst the big boys, recognition for venues that are at the grass roots of keeping music alive on a daily and weekly basis. Big love to The Musician (and Danny) and Thekla especially for keeping the flag flying.

Rob Moss

PROG DOWN UNDER

I just got back from Progfest Sydney, the first festival of its kind I've been to in Australia. It was eye-opening. The Headliners, Leprous, were great, but it was the Aussie bands that really blew me away. Voyager had crowd-pleasing anthems, Alithia had ambition to spare, and the hilarious Osaka Punch were a real find.

What was bizarre was how I — a native Australian resident and longtime music enthusiast — was completely oblivious of all this homegrown talent until a few months ago. I had no idea that Australia has such a booming prog scene. I learnt about Voyager from the Progfest poster. I learnt about Caligula's Horse from your magazine, and I learnt about Ne Obliviscaris from a Facebook meme! Perhaps it's because Canberra doesn't have much of a live music scene, or maybe it's because pop and EDM have such a stranglehold even on our 'alternative' radio station.

How about a nice big feature on Australian prog rock in your esteemed magazine to help give this fresh and vibrant scene a boost?

Conor Bendle

Check out our review of Progfest on page 118, Conor. We also have plans for an Australian prog feature in the works... watch this space! — Deputy Ed

Prog 84: new songs, great writing, everyone's happy. Right?

The "eye-opening" Progfest: Orsome Welles meet their fans.

PAUL TADDAY

PERFECT COUPLE

Interesting first two letters in *Prog* 84. Looks like Ignacio and Graham have found online happiness with a shared subscription. Personally I don't go along with either's view as I love all of it. Graham says "words bore me shitless"— it would be a dull mag without them!

And it's by far the best free CD with any magazine. I buy CDs by the artists featured after hearing one track, such as I did with Circuline and Kim Seviour. It's the more unknown artists, such as the excellent Bellerophon and Koyo, that benefit with getting tracks on the disc as they need the exposure.

I have a *Prog* mag playlist on my phone of nearly 100 tracks selected from your CDs that I uploaded and titled. I must go back to the last dozen CDs now to update my selection. I've been a prog fan for over 40 years and know a lot about the old classic bands, I did so enjoy the Genesis 1971 [*Prog* 84] article, though. But I love reading about the newer era bands such as Wobbler and Tiger Moth Tales. And I must add that the in-depth and personal article on Anathema was so good (and I was certainly not bored).

So please continue with your fine words and free CDs. The photos and layout go without saying.

Keith Shapland, Bristol

DESERT ISLAND DISC

Really pleased that the CD debate has reared its head again. Hilarious that your first contributor, the anagram 'Ignacio Loizaga Rio' likes the mag, hates the CD; and your second, the galloping gourmet himself, 'Graham Kerr', is vice versa. Clearly this is a marriage made in prog heaven and these two should be sharing a subscription. Perhaps yourselves in the office could club together and give them the rest of this year for free?

As for myself, I *really* like the CD. If I was ever stuck on a desert island, I wouldn't need to have *The Dark Side...* or *The Lamb...* for company, just next month's *Prog* sampler.

Bob Ballantine, aka Mr. Normal

TWEET TALK

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CHARLOTTE HATHERLEY
@CHatherley79
So excited to be a part of Space Rocks. Alongside music and art there's astronaut @astro_timpeake, rocket scientist Matt Taylor and @markmccaughrean. Come on!

MATT STEVENS
@mattstevensloop
How do we feel about 5:1 mixes? Is it important for you?

NEAL MORSE
@nealmorse
Mike and Casey backstage on Cruise To The Edge. They have all kinds of crazy costumes. I think they've found their new look!

GEOFFREY DOWNES
@asiageoff
Now on board @cruisetotheedge Great to meet up with all my progtastic friends again! Let's have a ball!

LETTER

Re: the first two letters in *Prog* 84 – tell them to get together! Whinging about CD/no CD, mag/no mag, are they unaware that nothing in life is perfect? But *Prog* is as close as you're going to get.

I'm an OAP whose musical interests began with Brenda Lee, The Beatles and Motown. By the end of the 60s I became aware of a whole new sound: King Crimson, Yes, Led Zeppelin, Genesis. Then came ELP and BJH, to name but a few. However, apart from IQ, Pendragon and Arena in the 80s, there seemed a very long hiatus for the genre.

That was until I found my first *Prog*. On the cover were Yes, Rush, Genesis and Pink Floyd. It was issue 11, and I've enjoyed the magazine ever since. The CDs have introduced me to so many new bands whose musicality and musicianship is astounding: bands such as Tiger Moth Tales, Credo, Touchstone, Knight Area, Magenta, Anathema, Comedy Of Errors and Moon Safari, to name a few. Through the magazine/CD and HRH Prog, I have a renewed enthusiasm for the genre.

I go to see 50 or 60 bands a year now and here I join with the reader's letters of a couple of issues ago to whinge about the lack of seating at venues (not including Robin 2). I went to see Threshold at the Islington O2 Academy, but in spite of the upstairs having a few seats, I was not allowed to use it. I had to leave halfway through as I couldn't stand any longer. I will not be going back there again!

Anyway, keep those CDs coming, even if it is costing me a fortune. Prog on.

The Prog Doctor, Rutland

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

THEN AND NOW

I felt I must drop a line as one of your old geezers regarding two letters in the February issue, namely from Messrs. Loizaga and Kerr. Have you two considered getting together and saving the cost of one magazine a month?

Personally, I thoroughly enjoy reading old stories and new from the world of prog, and as for the disc, without this invaluable freebie I would probably have remained in the dark regarding Big Big Train, Lifesigns, Mute Gods, M Opus and countless other bands that I discovered through your eclectic covermount.

I've been with you since issue two (still can't locate a copy of your first!) and long may you continue to enlighten, remind and surprise me.

Alan Jones

AUDIOVISUAL DELIGHT

Who do Ignacio Loizaga and Graham Kerr think they are? I've been reading *Prog* since issue one and I love it: the disc, the articles, even the adverts! I'm a 63-year-old prog and metal fan who was delighted when issue one of *Prog* appeared and have been subscribing ever since. The disc is brilliant as it introduces you to many new bands who you may not have heard before. Yes, sometimes there may be nothing on it that you like, but at other times there may be eight or more brilliant new pieces that lead to the discovery of your next favourite bands!

I read nearly all the magazine and find the majority of it interesting and informative. So, perhaps the two gentlemen previously named should get together! I, and I'm sure many others, will continue to look forward to receiving our regular dose of good music and great articles. Keep up the good work guys!

Simon Bamber, Guildford

KEVIN NIXON

Lifesigns: just one of the many stars of *Prog*'s CD.

FRESH FACES

Thank you for the fine job you do in bringing new artists and music into my world. I've been especially pleased that the music showcased in *Prog* is beyond old school progressive designations or boundaries. It's a real thrill ride to discover a new band and then go deep into their catalogue.

This has happened too many times over the years with *Prog* magazine, but most recently this year, it was your coverage of The Heliocentrics' *A World Of Masks*. Magnificent music and an eclectic group that deserve a wider audience. I now own all their back catalogue.

For those of us that live in Nowheresville and never hear of these 'new' artists, *Prog* is a lifesaver. Keep up the good work – good music is good music, regardless of its style label.

Tracy Parsons, Nowheresville, MI, USA

GLASS HAMMER
@GlassHammerProg
Glass Hammer roasting in the sun! #CTTE

CRAIG BLUNDELL
@craigblundell
Last night was my 150th show with @StevenWilsonHQ Some are more happy than others. It's been quite a ride #tothebonetour

PROG

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INTRO

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

ARENA GO RETRO ON NEW ALBUM

Clive Nolan and co revisit themes from *The Visitor* on their eighth studio release and celebrate the original 90s recording with a deluxe anniversary reissue and live shows across Europe and beyond.

Arena's *Double Vision* is due out in May via Verglas, and it's packed with Easter eggs that pay tribute to one of their biggest releases.

"This year we're celebrating the 20th anniversary of *The Visitor* so we thought it would be fun to look back over everything we've done," explains co-founding keyboard player and songwriter Clive Nolan. "There are seven tracks, and one of them addresses some of the questions that were never answered on *The Visitor*. That one is called *The Legend Of Elijah Shade* and it's 22 minutes long."

That's not the only nod to their back catalogue on there. The musician says, "I've made a point of putting little references to previous albums, whether it's musically or lyrically. It's not totally retrospective in sound but it's retrospective in attitude."

The album is Arena's first new release in three years and follows on from Nolan's recent musicals, which include *Alchemy* and *King's Ransom*. His hectic schedule meant working to a tight deadline with his Arena band mates Mick Pointer (ex-Marillion), Kino/Lonely Robot's John Mitchell, bassist Kylan Amos and vocalist Paul Manzi.

"After [2015's] *The Unquiet Sky* we had quite a big tour and I think after that, it just felt like we needed a little break from things," says the keyboard player. "We've all been busy so I promised myself that I'd lock myself in my room on January 2 and wouldn't leave until it was done."

Nolan also confirms that the tracks move away from the song-orientated albums of recent years.

"The last few albums have been quite vocal-heavy and there haven't been masses of the instrumentals that we used to do," he says. "We've brought some of that element back into the operation and expanded the songs a little bit just to take a different attitude. But in terms of production, we try to stay as modern as we can."

The new studio album is preceded by the remastered edition of 1998's *The Visitor*, which is available on double CD and vinyl from Arena's website. It's also the theme of their 22-date anniversary tour, which kicks off in April at

"I've made a point of putting little references to previous albums."

What Happened Before: Arena take inspiration from the past.

KYLAN AMOS/PRESS

St Helens' The Citadel (20). The band will then play at Montgomery Hall in Wath (21), London's The Borderline (27) and Winter's End festival in Chepstow (28), before heading out to mainland Europe and on to Canada.

"Playing the whole of *The Visitor* again is going to be very interesting because we haven't done it for 20 years," says Nolan. "When I went out with Arena that time, I had nine keyboards, a set of bass pedals and two 12u rack units full of samplers. Now I'm going out with just two keyboards and I think I can do pretty much everything I did on the nine keyboards on these two! So much of what I do means I'm pretty much locked in a room so the tour gives me the excuse to get out, visit countries and meet people – I always enjoy that part."

Although the set will focus on *The Visitor*, fans will also be treated to a preview of some of the new material, and there are plans to tour *Double Vision* in full at a later date.

Meanwhile, Nolan's musical *King's Ransom* will be returning to the stage this autumn with a special performance at Cheltenham Playhouse on September 8. The event has been set up in memory of director Ian Baldwin, who died at the beginning of the year. There are also plans to perform the musical in Norway.

For the full list of Arena's live shows and to visit the band's online shop, head over to their website www.arenaband.co.uk. **NRS**

This month, Intro was compiled by
Olivier Zoltar Badin
Malcolm Dome
Jerry Ewing
Eleanor Goodman
Jo Kendall
Hannah May Kilroy
Dom Lawson
Rhodri Marsden
Chris McGarel
Natasha Scharf
Johnny Sharp
Rick Wakeman

SPACE ROCKS PILOT EVENT HAS LIFT OFF!

Lonely Robot and Charlotte Hatherley to join high profile space scientists at April's intergalactic-themed event.

Girl From Mars: former Ash guitarist Charlotte Hatherley.

Progressive music, culture and science are coming together at Space Rocks at London's Indigo at The O2 on April 22. The all-ages pilot event, in association with the European Space Agency, also includes live discussions from space experts including astronaut Tim Peake, Rosetta mission scientist Matt Taylor and science fiction writer Alastair Reynolds.

"I think there's a very natural link between progressive music and space exploration," says co-founder Alexander Milas from Twin V Ltd, who is also *Metal Hammer*'s former Editor-in-Chief. "All cosmic music seems to have a certain tempo and aesthetic from the artwork to the actual lyrical subject matter, and I think that prog had always had a deep and profound relationship. For the first event, we thought, who better to ask to come down than John Mitchell and Lonely Robot? It's not just the music – they're the embodiment of the concept. We also have Charlotte Hatherley [see *Prog* 84] with her new solo project which is a science fiction and space-inspired break-up record called *True Love*.

"It's not just events," he adds, "we have other extensions. The point is to educate, to entertain, but also to bring all these different threads together under one roof and it's completely unique."

In addition to panels and live music, April's event will also include a space lounge and themed exhibits. It's the team's first voyage and Milas confirms that further initiatives are still to be announced, including some outside the capital.

For more information, visit www.spacerocksofficial.com. **NRS**

MARILLION REVISIT EMI YEARS FOR NEW REISSUES

Brave gets the Steven Wilson treatment as the British band announce their latest series of live re-releases.

Marillion mark their latest reissues campaign with an expanded edition of *Brave*. It's out via Rhino on March 9 and is packaged with previously unreleased live recordings from the accompanying show in Paris.

"*Brave* was a very strong artistic statement and it was probably the reason we got dropped by EMI," says guitarist Steve Rothery. "It was a dark, impenetrable album for a lot of people and, after the pop sensibilities of *Holidays In Eden*, it was maybe a bit of a shock."

The deluxe package includes a new mix from Steven Wilson who Rothery says has brought more clarity and separation to the album's reverb-heavy atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the band will release *Unplugged At The Walls* and *Tumbling Down The Years* on March 23 via earMUSIC as part of a limited-edition series of live reissues. More titles will be announced soon. See www.marillion.com. **NRS**

Bravehearts: Marillion are revisiting their classic albums.

GAZPACHO FREEZE TIME ON LATEST CD

Molok's follow-up mixes space themes with Bollywood and the world's oldest recording.

Magic Moments: Gazpacho mess with time on *Soyuz*.

Gazpacho say their new album pushes their sound in new and unexpected directions. *Soyuz*, which is out through Kscope in May, explores the idea of capturing moments of fleeting happiness.

"We thought we might try to get away from the doom and gloom that we always end up writing about," explains keyboardist Thomas Andersen. "We were at my summer house looking at the Oslo Fjord and there was a white sail against the background of the blue sea. It was a perfect moment and we thought we would try to capture that feeling of happiness through music. That morphed into the story of someone who manages to do this and stays in a frozen moment. Then we had the idea of these invisible workers who destroy the past so it's inaccessible to us."

The title track was inspired by the faulty Soyuz 1 spacecraft which crashed soon after its 1967 launch and symbolises the idea of a moment suspended in time. It's bookended with the longer *Soyuz Out*, which considers what might have been going through its pilot's mind shortly before impact.

The eight-track album welcomes the return of Gazpacho's former drummer Robert Johansen, as well as regular guest Kristian 'The Duke' Skedsmo on banjo. There are also some unexpected samples from a Bollywood soundtrack and a clip of the French folk song *Au Clair De La Lune* from 1860, which is believed to be the earliest known recording of the human voice. The finished result has been mixed by John Rausch (Taylor Swift/P!nk), which Andersen says has given the album a very clean-cut sound.

"He's a very poppy mixer and we loved the way he played with delays and reverb," he confirms. "It's got more guitars and less of the hypnotic, long passages which we were really into for a couple of albums. It's like trip-hop meets progressive rock meets classic rock meets world music so it's very complex. You have to give it a few spins to let the music sink in."

Gazpacho are currently preparing for a European tour. The dates also include one UK show at London's Tufnell Park Dome on May 28.

Andersen says, "We'll be playing a double set and we're thinking of a few secret things that will make an excellent night for everyone." **NRS**

"You have to give it a few spins to let the music sink in."

For the full tour dates and more, visit www.gazpachoworld.com.

INTRO extras

NEW ART BOOK FROM LASSE HOILE

Steven Wilson collaborator Lasse Hoile will publish a retrospective of his visual work this spring. The coffee table-style hardback *Portraits* is published by The Flood Gallery on March 26. The Danish artist, photographer and film maker has played an important role in Steven Wilson's visual imagery, from Porcupine Tree's 2005 album *Deadwing* right up to his current projects. Hoile has also worked with Dream Theater and Anathema. Signed copies can be pre-ordered from thefloodgallery.com.

Electric Dreams: BTBAM reveal their darkest anxieties on *Automata I*.

RANDY EDWARDS

BTBAM REVEAL NEW TWO-PART CONCEPT

Between The Buried And Me branch out on their sixth studio album.

Between The Buried And Me's *Automata I* sees the band returning to their heavier roots. The first instalment of the two-part album, out via Sumerian on March 9, explores themes of identity, loss, isolation and mental illness.

"This is probably the most detailed and deep narrative we've ever had for any of the concepts we've done," reveals guitarist Dustie Waring. "Tommy [Giles Rogers, vocalist] was saying, 'What would terrify me? What would be the worst thing ever?' And he said it would be if he woke up one day and his wife and [five-year-old] son were gone. The first song starts as he wakes up and his family are gone, so [*Condemned To The Gallows* and *House Organ*] are about his search. It's just as nutty and dense as you would expect from a nerdy prog band like us!"

BTBAM's first album for Sumerian, which is also home to Animals As Leaders and Chon, sees them moving away from the unbridled experimentalism of 2015's acclaimed *Coma Ecliptic*. Waring says, "We don't want to keep making the same album. *Coma*... was a heavy record but it was less aggressive than any of our other releases so we made a conscious effort to write a heavier album this time."

The US band have just begun their North American tour and hope to bring their live shows to the UK later this year. For more, visit www.betweentheburiedandme.com.

Now turn to page 101 for *Prog*'s review of *Automata I*. **NRS**

A PERFECT CIRCLE ARE BACK!

Maynard James Keenan takes to Twitter to announce the band's first full-length album in more than a decade.

A Perfect Circle release *Eat The Elephant* on April 20 via BMG, as confirmed by Tool's Keenan. The 12-track is co-produced by Dave Sardy (Slayer) and it's the band's first full release since 2004's *eMOTIVe*, but anyone expecting to hear the alt-rock strains of *Judith* is in for a surprise. Taster tracks *The Doomed*, *Disillusioned* and *TalkTalk* have showcased a moodier and more complex sound.

In addition to CD, digital and vinyl, the long-awaited album will also be available as a box set with a prism and a custom playing card deck. A white vinyl version will also be released in time for Record Store Day on April 21.

A Perfect Circle will be heading to Europe for the first time in 14 years this June. Dates include three sold-out shows in the UK and a slot at Spain's Be Prog! My Friend Festival at the end of the month. For tickets and pre-order info, visit www.aperfectcircle.com. **NRS**

Elephant Talk: A Perfect Circle's elephantine offering.

PRESS: TIM CADIENTE

don airey

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Don Airey, keyboard player with Deep Purple since 2002...takes time out of Purple's extensive world tour to bring "Don Airey & Friends" to The Junction,Cambridge.This incredible band of first call musicians will entertain you with Don's brand new album and classic tracks from Don's illustrious past career which includes – Rainbow, Gary Moore, Ozzy Osbourne, Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, Jethro Tull, Whitesnake, Wishbone Ash and many more. With a such a rich musical history,it's no wonder Don was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Tickets available now!

w w w . d o n a i r e y . c o m

LOUD N NOISE

Losing My Mind! Ungdomskulen feel the rush of their new album.

UNGDOMSKULEN'S GRAND NEW RELEASE

Møster musician guests on the Norwegian trio's energetic fourth album.

CONTSANCE ZWERUS

Ungdomskulen's new album *Gold Rush* is out through Apollon Records on March 2. It follows a gap of six years since *Secrecy*.

"We've all been very busy," explains guitarist and vocalist Kristian Stockhaus, "but the fact we decided to put out this album after such a lengthy period shows our commitment to the band."

Stockhaus believes that the eight-track *Gold Rush* has a very cinematic feel.

"Each song comes over as if it's a scene from a movie, but there's no overlaying concept. It's just that when I listen back now to the album I can personally visualise images that seem to tell a story."

The band wrote the material during a number of sessions over that six-year period, before recording *Gold Rush* in their own purpose-built studio.

"The way things work is we get the instrumental sections written first, and then I do lyrics to fit. That can be a challenge because the music is always so complex," he says.

Norwegian jazz saxophonist Kjetil Møster appears on the last track *Cassandra*, and there's an unexpected guest musician on *Lovers On The Run* too.

"There was a mariachi band playing in the street one day, so I asked the trumpet player if he would appear on this song. It was a spur of the moment idea, but that's how we tend to work. Apart of that, you will also hear people talking and street noises. It all adds to the ambience."

For more, visit the band's official Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ungdomskulenband. **MD**

INTRO extras

RICH FOURTH ALBUM FOR MIDAS FALL

Scottish post-rock duo Midas Fall release *Evaporate* via Monotreme on April 27. The 10-track album combines cinematic soundscapes with delicate melancholic vocals and the title track is said to be inspired by Icelandic landscapes. The album follows on from 2015's acclaimed *The Menagerie Inside* and will also be available on limited-edition black and clear blue vinyl. Midas Fall are planning more shows around the UK later in the year.

Awooga, L-R: Tam Ali (vocals/bass), Taran Ali (drums) and James Borrowdale (guitar).

AWOOGA OPEN THEIR MINDS ON DEBUT

Amplifier labelmates team up with *Trippin' With Dr Faustus* mixer on their new album.

Sheffield trio Awooga are to release their debut album *Conduit* through Rockosmos on April 20. It was recorded in Spain, after the band took the unusual step of advertising for a producer.

"We had done an EP, *Alpha*, in 2016, and wanted to move on from that record and do something different," says bassist and vocalist Tam Ali. "We were after a proggy approach, but also something heavy and doomy. We needed a producer who understood this, and advertised explaining what sort of thing we were after. Iago Lorenzo replied, saying it sounded like exactly what he'd love to do. It just happens his studio is in Spain!"

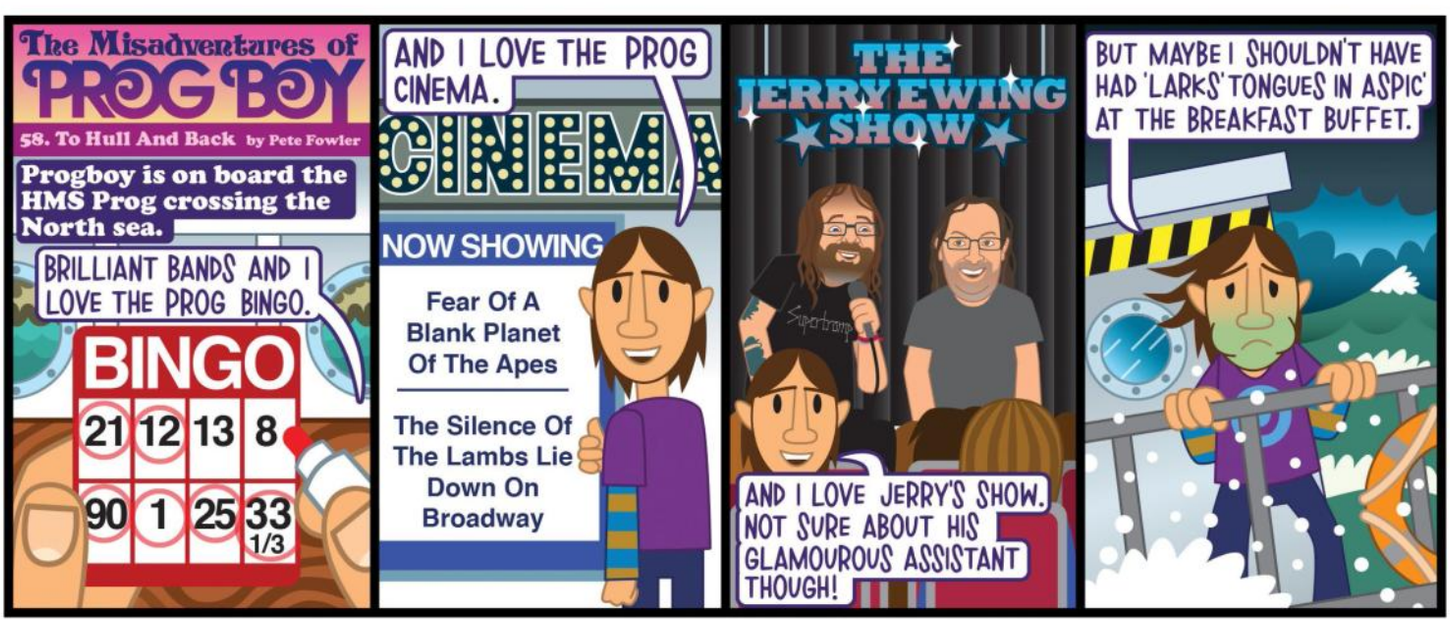
Awooga spent a month recording the album's seven tracks. And there is a linking theme between them.

"We never set out to do a concept album, but what we have realised is that there's a mantra that repeats throughout. Each song is a key to open a door into your own mind. And the album title fits into this, because we hope the music is a conduit through to a part of your consciousness."

There's one guest on the album and that's a Spanish singer named Cervi Theramin.

"He has a very low bass singing voice, so we got him in to do a part I could never have reached vocally," says Ali.

The band are selling limited edition vinyl copies of *Conduit* on their current tour with Amplifier. For a full list of the dates, go to www.facebook.com/Awoogaband. **MD**



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FAD GADGETS

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

GQT REEL-TO-REEL

Regular readers will have sensed my antipathy towards overly-expensive devices that promise audio perfection, but sometimes people build things so magnificent you can't help admiring them. Kostas Metaxas describes his GQT reel-to-reel player as a "kinetic art object" which "happens" to play and record analogue tape. He also says this format is by far the best way of recording live music. "This is a fact not open for discussion," he adds. I'd best shut up.
www.metaxas.com

NOD BANG

Analyst and engineer Andrew Lee had an idea back in October. "I'm planning to use this as an exercise," he wrote on his blog, "to apply the ideas and concepts from my interaction and physical computing classes. I'm not sure if this is really possible." Two months later, he proved it was in the form of a drum machine where the tempo is dictated by the nod of the musician's head. Given our propensity to nod vigorously in time to music, it feels like a magnificent idea – although if you used it on stage you'd be hoping not to have a sneezing fit.
www.vndrewlee.com

SAMSUNG S-RAY

For those who like personal audio but resent headphones, the tech industry has tried various ways to cater for you, such as conductive systems that transmit sound through your skull. Samsung just showcased this directional speaker system at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, which sits around your neck and plays the audio upwards. The sound, they say, is "delivered to the desired area while preserving silence around it." Sadly it seems to be only at the conceptual stage but stay tuned.
www.samsung.com

RICK WAKEMAN'S CAPED CRUSADES

ROCK OF AGES

Rick ponders this year's influx of 50th anniversaries.

No, I don't mean the hymn (or the Def Leppard song); I'm referring to the number of us who've somehow survived in this wonderful industry of ours and are now officially old. I think there are around 37 bands celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and I'm beginning to wonder if anyone *really* cares.

How will a 50th anniversary tour differ from those that have taken place during the previous 49 years? Do these anniversaries celebrate the fact that the surviving musicians can still walk unaided, have their own hips and still string a sentence together? The answer to the last one is... no!

I think we've all survived because we're good; we're accomplished musicians who care about the music and still enjoy playing. It's the management and record labels who have decided that by using the 50-year anniversary tag they can drum up more business, release yet another compilation CD remixed in Surround Sound, and hint that this *could* be the last tour and the last album.

Oh, and by the way, have I mentioned that it's Yes' 50th anniversary this year? Well, it is.

The number 50 is relevant for sure, but as regards to Yes' 50th anniversary, then Jon Anderson is the only one entitled to celebrate as he's the only one who's been there since the outset. My 50th would be in 2021.

There have probably been at least 50 people who will lay claim to having played with Yes either on stage or on a track somewhere, so that's another significant 50. I've also used 50 keyboards on stage and some of us can even remember when we were 50 as well. That was back in 1999 for me, but I wasn't in the band then...

There's more chance of Donald Trump having sex with Kim Jong-un than a Yes reunion...

It's all very confusing as there are at least two versions of Yes out there. And before anyone asks, there's more chance of Donald Trump having sex with Kim Jong-un than there is of another full reunion. So what *is* Yes really celebrating?

These ludicrous anniversaries aren't going to go away, so why not get it all over and done with by having one giant concert at the O2 Arena, or somewhere similar, where every band celebrating an anniversary can play on the same day. I'd want to be there just to see the fights, arguments and venom. There would be some serious casualties for sure!

Perhaps *Prog* could sponsor the event? Now *that's* something worth thinking about!

KEVIN FEBRUARY

MAJOR PARKINSON

Experimental, atmospheric dark prog from Bergen.

CREEPY WHISPERS, ATMOSPHERIC synths and theatrical weirdness pervade Major Parkinson's fourth album, *Blackbox*. It's like being trapped inside a dizzying lucid dream — and it's all part of the Norwegians' grand plan to create a "cinematic experience".

"Very early, I was hooked on progressive music from the 70s, like Genesis, Gentle Giant and Emerson, Lake & Palmer — all the big ones," says vocalist Jon Ivar Kollbotn. "I really loved the way they integrated the good melodies from the 60s within this experimental universe. And we're very inspired by the Cardiacs. The way they made music was so out-of-the-box, it's so hard to describe what they actually *did*. They turned music into a different art form."

Kollbotn started Major Parkinson in 2003, aged 22, while doing civil service at a theatre in Bergen. The job allowed him to mix with like-minded people, put on plays, and begin a band in the loft.

"The theatre gave me a lot of time to do music in my spare time, and the whole thing slowly developed into becoming a bit more serious," he explains. "I think we've created a monster — for better or worse!"

Using MySpace, the band caught the ear of producer Sylvia Massy (Tool, System Of A Down), who brought them to the US to record their self-titled debut — a more straight-up rock album. Today, only two of the original members remain, and the band is now a seven-piece, with keys, violin and an additional brass section on their recordings, giving their music a cabaret slant.

After studying literature for five years, Kollbotn became fascinated by the idea of making the listener "participate in the associative part of songwriting", and their music is a sonic collage that references books, art and the personal. On *Blackbox*, complex words and sentences materialise like avant-garde poetry, while the title track contains an explicit reference to the Dali painting *The Ghost Of Vermeer Of Delft Which Can Be Used As A Table*. It's a cerebral listen.

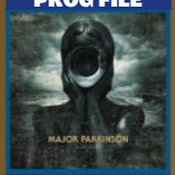
"It was supposed to be like a cinematic experience, so we didn't want to just have a heap of songs — we wanted the listener to be dragged into something that could create visual images," says Kollbotn. "The whole idea with *Blackbox* is it's supposed to be very intricate, but very simple at the same time. Hence the title."

The record's centrepiece is the synth-pop burst *Madeleine Crumbles*, its insanely jaunty refrain at odds with the fact Kollbotn wrote it two years ago when his grandmother became ill. Sadly, she's since passed away.

"It was supposed to be some kind of lament to her, and she never got the chance to hear it," says Kollbotn. "My family like the Bee Gees intro. It's almost like *Staying Alive* — that was the purpose of the song."

Major Parkinson are beautiful freaks on record, though Kollbotn explains that they're more "raw and guitar-based" live, making for an alternative encounter with their music. "We're trying to do something different, but we show respect for the old classics," says Kollbotn. "If you're interested in prog with an extra dimension, give it a try!" **EG**

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Jon Ivar Kollbotn *(vocals)*, **Eivind Gammersvik** *(bass)*, **Lars Christian Bjørknes** *(synth)*, **Øystein Bech-Eriksen** *(guitar)*, **Sondre Veland** *(drums)*, **Sondre Skollevoll** *(guitar/backing vocals)*, **Claudia Cox** *(violin, live vocals)*

SOUNDS LIKE

The Cardiacs and Nick Cave playing during a reading in a book shop

CURRENT RELEASE

Blackbox is out now via Karisma

WEBSITE

www.major parkinson.com

"We're very inspired by the Cardiacs - the way they made music was so out-of-the-box, it's so hard to describe what they actually *did*."

***Blackbox* Recorders: Norwegian septet Major Parkinson.**

JARLE HOVDA MOE

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

YOUR PROG CHEF:
MICK MOSS (ANTIMATTER)
On the menu: Heart Of The Sunrise

"I started taking cooking seriously in my late 20s. I'd been served some real quality stuff while I was on tour, and when I came home I was no longer prepared to go back to old habits. I think my parents' generation really subscribed to the convenience boom of the late 20th century, but almost everything I make now is from fresh, and that's how I came up with this recipe.

Don't be fooled by its simplicity – it has big, bold flavours but zero guilt. It combines salty, sweet and spicy into one warming meal that can be used as a healthy side to a cut of meat or served alone as a meat-free dish. Trust me, I'm a ninja in the kitchen... I also cook karate chops!"

Ingredients (serves 2):

1 butternut squash, 2 fresh red chillies, 10 large or 20 small mushrooms, 1 red onion, olive oil, sea or Himalayan salt to taste.

Preparation:

"Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Peel and de-seed the butternut squash. Cut into cubes of approx 2cm. Pour over a generous amount of olive oil and mix until completely coated, then arrange the cubes on a large baking tray with a good few twists of salt. Allow to cook while you prepare the rest of the veg.

Peel the red onion and cut into four equal pieces from tip to root. Cut the chillies into small pieces (add the seeds for extra heat). If you have small mushrooms, leave them whole, otherwise cut in half so they're at least twice the size of the squash cubes.

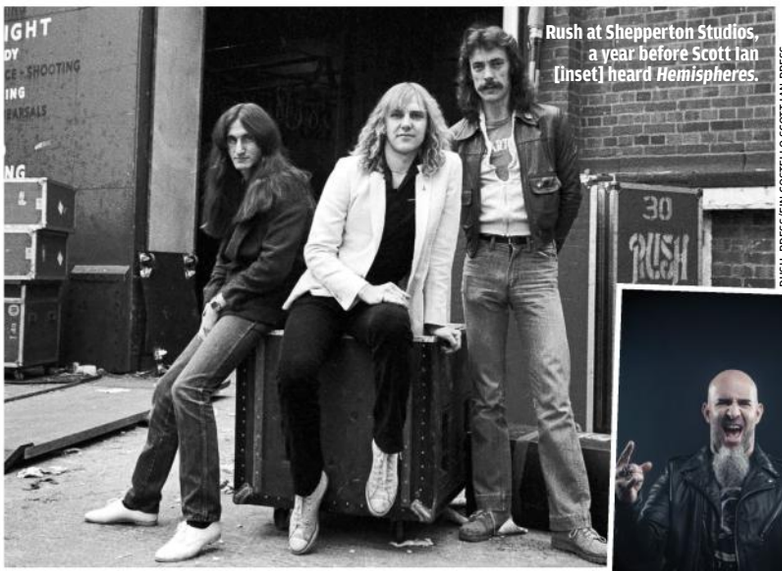
After 15 minutes, turn the oven down to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Turn the squash over and move the cubes to the centre of the tray. Make sure they're close together but not stacked on top of each other. Lightly coat the mushrooms with olive oil and place them around the edges. Add the chillies on top of the squash.

After another 15 minutes, gently toss the vegetables and push them towards the edge of the tray. Lightly coat the red onion in olive oil and add to the centre. Cook for another 15 minutes.

Turn the oven back up to 200°C/Gas Mark 6 and *very* gently turn all the vegetables again. Move them towards the edges of the tray, cook for a further 20 minutes and serve!

A lot of the flavour in this recipe comes from the salt and chilli, so adjust to your own taste. Personally I like a lot of both, and find it really amps it up to 11." **NRS**

MY PROG HERO
Inspiring the wider music world...



Rush at Shepperton Studios, a year before Scott Ian [inset] heard *Hemispheres*.

RUSH: PRESS/FIN COSTELLO SCOTT IAN: PRESS

SCOTT IAN

He's the guitarist with thrash metal pioneers Anthrax, but Rush send him to wonderland every time.

"I got into Rush because I was 14 at the right time! As a kid growing up in New York City in the late 70s, I was constantly discovering new bands and Rush sounded like a more muscular Led Zeppelin to me, at least on their first couple of records. But Geddy Lee's bass playing was my biggest attraction to that band – that's what initially caught my ear because it was just so original and so punchy.

Is it too much of a cliché to say that *La Villa Strangiato* is my favourite Rush song? As a kid who loved Tolkien, *Hemispheres* was right up my alley. How could I not like a concept record with a nine-and-a-half-minute instrumental and a song about trees? *La Villa...* is just such an epic. It was just three guys who challenged themselves so hard by doing this; they certainly never took the easy route and I think that really shows in that song.

They never pigeonholed themselves as being one thing: they're Rush. We, as Anthrax, have always felt that same way. We started out as a heavy metal band but we've never been afraid to push the boundaries and go places that no other heavy metal band had gone. You have to do these things for yourself and hopefully everyone else will come along for the ride.

The other guys in Anthrax are even bigger Rush fans and that's one of the reasons we covered *Anthem* on our 2013 *Anthems* EP. We've always wanted to do a Rush song and I think it was Charlie's [Benante, drums] idea to do that one. I would love to cover *La Villa...* at some point as well. Geddy and Alex [Lifeson] heard our version of *Anthem* and said they liked it, which was amazing to hear.

We almost ended up performing with Geddy at the Revolver Golden Gods Award Show but the logistics just didn't work out. In a weird way it was almost a relief because we would have been there with our jaws on the floor, staring at him the whole time and not being able to play our instruments. I think in hindsight it's better that it didn't happen!" **NRS**

"As a kid who loved Tolkien, *Hemispheres* was right up my alley."

Anthrax's Kings Among Scotland DVD is out via Nuclear Blast on April 27. Scott Ian's book Access All Areas: Stories From A Hard Rock Life is out now.

PROG IN BRIEF

Can founder Irmin Schmidt has co-authored the influential band's definitive story and it's out this spring. The two book package, *All Gates Open: The Story Of Can* is published by Faber & Faber on May 5. It contains unseen images and art.

Ayreon's *Ayreon Universe – The Best of Ayreon Live* is out via Music Theories on March 30. The double album features material from the Arjen Lucassen (left) project's first tour last September. It's also available on triple vinyl, DVD and Blu-ray.

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FLEET FOXES

CRACK-UP

(NONESUCH, 2017)

Fleet Foxes' creative leaders Robin Pecknold and Skyler Skjelset have always acknowledged their love of proto-prog works such as The Beach Boys' *Smile* or Van Dyke Parks' *Song Cycle*, but their ambitions towards a similarly ambitious patchwork quilt of songs weren't fully revealed until last year's third album, *Crack-Up*.

The opening track (intimidatingly titled *I Am All That I Need / Arroyo Seco / Thumbprint Scar*) seems to make a clear statement: 'Our days of easily digestible folky paeans are behind us. Goodbye chamber pop, hello folk prog.' Midway through typically harmony-drenched, richly melodic swells, they cut abruptly to softly plucked guitar and a vocal is whispered under Pecknold's breath, as if he were recording introspective song ideas into a Dictaphone. Later in the three-part track, the listener is repeatedly disoriented by sudden sound effects of him walking through doors while humming bars from the song to himself, lapping waves, clapping church choirs and much more.

Elsewhere on the album, the sprawling, nine-minute two-parter *Third Of May /Ðdaigahara* is similarly wrong-footing stuff. A lilting, joyous piano-based sweep lulls the listener into a beguiling sense of normal service being resumed, before it wanders off into a slowly strummed dreamscape that spirals in turn into a dizzy maelstrom of plucked strings – or, to use Pecknold's own words, it "floats away into a beautiful nothing".

That description was made in a posting on the lyric analysis website Genius (www.genius.com), where he added further intrigue to the *Crack-Up* experience by explaining some of the lyrical references made in the track, taking in everything from the Goya painting *Third Of May, 1808* to memories of band bike rides, Leonard Cohen lines and 18th-century poet Nathaniel Cotton, while asserting that the song is a time-travelling meditation about the history of his friendship with guitarist Skjelset.

As with a lot of the best prog, there's a lot to unpack here. Throughout the 50-odd minutes in total, we hear something of a cut-up approach to songwriting, like men driven mad trying to emulate the simple charms of their own back catalogue and tearing their template to pieces instead. But there are still plenty of sweet morsels to savour, such as the beautiful chorus swell of *Fool's Errand*, the hypnotic piano figure underpinning *Kept Woman*, and the soft, meandering, minor chords of *I Should See Memphis*. But even here, there's an ever-present sense that surprise is around the corner. As such, this is music that jars as often as it soothes, and questions as often as it answers.

Prog is already looking forward to more unexpected thrills next time round.

JOHNNY SHARP

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Our far-out trip to far-flung prog

Here comes the *Son*! Obiymy Doschu.

OBIYMY DOSCHU

Frontman **Vladimir Agafonkin** reveals what's been driving the Ukrainian band since their creation in 2004.

The Ukraine is better known for its borscht than its progressive music scene but Obiymy Doschu could be about to change that. The collective, part of a very small underground scene which includes the likes of Karfagen, Sunchild and A Noend Of Mine, have just released their hugely ambitious second album *Son*. It's been mixed by The Pineapple Thief's Bruce Soord and is quite unlike anything that's come from the region before.

"What we've been trying to do," says singer-guitarist Vladimir Agafonkin, "is blend the best elements of modern progressive rock with more accessible genres — such as Ukrainian folk, acoustic, contemporary classical and pop music — with beautiful melodies and touching, emotional lyrics anyone could understand. This way, our music can appeal to a broad audience, often hooking people who never listened to progressive rock before."

The album has been influenced by the darker side of progressive music, in particular Opeth, Porcupine Tree and Anathema, and has taken eight years to complete. During that time the six-piece expanded to 15 musicians and spent around 200 hours recording the material across seven different studios with 10 sound engineers. Although that might make them sound like perfectionists, the expansion of the project was also down to its fragmented nature. Line-up changes, babies being born and career opportunities have all played their part in delaying the creation of their 11-track behemoth, but Agafonkin believes the result is worth the wait.

"Our vision was to make something extraordinary, an album that could stand among the best Ukrainian rock releases of all time. So we obsessed over little arrangement details for years, and hesitated to commit to recording. We won't make this mistake again though. After finding a productive pace, we want to keep going, making more frequent releases."

And work has already begun on its follow-up, which he hopes will be out next year, although he's keeping the exact details under wraps.

"Our vision was to make something extraordinary."

Now *Son* is out, the band want to reach a wider audience. They recently performed their first live show in five years in Kiev, and hope to play some summer festivals too. Watch this space! **NRS**

For more, see www.rain.in.ua.

PROG IN BRIEF

And So I Watch You From Afar are among the first acts confirmed for this year's ArcTanGent Festival. The event runs from August 16-18 at Fernhill Farm in Compton Martin and also features GUG, Alpha Male Tea Party and Rolo Tomassi.

The band formerly known as Agent are releasing their self-titled album as **Temples On Mars** (left) via Primordial on April 6. The four-piece made their live debut in London at the end of January. More shows are expected to be announced soon.

KAUKOLAMPI

Leader of Finns K-X-P drops his dense, synth-driven solo album.

BEST KNOWN AS the frontman and driving force behind Helsinki's premier electronic space cadets K-X-P, Timo Kaukolampi has spent a great deal of time pummelling people into a state of euphoric submission with a relentless and trippy percussive assault. As a result, the Finn's first bona fide solo venture comes as a pleasant surprise. Simply titled *1*, its evocative electronic soundscapes delve deep into the atmospheric potential of old school synthesisers, proudly tipping a hat to pioneers like Vangelis and Klaus Schulze along the way. For Kaukolampi, this shift of focus originally stemmed from practical rather than creative concerns.

"I was living in Berlin between 2012 and 2015 and when I moved there, I rented out my studio space in Helsinki because I didn't need it any more," he explains. "When I came back, I realised I had a lot of equipment that was broken, all kinds of synthesisers and drum machines. I found a good guy who's brilliant at fixing them, and I started taking everything to him for maintenance, to bring it all back to life. At the beginning of 2016 I started to make these recordings without any kind of aim. I just started learning how to make electronic music again. From those jam sessions, which could be anything from 10 minutes to one hour long, some kind of album started to form."

Inspired to fire up his impressive collection of synths, Kaukolampi spent much of 2016 working on the new material. As the music evolved, he found himself drifting further from K-X-P's beat-driven approach and deeper into the world of ambience and abstraction. At certain points, he specifically removed beats from certain tracks, increasingly convinced that the true magic of this music lay in its non-linear allure.

"I realised that I listen to a lot of music at home that doesn't have any beats – lots of very abstract modern classical and free jazz and experimental music with electronics, lots of ambient and drone," he says. "My own taste has been changing a lot. K-X-P has really intense drumming all the time, so maybe subconsciously I wanted a different focus, because the drumming sometimes gets overwhelming!

"Another thing that was really a big influence: last spring I did four months of radio shows at Radio Helsinki, where I made this rule that I wanted to play music that didn't have any beats. So this ambient drone show was on air every Sunday and I grew closer to music that's flowing and that gave me the freedom to leave lots of beats out."

Beyond his obvious love for experimenting in the studio, Kaukolampi's first album has also given him an opportunity to pay tribute to some of his greatest inspirations. Opening track *The Prodigal Son Of Magnesia* references the region of Greece where Vangelis was born, while the twinkling, ambient haze of *Epiphyte (Requiem For Mika)* is a heartfelt tribute to Mika Vainio from revered Finnish electronic renegades Pan Sonic. Vainio passed away in 2017 aged only 53, but Kaukolampi is proud to be keeping his fearless spirit alive.

"I do a lot of yoga and I've learned that you have to respect your teachers. Mika was definitely one of the teachers for me," he says. "In the late 90s it was people like Pan Sonic who proved you could do something abstract, raw and wild, and people would like it outside of Finland. That was great encouragement for people like me, making strange electronic music. Mika was an amazing artist, a great friend and a very big influence. He had the same equipment I had but he made these *amazing* sounds out of it. I don't know how he did it… but one day I will find out!" **DL**

"I just started learning how to make electronic music again."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Timo Kaukolampi *(synthesisers/ electronics)*

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Timo Kaukolampi: exploring new sonic landscapes.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

Prog's Editor ponders: at what point does music lose its worth for the fans?

This column came about initially because of a Facebook post by one of the gentlemen to the right of this page, Stephen Lambe, discussing the abundance of 90s music available in charity and stock clearance shops compared with prog music. My ideas have since been enhanced by social media interaction with *Prog* readers, and then, lastly, Iron Maiden singer Bruce Dickinson recently brought up the subject of the worth of music in the face of current streaming trends, illegal downloading and the perceived worth of music. "People will pay for a book. But they won't buy an album. That is really sad and that is wrong," he said.

Alas, I'm not going to come up with the answer to the woes facing recorded music here. It will take a seismic shift in societal attitudes for anything positive to happen. It's an issue that seriously affects many of the musicians you read about in these pages. Although I equally note that most people reading this will value the music they listen to dearly, and largely shy away from illegal downloading, much of this has got me wondering: at what point do people lose the value of the music they once held dear?

Like, I suspect, many of you, I enjoy a good nose through the CD sections of my local charity shops, but sometimes I'm amazed at what I find in there. One could, for example, probably complete Muse's back catalogue in an afternoon's browsing. Or perhaps Coldplay. Or Elbow. Or Paul Weller. Ignoring any derogatory comments on any of the bands' musical style, these aren't just your run-of-the-mill landfill indie acts. Certainly in the case of the former two, we're talking about two global, arena-playing superstars (and, in the case of this mag, one perceived as a prog band, the other still popular with a section of our readers). And yet here they are, with albums they sweated over at £1 a pop.

It's even worse for indie acts. Pop into your local pound emporium and you'll find all manner of releases by the likes of Embrace, Starsailor, Snow Patrol, Keane, Razorlight, Cast... The list goes on. Chances are that none of these bands mean much to you. However, how long ago was it they were being fêted as the future of rock'n'roll by the music press? And how swift was their fall from grace, deserved or not?

While there is a certain element of pride (or annoyance when seeking a decent bargain) that prog as a genre very rarely crops up with anything remotely like regularity, it retains a much-sought demand and collectability.

Sure, downloading, age and even finances are all factors here. But equally it should be noted that, however low you view the musical worth of the bands mentioned, they once had their fanbase, they once graced major stages and the higher echelons of the charts. And look where they find themselves now.

I suspect many of you won't fall into this category. At least, I hope you don't. But a timely reminder of the pitfalls that can await even the most successful of musicians can never go amiss!

JERRY EWING

Got an opinion on the matter that you'd like to share? Please email us at: prog@futurenet.com.

HAVE A CIGAR

Saluting the scene's supporting crew

Off The Record: Sonicbond's Huw Lloyd-Jones and Stephen Lambe.

SONICBOND RECORDS

Stephen Lambe explores the world of labels and distribution with his and Huw Lloyd-Jones' new venture.

Summer's End is an essential date in so many of our calendars, and now the pair behind the annual festival have decided to set up their own record label.

"Sonicbond was initially devised as an online CD retailer back in 2005, but I closed it around 2008 when Summer's End was starting to take off," reveals Stephen Lambe, who co-owns the label with fellow promoter and Midnight Sun singer Huw Lloyd-Jones. "I've always loved the name and it was first revived a couple of years ago when Huw and I started up Sonicbond Promotions Ltd [to run the festival]. Then, last year I said to Huw, 'Why don't we do a label?'"

Although labels no longer hold the gilded purse strings of the 70s and 80s, Lambe says there are still advantages to being signed in the modern age, and the main one involves reaching a wider audience. Thanks to worldwide distribution via Nova, along with the use of digital platforms such as Spotify, iTunes and Amazon Music Unlimited, Sonicbond are able to offer small and mid-sized prog bands the chance to have their music heard all over the world. The label's philosophy also extends to offering a 50/50 split of profits rather than a smaller royalty percentage.

"Huw and I decided that we wouldn't sign anybody unless at least one of us absolutely loved the music," says Lambe, who describes the artists they work with as having at least a foot in the prog world. "We wanted there to be an emotional connection."

Their idea is to sign bands on a per album basis so no one is tied in. With that in mind, their current roster includes When Mary, Weend'ô, and Midnight Sun, whose next release is due in the coming months.

But that's not all. Lambe will also be launching Sonicbond's publishing wing later this year. The company will specialise in books that explore the creative process in a similar way to the acclaimed 33½ series. It's certainly an ambitious project but if the success of Summer's End is anything to go by, the Sonicbond group is one to watch out for. **NRS**

"Huw and I decided that we wouldn't sign anybody unless at least one of us loved the music."

For the latest updates on the brand, visit the website www.sonicbond.com.

PROG IN BRIEF

Post-rockers **God Is An Astronaut** (right) release their ninth album, *Epitaph* via Napalm on April 27. The seven-track sees the trio change musical direction from 2015's *Helios / Erebus* with ex-member Jamie Dean guesting on keys.

Enslaved's *Hordanes Land* is to be reissued on CD on March 2 and on vinyl on April 20 via By Norse. The remastered EP originally came out on 12-inch in 1993. The new package includes revised sleeve notes and the bonus track *Enslaved*.

Wooden Shjips' *V* is out via Thrill Jockey on May 25. The laid-back seven-track was written by frontman Ripley Johnson, who's also half of Moon Duo. The seven-minute lead single *Staring At The Sun* is now available to stream on Spotify.

Seventies aficionados **Boss Keloid** have signed to Holy Roar for the release of *Melted On The Inch*. The new album is out on April 27 and showcases their proggier new sound with influences from 60s psychedelia and 90s doom.

PRESS: STUART WOOD

'Perfect in just about every way' ★★★★★ THE TIMES

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THU	15	BIRMINGHAM ARENA
FRI	16	BOURNEMOUTH INTL CENTRE
SAT	17	BRIGHTON CENTRE
MON	19	GUILDFORD G LIVE
TUE	20	READING HEXAGON
THU	22	STOKE VICTORIA HALL
FRI	23	OXFORD NEW THEATRE
SAT	24	CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA
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SAT	08	MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO
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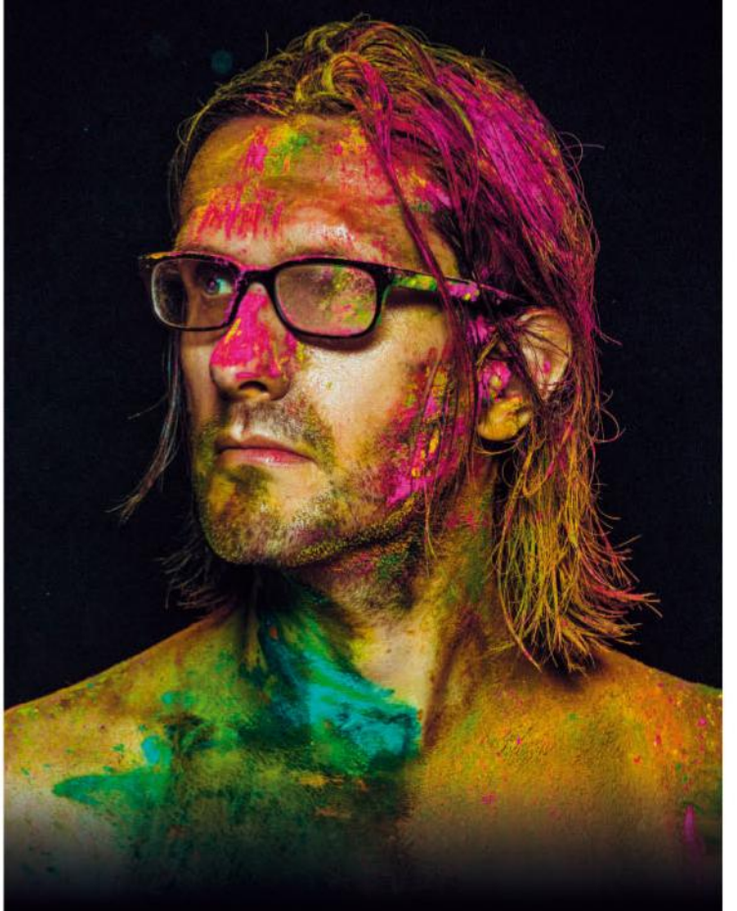

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Thu	22	Birmingham Symphony Hall
Sat	24	Glasgow SEC Armadillo
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Official Progressive Albums Chart

the prog top 30 albums

January 2018 Compiled by Official Charts Company

1	**JEFF LYNNE'S ELO**	Wembley Or Bust *(COLUMBIA)*
2	**RADIOHEAD**	Ok Computer *(XL RECORDINGS)*
3	**STEVE HACKETT**	Wuthering Nights – Live In Birmingham *(INSIDE OUT)*
4	**TAME IMPALA**	Currents *(FICTION)*
5	**PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING**	Every Valley *(PLAY IT AGAIN SAM)*
6	**MOGWAI**	Every Country's Sun *(ROCK ACTION)*
7	**DAVID GILMOUR**	Live At Pompeii *(COLUMBIA)*
8	**MASTODON**	Emperor Of Sand *(REPRISE)*
9	**ROGER WATERS**	Is This The Life We Really Want *(COLUMBIA)*
10	**MARILLION**	Misplaced Childhood *(PARLOPHONE)*
11	**RUSH**	A Farewell To Kings *(UMC/VIRGIN)*
12	**JANE WEAVER**	Modern Kosmology *(FIRE)*
13	**MOODY BLUES**	Days Of Future Passed *(DECCA)*
14	**STEVEN WILSON**	To The Bone (*CAROLINE*)
15	**RICK WAKEMAN**	Piano Portraits *(UMC)*
16	**TANGERINE DREAM**	Quantum Gate *(KSCOPE)*
17	**GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR**	Luciferian Towers *(CONSTELLATION)*
18	**ANATHEMA**	The Optimist *(KSCOPE)*
19	**HAWKWIND**	At The Roundhouse *(CHERRY RED)*
20	**CURVED AIR**	Air Conditioning *(CHERRY RED/ESOTERIC)*
21	**ARCANE ROOTS**	Melancholia Hymns *(EASY LIFE)*
22	**JETHRO TULL**	Songs From The Wood *(RHINO)*
23	**ALAN PARSONS PROJECT**	Eye In The Sky *(ARISTA)*
24	**ORPHANED LAND**	Unsung Prophets And Dead Messiahs *(CENTURY MEDIA)*
25	**MIKE & THE MECHANICS**	Let Me Fly *(BMG)*
26	**STRAWBS**	The Ferryman's Curse *(ESOTERIC ANTENNA/CHERRY RED)*
27	**VON HERTZEN BROTHERS**	War Is Over *(MUSIC THEORIES)*
28	**KING CRIMSON**	Live In Chicago *(DGM/PANEGYRIC)*
29	**JOHN MARTYN**	Head And Heart – The Acoustic *(ISLAND/UMC)*
30	**PAUL DRAPER**	Spooky Action *(KSCOPE)*

Find out more at **www.officialcharts.com**

WIN! ART ZOYD 44½: LIVE AND UNRELEASED WORKS BOX SET

To celebrate 44 ½ years of making left field music and smashing genres, French music group Art Zoyd are releasing the treasure trove box set *44 ½: Live And Unreleased* works via Cuneiform Records, and we have one box set to give away.

The box set is a 12-CD, 2-DVD, 2-book, 2-poster collection and is the first ever box set released by Art Zoyd and Cuneiform. It is designed by Max Franosch.

Art Zoyd were members of the notorious Rock In Oppositon (RIO) movement alongside the likes of Henry Cow and Univers Zero, they composed soundtracks and are a multimedia collective as well as a band, while their sound mixes post- and progressive rock with jazz and classical.

Containing hours of live and unreleased material from the vast Art Zoyd archives, *44 ½* delves into their world all the way back to the 70s, including everything from decades-old demos to abandoned live recordings and intimate performances as well as full-on orchestral assaults.

For your chance to win the box set, just answer the following question:

What was the name of Art Zoyd's first single?

a) Martini

b) Margarita

c) Sangria

Please email your answer to prog@futurenet.com with the subject 'Art Zoyd comp'.

For more information see www.cuneiformrecords.com and www.artzoyd.net.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This comp will be open from March 1 to April 4. Postal entries can be sent to: *Prog*, Future Publishing, 1-10 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY. By entering online you agree to our competition rules and you confirm you are happy to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing and carefully selected third parties. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries received by the closing date. No employees of Future Publishing or any of its group companies or the employees of any entity which has been involved with the administration of this competition or any member of their households may enter this competition.

Now our turn...

The Editor	The Art Guy	The Lone Office Lady	The Musician	The Writer	The Reader
Jerry Ewing	Russell Fairbrother	Hannah May Kilroy	Thomas Andersen	Fraser Lewry	Leo Trimming
MIDAS FALL	**ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF**	**MAJOR PARKINSON**	**JETHRO TULL**	**ONCE & FUTURE BAND**	**GALAHAD**
Evaporate	**Dead Magic**	**Blackbox**	**Chateau D'isaster Tapes**	**Once & Future Band**	**Seas Of Change**
MONOTREME	CITY SLANG	KARISMA	CHRYSALIS (FROM *A PASSION PLAY* REISSUE)	CASTLE FACE	AVALON

Endless Enigmas: Malady transform classic ELP sounds into sublime modern prog.

MALADY

Finnish quintet turn the 70s prog up to 11.

JONNI TANSKANEN IS a proud city man, born and raised in Helsinki. He even jokes that whenever he spends too much time outside of the city, "All this empty space with just cows, fields and not much more just drives me nuts!"

Despite this, the music of Malady will transport you instantly to the bucolic Finnish countryside, even if you haven't yet felt the serenity of watching the sun go down on one of the many beautiful Finnish lakes.

The quintet have now returned two years after their self-titled debut with *Toinen Toista*, an even more grandiose work, thanks to the presence of both a 23-minute epic (*Nurja Puoli*) that swallows the entire B side of the album, and a glorious, vintage M400 Mellotron, recently bought by their keyboard player Ville Rohiola.

"He got it in the US, for a fair price, too," says Tanskanen. "Actually, there's an article on the Finnish version of Wikipedia and it says there are fewer than 20 of them in the country, so we're pretty stoked to have one. Our only concern is how expensive it can be to keep it in shape: we recently had to change a single knob, a damn knob, and it cost something like €150!"

The new album also sees the band using more of a collaborative approach. "We were a trio for the first couple of years and that's when we created the bulk of the songs that made it on our debut," Tanskanen explains. "But this time around, it's much more of a group effort from all five of us. Maybe it will scare some of the prog diehards because there is some poppy stuff on there. Then again," he laughs, "there's also some of the most epic stuff we've done, so I don't know…

"I think the longest track on the previous album was 10 minutes and we were joking around about how we could do better than that. I was also listening a lot to Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and those in the know will probably be able to spot a few licks here and there, even if our drummer Juuso [Jylhänlehto] had a more *Close To The Edge* sound in mind…

"Our first album was mainly compared to many 70s bands, and rightfully so as it was truly a homage to that period. But I believe that on the new one, while retaining that vintage sound, we've found a new and more personal sound."

In true Neil Peart style, their drummer is also their chief lyricist, and the lyrics are all in their native language. Tanskanen attempts to explain the concept and ideas.

"There's a lot of symbolism so it's easy to get lost, I'm afraid, so bear with me," he begins. "The album's title can be roughly translated to 'The album was released on February 2 in Finland,' although it equally references the fact that it's our second album, or a relationship between two people. It's deliberately ambiguous: it's up to the listeners to decide for themselves what the song is about." **OZB**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Babak Issabeigloo *(vocals, guitar)*, **Tony Björkman** *(guitar)*, **Jonni Tanskanen** *(bass)*, **Juuso Jylhänlehto** *(drums)*, **Ville Rohiola** *(keyboard, Hammond organ, Mellotron)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Classic, laid-back 70s prog rock, with an extravagant Finnish vibe

CURRENT RELEASE

Toinen Toista is out on March 16 via Svart Records

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/maladyband

> **"I was listening a lot to ELP, and those in the know will probably be able to spot a few licks here and there."**

HOW FAR TO HITCHIN

One-man multi-instrumentalist brings his basement prog pop to the masses.

IF YOU GREW up in 1980s Britain, you might remember a bright green puppet with appalling nasal hygiene. Gilbert the Alien spawned a surreal Pythonesque series of sketches about British POWs in World War II called *How Far To Hitchin?*. You'll certainly remember a singles chart graced by art pop gems from the likes of XTC, Talk Talk and Jellyfish.

Paul Dews, aka How Far To Hitchin, is a multi-instrumentalist operating from his basement studio. He takes his cue from those acts for his subversive slices of clever, darkly humorous progressive pop, while adding a modern sheen that will appeal to fans of Everything Everything and Bat For Lashes.

"XTC are one of my all-time favourite bands," he divulges. "I've got all the albums on vinyl. I just love their melodic sense: I'm really into strong vocal melody and songs."

His most recent release is 2016's *Easy Targets*. Clocking in at just shy of 70 minutes, it's an extremely diverse collection of keenly observed songs that have been meticulously crafted over a long period.

"There are two previous albums," he reveals, "I've been doing this for years and I've gradually got into digital recording. These songs were a way for me to test out my engineering and production skills. They've come about over five or six years which probably accounts for the diverse feel of the album."

Dews is abetted by musicians such as Saul Pewd and Wes Ladpu, and sharper readers will immediately realise that those are anagrams of Dews' own name. He also produces all the artwork and provides art for other bands. He's a real little British cottage industry. "Yeah," he laughs. "I write the theme tune, sing the theme tune."

Dews is hard at work on the follow-up which he hopes to release later this year. "It's turning out to be a bit proggier," he tells us. "Not by intention — it's just working out that way. It was Genesis that first made me want to get into music in a serious way. I just love all that eldritch, intricate 12-string work and the massive soundscape they created."

Sick Little Monsters from *Easy Targets* is a disturbing update of *Harold The Barrel* from *Nursery Cryme*, based on a real police report of people filming and taunting a man who was threatening to jump off a building.

Dews' lyrics are often laugh-out-loud funny to counter such stark reality: *'My neighbours are shitbags/They're malevolent, malicious and nasty/ They're simply colonic.'*

"There's quite a bit of humour in my stuff, even in the darkest moments. We're living in a dark age," he laments. "I'm always trying to get back to a more innocent time with my songs.

"Hitchin was a very happy place to spend one's childhood. Planet Hitchin is somewhere I can go and pull up memories and make them applicable to the future and to the present." **CMG**

"XTC are one of my all-time favourite bands - I just love their melodic sense."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Paul Dews *(vocals, guitar, bass, keyboard, flute, drum programming, percussion)*

SOUNDS LIKE

XTC produced by Radiohead with a dollop of Canterbury whimsy

CURRENT RELEASE

Easy Targets is available now and is self-released

WEBSITE

www.howfartohitchin.bandcamp.com

Paul Dews: one-man band and ruler of Planet Hitchin.

PHOTO: LEAH BROWN

"Cascades that could elevate an imaginary Genesis classic."
Prog Magazine

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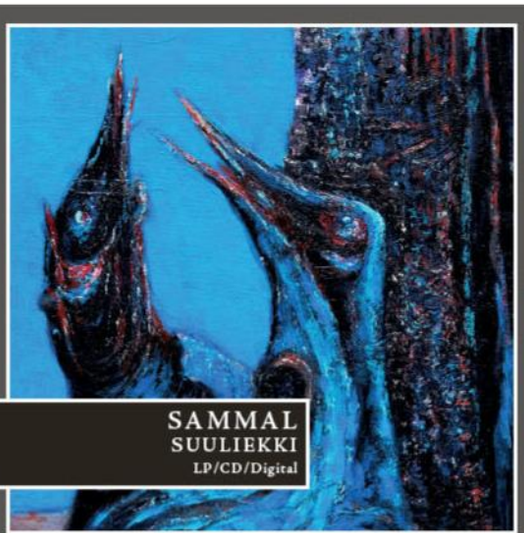

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My Record Collection

JIM PARKYN

Aardman Animations' roving ambassador has as much of an eye for quirky vinyl as for sculpting Shaun The Sheep or a Were-Rabbit – or producing some cracking cheese, Gromit…

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** Olly Curtis

"My first proggy record came from junior school. Rather than reading a book, we were given **Jeff Wayne**'s *The War Of The Worlds* on vinyl. It introduced me to this kind of musical landscape and also this incredible artwork. It got me into reading sci-fi and I became a *Star Wars* and *Doctor Who* kid. That record followed me around: there's a group of guys I work with on most of the films and *The War Of The Worlds* is a soundtrack to the model-making at Aardman. It would be played over and over on any new format as the years went by.

Another formative childhood thing is seeing *Labyrinth*, aged about 10 or 11. This was an accessible route into David Bowie's music, and a lifetime of inspiration from Jim Henson. When I'd left university and moved to Cardiff for my first job, I'd go to Bristol with my friends for nights out, a mega-city in comparison. We'd go to a rock pub called The Hatchet Inn, a Tudor building with a massive door covered in leather and studs — it hosted an odd mix of rock music downstairs and spank parties upstairs. But it was the only pub in town that had *Labyrinth* on the jukebox and we'd upset the locals by bunging in loads of pounds to hear it.

I'm from Warwick and spent all my childhood there. As soon as I could get away from the antique shop and retirement homes, I thought, 'I'll go somewhere exciting!' and I hit the bright lights of university at Pontypridd instead [laughs]. It was one of the few places in the country that taught animation. Studying film, we watched things like *Blade Runner,* and so many soundtracks would be by **Tangerine Dream**. *Melrose* is my favourite. I'm always drawn back to it, and it's great to sculpt to, especially if I'm up to my eyeballs on deadline. It's quite pop for them, and calming too. The last thing you want if you're meticulously sculpting something is to have your nerves jangled.

"What most people found amusing about Focus, I was drawn by."

My love of **Focus** grew from joining Aardman, in 2000. The place is a weird melting pot of people, late teens to late 50s, doing things from theatre design to live action, ceramicists, jewellers. As a communal thing, music will either divide a room or bring it together. We had a clunky old vinyl player and people would bring in odd records. Focus started off as us having a listen to something from someone's dad's collection. What most people found amusing, I was drawn by. The yodelling was quite unique but the rest was entrancing, and behind everyone's backs I started to investigate the wider world of Focus, and got into *Focus 3*. A friend of mine found they were playing in The Tunnels in Bristol so we went along. As a live experience, they were phenomenal.

Goldfrapp's *Felt Mountain* came at a dark time in my career. We'd just been made redundant from a film called *The Tortoise And The Hare* — we lost millions of pounds in a deal with DreamWorks that collapsed. On the same day, I was offered a job on the second *Robbie The Reindeer* film. I went from working in a huge factory to being in a team of about six. My friend Georgie told me about *Felt Mountain* and it got played solidly for about three weeks. It has my record collection's theme of storytelling and cinematography. Alison Goldfrapp is mesmeric and her voice is beautiful.

A couple of years later I was in a lull between projects and I found myself in a Tesco Metro inspecting an ad searching for cheesemakers to run a stall. It seemed a natural progression from Wallace & Gromit to cheesemaking. I worked with a *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* ensemble of actors, businessmen and this amazing guy, Chris, who had worked with Peter Gabriel, then went to Mexico to make music and lost his mind there. He'd set up the studio for Goldfrapp and we'd talk music while wrapping cheese.

I have a lot to thank Ken Bruce on Radio 2 for. One day he played **Richard Harris**' *MacArthur Park*. It was an incredibly symphonic and self-indulgent song and I knew I had to buy the album [*A Tramp Shining*]. Richard Harris is a great actor but he has this quite fragile singing voice. The whole record is a huge celebration of music, and it's where the Pearl & Dean theme that we used to hear in the cinema came from. I haven't delved too deeply into the meaning, but the imagery of a man having a strop about leaving his cake in the rain is brilliant. There's also puppetry, bitterness, sexism and wizardry. I drive my wife mad with it.

A different world altogether is **John Betjeman**'s *Banana Blush*. Betjeman, [Philip] Larkin and Roger McGough were my gateway to poetry when I was a kid. This was a punt in a charity shop and as soon as I heard it, I was lost to the jauntiness of it. I always loved *The Wind In The Willows* and it's got that sense about it, plus there's pantomime darkness.

My love of *The Butterfly Ball* started with the book — my wife and I both collect children's books and stories. But we didn't know until two years ago that the vinyl existed. We saw it in a charity shop, brought it home and we were quite taken aback by the sound of it — it was amazing, grandiose. The 70s and 80s was a great time for children's storytelling in this way.

I've always been a massive Edgar Allan Poe fan. But through Ken Bruce again, and seeing something on TV about prog, I found **The Alan Parsons Project**'s *Tales Of Mystery And Imagination*. It's not an obvious way of approaching Poe but it's something I really like. I'll listen to it when I'm drawing — working in my mill studio at night, it's quite cool to scare yourself a little.

Anna Meredith's *Varmints* is a very recent discovery through Frank Skinner's podcasts. He's a local hero to me as nothing that interesting comes from West Brom. *Nautilus* is his walk-up music before he comes on stage. It's a neoclassical composition of thumping brass and huge bass. It's crazy, orchestral pomp. It hooked me immediately and I'd love to see her live.

I listened to **David Bowie** all the way from *Labyrinth* to *Blackstar*. I bought my copy at Mr B's Emporium Of Reading Delights, a brilliant shop in Bath. There was something quite exciting about picking up this beautiful glossy album. I've got a love of ecclesiastical music — I joined the church when I was maybe seven and became a choirboy. I particularly liked singing psalms and there are quite a lot of psalm-like, monk-like qualities here. It was compelling and reminded me of music I'd loved as a child.

What's next on the stereo? A stack of cheap vinyl from the charity shop. Mrs Mills, mainly, the soundtrack to the next creation…"

Follow Jim Parkyn on Twitter @jimparkyn and find out more about Aardman Animations at www.aardman.com.

BETJEMAN'S
BANANA
BLUSH
Varmints
Goldfrapp
FELT MOUNTAIN

Q&A

GORDON GILTRAP

2018 marks Gordon Giltrap's 50th anniversary as a musician and recording artist, but don't expect any elaborate anniversary shows. *Prog* gets to know the English guitarist and composer.

Words: Malcolm Dome

During Gordon Giltrap's half century in the music industry, the guitarist has released a diverse range of albums spanning acoustic, electric and orchestral styles, establishing himself as a uniquely gifted musician along the way. He has also worked with a wide variety of talented people, including Wakemans Rick and Oliver. Giltrap kicked off 2018 with the release of *Peace Will Fall*, which is essentially a reworking of his 2012 album *Echoes Of Heaven*. The new release sees him working alongside vocalist Carol Lee Sampson and multi-instrumentalist and minister Reverend Martin Green.

What's the difference between *Peace Will Fall* and *Echoes Of Heaven*?
We originally had a vocal version of *Heartsong* on the album [*Peace Will Fall*], but that never really worked. Over the years, I've realised this is an untouchable jewel. So that was taken off and replaced with *The Lord's Seat*.

Is it fair to say that *Peace Will Fall* had a very spiritual influence behind it?
Definitely. That's why it was done: a lot of people over the years have told me that my music has a hymn-like quality. So I asked Martin Green, a friend and a minister in the Church Of England, to come up with lyrics and do vocals over the original instrumental recordings. I also got Carol, who has a strong Christian faith, to do some singing.

Are you a religious person?
Not at all. I don't even like the word 'religion'. I did go through a phase in the 70s when I was a born-again Christian, but I got very disillusioned with some aspects of Christianity. But there's certainly a side of me that *is* very spiritual and that first came out in my music on the *Visionary* album in 1976. Like everyone, I'm striving to understand the code of life and its meaning. I should stress, though, that when I say I'm spiritual, it does not mean I'm a good person!

"I'm not a religious person. I don't even like the word 'religion'."

You released your first, self-titled album in 1968. Do you have any plans to mark its half century?
None at all. When I was diagnosed with low-level cancer a couple of years ago, that changed my attitude towards what people perceive as my career. Thankfully, the cancer has been sorted, but it did make me feel that I didn't want to do something cheap like celebrating the anniversary of an album's release just to put bums on seats. That type of thing leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. I don't think too far ahead, and certainly never look at what might be best to make me money. This was all put into perspective when I was ill: I do what's artistically right, not what makes commercial sense.

Do you have any plans for new studio recordings?
I would love to do an album with Nicholas Hooper. People might know him best for his music in the *Harry Potter* films, and he has done a lot more movie and TV work. But he's a fantastic guitarist as well. We've become good friends and we've talked about working together. I'm also keen to do a new album with Paul Ward: we collaborated last year on the album *The Last Of England* and hopefully we can do something new soon.

Over the years, you've always been a peripatetic musician, performing in many genres. Has that been something you've deliberately aimed for?
Well, that's been more spontaneous than deliberate. I've always regarded myself as being something of a loner. I suppose that's why I was drawn towards the acoustic guitar. I was hugely influenced by the lone troubadours like Bob Dylan, Donovan, Bert Jansch and John Renbourn. What they did appealed to my musical aspirations and that's why I never felt I had to stick to one style of music, but could go anywhere I wanted. When you're on your own, nobody else drags you one way or another.

And yet you've worked with so many other musicians throughout your career, haven't you?
I know. What I love about hooking up with people is the interaction and the energy flow. I want to tap into what they have to offer, and also believe they can get something from me: it's very rewarding. One real case in point is Oliver Wakeman. We worked on the *Ravens & Lullabies* album in 2013. Oliver scared me to death, because he had so much energy coming out of him. I had just gone through my first series of operations to deal with the cancer situation, and then I was suddenly working with this incredible character. But I quickly realised that he was a brilliant songwriter, and to a large extent I let him guide how the album was done. I think he also needed to do this, after having such a bad time with Yes. That knocked his confidence, so being able to prove himself here was very important to him. But what a livewire… like his dad!

You were involved with the Cliff Richard musical *Heathcliff*. Does a musical based on your catalogue interest you?
That's something I have never thought about. Could it work? I would love to think of a way to use my songs in this way, if it were possible. That's an outlet other musicians have already used. Maybe I'll pursue this shortly, if I can find the right storyline for a musical.

You've had songs used as the themes for two TV holiday shows. What is it about your music and holidays?
There are two sides to my music. On the one hand, there are the sad, melancholic pieces, and these are an important part of what I do. But I also have some very uplifting and joyful compositions, the sort that would appeal to a TV holiday series, because they make everyone feel good. So the BBC used *Heartsong* for their *Holiday* programme. And when ITV heard this, they commissioned me to compose a theme for *Wish You Were Here…?*. I never got any free trips though!

Peace Will Fall is available now via Angel Air. See www.giltrap.co.uk for more information.

Birthday Boy: Ian Anderson ready to mark Jethro Tull's 50th anniversary.

50 The Enduring Appeal of Jethro Tull

Five decades, 30-plus band members and more than 20 albums – and **Jethro Tull** aren't ready to pack up the flute just yet. In light of their 50th anniversary, *Prog* meets **Ian Anderson** to look back over his band's extensive back catalogue, and to find out how they changed progressive rock forever.

Words: Philip Wilding
Portraits: Stuart Wood

Night Of The Living Dead, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Once Upon A Time In The West, bean bag chairs, ziplock bags, Will Smith, Hugh Jackman and Gillian Anderson. On reflection, 1968 was a pretty good year.

Intelligent, thought-provoking cinema, the birth of three (very different) era-defining actors and the creation of something to keep your sandwich in as you flopped down onto the latest in soft furnishings – all while listening to *This Was*, the debut album from a bluesy rock (if not for long) band called Jethro Tull.

It's debatable how Smith, Jackman and Anderson will be celebrating their respective 50th birthdays, but suffice to say there'll be enough candles to constitute a pyre. For Ian Anderson and his band, though, it's about moving forever forward, but with one eye on the past – and a very specific part of the past at that.

"When you think there were 36 members of the band over the years outside of me, it's a lot of people…"

Ian Anderson looks up from his coffee and makes some mental calculations, tapping out a rhythm on the table between us with his forefinger as the numbers add up.

"All of the different line-ups and sub-line-ups, there are 10 or 11 meaningful line-ups, in my mind. I think that's what I'm doing with this anniversary tour – thinking about the first 10 or so years and the Jethro Tull bands that were responsible for that period of music."

And what a remarkable decade that was. It saw a musical evolution that carried them from their bluesy debut through to the breakout *Stand Up*, the conceptual landmark piece *Thick As A Brick*, and took in two-thirds of their folk rock trilogy, *Songs From The Wood* and the inestimable *Heavy Horses*.

Along the way, they reinvented prog rock, introduced folk rock to a truly international audience and kept in step with the times, all while fine-tuning the way they kept moving as a band. What a first 10 years.

"I think that period is when most people would have come to Jethro Tull," says Anderson, "Maybe it was '69, maybe it was '78 for some people, but it was in that era when they got to know about us. Even for much younger fans today, they will almost certainly gravitate to that era of music to check out what was happening when Tull was relatively shiny and new, even though we were in a period when we'd evolved so much, when prog rock was in its original incarnation when it was successful. You must remember, it was only four or five years before it became ridiculed.

"In truth, the band kept making more progressive music than actual prog rock, possibly feeling a little alone, a little bit twitchy about being mauled in the press and getting bad reviews, but it had ceased to bother me by then. I might have been bent out of shape in 1973 but I got over it by 1974."

So did the band and bandleader feel in or out of step with the times? Part of Jethro Tull's enduring appeal is that they always kept a wary eye on the world around them. Anderson was writing about the ecological impact on the world as far back as the 1970s, which would later mutate into something much more cohesive and pointed (and way ahead of the times) in the subject matter of the 1979 *Stormwatch* album.

"It's kind of you to think that I'm in step with the times – many people would take issue with that notion."

Anderson arches both eyebrows and smiles thinly. "*I* think I'm usually in keeping with the times, it's just that my way of expressing that isn't going to be a fashionable and glossy way of making it seem relevant today.

"It's something I felt pretty obvious about in the mid-70s – then there was no point in trying to follow fashion and reinvent myself, to be somehow in keeping with the next generation of music makers. I loved the music I loved: I wasn't a fan of things like Elvis – I was too young – but then I got into the Howlin' Wolf and grittier blues and wasn't interested at all in what went before. I sneered at it. They weren't my thing. Same thing with the early Beatles.

"So I've always been very conscious that there's no point in trying to keep up with fashion to endear yourself to someone – you just have to plough your own furrow, whether it's with, say, *Heavy Horses,* or whatever it might be, and do the thing that you feel good about at the time. You hope people like it, that they're captivated by those notions and music, and that you scrape through and get to make another record."

"I've always been very conscious that there's no point in trying to keep up with fashion to endear yourself to someone – you just have to plough your own furrow."

He swirls the remnants of his coffee around in the base of his cup. We've been picking over the band's expansive catalogue for the best part of two hours. No one is more invested or willing to pick over the bones of the band that's been his life's work. He talks about product, titling, how to present – and sell – his music. He's an artist with an acute sense of business, which is yet another reason for his and Tull's longevity. That and his acute eye for the times he and his band found themselves in.

"It's interesting that you mention *Stormwatch*," says Anderson. "That album was very much about issues of conservation, climate change. You must also remember that the album came at a time when the scientific thinking of the day was that we were verging towards the likelihood of a mini ice age, so that was the driving force behind some of the songs on the album. Once the ice core samples started coming out in the 80s, the scientific community had to rethink this.

"It was all slightly arty farty!"

Producer **Derek Lawrence** recalls working with the fledgling Tull on their first single.

Mostly known for his work with Deep Purple and Wishbone Ash, producer Derek Lawrence recalls how he first encountered Jethro Tull.

"It was Ronnie Beck at Feldman Music who suggested I might like to work with a band called John Evan Smash. So, I booked time at Columbia Studios in New Bond Street, London, and that's where we recorded the *Sunshine Day* single and the B-side, *Aeroplane*. I have to admit that I wanted them to be more of a rock band, but they were determined to be more left field."

Lawrence subsequently worked with the young band on four more tracks at Abbey Road Studios, by which time they'd changed their name.

"I suggested they become Candy Coloured Rain. It seemed to fit what they were trying to do much better. To be honest, it was all slightly arty farty!"

While he wasn't exactly in tune with what the band wanted to do musically, Lawrence respected their potential.

"They were clearly talented and had some very good ideas. These were also nice guys, although the only one I used to hang out with was Mick Abrahams. Ian Anderson definitely had a strong vision for what he wanted to do, and I appreciated his single-mindedness."

What's In A Name?: Jethro Toe, er, Tull's 1968 debut single.

When *Sunshine Day* came out as their debut single, the band had become Jethro Tull, although a spelling error meant the label had them down as 'Jethro Toe'. In the past, Lawrence has taken the blame for this error. Now he's ready to set the record straight.

"It was actually a secretary at the label who misheard the name and made the mistake. I took the blame for what happened as it seemed unfair to let a hapless employee at Island get it. But now I can tell everyone: it wasn't me!" **MD**

"To go back to the first climate song I wrote, it was *Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of The New Day*. For the first time we were hearing about the distinct possibility that there could be man-made climate change and all of that tied in to population growth and all the other issues that have been exacerbated by pollution and so forth.

"In some ways I feel okay about having touched on those topics back then. It didn't make for a good or even acceptable song, but at least it's not just repeating yourself in the same old way; at least you're moving on, into topics that are a mixture of the contemporary while still paying attention to where we've come from.

"That's my take on pretty much everything: I'm not a historian, but I believe in the value of history, because it gives us perspective on how we got here and so it might be an indicator of where we might be going. My approach to music is to take on elements of the past, but I certainly don't want to be a prophet of doom. I'm essentially optimistic, but very concerned."

And back to Anderson's musical evolution as an artist: was that him striving artistically or did he simply get bored with one form if he had to repeat it over and over again?

"To be honest, in the case of the blues, I always felt a charlatan. Blues as an influence, it's as important to me now as it ever was. It's almost like a technical thing when you analyse the scales and the rhythms applied in that music. Lyrically, on the other hand, there's almost nothing that has hung over in my life after the first Jethro Tull album, nothing from that world.

"Musically, blues still has a part in what I do, but it's just one of several influences and arguably maybe not as important compared to folk and classical music in the broadest sense. There are perhaps greater influences, but blues is still part of what I do and who I am.

"Some of the things I was recording last March, at least one of them is rooted in a blues feel, so it's still something that's there for me today. There are certain passages, even on an album like *Heavy Horses*, that I will use and use again. Think of it like a chef in a kitchen with a spice rack. He's probably got 30 things in there and he's used them all before, but perhaps not in that order or with that twist, but there are lots of things you can do with that repertoire. And that applies to music too, you hope.

"Talking lyrics, though, when I started going through all the lyrics I'd written with a view to editing a collection of lyrical material, particularly the earlier stuff, I was expecting it to be excruciating, but with most of it, that turned out not to be the case. I could read it and think, 'It's 20 years old, it may be naïve or simplistic, but it's succinct, it's to the point, even if it's very much in keeping with young people writing lyrics for rock music.' There are howlers, but I'll let you root those out for yourself..."

Casting an eye over the Tull catalogue, does Anderson unearth many howlers? Are there moments when he does nothing but wince? Are there many musical missteps?

"Oh yeah, absolutely," he replies without hesitation, "And maybe if it wasn't for them then there wouldn't be any right steps either – you've got to fall to get up again. But sometimes you look back, whether it's a year later or 10 years later, and you'll regard it as not one of your finest moments, but on the other hand, they don't seem so bad after all. The heart and the head were in the right place, it's just that somehow it didn't quite work the way one had hoped."

There are still chances to rectify those missteps though – there's a new album that Anderson and his band started last year, though he's still uncertain whether it'll be a Tull record or a solo album. As *Prog* pushes him on it, he shrugs: "It depends what it's going to be released as. It's not something that I carry in my head."

The coffee's finished, as has our interview, but there's just time for one more reminiscence from a life spent living in and around music. It comes when *Prog* remarks that even into his 70s, Anderson still has the singing pipes of a man decades younger, which seems to surprise him.

"I've never been a strong singer," he says. "Comparing me to, say, Robert Plant is absurd – he has a God-given talent, which I recognised, fearfully, the first time I ever met him when Alexis Korner brought him into a club we were in. It might have been the Speakeasy, one of these awful places that your manager made you go to.

"So we'd gone along to this dreary, shitty club in town and it was awful. Alexis came in with this lean youth and said, 'Alright if my boy stands in and does a number? He sings and plays harmonica.' And I was like, 'Well, that's what I do, but sure, I'll just sit this one out and he can have a go.'

"We had no idea who he was and he did some blues standard and it was suddenly, 'Oh shit!' You knew instantly that he had something special about him. And he was a good harmonica player too. I sat there feeling this growing dread and, knowing a bit about Alexis and John Mayall, these were guys who would mercilessly nick your musicians – in the nicest possible way. They were band leaders; they were Svengalis. We got out of there pretty quickly, as I recall. Not too much looking back that night."

Anderson pushes his coffee cup away. There's more dry laughter as we both gather our bags and head for the door. The question of whether there will be another Jethro Tull album remains unresolved, even as Anderson readies himself to go back, once more, to living in the past, knowing that come what may, he's happy to visit all his yesterdays while he's still living for today.

Jethro Tull's 50th anniversary tour of the UK starts on April 3 in Manchester, and the USA tour starts on May 30 in Phoenix. For a full list of dates and more information, see www.jethrotull.com.

Went Walking Through The Trees

Dave Rees lifts the lid on the Tull-inspired A New Day festival.

The name itself suggests a strong connection to Jethro Tull, and it's certainly true that the festival – now in its third year – carries this through in their choice of artists.

"I've run *A New Day*, the Jethro Tull fan magazine, for over 30 years now," says festival co-founder Dave Rees. "What happened was that I was involved with another festival called Weyfest for about 10 or 12 years, but then it began to change. The organisers wanted to attract a younger audience, and I didn't agree with the type of bands they were booking. So, I decided to bail out."

In 2016, Rees and Frank Smith began running their own festival. "We didn't know what to call it, and then agreed that A New Day was as good as anything else. We're not officially connected to Jethro Tull, but will always look to book those who have an association with the band. Both Ian Anderson and Martin Barre appeared in the first year."

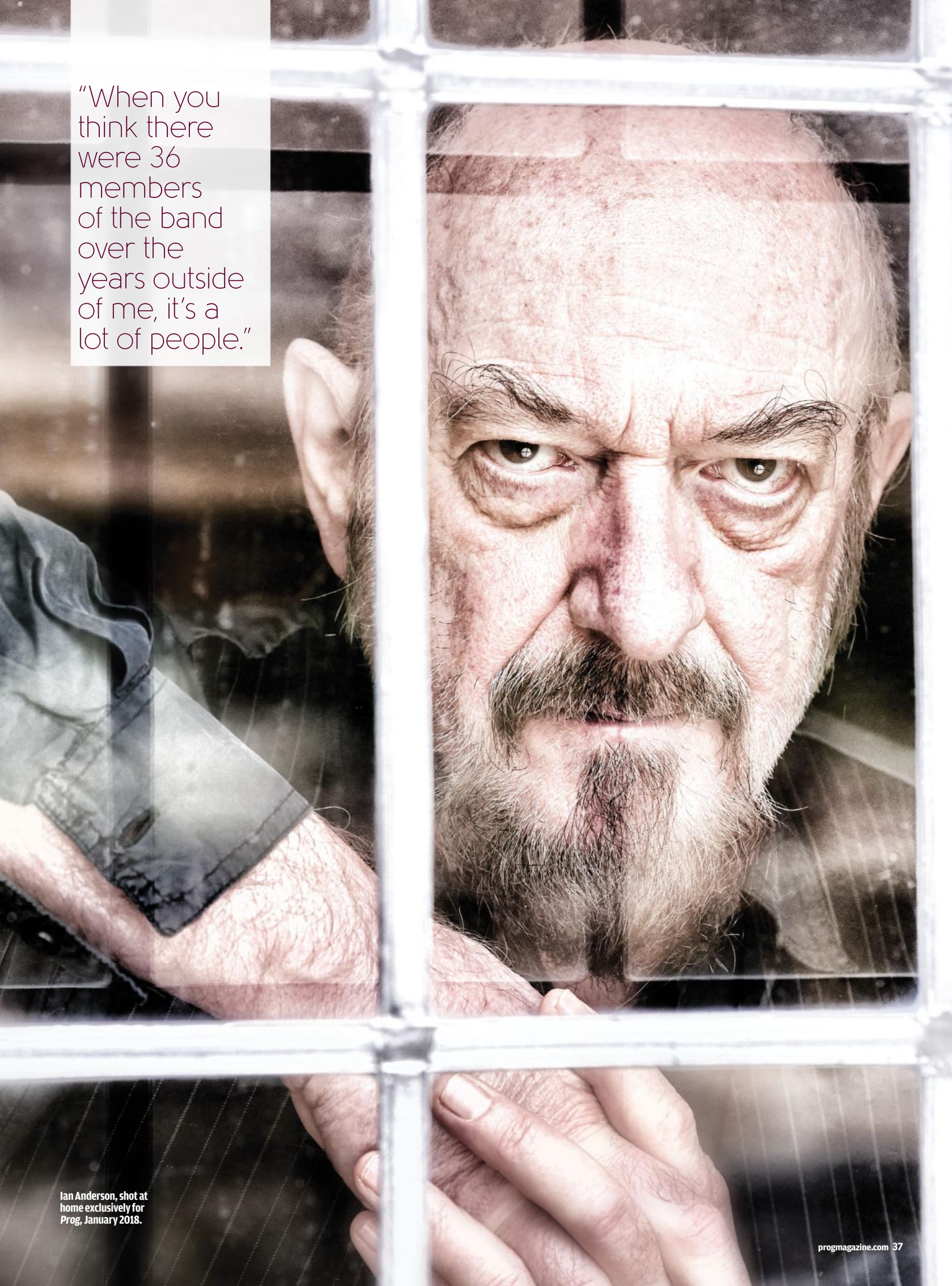
A New Day is located at Mount Ephraim Gardens in Faversham. This is where the Canterbury Fayre took place between 2000 and 2003, before going into liquidation. "Yes, it is on the same grounds," Rees says. "That was a great festival."

The line-up for the 2018 event will again have Barre on the bill. "Martin will be appearing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Jethro Tull. Ian is doing his own things, so is not available. But we also have a lot of other up-and-coming young acts," he laughs, "like Hawkwind, Carl Palmer's ELP Legacy, Caravan, Gong, Atomic Rooster, the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown and Curved Air.

"It runs over three days, and we hope there's something for everyone. It's certainly a diverse bill, which we believe will appeal to a lot of people."

See www.anewdayfestival.com for details. **MD**

Dave Rees, on stage at A New Day.



"When you think there were 36 members of the band over the years outside of me, it's a lot of people."

Ian Anderson, shot at home exclusively for *Prog*, January 2018.

Flint At The Fetlock

Jethro Tull's *Heavy Horses* turns 40 this year, and there's a special box set to celebrate the occasion. **Ian Anderson** looks back on the album's creation...

Iron-clad feather-feet: Philip Wilding
Album portraits: James Cotier

From up here you can see the morning mist rising up off the freshly turned earth. The threads of sunshine are turning into beams of light. It's cool, but the day's going to swelter long before midday. In the distance the valley comes slowly into relief, the hill's black edges stark against the blueing sky.

At this time of day, it's deserted except for a figure leading two giant shire horses, hat pulled down hard on his head, doing his best to keep the two beasts with him, traversing the land in straight, parallel lines. A slow half-circle turn and off they go again, this strange trio: mute, two of them hugely muscular, one sinewy and determined, working together.

In the distance, on the far edge of the field, a photographer cradling a camera with a telephoto lens shouts an instruction and the man between the horses jerks his head up, nods a silent affirmation, pulls at the heavy horses and goes again.

"I was holding on – they were very big!" Ian Anderson laughs as he remembers the day-long photo session for what would become the cover of Jethro Tull's 1978 album *Heavy Horses*.

Country Music: Ian Anderson on the photo shoot for the *Heavy Horses* cover, 1978.

"They were actually pussycats, those two horses – they were very good. The absurdity was that the shots that were taken were from a very long way away. It could have been so much easier. They wanted to get the valley in the background and the brow of the hill to give it some context, so I was a long way off. I had to walk an awful long way with these animals!

"The photographer was way over there somewhere – there was a lot of hollering and shouting. And you had to walk, and then it would be, 'Let's do that again, sorry!' But they were very well behaved. They were the best part of the day – they were nice animals."

The band's 11th studio album came as the decade was ending, a beautiful paean to a time that was fading as quickly as the 70s in which it was created. It's framed, albeit loosely, as the spine of the band's classic folk rock triumvirate, which began with 1977's *Songs From The Wood* and ended with 1979's *Stormwatch*. That's to underplay its elegance and vivacity though.

It could be argued that *Heavy Horses* often gets overlooked simply for not being *Songs From The Wood*, an album that helped define Jethro Tull's elongated musical and creative evolution. But that's to miss the point. In the yearning and sometimes playful *Heavy Horses*, Anderson and his band might have been continuing with some of the familiar tropes of its predecessor, but the record's hankering for a nearly bygone age – not least in the all-encompassing title track – gives it a timeless, magical feel, like finding a trove of old, forgotten photographs.

"It was fairly hot on the heels of the *Songs From The Wood* album," says Anderson today.

It's early evening in London, but dark, the lights of passing cars rushing past the hotel bar's windows. "In my mind, *Heavy Horses* is a logical

"*Heavy Horses* is a logical successor to *Songs From The Wood* – not quite part two, but it follows on with that slightly more rural context of its predecessor for a lot of the songs."

successor – not quite part two, but it follows on with that slightly more rural context of its predecessor for a lot of the songs. I remember that *Songs...* was recorded in Morgan Studios, our last time there, and *Heavy Horses* was our first in the new Maison Rouge building, which we'd finished building in time to do the sessions.

"You have to remember, this was at the time punk's final embers were burning out and you had bands like The Police and The Stranglers, who were, collectively speaking, a bunch of old hippies. The brave new world of punk rock had perhaps become commercialised at that point. But bands like those two used punk as a means to get their foot in the door, just as I did with the blues in 1968.

"So from our perspective then, it wasn't that we were vindicated that this new, intrusive music form had somehow ousted us from the public eye and approval, it was just a parallel event. I don't really recall being moved as a music maker by any of those changes in music that were going on. I knew what it was about and I rather liked some of it, but it was entirely separate to what I was writing. I didn't want to try to catch up or be influenced by it. We were still making Jethro Tull albums at that point."

Anderson wrote, as he always did, in snatched moments, some of the album's songs created on the train between his studio in London and his then home in Buckinghamshire.

"I do remember writing on the train, yes," he says. "In most cases the songs for *Heavy Horses* were written before we went into the studio, but sometimes they were written the night before, which is the way I often tend to work: writing things based on yesterday's rehearsal. It will make me rethink something and come up with a new idea or even a new song. I wake up very early in the morning and I work quickly – that's my time to get things done."

The band worked in short, creative bursts in the Maison Rouge studio, Anderson laid low with a head cold for part of the sessions.

"I know some people have a lot of affection for the title track, but when I was recording that, I had a stinker of a cold and when I listen to the opening vocals in the quiet part of the song, I can hear the mucus and the congestion going on through my nose – it almost sounds like it was processed through something. Well, it was, in a way."

So in the midst of decongestants, express trains between the capital and the countryside, and the final, faint traces of punk rock's boom, how did Ian Anderson and Jethro Tull magic up the bucolic pastures of a green and pleasant land that was fast fading in the rear-view mirror of history?

"If I'm honest, I wrote the songs as they came," says Anderson. "It wasn't a concept album – I didn't really have an overall thematic approach. It really was a collection of songs, albeit with a certain sense of tone and mood, and at the end of it, *Heavy Horses* was the one that presented itself somehow. It had this significance and it was a visual reference for the album cover. And it was also, let's not pretend, quite a good title.

"That said, it's unashamedly about something that was lamenting the passing of an age. It's the equivalent of the end of the age of steam or when I do cathedral concerts at Christmas – it's celebrating what's possibly the end of our association with Christianity and the Anglican Church. Those things that you know aren't going to be around very much longer, they do exercise an attraction and an appeal, emotionally and intellectually, because you're having to chronicle something that you know other people are going to look back on and think, 'What on earth was all that about? I've no idea what they were.'

"And that was the kind of thing that was happening with those kinds of horses. Before we released the album, the band had a brush with some heavy horses in terms of pre-publicity, where we went to a brewery to see the dray horses there. They weren't using them as workhorses any more – it was more of a showbiz thing. They kept a few as draft horses for taking the beer, so it was still something they were keeping alive for the tourists and for tradition, but it wasn't there for the daily deliveries any more.

"So I'd met some heavy horses before, and though we [Anderson and his wife] didn't have heavy horses, we had a few horses around the place, so I was pretty comfortable being put in charge of those two monsters. That said, you have to remember that there had been various horses used in cultivation, but there were small, working horses, the pit ponies that pulled coal out of the ground. Working horses are not all necessarily of a larger stature, hence the album's dedication to 'indigenous working ponies and horses of Great Britain.'"

Even with its underpinning pastoral overtones, Anderson also found time to address the leaden travails of modern living in *Journey Man*, a song that surely must have been conjured up on the rattling rails leading from his country home into London.

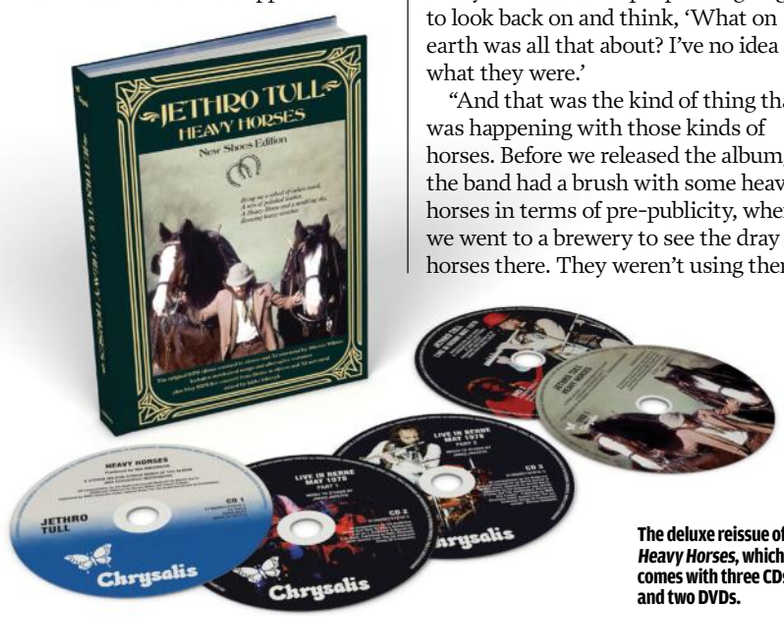
The animal theme continues with nods to both Anderson's dog and another Jethro Tull song about cats in the shape of *...And The Mouse Police Never Sleep*. Meanwhile, *No Lullaby* is guitarist Martin Barre in full flight, while *Weathercock* marries folk and hard rock to dizzying effect.

That said it's still the title track that casts the longest shadow, and it's a song that's endured in the band's live set, even with some minor tweaking.

"I changed it a few years ago," says Anderson, "to bring some other elements into it. I changed some of the

SHONA ANDERSON

Jethro Tull, L-R: Barriemore Barlow, Ian Anderson, John Evan, John Glascock, David Palmer, Martin Barre.



The deluxe reissue of *Heavy Horses*, which comes with three CDs and two DVDs.

Workhorse: Ian Anderson with his equine cover stars.

"Punk was entirely separate to what I was writing – I didn't want to try to catch up or be influenced by it. We were still making Jethro Tull albums at that point."

lyrics, which is a brave and perhaps silly thing to do, but I wanted to give a little bit more emphasis to put in context that world – I guess, being over 30 years later, it's even less likely to encounter working horses. In fact, right at this moment, there's a lot of pressure on the gene pool for a lot of rare breeds of horses, so it's looking a bit rough for some of them as there are fewer people willing to look after them and so forth.

"The problem is that they're not riding horses – you can't hop on their back and go for a walk; they don't race. They're just an impediment, really, in terms of the fact that they need a lot of land to graze and need to be mucked out and looked after just like any other horse. It's not their fault, but they can't earn their living these days.

"So I thought it'd be nice just to bring in the context, so the second verse now starts with a reference to *'nothing runs like a Deere'*, which is the slogan for the famous John Deere tractors. I'm trying to make the more obvious comparison with today's world where we talk in terms of horsepower, but today's world is full of air-conditioned cabs and hydraulic seats and suspension. It's a very different world, which was just beginning to happen when I got into farming.

"You know, I think there's something to be said for people getting their hands dirty," Anderson continues. "And I think, in a way, there's something more romantic and, dare I say it, something more satisfying at the end of the day about humping bales of hay than humping Marshall cabinets into the back of a transit van. And you get cold and sore hands, but it's good for the soul and it's all tied in with that thing that along the way, and over the years, you've done something, be it farming or whatever.

"But the one thing is that you have to be prepared to get down and dirty and get wet and cold, get back to the earth, to a more traditional way of doing things."

The field looks different now. The earth's freshly turned, the sun high in the sky, but the figures are gone and a tractor idles in the distance, a thin plume of smoke, barely an outline, evaporating in the air.

At the farthest corner of the field stand a pair of heavy horses, indescribably tall, a towering monument to a time passed. Blink and the waves of heat from the earth make them into mirages out at the horizon and for a moment, you can't be sure. You strain to see, but they've gone.

The Heavy Horses 40th Anniversary New Shoes Edition box set is out on March 2 via Parlophone. See www.jethrotull.com for details, and read our review on page 110.

WILL IRELAND

50 A Time For Everything

Ian Anderson reassesses every **Jethro Tull** studio album of the last 50 years…
(For *Heavy Horses,* see page 38.)

Interview: Philip Wilding

This Was

(1968)

"It's all in the title, isn't it? This was Jethro Tull. That's no accident because when we were recording it, the one thing I felt sure about is that if we were lucky enough to make another album, I knew it wouldn't be like this one: based on blues elements and black American folk culture. That's not part of my life and I couldn't keep doing that – I'd look like a complete twit. The cover had no logo or anything and people were telling me we couldn't do that, but we did it, of course."

Stand Up

(1969)

"The coming of age, in a way. The birth of more original music for us. It was then that what was referred to as progressive rock music was coming into being. If it's in that vein, it's rock music rather than folky, but it's progressive in that it reflects more eclectic influences, bringing things together and mixing and matching and being more creative. For me, it's a very important album, a pivotal album."

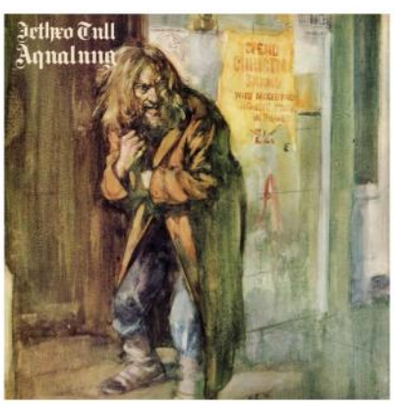
Aqualung: "The album that broke us in countries beyond the UK and US."

Thick As A Brick: "I thought, 'Right, let's show them what a concept album is.'"

Benefit

(1970)

"A darker album. You have to put that into the context of a band returning from the first of three forays into the USA and that altered my mindset. It's not all gloom and doom, but it's a slightly more oddball album. On *For Michael Collins, Jeffrey And Me*, we referenced Michael Collins, the astronaut who was stuck in the command module and we now know was given the instructions to leave the others behind. The loneliest man in space, and also he gets no glory because he's not the guy who walked on the moon."



Aqualung

(1971)

"That's the singer/songwriter side of things, where a lot of the music did come out of me strumming an acoustic guitar with a view to keeping it that way, as opposed to writing that way and turning it electric. That big title track riff came out of an acoustic jam – you've just got to have that imagination to hear that. You have to know that you can make it sing. It went on to sell and sell across the world. It's the album that broke us in countries beyond the UK and US."

Thick As A Brick

(1972)

"After *Aqualung*, I felt we had to take a big step forward. Many writers wrote about *Aqualung* as a concept album, and I kept saying, 'Maybe two or three songs in the same area, but not a concept.' In the wake of all of that, I thought, 'Right, let's show them what a concept album is,' and it seemed like an amusing idea to go down that route in this Pythonesque way and to try to use surreal humour. It clicked in America, which was a surprise, and it was our first real foray in that sort of theatrical presentation."

A Passion Play

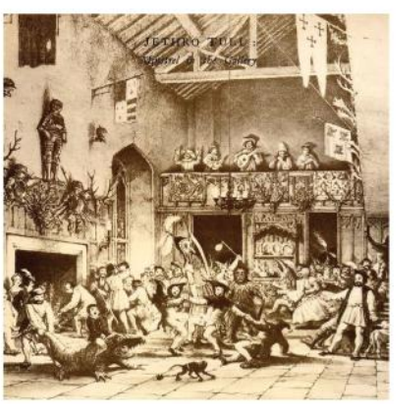
(1973)

"The 'step too far' album. We decamped to the Château d'Hérouville in France where Elton had recorded, and had a rotten time: technical issues, gastric bugs... we just wanted to go home. So we did, and had a frantic few weeks of writing a new album. Two pieces made it on to the *War Child* album and one or two morphed into something more sophisticated, but they never came to light on that album. Steve Harris [Iron Maiden] loves *A Passion Play*. I'm glad someone liked it!"

War Child

(1974)

"It's kind of okay. The big one on that was *Bungle In The Jungle*, which is a complete rebuild of a song from the Château tapes. Very much rewritten, but it used the reference of people behaving like they're animals in the jungle. It was written to be a radio hit, and in America it nailed it – we got AM radio play, which opened us up to a much wider audience and brought a lot more people into the concerts. It had its moment. Ritchie Blackmore has a soft spot for that album, for some reason."



Minstrel In The Gallery

(1975)

"That's an odd one. It's the last one that Jeffrey Hammond [bass] played on, so it has this negative undertow to it as we knew he was going. So with Jeffrey leaving, it made me think, 'Maybe I need to do this without relying on others so much.' I started working more on my own in the studio, writing and recording, playing to a click track, so a lot of it was a bit more 'them and me' – a bit more insular, musically speaking, which wasn't great in the spirit of working together."

A Passion Play: "Iron Maiden's Steve Harris loves *A Passion Play*. I'm glad someone liked it!"

A: "It was as simple as *A* for Anderson because it was supposed to be a solo album."

Too Old To Rock'n'Roll: Too Young To Die! (1976)

"The title track came to me on a plane journey when I was in heavy turbulence and very frightened. It was a piece about the kind of 50s Brit rock'n'rollers. Those bikers in that era, it was their world and they were already pushing 40 or 50 by then. You could mock that but there's something rather noble and determined and dignified about it, and I just wanted to explore that dichotomy. It's wistful and nostalgic and also a bit of a put-down, and it's finding that balance in a song sometimes."

Stormwatch (1979)

"There was a lot of stress within the band, mainly to do with John Glascock's illness [the bassist had heart problems]. We sent him home and told him he had to get out of this spiral he was in because it wasn't just his illness, it was lifestyle. He'd be on stage and his face would be white like wax, with a film of sweat. I made him leave to get himself well and sadly he got worse and then we got the terrible news that he'd passed away. Did we do everything we could to help? That's a question we'll ask ourselves forever."

The Broadsword And The Beast (1982)

"That followed a bit of hiatus and we were getting towards the end of the record, and I thought, as I have before, 'I've spent so much time with this material, I'd really like someone else to come in and mix.' We found Paul Samwell-Smith, who we knew from The Yardbirds, and he came in towards the end and took a lot of pressure off me. We worked well together – we had this good accord and bounced off each other very well. I'd been feeling very pressured on the previous albums, nursemaiding everything to the end."

Songs From The Wood (1977)

"More than any album we've done, this is one where the band had more to do with the elements of the songs. Martin Barre [guitar] and David Palmer [keyboard] particularly had worked some material up that would fit right into a song, and where the recording process had all the band involved. There was an exception or two – *Jack-In-The-Green* was me one Sunday after lunch in there alone – but the rest of it was all of us. I feel perhaps since the days of *This Was* or *Stand Up*, it had much more of a band vibe. It was good."

A (1980)

"It was as simple as *A* for Anderson because it was supposed to be a solo album. I wanted to take some time out and I asked Eddie Jobson to be involved, so we started in the studio. I heard this guitar line in this bit I'd written and I called Martin Barre and he ended up staying. Then the record company said, 'It sounds like a new Tull album,' and I regret giving in to that. It sits there on the edge of our repertoire: it's quite the mainstream thing."

Under Wraps (1984)

"That was following my solo album called *Walk Into Light* [1983] where I'd been exploring what was then the new technology of the emerging world that was moving from analogue to digital – drum machines, very primitive sequencers and so forth. I thought we could use that on a Tull album. It's got some great songs and it's arguably the one album where I really pushed myself as a vocalist. It's a great album apart from the drum machine – it annoys me to this day, and the public didn't like it either. I'm glad I did it though."

Under Wraps: "The drum machine annoys me to this day, and the public didn't like it either."

Catfish Rising: "The worst thing about the record was the album cover. Too much black!"

Crest Of A Knave

(1987)

"I was going out and doing *Under Wraps* [1984] live, and I ripped up my throat – I couldn't sing and I thought maybe time was up and I'd blown my voice completely. I spent a year not doing anything but seeing throat specialists, so it wasn't until the summer of '86 that we went out and did some shows, including one in Budapest where I wrote the song of the same name. In America it was the early days of MTV and *Steel Monkey* got quite a lot of prominence. That album did well in the US and won the Grammy."

Rock Island

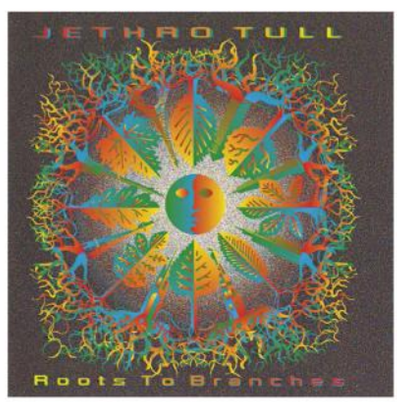
(1989)

"The antidote to the more cheerful *Crest Of A Knave*, it's mostly dark subject matter of alienation and desolation, except for the absurd *Kissing Willie* – an all-too-regrettable, unsubtle piece of saucy innuendo. Benny Hill would have been proud of that one. But the song *Strange Avenues* is still a favourite of mine. And *Another Christmas Song* too, which talks of origins and cultural identity. *'Everyone is from somewhere, even if you've never been there.'"*

Catfish Rising

(1991)

"A rather good collection of songs, but at a time when Tull weren't exactly in fashion! Some people felt it went back to our bluesy base – maybe too much for one reviewer who referred to it as 'cod blues'. *This Is Not Love*, *Still Loving You Tonight* and *Rocks On The Road* stand out for me. A lot of this was recorded alone in my studio with overdubs from Martin [Barre] and [bassist] Dave Pegg. The worst thing about the record was the album cover. Too much black! Too much Spinal! No space to sign autographs with a black Sharpie."



Roots To Branches

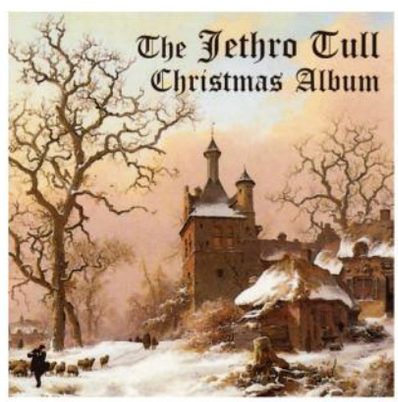
(1995)

"The last album with Dave Pegg who played, I think, only on three tracks due to the resurgent popularity of Fairport Convention – always his first love – and the increasingly difficult task of being the bass player of two bands at the same time. All the songs on this record still work for me. We enlisted American jazz rocker Steve Bailey to play bass. He turned up on a freezing January morning to start work on the record in my new studio. These days he's Chair of Bass at Berklee College."

J.Tull Dot.Com

(1999)

"With the advent of the internet, I thought we should have our own website. After some legal arm-wrestling with the cheeky owner of the name www.jethrotull.com, I beat him into submission in a Swiss court and got the name freed up for our use. The title track stands out, along with *Hunt By Numbers* and *Wicked Windows* – a reference to the heinous Heinrich Himmler of the bespoke dodgy specs. I was in the Auschwitz museum recently where the glasses of many incoming prisoners are on display. I thought of him while I was walking around. A lot."



The Jethro Tull Christmas Album (2003)

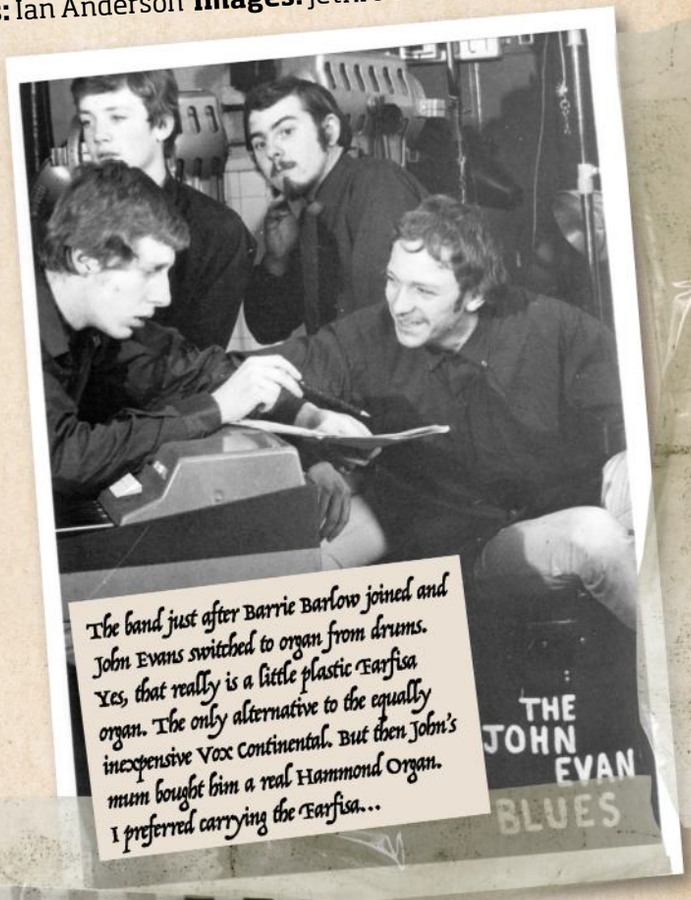
"When the record company suggested we do a Christmas album, my immediate reaction was no, but I started to wonder if there was a way to do something not altogether cheesy and trivial. So I came up with some variations on Christmas carols, looking at the 'other side' of Christmas. Some Tull material was re-recorded as I already had a few pieces in the repertoire that touched on the spirit of winter. *Birthday Card At Christmas* is special for me as my daughter's birthday is on December 22 and it tends to be glossed over in the days before Christmas."

Living In The Past

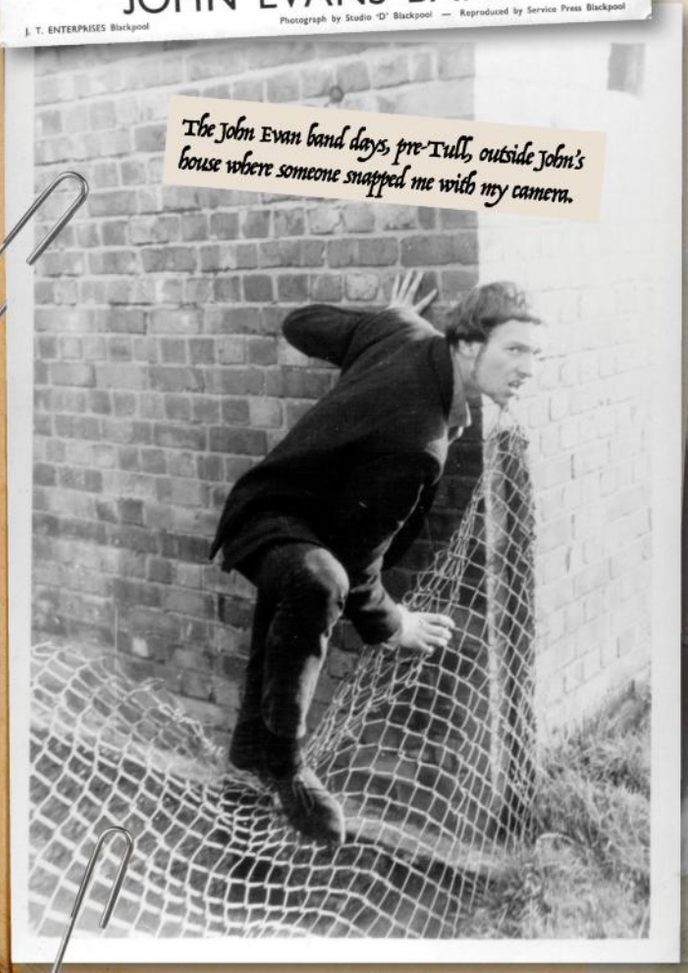
From bulging codpieces to missing legs, **Jethro Tull**'s **Ian Anderson** opens his archives to *Prog*, and reveals the inside stories behind the snapshots and headlines.

Words: Ian Anderson **Images:** Jethro Tull Archive

Our first publicity photo as the John Evans Band when, after adding guitarist Chris Riley to the line-up after the photo session, he was cut and pasted in – literally, as in the old technology. Count the heads, then count the legs. Mmmm...



The band just after Barrie Barlow joined and John Evans switched to organ from drums. Yes, that really is a little plastic Farfisa organ. The only alternative to the equally inexpensive Vox Continental. But then John's mum bought him a real Hammond Organ. I preferred carrying the Farfisa...



The John Evan band days, pre-Tull, outside John's house where someone snapped me with my camera.

One of the early shows. Glenn [Cornick] allowed me to borrow his little leather jacket. After I had sweated buckets into it for a few nights, he never asked for it back.

Don't knock Jethro Tull – remember Jesus

JESUS CHRIST was similar in appearance to Jethro Tull, with his long hair, beard and gaily coloured clothes. He was looked upon as God's son, performing miracles. Everyone believed in him, but his clothes were never commented on.

In the music world Ian Anderson, Glen Cornick, Martin Barre and Clive Bunker are also performing miracles with their records and concert dates. Good luck Jethro Tull!—Robert Dobie, Lily Whitcher, Tom Donovan, 25 Harland Green, Speke, Liverpool 24.

HOW DARE Pat Shelley (Pop Post 22.11.69) say such atrocious things about Jethro Tull! Ian Anderson is in a class of his own, and so are the other members of the best group on the scene. And we say they always will be.—Linda, Sandra, Malcolm, 14 Floyds Lane, Daw End, Walsall, nr. Walsall.

Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson: did Jesus look like t

Of course, we have no idea what the historical Jesus Of Nazareth looked like, or what clothes he wore. Certainly not expensive high-heeled zippered boots from Anello & Davide, tight velvet pants from Chelsea Market or a codpiece from the Royal Ballet.

WOULD YOU TAKE THIS MAN HOME TO MEET MUM? asks NICK LOGAN

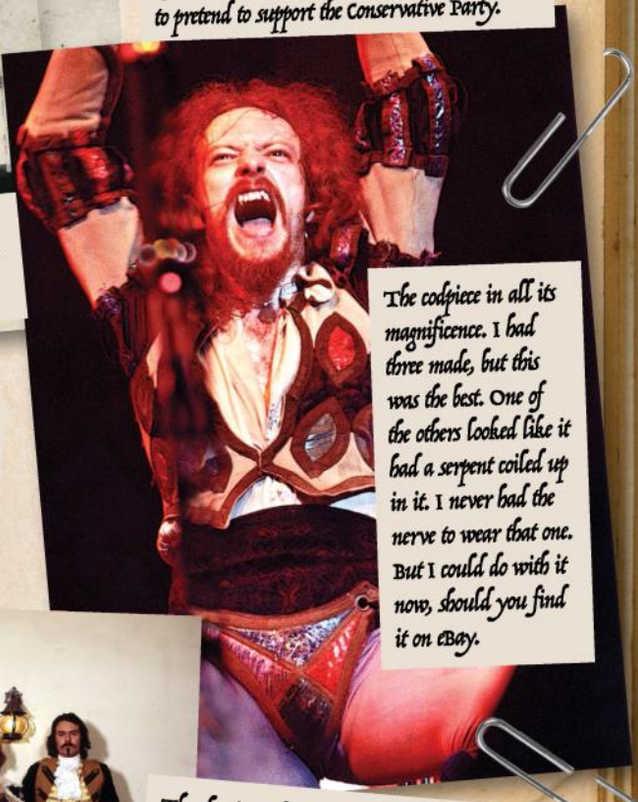
Three studies of the hirsute, shaggy IAN ANDERSON of the JETHRO TULL group, who have become Pop Members recently. Picture is a portrait by Chris Walters. The picture by Gerrard Plasmore on his form, Harry Goodwin and above by Barry Plummer.

I am no nearer to that than wearing a pipe and slippers and living in a semi-detached.

It's just as painful to be swirled in by either side. Or one hand being cast out and the other being embraced. I don't want to answer I just want to, and quote me in person invented commas. "Do My Thing."

Well, some girls did. I seem to remember being asked by my wife Shona to have a "little trim" before the inevitable meeting, and being advised to pretend to support the Conservative Party.

Going to see Elvis in 1969. I was somewhat coerced into going to see the show and upset everyone by not wanting to go backstage to meet him afterwards. I was too embarrassed to confront him as he seemed so out of it on stage and I couldn't bring myself to fib and say how great he was...



The codpiece in all its magnificence. I had three made, but this was the best. One of the others looked like it had a serpent coiled up in it. I never had the nerve to wear that one. But I could do with it now, should you find it on eBay.

Martin Barre and I preparing for a sound check in the USA in 1970 or so. There always seemed to be so much hanging about. Much more efficient these days. "Time is money," Glenn seems to be saying.

The classic mid-70s line-up when we actually all enjoyed dressing up in silly clothes. Of course, the clothes had nothing to do with the album War Child, which the photo was supposed to promote. Some musicians will do anything for a hot dinner.

IAN ANDERSON IS NO ROCK HITLER

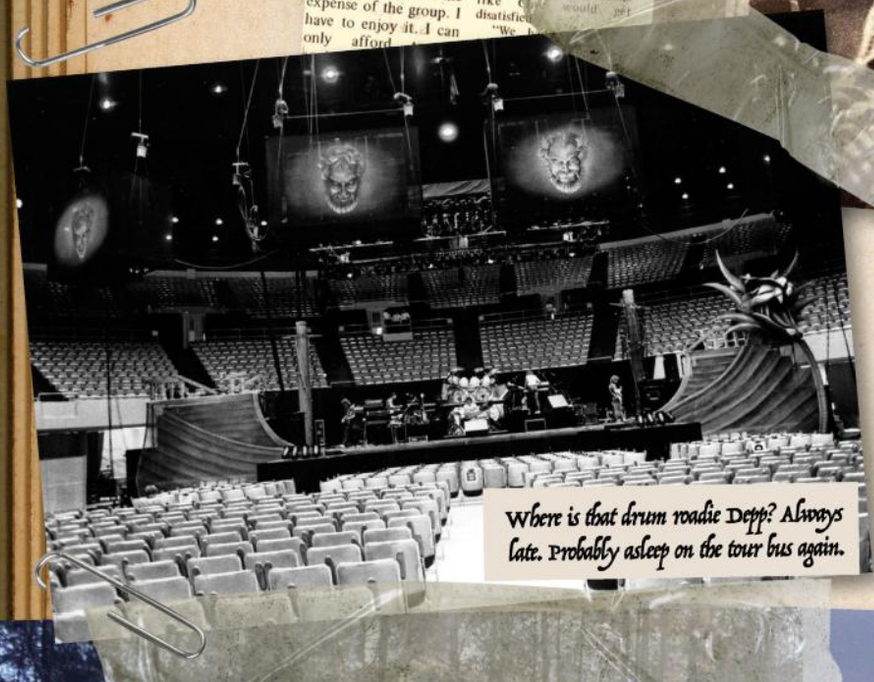
THAT bearded prankster Ian Anderson is amongst us once more with his ...uffled ensemble now featuring ...ie-More Barlow on percussion in ...e of Clive Bunker (now co-operating ex-Procol guitarist Robin Trower in ...v group) on a maxi-single entitled ...enough 'Life Is A Long Song' he says, 'will probably bomb out ... one will like it as it does not have ...iliar raving flute on it!''

...rson is of course a pessimist and past ...f the undersell in fact which he uses as ... of self- ... from critics. ...ppear to take ... as seriously ...critics then ...ly lose out ...stigate my ... a live ... I deliber- ...ately set out to entertain people sometimes even at the expense of the group. I have to enjoy it. I can only afford

by Keith Altham

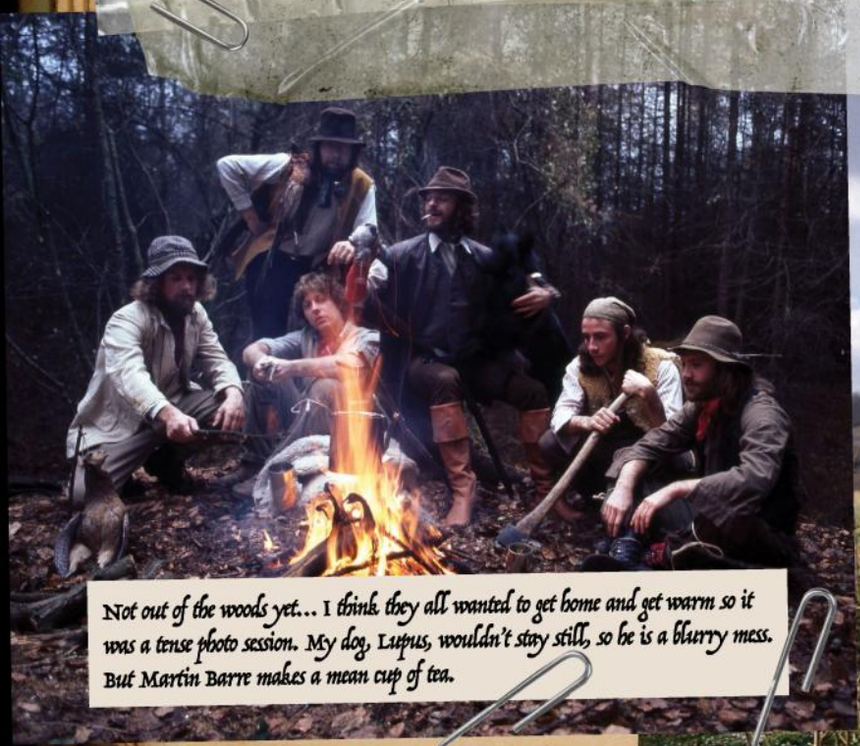
He simply felt that he needed more room to express himself – God knows I can understnd ... that ... do tend to domin... the writing aspect ... I will and I can ... understand why someone like ... would get dissatisfied ... "We ...

Well, that's a relief to know! I can't think where some MM sub-editor got that headline from. But in many ways, the Melody Maker, as it grew in success, echoed the attention-grabbing pages of The Sun. Not sure if I ever made it to page three of the MM in my tights and codpiece, though.

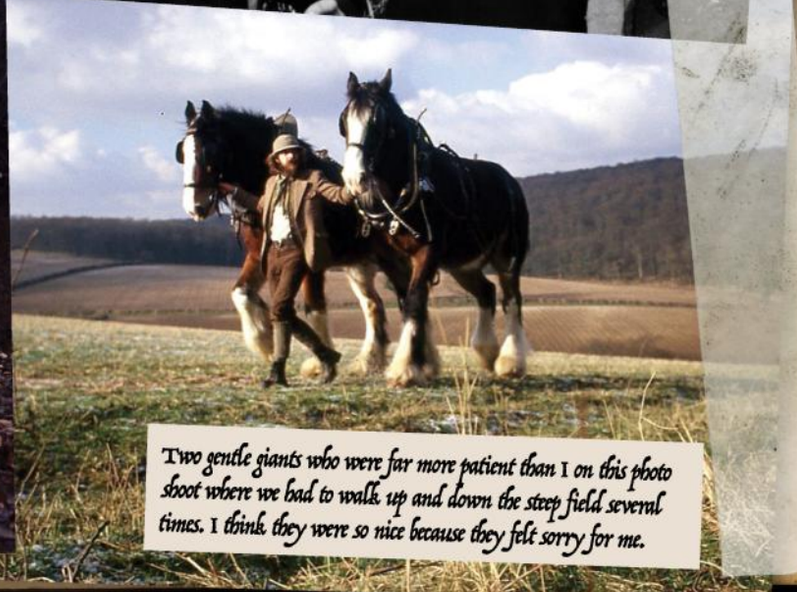


Where is that drum roadie Depp? Always late. Probably asleep on the tour bus again.

Desperation in the straw bales after a visit to a theatrical costumier. Probably picked that lot up for a song. No one else would wear it.



Not out of the woods yet... I think they all wanted to get home and get warm so it was a tense photo session. My dog, Lupus, wouldn't stay still, so he is a blurry mess. But Martin Barre makes a mean cup of tea.



Two gentle giants who were far more patient than I on this photo shoot where we had to walk up and down the steep field several times. I think they were so nice because they felt sorry for me.

Lots of familiar faces among the crew here, but many who just a did a tour or two. The Two Kennys – production manager Kenny Wylie [front centre, seated] and agent Kenny Bell [far right] were with us for 30 and 37 years respectively.

The A album line-up. Eddie Jobson is very dapper. Not really the outdoors type... Bless.

A slightly uncomfortable gathering of many of the worthies who graced our stages over the years. But everyone is smiling for the big moment. Four drummers, four bass players, two guitarists, two keyboard players, a flautist and a fiddler. No eyes were scratched out during the making of this photo.

Anna Phoebe when she toured with us in the UK and elsewhere for a year or so: Gavin Esler's skimpy-costumed 'Vixen Of The Violin', just before she met him, I think.. But she was always fully dressed at soundchecks.

Back in the days when the Habanero was king (the orange one). Nowadays, the cultivar Carolina Reaper outdoes it by nearly a million and half Scoville units. Scoville? Look it up: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoville_scale.

A PROGRESSIVE LIFE

As frontman for Israeli proggers **Orphaned Land**, **Kobi Farhi** passionately wants people to question the world around them. He talks to *Prog* about Plato, why the good die young and turning down money from Steve Hackett.

Words: David West **Images:** Zoharon Photography

Even in the multifaceted realms of prog rock and metal, Orphaned Land stand apart. Formed in Israel in 1991, the band draw upon influences from East and West for their politically and religiously charged songs that aim to bring a vision of unity to a corner of the world where that's in very short supply. Never ones to do the expected or conventional, they held the first press date for their new album *Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs* in a Berlin mosque.

"That mosque is exceptional because it's run by a woman," says frontman Kobi Farhi, chatting to *Prog* while in London. "She has a lot of death threats and she doesn't move anywhere without bodyguards, but I thought that this is something I want to support. She represents something that the new album also talks about because it talks about *Dead Messiahs & Unsung Prophets* — revolutionaries who ended up dead — and I thought she was a living example of these people."

The idea behind the new release comes from Plato's *Allegory Of The Cave*, written over two millennia ago, but which Farhi believes is just as relevant now. "How many revolutions have occurred?" he asks. "How many wars? And we're still facing the same problems. This is why we chose the concept of *...The Cave*, because people don't want to leave the cave. They're afraid of the light and they don't want to change. Every time a revolutionary man comes to take them out of the cave, it could be Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi or Che Guevara, they're all assassinated. How can someone kill Mahatma Gandhi? Was he a dictator? Dictators live forever. Only the good die young. That's the meaning of this album."

In addition to Ancient Greece, Farhi found inspiration in the form of Kim Kardashian. He explains this unlikely pairing of philosopher and celebrity: "Did you know that every year 70,000 kids are kidnapped in India for the purpose of paedophilia, trading their organs, or making them become street beggars for money?" he asks. "And we don't hear about it. Do you know who Kim Kardashian is? That alone should make you think: 'Why is that the situation?' I don't hear about those kids and I hear about Kim Kardashian every week. What's the purpose of dealing with her while something so important doesn't come before our eyes? I see her as the shadows in the cave and I see the kids as the truth outside."

Farhi says he naïvely believed he could change the world when Orphaned Land was born, but after 26 years of writing, touring and recording, he's changed his expectations. Now he just wants to make people question the world around them. "I just thought that I should let people think that there are prophets even in our times because George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, they were like prophets," he says. "I always dream and try to make the world a better place. I could think about myself and make a song about my girlfriend who just left me, but it's probably a part of me to sing about the world."

"DICTATORS LIVE FOREVER. ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG. THAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS ALBUM."

Orphaned Land's Kobi Farhi: looking to change your perspective through his music...

Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs features a guest guitar solo from Steve Hackett on *Chains Fall To Gravity*. They met when Farhi sang on Hackett's *The Night Siren*. "He was writing a song about the Middle East," says Farhi. "He wrote to me asking if I could sing on that song and if I could bring a friend of mine, an Arab singer, to sing as well. I was very flattered. Steve Hackett, man. That solo in *Selling England By The Pound*, what a solo."

Farhi called up Mira Awad, the Arabian vocalist who appeared on Orphaned Land's *All Is One*, and together they sang on Hackett's *West To East*. "He basically asked me, 'Do you want to get paid or shall I record on your next album?' I said, 'Steve, I will forget about the money in two weeks, but the solo will be there forever. Of course I want the solo.'"

The other two guests on the album are At The Gates' Tomas Lindberg and Hansi Kursch from Blind Guardian. Hansi sings on *Like Orpheus*, which describes the moment the hero leaves the cave and ventures out into the world for the first time. "In Greek mythology they say Orpheus' singing was so beautiful that even the stones liked his voice: Hansi is a modern Orpheus for me. His voice is amazing," says Farhi. "Tomas sings on *Only The Dead Have Seen The End Of War*: it's the song where they kill the hero and I needed the voice of a lunatic, a crazy guy from the cave. The guests on the album are just perfect, the roles they play and the way they executed it."

The new album, like its 2013 predecessor *All Is One*, was recorded across three countries. The choral voices come from Hellscore, the Israeli choir run by Noa Gruman, the singer for prog metal band Scardust, while all the orchestral parts were recorded in Turkey. "You hear the violins, no orchestra in the UK can play like that because the scales they use are so progressive, it's like quarter tones," says Farhi. "The West will be very linear, while the East will be wavy and they do it in such a terrific way in Turkey that I have to travel there and pay a fortune for them to play it, but I can't think of anyone else doing it."

"IF YOU CAN DANCE ON A TABLE AND SHED A TEAR AT THE SAME SHOW, THEN THAT'S A PERFECT SHOW FOR ME."

Farhi's vocals and the drums were recorded in Sweden, the rest of the instruments in Israel, and back to Sweden for mixing. That meeting of East and West elegantly illustrates the range of influences that inform Orphaned Land's music. It's a diversity that extends back into Farhi's youth and the soundtrack of his childhood in Israel. "It's a combination of listening to the muezzin singing *Allahu Akbar*, to my father and grandfather listening to Italian operas by Puccini and Verdi, my grandmother listening to classical, my mother listening to The Beatles, myself listening to Iron Maiden or Metallica, Pink Floyd or King Crimson," he says. "You have to think about the country. The majority of the people are Jews, but they came from all over the world. You have Moroccan, Iraqi, Yemenite, Iranian, Egyptian Jews and then you have Russian, Belgian, French, you have 80 different kinds of Jews bringing their own mentalities and habits, food, sounds, the way they look."

Between them, the five members of the band trace their roots back to the Balkans, Morocco, Romania and Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, and the Kurds. "Everyone one of us has different food in their house, a different language for their grandparents, and sometimes different music," says Farhi. "You get those together, that's a fusion,

Orphaned Land: they don't see things in black and white...

that's progressive music. That's a progressive life and a very rich life."

Though they tackle contentious topics, Orphaned Land's live shows feel celebratory, like a prog metal belly-dancing party.

"What is life, basically? It's a mixture of our happy and painful moments," says Farhi, explaining the contrast between his lyrics and the band's exuberant performances. "When our mother gives us birth it's the most wonderful thing, life is created but with screams of pain. Especially in the Jewish tradition, happiness, crying and sadness, they're always connected.

"When you get married in Judaism, you break a glass because Jewish people say you should remember the destruction of the Jewish temple even on your happiest day. If we play a song like *Brother* or *Let The Truce Be Known*, there is nothing happy about it. If we play *Norra El Norra* or *Sapari*, which is a Jewish traditional, those are uplifting. I get a lot of comments saying, 'I had a tear in my eye when you sang *Brother* or *Let The Truce Be Known*.' If you can dance on a table and shed a tear at the same show, then that's a perfect show for me. The greatest thing is to see people from different backgrounds, Jews, Muslims, uniting and celebrating. That's the best."

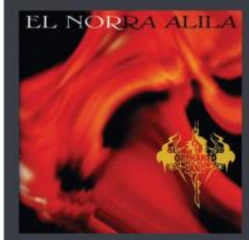
Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs is out now on Century Media. See www.orphaned-land.com for more information.

WELCOME TO ORPHANED LAND

Our pick of **Orphaned Land**'s most epic moments.

Seasons Unite (Sahara, 1994)

Orphaned Land's 1994 debut might lack the full musical scope and masterful production of their later releases, but it showed what they were capable of as players and songwriters with this impressive union of progressive and death metal.



Find Yourself, Discover God (El Norra Alila, 1996)

From the folky opening to the frantic metal onslaught that follows, this was another early example that points the way forward for Orphaned Land's ambitions.

Norra El Norra (Entering The Ark) (Mabool: The Story Of The Three Sons Of Seven, 2004)

A perfect example of Orphaned Land's range, *Norra El Norra* has crunching death metal riffs alongside Middle Eastern folk instruments and a piano solo. Farhi showcases his facility with quarter tones, which give his vocals their unique flavour.

The Kiss Of Babylon (The Sins) (Mabool: The Story Of The Three Sons Of Seven, 2004)

The album tells the story of three angels representing the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Powered by tasteful twin guitars, the track lets Farhi employ his death metal growl and the result sounds like a Middle Eastern Opeth.

Sapari (The Never Ending Way Of ORwarriOR, 2010)

Sapari is what happens when you take a traditional Yemenite Jewish song that is centuries old and give it a prog metal makeover. It's shamelessly progressive, hugely catchy and exquisitely mixed by Steven Wilson.

Disciples Of The Sacred Oath II (The Never Ending Way Of ORwarriOR, 2010)

Everything comes together perfectly here – the blend of acoustic and electric elements, the Middle Eastern instruments alongside the metal virtuosity. And it's an epic in composition and structure, brimming with pomp and grandeur.

All Is One (All Is One, 2013)

A fixture in their live sets, *All Is One* is an Oriental metal masterpiece, from the searing guitar lines to the rousing strings and the beautiful, uplifting voices of the choir. The album is an essential listen for any fan.

Let The Truce Be Known (All Is One, 2013)

Inspired by the Christmas Truce of World War I, when soldiers from both sides participated in an unofficial ceasefire, this is a sweeping metal ballad that plays like a heavy counterpoint to Paul McCartney's *Pipes Of Peace*.

We Do Not Resist (Unsung Prophets & Dead Messiahs, 2018)

A distillation of the new album's themes, *We Do Not Resist* seethes with anger. "Why do we deal with the birth of the child of Princess Kate for two days and not deal with kids dying in Africa because they don't have water?" says Farhi. "It's that cave. We prefer to deal with the shadows rather than dealing with the truth."

Only The Dead Have Seen The End Of War (Prophets & Dead Messiahs, 2018)

A track that reconnects Orphaned Land with the death metal of their early albums, *Only The Dead Have Seen The End Of War* is densely layered, with the orchestra adding drama to the headbanging guitar riff. **DW**

Double Or Nothing

After two of their band members left the ranks, **Perfect Beings** faced the choice to fold or fly. Spreading their wings, they've returned with their most ambitious work yet, but why is their third album called 'four' in German, and what does it all mean?

Words: David West
Images: Diana Feil

It might seem strange for Perfect Beings to name their third album *Vier*, which means four in German, but as with most things that the LA-based prog band do, there is meaning behind their madness.

After the release of their second album in 2015, the band went from a quintet to a trio following the departure of drummer Dicki Fliszar and bassist Chris Tristram. Rather than throw in the towel, Johannes Luley, Ryan Hurtgen and Jesse Nason vowed to press on and scale new heights.

"We were just regrouping after Chris and Dicki left," explains guitarist Luley. "And we thought, 'Okay, what are we going to do?' The idea was really to create a four-sided double vinyl album with four continuous compositions that cover one side of each album. And that's what we did."

Vier is almost shamelessly ambitious in scope and scale, running the gamut from progressive rock to classical to electronica across the titular four sides: *Guedra*, *The Golden Arc*, *Vibrational*, and *Anunnaki*.

"Obviously, the big mark you have to live up to is *Tales From Topographic Oceans* in the prog world, so I thought that was an interesting challenge for us," says Luley. "For Yes, I believe it was not a commercial success, even though today it's considered a classic and a big milestone. For me, the challenge in doing this long-form concept is for people to not tune out. I listen to *Tales...* now, I'm a huge Yes fan, but honestly, there are parts I don't care for. With this album, we don't want you to get bored: that's the biggest challenge."

The way that Perfect Beings create music usually begins with vocalist Hurtgen presenting a piano piece to Luley for consideration. "There have been days when he sends me five or six new ideas in one day and I'll go through them and put on my producer hat," says Luley. "I always look for catchy hooks. Even though we're a prog band, I want people to really get into the melodies. Music without the melody, there's something essential missing. Then we start developing the ideas once we all decide we like them."

Even with 18 minutes for each of the four parts of the double album, Jesse Nason found that he initially wrote too much music for his part *Vibrational*, which is the third section of the album, necessitating some judicious pruning. "It was like, okay, how do we subtract this so that I still have a sense of what I want to present but also find ways of cutting the fat to make it more streamlined?" says Nason. "I thought about writing three-and-a-half minute pop songs: you had to find ways of telling a really complex story in a short amount of time. Now it's 18 minutes instead of 22 minutes, so it was a really fun challenge. I don't know if I'd want to relive it, but it was fun."

As epic as the album may be, the band have a strict no-noodling policy to prevent any musical self-indulgence. "That's why the focus on vocals is so important to us," says Luley. "This is really telling a story. It's not just about us showing off our skills. I don't want to put ourselves down, but there are other bands that play 10 times faster and are more skilled than we are. In the end, the overall sound is more important than a guitar solo."

Nason believes that the band members each played to their strengths in

creating *Vier*. In his day job, Luley runs his recording studio My Sonic Temple and is a producer and engineer, so his experience in arranging and orchestrating strings paid off on the classical approach of *The Golden Arc*. *Vibrational* is built around Nason's keyboards, while the lyrics were left in the hands of Hurtgen. "The lyrics came out of the music," says the singer. "A lot of times I'm just trying to invoke the feelings that I'm getting from

"For me, the challenge in doing this long-form concept is for people to not tune out."

Johannes Luley

Perfect Beings album line-up, L-R: Ryan Hurtgen, Johannes Luley, Jesse Nason.

"It's not a science lesson or a spiritual guide. It's just an album of music. If you listen to it and you feel something, that's what I want."
Ryan Hurtgen

Perfect Beings, with added live drummer Sean Reinert (right).

the chord progressions that I write and then shape it from there. It's a constant reshaping and redefining process."

Guedra takes its name from a Moroccan dance, *The Golden Arc* tells the history of the United States. For *Vibrational*, "Jesse came up with the music on that, and that was a piece I imagined as being one day, 24 hours, so I wanted to contract the time into just one day," says Hurtgen. "The intro is this glorious meditation, basically, so that was an opportunity for me to bring in a lyric that could hold up to the beauty of the music."

Hurtgen says the final chapter, *Anunnaki*, concerns "different characters I was imagining in my head, people struggling with life in the modern world, trying to figure out where they belong and those kinds of themes. It's hard to talk about really, I'm still figuring out what it's about."

He explains that for his bandmates, the more abstract the lyrics are, the more they approve. For the singer himself, the meaning of his own lyrics has evolved over time with repeated listens to the finished album. "I think that's why I wanted the title to be *Vier*, because it's simple," he says. "I could have named the album *Freedom* or *The Secret Keys Of The Path Of Consciousness*, something really specific, but that would limit it. It's just 'four', it's four pieces. I want to refrain from saying what it's about. It's up to who's listening to it and what they're feeling when they listen to it. At the end of the day, that's what I'm trying to do, I'm trying to make you feel something and by defining it, that might just take you out of it. It's not a science lesson or a spiritual guide. It's just an album of music. If you listen to it and you feel something, that's what I want."

After crafting their magnum opus so meticulously in the studio, Luley says the Beings may take a different approach for their fourth album. "For the next record, we've already talked about doing a live thing, so we'll be setting up as a live band and we'll try to approach it that way," he says.

This leads to the question of how the musicians will present *Vier* live on stage. If the music wasn't already sufficiently challenging, they've decided to tackle the almost Herculean labour of playing the entire double album in full. To achieve this, the three core members will be joined live by drummer Sean Reinert, bassist Jason Lobell, and Dan Kaneyuki on flute and saxophone. Even then, there's still a lot of ground to cover. "*Anunnaki*, yeah, five or six people can pull this off," says Nason. "But then it comes to *The Golden Arc*, okay, who's going to cover the string part? We need an orchestra! We have to wrap our heads around it and see it from a new perspective, but we're going to do it."

Vier is available now from InsideOut Music. See www.perfectbeingsband.com for more info.

Guitar Man
Johannes Luley talks about his solo work...

As if crafting a massive double concept album is not enough to keep him occupied, Johannes Luley released his second solo album, *QITARA*, in late 2017. Where the Beings express his progressive influences, when Luley flies solo it's all about fusion. "I come from jazz originally," he explains. "In my teenage years I asked my dad to pay for my guitar lessons. My dad, being a huge Coltrane and Miles Davis fan, said, 'You can do that, but you have to take jazz lessons.' I was into Slade and Alice Cooper, all the glam bands of the time and I reluctantly agreed, but I've never looked back."

QITARA, as the name implies, is dedicated to the electric guitar and the artists that inspired Luley, from Soft Machine and Steve Hillage to David Gilmour, Jeff Beck and John McLaughlin – "Probably my all-time favourite guitar player," says Luley, who didn't want to impose his jazz rock proclivities on Perfect Beings. "I feel very comfortable in that genre, but I didn't want to push that on the band. They're not afraid of jazz but it's not where they come from. I was happy to have that outlet. Doing something more on the jazz side has definitely been itching me."

Luley played around 15 different guitars on the record, including a Steve Howe model Gibson ES-175 on the track *Red And Orange*. "I got this guitar because it was built the same year I was born and later I found out it was built in the same month that I was born, so I fell in love with that and we're inseparable now," says Luley. "I'm not a collector, I'm a player, but I do collect guitars. I don't collect them to put them up on the wall, I collect them to play them." **DW**

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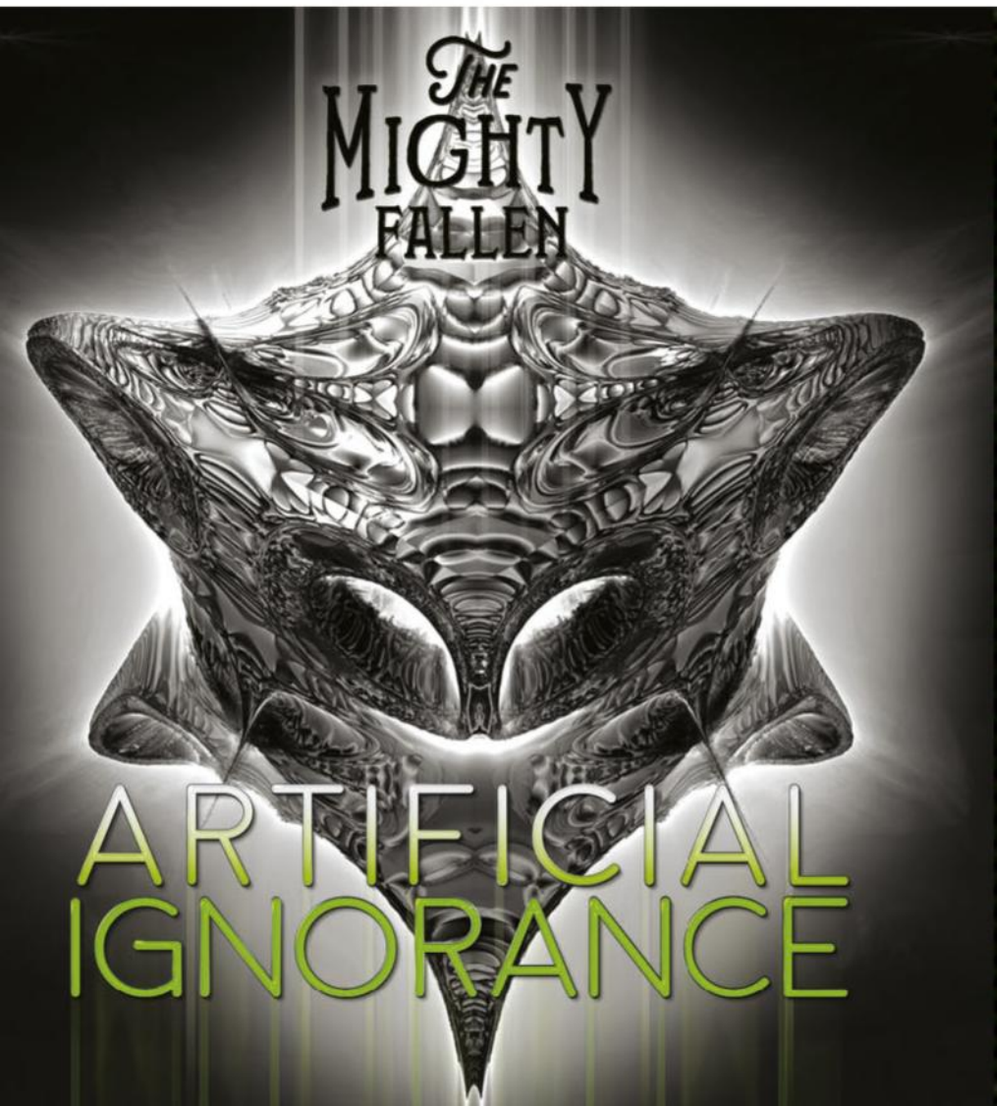

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Hair Raisingly Good! It's all "stylised glamour" for Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry.

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Sheer Chic

Roxy Music's eponymous 1972 debut album is being reissued as a super deluxe edition to celebrate its 45th anniversary. In light of the release, **Phil Manzanera** and **Paul Thompson** look back on the making of the album, and what it means to them…

Words: Paul Lester

"Bryan [Ferry] has been doing it for bloody years," says Phil Manzanera of the long-awaited, super deluxe edition of Roxy Music's 1972 debut album, which includes a 5.1 mix of the record by Steven Wilson and sleevenotes by Richard Williams, who first wrote about the band in 1971 for *Melody Maker*'s Horizon — New Names That Could Break The Sound Barrier section.

"We've been going bonkers: 'Oh, for goodness' sake. Get it out!'" Manzanera adds of the reissue. "But Bryan's done a brilliant job: the sleevenotes, the [fashion designer] Antony Price sketches. We've been talking about it for eight years. But that's Roxy for you: the career strategy is non-existent."

The Roxy guitarist might be right when he says, "We could have been bigger had we had an amazing manager. We're our own worst enemies." Certainly they could have been more successful in America, had they been prepared to put in the necessary "graft" (Manzanera's word) and do the requisite hefty long tours.

Still, they didn't do badly. They dominated Britain's glam-era pop scene in the first half of the 70s, despite having next to nothing in common with Slade, Sweet et al and not being a pop group, or even a rock group. Indeed, they shared as much ground with the prog fraternity: Ferry had auditioned to be lead singer of King Crimson following the departure of Greg Lake, Roxy were looked after by EG, the management team behind Crimson and ELP, their original guitarist was Davy O'List of The Nice and that 1972 debut album happened to be produced by King Crimson lyricist Pete Sinfield. The fact that the music comprised as many multi-part mini-suites as it did actual neat songs increased its prog quotient.

Above: Roxy Music's eponymous 1972 debut album.

"We could have been bigger had we had an amazing manager. We're our own worst enemies."

Phil Manzanera

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Shine On: Phil Manzanera, September 1972.

Manzanera had been in a prog/jazz fusion outfit called Quiet Sun with Bill MacCormick (later of Robert Wyatt's Matching Mole) when he chanced upon an advert in *Melody Maker* seeking "the perfect guitarist for avant rock group".

"That's how they saw themselves: an avant-garde rock group, not glam like their peers," says Manzanera, who still has the *Melody Maker* clipping. He recalls the ad's series of demands, and his confident ability to meet them. "'Original'? Yeah. 'Creative'? Tick. 'Adaptable'? Yep. 'Melodic'? Yup. 'Fast'? Yes. 'Slow'? Yup. 'Elegant'? Yep. 'Witty'? Yes. 'Scary'? Oh yeah, I can do scary. 'Stable'? Yes. 'Tricky'? Yes, I could be very tricky."

The ad for the drummer was similar ("Wanted: Wonder drummer for avant rock team"). Paul Thompson was intrigued by the word "avant".

"I'd never seen it used in a rock band setting before — it was more commonly used in jazz," he says, his accent none-more-Geordie (like Ferry, he's from the north-east). "I was hoping they'd sound a bit like King Crimson, but really, I didn't have a clue what the music would be like."

Thompson has been credited with tethering the rest of the band and giving them a solid base.

"That's what people have said, but I don't like to blow me own trumpet," he says modestly. "But Eno has said Roxy would have been an ordinary student art rock band if I hadn't joined."

A fan of John Bonham, Ringo Starr and Family, Thompson detected "elements of prog" in tracks such as *The Bob (Medley)* but adapted well to the assorted "stops and changes".

Manzanera had been used to playing "ridiculous prog rock stuff in funny time signatures like 7/15" with Quiet Sun when, in late 1971, he turned up for the Roxy audition with his "unfashionable" Gibson ES-325 at the tiny workingman's cottage in Battersea that Ferry shared with Andy Mackay when the louche crooner and the handsome saxophonist were both still schoolteachers.

There, too, that day were Thompson, experimental sonic FX man Brian Eno, and the band's original bassist Graham Simpson. Five years their junior, the

21-year-old Manzanera was amazed at "how grown-up these guys seemed: they had jobs, cars, bank accounts…" He was equally impressed by their less-is-more approach. "They said, 'Let's have a jam,' and it was just two chords. It was such a relief not having to play 'tricky-dicky' stuff."

Mantric drones with Eno's VCS3 synth treatments on top, the racket couldn't help reminding Manzanera of The Velvet Underground.

"If there was a little [speech] bubble above my head it would have said, 'You're in the nearest equivalent of The Velvet Underground.' Those Velvets albums were so important to me."

Unlike so many of his guitarist peers, Manzanera — who was brought up in Cuba, Venezuela and Colombia — wasn't steeped in the blues, gravitating instead towards free jazz guitarist Sonny Sharrock and, inevitably, Jimi Hendrix.

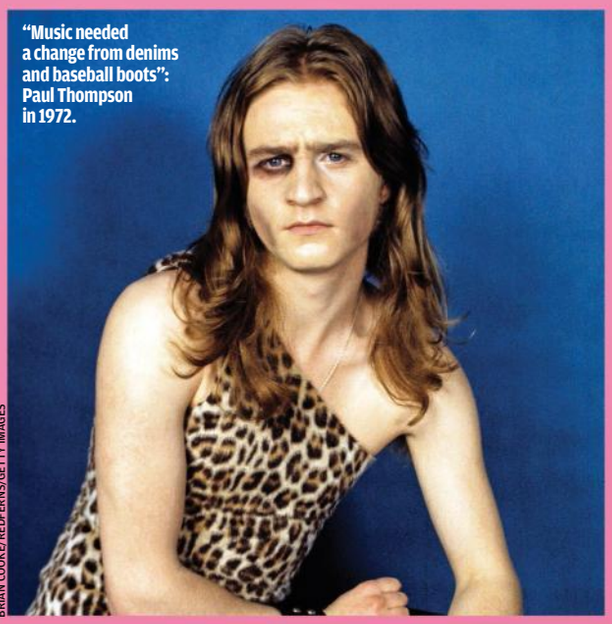
"Seeing Hendrix on *Top Of The Pops* and live at the Albert Hall changed everything," he recalls. "It was jaw-dropping."

Roxy Music suited Manzanera and his own experimental tendencies.

"I thought there was one song [from the debut] that smacked a little of prog and that was *The Bob (Medley)*, which was almost like Genesis without the funny time signatures," he says. "It had lots of different parts: the heavy bit, the quiet bit… Whereas others like *Re-Make/Re-Model* were anarchic, with all these weird bits of Eno on."

Meanwhile, for *Ladytron*, Ferry asked Eno to approximate a lunar landscape. *If There Is Something* went from jaunty country hoedown to the sax-smeared heart of darkness. *Chance Meeting* was like a miniature David Lean movie, only with a backdrop of tortured muzak. *2HB* was a queasy listening torch ballad. *Bitters End* was like Noël Coward doing a doo wop duet with The Ink Spots. *Would You Believe?* reimagined Showaddywaddy on Saturn.

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

"Music needed a change from denims and baseball boots": Paul Thompson in 1972.

On the first album, Roxy Music were purveying postmodernism and retro-futurism years before those terms became pop currency.

"I could see this was rock," Manzanera notes, "but it was avant-garde. The music was often simple but based on ideas to do with systems music. There was improvisation, which was good for me because I'd been brought up listening to freeform jazz. The idea of having sections: there was an affinity there in a bizarre way. There were different sound textures and colours, combined with a rock beat."

Was it important that Roxy weren't all virtuosos?

"Crucial," he says. He paints a picture of a band who were like punks five years ahead of schedule. "I didn't want to be a technique player. It was more about atmospheres and moods than learning scales or playing fast. We were inspired amateurs. You didn't need to have studied at Berklee for years. You just needed one or two chords, enthusiasm and a good idea."

Roxy Music was created in a matter of weeks in a quaint, old basement studio — Command — on London's Piccadilly. It was largely recorded live, with the four players performing together in the studio, Ferry laying down guide vocals and Eno adding effects and live-treating the guitar and sax in a series of oblique strategies.

Thompson recalls the sessions being "quite chaotic", but it was a controlled kind of anarchy.

"It was fantastic," he says, "especially Eno's left field approach and the strength of Bryan's material."

For Thompson, Roxy was always "Bryan's baby". Manzanera jokes that "you should never have a band with two Brians", but he essentially agrees.

"We created a musical context for Bryan Ferry's unusual character voice, and for his lyrics, to fit in," he sums up. "We created a musical world that, combined with the imagery, people could look into and see some depth. We created this Roxy World."

Below: the inner gatefold of the debut, with animalistic art direction by Antony Price.

ROXY MUSIC/ PRESS

Roxy Music in 1972, L-R: Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera, Paul Thompson, Rik Kenton (who replaced Graham Simpson), Andy Mackay, Brian Eno.

By "we", Manzanera means Antony Price and the cast of, well, several, who together comprised Roxy's extended operation. If George Martin was the fifth Beatle, Price, PR consultant-cum-Minister-of-Information Simon Puxley and the rest were the sixth, seventh and so on of Roxy Music.

"We were totally art directed by Antony Price," says the guitarist, recalling the iconic six individual images of the band smothered in leopard skin and alien allure that appeared on the inner sleeve. "I remember still living with my mum and getting on the bus in Clapham, going to the photo shoot, wondering, 'What am I going to wear?' I got my mum to sew some diamanté glittery stuff onto a white shirt. I got to the photo shoot and Antony took one look at me and said, 'No, no, no — put this on.' He gave me a black leather jacket and some sunglasses — job done."

Thompson was still working on a building site even as Roxy were recording their debut album and doing John Peel sessions.

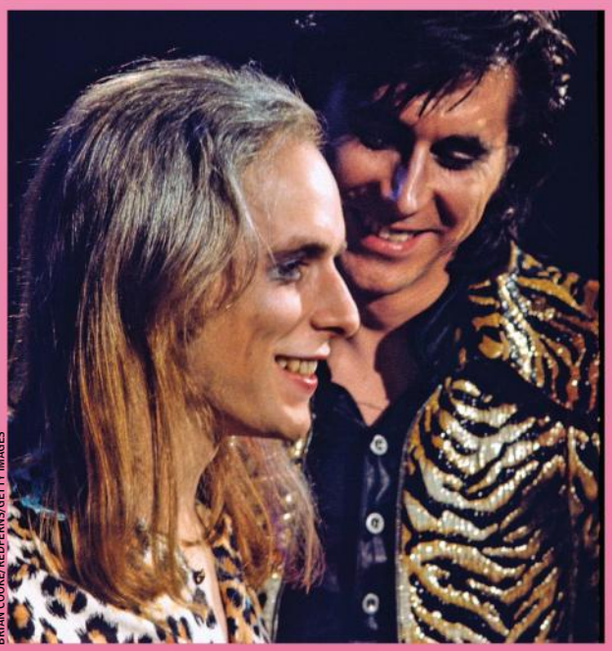
"I remember turning up at the BBC in Shepherd's Bush covered in brick dust and my hair all matted," the drummer laughs. He might have baulked at some of fashion maven Price's wilder excesses, but he could see the point of a glamorous image.

"It was very strange," Thompson says of the chance release, within two weeks of each other, of Roxy Music and David Bowie's *...Ziggy Stardust...* album. "It was a zeitgeist thing. Music needed a change from denims and baseball boots. We wanted to bring a bit of glamour back, rather than look like everybody else."

> "That first album was a real breakthrough, and very influential: I've heard everyone from The Sex Pistols to Duran Duran citing it as an inspiration."
>
> **Paul Thompson**

Hardly surprisingly, Roxy's ostentatious stage wear wound up the neanderthal types then at large in the UK and US. Manzanera has vivid memories of being attacked onstage here and in the States.

"I remember supporting Rory Gallagher in Liverpool. Now, I loved Taste and the check shirts and everything, but his audience were not going to have this bunch of so-called 'faggots' playing weird music, so we got water-bombed. We got water-bombed all over the world. In Bakersfield in California, supporting Santana, people shouted, 'Get off!'" He laughs at Roxy's brittle determination beneath the outré garb. "We said, 'No, we won't.'"



BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

"The Two Brians": Eno and Ferry.

Roxy also antagonised the authentic music brigade, who didn't like the way they seemed to appear, as though from nowhere, in the charts: the debut album at No 10 and non-album debut single, *Virginia Plain*, at No 4.

"People were disparaging," Manzanera says. "'Oh, they haven't paid their dues or slogged around.'"

Nevertheless, the prevailing view was that Roxy, along with Bowie — who they supported twice in 1972, in front of 50 people at the Greyhound in Fulham and at the more capacious Rainbow — were a Good Thing, together offering the sense that the 60s were over and the 70s started here.

"People were looking for something more colourful, particularly in that little period between 1969 and 1971 when most of the great 60s artists were either dead or close to death because of heroin and the drugs were keeping everybody down," Manzanera elaborates. "Then Bowie and us appear and we're all colourful and theatrical and showbizzy, and people go, 'Phew!' Suddenly, people were free to be flamboyant or gay. I remember watching Jimi Hendrix on *Top Of The Pops* and thinking, 'What the fuck is that?' I can imagine somebody doing the same with our first appearance. There's all these people in the audience in jumpers and flares, and suddenly we come on as though from the Planet Zog! You can imagine their parents going, 'What the bally hell?'"

Manzanera is proud of Roxy's debut, while Thompson is especially fond of *Virginia Plain* and its irresistible demonic electronic supersonic mo-mo-momentum, to coin a phrase ("When the keyboards and drums come in, it's like, 'Woof!' Being hit by a tidal wave"). Truth be told, the drummer hasn't heard the album since the day it came out. But, 46 years on, he can still appreciate its impact.

"It was pretty groundbreaking," he says. "Something new. A different approach to music. I think the second album [*For Your Pleasure*, 1973] was better — we had more input — but that first album was a breakthrough, and very influential: I've heard everyone from the Sex Pistols to Duran Duran citing it as an inspiration."

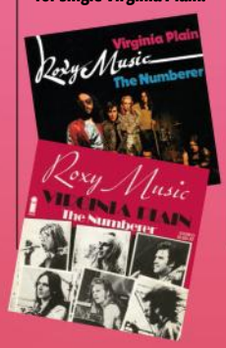
Roxy's stylised glamour was catnip to the new romantics, its sense of provocation a beacon to the punks. According to Thompson, who takes immense pride in this, that debut album annoyed as many as it appeased.

"A lot of musicians didn't like it cos it was kind of rough," he says of the often angular, staccato, abrasive sonics. "I won't say who."

Because it was led more by ideas than it was technical prowess?

"Probably," Thompson laughs. "Well, that and the fact that we were a bunch of poofs all dressed up."

Below: The artwork for single *Virginia Plain*.



The Super Deluxe Edition of Roxy Music is available now via UMC. See www.roxymusic.com for more information.

Virtuoso pianist **Gleb Kolyadin** has enjoyed success in iamthemorning, with the duo winning Album Of The Year at the Progressive Music Awards in 2016. But with a debut solo record now in his arsenal, things look set to get even greater for the Russian…

Words: Chris Cope **Image:** Alexander Kuznetco

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

It's hard not to be shaken into a little bit of awe by the list of esteemed guest musicians on Gleb Kolyadin's debut solo album. It's almost a who's who of modern-day prog, with Gavin Harrison and Nick Beggs underpinning things in the rhythm section, and Jordan Rudess, Steve Hogarth, Mick Moss and Theo Travis contributing cameos too.

Yet despite all the names in bright lights, it's clear that Kolyadin is the true star on the self-titled record. It's a jaw-dropping collection of largely instrumental salvos from the iamthemorning pianist, with a smorgasbord of styles present, from prog blow-outs and classical piano to fusion, minimalism and avant-garde. Quite simply, it's probably one of the most exciting musical adventures you're likely to go on this year.

It seems *Gleb Kolyadin* has been a long time coming for the virtuoso Russian. It was around seven years ago that the idea of branching out from prog duo iamthemorning first fizzed in his mind, but he ended up using his stockpile of ideas for the group's award-winning 2016 record *Lighthouse* instead of going it alone.

"Years after, I had so many more sketches that it felt embarrassing to go on accumulating them without using that material," Kolyadin says. "If I set a goal to simply record all the old ideas in a good quality, I'd end up with enough material for another two or three albums. But I'd rather take a journey similar to what I've recently taken, to create a unique story rather than just a set of tracks. It was a very long and consequently hard process in terms of recording, but in terms of the writing, that goes much faster."

Upping the prog credentials with unashamed gusto, the pianist says the record is based on a story of a "person dreaming of a non-existent house", which is ultimately a projection of the inner self.

"While passing through twisted corridors and climbing up ladders, the character puts the scattered ideas together, reinvents them and comes to the holistic view of his own world," Kolyadin says.

There's certainly an interesting musical palette underneath to tell the tale. *Astral Architecture* sees Antimatter's Mick Moss channel his best inner Eddie Vedder for an introspective yet rousing rally, *Kaleidoscope* is a flurry of finger-frenzy on the piano, and the 10-minute *Confluence* — which features Marillion's Steve Hogarth — starts jazz bar before ending with some prog rock pomp.

Technically it's as sharp as a knife, but the moments of virtuosity don't feel overblown or superfluous — a sometimes tough balance to achieve — and you get the sense that the music comes from deep within.

"I think it's important to attract listeners' attention, but I never force that," Kolyadin says. "I find it important to create an engaging story, an interesting dialogue rich in emotions and images. In this work I tried to unite the genres that I personally take interest in. And, in fact, the music I like is very diverse."

Musically, *Gleb Kolyadin* uses a number of ethnic motifs, which the musician says "symbolise the mystique" of a human life. The track *Strand*, for example, is like a "look into the microcosmos, a world in miniature, and a kind of a cipher of each of us".

Kolyadin explains: "I wasn't trying to imitate anyone when composing this music but later on, to my surprise,

“I discovered fragments in my tracks that remind me of early Gong albums or some Steve Reich pieces.”

Gleb Kolyadin: going solo – with a little help from his friends...

I discovered fragments in my tracks that remind me of early Gong albums or some Steve Reich pieces. Apparently there's no one particular influence —there's just an accumulated 'baggage' of the music I had played or listened to that my brain just adds randomly in its own creative process.

"The only bit I made on purpose was some sound allusions to the universe of David Lynch. In one of the tracks [mixer and engineer] Vlad Avy played all his guitar parts end-to-beginning only to use them reversed on the record, similar to the Black Lodge in *Twin Peaks*. Remarkably, its season three was out after we'd finished all our work, but this movie turned surprisingly close in spirit to what I've been thinking the whole last year while working on the album."

Koloydin grew up in Saint Petersburg, Russia's second largest city after Moscow, and the country has cast a strong spell over his creativity and songwriting. The historical features of Russia and its deep-rooted musicality have — consciously or subconsciously — seeped into his psyche for much of his life.

"Since childhood I've had a very close connection to Russian folklore, with its melodiousness and feel," he says. "Secondly, playing piano since childhood impacted me a lot. The piano school and its legacy is very honoured in Russia. I was lucky to have the teachers that I had. Having passed all the steps from a music school to conservatory, I'm strongly convinced that it's the music school and my teachers that made me who I am now, not only in a professional way but in a human way too.

"I was born and I grew up in Saint Petersburg, a beautiful city that has a rich culture and turbulent history, where people like Dostoyevsky and Shostakovich lived. Sure enough, that kind of atmosphere influences both consciousness and creativity."

Kolyadin formed iamthemorning back in 2010, joining up with singer Marjana Semkina to stirring effect. The ethereal duo worked with Porcupine Tree and King Crimson drummer Gavin Harrison on their second and third records, so perhaps it was only natural that the sticksman would be willing to help out Kolyadin on his solo album.

But the guests kept on coming, with Steven Wilson comrade Nick Beggs laying down all of the bass work, and the other cameo musicians quickly signing on too.

"I still can't figure out how getting the guest appearances happened," Kolyadin says. "I guess that thought was born two autumns ago when iamthemorning received the Album Of The Year Award from *Prog*. I was very inspired back then and I thought it would be nice to make an interesting collaboration for my own album. Vlad Avy supported the idea, so then I just messaged everyone I'd want to play with. All of a sudden, all these people agreed after listening to the material."

The pianist, meanwhile, said getting the octopus-limbed Harrison on board was one of the most pivotal moments of the recording process as drums began to be laid down alongside the lead piano.

"He was the first to agree by replying the very same evening that he very much liked the material," Kolyadin says. "That moment I understood that the album was really going to happen. He asked me to send him sheet notes for all the piano parts to polish his parts. That process helped me correct some mistakes and get the material ready for recording the piano. A couple of weeks later, Gavin recorded drums for all of the tracks in a row, one by one, and they were just perfect. The grand piano and the drums sounded fantastically homogeneous. That musician is a real pro."

Kolyadin cites older prog as one of his main influences, particularly King Crimson's *Red* era, along with Jethro Tull and Genesis.

"But at the same time I don't mind listening to *10,000 Days* by Tool or some of Brian Eno's ambient albums," he adds. "Actually, I'm pretty omnivorous as long as there's magic and dynamics inside the music."

But while prog adventurism runs through his veins, the Russian doesn't like to be pigeonholed by the genre and instead sees himself as a someone with a veritable myriad of musical styles on his mind.

"I think this very album may really be identified as prog, but to be honest, I wouldn't like to identify myself as a prog-only musician," Kolyadin says. "I have a classical music degree and I like to play very different music, from classical to tango, minimalism and avant-garde. I even had an experience playing some electronic music. But my classical pianist background is prevailing in me. It's one of the main sources of ideas."

As the new year beds in, iamthemorning are working on new material, with Kolyadin having high hopes over the eventual finished product. But for now, the spotlight is all on the pianist. It appears the maestro is vindicated in his decision to go solo – even if there was some sweat and tears along the way.

"The work took a pretty long time, so I think I've gone through all the stages from a fanatic and neurotic involvement in it to utterly detesting everything that was going on," Kolyadin admits. "But now that I listen to the album, I like the music, particularly as a listener. And that's not a bad result, I think."

Gleb Kolyadin is out now via Kscope. For details, see www.kscopemusic.com.

"I think it's important to attract listeners' attention, but I never force that."

Morning Glory: the iamthemorning man is exploring solo ventures.

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Claire Hamill

This British singer-songwriter has had a career since the age of 17 and has worked and toured with the likes of Jethro Tull, King Crimson, Yes and Wishbone Ash. So now we have to ask: **how prog is Claire Hamill?** **Words:** Lin Bensley

Though modesty forbids her, Claire Hamill is probably more qualified than most to call herself an ideal candidate for *Prog*'s Outer Limits, should she feel so inclined. Her credentials are impeccable: during the 70s, as a fledgling singer/songwriter, she carved out a singular career.

"Raised on Teesside, I was the eldest of seven siblings in an Irish Catholic family," she recalls. "We never had anything in the house to listen to music on — my mother had children instead of stuff! But my granny played piano and my aunties and my mother all sang, so that's how I learnt to harmonise, listening to my family sing. I loved The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Monkees and Free."

By the time she was 12 years old, Hamill was playing guitar and singing her own songs at local venues, and she eventually came to the attention of John McCoy and Tony Dimitriades, who jointly managed her career and secured a contract with Island Records. She was barely 17 when she recorded her 1972 debut, *One House Left Standing*.

"The title of the album was my suggestion," says Hamill. "At the time I recorded it, I was living at home in Port Clarence, a tiny hamlet on the north bank of the River Tees, between the shipyard and the gasworks. It was gritty and dark and they were always knocking bits of it down.

"One night I came home and they had knocked the street down, including the house where I used to live, but they left one house — one house left standing. It was silhouetted against a dark blue sky and made a deep impression on me."

While the album contains several of Hamill's own self-penned compositions, the majority of the lyrics were written by her then partner, Mike Coles. "At least he wrote the words and I turned them into songs," says Hamill. "Mike went to art college and was a talented artist. If it hadn't been for him and his wonderful poetry, I doubt whether I would have got a recording contract at the time. I may well have secured one later, but it was Mike that gave my songs depth and maturity."

> **"I became close to Yes and would regularly go to their gigs and the parties afterwards. When I listen to the *Abracadabra* album now, I'm transported back to that time in my life."**

First Steps: Hamill's 1972 debut album *Last House Standing*.

A cursory listen to the album proves that Hamill does herself a serious disservice. Indeed, favourable reviews for *One House Left Standing* meant Hamill was invited to make a second album.

October (1973) was produced by former Yardbirds bassist Paul Samwell-Smith, who had already worked with the likes of Amazing Blondel, Bronco and Cat Stevens.

"Paul was gentlemanly and precise," says Hamill. "He knew exactly what kind of sound he was after and to this day it remains the best-recorded album in my collection, I think."

Though she had by now parted company with Mike Coles, her own writing shows how much Hamill had developed, both musically and emotionally, in so short a space of time. Nowhere is this more evident than on *Speedbreaker*, which details in painful honesty her brief liaison with John Martyn: *'Don't worry, I fully realise that you only love me because I'm here/ the only one available — the only woman near/I will try my best not to fall in love/ cause that will be too much to bear.'*

A sense of loss and separation permeates several songs, as with *Warrior Of The Water*. Hamill explains, "It's a very meaningful song for me as it was written for one of the great loves of my life, Mike Marsh. I met Mike when I toured America in 1972. He was tall, blond, green-eyed and charismatic, and nothing like the boys I had been used to in England. In fact, he was a surfer!

"I fell madly in love with him, but couldn't be with him, I couldn't leave my family and I couldn't leave my country. Looking back, the song sounds even more poignant to me now."

Though *October* elicited further praise from critics, this didn't translate into sales. Island became jittery after the album failed

Claire Hamill Today: still touring and recording after more than four decades in music.

ANNA MALN/PRESS

BRIAN COOKE/PRESS

Claire Hamill:
a prog icon?

Northern Soul: Hamill returning to her Teesside roots.

GRAHAM LOWE/PRESS

to recoup its costs and so Hamill switched to the Kinks' own Konk label. Under the supervision of Ray Davies, Hamill recorded *Stage Door Johnnies*, and working with the Kinks man proved to be a defining experience.

"Ray was amazing. Hugely charismatic. You felt his presence when he was in the room. He was a colossus – working with him was inspiring."

The album features mostly cover songs, as Hamill concedes: "It may be that I had not written enough new material at the time, but it could also be because I hadn't made an impression on the charts that they felt my music wasn't accessible enough and that doing covers might help."

Coincidently, her astute reworking of the Michael Murphey country hit *Geronimo's Cadillac* received extensive coverage on both television and radio and almost gave her that elusive hit. And anyone so minded might detect a note of irony in the fact that one of the few self-penned numbers on the album, *You Take My Breath Away* (also dedicated to Mike Marsh), would later become her best-known song after it was in turn covered by Eva Cassidy.

Hamill decided to produce her next album for Konk herself, and *Abracadabra* was the admirable result. Among others, *Rory* (written for Yes drummer Alan White's then girlfriend) emphasises her talent as a songwriter.

"Alan, Rory, Tony [Dimitriades] and I all lived together in a flat in Marble Arch. I became close to Yes and would regularly go to their gigs and the parties afterwards. When I listen to that album now, I'm transported back to that time in my life. I was smoking pot, going to parties, driving around with Rory in Alan's Panther or his Bentley. It was a hell of a ride!

"Jon [Anderson] suggested that I might like his song *You Dear*, which he had written for his wife, Jenny. I was keen to cover it and I love the way the melody builds up to a crescendo. At this point in time, all I wanted to be was a rock star like the boys. Pat Benatar was all the rage, and after being the UK's answer to Joni Mitchell, I rather fancied myself as the UK's answer to Pat Benatar."

Soon after recording *Abracadabra*, Hamill was invited to provide the vocal for *Look Over Your Shoulder* on Steve Howe's *The Steve Howe Album* (1979).

"Because of my friendship with Alan, I had frequently bumped into Steve Howe and was delighted when he asked me if I would sing on his album."

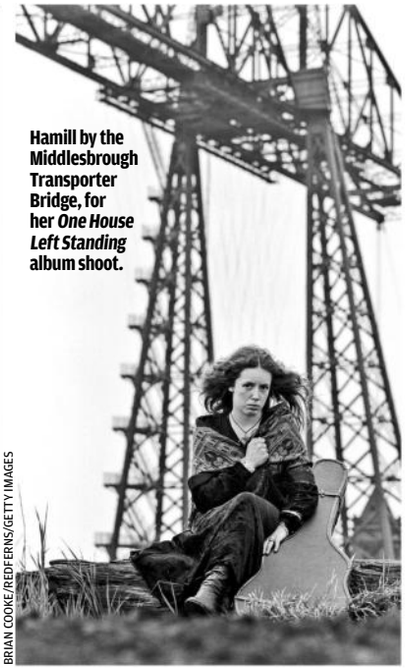
From top: 1973's *October*, 1974's *Stage Door Johnnies* and 1975's *Abracadabra*.

1986's *Voices* album, Hamill's most successful to date.

Hamill was also invited to provide backing vocals on the album *The Friends Of Mr Cairo* (1981) by Jon And Vangelis. "I supported Jon on tour. Our last gig was at the Royal Albert Hall and Vangelis was there. We went out for dinner after the show and then Vangelis took us back to his apartment for a jam. It was then that he asked me to sing backing vocals on his album with Jon."

This was a hectic time for Hamill, who had also been working with

> **"Ray Davies was amazing. Hugely charismatic. You felt his presence when he was in the room. He was a colossus – working with him was inspiring."**



Hamill by the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, for her *One House Left Standing* album shoot.

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

L-R: Jean Roussel, Claire Hamill, Gerry Conway, Pat Donaldson and Albert Lee at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, February 2, 1973.

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

The Changing Woman: Claire Hamill in 1983.

Wishbone Ash on the recording of *Just Testing* (1980). "I co-wrote *Living Proof* with Laurie Wisefield, which turned into a great blessing for me as it was hugely popular with the band and the fans and has kept my name alive in Wishbone Ash history."

Hamill joined the band during their 1981 tour and again provided backing vocals on several tracks for their album *Number The Brave*, which was released the same year.

By this time Hamill had met and married Nick Austin, then owner of Beggars Banquet records. He signed her to their offshoot Coda to record an album of New Age music, encouraging Hamill to create an album of vocal music without words. She thought the idea was insane at first, but soon became intrigued as they commenced the recording sessions for what became *Voices* (1986).

"The album took six weeks to record and was the easiest thing I had ever written – and, to date, the most successful. I was very bemused by the idea and it really took me a while to see that what I was doing was unique, but I'm proud of the effect I had."

The album received national exposure when its music was used in the BBC TV series *The Domesday Book* and it went on to become a bestseller in the New Age music charts.

Her next album, *Love In The Afternoon* (1988) was recorded during a time when she was raising a family and immersed in a busy home life.

"The truth of the matter is that Nick was under contract to his publisher in Japan to deliver an album and so that was it, I had to go into the studio to record whether I wanted to or not! The album does contain some of my personal favourite songs, but I had a hell of a job recording them and fitting the sessions around my role as a wife and mother."

The title track was taken from a song Hamill had written many years before about a romantic tryst with Robert Fripp. "It was when we were touring Italy in 1972 and became firm friends. I think Robert was more in love with me that I was with him – I was still in love with Mike, so it was never going to work long-term, but it was fun while it lasted."

The Invited Guest: albums from Steve Howe, Jon And Vangelis and Wishbone Ash, all featuring Claire Hamill.

After a lengthy hiatus, *The Lost And The Lovers* was released in 2004. "Perhaps I keep reinventing myself, or I might just be reflecting the endless movement of time and its impact upon us."

Her latest offering, *When Daylight Arrives*, contains many bittersweet meditations, all of which serve to prove that Hamill's musical pilgrimage is one that has enriched the lives of many, even if the rewards and recognition have often been all too slender.

On *The Lost And The Lovers*, Hamill re-recorded *You Take My Breath Away*, reaffirming her belief in unconditional love.

"This is my lucky song – thank God I had at least one! I can't explain the feeling I got when I heard Eva Cassidy singing it for the first time, but I just thought to myself, 'At last, at last, I've written something that sounds great, good enough for Eva Cassidy to sing, and she only sings amazing songs!' I think it was my proudest moment."

Latest album *When Daylight Arrives*, released in 2015.

See www.clairehamill.co.uk for more information.

YOUR SHOUT!

She has links to Yes, Jon & Vangelis, Robert Fripp and more... but how prog do our readers think **Claire Hamill** is?

"Very fond memories of her *Voices* album from 1986, using her voice as a musical instrument without words. My wife and I saw her perform some of those songs as part of a vocal group which featured Enid Williams from Girlschool! Great songwriter, and a versatile, emotive voice."
David Elliott

"I only really know her more commercial work such as *Touchpaper*. Great album. But she has worked with the likes of Nick Magnus and there are definitely prog-like tendencies."
Phil Morris

"Great vocals for Wishbone Ash, and a lovely lady to chat to."
Steve Lord

"Met her recently. She was singing in the bar at the end of my road. Got her to sign one of my Ash CDs."
Darren Johnson

"I would include her before many that you already include."
Solent Area Prog

"Maybe not as prog as Peter Hammill!"
Dave Smith

"Claire Hamill! She sang one tune on *The Steve Howe Album*, *Look Over Your Shoulder*. I like that one a lot."
Bas Langeris

"Don't know of her solo output, but I do know she sang backing vocals on the Wishbone Ash album *Number The Brave*, and was very good."
Paul Watson

"Claire has a fab voice. If you can find one we did a great compilation in 2007 called *The Minor Fall, The Major Lift* on Esoteric. Some is folky, some not unlike Tori Amos, some quite proggy. My favourite track is *Glastonbury*."
Vicky Powell

"She opened for Caravan at a club called Ebbets Field in Denver around 1975. Rumour is that the band 'pulled the train' with her. If that's not prog, I dont know what is."
James Hresko

"Let's see... At various times she has toured with Jethro Tull and King Crimson, and she sang on *The Steve Howe Album* and a couple of Wishbone Ash albums as well. Yet in spite of the prog connections I'd put her more in the folk rock and new-age categories, with the occasional foray into rock and prog."
Clive Summerfield

"Not very. When I saw her supporting King Crimson many years ago, some wag in the crowd shouted *'Interstellar Overdrive!'*, and she didn't even know what he was talking about."
Rick Startin

"Art rock and a bit of an experimental artist. Yes, she is prog in some way."
Eleni Eriksson

"Saw her live with Wishbone Ash. And she had her own group call Transporter for a while (great single called *Kids On The Run*). More light rock than prog..."
Nigel Hobday

A Saucerful Of Secrets

Anna von Hausswolff's fourth album, *Dead Magic*, digs deep into a dark yet enchanting world, with a little help from a 20th-century organ. The Swedish singer and musician meets *Prog* to discuss writer's block, the wide variety of artists who inspire her, and why she's been getting her hands dirty – literally…

Words: Rob Hughes **Images:** Lady Lusen

Writer's block is the scourge of creative ambition. Returning home to Sweden after touring her last album, 2015's *The Miraculous*, Anna von Hausswolff underwent an artistic slump. "I'd been playing and talking about that record so much that I fell into this place where I totally lost contact with my own creativity," she tells *Prog*. "I had this extremely passive, kind of hopeless and neutral state of mind. My dark imagination was projecting ideas onto me, telling me that I didn't have any. So it was kind of degrading itself. This dark force was pushing out the lighter ones."

Von Hausswolff decided to respond by doing what she does best — making music. "I think I was suffering from exhaustion," she says. "I'm a very sensitive person and need to learn how to cool down a little. So I started writing music again, because that's what I know. But when you're not in contact with your creativity and curiosity, it's very hard to feel the magic. Then gradually I pulled myself out of it. The songs you're hearing on *Dead Magic* are the ones I wrote when I was in that void."

The striking yet mysterious cover of Anna von Hausswolff's new album, *Dead Magic*.

Dead Magic is an extraordinary piece of work. Written during that creative impasse of 2016 and recorded last year in Denmark, its central motif is the sound of the 20th-century organ at Copenhagen's Marmorkirken, one of the largest and most imposing churches in Scandinavia.

Von Hausswolff and her five-piece band, overseen by US producer Randall Dunn, frame her buzzing drones in atmospheric arrangements that swing from the thunderous to the ambient. It's often a shatteringly intense experience, her impressionistic songs stretching out into vast, textural epics. Similarly, von Hausswolff's vocals shape-shift from subtle invocations to fearful shrieks.

In person, von Hausswolff is petite and gregarious. It's difficult to equate the brooding immensity of her voice and music with her bright personality and physical stature. She's happy to talk about almost everything, though she's deliberately cagey when it comes to the inner meaning of *Dead Magic*. The press release for the album consists of a brief paragraph from Swedish writer Walter Ljungquist, bemoaning an age deprived of silence and secrets.

"Walter Ljungquist is my favourite writer and I always turn to him if I need to clear my head or get some perspective on things," she says. "He's someone I'm always coming back to; he's my guiding star. The quote I've chosen is everything I'm feeling right now about the transparency of our society, where everything has to be explained on a micro level.

"It can be good in certain cases — in politics, for example — but when it comes to art, I feel it's important for the perceiver to use his or her imagination to get a more personal bond with the subject. I want people to use their own creativity, to make their own interpretations of these songs."

This guardedness also extends to the intriguing image that adorns the cover of *Dead Magic*. An unsettling female portrait bathed in red, von Hausswolff will only disclose that she has a personal connection to the image. "It's a photo I've had in my possession for 16 years," she says. "I will reveal what it is, eventually, but right now it's a secret. I'm getting fantastic stories and interpretations of it."

As for the thematic concerns of the album, songs like *The Truth, The Glow, The Fall* and *The Mysterious Vanishing Of Electra* hint at transformation and salvation. The video for the latter is typically cryptic. Von Hausswolff is shown striding across a moonlit field, then clawing a body from the earth, finally running towards the camera (caked in mud) down a creepy backwoods road. Like her other recent videos, it was directed by her sister, Maria.

"Like me, she's extremely secretive in what she does and how she approaches things," von Hausswolff says of her sibling. "The story is an ongoing thing across my other videos. It's constantly twisting and turning and becoming something else. This one was filmed in the middle of the night and it was really cold and wet. We were out in this bird field and the mud smelled like shit, so it wasn't a very pleasant experience. I covered myself in all this shit and worked my way through the song. I think the physical circumstances make you go deeper into the character. I really felt like I'd been dug up and was struggling and losing my senses, because I wasn't in my right element at all. Watching it afterwards was a challenge, it was so embarrassing."

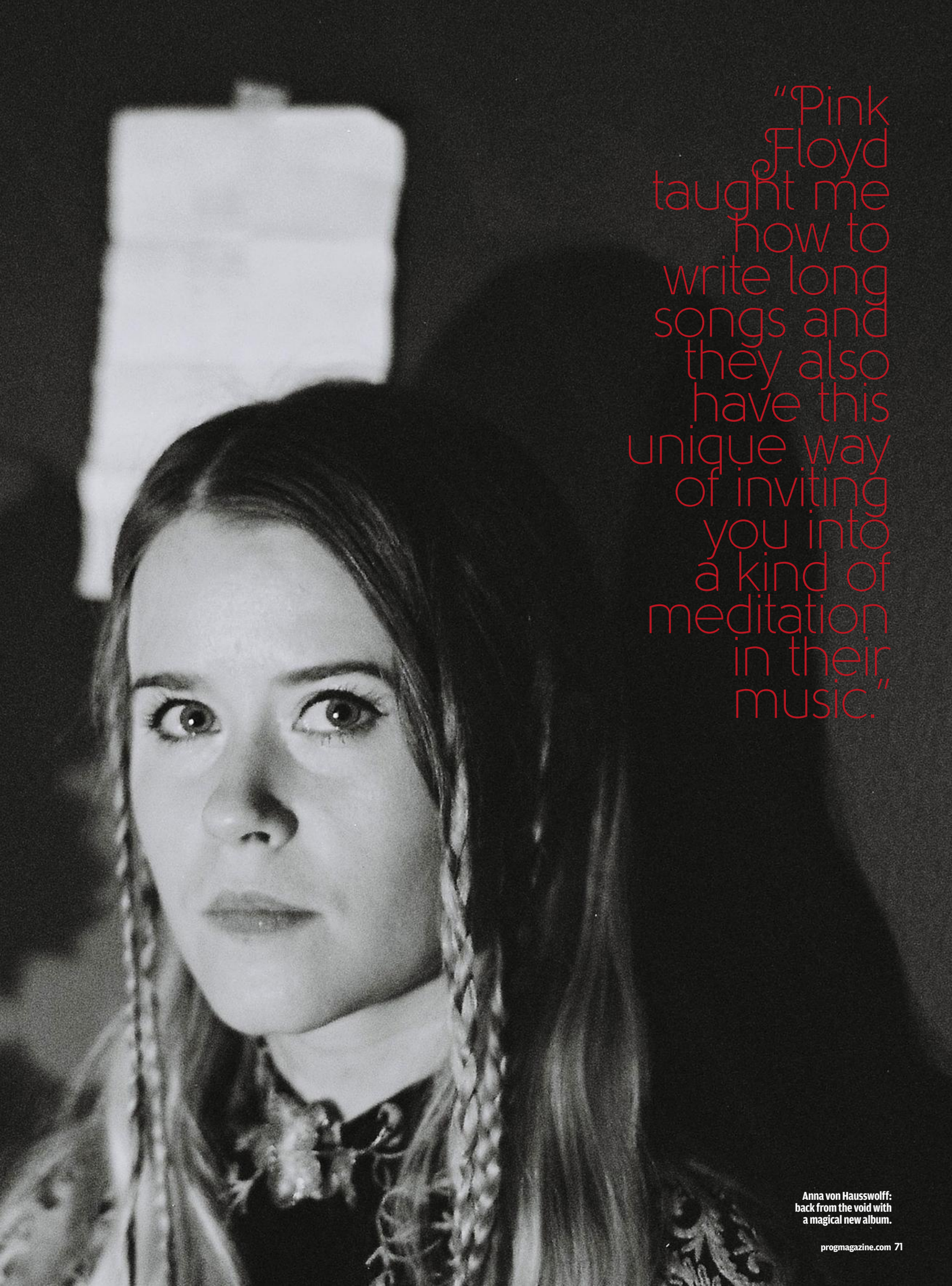
On a musical level, von Hausswolff is more forthcoming. *Dead Magic* is her fourth album. Like immediate predecessors *The Miraculous* and 2013's *Ceremony*, it continues to explore her fascination with drone music and the fluid sound possibilities of pipe organ.

"I studied at the art academy in Copenhagen, which is only a few metres away from that church," she explains. "I've seen concerts there, all involving experimental artists who are very extreme in their fields, including two by Diamanda Galás. To have her set up in an acoustic environment like a church, with just a grand piano and her voice, was so pure and raw. She was perfect for that environment."

That said, it took the arrival of Randall Dunn to suggest recording in the Marmorkirken, known locally as 'the Marble Church'. "I'd recorded on that organ before, with a Danish band called Sort Sol," von Hausswolff says, "but was a little sceptical about doing it again. He sent me some sound clips and they were really good, but the attraction in this case was the room, which is just as important as the instrument itself. When everything is in harmony like that, a small organ can sound really big. And this room was just beautiful, a dome-shaped building with everything made of marble."

Known for this work with Earth, Sunn O))) and Wolves In The Throne Room, Dunn was an ideal choice of collaborator. Indeed, Wolves In The Throne Room enlisted her for *Mother Owl, Father Ocean*, the centrepiece of last year's Dunn-produced *Thrice Woven*. But the key inspiration for *Dead Magic* was the late Hungarian classical composer György Ligeti.

"I'd been listening to Ligeti's *Atmosphères* [1961] a lot the year before I wrote the album," von Hausswolff says. "*Atmosphères* was written for orchestra, but I felt that it would also be perfect for pipe organ. He works using micro-polyphonic technique, which is like a vertical way of composing. The idea of creating clusters and ambience and just having the contrast with the pure melodies and harmonies working together. It's something that's been following me lately and is a bit of an obsession.



"Pink Floyd taught me how to write long songs and they also have this unique way of inviting you into a kind of meditation in their music."

Anna von Hausswolff: back from the void with a magical new album.

"Another singer who was very important to this album was Yma Sumac," she continues. "I've been listening to her a lot. She has this incredible range that's just insane. The way she sings without producing words, expressing herself in such a vivid, emotional way… she helps me see landscapes and the place she's in. And there's exotica music. I've been playing a lot of Les Baxter before my shows for three years now, as a way of triggering things and creating some kind of atmosphere. I try to take people into this jungle of sound."

As the daughter of experimental composer and conceptual artist Carl Michael von Hausswolff, Anna's chosen vocation was always likely to involve music of some kind. Her dad co-founded the Radium 226.05 label in the 80s, exposing her to Swedish art punks like Cortex and Union Carbide Productions. Von Hausswolff's love of classical music, meanwhile, comes from her mother's fondness for Chopin, Debussy and Tchaikovsky.

Her schooldays found her discovering the likes of Radiohead, Björk and the Cocteau Twins. "Cocteau Twins were a huge inspiration," she explains. "In some ways, Elizabeth Fraser is similar to Yma Sumac in that she's expressing herself with melodies, rather than words."

Crucially, though, the music von Hausswolff constantly refers back to is prog at heart.

"I've been listening to Pink Floyd for as long as I can remember. My father was a great Floyd fan — he has all of the albums — and my first personal connection was with *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. It's a classic. Floyd taught me how to write long songs and they also have this unique way of inviting you into a kind of meditation in their music. And experimentation too. I still listen to Pink Floyd — they're a truly fascinating band."

Floyd's guiding aesthetic plays no small part in *Dead Magic*. "When I go into the studio I might have an idea, some abstract image or maybe just a rhythm I'm thinking about," von Hausswolff says. "Then I find a pattern I like, make small variations and gradually move on to another. It's a case of feeling the music. That's when you start forgetting about your surroundings and dive right into the emotion. When that happens, time just disappears."

Dead Magic is out on March 2 via City Slang. See www.annavonhausswolff.org for more information.

"I want people to use their own creativity, to make their own interpretations of these songs."

Dark Matters: von Hausswolff explores strange new worlds of drone and prog.

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Out On His Own

He's played with everyone from Judas Priest and The Who to Jack Bruce and Dave Gilmour. As he releases his fourth album of dizzying progressive fusion with Protocol, **Simon Phillips** checks in to tell *Prog* about why groove matters, his decision to leave Toto, and why mistakes are never the end of the world.

Words: David West **Portrait:** Francesco Desmaele

It's easy to tell when Simon Phillips is in town. At Ronnie Scott's, it's impossible to miss Phillips' mammoth 17-piece drum kit that threatens to spill off the stage into the audience, and his extraordinary ambidextrous playing is similarly unmistakable.

Emerging as a top session drummer in London in the 1970s, Phillips moved to California to join Toto in the 1990s and has been there ever since, working as a drummer, engineer and producer.

Parallel to his session playing, Phillips launched his solo career with the 1988 *Protocol* album, but didn't return to the name until 2013's *Protocol II*. Now he's out on the road to support the fourth album under the Protocol banner. With much of his life spent living out of a suitcase, he's adapted to writing music on tour.

"It started off on the last album: the song *Catalyst* was mostly written on a plane without a keyboard, straight into the computer, literally dragging and putting notes in on the MIDI stave," he says. "The cool thing about that is you rely purely on your ears for harmony, instead of defaulting to shapes on the keyboard. If you're a limited keyboard player like I am, extremely limited, you tend to just repeat those shapes. When you don't have a keyboard in front of you, you've got to literally imagine the keyboard and the intervals between the notes,

Phillips' short-lived band 801 in 1976, L-R: Bill MacCormick, Brian Eno, Lloyd Watson, Francis Monkman, Simon Phillips, Phil Manzanera.

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Groove Is In His Heart: Simon Phillips with his monster kit.

"There's something to be said about great songs, pop songs. From Don Henley, Billy Joel, whoever it is, it's the melody, and the problem with jazz and fusion is sometimes the melody is secondary."

From left: Roger Daltrey, Simon Phillips and Elton John playing The Who's *Tommy* on August 24, 1989.

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Primitive Cool: Joe Satriani, Bernard Fowler, Simon Phillips and Richard Cottle rehearsing for Mick Jagger's 1988 solo tour.

“If you ask any of the older drummers that have been around for years, they’ll always say, ‘Play to the room.’”

so it’s great. And it helps because you’re writing melody down instead of coming up with a really cool harmony and putting the melody on top.”

Despite the virtuosity in the Protocol band — the current incarnation live boasts Greg Howe on guitar, Ernest Tibbs on bass and Otmaro Ruiz on keys — Phillips never wants the music to be about busting chops.

“If you think of any of Paul McCartney’s songs, it’s always the melody,” he says. “There’s something to be said about great songs, pop songs. From Don Henley, Billy Joel, whoever it is, it’s the melody, and the problem with jazz and fusion is sometimes the melody is secondary.”

Then there’s the funky side to Protocol’s progressive fusion, which Phillips says is “always important, especially when playing complex music. That’s always the problem I had, in a production sense, when people come to me and they have incredibly complex music. I end up going, ‘It’s great, it’s clever, but there’s no groove,’ and that’s when I pull a song apart, like I did with Derek Sherinian. ‘This doesn’t need to be in 17, it can be perfect in nine and it can groove.’

“It’s something I think I’m very conscious of, especially with my own writing, that first and foremost, even with the complex stuff, there’s still a groove. You can basically tap your foot all the way through.”

Bringing new people into the fold — Howe and Ruiz came in after the departure of Andy Timmons and Steve Weingart — means the band members have to discover whether they click not just as players, but as people too.

“You never really find that out until you go on the road,” says Phillips. “First tours are usually fantastic and it’s always the second tour that the familiarity sets in and then you see how some people are because they get a little more comfortable with everybody. The honeymoon is over.”

The *Protocol 4* line-up, L-R: Ernest Tibbs, Simon Phillips, Dennis Hamm, Greg Howe.

Spot The Famous Face: Simon Phillips (back centre) at the 1983 Ronnie Lane Appeal For ARMS benefit concert, with Paul Rodgers, Eric Clapton, Ronnie Lane, Andy Fairweather Low, Jimmy Page, Bill Wyman, Kenney Jones, Jeff Beck, Charlie Watts and more...

RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

He describes the current line-up as “the most chilled band I’ve had”, and they’ve been travelling in close quarters, with the drummer often taking the wheel — and testing everyone’s nerves.

“For the first part of the tour I had a Renault Espace — I was doing the driving,” he says. “I like to drive quickly so I’m always checking, ‘Okay, is everybody cool for hyper drive?’ ‘Yeah, okay.’ So the next day I’ll speed it up a little bit just to get everybody’s confidence and then suddenly we’re doing 180 down the freeways in Europe and everybody is cool.”

Touring jazz clubs with Protocol has to be a different experience to his time playing arenas with Toto, Jeff Beck and The Who, but Phillips believes it’s all about adapting to the venue and not losing focus on what really matters.

“My head isn’t in the rock’n’roll thing any more in terms of needing this, needing that — my head is in playing music and making it work,” he says. “If you ask any of the older drummers that have been around for years, they’ll always say, ‘Play to the room.’ If the room is small and reflective, you’ve got to change the way you play. You’ve got to be respectful and mindful of the acoustics.

STEPHANIE CABRAL

"There's always a tendency when it's not working out to play harder, but you're hitting a brick wall. It ain't going to get better. You have to go the other way, just lighten up a bit and let the music play itself. Don't try too hard."

To illustrate his point, Phillips recalls a recording session he engineered. "It was Brandon Fields on soprano, Dave Carpenter on upright, Peter Erskine on drums and the artist was an Italian piano player," he says. "We did one take, and Pete said, 'Okay, let's do another take. This time let's try not to impress each other.' I was in the control room almost on the floor laughing. He counted it in and it was a beautiful take. It was very cool what he said. Just play the music.

"That's the thing you have to do in those scenarios when it's a rough-sounding room. I always try to tell musicians who play in the band if they sometimes get too caught up in the way its sounding or making mistakes, I say play a mistake, make it work. That's the whole thing about jazz. Make it work and let it go. It's not the end of the world."

Although he's been out of Toto since 2014, Phillips still finds that band's fans coming to his shows now. Never just the drummer in the group, Phillips engineered three of their albums and was involved in the songwriting process too — but that was always part of the appeal.

"That's why I thought I'd probably never join a band unless it was my own band because, in order to be fully engaged and involved for a long time, I would need to have those other things to do," he says.

After a while, the band started recording at Phillips' studio. "It was a slow process until Luke [Steve Lukather] worked with me on a record I was producing and engineering, and he said to the other guys, 'He's got a great thing happening up there at his house, let's record there.' So, I had the whole of Toto in my house, I had a guitar rig in the garage and we recorded *Through The Looking Glass*.

"I got very involved but we kind of really broke up in 2008 after Mike [Porcaro] wasn't able to play any more because of Lou Gehrig's disease. Everything came to a head and we just needed a break. I think we'd needed a break for a long time and eventually Luke also said, 'I can't do this any more.'

"Then we got back together in 2010 and I was fine to do it if we only went out for a month a year, maybe a couple of times, two tours, but Luke really wanted to do more. So I said, 'Okay, 21 years is enough. I need to do other musical ventures.'"

One highlight of Phillips' work since 2010 has been his collaboration with piano phenomenon Hiromi and bassist Anthony Jackson in The Trio Project, but that group have been on indefinite hiatus since their July 2016 performance at The Jazz Café in London when Phillips was ill and Jackson suffered a stroke.

"Anthony and I were in a terrible state," he says. "I was in so much pain; I was very sick. Anthony hadn't been doing very well. He was slow. We had to be really careful with him, making sure he didn't fall or slip coming out of the van, and sometime that night, he fell outside the Jazz Café and that was it. Then both of us were in wheelchairs in the airports, so Hiromi's Trio consisted of Hiromi and [tour manager] Mario pushing two wheelchairs. So that was the end of that."

Phillips was on the road to recovery after two months, but Jackson is still recuperating, so The Trio Project is on hold until he's well enough to play and travel again. "It was probably time for us to take a break anyway," says Phillips philosophically. "Too much of a good thing, sometimes people stop coming out to see you, but I'm sure we'll do something again. I hope so."

Protocol 4 is out now via Phantom Recordings. See www.simon-phillips.com for more information.

A MATTER OF PROTOCOL

The finest moments of **Simon Phillips**' progressive fusion powerhouse.

Protocol
(Protocol, 1988)

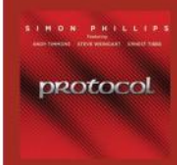
Searching for a record label willing to support his instrumental, genre-blending style, Phillips wound up playing every one of the instruments on his debut album himself. The title track from his solo debut still pops up in live sets, a showcase for the drummer's remarkable fluency on his instrument.

Wildfire
(Protocol II, 2013)

The first version of the band, with Andy Timmons, Steve Weingart and Ernest Tibbs, set out their stall with the opening track of *Protocol II*, which arrived a mere quarter of a century after the first *Protocol* album. *Wildfire* is a knotty slice of syncopation built around the groove laid down by Phillips and Tibbs while Timmons busts out guitar licks over the top.

Enigma
(Protocol II, 2013)

A track that starts with a funky groove in six, then drops down into a jazzy break where Weingart and Timmons trade solos between the keyboard and guitar. It's slinky and smooth, letting the band highlight their sophisticated side even when Phillips cuts loose with another of his articulate, time-bending solos. Think of Billy Cobham circa his *A Funky Thide Of Sings* album for reference.

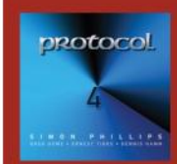


Catalyst
(Protocol III, 2015)

This is a fantastic track for playing 'Guess The Time Signature'. However, *Catalyst* really showcases Phillips' ability to construct a fiendishly clever piece of music that still has a melody and a groove. And that's before you get to the scorching solos in the mid-section.

You Can't But You Can
(Protocol III, 2015)

This one starts off deceptively smoothly, with Andy Timmons channelling Nile Rodgers with a sweet, funky guitar lick. Of course, it doesn't stay that way. The track builds up to a burning solo from the guitarist, then drops down to an almost ambient section before bringing the heat back for the final sprint to the finish line.



Solitaire
(Protocol 4, 2017)

Phillips brought in Dennis Hamm, who has worked with Chris Cornell, Thundercat and Allan Holdsworth, to play keys on the fourth Protocol album, and *Solitaire* features a chunky keyboard refrain that plays like a freaked-out Stevie Wonder jam. The bridge sees the drummer flexing his muscles, soloing inventively over the vamp in seven.

All Things Considered
(Protocol 4, 2017)

The arrival of guitar genius Greg Howe in the band brought a new vibe to the fourth album, with Howe's outrageously slinky lead work recalling Phillips' time with Jeff Beck in the late 1970s. Phillips drives this one with a strong, pulsing beat that provides the bedrock for Howe's liquid lines to run wherever the mood takes him.

Azorez
(Protocol 4, 2017)

A track that tidily exemplifies what the Protocol concept is all about, *Azorez* is a chameleon in musical form. Opening as a charged-up rocker, it moves back and forth between rock, jazz and funk passages. Howe is on top form, his fleetness on the fretboard a constant marvel. Not to be outdone, Phillips wraps the track with a series of blistering fills around the drums. **DW**

THE VETERAN COSMIC ROCKER

The **Moody Blues** founding member, flautist, singer and composer **Ray Thomas** sadly passed away at the beginning of 2018. Here, his bandmates pay tribute to the "always cheerful", "superb songwriter" who will be greatly missed.

Words: Malcolm Dome

Listen to *Nights In White Satin* again. Seriously, don't just play it, but *listen*. Do you know part of the reason why it's so iconic? There's a flute solo in the middle by Ray Thomas.

"Ray's contribution to the song was so important," says Moody Blues bassist John Lodge. "The solo he did was so haunting and magical, and added so much to the atmosphere. Ray played the flute differently to anyone else. Maybe that's partly due to the way he breathed, and he was also self-taught."

Lodge had known Thomas since 1959, when they formed El Riot & The Rebels in Birmingham, a band that also featured future Moodies keyboard player Mike Pinder.

"I first met Ray when I was 14," recalls Lodge. "And then a year later we put together what was really a blues band. We used to wear Mexican outfits, even sombreros. Ray always called me Rocker after that, while I referred to him as El Riot."

Thomas and Pinder founded the Moody Blues in 1964, quickly bringing in Graeme Edge on drums. Two years later, Lodge and guitarist Justin Hayward were recruited to complete what many would view as the classic line-up. But despite being a guiding force in starting the Moodies, Thomas never threw his weight around, as Lodge reveals.

"Ray wasn't even somebody who wanted to be a bandleader. Every decision we made had to be unanimous, otherwise it wasn't accepted. We used to sit around a coffee table in the studio and whenever someone had a song idea they'd put it forward and everyone else would add their own touches to it."

"Ray and I were like brothers and we developed as musicians and songwriters together," adds Pinder. "The music of the Moodies was very collaborative. When Ray brought a song to the table that he was working on, I would add my touches and vice versa. It was part of the magic of what has been called the 'Core Seven' albums. Ray was an integral part of the engine and magic in the Moody Blues."

> "THE WORLD IS ALWAYS **DIMINISHED** BY THE LOSS OF A **GOOD MAN**, AND **RAY THOMAS** WAS A **FINE HUMAN BEING**."
> **Mike Pinder**

Thomas would have his own unique manner of getting across a song structure, as Lodge remembers with amusement.

"Ray would always give us the melody for anything he was working on. And he had a smile on his face. That was the way he was – always cheerful. Because he never dealt in chords, he would indicate whether something was a major or minor chord by the expression on his face.

"Ray was a superb songwriter, and he was out on his own. No one else could have come up with the material he did. Who else could have written *Legend Of A Mind*, which was about Timothy Leary, but done with a twinkle in his eye? And then there's a backwards message that ends *Veteran Cosmic Rocker*. That was his own idea, and typical of him.

"If you play *Dear Diary*," Lodge adds, "you can hear him talking on that as well. He just came out with these phrases, which were a little eccentric, but represented his personality. We all loved it when he would do that sort of thing in the studio."

Thomas was also renowned as a fine singer. And while Pinder, Lodge and Hayward also have expressive vocal delivery, it was Thomas who was regarded as arguably the best in the band on this front.

"Ray had a beautiful voice, and this was a distinct part of the band's sound," insists Pinder.

"He had a Welsh father, and was very proud of his tenor voice," laughs Lodge. "He always claimed this came from his Welsh background. And I'm sure it was because of his voice that Ray had his own way of breathing when he played the flute."

Pinder has no doubts as to Thomas' qualities as a person, which immeasurably added to his role as a team player in the band.

"Ray and I were friends for almost 60 years. Ray was Welsh to the bone and headstrong. But to balance his stubborn tendencies he was fiercely loyal and I could always count on his honesty and integrity. Ray was generous and magnanimous as well. He was quick to give of himself to others, and that's often a rare trait nowadays."

Ray Thomas: not just a singer in a rock'n'roll band.

Long Distance Voyagers: the Moody Blues take the train, November 11, 1964, L-R: Ray Thomas, Clint Warwick, Mike Pinder, Graeme Edge, Denny Laine.

Lodge admits to being impressed with the way in which Thomas took everything in his stride. "Nothing would phase him. And when you're on the road, you have to be prepared for things to go wrong. They always do, and if you don't have the right temperament, then you can be easily distracted and get stressed out. That's never a good sign as it causes a lot of tension within a band. However, Ray was always calm under those circumstances, and because of the way in which he dealt with those problems, it had a soothing effect on the rest of us. You were certain that Ray would shrug his shoulders and move on. Nothing ever got him down."

Thomas also had a sense of humour that added to the positive feelings Lodge has of his one-time bandmate.

"Oh, Ray was a funny person, and he could see the humour in any situation. There are so many stories which come to mind that highlighted his ability to laugh at anything. For instance, there was the time he drove us to a party at a country mansion. Now, let me point out right here that I passed my driving test before he did, and I even gave him his first lesson.

"Anyway, once he had his licence, Ray got his own car. We were supposed to be rehearsing in Birmingham, but Ray persuaded me that we should escape and go to the opening of this new club he'd heard about. So, we left and Ray drove us down these narrow country roads to the mansion. It was like something from a *Harry Potter* film! Wrought-iron gates, imposing pillars on either side with huge balls on top. Ray drove through the gates, and guess what? He hit one of the pillars, and the ball crashed down on the roof of the car!

"For most people this would have been a nightmare situation, and I was on the verge of panicking, even though it was Ray who caused the accident, and it was his car anyway. But he just shrugged it off, got out and called a breakdown van. We never made that party, but the memory of it is still with me today! "

"Ray and I were the same age," says Pinder. "Our birthdays were two days apart – he was on December 29, and I'm on December 27. We were born in 1941. And when we talked to one another, we did this strange thing of calling each other by our mothers' names. So, he was Elsie and I was Gladys!

"We did so much as a pair in the 60 years we knew one another. We walked across Germany together, and we both contributed

> "RAY WAS A **FUNNY** PERSON, AND HE COULD SEE THE **HUMOUR** IN ANY SITUATION."
> **John Lodge**

HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Knights In Bright Satin: the Blues brothers in their pomp.

ROBERT STIGGINS/DAILY EXPRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

BRYAN STEFFY/GETTY IMAGES

Justin Hayward, Graeme Edge and John Lodge in Las Vegas, October 2016.

harmony vocals and played the harmonica on two songs by The Beatles. These were *I Am The Walrus* and *The Fool On the Hill*. That's how close we were tied to each other."

On April 14, the Moody Blues will finally be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. And Lodge recalls talking to Thomas about the honour just before he died.

"Every year I sent Ray a birthday card, and just before Christmas 2017, I phoned to wish him a happy birthday. He said to me, 'Rocker, could you do me a favour and pick up my award for me? I'm not well enough to make the trip over to Cleveland [where the ceremony will be].' I was happy to agree to do this, but now there's an added sadness about it all.

"Then he added something that was typical of him: 'Hey, now we're in the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, does that mean we've become famous at last?' He had his tongue firmly in his cheek, as was so often the case with him."

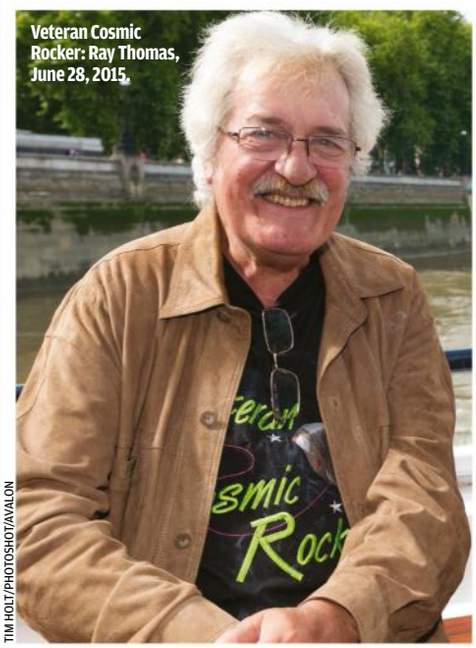
"Ray and I started a band in Birmingham and made music that changed people's lives," says a proud Pinder. "When we found out that the Moodies are to be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, we laughed. It's nice for our fans who have wanted the band to be given this honour for a long time, but our legacy has always just been the impact on the listeners that has endured for over 55 years."

Lodge has no doubts that Thomas' influence had much to do with the way in which the Moodies stood apart from other bands.

"We've never followed what others wanted us to do. Ray wasn't a person easily impressed by what the powers that be at our record company demanded from the band. Can you believe that after *Nights In White Satin* became a hit, Deram asked us to do a cover version of *Somewhere Over The Rainbow*? Ray just laughed out loud at the very idea, and the rest of us were equally unimpressed. All of the band had the same attitude, and that was to do things the way we wanted. Maybe that was part of the reason why the Moodies never became as big as we might have been, but it suited who we were as people, and it certainly fitted in with Ray's approach to his life.

"You never knew what would inspire him to write a song. There's *Veteran Cosmic Rocker*, which was based on a phrase used in a review by an American journalist. He called us 'veteran cosmic rockers'. Ray saw that, and off he went. And he did it with a humour he never lost."

Justin Hayward is still upset by Thomas' death, and felt unable to talk openly about his feelings. However, he did send *Prog* the following heartfelt comment: "Ray was a kind, generous and 'giving' musician and friend through all those magical years for the group. I treasure the songs he and I wrote in the early years of the band, which were a joy for me, as they were, I know, a delight for him.



TIM HOLT/PHOTOSHOT/AVALON

Veteran Cosmic Rocker: Ray Thomas, June 28, 2015.

"Ray always gave great support to me, and without his input and encouragement the songs would never have been the same. I loved working up his words and melodies too; he was always open to ideas. And Ray always made it fun to work with him."

Maybe the best tribute, though, comes with these words from Pinder: "The world is always diminished by the loss of a good man, and Ray Thomas was a fine human being."

The current Moodies line-up finished their US tour celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Days Of Future Passed* back in January, a live DVD and CD is out this month and there are plans in hand to bring the show to Britain.

"Of course we have to do that," says Lodge. "There has been a discussion about multiple nights at a prestigious London venue, but right now, I can't say any more, because it's far from being confirmed. However, I hope our fans UK fans don't think we're ignoring them, because that's certainly not the case."

The band are also delighted that their annual cruise continues to be a huge success.

"When we started this, we had no idea it would prove to be so popular," admits Lodge. "We love doing it, and are already planning for one in 2019. It's a great way to bring together so many different bands, and to give the fans a different way of enjoying our music. It's quite relaxing, which for guys of our age is important!"

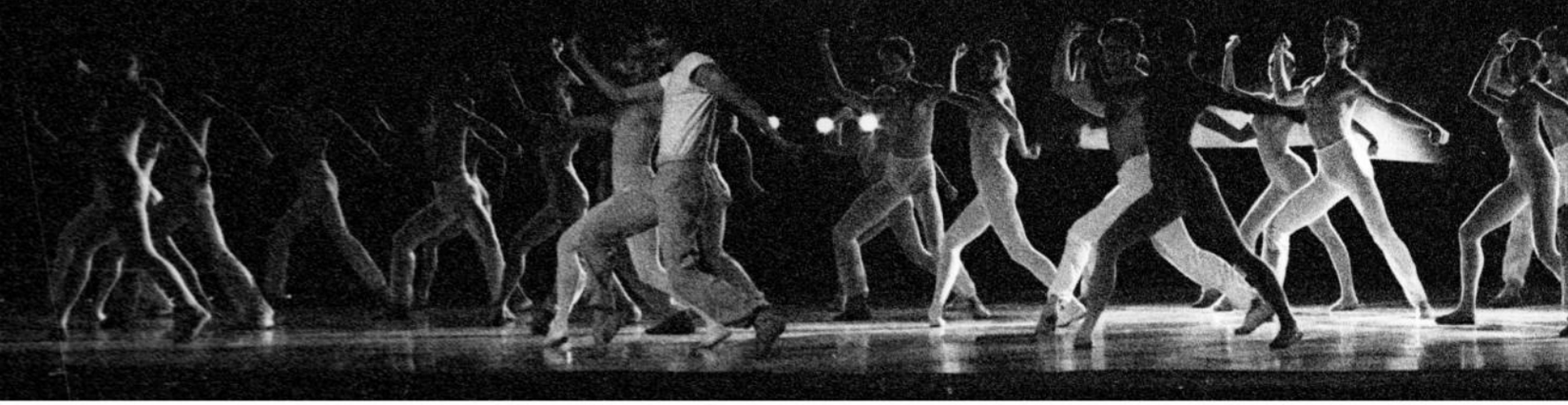
Now, go and listen to *Nights In White Satin* one more time!

Days Of Future Passed Live is out on March 23 via Eagle Rock Entertainment. For more information, see www.moodybluestoday.com.

The Next

With a mega 14-disc box set out to celebrate the career of **Art Zoyd**, one of avant-rock's most underground of underground bands, *Prog* spoke to **Gérard Hourbette** and **Thierry Zaboitzeff** to discover the story behind the French band that made music without limits.

Words: Sid Smith



Never underestimate the importance of the humble transit van in the lives of musicians and the music they play. For all its practical applications, the van has never just been a way of getting from A to B. Life in the van is something more than that. Some players can tell you almost to the year, month and day how long they've been getting out of the back of the van as a prelude to a gig. Some will recall writing songs as the wheels trundled over the tarmac. Most will have a story about life on the motorways, the sights and the scenes, the fights and dreams that come and go as the miles and the wear and tear on both the transport and its passengers accrue.

Experimental French outfit Art Zoyd are no exception. The band's violinist and keyboard player, Gérard Hourbette, remembers that in the early 70s, the band lived and slept in the van. "In the winter it was very cold and we pitched a tent inside the truck," he remembers. "One night, while I was sitting alone, watching the campfire burning out and dreaming, I suddenly heard a noise in the bushes. I picked up a stick and silently walked around the truck, when suddenly this lout covered in a white sheet fell on me, screaming. I was ready to fight and defend my life and that of my comrades who were sleeping. Suddenly, the man burst out laughing – it was our drummer, the joker of the band. No surprise that subsequently, Art Zoyd never had another drummer!"

ART ZOYD 3 ARCHIVES

Above: Gérard Hourbette (left) and Thierry Zaboitzeff at Rock In Opposition, September 2015.

That story appears in the booklet of *44 ½: Live And Unreleased Works*, a lavish 14-disc box set released late last year by American label Cuneiform Records. Crammed with rarities, demos and previously unavailable live performances, it celebrates the work of one of France's most underground of underground bands. Their reputation as one of the more uncompromising outfits on the avant-rock scene was cemented with the release of their 1976 debut album, *Symphonie Pour le Jour Où Brûleront les Cités*, roughly translated as *Symphony For The Day Cities Will Burn*. This self-issued album was about as far away as it was possible to get from the only other Art Zoyd release at that point, *Sangria*, a groovy, psyche-drenched single released in 1971.

Back then, the group were led by a hip guitarist and Zappa lookalike, Rocco Fernandez. "They were already a 'famous' group in Valenciennes. They had recorded a single and travelled in a van that belonged to their record label," says Hourbette, recalling how he came to be recruited after meeting Fernandez.

Keen to join, he insisted that his childhood pal Thierry Zaboitzeff step into the ranks of Art Zoyd as well. It would be a life-changing moment for all parties concerned, though the slightly boozy whiff that wafts from

Phase

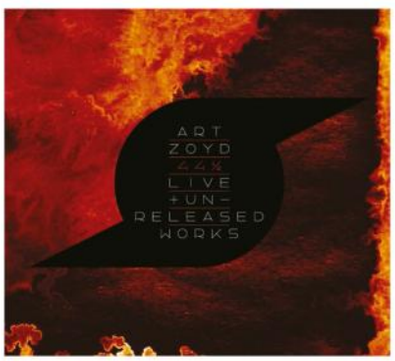
Strike A Pose! Art Zoyd performing alongside Roland Petit's *Le Mariage du Ciel et de l'enfer* ballet, Milan, 1984.

ALESSANDRO ACHILLI/PRESS

Sangria's happy vibes gives no hint of what was to come. That only became apparent once life in the van became too much for Rocco, who quit and left the direction of travel in the eager hands of Zaboitzeff and Hourbette.

"Like many other teenagers of my time, I was very attracted to the rock music of the late 60s," says Zaboitzeff. "I laboriously scraped guitars to try to understand and emulate. I knew that I wanted to do this job and lead the life that goes with it, but little by little, I realised that all this was often too superficial. I was interested in Hendrix, Zappa and Soft Machine, but then went back to Miles Davis, Stravinsky, Bartók, Art Ensemble of Chicago, Berio… all this in no particular order."

While Zaboitzeff may have lacked the formal musical education of the conservatoire-trained Hourbette, he more than made up for it with a formidable instrumental technique. The alchemy that grew between the two very different players was crucial to the distinctive sound they would forge. With a line-up now consisting of Alain Eckert on guitar and percussion, and Jean-Pierre Soarez on trumpet and percussion, alongside Hourbette on violin and Zaboitzeff's bass, vocals and percussion, Art Zoyd were never going to be in the mainstream.



Left: the new box set, *44 ½: Live And Unreleased Works*.

> "We were four guys who decided in 1972 to make a rock band without drums, without the clichés of rock, and to constantly push the limits in the composition and the instrumentation."
>
> **Thierry Zaboitzeff**

"We were four guys who decided in 1972 to make a rock band without drums, without the clichés of rock, and to constantly push the limits in the composition and the instrumentation," says Zaboitzeff.

That act set Art Zoyd outside of the mainstream in which most bands of the day operated. The lack of a drummer should not suggest for one minute that Art Zoyd lack either punch or dynamics. *Symphonie Pour le Jour Où Brûleront les Cités* conjured a raw and frequently jagged aural space. An imposing and at times intimidating listen, the taut string lines, bursts of supple brass and bass counterpoint, demented vocals and skittering chords fuse into a nightmarish landscape filled with dark, foreboding shadows.

The cities evoked here are alienated, contested places whose towers, terraces and monuments are connected on the map by dread, uncertainty and claustrophobia. Lacking any of the usual resting points in rock music, such as steady grooves, repetitive rhythms and hooks, the themes

Art Zoyd live on Radio Tonkraft, Stockholm.

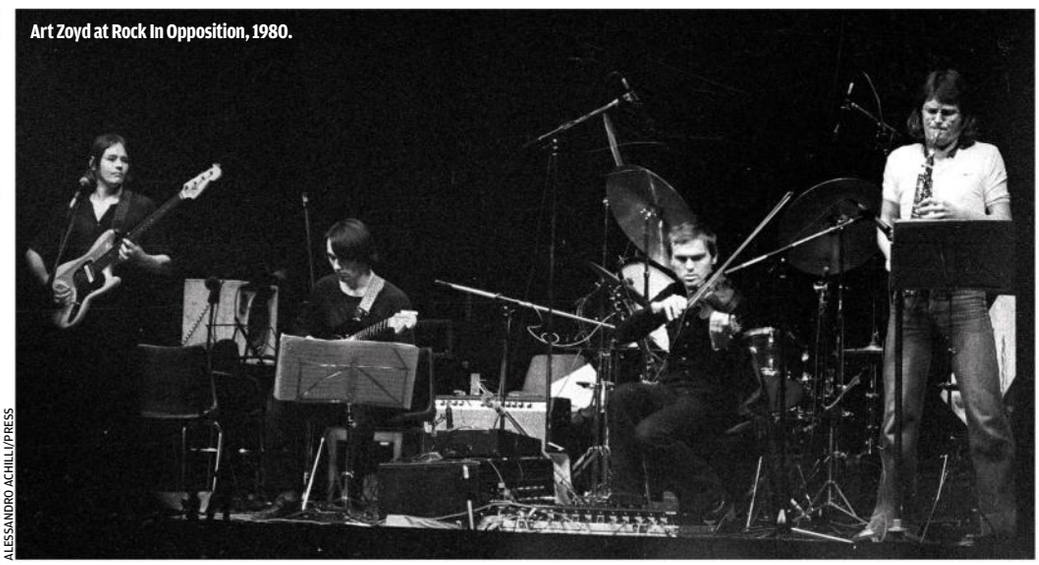
ART ZOYD 3 ARCHIVES

Another String To His Bow: Thierry Zaboitzeff.

SYLVIE HAMON AND STEPHANE FOUGERE /PRESS

Trois Rêves Non Valides concert, 2013.

EMMANUEL VALETTE/PRESS



Art Zoyd at Rock In Opposition, 1980.

ALESSANDRO ACHILLI/PRESS

DIDIER CRASNAULT/PRESS

found on that debut album are typical of Art Zoyd's uncompromising methodology, which would then extend to a discography that includes over 20 subsequent albums. If you like your prog music to be filled with sweet tunes, beatific guitar and rhapsodic keyboard solos, Art Zoyd are not the band you're looking for.

In joining the Rock In Opposition movement in the late 70s, Art Zoyd joined a group of bands that included Sweden's Samla Mammas Manna, Belgium's Univers Zero, Italy's Stormy Six and the UK's Henry Cow among others. While stylistically quite diverse, the common thread that ran between the groups was their desire to operate outside the dictates of the music industry. Through an alternative network it was possible to bring the music to audiences that regular promoters didn't want to touch.

Hourbette explains, "Rock In Opposition allowed us to exchange concerts and we could play in almost all European countries. We were all rebel groups, iconoclasts in our way, artistically and politically."

ROXY MUSIC/ PRESS

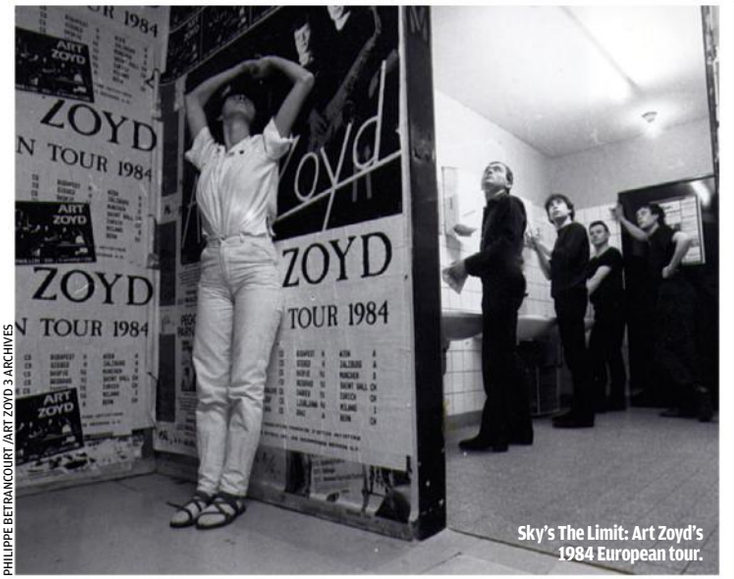
Despite changes in personnel, a defining characteristic of the band's work has been a willingness to experiment and work with practitioners across other disciplines. The 80s saw them increasingly collaborating on multimedia events. In 1985 they released *Le Mariage du Ciel et de l'enfer* (*The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell*), which was the score to a ballet choreographed by the celebrated dancer Roland Petit, who had worked with Pink Floyd in 1972. The group were also creating ambitious soundtracks to accompany screenings of classic silent movies by director FW Murnau that included *Nosferatu* and *Faust,* and later, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

"I like the idea of crossing audiences, of 'decompartmentalising' them and thus of widening them," says Hourbette, who thinks hybridisation, openness and the incessant search for new forms are what Art Zoyd do best.

With any long-lived ensemble, there will come a point where the different visions as to where the band should be heading will lead to tensions. Zaboitzeff says that by 1996, the common ground the members of Art Zoyd had occupied was nonexistent.

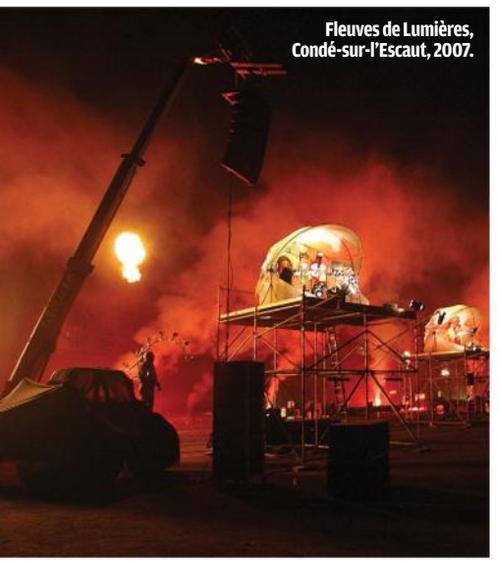
"My colleagues wanted to move towards more 'contemporary' music and open our studios to various composers for residencies," he says. "That wasn't a view I shared. I dreamed of an Art Zoyd-plus, out live with real musicians and using fewer machines."

> "Rock In Opposition allowed us to exchange concerts and we could play in almost all European countries. We were all rebel groups, iconoclasts in our way, artistically and politically."
> **Gérald Hourbette**

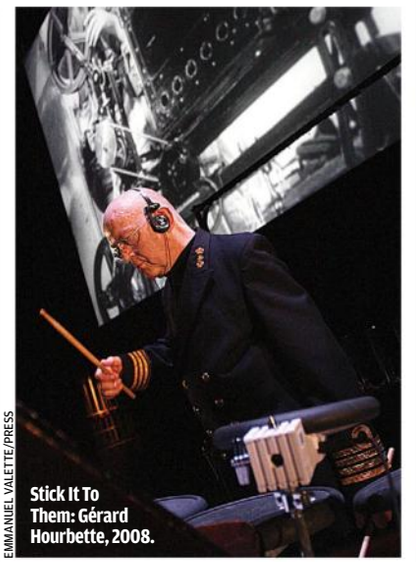


PHILIPPE BETRANCOURT /ART ZOYD 3 ARCHIVES

Sky's The Limit: Art Zoyd's 1984 European tour.



Fleuves de Lumières, Condé-sur-l'Escaut, 2007.



EMMANUEL VALETTE/PRESS

Stick It To Them: Gérard Hourbette, 2008.

Following what he describes as multiple and insoluble tensions, he quit. The psychological damage that such a departure inflicts upon those affected shouldn't be underestimated.

"Any group ends up having artistic divergences," offers Hourbette. "Me, I wanted to open Art Zoyd to new adventures focused on music creation and research, while Thierry did not want that. Realising that we no longer had the same values was the lowest point in Art Zoyd's history for me."

As Zaboitzeff forged a solo career, Hourbette continued to steer Art Zoyd through the cultural crosscurrents. That sense of unfinished business, however, led both men to entertain the idea of performing together and, in 2015, at a special concert as part of the Rock In Opposition Festival in Carmaux, France, Hourbette and Zaboitzeff were reunited on stage.

Joined by an expanded line-up, performing material from across the band's considerable repertoire was exciting, but not without its challenges. "What was most difficult was not the choice of music but the mixing of the musicians from the current line-up who had not known the old pieces and the old musicians who did not know the new material," says Hourbette.

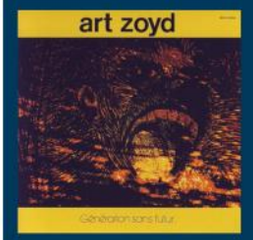
That concert is included in the *44 ½: Live And Unreleased Works*. Zaboitzeff, who worked alongside Hourbette on compiling the box set, was pleased to revisit the material of the band he was a member of for 25 years. "It was a wonderful and exceptional adventure that opened up so many things and so many artistic doors for me," he says.

Hourbette is currently planning more archive box sets and new releases that include a virtual reality project. And as Art Zoyd near their half-century milestone, there's a very real sense of celebration. The group are continuing in much the same way that they began, he explains: "A centre combining creation, pedagogy, composers in residence, a record label: a real Tower of Babel, a tool for the creation of music."

44 ½: Live And Unreleased Works is out now via Cuneiform. See www.artzoyd.net for more information.

MUSIQUE D'ART

An album guide to **Art Zoyd**.



Génération sans Futur (1980)

Featuring the sometimes unsettling topography of uneven time signatures, caustic harmonies, unexpected chordal emissions, shrieking notes and skronking brass, it's this wild, haywire eclecticism that exemplifies Art Zoyd's singular approach to music-making. An undoubted standout moment, however, comes in the title track. Adding fire and devastating precision bombing to Thierry Zaboitzeff's brooding, complex piece is guest drummer Daniel Denis, best known for his percussion and keyboard work with fellow RIO comrades Univers Zero. The contrasts in tight control and energetic freedom may seem unlikely, but it's pulled off with an exhilarating panache.

Phase IV (1982)

The band's fourth release and their first double album is a favourite of Zaboitzeff's. Beginning with the alarmed screaming of a distant crowd and a doom-laden fanfare, the irregular march underpinning Zaboitzeff's *État d'urgence* forms the basis for this unflinching essay regarding the nature of oppression. The austere movements are tempered with intricate arrangements for Jean-Pierre Soarez and Didier Pietton's brass section, especially on the exquisite *Ballade*. The final side, composed entirely by Hourbette, marshals some markedly warmer, consonant themes, with the ponderous *La Nuit* eventually coalescing into the sparse, gently undulating piano and yearning cello of *Les larmes de Christina*. It's about as romantic and as melodically accessible as this band get.

Berlin (1987)

Alongside keyboardist Patricia Dallio and André Mergenthaler's cello, sax and vocals, Zaboitzeff and Hourbette continue exploring brain-jolting repetition through extended works such as Hourbette's frantic *Epithalame* and the meta-collage *A Drum, A Drum*, whose growling, manic vocals, sampled typewriters, massed chthonic choirs and insistent call-and-response melodies sound as though they belong to part of an obscure performance art ritual. It remains a favourite of Thierry Zaboitzeff's. "For me, I consider this to be the most artistically successful album because we had finally found at that time, in my opinion, the perfect synthesis between the rhythmic complexities; the vocal parts; the grandiloquence; the intimate; amplified acoustic sound mixed with the synthetic."

Metropolis (2002)

Art Zoyd certainly weren't the first group to provide a bespoke score to Fritz Lang's visionary silent movie classic, but theirs could well be the most ambitious in scope and scale. Grafting together abrasive synth textures and contrasting movements that seem to represent the disparity between the elites and the exploited workers, the dense music is occasionally illuminated by a series of luminous themes that perhaps hint at a sense of hope shimmering, albeit in the distance. "*Metropolis* was a real adventure," recalls Hourbette. "I superimposed the music of three composers – Kasper T Toeplitz, Patricia Dallio and myself – to create a kind of 'metamusic'. It was a real challenge." **SS**

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Something of a modern prog supergroup, **Good Tiger** knew they could make their band work, and the risk has certainly paid off. From crowdfunding to geographical restrictions, *Prog* discovers their journey.

Words: Eleanor Goodman **Images:** Tom Barnes and Giles Smith

In July 2015, Good Tiger launched a crowdfunding campaign for their debut album. This brand new band, formed from the ashes of The Safety Fire and featuring ex-Tesseract vocalist Elliot Coleman, had never released a note of music, nor played together in the same room. They were taking a gamble with their future, and they didn't know how the world would respond.

"We were very much aware of the fact that if it didn't go well, it could spell the end of the band before it had even begun," recalls guitarist Derya 'Dez' Nagle. "We were blown away by the support we got from the campaign: it was somewhat of a relief that people were as excited as we were."

Happily, their $16,000 target was smashed in just *18 hours*. The impressive, progressive *Head Full Of Moonlight* was released in November 2015, helping the band earn a nomination in the Limelight category of the following year's Prog Awards. With the campaign surpassing its target by $30,000, Good Tiger were suddenly able to think

Good Tiger, L-R: Alex Rüdinger, Joaquin Ardiles, Derya 'Dez' Nagle, Elliot Coleman, Morgan Sinclair.

long-term, and became the first band to sign with Blacklight — a subsidiary of Metal Blade, bizarrely overseen by US celebrity chef Chris Santos. Now they've just released follow-up record *We Will Be Gone*, a contemporary and assured statement of intent from what's now a fully fledged outfit.

"I hate to use words like 'organic' and 'mature', because what does that really mean? But I guess you could apply those labels to *this* album compared to the last one," considers Coleman. "It feels like a *real* record, that we worked on together."

Writing for *We Will Be Gone* began on the road. After the smoke had cleared from their crowdfunding campaign, Good Tiger's first order of business was to play their first ever shows, hitting Europe with Periphery and America with Dance Gavin Dance. From March 2015, they wrote on and off for a nine-month period, heavily influenced by the way their existing material held up onstage and in front of an audience that had previously only existed in their heads.

"Prior to the album being released, we had never played in a room together, and we didn't know what the band was destined to do," explains Nagle. "We weren't necessarily aware that we'd be going on tour so quickly, and once you actually start playing those songs live and seeing those reactions, it's undoubtedly going to shape — consciously or not — what you want to do with the music. We started to feel where the band would be going."

Becoming surer of their direction and armed with a bunch of new songs brimming with potential, Good Tiger booked time at South Devon's Middle Farm Studios with producer Forrester Savell (Karnivool, Dead Letter Circus) and engineer/mixer Adam 'Nolly' Getgood, who worked on their debut. For a band usually divided by the North Atlantic ocean — Nagle lives in Washington, DC; Coleman lives in Brooklyn; drummer Alex Rüdinger lives in Frederick, Maryland; while guitarist Joaquin Ardiles and bassist Morgan Sinclair are based in London — it was a rare opportunity to feed off each other's creativity and spend time growing as a band. In this remote rural location, they worked intense 12-hour days throughout January, pausing only to eat and sleep. Nagle and Coleman were both buzzing to have a proper residential recording experience, following the traditional path their musical heroes trod in decades past.

"Growing up, all I did was read in magazines about bands renting a house in LA, or New York, or Sweden, or whatever, and spending all this time together in one room," enthuses Coleman, a man who is so mild-mannered, genial and laid-back that he might as well be doing this interview in bed. He has the air of someone who is just happy to be here.

"The Strokes have done that, Guns N' Roses, Deftones… it's like a summer camp. Just to focus completely on work, it made me the most creative I've ever felt in my life. For one month, I was doing something that I was gonna be proud of, and that people were hopefully going to enjoy."

But Nagle had an additional motive for assembling the troops — he wanted to loosen his grip on the band's output. Now aged 30, he speaks of being at a point in his life where his view on musicianship and making music has altered. On the first album, he recorded the vocals with Coleman, giving his opinion on "what was good and what wasn't". This time around, Coleman predominantly worked with Forrester in another room. For the guitarist, it was about submitting to a process that was bigger than himself.

"I wanted to have less control over the recording. I'm normally writing a lot of the music as well as recording it, and having my fingerprint over the whole thing," says Nagle. "It was a specific choice not to do that. I was trying to lose the ego — there's something you want to see about holding your

"IT MADE ME THE MOST CREATIVE I'VE EVER FELT IN MY LIFE. FOR ONE MONTH, I WAS DOING SOMETHING I WAS GONNA BE PROUD OF, AND THAT PEOPLE WERE HOPEFULLY GOING TO ENJOY."

Elliot Coleman

voice or yourself, and having to put that aside to allow the greater good of the band."

When Nagle talks, you can almost hear the cogs turning in his brain – not surprising for a musician who grappled with odd time signatures and intricate musical diversions for almost a decade in The Safety Fire. You get the feeling he never stops. He's currently talking to us on the phone from Canada, where he's producing the next Protest The Hero record, while Coleman is at home in the States. He doesn't know exactly *when* he changed as a person and arrived at the decision to step back, he's just aware that it happened. He grew up.

"There was definitely a point in my life where, specifically in the band I was in before, my writing style was very much geared towards wanting to write something I thought was new and exciting and hadn't been done before," Nagle admits. "I wasn't necessarily focused on writing the *best song*, but just something that would potentially catch people off guard. Or I would be getting some kind of gratification from having people say, 'This sounds weird.' Now I'm more concerned about writing songs that speak to whoever for whatever reason, rather than writing the most outlandish riff or crazy structure. And as a collective of people, all of us moved in that kind of direction together. I didn't really have a point to prove any more, whereas I did when I was younger."

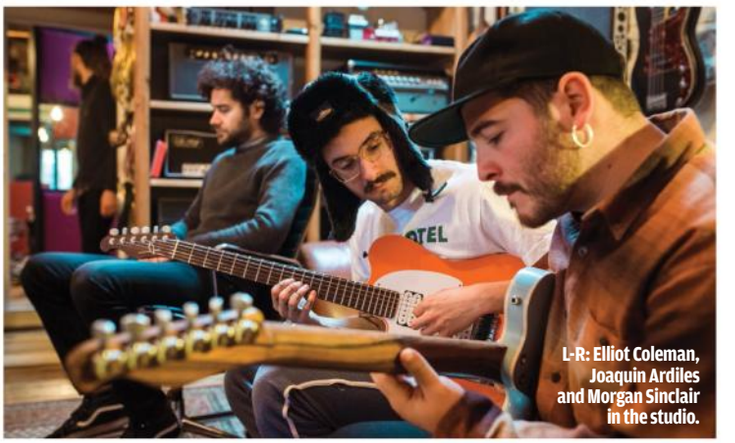
The album title, *We Will All Be Gone*, also reflects where Nagle's head is at. Over the last few years, he's been through some tough life experiences and grappled with his mental health. His mum is a counsellor and his brother studied psychology at university, inspiring Dez to explore his own psyche. His current outlook has been shaped by reading existential works by the likes of Franz Kafka and Patrick Süskind, and Irvin Yalom's book on psychotherapy, *Love's Executioner*.

"I'm trying to have fun and enjoy life for what it's worth," he says. "I think the album title encapsulates that ideology of not forgetting that what you're doing at any moment could be over – whether that be your life as a grander thing, or your job, or your relationship. I'm focused on making myself and the people that are around me happy."

The result is a record that swoops and soars, pitched somewhere between radio-friendly alt-rock and the vibe of a live show in a dark, underground venue, Coleman's voice remaining the rich instrument at the centre. While the faintest residue of tech metal remains, the rough edges of The Safety Fire have been smoothed over. After touring with the likes of Periphery and Dance Gavin Dance, they're not sure where they fit – and with an even broader appeal, there's the potential to play to a more diverse audience than ever.

"I don't just wanna play to the same crowd," says Coleman. "I would never wanna do that. I would hope even somebody who knows absolutely nothing about music would be a fan. Maybe the one guy that only listens to jazz music could get into this band. Or only listens to country and doesn't like anything with heavy guitars. I would hope *anybody* would find any of these songs enjoyable."

Guitar Duo: Joaquin Ardiles and Derya 'Dez' Nagle.



L-R: Elliot Coleman, Joaquin Ardiles and Morgan Sinclair in the studio.

High Hopes: Alex Rüdinger.

Checkmate: Elliot Coleman.

"I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT WRITING SONGS THAT SPEAK TO WHOEVER FOR WHATEVER REASON, RATHER THAN WRITING THE MOST OUTLANDISH RIFF OR CRAZY STRUCTURE."

Derya 'Dez' Nagle

Both speak of the desire to tour as much as possible, especially following a couple of setbacks at the end of last year. In October, they cancelled some UK shows for personal reasons. The following month, their van broke down during a US tour supporting I The Mighty and Hail The Sun, prompting Nagle to heroically perform the shows solo. Now determined to push forwards, they've got their feet planted firmly on the ground while keeping expectations high.

"I hope that if you liked the album before, you'll like this one. And if you've never heard of us, you'll become a fan," says Coleman. "My ambition would be that hopefully by the next two or three albums, we are doing big things."

We Will All be Gone is out now via Blacklight. See www.goodtiger.co for more information.

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Prog's Best-Kept Secret?

They've released 18 studio albums in their 12-year career and regularly top festival bills in their Cardigan home, but we're betting you've never enjoyed the delights of *Streamedelica She Sighed As She Hit Rewind On The Dream Mangler Remote* or *The Pavilion Of Magic And The Trials Of The Seven Surviving Elohim*. That's about to change. Meet **Sendelica**, the best band you've never heard.

Words: Kris Needs

As a passionate watcher of the progressive rock skies for over 50 years, this writer has long regarded Sendelica as the UK's foremost proponents of the music's original spirit. Evocatively bathed in mystery and imagination, the Welsh band possess that open-minded ethos that can see them embracing electronic music, even disco, while never forgetting their core influences of *Dark Side Of The Moon* Floyd, Funkadelic's cosmic jams and Krautrock.

Unbothered by music industry ignorance, Sendelica have spent 12 years building a stunningly prolific cottage industry in far-flung west Wales, releasing 18 studio albums, eight live sets, plus many one-off singles and solo spin-offs. They routinely inspire superlative reviews and enjoy an expanding global following that's taken them to America, Europe and Russia. Quite incredibly, this is their first major music press feature.

Although Sendelica's line-up changes with every album, the band always revolves around mercurial guitarist Pete Bingham, a Geordie who lived in Leeds before settling in the Welsh coastal town of Cardigan 20 years ago. Bingham had already been in bands, including K.A.L.D. (Kill All Line Dancers) when his mission crystalised in 2005 after seeing Japan's Acid Mothers Temple, whose star-sailing ethos and vast catalogue provided inspiration.

"Going to see them reminded me of the music I'd loved since I was a kid at school," says Bingham. "I decided to make that music for my own pleasure, so we got together every Sunday afternoon in our sleepy little village and it got out of control. We used to tape rehearsals and give them to friends. Next thing, somebody is asking if we do gigs. It was surreal but great because we had no expectations – everything just happened and flowed."

Sendelica have always worn their influences on their sleeve, allowing Bingham to indulge in his love of guitar heroes, a passion ignited by catching Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon* tour in Newcastle at the age of 14, followed by Gong and Hawkwind. After that, he says, "I knew life wasn't going to be the same."

> "For me, disco is the natural progression from Krautrock, but it's funny how people into space rock or prog look down on it because they don't like to look outside of their little pigeon box."
>
> **Pete Bingham**

Joined by former Surf Messengers bassist Glenda Pescado, who became Bingham's lifelong lieutenant, and keyboardist Roger Morgan, Sendelica released the mind-blowing *Entering The Rainbow Light* on their Frg imprint in 2007, followed by *Spaceman Bubblegum And Other Weird Tales From The Mercury Mind* for Russia's R.A.I.G. ("We were the first Welsh band signed to a Russian label," Bingham reveals) and their ethereal soundtrack to art house movie *Sleepwalker Fever*. By now, saxophonist Lee Relfe, another long-standing cohort, had joined, adding swooping flavours recalling VdGG's David Jackson.

After *Spaceman Bubblegum* got good US reviews, 2008 saw a six-date East Coast tour, climaxing at New York's Knitting Factory. They recorded 2009's peak masterpiece *The Girl From The Future Who Lit Up The Sky With Golden Worlds* at a Rhode Island studio with veteran jazz percussionist Bob Fish, highlights including live fave *Manhole Of The Universe* and Eddie Hazel tribute *Hazelnut*.

After R.A.I.G. leapt at the chance to release the LP, Sendelica toured Russia for the first time ("mind-blowing but very strange"). The label also released 2010's *Streamedelica She Sighed As She Hit Rewind On The Dream Mangler Remote*. Further memorably titled albums followed, including *The Alternative Realities Of The Re-Awakening Somnambulist*, *The Pavilion Of Magic And The Trials Of The Seven Surviving Elohim*, *The Satori In Elegance Of The Majestic Stonegazer, The Kaleidoscopic Kat And It's Autoscopic Ego* (sic), *The Fabled Voyages Of The Sendelicans* and the soundtrack for *The Megaliths*. All boasted different moods, from monolithic early-Crimson grandeur to interstellar galactic jams.

Sendelica's special relationship with the Fruits de Mer label began in 2010 with a 45

featuring reworkings of The Velvet Underground's *Venus In Furs* and Funkadelic's *Maggot Brain*. Their FDM covers have since become a tradition, and include versions of Hawkwind's *Urban Guerilla* with Nik Turner; electronic pioneers the United States Of America's *Love Song For The Dead Che*; Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust*; Frank Zappa's *Don't Eat The Yellow Snow*; The Walker Brothers' *Nite Flights* (remixed by long-time co-conspirator Marc 'Astralasia' Swordfish); and Donna Summer's *I Feel Love*, reimagined as a 21-minute Krautrock epic.

"There were a lot of eyebrows raised at that!" laughs Bingham. "For me, disco's the natural progression from Krautrock, but it's funny how people into space rock or prog look down on it because they don't like to look outside of their little pigeon box."

Their pulsing new *Disco Daze* EP should further irritate those stuffy noses.

FDM started releasing original Sendelica material with 2016's *The Cromlech Chronicles*. Influenced by 70s Japanese commune bands like the Taj Mahal Travellers, recording sessions near the ancient Pembrokeshire burial cromlech became an annual jam session.

> "I have so much music in my head I want to get out and as I get older, I worry about not doing that."
>
> **Pete Bingham**

Bingham explains: "We invite lots of people to play because I don't want to risk doing the same thing every time. It's exciting for us, and the audiences."

2017 saw epic double set *Lilacs Out Of The Deadlands* mixing interstellar meditations with scorching double-drummer prog jazz, followed by the Martian chamber music of *Cromlech Chronicles II*, which includes producer Colin Consterdine on electronics, Kate Riaz on cello and Cheryl Beer's exotic percussion.

"I really love that idea of being almost like a family. The Cromlech recording sessions are such an experience. There could be 10 people up there. We just go up with very few preconceived ideas and see what develops – quite scary for some, but it makes for more interesting music."

Since 2015, Sendelica have topped bills at FDM's annual Dream Of Dr Sardonicus festival in Cardigan. There's also the Sendelica Drone Band and Bingham's solo project, The Fellowship Of Hallucinogenic Voyagers. The latter released last year's ambient *This Is No Wilderness*, an album inspired by poet Lindsay Smith's book of the same title.

All this activity but little press made Bingham wonder if releasing so much material was confusing, but as he tells us, "Our sales just get better, our mailing list continues to increase and we've got manic superfans who collect everything. We're a cottage industry with hands-on directness. We get a lot of feedback from fans who love what we do, no matter what path we go down. I have so much music in my head I want to get out and as I get older, I worry about not doing that."

As Sendelica's arc continues upwards, the sky was long ago the limit. They're prog's best-kept secret no longer.

My House Is Made Of Angel Hair is out on 31 March via VE Records. For more information, see www.sendelica.bandcamp.com.

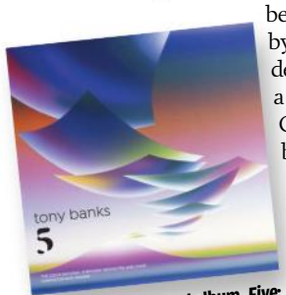
THE PROG INTERVIEW

TONY BANKS

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 **Tony Banks**. *Prog* meets the keyboard legend to discuss his new classical work, then pan out to discuss the ups and downs and turnarounds of Genesis' extraordinary career and achievements, the relationships between the personnel, his fondness for bread bins and double glazing, and what it's like to be critiqued by an American psycho and declared a Prog God.

Words: Chris Roberts **Portraits:** Kevin Nixon

Tony Banks arrives at the swish, futuristic London members' club carrying a free newspaper in one hand and dressed in black. He's a youthful 67 (68 this month) and, belying any reputation for quintessentially English reserve, happily talks 19 to the dozen. He's pleased, too, to lay eyes on a CD of his new orchestral album *Five* for the first time, though we spend a moment pining for the grander artwork of vinyl releases. *Five* — a set of (count 'em) five grandiose symphonic compositions — is both a long way from Genesis and yet, in its essence, a kindred swell of beauty and pathos.



Banks' new orchestral album, Five: "There's no Firth Of Fifth here..."

Banks was, of course, key to (and keyboardist with) Genesis since their formation in 1967. From Charterhouse to revelation, from theatrical and experimental prog to a sharper focus and massive global success, from *Supper's Ready* to *Invisible Touch*, he was always there, vital as a writer and player, the king of chords and key changes.

He may not have had the high profile of the band's frontmen, but he's been a sort of éminence grise, the power behind the throne. As Phil Collins has said, "Ever tried making Tony do something he doesn't want to? Won't happen."

Banks reckons that by not being recognised in the street, being able to travel by Tube unbothered despite being a Rock'n'Roll Hall Of Famer, he has the best of both worlds.

While on his previous album, *Six Pieces For Orchestra*, he composed but didn't play, he's very much playing on this one.

"I am, but people shouldn't get too excited," he smiles. "The piano isn't dominant, as such. My parts are a continuum, holding the thing together. But, you know, there's no *Firth Of Fifth* here. That's not the intention. It's orchestral music."

Prog finds out more...

DAVID WARNER ELLIS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

The classic Genesis line-up in 1974, L-R: Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel.

> "Genesis have always been a rather divisive band, at least our more extreme ends. And I've always been happy with that."

When you were first discovering music, what were your first loves? Rock'n'roll or Ravel?

Well, the first thing I was ever aware of was show tunes, which my mother played at home — early Rodgers & Hammerstein stuff. And I heard a lot of hymns at school. Then my brother had a few records and I got into pop music. We both loved a version of *Sixteen Tons* by Frankie Laine. It's not even the best-known version of that song, but I just played it to death, going: "This is fantastic!"

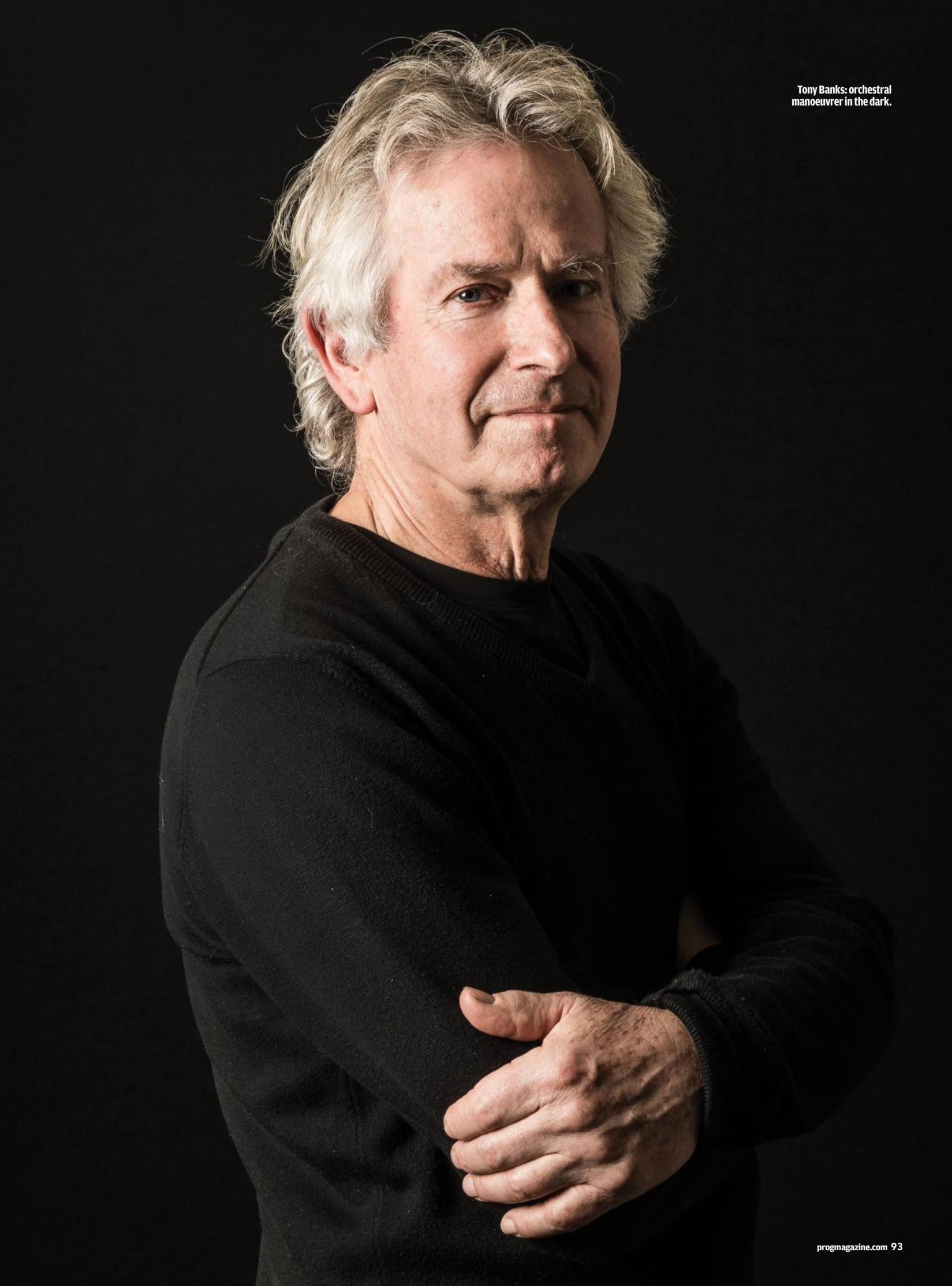
Then I listened to *Pick Of The Pops* with Alan Freeman. It was 1961, I was 11 years old. I heard a chart where *The Young Ones* by Cliff Richard was No.1 and I loved everything — Acker Bilk's *Stranger On The Shore*, Bobby Darin's *Multiplication*, Elvis' *Rock-A-Hula Baby*. I had no discrimination at all, thought it was all wonderful!

The first record I bought was *The Wanderer* by Dion. Of course, it's an incredibly simple 12-bar blues, but done with a great sound, great effects. I was hooked from then on — a complete fanatic for music from about 11 to 17. But then I got more discriminatory as time went by, and found more and more things I didn't like...

Ah, the passing of innocence!

Yes, but then that early era of the groups in England — Beatles, Kinks, Animals, Stones — was so exciting. From the background I had, it was never something that ever seemed a possibility. When we were at school we *dreamed* of being this thing. Because I could play by ear, I loved working out Beatles songs from the radio. I started to understand the structures, and the idea of

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES



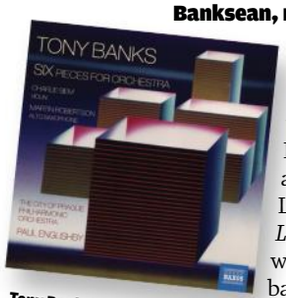
Tony Banks: orchestral manoeuvrer in the dark.

writing our own songs emerged with Peter [Gabriel], one of my closest friends. We started trying weirder chords, seeing what worked.

Ten years later, by the mid-70s, whereas I'd liked everything when younger, I disliked most things, felt I'd heard it all before. Once you've heard the pattern of *The Wanderer* a dozen times, it gets a little dull. So you start looking to do different things.

And once we were a group, we were quite competitive with the groups we'd come in with — Family, Pink Floyd, King Crimson. A lot of bands had guitarists who'd just go nuts for ages, and I'd think, "Yeah, I've heard that now."

You've done orchestral albums called *Seven*, then *Six*, and now *Five*. Are you getting closer to achieving your exact aims?
The first one was a learning process. The second one was more involved. With this one, I decided to go about it slightly more like I used to do solo albums and some Genesis stuff, where you put down a framework first. I did the piano and a lot of orchestration at home, so the structure, the template, was there. The original piano part stays in. I could control the tempos while letting it breathe. On the other ones, some pieces came out like I'd intended, others not quite. This is closer to how I envisaged it.



Tony Banks' *Six Pieces For Orchestra* album from 2012.

The first seeds for the album were sewn in Cheltenham...
Yes, the opening piece of *Five*, now called *Prelude To A Million Years* — unpretentiously, of course — was started for the Cheltenham Music Festival in 2014. It was quite traumatic for me to hear the orchestra playing it. It worked, but there's always compromises. So here, working with the experienced Nick Ingham, we made what I'd written make sense for the full orchestra. We recorded the parts separately, more like the mechanics of a band. So I'm happy — if I fail, it's on my own terms.

***Five* does have that distinctive Banksean, melancholy feel...**
Hmm... wistful, nostalgic, perhaps, rather than melancholy. I've always been a nostalgic person. Lyrics like *Fading Lights* for Genesis were all about looking back on life, how things could have been different. But the attitude is usually one of 'it all worked out in the end'. There's a shape to this album, with *Prelude*, then *Reveille*, an awakening, then *Ebb And Flow* moving forward to *Autumn Sonata*, towards the end of life, and finally *Renaissance*, my favourite, which is a kind of rebirth, both an end and a beginning. That one moves from moody to optimistic — it could have been worked into a prog piece, I suppose!

Seven: A Suite For Orchestra, Banks' 2004 release.

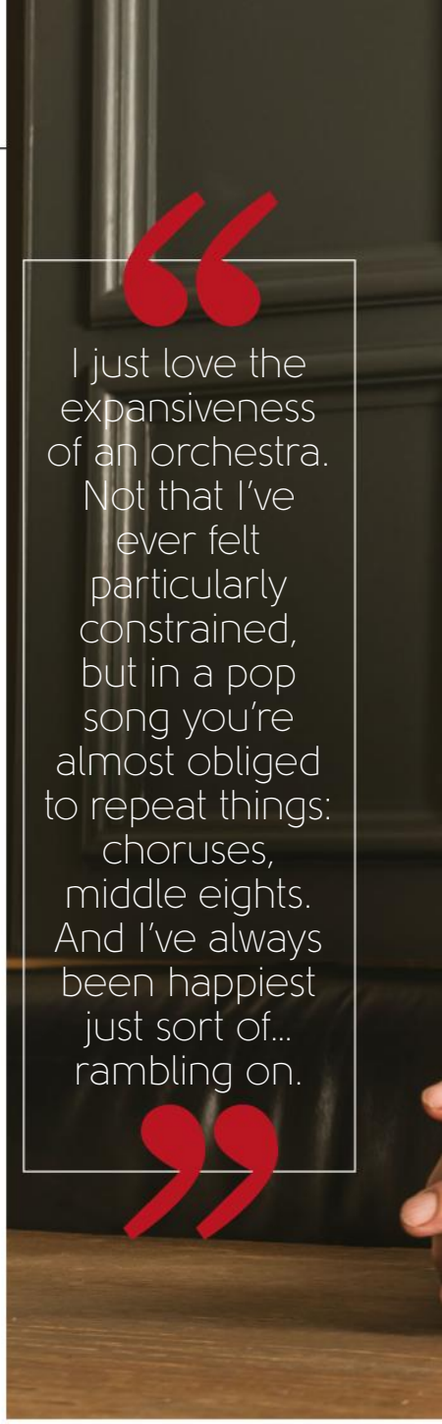
Didn't you initially write some of it during the Genesis years?
Oh, I know that's been said, but just the first minute or so was written when I was trying to get into film music, so... the late 90s. I was listening to an old tape, a mix of strange drone and sweet melody, and I thought, "I can go somewhere with this."

Yes, if you wanted to, you could do it with drums and vocals and stuff, but... I just love the expansiveness of an orchestra. Not that I've ever felt particularly constrained, but in a pop song you're almost obliged to repeat things: choruses, middle eights. And I've always been happiest just sort of... rambling on.

So this genre is more in tune with your natural proclivities?
In a way, yes. I mean, I love writing songs too. Poets used to love writing sonnets as well as epics, you know? I'm very proud of some of the songs I've been involved in. In the old days, when we did something like *Supper's Ready* or *The Musical Box*, we'd go on and on, but if repeating a phrase, we'd do a totally different arrangement of it. *Supper's Ready* is the prime example, where the final section is a reprise of an earlier part but done a lot better to really give you that... feel.

Prog God 2015: Tony Banks receiving his prestigious award from Peter Gabriel.

JO HALE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



There was always method in the madness. Non-fans seem to think early Genesis waffled on randomly, but it was all about the carefully built structure.
It's a funny old thing, isn't it? I had to be really cajoled into doing a solo, the first time. I was eventually persuaded to do one on *Stagnation* on *Trespass* — it was quite a thing for me! I got this first phrase which worked, then pretty much played scales and arpeggios for the rest of it! Anyway, then I had a clue. And okay, it became a *part* of Genesis, but we always wanted a freedom, a fluidity. Some of the bands we were compared to — ELP, Yes at times — would have a solo just

Tony Banks shot exclusively for *Prog*, January 2018.

KEVIN NIXON

because Keith [Emerson] or Steve [Howe] was a good musician. We never did that. Probably because neither Steve [Hackett] nor I wanted to be out front.

I know there are long keyboard sections like on *The Cinema Show*, but they had a purpose. And on *Supper's Ready*, things grow from lighter to heavier until you get to the real climax, with the '*666*' section. Some of your readers may know that piece! You get this massive, dramatic C chord, then Peter starts singing over the top. Initially I didn't want him spoiling my chords [laughs] but then I realised how good it was.

That's how you work as a group sometimes — you're fighting against each other but the combination of those impulses produces something special.

Was it more of a boon or a traffic jam that all your personnel were highly talented individuals?

No one was carried: everyone was involved. The combination all round was interesting. But in a way that's *why* the five-piece had to become a four-piece, then a three-piece — just too many ideas in there. Three of us was okay, because we covered all the bases. And fortunately we had a fantastic drummer who could sing! It was a good unit, that. I loved all the periods of Genesis really.

I once asked you why people don't often make music like *Supper's Ready* any more, and you said people weren't allowed to. Can you elaborate on what you meant by that?

In the late 70s, there was a reaction against groups like us, which in a way was fair enough. The other thing is these pieces never get played. Back in '72 or '73, on Capitol Radio, *Stairway To Heaven* was voted best song of all time and number two was… *Supper's Ready*. Now *Stairway To Heaven* is on the radio all the time, but *Supper's Ready*? It's simply too long! People's attention spans, especially now with Spotify and the rest, are three or four minutes tops.

The current pop formula works, sells billions, but it must be so boring to write. Half the fun of constructing a song, for me, is moving away from the theme and then coming back to it again in an exciting way. Masters like Holland-Dozier-Holland and Burt Bacharach could do that. Take it away, then bring it back better. I love that, in all forms of music.

One of your finest compositions that goes (comparatively) under the radar is *Mad Man Moon* from *A Trick Of The Tail*…

Some get less attention than others. Of course, we never played it live, so there's that. It's more, dare I say, a feminine track. Melancholy. I was very pleased when I wrote it, especially the verses. The noodling in the middle is quite fun, but if you listen carefully, it's beyond my playing ability! As for the line *'A muddy pitch in Newcastle'*, I've had a few phrases that you really shouldn't. *'Bread bin'* in *All In A Mouse's Night*. *'Double glazing'* in *Domino*. You either like

those lines sticking out or you don't. Anyway, Genesis have always been a rather divisive band, at least our more extreme ends. And I've always been happy with that.

Across the band's lifespan, you evolved from songs based on fables and Bible stories to lyrics addressing real relationships and the modern world. Is it fair to say we hear you all, for better or worse, growing up in public?
That's absolutely true. I mean, we came out of Charterhouse public school incredibly repressed and naïve. Whatever the opposite of streetwise is, we were it. We didn't have the courage to write 'I love you baby' at all. So we went towards Ovid and Greek myths, Narcissus and the rest, and used that. Up to *A Trick Of The Tail*, we – bar the odd song – stayed out of reality. Even on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, it was still dressed up as fantasy.

It wasn't until confidence came and we were feeling more at home with life that I wrote a genuine 'love gone wrong' song, which was *Many Too Many*. At the same time, Mike [Rutherford] wrote *Follow You Follow Me*. There was less hiding behind myths and legends; we could move in a more straightforward direction.

And that new direction won you a whole new audience?
I'd say it doubled our audience! A lot of females had found us… fairly impenetrable. *The Fountain Of Salmacis*: what the hell was that all about? But we now pulled in people to like the other stuff as well. At our shows we'd do old and new. Although, at that last tour in 2007, we'd do long instrumentals like *Duke's Travels* and half the audience would go for a loo break. Then the next song was *Hold On My Heart*, and the other half would go. I like it all; I'd have stayed put for all of it!

We'd have done more UK shows on that tour, but we had a funny idea of what our status was. A lot of the cognoscenti don't like us – they never got over the fact that we survived 1977, and we were Public Enemy No.1 at that time. So we've always had a strange image here. But the way it went, we felt we could've done more and it would've been nice. But it wasn't to be. And it probably was the last one.

A Step Ahead: from prog to pop and now classical, Banks is always progressing.

KEVIN NIXON

Really? So there'll be no more Genesis gigs, ever?
I mean, poor Phil, he's not going to be able to drum again. He can sing, but... we'll see.

Have you been to any of his solo concerts?
Yes. They're going pretty well, I think, after a slightly shaky start. I saw him at the Albert Hall before he had a fall and had to cancel a couple. It was okay: it wasn't brilliant. Great musicians, effects and lights. He was singing fine, very warmly. It's just... you wanted him to be leaping around doing the tambourine dance, y'know? Can't do that any more, I'm afraid.

Have you seen Steve Hackett's Genesis Revisited shows?
I haven't, no. Haven't seen him live for years actually. It's great that they're playing those songs though. There is an irony to it, in that Steve's the one playing this stuff and he *left* the band! But I heard their version of *Afterglow* on the radio: that sounded good.

Genesis fans will never agree on the best album, or even the best era. Is that a help or a hindrance?
I remember when *Abacab* came out, we had about eight albums in the Top 100. People went back and discovered the earlier ones, which is great. But we don't sell much these days. We never had that definitive album the way Floyd had *The Dark Side Of The Moon* or the Eagles had *Hotel California*. Again, we're... divisive. We haven't got that universality of somebody like Queen, who everybody likes to some degree. We were considered too fey to be street cred, so some like us, some don't.

You played four nights at Wembley Stadium in 1987, though, which was a record back then. Was that a fun experience?
Very unusually for us and outdoor events, the weather was good. Those big shows aren't the greatest musically, but they are a celebration. You get into the spirit with the audience. I remember coming off after the last show, thinking, "Oh well, there's no way we're ever going to be this big again! We've peaked." That said, we sustained reasonably well with *We Can't Dance*. It was an extraordinary time. We'd begun by playing noodly, obscure music with no image, not even changing to go onstage, and here we were. Sometimes I'd make myself look

KEVIN NIXON

Together And Apart: Genesis at the launch of *that* documentary.

> "Some of the bands we were compared to – ELP, Yes at times – would have a solo just because Keith Emerson or Steve Howe was a good musician. We never did that. Probably because neither Steve Hackett nor I wanted to be out front."

at it as an outsider, a spectator, and I enjoyed that.

I was never a natural performer, never a show-off, but I found a way of coping. If I did what I *can* do, which is play, I was always confident the others would make it work.

Is it fair to say you didn't think the 2014 *Together And Apart* documentary worked?
We were disappointed with that. Mike and I saw it about a week before it came out, and it was... terrible. So we quickly got a new director and recut it, and it was better, but things were in there that shouldn't have been. We'd done better documentaries in the past, like 2008's *Come Rain Or Shine*, which shows the hilarious minutiae. But we didn't feel good about this one.

With the solo careers, originally it only focused on Phil and Peter. Mike and I managed to get us in, but of course we didn't get Steve in, which was a mistake. We did try. But overall the thing didn't do its job. There were some witty things said, and it was nice to have us all in a room together again. And when everyone pointed out that I shouted the loudest to get my own way, I took it as a compliment – it suggests I'm more responsible for the music!

How did you feel about Genesis being analysed by serial killer turned music critic Patrick Bateman in the controversial novel *American Psycho*?
Well... it was strange, but interesting. That character's not very likeable, to put it mildly, but he loves Genesis and contrasts our old and new music in detail. So it was oddly flattering, but in a backhanded way. Hey, getting mentioned at all is nice!

As the recipient of 2015's Prog God award, you got more than mentioned...
Yes, fantastic! I was surprised. I've always stayed in the background to some extent, so am never quite sure if people are aware of how much I do. And with Peter presenting it, it gave us a chance to make jokes about each other. We have a good relationship. Obviously we don't see each other like we used to, but when we do, we go back to that close friendship we had very quickly.

So what's next for you? After *Five*, will you go forth to *Four*?
Oh, I do this because I love to, and because I can afford to on the back of what I've done in the past. It isn't a commercial proposition, really. Maybe it's an ego trip, which is fine. When my earlier solo albums did nothing, it was like beating myself up. But *Six* got to No.1 in the classical charts, and there's interest from more than just loyal Genesis collectors. So that's great. And once *Five* is out, I'll no doubt feel cravings again...

Five is out now on BMG. For details, see www.tonybanksmusic.com.

Edited by Jo Kendall
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New spins...

KINO

Lonely Robot's John Mitchell, Marillion's Pete Trewavas and It Bites' John Beck: a sleeping supergroup emerges from a 13-year hibernation. Where's the dial headed?

Words: Johnny Sharp **Illustration:** Stuart Briers

Prog musicians are a restless bunch. There aren't many other genres in which the leading lights collaborate, guest, spin-off, supergroup and side project the way prog's finest like to do. That's particularly true of prog's second generation, which came of age in the neo-prog scene of the 1980s.

Marillion's Pete Trewavas was one such graduate of the class of 1985, and with Edison's Children and Transatlantic also among his going concerns, a second album from Kino lengthens his CV yet further. Mind you, John Mitchell – prolific producer, guitarist with Arena and Frost*, mastermind of Lonely Robot, solo artist and now frontman of It Bites – makes Trewavas look like a slacker.

Of course, supergroups have played a key role in the development of prog rock since its 1960s inception, but is that always for the best when their output is stretched so thinly?

Given our natural tendency as fans to cling to our favourite artists and bands like loyal customers of a brand, it's sometimes hard to emotionally invest in one-off, irregular side projects whose body of work is inevitably somewhat disjointed. Nearly a decade and a half after the first Kino album, what kind of music do we expect to hear when that name is turning around the record deck spindle?

Well, they didn't shy away from big, broad tunes on their 2005 debut *Picture*, and nor have they on *Radio Voltaire*. "It is a collection of pop songs. But ones we have messed around with." That was Mitchell's verdict on announcing this release, but of course the devil is in the details, and it's often the messy bits that provide the richest flavours.

We can definitely slap that label on the barely comprehensible wartime-style radio announcement that introduces the album, but then the title track rides in on Rothery-esque guitar melodics before an undulating midnight piano pattern builds an emotive verse, then transforms into a sweeping, harmony-soaked chorus, to the point where it almost has the feel of a crescendo-buoyed final track. Nonetheless, its seven minutes constitute a powerful handshake to welcome us in.

Radio Voltaire

INSIDEOUT

> **The devil is in the details, and it's the messy bits that provide the richest flavours.**

If that gives the impression that this will be a more easygoing affair than *Picture*, *The Dead Club* suggests otherwise. Introduced by the sound of a needle on vinyl and a crackly German radio announcer, it then employs shock and awe tactics via explosive prog metal riffage, techno grunt and weird kitsch keyboard diversions. References to *'jihad'* in the same passage as a *'demonic narcissist'* who will self-implode are spat into a swirling mix of keyboards and more offbeat metal thunderstorms. Mitchell then bemoans *'moronic agelessness'* and adds, *'When it takes its toll it's only rock'n'roll.'* If he's comparing self-destructive artists to jihadi suicide bombers, it's an original and striking analogy.

For the most part, though, *Radio Voltaire* is highly accessible, with regular twists along the way. *I Don't Know Why* has an 80s pop rock feel as Mitchell tells of an errant lover stringing him along *'every single way, like some Doris Day'*. Then hair-tearing guitar breaks and agitated drum fills give a tale of romantic frustration a sense of antsy impatience.

Out Of Time initially sounds like it could have been a hit in It Bites' chart-busting early days before the layers begin to fall away and we're left first with a syncopated guitar riff and halting drumbeat, then hesitant rimshots, timpani, strings and, oh yes, brass accompaniment. And then eventually we're back into the big, booming chorus.

The urgent rush of *I Won't Break So Easily Anymore*, full of defiance, ties more knots in the linear pop template, John Beck's keyboard improvisations crawling hyperactively all over it as it accelerates to a final burnout.

So if that's the identifying approach of Kino – radio-friendly rock sprinkled with prog spice – then it's effective, even if at times their admission that there's no overall concept or link to these songs is sometimes telling.

While the aforementioned title track sounds like a premature climax, the album ends with the mournful war story of *The Silent Fighter Pilot*, building into a thunderous swell before squalls of guitar from Mitchell blaze, crackle and then spiral into nothing like the shot-down plane suggested in the title. Yet what should be an emotional climax feels like it's reaching for top gear and not quite finding it.

If *Radio Voltaire* feels more like a compilation of songs than a solidly coherent album, it contains considerably more hits than misses. And with that, Mitchell, Trewavas et al are doubtless off to the next project.

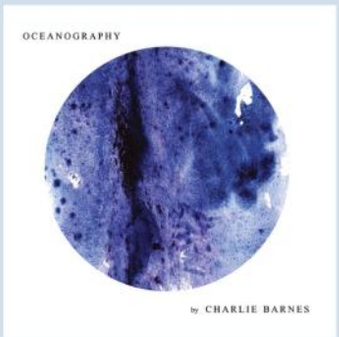
Can we expect a third Kino album in around 2031? No pressure, guys.

VOLUME
OSLO
MOSCOW
HELSINKI
LYONS
LONDON
PRAGUE
BUDAPEST

CHARLIE BARNES

Oceanography SUPERBALL MUSIC

Powerful third from prog pop wunderkind.



With 2015's *More Stately Mansions*, electronic singer-songwriter Charlie Barnes went full band in an attempt to realise the towering ambition left to him by his principal influences, bands like Radiohead and Oceansize. However, stepping away from the oddball electronic prog pop of his debut full-length *Geekk* was also deeply reflective of his life at that time: living in Leeds, working as a roadie for prog heroes Amplifier, playing shows with his live band and musing on the weight of balancing life, work and creative effort.

> **Straightforward pop sections crave a little bit more weirdness.**

Oceanography in a sense is the same, in that it's a product of his circumstances. Around the time that *More Stately Mansions* was released, Charlie became the touring guitarist for pop megastars Bastille. As a result, his personal and creative life have been upended, and this album was put together largely on the road, in hotel rooms, between playing stadiums and arenas all over the world. *Oceanography* is thus the sound partially of him returning to his stripped-back song-orientated roots, but also of him using the instrumental language he and his band developed on *More Stately Mansions*.

Even with the songs to the fore, there are still guitars, bass, drums and grandiose arrangements: *Legacy* and extensive album highlight *One Word Answers* are the closest he's yet come to squaring up to his prog idols. *All I Have*, on the other hand, is uncomplicated guitar pop, albeit with smarter than usual lyrics. *Oceanography* — ironically for the title track of this album — is probably the closest in tone and style to the singles from *More Stately Mansions*, and boasts one of the most effortlessly rousing refrains on the record.

The album works best when it's in the sweet spot between his more left field influences, straight-up guitar pop, and the bombastic Muse-style melodrama that's a constant thread both on this LP and his previous work. That said, even when the tendency in this trifecta skews towards being over the top, as on *Ruins*, it usually works brilliantly. It's the more straightforward pop sections that crave just a little bit more weirdness, even if Charlie's personality does consistently shine through.

Barnes has always been an interesting character to watch, and this latest chapter just reconfirms his dedication to his own creative vision. With the Bastille gig, many would pack in their own projects, but his determination has borne fruit, and *Oceanography* represents a logical progression from his earlier work. Despite how accomplished this album is, there are still abundant hints that this is still not him at the peak of his powers. Who knows where he'll go next.

ALEX LYNHAM

AURI

Auri NUCLEAR BLAST

Nightwishers explore Celtic dreams.

Fans of symphonic prog metal will be no strangers to Troy Donockley and Tuomas Holopainen, both core members of Nightwish. Vocalist Johanna Kurkela will also be known to some for both her guest spots with Sonata Arctica, as well as solo work. Auri brings all three together in a project that fuses elements of Nightwish's expansive sound with modern minimalism and Celtic folk. The effect is often arresting and always fascinating. Opener *The Space Between* – which showcases Kurkela's soaring voice – gestures to symphonic rock. It's lovely and comforting, but arguably doesn't break the new ground promised by this trio. It soon becomes clear that this is a palate-cleanser. As *Auri* unfolds – especially on tracks such as *Desert Flower*, which weaves the classical, folky and strange with ease – the more it takes hold. By the time of the spooky *Savant* and the meditative *Underthing Solstice*, Donockley and co have created a sound world that fuses menace with lullaby. It could be a mess – not everyone could team uillean pipes with Kurkela's spectral voice and Holopainen's left field keys – but the understanding between the Nightwish confrères makes this work. **RM**

AYREON UNIVERSE

The Best Of Ayreon Live MASCOT

Grandiose presentation of Ayreon's first live performance.

Considering that Arjen Lucassen began the Ayreon project over 20 years ago, it's perhaps surprising that it took until September last year for it to make the transition to the stage. However, with the sheer number of guest musicians involved, a live performance couldn't simply be thrown together. Instead, he's waited until the material could be performed in a setting worthy of the music, and this typically bombastic live recording is the result. Taking a cynical standpoint, the use of guests usually equates to higher album sales, but when performed live, the variety offered by the 16 singers ensures that the set never lurches towards the predictable. Anneke van Giersbergen is as flawless as ever, notably on *Valley Of The Queens*, with Damian Wilson adding his distinctive panache to a number of songs. Those familiar with Ayreon's sci-fi tales will no doubt adore the hammed-up delivery, but newcomers may find some of the narrated sections a touch too close to *Blake's 7* for comfort. Admittedly, cod operatics occasionally creep in, and the power metal approach is sometimes claustrophobic, but this album shows off the scope and ambition of the Ayreon project to date. **RW**

BARREN EARTH

A Complex Of Cages CENTURY MEDIA

Dark Finnish prog with a psych metal spirit.

A meeting of minds from some of Finland's most inventive metal bands, Barren Earth have steadily moved away from their progressive death roots and into more esoteric territory. The band's core sound remains intact from 2015's *On Lonely Towers*, but their fifth full-length feels more refined, the brutal moments serving as necessary punctuation, rather than sonic bedrock. New keyboardist Antti Myllinen has slotted in seamlessly, the buzz and throb of analogue organs bringing warmth to what are otherwise spiky and unpredictable songs. Faroese vocalist Jón Aldará puts in a bravura performance too, most notably on the 10-minute *Solitude Pith*. A claustrophobic fever dream with swivel-eyed psychedelic overtones and a bombastic chorus, its mid-section sounds like *Red*-era Crimson playing *Kashmir* in space, before morphing into an imperious groove worthy of Opeth. The album ends with the folk-tinged, glassy serenity of *Withdrawal*, a masterclass in melodrama driven by Aldará's howls of anguish. It's another indication that Barren Earth's future lies deep in prog's mesmerising mire, and that Finnish metal's adventurous instincts are alive and well. **DL**

BEAUTIFY JUNKYARDS

The Invisible World Of Beautify Junkyards GHOST BOX

Deep in the woods glows a masterpiece.

Densely lysergic of texture and ethereally pagan, Lisbon's Beautify Junkyards take late 60s UK acid folk as a launch pad. The band caress the swooping vocal interplay between keyboardist João Branco Kyron and Rita Vian with intricately shimmering backdrops forged around João Moreira's rippling acoustic guitar, Sergue Ra's bass, Antonio Watts' percussion and Helena Espvall's autumnal cello. There are sprinkles of Incredibles or Forest here, Principal Edwards or Trees there, certainly echoes of the ornate riverbank reflection garnished by Robert Kirby for Nick Drake. But something deeply special to Beautify Junkyard glows in their dense reverie, including their love of Brazilian Tropicalia that infuses their psychedelic cauldron and gives any Tyrannosaurus Rex-style woodland bongos exotic grounding. Technological evolution is one key element the band have over acid folk's original pranksters, enabling them to lace *Ghost Dance* with Mellotron flute, bathe *The Masque The Hidden Garden* in Medieval tomb ambience and coat everything in synthesised luminescence and mystery. It all elevates their 21st-century psych folk to a magical higher level. **KN**

BIRTH OF JOY

Hyper Focus GLITTERHOUSE

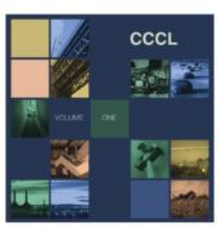
Hard-rocking Dutch trio take the prog route.

Regulars on the European festival circuit over the last few years will most likely be familiar with Birth Of Joy, who seem intent on staking a claim of being the hardest-gigging band around. They've also found time to make five studio albums, the latest of which finds them less reliant on the heavy, vaguely retro psych blues that made their reputation. Instead, *Hyper Focus* signals a shift towards the proggier end of the spectrum, the three-piece striking out into more nebulous territory. *Join The Game* is a riot of galloping prog metal, complete with a shredding solo from singer/guitarist Kevin Stunnenberg. By contrast, *Forenoon* gives in to their jazz-rooted tendencies, allowing room for organist Gertjan Gutman (who also doubles up on bass) and drummer Bob Hogenelst to develop a cooler tempo. There's still the odd concession to vintage psych – most prominently on *Riff Raff* – but Birth Of Joy appear just as happy in the midst of a meandering jam like *Sypdorkat* as they do in the playful time signatures of *Witches Hammer*. And listen out for *Poor Duffy*, which sounds like an ominous coupling of The Doors and King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard. **RH**

CHRIS CARTER

Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons, Volume One MUTE

New electronic milestone blows up the lab.



After appearing over 40 years ago with art terrorists Throbbing Gristle, Chris Carter, with lifelong partner Cosey Fanni Tutti, pioneered electronic forms now assimilated into modern music's DNA. Always a boffin, Carter's finally releasing a solo album, citing influences like his fixation with 60s Radiophonic Workshop recordings and "guilty pleasure" English folk. Over 25 otherworldly future soundscapes, he unearths dazzling seams in a mine thought long-exhausted, resulting in one of the most astonishing electronic works to hit these shores in many moons. Every track has its own distinct character but, mentioning just six, *Cernubicea*'s spectral voice fragments become space siren incantations; *Modularity* turns German motorik rhythms into a glistening express wired to explode into technicolour shards; *Blissters* plants dirty electrodes on Tangerine Dream's gonads; *Pillars Of Wah* forges electronic shoegaze; *Lab Test* pillages the space disco; and *Tones Map* heaves to life like Godzilla waking up with a bad head on Mars. Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the electronic waters, along comes Chris Carter with this euphoric, questing shark attack. **KN**

BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME

Automata I SUMERIAN

Progression, yes, but with unfinished business.

Between The Buried And Me aren't ones for standing still. Constantly evolving their sound, the North Carolina five-piece's brutal blitz of gung-ho riffery of the early 2000s has shape-shifted over the last decade into a more daring, progressive sound, showcased by the bold *Colors* and *Parallax II*. And when the prog metallers released their brilliant seventh album *Coma Ecliptic* in 2015, things were done a little differently, with dialled down song structures allied to more clean vocals, in addition to a 'rock opera' tag that no doubt struck fear into their more burly followers.

> **There's less overt exhibitionism, each soundscape more considered.**

So how could they move forward this time? *Automata I* is the first part of a double LP — chopped in two in an attempt to ensnare today's more fickle, shuffle-led listener — and it runs with the concept of dreams being broadcast for entertainment, kind of like a *Black Mirror* for the prog world, with the story largely taking place inside the protagonist's mind while asleep.

The musical progression is clever, subtle yet noticeable. Opener *Condemned To The Gallows* is more typical, with a swaying acoustic intro and keys merging into a number of kaleidoscopic riffs, vocalist Tommy Rogers juggling cleans and screams with swagger. But it's the other five songs that pique the interest. *House Organ*, a slender, less-than-four-minute track, opens with jagged riffs, then plunges like a North Sea wave, motifs cunningly chucked in from the previous tune, but it's supremely melodious and dreamy too.

Yellow Eyes finds guitarists Paul Waggoner and Dustie Waring exuding both finger-frenzied leads and apocalyptic riffing as bassist Dan Briggs and demi-drum-god Blake Richardson trade artillery fire. While it may not grab you by the throat, it's still a rollicking ride.

Millions is perhaps the biggest surprise, a snappy song feeling like an indie rock tune gone twisted, and the thrilling *Bolt* acts as a grenade lobbed in to awaken the senses and conclude part one on a cliffhanger.

This still *sounds* like Between The Buried And Me, and their desire to march into fresh realms has been realised as they settle into new label Sumerian. But they've taken an unexpected turn, one with less overt exhibitionism, with each note and soundscape more considered.

Both dark and light, the absorbing *Automata I* is often itself is the sum of two parts, but like most double records, by the end of the 35 minutes, you're left a little unfulfilled and impatient to explore its follow-up.

CHRIS COPE

GALAHAD

Seas Of Change AVALON

The UK veterans return to neo-prog in style.

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union was the biggest political and social story of the past five years. Each of us has a viewpoint on Brexit, and some of those opinions are as toxic as it gets. Any band choosing to address such a divisive subject takes their metaphorical life into their own hands, but that's exactly what Galahad have done with their 10th studio release, *Seas Of Change*.

> **Just like Brexit itself, Seas... is sprawling and complex.**

Just like Brexit itself, *Seas...* is sprawling and complex. Lasting for a few seconds short of 43 minutes, it's a single conceptual track, broken down into three song suites. The laid-back, shorter tunes featured on 2017's *Quiet Storms* weren't to everybody's taste, and it's to Galahad's immense credit that they've bounced back following what they've termed "a pretty difficult couple of years" – a period that saw the exit of co-founding guitarist Roy Keyworth – to present such an ambitious yet ultimately rewarding banquet of neo-prog.

With its spoken-word demand of: *'I respectfully request that you be upstanding, for I give you total confusion served up with a smattering of understated incredulity/Topped off with a heady dose of utter bemusement,' Lords Ladies And Gentlemen* throws down the gauntlet, a BBC-type voice quickly announcing: *'The matter could become critical in a couple of days.'* "Yeah right," grunts a man in the pub, scowling into his pint.

Galahad's decision to replace Keyworth from within with former member Lee Abraham, who of course switches from bass to guitar, is a sound one. Abraham handles frets and keys on his excellent solo records, and despite its brevity, a Gilmour-esque intro to *Sea Of Uncertainty* is among the record's many highlights.

Another to cover himself in glory is Dean Baker, whose mastery of keys is fundamental to the album's success. And kudos to co-producer Karl Groom, who at times makes Baker's contribution sound positively orchestral.

The potshot at former Prime Minister David Cameron, the idiot that opened the whole can of worms and then ran for the hills, is well-deserved – *'His masterplan having backfired, the PM has so gracefully retired'* – but we're left no clearer as to whether Galahad are 'remainers' or 'leavers', though by jiminy the debate has been fun.

Is there a place for politics in progressive rock? Roger Waters believes so, obviously. Is it all a bit too close to home? Well, only if you don't inhabit the real world. *Seas Of Change* enhances the notion that, potentially stuffy as it may seem, everyday life is every bit as absorbing as our imaginations. **DAVE LING**

CAVERN OF ANTI-MATTER

Hormone Lemonade DUOPHONIC

Album number three from the new Berlin school of electronic music.

That Tim Gane's post-Stereolab band evoke retro-futurist visions of our technological past is practically a given – it's part of their DNA, a fascination with the sounds and imagery of tomorrow's world. Yet Cavern Of Anti-Matter are still full of the pioneer spirit on *Hormone Lemonade* as they journey along the unexplored byways of electro rock, machine funk and avant disco. The album begins with the extended *Malfunction*, which initially suggests the theme to an 80s sci-fi drama, shifts up into a Krautronica gear, then bursts into solar flare brilliance. In contrast, *Make Out Fade Out* is grimy electronic pop worthy of Add N To (X). Songs constantly change direction: the pulsing arpeggios of *Automatic Morning* ease into a 70s library music groove until a computer-in-distress alarm channels Hawkwind's sonic attack; the spooky Moog of *Feed Me Magnetic Rain* mutates into a harsh techno riff before drifting into an ambient reverie. Other tracks feature more guitar-led arrangements, with the folky picking of *Remote Confection* subsumed by droning swathes of analogue bliss. Like a meeting of science and nature in a hall of mirrors, it's a synthedelic delight. **JB**

DEAD MEADOWS

The Nothing They Need XEMU

LA stoner rock veterans celebrate 20th anniversary.

Formed around 1998 out of Washington DC's punk indie scene, Dead Meadow cut their stoner swathe by referencing Pink Floyd, Sabbath and Led Zep before such influences became a hipster mainstay. Led by Jason Simon's sonorous croon collision between Syd Barrett and Peter Perrett, his guitars crackle with overloaded natural static or shimmer in the ether before joining bassist Steve Kille's lumbering rumble. Touring incessantly and changing drummers as often as their underwear, they've now released eight albums, two live sets and a Peel session set, capturing the first time a band recorded for the show away from the BBC's studio. This celebration of Dead Meadow's 20 years of existence, recorded at their Wiggle Room rehearsal studio in LA, calls back every drummer who's played with the core duo. It's a feast of bulldozer riffing, psych-dosed stoner reverie and axe fireworks, all bathed in plumes of drifting sonic smoke that encourage horizontal listening, though the sprightly *I'm So Glad* tosses some bouncy sausages onto the blues rock grill and may even inspire some vertical take-off action. **KN**

AL DI MEOLA

Opus EARMUSIC

Now a happy man, the guitarist continues to stretch himself.

He was Return To Forever's diffident firebrand, the fusion genius behind *Elegant Gypsy*, and he shared a stage with fellow guitar giants Paco de Lucía and John McLaughlin. But follow the trajectory of Al Di Meola's four-decade solo career and you'll see him emerge as a musical globalista with a love for Piazzolla's nuevo tango and an appreciation of Latin-based styles. He says that *Opus* marks the first time he's ever written while happy, but that hasn't turned his brain to saccharine mush – this sparely produced, mainly acoustic album is no sugar-fest. The tango-inspired *Escapado* and gelid *Frozen In Time* are the most immediate tunes, but 10-minute suite *Ava's Dream Sequence Lullaby* is capricious and requires concentration. A musical conversation with himself, *Left Unsaid* is a skilled expression of his new-found contentment, while the jazzy, contrapuntal harmonies of *Insieme* are dazzlingly complicated. A few weak string and drum samples disrupt the flow, but pianist Kemuel Roig adds class to *Rebels* and *Milonga Noctiva*, and it's a thrill to follow an explorer reaching new creative peaks, even if the air's pretty thin up here for the rest of us. **GRM**

ELEPHANT9

Greatest Show On Earth RUNE GRAMMOFON

Scorching set evokes prog's keyboard legends.

Never judge a book by its cover, nor an album by its opening track. With its slippery bass, stilted beats and what sounds like an inebriated Mellotron slurring through a sing-song after a grand night out, the almost comedic *Way Of Return* provides no clue as to what lies ahead. While their last two releases were augmented by Swedish guitarist and sometime Motorpsycho and Dungen collaborator Reine Fiske, here keyboardist Ståle Storløkken, bassist Nikolai Hængsle and drummer Torstein Lofthus go back to power trio basics. Exploding into a thunderous, urgent groove and sprayed with fiery organ, the fifth studio album by this virtuosic Norwegian outfit is bursting with a riotous intensity. Summoned through a sequence of gloriously Hammond-heavy invocations, the spirits of Egg-era Dave Stewart, Keith Emerson and Lifetime's Larry Young are made manifest amid a hurtling, energetic sequence of original compositions. Soulful, smart and packed with thrilling keyboard excursions, this is a love letter to the finest keyboard-orientated outfits in progressive music. Forget thoughts of pastiche or nostalgic knock-off – this is their most powerful release to date. **SS**

GRICE

The Grey Of Granite Stone HUNGERSLEEP

Title belies colours and softness, enhanced by Barbieri, Jansen and BJ Cole.

Grice Peters, a London-born singer/musician, has – unusually for a contemporary artist – retained a degree of enigma, despite acclaim for his post-pop art rock elisions on 2012's *Propellor* and 2015's *Alexandrine*. This new five-track EP sees him again joined by Richard Barbieri and Steve Jansen on the gently throbbing *Cry*, while BJ Cole, another semi-regular contributor, brings his pedal-steel guitar. If it's slightly less majestically brooding than his previous releases, it still understands that pop music can be a vast edifice of warm, beautiful shapes, rather than a disposable prefab. It will appeal to fans of Japan and Tears For Fears, especially as Grice is a distinctive, ambitious vocalist. Like its influences, it grasps that the sleek chilliness of electronica is seductively balanced by bass sounds that possess personality, and this trick is demonstrated on the proudly happy-sad opener *Change My World*. *Spirit Level* revels in big splashes of drama while never losing its forward momentum; *Cry* is a caress of onomatopoeia, a lapping of waves reminiscent of *Alexandrine*; and *Glass Séance* is a brief, experimental ambient piece that's anything but grey. **CR**

GWENNO

Le Kov HEAVENLY

Multilingual ex-Pipette's electro-psych second.

At first glance, Gwenno Saunders' staunch loyalty to the dual mother tongues that loom largest in her lineage (her debut *Y Dydd Olaf* album was sung exclusively in Welsh, its *Le Kov* successor entirely in Cornish) speaks of a tendency toward isolationist traditionalism. But not a bit of it. While there is a conceptual leaning toward the legends surrounding lost Brythonic cities, folk and folklore, the bewitching, pulsing, pastoral throb of *Herdhya* liltingly bemoans the "feeling of isolation after the Brexit vote". Re-establishing Cornish as a living language in this most contemporary of sonic settings (a rich electro-pop-literate strand of psychedelia) seems way more intent on inclusive progression than exclusive regression. Elsewhere, against the motorik-lite Cornwallian kosmische of *Eus Keus?*, Gwenno embarks upon a lyrical journey toward enlightenment, asking – like generations of questing druids before her – *'Is there cheese?'* Neither lousy with self-righteous purism nor devoid of humour, Gwenno has delivered a second solo album that charms in its powerful presentation of the Cornish tongue as exotic and otherworldly, hinting at dark secrets while demanding Yarg. **IF**

PROGRESSIVE METAL

Dom Lawson buckles up for a delve into the darker, heavier side.

Howling Sycamore are the brainchild of Davide Tiso, best known for his work with various disparate incarnations of jazz metal experimentalists Ephel Duath. Far closer to more recognisable forms of prog metal than anything the Frenchman has done before, their self-titled debut (Prosthetic) brings Tiso together with legendary ex-Watchtower vocalist Jason McMaster and extreme metal drum hero Hannes Grossmann (Obscura/Necrophagist). The results are stunning, McMaster's imperious bellow adding genuine drama and embattled soul to Tiso's complex but weirdly memorable flights of heavy me(n)tal fantasy. For a debut, *Howling Sycamore* is frighteningly good.

There's no denying that French hash-tronauts **Stonebirds**' second album *Time* (stonebirdsarestone.bandcamp.com) possesses plenty of Sabbath-saluting riffing, but this is doomy post-metal of a psychedelic and expansive nature. It's full of jaw-dropping dynamic detours, fizzing ambient wooziness and an underlying sense of drug-addled melancholy that ensures the whole red-eyed sprawl grips from start to finish. The 11-minute *Shutters Part I & II* is particularly breathtaking.

Arkheth's *12 Winter Moons Comes The Witches Brew* (Transcending Obscurity) fulfils the synapse-detonating promise of its barking mad artwork and then some. Ostensibly a black metal band, these shadowy Australians have more in common with Japan's always loopy Sigh than anything more recognisably frostbitten. Rambling, schizophrenic freak-outs like Dark Energy Equilibrium are prog to the core, embellished with all manner of skewed and unexpected instrumentation and never less than riveting in their unpredictability.

Progressive instincts have been celebrated in death metal since the late 80s, which means that **Letters From The Colony** are very much upholders of a revered, ancient code. The Swedes' *Vignette* (Nuclear Blast) is certainly brutal, technically dazzling and not for the faint of heart, but it's also disarmingly beautiful and flows like the great progressive albums of old: yer actual authentic musical voyage, if you please. Frontman Alexander Backlund's feral growl aside, it feels closer in spirit to Voivod, Opeth or Devin Townsend than to death metal's traditional wing.

Similarly, Swedish brutes **Usurpress** retain strong links with their brutal past, but fourth album *Interregnum* (Agonia) uses scything riffs as a mere starting point. What emerges is pure prog rock magic, albeit noticeably heavier than the average and occasionally sung by what sounds like an angry gorilla.

Finally, post-djent pugilists **Core Of IO**'s *Part II: Europa* EP (self-released) is their strongest effort yet. The first two tracks, *Stuck* and *Hit The River Hard*, offer a spiky blend of alt-rock angularity and tech-metal crunch, while the epic *Lenuta* is a giddy blur of moods, dynamics and Coheed-ish sparkle. Nice work.

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Vol.1

MALADY

Toinen Toista SVART

Exploratory prog from rising Helsinki quintet.

Malady's self-titled debut of 2015 carried strong echoes of fellow Finns Wigwam and Tasavallan Presidentti, bands that helped define the sound of Finnish prog from the late 60s onwards. This second effort is infused with a similar sense of adventure, the five-piece busying themselves with mellow grooves that pitch and yaw, striking a fine balance between technical ability and improv. Babak Issabeigloo's vocals (all in his native tongue) are kept to a minimum, the frontman preferring to add contrast to the fluid rhythms of fellow guitarist Tony Björkman. It's Ville Rohiola's Hammond and synth lines that push into the foreground, particularly on the jazz fusion of *Tiedon Kehtolaulu* and the rich pastoralism of the title track. The album is dominated by epic closer *Nurja Puoli*. At nearly 23 minutes, it's a piece that finds the whole band locked into a vast prog funk groove, with each member seemingly given licence to wander free. Bassist Jonni Tanskanen tends to hold it steady, allowing Björkman and Issabeigloo to raise the temperature with a series of recurring guitar motifs that subside into gentler ambience. A deep, complex and rewarding trip. **RH**

MELTED SPACE

Darkening Light SENSORY

Ensemble cast unite for Frenchman's third album.

What's in the water – or beer – on mainland Europe? In Holland you've got workaholic Arjen Lucassen, famed for bringing together millions of musicians for his many Ayreon albums, and in France you've got Melted Space's Pierre Le Pape. His third full-lengther under the Melted Space moniker, *Darkening Light*, enlists talents from the likes of Sons Of Apollo, Dark Tranquillity and The Gathering – and many, many more – to create a prog metal opera that when it's good, it's *really* good. Part Nightwish, part Within Temptation, part, erm, Ayreon, the record juggles prog, metal and a keen a sense of brain-tickling melody. *The Dawn Of Man (I'm Alive!)* blends Megadeth leads, Dream Theater progressions and Jeff Scott Soto's powerful vocals, while *Regrets* manages to somehow juxtapose nightmarish black metal gurgles with ethereal female vocals. It's not all a triumph, though – *Newborns*, for example, feels a little corny as the theatrics whirl up. However, by the time the almost eight-minute finale *Fallen World* dissolves into Opeth brutality, you're left feeling a little forlorn that you're about to leave this odd yet somewhat endearing universe behind. **CC**

MILDLIFE

Phase RESEARCH

Melbourne quartet cram youthful chops into a 70s fusion-bound TARDIS.

Coming straight out of Melbourne via what sounds like parts of the most enterprising moments of Herbie Hancock's canon, Mildlife make music that made this writer want to transform his living room into a haven of shagpile carpet, with some sort of seat that looks like a bowl that hangs from the ceiling on a chain. After giving the album a couple of spins, one was even thinking about cultivating an Afro. Listening to *Phase* can do that to you, with its undulating, cultured synth patterns and loose, jazzy grooves with splashes of psych rock and funk. At points you think they're going to give in to a disco groove – check out the thoroughly spaced-out funk intro to *Zwango Zop*, which then bubbles and shrugs away into the astral skies. It might be out of time, but it's certainly in the zone, lovingly crafted, starry-eyed and thoroughly enchanting in its own hypnotic way. Also especially good is the epically proportioned opening track *The Magnificent Moon* and the slowly creeping *The Gloves Don't Bite*, which boasts sparse, echo-laden vocals and percussive trills. This is the perfect album for you to tune in, drop out and float very gently away. **PW**

GONG EXPRESSO

Decadence SELF-RELEASED

Bass is the place on Gong men's reunion.

Having cut his teeth as a jobbing jazz bassist in New York's club circuit, Hansford Rowe knows how to make things happen within a song. It's a capacity that propelled him onto the international stage after his recruitment to Pierre Moerlen's Gong in the mid-70s.

A gentle exploration that sparkles with a bewitching intensity.

A universe away from Daevid Allen's playful Pot-Head Pixies, Moerlen's iteration of the franchise delivered vibrant, high-octane jazz fusion, with Rowe's sinuous playing providing the spine to their work.

In recent years, in addition to exploring microtonal music, Rowe has quietly moved into jazzier territory via his Moments duo and HR3, the latter featuring guitarist Julien Sandiford. Rowe's brand new reunion with fellow PM Gong alumni Benoît Moerlen (vibes and marimba) and François Causse (drums and percussion) co-opts Sandiford, whose illuminating presence is very welcome indeed.

Anyone expecting fast fusion thrills may struggle with this often downtempo offering, yet the gentle exploration of their spacious sound world sparkles with a bewitching intensity.

Rowe's lucid runs frequently set the scene, with Moerlen and Sandiford carrying the principal tunes, several written by the guitarist. The youngest member of the ensemble, not even born when his fellow bandmates were recording with Pierre Moerlen, his writing revels in supple explorations of melody and harmony. With a distortion-free tone, the care and grace with which he deploys his notes occasionally evokes the ringing purity of Bill Frisell or the more languid rumination found within early-period Pat Metheny.

Lithe, lean and always on point, the fluidity of Moerlen's tumbling vibes often take on a pianistic aspect, trickling over the see-sawing chords during *Toumani* or the bright, thematic figures of *Zephyr*. This latter tune in particular, with growling bass, sometimes recalls the kind of circuitous piece Gilgamesh might have tackled, while it provides Causse with a speedy breakout.

The music of *Decadence* is uncluttered and largely unhurried, and it's blessed with a rich connectivity that fizzes between the gifted players. At the heart of this album is a simple, precision-driven transparency, a feeling that the group are entirely focused on pursuing the clarity within its compositions.

Chilled but far from lethargic, a special, intimate atmosphere pervades this recording, and the expressiveness found within this material is particularly rewarding.

SID SMITH

IO EARTH

Solitude SELF-RELEASED

Midlands prog masters enter darker territory.

A new IO Earth album is always a matter for rejoicing. Not only have they produced symphonic prog of the highest order for the best part of 10 years, but they've built a fan base that's more like a family than a conventional audience. *Solitude*, however, is particularly welcome as it's new vocalist Rosanna Lefevre's debut on an IO Earth record.

> ***Solitude* is unquestionably their most affecting record.**

Lefevre has an immediate impact. Where previous vocalist Linda Odinsen brought clean Scandinavian precision to recordings, Lefevre brings darker rock and blues sensibilities to bear. On the serious and heavy *Breakdown*, Lefevre demonstrates that she has technique to spare — few could so easily reach a note so high it might shatter glass, but it's her lower register and mid-range that give IO Earth a new emotional centre.

Long-time fans may be wondering how *Solitude* shapes up against 2015's *A New World*. Leaving aside the vocal shifts, *Solitude* is arguably IO Earth's darkest record yet. Certainly, all the things we've come to love from Dave Cureton and co are there — grand symphonic sweeps, flashes of metal, extraordinary guitar wig-outs and vast songs — but *Solitude* is unquestionably the more affecting record. It explores themes of depression, loneliness, courage and connection in a way that's both personal yet universal. When Cureton sings, *'I feel so alone inside... but you understand my mind,'* on the epic *Race Against Time*, it reveals layers of sensitivity that the casual prog fan might not expect. It should become a live favourite.

Solitude also feels more confident than *A New World*. That album produced some stone-cold live classics such as *Colours* and *New World*, but *Solitude* relies less on bangs-and-whistles. Opener *Solitude* is an object lesson in patience and judgement. It dares to take the first third of its seven-minute run time on scene setting, Cureton offering a mesmeric *'1, 2, 3, 4'* count over minimalistic key washes, strings and Lefevre's spooky vocals. It could be disastrous. Instead, its bravado pays off. When the track finally explodes, it delivers thrills and chills.

In case anyone thinks Cureton and Adam Gough have gone all fey and forgotten how to rock, *Solitude* remains unafraid of some powerful progressive wig-outs. The band's core duo have always had a gift for melody, but this album shows new maturity. The soloing from sax player Luke Shingler, as well as Cureton on *Madness*, is jaw-dropping, but they never lose sight of the song.

Solitude represents a fantastic addition to the IO Earth catalogue. It's a step forward and its 75 minutes will leave you delighted, thrilled and almost certainly emotionally wrung out.

RACHEL MANN

MINT FIELD

Pasar De Las Luces INNOVATIVE LEISURE

Tijuana shoegazers channel the greats.

Mexicans are building a wall... of sound. Mint Field are two 21-year-old females from Tijuana who have the brass to replicate the late 80s UK shoegaze sound with a mix of clinical reverence and improvisational bravado. Amor Amezcua (synths, drums) and Estrella Sánchez (wispy vocals, guitars) met in high school and have already played Coachella and toured with Ice Age. Their debut album, produced in Detroit by Christopher Koltay, is an unapologetic homage to their inspirations. Americans are arguably more familiar, or comfortable, with the phrase 'dream pop' than shoegaze, and that feels more appropriate for their reverberating reveries that dig away at looped riffs until silvery slivers of emotion are unearthed. There's a lush aura to the whole, and if it threatens to slump into one-trick-pony repetition after a few tracks, they save the day by detouring into Krautrock on *Quiero Otoño de Nuevo*, or more melancholy moods on *Viceversa*. It's hard to tell whether their fuzzed-up echoes are aimed at nostalgists or if they're a generation too young to remember Slowdive, but bar some over-fiddly drum fills, they bring a freshness onto a well-worn pitch. **CR**

OCEANS OF SLUMBER

The Banished Heart CENTURY MEDIA

Intimate fourth LP from Texan progressive metallers.

Oceans Of Slumber have long been refining their formula, blending the dynamics of old school death metal with modern progressive rock. Vocalist Cammie Gilbert's clear vocal gives a real freshness to their sound, even where the instrumentals are conforming to the expected mores of a genre. The joins between the more prog versus metal timbres aren't always seamless though, such as the somewhat jarring transitions in *At Dawn* from blast beat death metal to melodic clean vocal sections with Gilbert taking the lead. That said, when these sometimes abrupt transitions do hit home, they define the dynamics of the album and set it apart from other works in the genre. What's interesting is that when the riffing returns to somewhat more classic rolling chugs later in the same track, the juxtaposition between the instrumentals and Gilbert's voice is nothing short of electric. Indeed, this is a feature of many of the best tracks, such as *Etiolation* and the furious *A Path To Broken Stars*. The title track is where it all comes together: a nine-minute cut of metallic elements, a brooding and intimate piano section, and a bombastic prog finale that all gel together perfectly. **AL**

FERNANDO PERDOMO

Out To Sea SELF-RELEASED

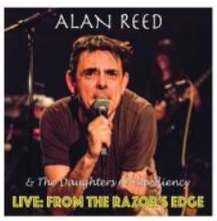
Miami multitasker's 'tribute'-heavy instrumental set.

This Florida-born session player and producer has worked with such notable names as Todd Rundgren and Dave Kerzner, but while he's a well respected 'musician's musician', he's not hugely well known round these parts. By releasing an instrumental album, he's got his work cut out creating a star profile. That's a shame because *Out To Sea* is full of personality – multiple ones. That much is evident when he kicks off with an abrasive guitar riff reminiscent of Gang Of Four, then branches out into jazz rock chords and funk grooves before Genesis-flavoured keyboard emerges from the choppy waters. Other reference points are similarly diverse, but he regularly returns to his natural habitat of traditional prog textures. *Out To Sea* has faintly Latin rhythms accompanying Perdomo's slightly surfy twang, but there's a definite Hackett influence in *De Boerderij*'s galloping licks, while the gorgeous flute that introduces the piece would grace any number of early-70s releases. *The Future According To Roye* and *Sonja* pay homage to Mr Albrighton and Ms Kristina respectively, but whether or not you can spot the pastiches, Perdomo's versatility and talent rarely let your interest wane. **JS**

ALAN REED & THE DAUGHTERS OF EXPEDIENCY

Live: From The Razor's Edge RED DWARF

A live taste of *Honey*.



Down but not out, Alan Reed's infamous ousting from Pallas was about as unsavoury as the former Kiss members arguing over the band's legacy in the press. Regardless, both parties have now moved on, even if it did seem for a moment there that a completely disgruntled and disheartened Reed might give up music for good. Thankfully, that wasn't to be, as Reed has flourished as a solo artist both on record and as a live performer. And as stirring as he is while wailing away from behind an acoustic guitar, it's glorious to hear him in full voice with a backing band behind him. It's also clear that no one's having quite as much fun as Alan Reed and his band – well, apart from his audience, maybe. After last year's very well-received studio album *Honey On The Razor's Edge*, it's good to see Reed making the transformation back to band leader, and he's at his full-throated best on this live set. Especially good here are *Razor*, *For The Greater Glory*, *Kingdom Of The Blind* and an uproarious take on *Crown Of Thorns* that's welcomed home like a returning hero. **PW**

TAMARISK

Breaking The Chains SONIC AGE

Eighties time capsule packed with delights.

The influences on 80s neo-prog are many and various, and alongside the usual suspects are the interstellar explorations of crusty rock and even shades of punk and New Wave. *Breaking The Chains* – an opportunity to hear new recordings of rare classics from neo-proggers Tamarisk – is a timely reminder of the influences that shaped those heady days. From the opening cock crow of *An Alien Heat*, through to the closing keys of *It Was Never There*, this is a bracing and wonderful listen. Until now, the only chance to hear this outfit – part pronk, part Hawkwind, part VdGG – was on old tapes or a CD taken from them. *Breaking The Chains* uses a combination of original master recordings – including the drum work of the late Richard Harris (not that one!) – and new versions using a mix of old and new personnel. Hearing these recordings conjures the sweaty thrills of the Marquee or fag-choked pubs. It's hard not to get the whiff of patchouli and bad beer out of the nostrils. But this band still have something to say: *...Chains* reveals Tamarisk had the anger of Marillion, the cool of Twelfth Night and more power than many metal bands. A treat from yesterday that still speaks today. **RM**

THE OSIRIS CLUB

The Wine-Dark Sea INDIE

Consolidating second from beaked brotherhood.

There are a couple of things that strike you upon encountering London's The Osiris Club. First off, they customarily perform while dressed as medieval plague doctors. Now, for those who've never had cause to have their swollen buboes looked at by time-travelling 14th-century quacks, this is quite the look: part-Goth Womble, part-Spy Vs. Spy, all pointy nose-cone and voluminous cowl. Secondly, they're not averse to post-Crimson instrumental complexity. All well and good: they've certainly come to the right magazine for that kind of caper. But point A does tend to render point B almost impossible. Executing a stunt tempo change while packing shedloads of notes into every lick is one thing, but when you can't see your fretboard for your cardboard hooter? Well, you've got to take your hat off to them. Nothing drastic's happened between 2014's *Blazing World* debut and *The Wine-Dark Sea*'s nine eloquent and accessible tracks. Sean Cooper's vocals recall Brian Molko with fewer shards of glass in his caw, while his accompanying Club offer an HP Lovecraft-haunted refinement of avant-metal, all dark sci-fi cinematics, compositional curveballs and rich harmonic rewards. **IF**

PROGRESSIVE FOLK

Paul Sexton scours the new releases to find there's nowt so prog as folk.

An unreleased track by an undisputed progenitor of British folk demands top billing. **Shirley Collins**' romantic declaration *Wondrous Love* completes the soundtrack of Tim Plester and Rob Curry's fine documentary on this anchor of English song, *The Ballad Of Shirley Collins* (Earth Recordings), which plots her emergence, years lost to dysphonia and her return. It also accompanies Collins' new autobiography, *All In The Downs: Reflections On Life, Landscape And Song*.

Scottish adventurer **Alasdair Roberts** continues the work in his own name that followed initial years as Appendix Out. *What News* (Drag City), in collaboration with Concerto Caledonia director David McGuinness and sonologist Amble Skuse, keeps the focus on history, but this time with keyboards at the core. He visits Scottish ballads learned from such singers as Betsy Whyte, Duncan Williamson and Alasdair's own late father, Alan. It's a winning approach with beautifully textured sounds, some from an 1844 grand pianoforte or a 1920s Dulcitone, while Roberts' characterful vocals complement many a time-worn tale about the likes of *Young Johnstone* and *Clerk Colven*.

An album by a singer-sitarist who's also a scientist, neuro-philosopher and actor, and dons wearable Mi.Mu gloves to trigger sounds by movement, is likely to be acutely cutting-edge. Such is **Shama**'s *Truth Be Told* (The GungHoDown), a globe-straddling collage set on a bed of both Indian and Western songcraft. A three-part philosophical treatise based on the work of Sufi poet Rumi, it blends singing with poetry, hip-hop culture with sitars and Afrobeat with jazz. The sonic panorama stretches as far as the listener's imagination, and then some.

Luke Daniels has revelled in restless sonic experimentation for two decades, variously as a melodeon accompanist and in Cara Dillon's band, then on many an album in his own name. The latest, *Singing Ways To Feel More Junior* (Gael Music) deserves more than a measure of crossover for this unconventional troubadour. Highlights include *The House That Jack Built*, which addresses misogyny and gender while getting your toe tapping.

Lastly, two torchbearers for rootsy British individualism return. **Stick In The Wheel** expand on their admired 2015 debut *From Here* with *Follow Them True* (From Here). It features their smart, trademark folk-punk synthesis, including vivid London street vignettes *White Copper Alley* and *Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*, sung in broad Cockney by Nicola Kearey, to a title track that dares to introduce folk to Autotune.

You Are Wolf's self-released *KELD* again showcases award-winning composer Kerry Andrew, and like Megan Henwood's *River*, featured in our last column, it draws on watery inspiration to elegant effect. Andrew has just had her first novel published and is admired by no less than Shirley Collins, which takes us back to where we came in...

ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF

Dead Magic CITY SLANG

Bright sounds from a dark heart.

Anna von Hausswolff is one of the most underrated young musicians around today. Like her father, the controversial sound artist Carl Michael von Hausswolff, this Swedish organist and singer has little regard for rules and prefers to create experimental sounds that are immersive but accessible. Since her 2010 debut *Singing From The Grave*, she's embraced art pop, drone and post-metal, yet her fourth studio album is a juxtaposition of dark and bright.

> **Captivating - each note rushes straight to the amygdala.**

Whereas 2015's predecessor, *The Miraculous*, regaled in gothic splendour, *Dead Magic* skips along to a brighter, poppier beat, guided by the sonic limitations of her choice of organ: a mid-20th-century instrument housed in Denmark's Marble Church. And the listener is transported to that hallowed space mere moments into the spine-tingling opener *The Truth, The Glow, The Fall*. The 12-minute three-parter begins with simplistic chords and effervescent melodies that wash over the listener and capture the rich atmosphere of this sacred building. The addition of discordant strings provide an uneasy feeling that's quickly replaced by an almost *The Velvet Underground & Nico*-esque dirge, although von Hausswolff's vocals are higher-pitched and more innocent than the German chanteuse's knowing timbre. The track then floats off into a magical sparkling kingdom before exploding into a synth-driven extravaganza.

She's been placed alongside post-metal musicians Myrkur and Chelsea Wolfe, but von Hausswolff's sound is far brighter and purer, as lead track *The Mysterious Vanishing Of Electra* shows. This is a post-shoegaze gem that could have been in 4AD's back catalogue. Vocally inspired by Peruvian soprano Yma Sumac, her oral gymnastics beg comparisons to Kate Bush and Bat For Lashes, but her minimal lyrics are reflective of the turbulent emotions that drove her to write this album.

Ugly And Vengeful's industrial soundscape makes the most of the church's acoustics with reverb-heavy vocals reminiscent of *A Kiss In The Dreamhouse*-era Siouxsie Sioux.

Sunn O))) producer Randall Dunn crafts von Hausswolff's haunting sound so it captivates as much as her live shows — each note fizzes and rushes straight to the amygdala. She adds further depth with influences from the world of Krautrock, along with nuances of Einstürzende Neubauten and Swans.

The album's shortest track, the majestic instrumental *The Marble Eye*, honours the glorious organ with whispers of *Tubular Bells* as it segues into elegant closer *Källans Återuppståndelse* and rekindles those Kate Bush comparisons.

It might only contain five tracks, but *Dead Magic* is a remarkable journey through one woman's subconscious.

NATASHA SCHARF

THE Z

People Of The Mirror World DETOUR

Tune in, turn on, freak out.

Masterminded by psyched-mod ex-The Studio 68! scenester Paul Moody, The Z's entirely feasible CV tells us that they're already an intergalactic sensation, the biggest band on Betelgeuse and, ahem, from the future. 2517, to be precise. Clearly, since the catastrophic Info Crash of 2350, pop music's been/will be in a terrible state, but thankfully The Z are/will be here to save our souls with lashings of groove-aliciously analogue psych-pop majesty. Other key points you'll probably benefit from processing are that *People Of The Mirror World* is a sci-fi space opera and The Z's phenomenal Joolz-via-Slick-'n'-Sioux vocalist Zoot is a practising Italian High Priestess. (Yes, it seems there's also an Italy on Alpha Orionus. Who knew?) Aside from the 'facts', The Z's debut could be just the record you've been waiting for. It's a 60s-based vision of the future, rendered irresistible by almost imperceptible contemporary pop tropes; a tripped-out, head-on collision of freak-beat, gutter-glam, IOP, acid, Jefferson Airplane, Blues Pills and the house band from the best mondo-bizarro sexploitation party scene you've never seen. Highly recommended. **IF**

THEM MOOSE RUSH

Don't Pick Your Noise TMR RECORDS

Fireworks galore on second album from Croatian power trio.

If it sometimes seems that modern prog lacks a certain, let's say, attitude, here's a band with bags of the stuff. Them Moose Rush hail from Bjelovar in Croatia and blimey, are they feisty. Singer/guitarist Nikola Runjavec sounds like Mike Patton on helium, and gives off an exuberant if slightly scary vibe, like the strange kid in the playground inviting you behind the bike sheds to play with matches. The irreverent, offhand inventiveness of Faith No More is actually not a bad reference for these guys, but their restless math/prog/metal sound is very much their own. *Damudu Honey* starts with a tension-building Morse code riff before morphing into a bad-trip groove. *Anoie* begins as Floydian space rock before exploding into an urgent new shape. *Dreydribble* has enough fretwork fireworks to keep any tech metal fan happy. *Radio Violence* is a great big slap in the face of a riff and a rant against bland FM programming. Resistance is futile as bizarre comparisons keep popping up: one minute they're Jeff Buckley jamming with the Cardiacs, the next they're Jane's Addiction fighting King Crimson. The title says it all: snotty, stupid and clever in equal measure. **JB**

TONOCHROME

A Map In Fragments BAD ELEPHANT

Colourful pop prog debut, featuring the prolific Charlie Cawood.

It's always a joy when jaded ears are refreshed by sparkling music that's largely uninterested in following trends or staying within expected boundaries. Formed in 2011, Tonochrome's first album is an accomplished affair. Predominantly composed by vocalist Andres Razzini and keyboard player Steve Holmes, their deceptively simple but striking arrangements, occasionally reminiscent of Sanguine Hum, enable well-crafted songs to blossom in unexpected ways. A distinctive feature of *A Map In Fragments* comes from the inculcation of cyclical motifs looping through several songs, effectively forming a kind of DNA from which stunning moments evolve and grow. The addition of a string quartet, a classical brass section and chiming lead guitar from Knifeworld's Charlie Cawood bring with them a subtle refinement. The layering of brass and strings, and their dynamic swells, aren't unlike some of the moments found within American composer John Adams' more introspective works. Bridging chamber pop, rock and beyond, the map Tonochrome refer to may well be in fragments, but the treasure is there for all to hear. **SS**

DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN

The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour BLACKLAKE

Superb second album from the Headspace duo.

The combination of Damian Wilson and Adam Wakeman has never disappointed and this eloquent album continues that trend. Key to their artistic success is an understanding of songwriting and a defiant resistance against overplaying. Instead, the songs collected here are raw and direct, with the arrangements deliberately restrained and infused with a simple beauty. *Laugh In Time* is a seductive ballad that's reminiscent of Cat Stevens at his finest, and the darkly amusing *Blackpool Clip Joint Racket* possesses the grandeur of early Billy Joel. Indeed, throughout *The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour*, there's a rare consistency to the music, which mixes a contemporary approach with early-70s concise inspiration. Opener *The Last American Hero*, with an impossibly catchy chorus, is an upbeat tale of an airman and astronaut, and *On This Battlefield* is similarly direct. The inclusion of Travis guitarist Andy Dunlop alongside seductive strings only enhances the appeal. Impeccably pitched and performed, it's an album with the potential – given the right exposure – to cross over to mass public appeal. **RW**

WEEND'Ô

Time Of Awakening SONICBOND

Symphonic French prog metallers' second long-player.

When one of your band's major assets is a voice as captivating as Laetitia Chaudemanche's, you're onto a winner from the start. But while her charismatic warble immediately brings comparisons to the symphonic likes of Nightwish or the dream pop of Bel Canto, the other elements to Weend'ô's sound seem designed to contrast with her vocal, as well as complement it. It jars as often as it gels – the juddery jerk-prog of *Angel Dust* and some manic shredding seem to battle against Chaudemanche's ghostly entreaties and drown them. But when based around powerful melodic sweeps such as the descending chord progression of *Time Of Awakening Part 1*, their heavy riffing can be lifted up by the vocal into a thrillingly dramatic rock symphony. Other moments of beauty include the hymnal harmonies and acoustic flora that introduce *Elea Part I*. When all the key elements of their sound coexist at full power, it's a breathtaking feeling – the power chords, scattershot percussion and metallic licks of *Time Of Awakening Part III* against Chaudemanche's hands-to-heaven contralto come over as a jilted bride weeping in a thunderstorm. **JS**

JONATHAN WILSON

Rare Birds BELLA UNION

Roger Waters compadre demonstrates that it's good to Talk Talk.

As a respected record producer – he was working alongside Roger Waters while making this, his third album – Jonathan Wilson is the kind of music wunderkind it would be quite easy to loathe if he weren't so damn good. As well as some kind of modern-day production wizard, Wilson has already released two lauded records that have shown off his impressive singer/songwriting chops, but for album number three, he's less Tom Petty and more Talk Talk. Built around a failed relationship and production notes that echo Trevor Horn's stellar work through the 80s, Wilson has (not unlike Steven Wilson) maintained his eclectic, musical shades (he can conjure up Roger Waters, folky musings and hard pop as if on a whim), while adding a harder, commercial sheen. Like the other Wilson, that might infuriate people in some quarters who like what they know and know what they like, but Wilson's moving determinedly forward, and gloriously so. Dense, colourful, wonderfully realised, there are George Harrison hooks (*Miriam Montague*) and songs that could have appeared on a Manics album when they're at their most pop (*There's A Light*), but it's all dizzyingly and infuriatingly good. **PW**

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Grant Moon has a rummage down the back of the *Prog* sofa for the ones that nearly got away...

Lest we forget, the wonderful Big Big Train don't have the monopoly on English history! Back in 2015, Bristol's **Pagan Harvest** gave us a promising eponymous debut with a profound Anglo aesthetic, and the follow-up shows they've only grown in confidence and ability. *Sacred River* (www.paganharvest.com) draws on the rich banks of lore around the River Thames, and it's a thoughtful album that's dramatic, atmospheric and deftly performed. Jon Bickley's engaging blend of spoken-word and dour melody is set to fascinating, folk-inspired arrangements from Lawrence Reed. Steve Daymond's bass work is eccentric and well judged, and with added depth from co-vocalist Debbie Hill, this is interesting, clear-eyed prog from a band who deserve to reap what they've sown.

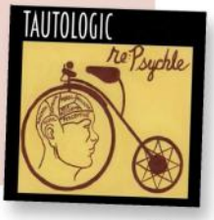
If you enjoy the post-Eno school of moody, electronica music with a chilled, ambient vibe then **Bob Holroyd** may already be on your CD shelf. Nitin Sawhney and Mogwai are fans, and he's added texture to blockbuster movies (*The Dark Knight*) and classic TV (*The Sopranos*). His ninth album, *The Cage* (HML), is the sound of the artist trying to break the confines of his self-professed introspection, and its spare guitars and lonely piano lines will leave you either desolate or exultant, depending on your own headspace.

While we're getting deep, Finnish art rockers **UTU** return with their third album *Russian Poets* (Luova), inspired by the works of Soviet writer Andrei Platanov, and numerous paintings too. It's a transfixing work, with vocalist/songwriter Petra Poutanen's spirited vocals set to experimental arrangements in the spirit of Kate Bush. This is a hard album to describe but it's an easy one to recommend.

Meanwhile, on the lighter, dafter side, prog maven **Rob Reed** has come up with a none-more-Oldfield version of the theme from *Doctor Who*, with Les Penning (recorder player on *In Dulci Jubilo*) and *Tubular Bells* producer Tom Newman. The video's a laugh, the vinyl comes in police-box blue, and it's a bit of frippery. But Reed's many fans are surely due something more substantial soon?

Fractal Mirror's fourth album is their first for the gleefully pluralist label Bad Elephant. *Close To Vapour* plays to their many strengths – catchy tunes, proggy twists and arty spirit. Leo Koperdraat's voice retains that utterly natural tone, Echolyn's Bruce Kull adds solid guitar work, and *Book* and *Hey You* exemplify the likeable pop prog they do so well. It's a gas.

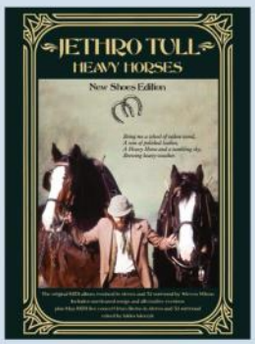
Just as listenable, yet more eclectic and erudite, my record of the month comes from Chicago's **Tautologic**. Led by vocalist, composer and musical egghead Ethan Sellers, they proffer second album *Re:Psychle* (Turtle Down) a mere 18 years after their debut. You can bet Sellers has more than one Gentle Giant LP in his, er, cellar – his urbane lyrical snark is served up with hooky and harmonically challenging music with plenty of 90-degree stylistic turns along the way. It was almost worth the wait!



JETHRO TULL

Heavy Horses UMC

40 years of ploughing their own furrow.



Like some lordly pied piper, Ian Anderson has led Jethro Tull's legions of followers through many changes in style across 50 years. Having marched them from relatively simple rock songs through to extended suites and concept albums, the release of *Heavy Horses* followed *Songs From The Wood*, journeying into a folkloric landscape filled with bucolic tales and a hearty song. Appropriating the kinetic energy of jigs and reels and harnessing it into Tull's music seems natural now, but it wasn't to some folks' tastes back in the day. Forty years on, as this five-disc demonstrates, Anderson was right to follow his own instincts.

"Experience the full force of Tull live in your own home."

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see," wrote Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*, his 1854 treatise on living in harmony with the land. One of the few writers in progressive music tackling the complexities and contradictions of the British class system, Anderson's vision of a field tilled through an honest day's work might suggest a romanticised portrait of the dignity of labour, but he's canny enough to avoid unwelcome lapses into forelock-tugging nostalgia in his appreciation of times gone by.

Martin Barre's biting tone and his impressive versatility imbue the material with such presence and vitality. That he carries off this animating role with such authority, regardless of whichever direction Tull embarked upon, speaks to the guitarist's quiet, unflashy brilliance. Annotating the songs in much the same way that Anderson's flute inscribes each track, Barre's work possesses a reassuring depth, providing in a way a continuity of sorts that lets you know whatever the mode or muse, this is unmistakably, and authentically, Tull.

Barre is just one of the beneficiaries of Steven Wilson's attention. Like his previous Tull remixes, Wilson manages the delicate business of simultaneously respecting the original parameters while broadening the available aural space. Delivering an impressive clarity, the elegant gallop of *Rover*, *...And The Mouse Police Never Sleeps*, and *No Lullaby*'s simmering percussion are especially exciting in their new, expansive settings.

The live show from Berne included in this edition packs such a terrific punch that it's easy to understand why Anderson has been so effusive in his praise of King Crimson's Jakko Jakszyk's remixing efforts. While parts of 1978's *Bursting Out* hailed from this performance, as good as that double album is, if you want to experience the full force of Tull in concert in the comfort of your own home, either in stereo or surround, this newly expanded version is definitely the one you should be reaching for.

SID SMITH

HOLGER CZUKAY

Cinema GRONLAND

Twists galore in blockbuster box set from late Can man.

It's always a slight surprise to see that *NME*'s best albums of 1980 list featured – below Joy Division's *Closer* at No. 1, but above canonical works from Talking Heads, Bowie and Springsteen – Czukay's *Movies*, which dominates this box set, at a giddy No. 5. While a cult hero up to his death last September, the German pioneer of sampling, ambient and world music sounds was never a full-on "star". Tributes paid to him since have emphasised his importance as an inspiration and key collaborator, from co-founding Can through his solo sojourns and work with everyone from David Sylvian to Jah Wobble to Eno.

This chronologically constructed five-album retrospective cherry-picks from his post-Can career, adding an unreleased 1960 tidbit, and ties in with what would've been his 80th birthday and Can's 50th anniversary. (There's a 36-page photo-booklet, and the vinyl version offers a "vinyl video" and other visual quirks.) The Danzig-born provocateur worked in a radio repair shop as a teenager: one pictures him twitching the dial, falling in love with juxtapositions and unexpected sound clashes. Throughout this collection, we hear a man restlessly running between genres and often inventing new ones. One minute we're experiencing post-Krautrock, or arty Roxy cabaret; the next it's like *The Clangers* are having a bash at opera before a psychedelic dub groove takes over.

Work as/with Cluster, Les Vampyrettes (with Conny Plank), Jaki Liebezeit and Ursa Major feature, while 1981's gleeful, mischievous *On The Way To The Peak Of Normal* is almost as centre stage as *Movies*. There's nothing in this selection from the Sylvian collaborations for those of us pop kids who first came to his work via that route, but Czukay always coined his own language. The best way to learn it is to let its description-defying murmurs and mash-ups wash over and into you. Pulsing, warping, trickling, whistling – he paints the big screen between your ears with technicolor dreams. **CR**

BILLY COBHAM

Crosswinds MUSIC ON VINYL

Superior grooves on storming second solo album.

For all their brilliance and the mass adulation they attracted, life in The Mahavishnu Orchestra was not without its frustrations. For example, unless you were John McLaughlin, it was well-nigh impossible to get one of your compositions played on an album. Though still a member of the band, Cobham's 1973 debut *Spectrum* showed he was more than capable of penning a few tunes. However, *Crosswinds*, recorded the same year but released in 1974, shows him extending his range and scope as a composer and arranger.

Beautifully presented on this new high-quality sounding vinyl reissue, the side-long track, *Spanish Moss – A Sound Portrait* was inspired by time spent in California's Big Sur. Rugged themes, breezy contributions from Garnett Brown and Randy Brecker, and a stormy drum solo, enhanced by co-producer Ken Scott, all suggest an impressionistic tone poem of nature and the elements. However, it's more akin to individual sketches rather than the fully developed representation it perhaps claims to be.

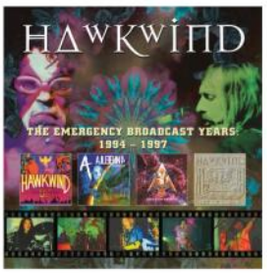
Cobham believed this album was about the need to find himself. The reflective ballad *Heather*, written after a visit to Hiroshima during a Mahavishnu tour, in particular represents a still point of clarity for its composer. Michael Brecker delivers one of his most emotionally articulate solos thanks largely to the framing of Cobham's yearning chords, delicately nuanced here by George Duke. Eschewing any of the flash or panache usually associated with players of this pedigree, sometimes what truly counts is not what you've got but how you use it.

The extent to which this period of Cobham's music has been sampled and repurposed gives the album a remarkably contemporary feel and resonance. Indeed, the title track, with John Abercrombie's intense, finely-controlled guitar break, could easily be mistaken for the latest Snarky Puppy release. Unfairly overshadowed by *Spectrum*'s commercial success, *Crosswinds* stands out as a powerfully expressive statement. **SS**

HAWKWIND

The Emergency Broadcast Years 1994-1997 ATOMHENGE

A reconfigured band experimenting and in full-on mantric flow.



Between 1994 and '97, Hawkwind issued four albums – 1994's *The Business Trip*, 1995's *Alien 4*, 1996's double *Love In Space* and 1997's *Distant Horizons*.

Two were live and, as to be expected, are the main picks – in fact, *The Business Trip* is downright essential. Recorded at Thames Valley University in Slough in November 1993 to promote their 18th album, *It Is The Business Of The Future To Be Dangerous*, it captures the trio of vocalist/guitarist Dave Brock, bassist Alan Davey and drummer Richard Chadwick in simpatico as they astral glide through classics, past, present and future. A frenzied reading of *You Shouldn't Do That* is pure wall-of-sound trance-inducing ecstacy underpinned by bass, drums and raw guitar. Synths whirl and Brock barks the title with a spontaneous urgency; the excitement of the audience is palpable.

A cover of *Quark, Strangeness And Charm* is slower than the 1977 original, more contemplative, with lyrics at the fore. Other tracks are performed straight – such as 1992's *LSD* – while a cover of Robert Calvert's *The Right Stuff* is a heartfelt tribute to the band's resident poet who died in 1988, as incendiary guitar and crashing cymbals frame Brock's pure punk rasp.

1996's *Love In Space*, the other live album, documents the 1995 album *Alien 4* tour. In the studio for *Alien 4*, the core three are joined by singer/frontman Ron Tree for the first time and on some tracks, second guitarist Jerry Richards. Standouts include *Abducted* and *Xenomorph* – the first a sinister portent, with spoken word by Tree atop ominous keyboard lines, the second an exhilarating space rock incantation.

On the road, as profiled on its live counterpart, interstellar versions of *Silver Machine* and *Are You Losing Your Mind?* aid the lysergic discombobulation. 1997's *Distant Horizons*, which closes this excellent set, sees Davey replaced by Tree on bass, Richards becoming a full-time member and the group expanding their sound to embrace techno. It's all numinous stuff. **LW**

NIGHTWISH

Decades NUCLEAR BLAST

Finns reflect on the last 20 years with another 'best of'.

Nightwish are good at a lot of things, like symphonic prog metal, epic grandeur and melody, and you can add releasing compilation albums to that list. They reached No. 1 in their homeland Finland with a 'best of' back in 2015, but they've also flung together a ballad-only collection, as well as some other more inconspicuous anthologies too.

Their latest retrospective is *Decades*, a look back at their journey since their inception in 1996. Nightwish don't look the same now as they did back then; original vocalist and band hallmark Tarja Turunen is solo after a messy split in 2005, while her replacement Anette Olzon only lasted five years.

But what *has* remained steady throughout is keyboard wizard, songwriter and leader Tuomas Holopainen, whose affinity for cinematic orchestration gives Nightwish's imposing sound its true vigour.

Decades pays homage well to the band's now hefty discography, with the album catapulting into life with the recent *The Greatest Show on Earth*, a 24-minute swashbuckler which includes a cameo from God-naysayer Richard Dawkins.

Elsewhere, prominent singles like *Amaranth*, *Nemo* and *Wish I Had An Angel* build a strong backbone to the two-CD release, while the beguiling *The Poet And The Pendulum* and *Ghost Love Score* present a bit of balance, nudging over the 10-minute mark and hinting at a welcome labyrinth of twists and turns.

Nightwish aren't ones to skimp on the theatrics. They have their moments of unashamed cheesiness – *Sleeping Sun* is a slow-burner, while *End Of All Hope* veers dangerously into cheddar metal territory – but if you can stomach the saccharine then you'll be just fine.

The record ends on a rare, bare-bones demo of the band's early track *Nightwish*, which, at over 20 years old, provides an intriguing snapshot of how far the group have come. Never listened to Nightwish? *Decades* is a perfect place to start, but for the diehard, there's not too much to get worked up about. **CC**

PROCOL HARUM

Still There'll Be More: An Anthology 67-17 ESOTERIC

Birth of prog and its inventors' trail-blazing evolution.

In this magazine's tradition, we'll avoid well-trodden paths when considering this stellar overview of Procol Harum's 50-year legacy and take the scenic route after those two first hits instead. Although their self-titled first album surfed 1967's psychedelic tidal waves with grace, elegance and imagination, classical-referencing instrumental *Repent Walpurgis* confirmed Procol were busy inventing modern prog as we know it before any usually-cited bands, Gary Brooker singing Keith Reid's surreal lyrics at the core of their sound.

After 1968's *Shine On Brightly* boasted one of nascent prog's first epic suites with the 18-minute *In Held 'Twas In I*, *A Salty Dog* stands as their greatest achievement in the 69 tracks drawn from 13 albums in this lavish set. Still hauntingly

> **A stellar overview of Procol Harum's 50-year legacy.**

beautiful, it was their first to use an orchestra, subtly enhancing the emotion swelling through Brooker's brine-battered vocal. *The Devil Came From Kansas* plugged Procol into proto-Americana infused with crashing drama, despite Trower straining towards power trio exhibitionism.

1970's *Home* continued the schizophrenic dashes between gothic classical and US roots, though Trower was gone when this writer saw Procol prove blindingly powerful live. 1971's *Broken Barricades* clinched their progressive crown with tracks like the Mellotron-garnished *Luskus Delph*, consolidated by 1972's *Live: In Concert With The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra* presenting a richly effective classical rock fusion, including a full-bore realisation of *In Held 'Twas In I*. 1973's fabulous but overlooked *Grand Hotel* highlighted Procol's sweepingly romantic, decayed ballroom grandeur, the title track's palm court ghosts imbued with sepia classicism. 1974's *Exotic Birds And Fruit* and '75's Leiber and Stoller-produced *Procol's Ninth* refined this heady brew, *Pandora's Box*'s dark marble hoodoo their last hit before they buckled under punk and bowed out with 1977's robust *Something Magic*.

Procol picked up where they'd left off with 1991's *The Prodigal Stranger*, then 2003's *The Well's On Fire* showing the pair's writing chops were still in rude health. After more touring, Procol returned with 2017's late-period peak *Novum*, veteran poet Pete Brown now Brooker's lyrical foil, its poignantly spot-on *The Only One* closing disc three.

Disc four presents a 1973 Hollywood Bowl show with LA's Symphony Orchestra while five features a 1976 Bournemouth set, both previously unreleased. There are also three fascinating discs culled from UK and German TV appearances, starting with *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* on *Top Of The Pops*, completing this stellar prog monument.

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GUNGFLY

Rumbling Box INSIDEOUT

Monster reissue collection for ex-Beardfish frontman.

Best known for his work in Swedish proggers Beardfish, and latterly his involvement with Big Big Train, Rikard Sjöblom has also had a prolific solo output. Starting with 2006's *Cyklonmannen*, under his own name and the Gungfly moniker, he's released a total of five albums, with the first four collected in this box set. In addition to the four albums reissued as part of this collection, there's also an unreleased LP included, *Att För Barn Som Tror På Sagor Läsa Högt När Kvällen Kommer*, and sleeve notes by Sjöblom. The only record not present is Gungfly's 2017 release *On Her Journey To The Sun*.

Whether it's Gungfly or the material originally under his own name, there's markedly more of a pop sensibility on display than was present in his work with Beardfish. For example, *Brackan*, the opener from *Att För...*, which is half Jack Johnson slacker surf pop and half bombastic Queen-like rock; *Knappmannen*, which is most reminiscent of 80s pop-soul, or *Jag Kan Se Runt Horn*, which is pretty much a straight-up funk tune. Thus, though there are definitely prog elements in many of these tracks, prog is by no means the rule. In fact, the tone across the albums leans much more heavily towards jazz fusion with hints of funk and soul, although there are also nods to Krautrock and kosmische, such as on *The Anti Sexual Committee*. Given the crossover between jazz and the original pioneers in Krautrock, perhaps that shouldn't surprise. To generalise, however, does these albums something of a disservice, as this is a wide-ranging and diverse collection of tracks, and while there's nothing completely out-of-the-blue here, there's a lot of ground covered.

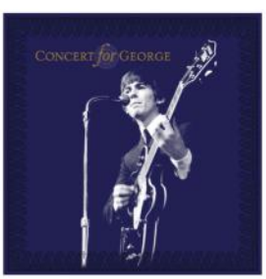
With the addition of *Att För Barn Som Tror På Sagor Läsa Högt När Kvällen Kommer* there's enough for fans of Sjöblom or Gungfly to explore, but perhaps less so for those that already own the four LPs.

For those that only know him from Beardfish, this reissue is basically Christmas come early – it'll certainly keep you entertained until then. **AL**

VARIOUS

Concert For George UMC/CONCORD

Happy birthday to the proggiest of The Beatles.



If *Sgt Pepper* helped usher in the first wave of prog bands, then who was the proggiest of The Beatles? This writer is a fan of all four, but the one who resonates most has always been George Harrison, not least because of his willingness to experiment on those first two solo albums, *Wonderwall Music* and *Electronic Sound*.

Harrison died in 2001, but released to coincide with what would have been his 75th birthday on February 25 comes a reissue of the Royal Albert Hall concert that celebrated his life, now available in various formats.

Many sides of the peace-loving Beatle are on display here, although the overt experimentalism of those aforementioned albums is not. But plenty of those who were close to him are on hand to contribute, not least fellow Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, and fellow Travelling Wilburys Jeff Lynne and Tom Petty.

Anoushka Shankar (daughter of Ravi, with whom Harrison worked) gets things going, showing Harrison's love of Indian music. Then the fun-loving side of his character is reflected by his mates Monty Python, joined by Tom Hanks for *The Lumberjack Song*.

Eric Clapton – who later married Harrison's wife Pattie Boyd and who organised this event – really shines, especially when he hooks up with McCartney for *Something* and *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, as does Tom Petty on *Taxman* and a touching *Handle With Care* (the latter with Harrison's son Dhani). Jeff Lynne remains understated on *I Want To Tell You*, Procol Harum's Gary Brooker nails *Old Brown Shoe* with aplomb, and cheeky chappy Joe Brown recalls Harrison's love of the ukelele, especially on *Here Comes The Sun* and *That's The Way It Goes*.

Billy Preston's *My Sweet Lord* is fittingly moving and overall this is pretty much exactly the celebration you wanted it to be. Although when Brown closes the show with *I'll See You In My Dreams* on ukelele, it really is hard to suppress the lump rising in your throat, even 17 years down the line. **JE**

SPIRIT

It Shall Be - The Ode & Epic Recordings 68-72

FLOATING WORLD/ESOTERIC

Pigeonhole-defying West Coast pioneers revisited.

Living in the age of the digital cornucopia, listeners are used to being able to hear anything at the click of a button. But it wasn't always like that. When *Time Circle 1968 - 1972* was first issued in the early 90s, the West Coast outfit, whose electric creativity sparked between psychedelia, pop, jazz and proto-prog musings, had fallen into relative obscurity, with only one of the four albums featured on the two-disc compilation being in print at the time.

The fact that Spirit never fitted into a pigeonhole perhaps explains their relegation to rock's margins. The straightforward reissue of *Time Circle* and Esoteric's five-disc celebration show the capricious instincts and sense of adventure on Spirit's 1968 self-titled debut, and that year's *The Family That Plays Together*, 1969's *Clear* and 1970's *The Twelve Dreams Of Dr Sardonicus* are well worth exploring.

> **Spirit show they have an ear for adventure as they evolve.**

There's a luscious quality to the first three albums that comes in part from the deployment of orchestral arrangements thanks to producer Lou Adler's use of veteran jazzer Marty Paich's thoughtful writing. Such ornamentation, veering into baroque opulence or, as with *Taurus*, a bucolic splendour pulls things outside standard rock band schtick.

While guitarist Randy California might have picked up licks from Hendrix, there's more in play than obvious blues or full-on, freak-out heaviness. *Elijah*'s taut bookending theme, composed by keyboardist John Locke, gives way to a groovy modal improv shining with California's fluid, sustained tones, and drummer Ed Cassidy's use of space and dynamics. That capacity to smoothly shift moods typifies Spirit's openness and ear for adventure as they evolve.

The arrival of Neil Young producer David Briggs for the brilliant but sparser-sounding *The Twelve Dreams Of Dr Sardonicus* coincides with a rise in friction between members. After its completion, California departed for an ill-starred solo career that surprisingly included a surging cameo on Peter Hammill's gothic masterpiece *The Silent Corner And The Empty Stage*. 1972's *Feedback* is not without notable moments and useful picking from Randy's replacement, Chris Staehely. However, mundane lyrical matter and the diminishing returns of a blues rock holding pattern mean it lacks the previous innovative momentum, as Locke and Cassidy attempt to keep the show on the road.

Esoteric's expansive set boasts remasters, extra tracks and the band's debut in its mono mix for the first time on CD. Deserving more than being remembered for a failed plagiarism court case against Led Zeppelin, these collections provide welcome recognition of Spirit's achievements.

SID SMITH

AURI

Johanna Kurkela, Tuomas Holopainen (NIGHTWISH) and Troy Donockley (NIGHTWISH)

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MYSTERY

Second Home UNICORN DIGITAL

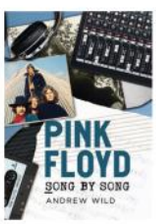
Classy, melodic and inventive.

The title says it all: Canadian prog rockers Mystery just love Holland. They love celebrated Dutch venue Boerderij even more, which is why this live recording, taken from their set at Prog Dreams V two years ago, is named in honour of what they see as their second home. Perhaps best known as being the band whose vocalist at the time, Benoît David, joined Yes after Jon Anderson had been unceremoniously dumped in 2008, David ironically also succumbed to vocal problems. He was replaced by Jean Pageau, whose graceful tones go a long way to making this live set the engaging listen it is. Most credit is due to long-standing guitarist Michel St-Père, who has guided Mystery since he formed the band back in 1986. If it's classy, melodic and inventive progressive rock you want, Mystery are the band for you. The bulk of *Second Home* (also available on CD) draws from their most recent 2015 studio album *Delusion Rain*, and although 2010's excellent *One Among The Living* is largely ignored, they do dip back to 1998's *Destiny?* with *Shadow Of The Lake*. Professionally shot, although perhaps lacking a touch of glitz, *Second Home* certainly rams home the point that Mystery deserve to be a much bigger band than they currently are. **JE**

PINK FLOYD SONG BY SONG

by Andrew Wild FONTHILL

A trainspotter's guide...



This is a chronological jaunt through the Pink Floyd catalogue that tackles their music one track at a time. At times, this book can feel like *A Trainspotter's Guide To Pink Floyd* as Wild lists every musician on each song and all known live performances, which is impressively thorough but not necessarily very compelling, and the segmented format means there's not much room for the prose to flow. More engaging are the critics' reactions to the material – contemporary writers tended to be far less agreeable than those looking back to Floyd's heyday – and snippets from interviews with the band members. *The Independent*'s Andy Gill is gloriously scathing on *The Endless River*: "All that's left is ghastly faux-psychedelic dinner-party muzak. Which is fine, if you're thinking of throwing a ghastly faux-psychedelic dinner-party." Roger Waters' caustic personality inevitably asserts itself, whether he's dismissing Roy Harper's vocals on *Have A Cigar* or savaging everything Floyd did after he left. "It had got totally Spinal Tap by then," he says about *The Division Bell*. "Lyrics were written by the new wife. Well, they are! I mean, give me a fucking break!" Don't sugar-coat it, Roger, tell us what you really think. **DW**

CARDIACS

Some Fairytales From The Rotten Shed THE ALPHABET BUSINESS CONCERN

Better late than never from the madcap Englishmen.

A comment on a YouTube clip taken from Cardiacs' *Some Fairytales From The Rotten Shed* DVD perhaps says it all. "Sounds like Gentle Giant snorted all the coke ever and then proceeded to pick a fight with Madness," it reads, and you wouldn't argue against it. The now-dormant band's penchant for prog punk peculiarity is showcased in fine form on this long-awaited release, which was originally filmed back in the 2000s during rehearsals for some London shows before frontman Tim Smith sadly fell ill. Despite the quartet being cooped up in the smallest and dingiest practice space imaginable, there's a true sense of theatrical performance here, and not just in the music, which nods back to Cardiacs' earlier material. The antsy Smith is an absorbing presence on the likes of the snaking *As Cold As Can Be In An English Sea* and *Hello Mr. Minnow*, both musically and also in his snarling looks and grumped-up, off-the-cuff snaps. Part musical genius, part oddball comedy, this DVD is well worth the wait – even if stoically deadpan bassist Jim Smith does spend an age mid-flow trying to put his lead back into his guitar, fuzzy crackles 'n' all, while only wearing his underwear. **CC**

TIME FLIES: THE STORY OF PORCUPINE TREE

Rich Wilson ROCKET 88

Essential reading for fans of the dormant prog rockers.

When Rich Wilson opens his Porcupine Tree biography *Time Flies* with an account of the prog rockers' inconspicuous debut gig in a small pub in 1993, it nails this project's authenticity from the get-go. Wilson was one of the lucky few there, eyes and ears taking it all in, and the author – who regularly writes for this publication – was also at Steven Wilson and co's last show at the somewhat more palatial Royal Albert Hall in 2010, and no doubt many concerts in between. It's this first-hand knowledge that lifts *Time Flies* beyond being just any other

> **First-hand knowledge lifts this book above other biographies.**

biography, with the book – which also includes a series of rare images – feeling comprehensive and compelling.

The narrative is, of course, sculpted around main man Steven Wilson, chronicling his passage from a wannabe conjuring up music in his parents' home to becoming one of prog's leading lights. The cast of supporting characters is plentiful, from bandmates to videographers and label bosses, but they feel like they're mainly there to service Wilson and his vivid visions.

Through archive interviews and the author's own chats with those involved, we learn about Wilson's journey – built on a foundation of indefatigable energy and prolific creativity – from a shy lad in the 1980s toying with psychedelic adventurism to Porcupine Tree's ringleader in the 1990s and beyond. Band colleagues Richard Barbieri, Colin Edwin, Chris Maitland, Gavin Harrison and John Wesley are largely full of praise for Wilson, but it's the moments that dig a little deeper that make *Time Flies* truly shine. There's the sparsely attended early gigs and the prolonged battle for recognition, while the dynamics of Wilson's control over Porcupine Tree makes for engrossing reading.

Don't expect many rock'n'roll stories – the band seem like they'd be more interested in peppermint tea than partying – but the departure of ex-drummer Maitland does provide a bit of drama. The later years are also covered well, as the band's diversion into heavier hues helped them hit new heights.

Porcupine Tree's indefinite break came when they were on the cusp of performing in arenas, and while Wilson has subsequently gone on to forge a massively successful solo career, long-time stalwarts like bassist Edwin have somewhat been left in the lurch. Will they ever reunite? Who knows, but as *Time Flies* superbly documents, after decades of hard graft, it feels like the band deserved some time off. A couple of gigs or a final album to provide a closing chapter to Porcupine Tree's colourful story wouldn't go amiss, though.

CHRIS COPE

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Take a bow

PROGFEST

VENUE	THE CORNER HOTEL, MELBOURNE
DATE	27/01/2018

Australian progressive rock and metal is slowly starting to attain the recognition it so richly deserves, and despite the searing heat of this Melbourne midsummer afternoon, The Corner Hotel is already packed full of sweaty punters at 3pm.

For those unfamiliar with this venue and this format, this is one great, cavernous room (for a pub, anyway) with a large main stage and a slightly smaller secondary stage. It makes for very quick and easy changeovers and a generally seamless organisation of the day's progressive festivities.

The sheer musical diversity of this festival is on vivid display from the get-go. **Fierce Mild** plough strange but strangely compelling musical terrain, juxtaposing electronics and a cello with guitar, bass and drums, and channelling these would-be disparate elements into a sound and visual presentation that's both moody and psychedelic at once. By stark contrast, young Melburnians **Enlight** offer a slightly more traditional alternative/progressive rock sound, although they shake things up with sweet melodic female vocals and a focus on ambience over musical muscle. However, said ambience is still punctuated with excursions into crunching heaviness, and it all makes for a rather dynamic, almost schizophrenic mix.

Acolyte show real adventure, taking the fans across so many different feels and textures it makes one's head spin, with Morgan-Leigh Brown's majestic voice soaring over the top and David Van Pelt's keys lending an *Animals*-era Floyd vibe to the sound.

Another head-snapping turn to the left sees Adelaide's **Dyssidia** smash the secondary stage with their razor-sharp prog metal, which features gut-churning howls from singer Mitch Brackman, and frenetic drumming and virtuoso playing from guitar, bass and keys.

Sydney's **Meniscus** are a real enigma. Having been around for well over a decade, they create swirling, churning, dynamic post-rock instrumental alchemy. In fact, the sound coming from just the three of them often resembles a full-blown orchestra, and their set is soothingly monstrous and compelling.

> **"Voyager go all out, adding further lustre to their illustrious live reputation."**

Progfest 2018 is tinged with a little sadness as livewire Melbourne heavy prog act **Branch Arterial** announced a few days prior to the show that they're quitting, so the reception they receive from the throng holds just that much more resonance. Their blistering set is both deeply sad and a celebration.

What can one say about seven-piece avant-garde prog punkers **Alithia**, except that their music and live presentation are wild and unpredictable, and if you come in expecting the unexpected, you won't be disappointed.

Toehider's main man Mike Mills has a rather unique guitar playing style. Steeped in the blues, he supercharges it and, when combined with his voice and his prodigious

Enlight-ening Stuff: Rachael Graham adds sweetness and might.

Voyager: Daniel Estrin takes the crowd on an unforgettable trip.

School Of Rock: Toehider's Mike Mills blends old and new.

Heart And Soul: Branch Arterial bow out in style.

Michael Vincent Stowers leads Orsome Welles through an awesome set.

PAUL TADDAY

two-piece rhythm section, he creates a scintillating nu-school style of prog that's heavily influenced by the old school.

By the time long-running Perth melodic progressive marvels **Voyager** take to the main stage, the audience is packed in to the very back, and they give the big V an almighty hero's welcome as the band slam into *Ascension*. Sometimes a 30-minute set is a good thing because it allows a band to get up and go absolutely hell for leather, without having to be too concerned with set dynamics. And that's what we have tonight. The band go all out, adding further lustre to their illustrious live reputation.

One more trip to the side stage sees Melbourne five-piece **Orsome Welles** slaying the room with their quirky but powerful take on proggy alternative rock. The main draws of this band are the towering strength of their grooves, the sheer 'stick in your head' catchiness of their tunes and the unique voice and persona of frontman Michael Vincent Stowers.

Progfest has been running for several years now, but 2018 finds it featuring a major international headliner for the very first time. Norway's **Leprous** are legends in progressive music circles, and their set tonight reveals exactly why. Musically, there's literally no one on the planet doing quite what this band are doing: they're a unique and wondrous beast.

Their set features a phalanx of their spiralling, unclassifiable songs, mostly culled from their most recent two albums *Malina* and *The Congregation*. There's a riveting ambience that makes the hair on the back of necks stand to attention, powerful moments that seemingly explode out of nowhere and fabulous four-way vocal harmonies. The encore, *Slave*, sees the members of Voyager jump up to give them a hand, setting the room alight.

ROD WHITFIELD

Nordic Giant: Leprous main man Einar Solberg.

Think Floyd: Acolyte channel Animals-esque vibes.

Fierce Mild: "Both moody and psychedelic."

Bees Knees: Meniscus make a monstrous noise.

Alithia: getting down with the kids.

KNIFEWORLD

VENUE	THE LEXINGTON, LONDON
DATE	20/01/2018

When Knifeworld played this venue in 2014, it was off the back of signing to InsideOut and releasing second album *The Unravelling*. That gig was rammed to capacity, so it's no surprise that tonight has been sold out for weeks in advance.

This 'evening with Knifeworld' will feature two sets, one acoustic and one electric. *Feel The Sorcery* opens the acoustic set in upbeat fashion, and introduces a brace of tracks from 2016's *Buried Have Regrown Their Eyes*. Staccato blasts from the woodwinds and discordant repeating piano figures recall such avant-garde greats as Steve Reich and John Zorn. A mightily impressive feat, but then Knifeworld aren't your typical prog outfit.

Torabi apologises for potentially having brought some of us along tonight under false pretences — there are to be no new songs in either set as they wouldn't fit the band's current configuration. He announces: "We have big ideas that would not translate. You'll see." The tease.

After an intermission, it's time for the electric set. The drone intro to *High/Aflame* begins its mantra and the atmosphere is charged. When the psychedelic tour de force reaches its first crescendo, it explodes in a firework display of brass and riffs. For all their knowing complexity and avant-garde influences, this collective really know how to get a crowd bouncing.

The Germ Inside and *I Am Lost* keep the energy level high with funky, syncopated rhythms. Torabi seems to be channelling his muse, reaching a hand out across the audience, a bug-eyed, manic, shamanic preacher.

Despite their leader's magnetic presence, it's rare to see a band so democratic in their performance. No one individual's contribution can be singled out — this is an ensemble in the truest sense. But that's not to say there aren't problems. Some changes could be tighter, punchier. Put that down to nerves, onstage sound issues, lack of rehearsal... who knows? It's nothing that couldn't be improved with a little more preparation.

Torabi dedicates *Send Him Seaworthy* to "my sweet captain", Tim Smith of Cardiacs, whose financial struggle in getting the health care he needs has been widely publicised in recent times.

meditation on death, *Bottled Out Of Eden*. *Foul Temple* is achingly poignant, the three-piece wind and brass section harmonising a plaintive last post for the newly departed.

Frontman Kavus Torabi displays an effortless Adrian Belew-like facility in vocalising while nailing the tricksy guitar arpeggios in *Lowered Into Necromancy*. Like the latter incarnations of King Crimson, having an octet at your disposal opens up all manner of possibilities for arrangement. Where that succeeds most is in the chamber/jazz orchestration of *A Dream About A Dream* and *The Skulls We*

Sax Appeal: Knifeworld get horny.

A selection from the early EPs follows in the Zappaesque mini-epic *HMS Washout* and *The Prime Of Our Decline*. These more obscure gems are the equal of the album tracks. For instance, the beautiful minimalist mid-section of *Destroy The World We Love* is Reich's *Octet* turned up to 11.

The encore of debut single *Pissed Up On Brake Fluid* absolutely rocks — a prog Saxon with lyrics Lemmy would have been proud to pen: *'I still get my kicks from the treble-six'*! And *Me To The Future Of You* is a triumphant, anthemic closer.

The gig's live Facebook stream boasted 2,000 viewers. What they, and we, witness tonight is a consolidation thus far of the career of a unique band, one who have yet to create their masterpiece and break through to prick the consciousness of the global prog community.

It's coming. Attendees of this year's Cruise To The Edge will find that HMS Knifeworld is more than seaworthy.

CHRIS MCGAREL

TEMPLES ON MARS

VENUE	THE BLACK HEART, LONDON
DATE	27/01/2018

As someone once sang, *'Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got.'* Well, making a name for yourself in today's online world takes a bit of doing too. Picking a distinctive band name that will allow people to find your music has never been more important. Prog metallers Agent have decided not only to change their generic-sounding name, but have undergone a line-up change and taken a slightly different musical direction.

Tonight, Agent relaunch their career as Temples On Mars with this debut performance, ahead of the spring release of their self-titled first album. *Gods & Kings* is a promising start. Agent always had a knack for writing a hook or two, as evidenced on their 2013 album *Kingdom Of Fear*, but this sounds more streamlined, more urgent, while keeping the metallic edge.

Frontman James Donaldson is having a blast, giving it all the rock star bravado he can muster. He gestures to the slightly reticent crowd to come forward, which has the effect of splitting the audience in two – those who are into it and those who continue to noisily chat at the back bar. Oh well, their loss.

When Gods Collide shows off a tight, well-rehearsed unit. Drummer Dean Gibb deserves a lot of the credit for this:

Amped Up: Melanie Woods and Kavus Torabi.

Cutting Edge: Knifeworld rocking sharp shirts and sharper riffs.

Live And Kicking: Kavus Torabi putting the 'rock' in 'prog rock'.

WILL IRELAND

> **"When the psychedelic tour de force reaches its first crescendo, it explodes in a firework display of brass and riffs."**

his double-kick work and airtight fills propel the song onwards. This is good stuff, reminiscent of the catchy prog metal of Long Distance Calling's recent *Trips* album.

The wonderfully named *Suicide By Tiger* introduces a different dynamic. Guitarist Gerald Gill employs pianistic two-handed tapping, creating an atmospheric backdrop that gradually builds to an anthemic power ballad vibe.

Current single *So In Love With Your Own Drug* has arena rock melodies and an accessibility far beyond the prog sphere. Fans of Muse, take note. It's a shame, then, that what should have been a clarion call is marred by vocal issues due to in-ear monitor problems.

Daz Carikas' slap bassline punctuates the heavier *Black Mirror*, which closes the set. Five songs over the space of half an hour is hardly a definitive representation of what's effectively a new band, but this has been an encouraging first outing. Agent are dead. Long live Temples On Mars.

CHRIS MCGAREL

FRANCIS DUNNERY

VENUE	BUSH HALL, LONDON
DATE	21/01/2018

There's real love here in a completely rammed Bush Hall for Francis Dunnery and his band, and the anticipation generated by the promise of hearing the whole of the *Eat Me In St. Louis* album is palpable.

While Dunnery still seems to have a nuanced relationship with his It Bites past, fans demonstrably suffer from no doubts or cynicism in their enthusiasm for the music as the opening salvo of a storming *Positively Animal* and *Underneath Your Pillow*, a highlight of the night for many, washes across the room. It's clear that Dunnery has lost none of his astounding abilities on guitar, and his voice is in good shape too.

Musically, it's as fine a demonstration of great ensemble playing and respectful interpretation as one could ask for. With guitarist Luke Machin, bass player Paul Brown and the hugely talented Peter Jones on keyboards and backing vocals, you know you're in safe hands. Special mention for drummer Donavan Hepburn, though, who plays throughout with a real sensitivity to the original recorded versions yet injects a character, energy and excitement all his own.

If meeting audience expectations is a measure of overall gig quality, Dunnery and co are scoring high tonight – not only do we get every track from the aforementioned It Bites classic, but we're also given solid extras like bonus tracks *Having A Good Day*, with its gorgeous keyboard intro from Jones, and a fantastically frantic *Bullet In The Barrel*. There's an acoustic rendition of *Plastic Dreamer*, for which the audience enthusiastically provide massed backing vocals, and songs from 2013's Dunnery solo album *Frankenstein Monster*, including the title track and *Marijuana Make Those Eyes At Me For*.

Interspersed with all this are the requests for volunteers to come up from the audience to sing; female backing group The Eatettes (who are lovely, we're sure, but simply can't be heard!); a surreal and extremely brief moment with a pantomime horse; a couple of anecdotes from Dunnery delivered in his own ebullient Cumbrian manner; a beautiful rendition of the powerfully fragile *The Ice Melts Into Water*; outings for Dunnery's Tapboard; and a blindsiding digression into Frank Zappa guitar piece *Black Napkins*!

Well over two hours of the band onstage simply flies by, and a deeply satisfying evening finishes, as could be predicted, with The Big Hit Single from the album, *Still Too Young To Remember*, and a half-promise from Dunnery that he'll be back next year performing *The Big Lad In The Windmill*. He'll need a bigger venue...

GARY MACKENZIE

BEATRIX PLAYERS

VENUE	THE GREEN NOTE, LONDON
DATE	19/01/2018

Are the inhabitants of Camden ready for a Friday night of intense, florid chamber pop? *Prog* should rococo. Beatrix Players don't have the SOUND Choir accompanying them tonight, as they did at St Pancras Old Church last November. Nevertheless, pianist Jess Kennedy, cellist Amanda Alvarez (both seated) and singer Amy Birks, whose voice does all the moving for her, create a sound as richly textured and smoothly enveloping as the red velvet curtains behind them in this intimate north London space.

Enhanced by violin and double bass, they reduce tonight's audience to reverent silence, only the occasional whoop breaking the mood. *Rushlight* is first, all mournful majesty and baroque curlicues, Birks' sung question, *'Do you feel it too?'* needing no answer. *Never Again*, another track from 2017's *Magnified* album, is sung by Birks with a slight tremble, her voice a vehicle for doubt and confusion, not virtuosic bombast. The violin bolsters her poignant assertions (*'I will live to outdate this'*), making the song sound like a sort of neoclassical *I Will Survive*.

> **"Enhanced by violin and double bass, they reduce tonight's audience to reverent silence."**

Ah, but are they prog? Actually, you could imagine *Walk Away* and the rest being afforded a more grandiose treatment. There are good lyrics, too — tiny suspect devices (*'You will be faced with your own disgrace'*) within these seemingly soft, ornate ballads. Suddenly, a line such as *'I cannot let you walk away'* sounds like a threat: there's malice in this wonderland.

For *Not For The First Time*, Kennedy tells the story of the trio's arrival in the capital, from Australia, Spain and northern England, and their resultant trepidation and isolation. However, as young women in their prime, they don't quite have the towering gravitas or end-of-life pathos required to make a somewhat supper-club rendition of Trent Reznor-via-Johnny Cash's *Hurt* work, and it proves to be the night's first and only misstep.

Anyway, their own material is more enjoyable and more acutely affecting than the cover, although it's easy, to paraphrase the lyric to *Molehill*, to be blinded by hindsight. *Elsa*, from their debut EP *Words In Lemon Juice*, has a shadowy longing, the chord changes rarely obvious. Birks is breathless after all that dark, torrid rapture, and has to pause before embarking on *All That Thinking*'s doleful peak, all piano trills, weeping strings and sombre admissions of despair.

New song *The Road To Gordes* is searing and soundtrack-worthy, in that order. *Ophelia* may conjure the mythological, but like all these songs, it's rooted in everyday fear and loathing.

Finally, there's the pretty tumult of *Roses*, for which Birks bangs a drum — it's the delicate sound of thunder, folks — and an encore of *Obey Me*, which turns female submissiveness on its head.

PAUL LESTER

Baroque'n'roll Star: Amy Birks.

KEVIN NIXON

Beatrix Players, L-R: Jess Kennedy, Amy Birks, Amanda Alvarez.

MOON DUO

VENUE	XOYO, LONDON
DATE	04/02/2018

The small spot beam lights that are strategically placed behind the band are conspiring to not only reveal Moon Duo – all three of 'em! – as silhouettes, but also to beguile the wide-mouthed audience watching on.

As the shards of probing lights alternate from white rays to all colours of the spectrum, hands instinctively shoot up as if to grab something that can never be held. And as those beams strafe and hypnotise, it becomes hard not to utter the words, "My God! It's full of stars!" while recalling Dr Bowman's intergalactic trip through the star gate at the climax of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The notion that Moon Duo have nothing left to offer so soon after last year's promotional campaign for both volumes of *Occult Architecture* is understandably prevalent, yet any doubts are dispelled within moments of the band taking the stage.

The familiarity that surrounds opener *The Death Set* simultaneously thrills and comforts, and Moon Duo's blend of motorik precision, guitars that switch gears from warm fuzz to silky, six-string meandering, and insistent and pumping synthesised basslines elicits a sense of welcome familiarity.

Aiming for the hips just much as it does the head, Moon Duo's brand of space rock is possessed of a strike rate that doubles the pleasure. Naysayers may scoff at the simplicity of their attack, but the trance-like result of their music allows for cerebral exploration, in tandem with more instinctive and physical reactions.

As evidenced by the extended sonic excursions of *White Rose* and *Free Action*, the band are at their best when they're disregarding the concept of time by getting off on elongated explorations. It's during those moments that self conscious thought becomes a meaningless concept, as the body reacts in time with the pulses, beats and repetitive rhythmic embellishments emanating from the speakers.

There's a fear that Moon Duo perhaps reveal too much of their modus operandi with telling covers of Alan Vega's *Jukebox Babe* and The Stooges' *No Fun*. While there's undeniably enough of their own personality and stylistic approach to ensure that these aren't straightforward readings – the rockabilly looseness of the former is replaced by an electronic exactitude, while the nihilism of the latter surrenders to a new-found warmth – it does feel a little bit like a magician revealing exactly where his doves are located.

However, these caveats are ultimately blown away like so much cosmic dust. Only the sternest of hearts or churlish of minds can withstand Moon Duo's simplistic yet seductive attack. These are musical miners digging a groove as deep as it is wide, and once again they've struck a rich seam of gems.

JULIAN MARSZALEK

O.R.K.

VENUE	THE UNDERWORLD, LONDON
DATE	23/01/2018
SUPPORT	LIZZARD

With the venue tonight at maybe half-capacity, despite a headline act that includes members of King Crimson and Porcupine Tree, LizZard refuse to let the audience have a lazy night off. Frontman Mathieu Ricou doggedly works to whip some energy into the crowd, and his persistence pays off with a vociferous reception for the France-based trio.

The band hit hard with the abrasive guitar riff that opens *Singularity*, and their set is jammed with clever songwriting, balancing intricate, odd measures with hooky melodies. Ricou makes nimble use of a loop pedal to layer guitar parts on top of each other in *Vigilent* and *Leaving The Dream*, while drummer Katy Elwell never seems to miss a step, even in the twists and turns of *The Roots Within (Majestic)*.

The instrumental *Shift*, the title track of their new album, builds from a looped guitar lick in 5/4 into an absolute monster, with Elwell rumbling around the drums as Ricou and bassist William Knox pile on the intensity. There's a hint of Tool in the riffage of *The Orbiter*, another barnstormer, while *Passing By* sounds like a proggier Biffy Clyro. Don't miss this marvellous lot the next time they come through the UK.

O.R.k. are one of those bands that seem to have an innate aversion to the conventional. For a start, their setup puts Pat Mastelotto's drum kit at the front on the left, facing across the stage to guitarist Carmelo Pipitone. That leaves bassist Colin Edwin and singer/keys player Lorenzo Esposito Fornasari sandwiched in the middle, with Fornasari having to front the band from the back. To further confound expectation, they open not with one of their own songs, but with *Therapy* from Fornasari's album *Hypersomniac*.

Clap Happy: Pat Mastelotto.

KEVIN NIXON

Mastelotto brings some seriously heavy hands to the drums, hammering out the groove of *Breakdown*, but he's always matched by the restless momentum of Pipitone. Despite the heaviness of their sound, Pipitone plays an acoustic guitar, not the Gretsch Power Jet (possibly a Duo Jet) he used on their last visit. But running the acoustic through his pedal board means he still produces the attack and aggression required for the manic *No Need*, while *Collapsing Hopes* plays like a freaky, sleazy blues that peaks with a huge crescendo.

Fornasari touches on Mike Patton territory with a range that covers a deep, almost spoken delivery to the dramatic vocalising of *Pyre*. Likewise, *Too Numb* is reminiscent of Faith No More circa the *King For A Day...* and *Album Of The Year* records. They encore with a crushingly powerful, psychotically unhinged cover of David Bowie's *I'm Afraid Of Americans*.

A band this strong should be on every prog fan's radar, not rocking the hell out of an under-filled Underworld.

DAVID WEST

> **"A band this strong should be on every prog fan's radar."**

O.R.k., L-R: Pat Mastelotto, Colin Edwin, Lorenzo Esposito Fornasari, Carmelo Pipitone.

MICHAEL ROTHER

VENUE	JAZZ CAFE, LONDON	DATE	06/02/2018

As Michael Rother acknowledges with a smile, he isn't one for talking much onstage. He probably doesn't want to break the spell cast by the music, which is a wise and astute call. However, he takes a moment tonight to remember fallen comrades: Can drummer Jaki Liebezeit, who provided the motorik beat for Rother's late-70s albums and for whom Rother recently played a tribute jam in Cologne; Harmonia colleague Dieter Moebius; and Klaus Dinger, with whom Rother split from an early Kraftwerk in 1971 to form Neu! with great results, altering the course of music.

There's respectful applause from the Krautrock-enamoured audience, and a voice shouts, "And Holger!" referring to Can's co-founder Holger Czukay. "Yes, Holger," defers Rother. "Although actually I never worked with him, but... great stuff."

This very German mix of accuracy, precision and dry humour serves him well. That exchange aside, the Hamburg-born 67-year-old focuses on what he does best: finding the glory in driving, repetitive grooves that aspire to a transcendent and trance-like state of Zen, while refusing to allow your feet to keep still or your brain to switch off.

His cohorts are guitarist Franz Bargmann, a younger man who nonetheless looks like the most 70s-in-Germany musician ever, and Hans Lampe, veteran of the peerless *Neu '75!* album. They provide the solid-as-a-post-rock foundations over which Rother lays his laptop-based sound bed and, most thrillingly, his guitar.

His playing on most tracks begins as decorative, establishing a hint of melody or an effective hook. Then, as the music climbs up through the gears, he gets more possessed, unleashing a serrated, abrasive sound that still retains control and structure. Energy roars as it might from a showier guitarist, yet it emanates from an exquisite balance between raw power and restraint. There's no widdly-widdly flash here, just plenty of diamond-sharp edge.

Within these superficially similar but crucially different grooves, any self-respecting music fan will hear glimmers of their favourite artists who recognised Rother's genius and borrowed and built on elements: Bowie's *Berlin* trilogy, obviously, but also scents of early Ultravox, Simple Minds, Radiohead and the 21st-century's leading lights of electronica.

In front of a subtle film backdrop showing misty autobahns, the trio play a set lasting around 90 minutes, visiting the highlights reel of Neu!, Harmonia and Rother's solo catalogue. It works best as a whole, developing momentum as the trio pick up a head of steam. Of course, the biggest cheers and most untethered head-nodding (from an all-ages crowd who are concentrating very, very hard) arrive with the Neu! landmarks, which lock in like a sniper fingering a trigger. Krautrock's greatest living guru still turns less into more and makes sparks fly.

CHRIS ROBERTS

WILL IRELAND

A Spot Of Rother: the king of Krautrock finds his groove.

> **"The driving, repetitive grooves are transcendent, while refusing to allow your feet to keep still or your brain to switch off."**

AVIV GEFFEN

VENUE	OSLO, LONDON
DATE	21/01/2018

At one time, Blackfield appeared to be an equal collaboration between Aviv Geffen and Steven Wilson, but it's evolved into something more akin to a Geffen solo project, with Wilson's name shoehorned in wherever possible to lend a commercial, credible weight to proceedings. Last year's *Blackfield V* was sold as a joint venture, but while Wilson's sonic signature was very much in evidence, his input elsewhere was minimal.

Tonight he's nowhere to be seen, and this is reflected in the audience, which seems to be composed of fans of Geffen's solo work – even though the set is entirely made up of Blackfield songs.

It's a perplexing gig. Occasionally it seems like the band's ambition isn't quite matched by their ability, as the backing vocals on *Open Mind* fall flat and the solo acoustic intros to *Summer* and *Epidemic* suffer from the shakes. But sometimes it's sublime. On *The Jackal*, pristine harmonies compete with a near-rhapsodic solo from guitarist Omri Agmon, who also lights up *Blackfield* and the closing *Hello* with his Gilmour-esque playing.

October is undeniably dramatic, although it does suffer from being forced to compete with a couple of shrieking dimwits at the bar. This hateful duo appear determined to engage in the world's loudest conversation, and return for an unwelcome encore during *Glow*, their blathering finally drowned out as the song reaches its towering climax.

Distractions aside, it's a solid show. The musicians are clearly capable, and Geffen's an engaging though somewhat earnest character. When the band really hit their stride – as they do on *Jupiter*, where the harmonies are worthy of ELO at their most spotless, and during the aforementioned *Blackfield* and *The Jackal*, where the sound envelops the audience in warmth – it's thrilling stuff. But it all feels more constrained than it ought to, as if Geffen's experience as a pop star makes him fearful of truly letting loose.

We get two dozen songs in two hours, and you wonder whether he'd be better off halving the setlist, removing the shackles and letting the musicians really explore the music. Only once, as Geffen steps forward during *Where Is My Love?* and leans into his Rickenbacker with some degree of menace, do you feel like *anything* could happen.

FRASER LEWRY

UMPHREY'S MCGEE

VENUE	THE FILLMORE, PHILADELPHIA
DATE	26/01/2018
SUPPORT	NICOLE ATKINS

Indiana sextet Umphrey's McGee have been a staple of the American jam band/progressive scene for roughly 20 years, blending the laid-back vibes of the Grateful Dead and Phish with the intricate eccentricities of Mahavishnu Orchestra, Frank Zappa, Dream Theater and King Crimson.

Of course, their concerts best represent how imaginative and skilful they can be, and this one – which commemorates *It's Not Us*, their new studio album – is no exception. An extensive set adorned by vibrant theatrics, melodic comforts and instrumental wackiness, it's a thrilling evening, even if it's slightly repetitive and exhausting.

American singer/songwriter Nicole Atkins' retro fervour provides a lively warm-up. She features several tracks from her latest album *Goodnight Rhonda Lee* – including bittersweet ode *A Dream Without Pain* and feisty rocker *Brokedown Luck* – plus older gems like *Who Killed The Moonlight?* and *Cry Cry Cry*. Complemented by back-up singers and colourful, atmospheric illumination, Atkins oozes vintage charm in her genre-bending defiances and laments, squeezing bits from a lot of varied genres into an enticing tour de force.

Umphrey's McGee appear shortly after and use a prolonged *Miami Virtue* to reveal how lengthy, complex and yet fun their arrangements can be. Packed with wild rhythmic changes, incredible guitar work and some vocal tranquillity, it's a stunning collection of chilled-out virtuosity. And the rest of their show contains similarly captivating stylistic shifts, be they within brand new tracks (*Maybe Someday* and *Half Delayed*) or older favourites (*Der Bluten Kat*, *Example 1* and *Plunger*).

Beyond playing wholly original compositions, Umphrey's McGee also pull out inventive combinations of other artists' material. Early on in the performance, they put a manic spin on a mash-up of The Police's *Every Breath You Take* and the *Peter Gunn* theme song.

Later, Atkins returns to belt out The Pretenders' *Brass In Pocket*, while their lone encore selection, *Frankie Zombie*, unites three vastly different pieces: White Zombie's *Thunder Kiss '65*, Pink Floyd's *Welcome To The Machine* and Frankie Goes to Hollywood's *Relax*. It's a delightfully erratic ride.

True, their performance eventually becomes a shade too familiar and draining, yet there's always something jaw-dropping about it.

A special mention must be given to the lighting, since it plays a role in elevating the set into a celebratory psychedelic wonderland, with beams cascading across the entire auditorium while alternating shades to match the music. It makes the night almost as engaging visually as it is aurally, cementing the fact that there's nothing quite like an Umphrey's McGee concert.

JORDAN BLUM

JOHN PETRUCCI

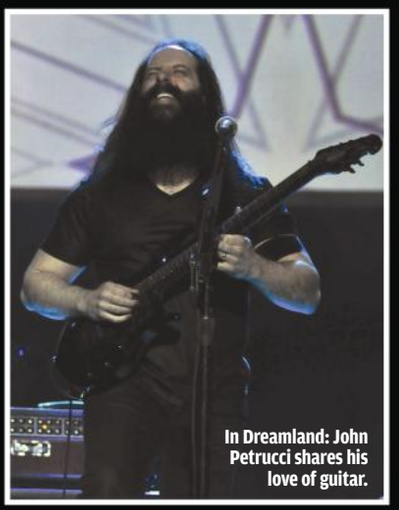
VENUE	PALACE THEATRE, ALBANY, NEW YORK
DATE	10/02/2018

Two songs into his 50-minute set, John Petrucci greets the cheering crowd by saying that the G3 tour – the latest incarnation of which sees the Dream Theater co-founder moonlighting alongside Joe Satriani and Def Leppard's Phil Collen – is "the most fun a guitar player can have". It's a welcome display of personality by the normally all-business guitarist, whose capacity to make jaws drop is well-documented, but who tonight seems more interested in turning frowns upside down while displaying a different side to his persona.

Case in point: a delightful, previously unreleased track called *The Happy Song*, which Petrucci initially debuted during a South American G3 tour in 2012 (at which time it had the working title *Cloud Ten*). It's an absolutely irresistible, infectious mixture of major-chord power pop and melodic shred that borders on mimicking the theme song from an imaginary 1980s television sitcom.

With a soaring intro that recalls his scintillating opening to Liquid Tension Experiment's *Universal Mind*, the song proves definitively that there is a way to write instrumental music that's both catchy and virtuosic. It would become an immediate hit if put on YouTube.

Another unreleased song dating back to the 2012 G3 tour, *Glassy-Eyed Zombies*, shows off Petrucci's Mr. Hyde side. "It's a little scary, so don't be afraid," he warns the audience during his introduction.



In Dreamland: John Petrucci shares his love of guitar.

Featuring a polyrhythmic groove and a moody, angular opening riff, the track gives him a chance to show off his insane right-hand picking speed, while its closing solo – during which he combines sweep-picking and tapping to dazzling effect – is the set's most furious moment.

The remainder of Petrucci's set features sterling renditions of three selections from his 2005 solo debut, *Suspended Animation*, the highlight of which is *Glasgow Kiss*, another track reminiscent of Liquid Tension Experiment, with hypnotic licks and lilting melodies. There's also a cover of cellist Tina Guo's 'metal' version of the Hans Zimmer/Junkie XL-penned *Wonder Woman* movie theme. The latter features a thunderous, chunky riff that, if you could see past his bushy beard, would presumably expose a snarl all over Petrucci's face.

He's all smiles, however, during the show-closing encore jam with Satriani and Collen, as the man himself – apparently not content with providing a mere flurry of notes – delivers a full-scale blizzard to tie a bow on what has been an exuberant performance.

> **"He balances his progressive inclinations with a natural virtuoso talent."**

It all proves that, out on his own, there's much to commend Petrucci's ability to fascinate an audience. And he balances the inevitable progressive inclinations you would expect from someone with his background with a natural virtuoso talent. He can certainly hold his own with any of the other guitar masters involved with the G3 tour.

CLAY MARSHALL

The G3 tour's guitar heroes, L-R: Joe Satriani, Phil Collen, John Petrucci.

FRANK WHITE

WILSON & WAKEMAN

VENUE	THE STABLES, MILTON KEYNES
DATE	04/02/2018

It's puzzling, and perhaps a little infuriating, that other commitments prevent this pair from being more prolific. As they show here, there's a natural rapport between them that both energises the performance and makes it more than a mere display of musical breadth and vision.

There again, perhaps it's because they don't consistently work together that Damian Wilson and Adam Wakeman actually deliver so much. You can imagine that these two could easily get bored with having to live up to a reputation for being characters who play off one another with no semblance of effort or rehearsal.

Whatever the reason for the rarity of such performances as this, we should all be delighted the duo still find much to commend in continuing these collaborations. Because not only is it a musical experience of the highest calibre, but the banter and communication they have is both hilarious and instructive.

And Wilson loves nothing better than involving the audience whenever possible. Crowd participation is demanded, and it's received on *Homegrown*, plus an effective cover of Iron Maiden's *The Evil That Men Do*. The fourth wall isn't so much breached here as battered into dust!

Given their combined experience and vast range of influences, nobody is sure what to expect, and that's part of what makes this so inviting. Wilson revisits his time in *Les Misérables* with a stunning rendition of *Bring Him Home*, and also does his own *Homegrown*. Wakeman, meanwhile, celebrates his dad not only through *Tapestries* (the title track of the first album he recorded with Rick), but also a fluent version of *Life On Mars?* (with Wilson adding some soaring vocals) and a jazz rock arrangement of Black Sabbath's *Iron Man* on piano.

The set mostly consists of covers, with just three originals from the two Wilson and Wakeman albums to date. They begin with two songs from *Weir Keeper's Tale*, namely *Seek For Adventure* and *Catch You When You Fall*, and encore with the title track from new album *The Sun Will Dance In Its Twilight Hour*.

Some will doubtless be puzzled that they choose not to do more of their own material. However, that misses the point. Wilson and Wakeman are playing shows like this not so much to promote their catalogue as to lay bare a love of music, plus their own delight in having the chance to perform together. And the crowd witness a romp through many musical textures, with the main set finishing on a rendition of Charlie Rich's country classic *Feel Like Going Home*.

To paraphrase a well-known music-related quote from the 70s, Wilson and Wakeman are quite simply the most fun you can have with your clothes on!

MALCOLM DOME

Damian Wilson: plugging the merch.

KEVIN NIXON

> "This is a romp through many musical textures."

Piano Man: Adam Wakeman.

JUDY DYBLE AND ANDY LEWIS

VENUE	THE UNION CHAPEL, LONDON
DATE	20/01/2018

It's cold and grey and everyone's skint and/or ill. Welcome to January, the worst month for live music anywhere in the UK, even in the bustling capital.

But what's this? Free (ish) music? On a Saturday lunchtime? In a warm, accessible venue, with tea and biscuits? Daylight Music is almost a gift from God.

For several years, the promoters at the Union Chapel have put on autumn and winter seasons of pay-what-you-like gigs. This week it's a triple bill headlined by Judy Dyble's new project with producer-bassist-DJ Andy Lewis. Bridging a 20-year age gap, their 2017 debut album *Summer Dancing* united the two in attitude, intellect and psychedelic experimentation, Dyble's archive of unfinished lyrics paired with Lewis' multi-layered arrangements.

The 'band' – Papernut Cambridge men Robert Rotifer and Ian Button on acoustic guitar and drums, viola player/backing singer Alison Cotton from The Left Outsides, guitarist/keyboardist Pete Twyman and Lewis' wife Liz on samples and autoharp – have done just three shows in five months. Rehearsals have been minimal, but hey, they're professionals, and from the casting of *A Net Of Memories (London)* – Petula Clark's *Downtown* spiralised by a dreamy melancholy and tinkling folk song – we know we're gonna be okay.

More than okay. Most who've seen Dyble before know she can be a nervous performer, often clinging to her lyric book for comfort. The book's out, on a music stand, but the venue so suits Dyble's cut-glass vocal – she's clearly enjoying the songs and the company – that it's the *band* that come over a little tense, careful to not overshadow their star player or blast a bum note.

Lewis does a great job of plucking Herbie Flowers-like bass lines and adding occasional throatiness (*A Message*'s heartsore *'Darlin' I miss ya'*), while gently supervising the ensemble. There's a Trader Horne cover, *Velvet To Atone*, and a new song, a cover of Nick Drake's *Northern Sky*.

As clap-a-long knees-up *The Day They Took The Music Away* abruptly ends, it appears that Dyble – now 69, and lately in the UK album chart with Big Big Train – might be on the form of her life.

JO KENDALL

THERION

VENUE	ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL, LONDON
DATE	03/02/2018

Thirty years on from Therion's genesis, the Swedish symphonic pioneers have created one of their most ambitious works to date. Having indulged in classically inspired metal for the past few decades, incorporating neoclassical elements as early as 1993, they're no strangers to the concept of combining orchestra and opera with guitars. As such, it's perhaps surprising that *Beloved Antichrist* is their first rock opera, spanning three CDs. Indulgent? You betcha. But Therion have been doing this long enough to pull it off... almost.

Tonight London gets to experience a taster of *Beloved Antichrist* just before its release. Newness considered, extracting 90 minutes of its three hours for the purpose of a tour is a brave thing. Doubly so when budget – or lack of – means their rock opera is less *Phantom Of The Opera* and more operatic rock, foregoing all of the theatrical props and gimmicks that make a stage show spectacular. No doubt Therion would love to get their mitts on a full stage production but alas, the Assembly Hall has to suffice.

So is it any cop? Well, yes and no. Thank goodness Therion have the sense to spare us all 40 tracks of their operatic odyssey, instead cherry-picking what we can only assume are the best bits for tonight's show.

Kicking off with *Theme Of Antichrist*, they're straight into the action. Basing their story on Vladímir Solovyov's *A Short Tale About The Antichrist*, Chiara Malvestiti, Lori Lewis and Thomas Vikström represent various characters from the tale. When they sing in unison, it's not far from spine-tingling, especially on *Night Reborn* and *Ginnungagap*, where the quality and composition of the operatic vocals exude stark professionalism.

Christofer Johnsson, in his signature top hat, alongside Christian Vidal and Nalle Påhlsson, support their warblers with a metallic gallop, fuelled by the rampant stomp of Euro metal. Maybe two or three times the band introduce a song with, regrettably, all the panache of a slug reading an obituary. "This one is about the Christians who aren't very happy," says Vikström, while other stilted intros get lost in a sea of cheers and heckles.

Their operatic roadshow is all pomposity with not enough of the drama, leaving the desire to indulge in the full version nothing more than a waning curiosity.

Let's be honest, *Beloved Antichrist* isn't going to win a Tony award. High-end self-indulgence has cost Therion memorable hooks, which only make an appearance when they whip out some old classics at the end of the set, proving the adage that sometimes less can be more.

HOLLY WRIGHT

DARKHER

VENUE	THE BLACK HEART, LONDON
DATE	02/02/2018

Giving It Some Stick: drummer Christopher Smith.

SIMON KALLAS

Performing as part of underground promoters Chaos Theory's *8 Years Of Chaos* anniversary, Yorkshire singer Jayn H Wissenberg is back in London, one year after her sold-out acoustic act at the Union Chapel, opening for Norse folkers Wardruna.

A glimmer of red flowing locks hidden under a hood appears on the stage. The singer of dark and atmospheric prog has arrived, surrounded by amps and with black guitar in hand. However, this time she's not alone, as tonight she'll be accompanied by drummer Christopher Smith. This is a nice evolution, from the calm of her previous church surroundings to a busy pub at the heart of Camden Town.

Darkher's set begins with the soft intro of *Moths*, which rapidly descends into a whirlwind of heavy doom strums and a single hard-hitting drum tempo. *Foregone*, one of the liveliest and darkest songs on the album *Realms*, is an effective crowd pleaser and sees hair begin to fly.

The challenge is to get a glimpse of the stage at the end of the narrow room — if you're more than two metres away, you can't see a thing. Luckily, the recent venue renovations mean the overall sound is good, albeit so loud that the free earplugs at the bar are most welcome.

Darkher's powerful vocals are a constant soft melody of gentle melancholy and lingering sorrow skirting the heavy bass notes, pounding drums and poignant lyrics. Emotion-drenched songs *Wars* and *Buried Pt. I* and *Pt. II* are a statement to her talent.

> **"Darkher's powerful vocals are a constant soft melody of gentle melancholy and lingering sorrow."**

Appearing confident on stage, the bewitching singer only addresses the crowd to say "thank you" between songs. Her communication is clearly achieved through the heartfelt music. There's an almost overwhelming theme of conflicting powerful yet fragile elements throughout.

Having released two albums, toured with Chelsea Wolfe, Emma Ruth Rundle and Subrosa, as well as collaborated with My Dying Bride drummer Rick Miah, Darkher continues to enchant prog and occult rock fans alike. We can't wait to see what she'll have planned for her next London date.

ISERE LLOYD-DAVIS

Darkher's Jayn H Wissenberg: as enchanting as ever.

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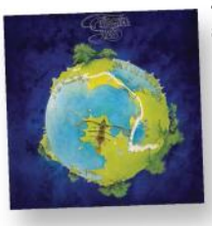
Neal Morse

The great and good of progressive music give us a glimpse into their prog worlds. **As told to Grant Moon.**

Where's home?
Nashville, Tennessee. I grew up in LA but have been here since 1995.

Your earliest prog memory?
Seeing Yes open for Black Sabbath at the LA Forum in 1972, when I was 12. *Fragile* had just come out, Rick Wakeman was there in his cape, at the Mellotron and the grand piano. Jon Anderson's voice was incredible, Bill Bruford was on drums. I liken it to the glass shattering in *Tommy* — a whole world of possibilities opened up before me.

First prog record bought?
Fragile and, around the same time, ELP's *Tarkus*. There was a local record store in California that my brothers and I would go to. We bought a lot of records, so we'd go in on them together. Then we'd listen to them on our huge, bassy stereo at home. Sounded great to me.



Favourite piece of technology?
I changed cell phones recently and had to do without one for an entire day. I have to admit, I felt weird and pretty lost without it.

What's the guiltiest pleasure in your record collection?
The more I listen to John Mayer, the more I think he's one of the best artists of the last 15 years. I really like his songwriting, and his production is so tasteful and minimal.

What would your *Mastermind* subject be?
I could be pretty authoritative about The Bible. If you quoted some scripture and asked me where it's written in there, I would probably know.

What has been your biggest prog extravagance?
My wife bought me a signed copy of Peter Gabriel's *So* a few Christmases ago. It was quite pricey, but lovely. I've also just bought myself a vintage Marantz stereo receiver, which was pretty extravagant.

GETTY IMAGES

Your favourite venue?
I've really enjoyed playing Cruise To The Edge the times I've done it. I generally don't like outdoors stuff much, but we played *The Similitude Of A Dream* on the Cruise under a clear blue sky, and it was a beautiful experience.

Outside of prog, what are you into?
I spend time with my family, just hanging out, talking to my kids. I do a lot of church stuff too, meetings and songwriter nights. I used to enjoy skiing and tennis, but my legs aren't what they were.

Who is your prog hero?
I have two —Peter Gabriel and Jon Anderson.

What do you collect?
Chess sets. They're such beautiful things and there are so many variations. And I buy a *lot* of LPs on vinyl at the moment.

What was the last prog album you bought?
I've been restocking on things I didn't have any more, so Genesis' *A Trick Of The Tail*, PFM's *Photos Of Ghosts*, and lately I found Todd Rundgren's Utopia's *Ra* in a bargain bin. I love that album.

And the last prog gig you attended?
The Cruise, back in February 2017, when I saw Yes. But I did see Deep Purple back in September, in St Louis. I'd never seen [Flying Colors bandmate] Steve Morse play with them before.

Have you ever been on a prog-related date?
No. My wife's a pop fan. I have taken her to the symphony but she's not really into classical music, so she usually falls asleep! She's been with me to see Mike [Portnoy] and Pete [Trewavas] play, but not a date scenario, no.

> I collect chess sets: they're such beautiful things.

Who in the prog fraternity do you call for a good night out?
Pete Trewavas. He's a very fun chap.

What do you think is the ultimate prog song?
There are so many. *Heart Of The Sunrise*, *Firth Of Fifth*, ELP's *The Endless Enigma*…

Who's the prog muso you'd most like to work with?
Steve Hackett and I have worked together but it's all been through file-sharing. I like the idea of us properly collaborating on an album.

What prog album would you play to get yourself in a good mood?
Thick As A Brick has got such a jaunty feel, it's so tongue-in-cheek.

Who's the best prog artist you've ever seen live?
Transatlantic took a night off in 2002 and we saw Yes at the Opera House in Frankfurt with an orchestra. It was so impressive. And we got to go backstage and meet them.

Can you recommend us a good read?
All The Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr. It's a wonderfully written novel.

What's your favourite prog album cover?
Gentle Giant's *In A Glass House*. It has that 3D thing, that's a really cool one.

And what are you up to at the moment, Neal?
I've got the new album *Life & Times*, and I'll be playing Cruise To The Edge as a solo artist for the first time then Todd Rundgren's Utopia's *Ra* too — just me, my guitar and keyboard. I'm also arranging some European dates, which should be happening in June.

Life & Times is out now via Radiant Records. See www.nealmorse.com for more.

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