JON HISEMAN RIP

Colleagues pay tribute to the late Colosseum drummer

Progressive Music Awards 2018

PROG GOD AND NEW HOST ANNOUNCED!

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PETER GABRIEL

Punk. Poetry. Charlie Drake? What Peter did in his post-Genesis gap year

NICK MASON
Why he's back revisiting Floyd's pre-*Dark Side*... past

HAKEN
Ross Jennings picks his favourite prog live albums

BEV BEVAN
"People said ELO's *Out Of The Blue* was the best tour they'd ever seen."

DAVE SINCLAIR
Caravan founding member returns with new solo album

"It's all about letting go."
Peter Gabriel

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The Story Of Prog Metal
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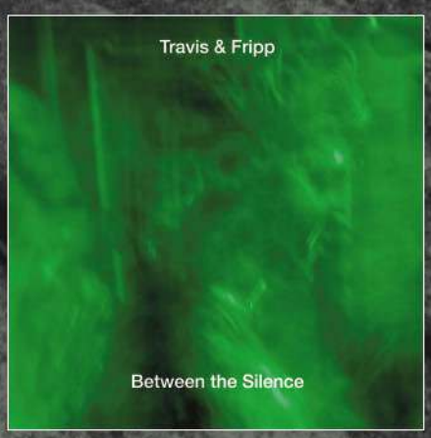

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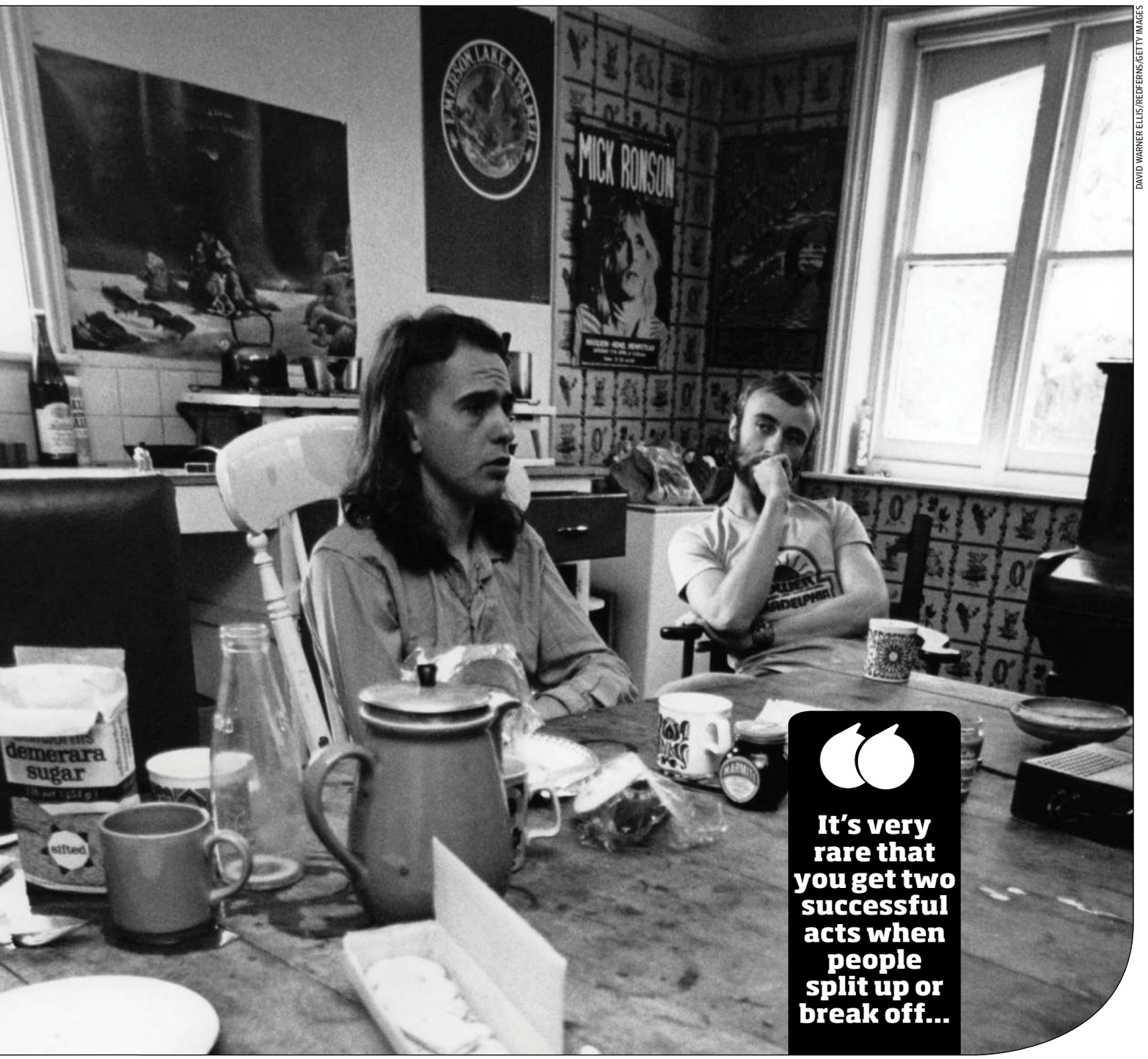

DAVID WARNER ELLIS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

It's very rare that you get two successful acts when people split up or break off...

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What really happened between him leaving Genesis and his first solo album...

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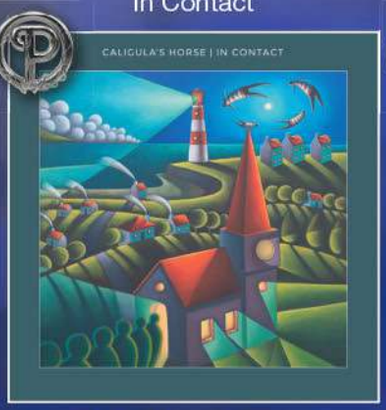

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Nominated for Album Cover of the Year

On tour in the UK in November 2018 with Circles & I Built The Sky

KINO
Radio Voltaire

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Nominated for Best UK Band

LEPROUS
Malina

CD / LP / Digital Download

Nominated for Album of the Year

On tour in the UK September 2018 with Agent Fresco

PERFECT BEINGS
Vier

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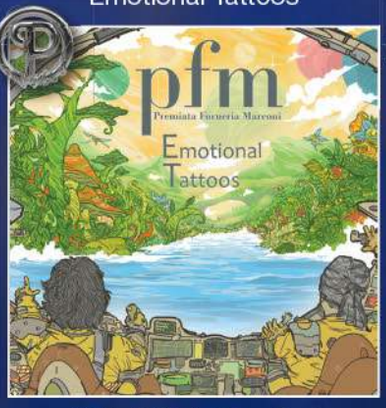
Nominated for Video of the Year for 'Vibrational: Mysteries, Not Answers'

PFM
Emotional Tattoos



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SPOCK'S BEARD
Noise Floor

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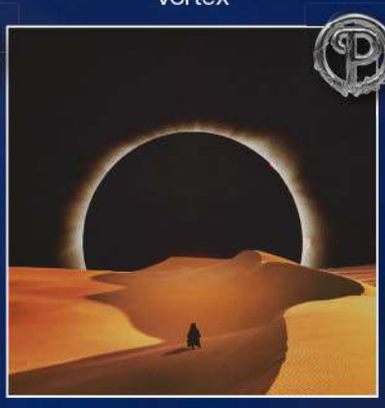
Nominated for International Band of the Year

On tour in December 2018 with Roine Stolt's The Flower Kings

TOUNDRA
Vortex



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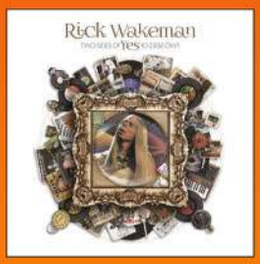

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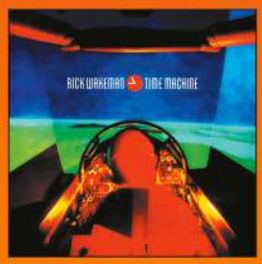

Time Machine

Guest vocalists include Ashley Holt, and Roy Wood

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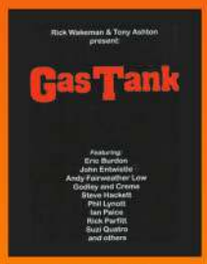

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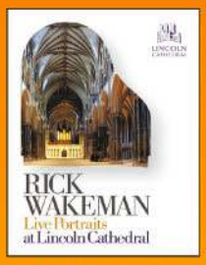

Live Portraits

Recorded live at Lincoln Cathedral – Truly glorious!

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With Adam Wakeman. Entirely instrumental

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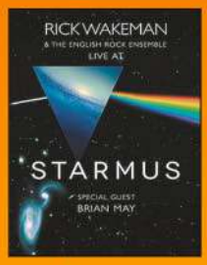

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Live in San Francisco

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Can You Hear Me?

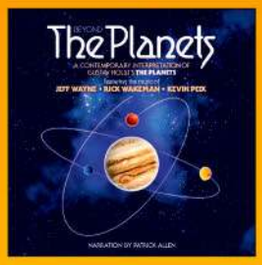
Featuring The English Chamber Choir

HRHCD005

Crimes of Passion

A wicked and erotic soundtrack!

MFGZ018CD



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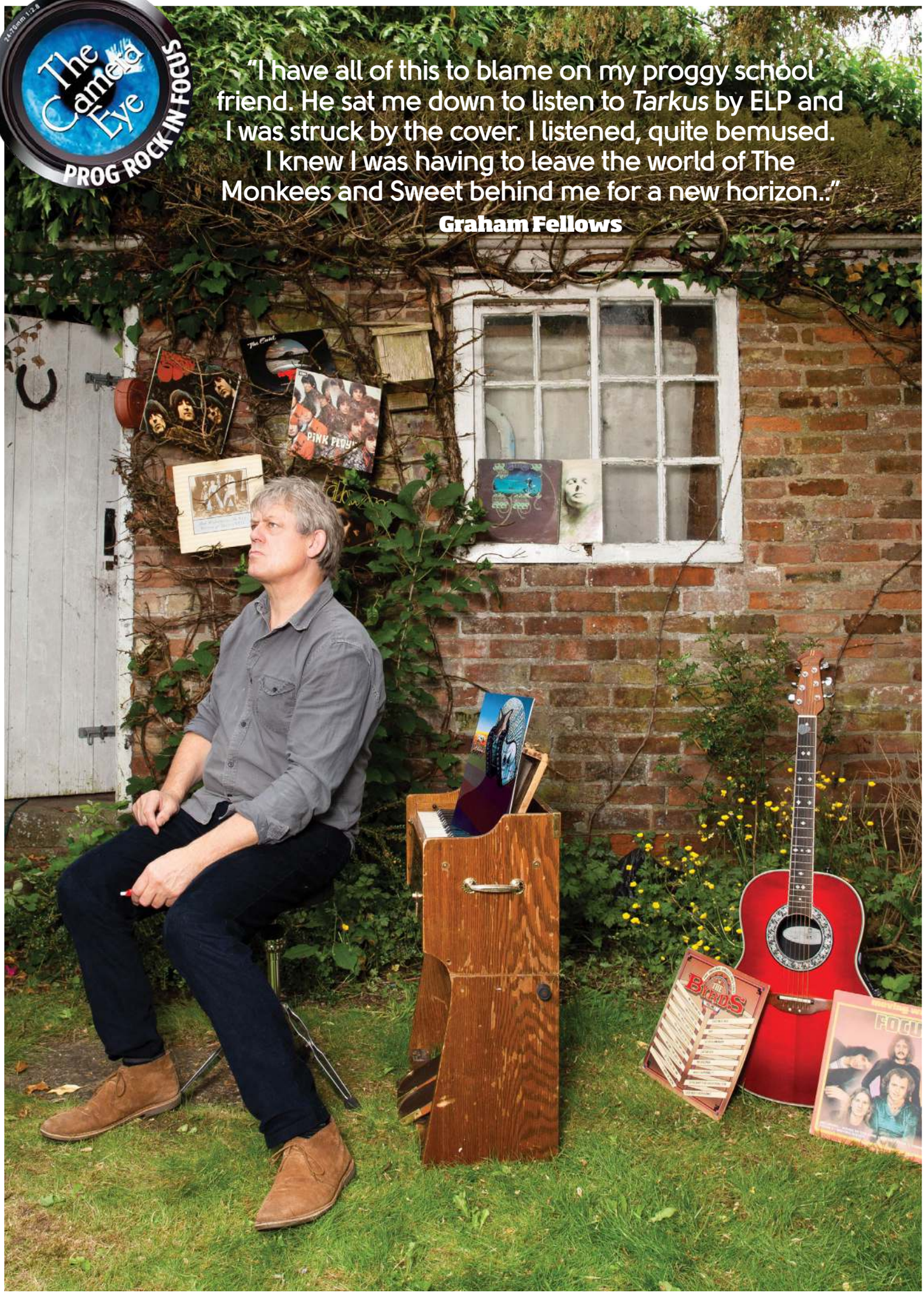
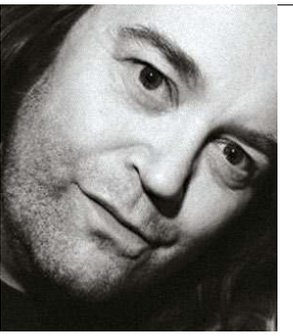

"I have all of this to blame on my proggy school friend. He sat me down to listen to *Tarkus* by ELP and I was struck by the cover. I listened, quite bemused. I knew I was having to leave the world of The Monkees and Sweet behind me for a new horizon..."
Graham Fellows
The Cure
Pink Floyd
The Byrds

DAVID WALA

Ed's Letter



So we're back in the office after another great Be Prog! My Friend festival. In fact, we were back just in time to get down to the Borderline to catch a great show by Aussie prog rockers Voyager too. Both events highlight the diversity and talent on offer in the progressive scene at the moment, the former aligning it with two fine sets from headliners A Perfect Circle and Steve Hackett. And although the odd grumble is nothing new to our community, I look at events such as these and see little correlation with some suggestions that 2018 hasn't been a good year for progressive music.

It's that sense of balance that we alway try to reflect in *Prog* magazine. This issue's cover feature looks at what Peter Gabriel got up to between leaving Genesis and kicking off his solo career with *Car*. It is an intriguing tale of a man who chose to turn his back on what many saw as impending fame, fortune and glory, only to achieve all that but on his own terms. A truly progressive outlook if ever there was one.

Elsewhere we discover why Nick Mason's gotten back behind the drum kit with Saucerful Of Secrets, Bev Bevan recalls his time with The Move, ELO and Black Sabbath, and Dave Sinclair talks us through his latest solo album. On the newer front, Haken singer Ross Jennings discusses his favourite prog live albums, we look at the roots of prog metal and Sanguine Hum's Matt Baber talks us through his first ever solo album

We also pay tribute to the late Jon Hiseman, who sadly passed away last month. I met Jon at the Progressive Music Awards in 2016 when we honoured him with the Visionary Award. I can only echo the words of others in this issue and state what a charming and inspirational man he was. Thankfully his music will live on forever.

Jerry Ewing - Editor

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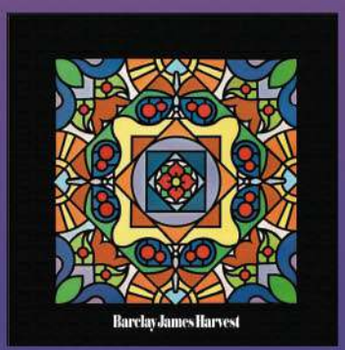
BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST
'BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST'

3CD/1DVD LIMITED EDITION DELUXE BOX SET

- Esoteric Recordings is proud to announce the release of a new re-mastered four disc deluxe expanded boxed set limited edition (comprising 3 CDs and a DVD) of the legendary self-titled debut album by Barclay James Harvest.
- Features an additional 33 bonus tracks drawn from new 5.1 surround sound & stereo mixes from the original multi-track master tapes, BBC radio sessions from 1968 and 1971, the singles Early Morning, Brother Thrush & Taking Some Time On, a rare Woolly Wolstenholme solo demo from 1969 of The Sun Will Never Shine, along with the 1968 short film Mr. Sunshine & a 68 page book.

REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION



- Esoteric Recordings are pleased to announce the release of a new re-mastered and expanded edition of the legendary self-titled debut album by Barclay James Harvest. This reissue has been ewly remastered from the original master tapes and also includes nine bonus tracks, including the classic Early Morning, Brother Thrush and Taking Some Time On singles and four tracks recorded in August 1968. The lavishly illustrated booklet features previously unseen photographs and an essay by BJH specialists Keith & Monika Domone.

CHRIS SQUIRE
'FISH OUT OF WATER'
2CD / 2DVD / 1LP / 2 X 7" SINGLES LIMITED EDITION BOXSET

- Esoteric Recordings are proud to announce the release of an official limited edition deluxe boxed set of Yes founder Chris Squire's legendary 1975 solo album Fish Out Of Water.
- The highlight of this limited edition deluxe boxed set is a stunning new 5.1 Surround Sound mix (exclusive to this set on an NTSC / Region Free DVD), along with a new stereo mix, from the original multi-track master tapes by Jakko Jakszyk and a new re-master of the original 1975 mix by Paschal Byrne.

2 DISC EDITION

- Featuring a new mixes from the multi-track master tapes by Jakko Jakszyk.
- 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.

NIRVANA
'BLACK FLOWER'

- New remastered & expanded release of the legendary & impossibly rare 1970 album by uk band.
- With five bonus tracks, three previously unreleased.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS
'PRIVATE PARTS AND PIECES VOLUME IX-XI'

- A 4 CD definitive edition clamshell boxed set of the final three seminal "Private Parts & Pieces" albums by Genesis founder member Anthony Phillips.
- With a bonus CD featuring 18 previously unreleased tracks.

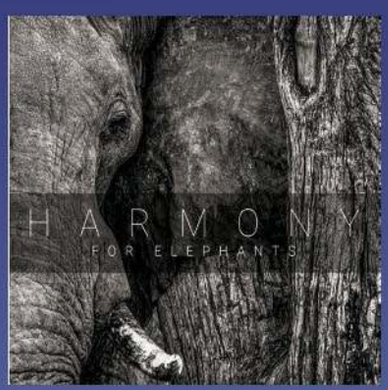
COMUS
'FIRST UTTERANCE'
REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION

- Esoteric Recordings are pleased to announce the release of a new re-mastered and expanded edition of the legendary album First Utterance by COMUS.
- Includes four bonus tracks taken from the 'Diana' maxi-single, along with the song 'All the Colours of Darkness', recorded during the "First Utterance" sessions. The booklet restores the original album artwork and features an essay by Malcolm Dome and interviews with band members.

STRAY
'LIVE AT THE MARQUEE'

- New re-mastered and expanded edition of the 1984 album Live at the Marquee, by the legendary British rock band Stray.
- The album was the first record release by Stray since their 1977 album Hearts of Fire following which the band went on a hiatus.
- The line-up of Del Bromham (lead guitar), Pete Dyer (vocals), Gary Giles (bass) & Ritchie Cole (drums) reunited in 1983 to play a triumphant concert at The Marquee Club in London, featuring many Stray classics such as All in Your Mind, Suicide, One Night in Texas and Houdini, all captured on this album released the following year.

VARIOUS ARTISTS 'HARMONY FOR ELEPHANTS'
CHARITY ALBUM



- Esoteric Antenna is pleased to announce the release of a charity album featuring new tracks by legendary artists from the "progressive" music world; "Harmony For Elephants". The album features new music donated to raise funds and awareness for the charity Elephants for Africa, an organisation dedicated to protecting the endangered African elephant through research and education. Featuring new tracks from Anthony Phillips, Steve Hackett,Nad Sylvan, Nick Magnus and more.

Bloody Well Write

Send your letters to us at: *Prog*, Future Publishing, 1-10 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY, or email prog@futurenet.com.
We regret that we cannot reply to phone calls. For more comment and prog news and views, find us on facebook.com under *Prog*.

PROG THAT SUCKS

I was fascinated by Rhodri Marsden's piece in Fad Gadgets [*Prog* 88] about the cyclophone, an instrument incorporating 48 flue pipes from Dyson vacuum cleaners and featured in a composition by David Roche.

A musician colleague said that Dyson seemed to be the perfect machine for such compositions, which is a good point as it's both efficient and contemporary. However, though Dyson may be the current go-to for works featuring vacuum cleaners, Malcolm Arnold's *A Grand Grand Overture* (written for a Hoffnung Festival and incorporating three vacuum cleaners and a floor polisher) was created before Dyson came along. So I guess we have post-Dyson and pre-Dyson in compositional development in both the classic and progressive electric wind area...

Below: the cyclophone.

Brian Thomas

BIGGING UP DOWN UNDER PROG

Thanks for the exposé of Australian prog [issue 87]. While I know I'm not the only fan of Caligula's Horse in the nation's capital these days, as a kid I often thought I was alone in the universe, walking the streets of Canberra humming along to *Tales From Topographic Oceans* or *The Wall*. The country at the time seemed obsessed with the pub rock sounds of AC/DC, Midnight Oil, The Angels and Cold Chisel (which I loved as well).

I never understood why there had to be two camps, though. Midnight Oil, for example, did incredible things with unlikely key signatures and bizarre chords. And in an issue jam-packed with acts I would never have discovered, like Gazpacho and TesseracT, while also championing releases that were originally ridiculed, like Marillion's majestic *Brave*, one is reminded to not hastily judge music that may not instantly appease and appeal.

Below: our Aussie prog feature in issue 87.

Can I throw in one minor gripe? While prog musicians are wonderfully experimental in their music, their band photos rarely do them justice. They often line up, po-faced with arms crossed or hanging like they have tennis balls in their armpits, with a look suggesting they want to beat you up if you dare call them 'arty'. A fun game to play is grabbing a random issue of *Prog* and spotting the cranky line-up photo of a band in front of an old, abandoned building. I like your music, folks, even if you are a little arty and experimental and once listened to Yes, hoping you wouldn't get beaten up for it.

George Huitker, Canberra, Australia

He Needed A Change: Joe Payne, the subject of this issue's Star Letter.

KEVIN NIXON

A WONDEROUS REVIEW

It was my birthday last month and my wife, bless her, bought me a copy of [*Prog* editor Jerry Ewing's book] *Wonderous Stories*.

Firstly, let me say that I enjoyed it so much I finished reading it the same day (she may regret this present). I found your book a fantastic read and it covered all the bases without going into tiresome detail or lengthy histories of bands we all

TWEET TALK

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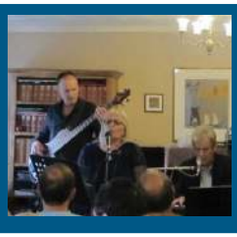
JUDY DYBLE
@judydyble
Singing at a house concert near Ely last night.. I think I should stand on a box in future :-)



RICK WAKEMAN
@GrumpyOldRick
Had a fabulous time last night with son Adam at the charity event who asked some embarrassing questions and I squirmed accordingly! Thanks son for flying in that day, getting no sleep, driving back last night, having little sleep and flying off at the crack of dawn. Proud of you.

MIKE PORTNOY
@MikePortnoy
Good times at @hellfestopenair #hellfest @StevenWilsonHQ

LETTER

Following on from your feature on Joe Payne in the May issue, we were privileged to be at his Acoustic Showcase gig on Sunday May 27.

It was very clear from the outset that this was going to be no ordinary show. For a start, around half the audience were female! At most gigs we're definitely in the minority so it was a most welcome change. Although there were plenty of seasoned Enid veterans who had been there and got the T-shirt to prove it, there was also a healthy core of much younger fans. Maybe this diversity contributed to the atmosphere and if this is the future, it's looking pretty good.

Each of Joe's guests played a set before he joined them on stage. When Oliver Day wandered onto the stage, picked up his guitar and began playing softly, the entire audience fell silent. We couldn't quite believe what we were hearing. If you don't know Oliver, I suggest you catch up with him while you can still afford a ticket!

Joe's glorious five-octave-range voice dipped and soared around the old cinema as he played haunting, mysterious songs with Nikitas Kissonas (Methexis) and old favourites from his Enid days. The Picturedrome [in Northampton] is a great venue for live music, intimate but with perfect acoustics, due in no small part to the expertise of sound man Max Read, who had a hand in its design.

Four hours of stunning music finally came to a close with Joe singing *I Need A Change*, which brought the crowd to its feet. Joe and friends — who also included Pete and Dunk and John Holden — had between them delivered a truly unforgettable performance that was warmly appreciated by everyone there. It was always going to be emotional and my only regret is not wearing waterproof mascara!

Jane Tucker

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

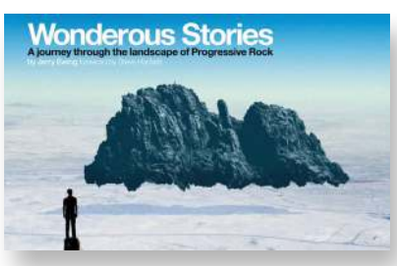
know well. It was pleasing to note that the sections covering albums that defined prog all sit proudly in my collection.

Secondly, and although you pointed out quite clearly that you may miss one's favourite band, it was great to see Barclay James Harvest get a mention along with XTC and Tears For Fears. I always thought Andy Partridge was underestimated and *Apple Venus Volume 1* is testament enough of his prog leanings. Equally, Roland Orzabal with the *Raoul And The Kings Of Spain* album and his *Tomcats Screaming Outside*, the latter released under TFF but very much a solo album, also displayed his great talent.

Enough of my ramblings. To finish, I'd like to express my appreciation for the time, effort and no doubt sleepless nights at the expense of family that obviously went into putting *Wonderous Stories* together. From my perspective it did the job exceedingly well, and once I've wrestled it back from a prog-loving friend, I shall enjoy reading it again.

Look forward to the next book!

Colin Logue, Melbourne, Australia



Left: Jerry Ewing's *Wonderous Stories*.

PRESS/JAMES L. FRACHON

Above: Klaus Schulze.

SHOUT OUT TO SCHULZE

Just picked up *Prog* 88 and was chuffed to see a review of Klaus Schulze's *Silhouettes* along with a long overdue interview with the man. I was happy to learn of his much improved health.

Always a pioneer and often revered by many musicians it is gratifying that he's making music once more — long may this continue…

Like a lot of prog music, Klaus' music conjures up a lot of Marmite opinions, so on this rare occasion it is gratifying to see and read such an approving review of the new CD.

Well done *Prog*! A great issue…

Now if you could do an article on the Brit electronica heroes such as Andy Pickford, R.M.I, Airsculpture, and Paul Lawler (aka Arcane), that would be great!

Martin Weselby

MARJANA SEMKINA
@marjanasemkina
Moscow show was fun. Which you can clearly tell from joyous expression on my face.

JAKKO M JAKSZYK
@JakkoJ
Ah. Vienna and an evening off. I decide to immerse myself in the indigenous culture. I watch Nigeria v Iceland in Flannigans Irish pub and find this aptly named restaurant on the way out!

PROG

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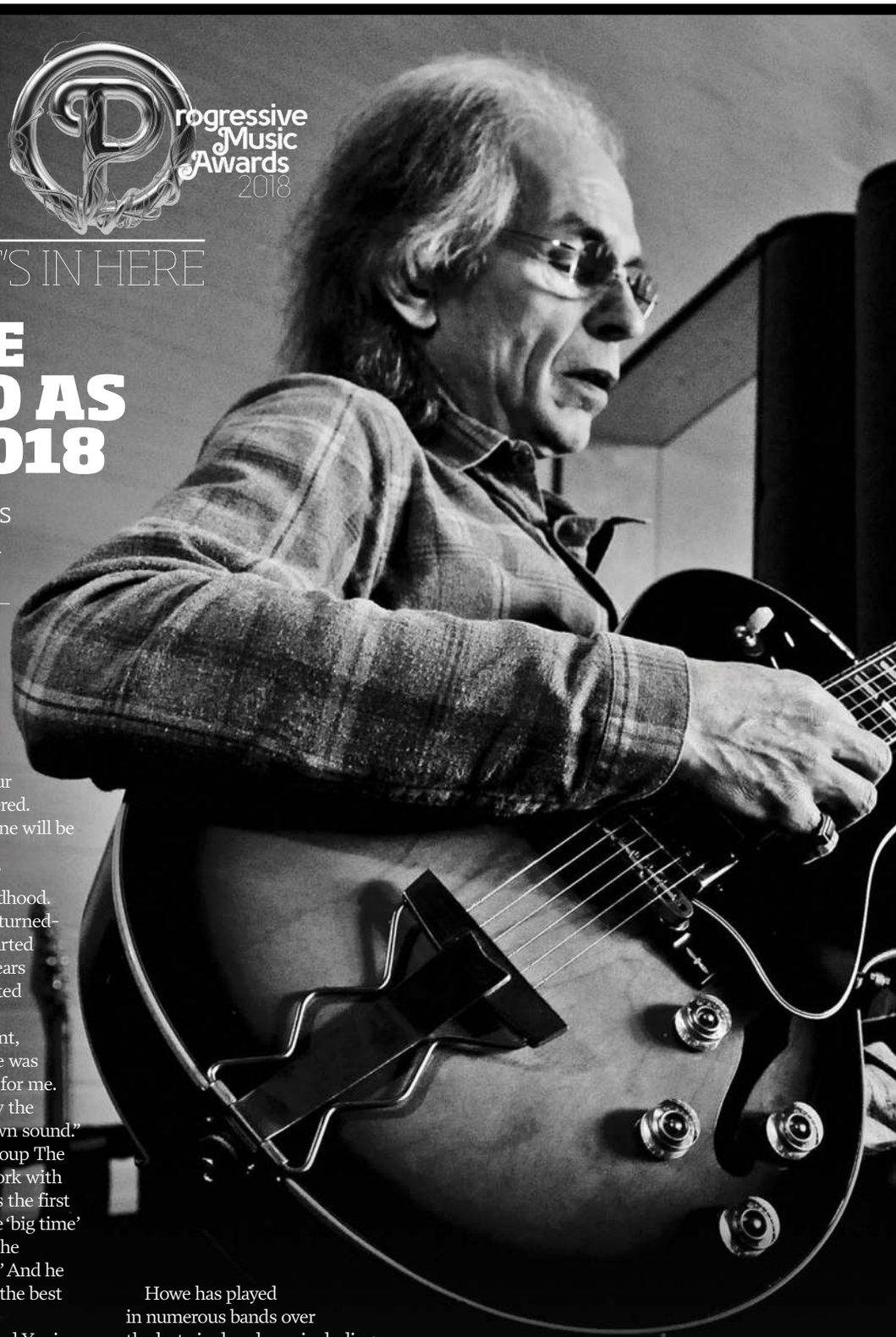
INTRO

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

Progressive Music Awards 2018

STEVE HOWE ANNOUNCED AS PROG GOD 2018

And comedian **Al Murray** confirms he'll be hosting the seventh annual Prog Awards this autumn.



YES/PRESS/ROB SHANAHAN

Yes guitarist Steve Howe will be lauded Prog God at the Progressive Music Awards 2018 in London on September 13. Previous award recipients include Carl Palmer, Peter Gabriel and Rick Wakeman.

Speaking to *Prog* from North America, where he's currently on tour with Yes, Howe says, "It's an honour to be heralded as somebody of importance. I'm flattered. I keep my awards on top of my guitar rack and this one will be added to them."

Howe grew up in north London where his parents' music collection provided the soundtrack to his childhood. Through it he discovered the work of jazz musician-turned-guitar inventor Les Paul, and by the age of 12 he'd started teaching himself how to play guitar. His formative years coincided with the birth of rock'n'roll, which cemented his career path.

"When Chuck Berry was doing the duckwalk I went, 'This is amazing! I wanna do this!'" he laughs. "There was something about the guitar that was just so suitable for me. I taught myself, that's been my strength and possibly the reason why I'm fairly original. I always wanted my own sound."

His first professional outing was with the blues group The Syndicats, which afforded him the opportunity to work with experimental producer Joe Meek. He recalls, "Joe was the first producer I worked with and the first person from the 'big time' that I met. I learned the ropes [with him]. I went to the recording session and said, 'Where's everybody else?' And he said, 'It's just you!' I loved that attention so that was the best day in that period of my life."

The turning point in his career came when he joined Yes in 1970. He co-wrote the following year's breakthrough *The Yes Album* and has since spent the best part of five decades with them. He cites the band's first performances at New York's legendary Madison Square Garden in 1978 as a personal highlight.

"I wanted to be successful as a musician and there are certain things that are always indicators of your success. The fact is that we were filling out Madison Square Garden and we weren't staying in crap hotels; to be able to enjoy one's achievement is nice."

> **"It's an honour to be heralded as somebody of importance. I'm flattered."**

Howe has played in numerous bands over the last six decades — including Asia, and GTR with Steve Hackett — and has guested with Queen, Lou Reed and Fish. He's also enjoyed successful a solo career and is now looking to release his third album with the Steve Howe Trio.

"I've been in 10 bands in my life and that's a lot," he says. "You could ask, 'When am I going to stop being in a band?' And I relish the time when I might because I would like to do more solo work. I've written a lot of tunes and I like playing them so let me play them please at some point!"

Meanwhile, comedian Al Murray is confirmed

Steve Howe: it's a big Yes to this man's contribution to prog.

as host for this year's Progressive Music Awards. He told *Prog*, "I'm delighted to be asked to present the Prog Awards this year. Prog's a real of a passion of mine — as anyone who follows me on Twitter will know — and when I went to the event last year I knew I was among my people: nerds, dweebs, freak-outs, hippies, Mellotron-heads and odd-time groovers. As an occasional musician, too, it's quite inspiring to be around people who created such incredible music, recordings that have given me so much pleasure and inspiration since I was a kid."

Voting for all categories closes at midnight on August 24 so head over to www.loudersound.com/prog2018 and make your voice heard. **NRS**

Al Murray: among his people as the new host of the Prog Awards.

KEVIN NIXON

This month, Intro was compiled by

Jeremy Allen
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Pete Fowler
Martin Kielty
David Keevill
Jo Kendall
Giulia Mascheroni
Rhodri Marsden
Natasha Scharf
Nick Shilton
Rick Wakeman
Phil Weller

MYSTERY GET THEIR WINGS

Canadian proggers' new album *Lies And Butterflies* showcases the live band.

Fly From Here: Mystery live.

CLAUDE DUFRESNE

Mystery release *Lies* *And Butterflies*, their seventh studio album and second with vocalist Jean Pageau fronting the band, on July 14. The release was deliberately timed to coincide with the Canadian proggers' debut at the Night Of The Prog festival in Germany.

The band's founder and lynchpin Michel St-Père says that *Lies And Butterflies* represents a natural progression for the band, building on the success, and sound, of their previous album, 2015's *Delusion Rain*.

"We just try to make the best music that we can at that moment," he says. "We don't set goals to achieve any particular new sound. We just keep going the way that we've always been and make sure we do our best when writing and recording."

Lies And Butterflies consists of seven tracks and is bookended by two songs, *Looking For Something Else* and *Chrysalis*, which both exceed 15 minutes each. St-Père tells *Prog* that it was a deliberate decision to showcase the strength of Mystery's live band, which is completed by bassist François Fournier, guitarist Sylvain Moineau, keyboardist Antoine Michaud and drummer Jean-Sébastien Goyette.

Having played a series of dates in Europe already this year, Mystery's further live activity in 2018 is likely to be confined to playing the final night of the Progstock festival in New Jersey on October 7, and potentially some Canadian shows. The band are, however, looking to return to Europe in 2019.

For more information, see www.therealmystery.com. **NS**

SKYHARBOR: NEW ALBUM

Keshav Dhar reveals the band's new sound on their "edgy" third album, *Sunshine Dust*.

Skyharbor release the long-awaited *Sunshine Dust* on September 7 via eOne/Good Fight Music. The Indian/American collective have spent the best part of four years working on the album and ended up completely re-recording it in Australia.

"The producers [Forrester Savell (Karnivool, Dead Letter Circus) and DLC's Luke Williams] helped us take the songs apart and almost rewrite a bunch on them," explains founding guitarist Keshav Dhar, "but we felt like we were in good hands from the beginning."

The 13-tracker is the first full-length recording to feature singer Eric Emery and drummer Aditya Ashok who both joined the band in 2015.

"The sound of the band now is a lot more edgy and bi-polar," says Dhar. "There's some really pretty stuff but there's also stuff that's way more dark and aggressive than we've ever done. It covers a much wider range of expressions and styles."

For more, visit www.skyharborband.com. **NRS**

One Shore Thing: Skyharbor bring us *Sunshine*.

PRESS/ARGON PHOTOGRAPHY

COHEED AND CAMBRIA RETURN TO THE AMORY WARS

New York proggers continue sci-fi concept series as frontman admits he was ready to call it quits.

Taking Off: Head With Wings.

Coheed And Cambria release *Vaxis – Act 1: The Unheavenly Creatures* via Roadrunner on October 5. The 78-minute album is the first part of a pentalogy that revisits the Amory Wars universe with a new storyline developed from 2007's *Good Apollo, Volume Two*. It's also available with a companion novella.

"I think the idea we've got right now is what Coheed And Cambria was supposed to be in 2002 but I was too young to make it that way," reveals frontman Claudio Sanchez. "The comic books didn't start until 2004 and it took a lot of maturing to realise this is how the story needs to be told."

The 15-track album explores the relationship between two lovers faced with securing their unborn son's future. Though it's set in the world of science fiction, it also addresses some of Sanchez's concerns on becoming a father four years ago.

"There's a song on this record called *The Pavilion*. I wrote that in 2016 right after the creation of [2015's non-concept album] *The Color Before The Sun*," he says. "That song was originally about me leaving music, leaving the band and feeling this confusion of: is this really where I want to be now I'm a dad? Do I really want to sacrifice time with my son to go on the road? As time went on, I realised how lucky I am and grateful I am to be in this band so it was like a crossroads that I was at. I think that writing a song like *Pavilion* really allowed me to understand who I am and how important it was for me to continue this."

Coheed released the 10-minute teaser *The Dark Sentencer* at the end of June and the frontman admits it's "the longest, most progressive tune on the album, but I think the record in itself travels around a lot and that's what makes it special. It's very adventurous and there are a lot of places to go on the album. There are a lot of surprises."

"It's very adventurous and there are a lot of places to go on the album."

A deluxe edition of *The Unheavenly Creatures* is now available to pre-order via the band's website. It comes with a bonus album of demos and a novella written by Sanchez and his wife, author Chondra Echert. To coincide with the release, Coheed And Cambria will play six shows in the UK this October with support from Chon. **NRS**

See www.facebook.com/coheedandcambria for more info.

INTRO extras

CAMEL ROAM ON

Following Andy Latimer's bout of pneumonia and show cancellation in The Hague, Camel are back on track for their UK tour which starts at Manchester Bridgewater Hall on September 7 and concludes at London Royal Albert Hall on the 17th. See camelproductions.com for more info.

Tea-o and Robert: app-making is thirsty work.

APPY TALK!

A reissue round-up for Theo Travis and Robert Fripp, plus three new experimental music apps with Brian Eno collaborator.

Theo Travis and Robert Fripp's reissue campaign continues with *Between The Silence*, a three-CD compilation featuring live sets from All Saints Church, Broad Chalke in 2009, Bath Festival Spiegeltent in 2010 and All Saints Church, Cheltenham in 2010. "After several Travis & Fripp releases, the label [Panegyric] thought it would be good to have it in a multipackage," Travis tells us. "They are three different types of concerts in different venues and there's lots of contrasts, so that keeps it interesting."

Something else to keep things interesting is the duo's new Travis & Fripp iPhone and iPad app, developed by Brian Eno app collaborator Pete Chilvers.

"Pete suggested the idea," says Travis. "It sounded pretty cool and I proposed it to Robert, who agreed, but it's taken a couple of years to get from there to here."

Titled *Travis & Fripp I*, *Travis & Fripp II* and *Travis & Fripp III* – and featuring gently trippy synched artwork – each app is "in a different key, a different harmonic area", says Travis. "My flutey clips and Robert's guitary clips will be picked by the user, or played in random order, but they've been selected and designed to work together in different ways so you get a unique performance each time – ones that will never be repeated, even if you let them float on infinitely."

As a clip comes up, the date, time and location of recording is shown. Some pieces were recorded this year. "I had to go through the master tracks and find 90 clips that worked," Travis says. "That's when we realised we needed to record some new stuff."

The apps are available for iOS on the App Store now, priced £2.99 each or £6.99 for the three. **JK**

DEAD LETTER CIRCUS GO FOURTH!

Aussies hope that "people will find a connection" on uplifting new, self-titled, long-player.

Brisbane's Dead Letter Circus are back with their fourth studio album, which is out via Rise/BMG on September 7. Titled *Dead Letter Circus*, it's their first album of new material since 2015's *Aesthesis* and follows on from last year's acoustic reworking, *The Endless Mile*.

"It's very hard to rewrite your songs in a different format and at the very end of that process, the ideas for this one started coming out like an epic download from the ether!" says frontman Kim Benzie.

The new 10-tracker takes lyrical inspiration from self-reflection.

"Being a musician in this day and age throws you different challenges; it's not a very supported path," he says. "But the ultimate compliment is when fans tell us our music has helped them get their life back on track. I hope that people will find a connection with this album on that level."

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

DLC: "Epic ideas from the ether."

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Arcane Roots: radical.

ARCANE ROOTS REWORKED

British three-piece announce complementary EP and tease "unusual" live shows later in the year.

Arcane Roots are revisiting material from last year's LP *Melancholia Hymns* for a September 14 release. The four-track *Landslide* EP is out on Easy Life and contains reimagined versions of *Before Me*, *Matter* and *Off The Floor*, as well as the brand new title track developed from early lyric ideas for *Solemn*.

"We promised ourselves that because there was still so much within the songs we would keep developing them. I really like the idea of being able to tell more of a story lyrically or to tell the other side of that story," reveals frontman Andrew Groves. "[The track] *Landslide* is my favourite recording of ours and more indicative of where we might go on the next record."

The EP continues the album's "unfiltered" approach to influences with more inspiration coming from the worlds of electronic and atmospheric music. Groves even namechecks Iranian-Dutch artist Sevdaliza and experimental pop artists FKA Twigs and Banks among his more unconventional influences. The band, who appeared at the inaugural, Prog Award-nominated Space Rocks event recently, will play at ArcTanGent Festival next month and support the EP with a handful of very special UK shows in what Groves describes as "unusual venues". He adds, "We're looking to create a live set that's entirely organic so that each show is completely different. I'd like to extend parts, loop them, take them in another direction and control the elements in real time. It'll also act as a transition while we start writing a new record."

Find out more at www.arcaneroots.com. **NRS**

INTRO extras

MAX WEBSTER MAKE PLEDGES

Rush labelmates Max Webster have eight-disc vinyl and CD box sets up on PledgeMusic right now. Contents include a 32-page booklet, a vintage poster, newly remastered albums *Max Webster*, *High Class In Borrowed Shoes*, *Mutiny Up My Sleeve*, *A Million Vacations*, *Live Magnetic Air*, *Universal Juveniles*, *Kim Mitchell EP* and a special edition *The Bootleg* which features unreleased studio and live tracks remixed by producers Terry Brown and Greg Wells. Go to www.pledgemusic.com/projects/max-webster-the-party.

The Hum: drinking tea, making prog plans.

SANGUINE HUM HAVE THE POWER!

Oxfordshire madcappers unveil the second part of their dystopian future concept.

Bad Elephant Music confirm they're to release Sanguine Hum's *Now We Have Power* on October 12. The long-awaited follow-up to 2015's double opus *Now We Have Light* also includes a guest appearance from original drummer Paul Mallyon.

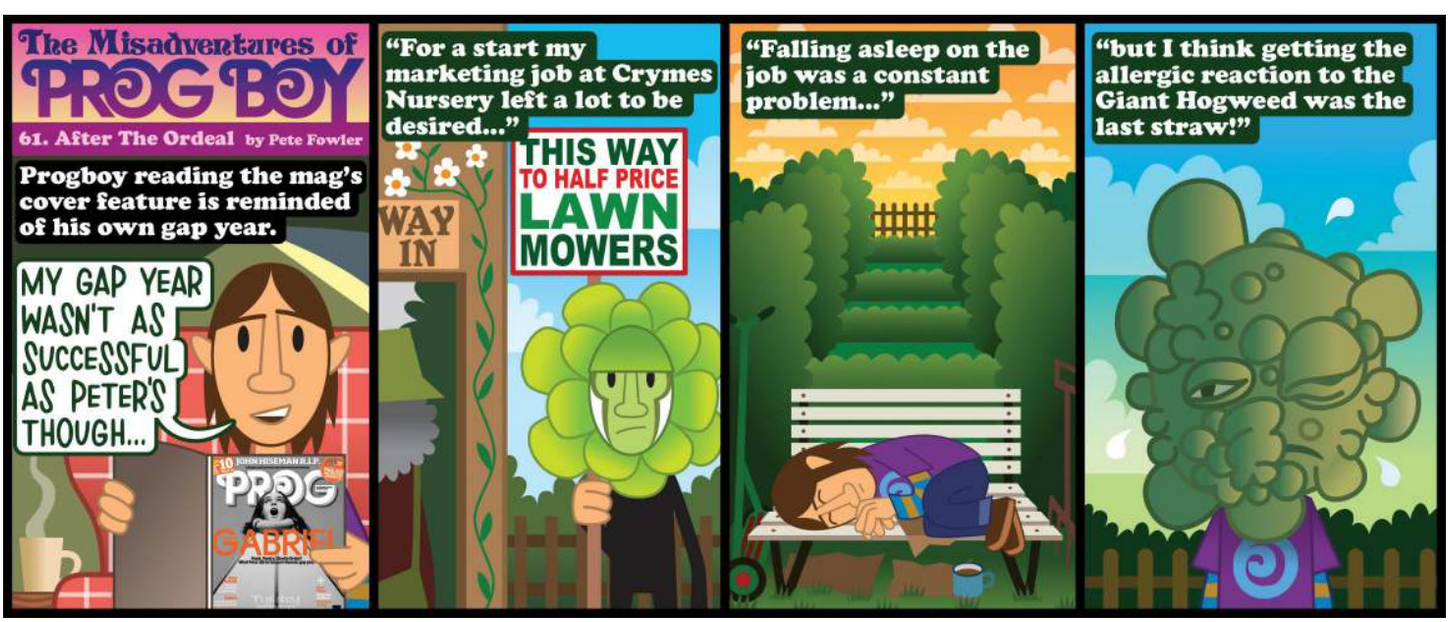
"I think it's the best-sounding record we've made in terms of sonic depth and it has a little more of a nod towards the Canterbury sound which we started with many years ago as Antique Seeking Nuns," says vocalist and guitarist Joff Winks. "We really wanted to have Paul on this record because he'd been with the band for such a long time but never ended up playing on *Now We Have Light*. We decided we'd have Paul come back and guest on it. It was a way of concluding the story and bringing him some closure."

The 50-minute recording picks up from where *...Light*'s futuristic tale left off with the tribulations of an inventor who accidentally creates a wormhole to another universe. In this new world, his sudden arrival is misinterpreted as he becomes an accidental Messiah and history repeats itself.

"It's the final chapter that we have planned for this sequence although, for a long time, Matt [Baber, keyboards] and I have played around for another idea that might visit the space where these two worlds join so this might not be the last thing we ever do with the story!" says Winks.

Sanguine Hum join North Sea Radio Orchestra, Doris Brendel, Thumpermonkey, Lord Of Worms and Fractal Mirror as an acoustic duo at Chelthenham's Eppyfest 7 on July 28.

Visit www.sanguinehum.com for more info. **NRS**



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—Pete Whalley (Get Ready to Rock)

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FAD GADGETS

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

ELECTROSPIT

Much effort has been made over the history of rock to make people sound like robots. There's the vocoder, where the sound of the voice combines with a synth to get that *Mr Blue Sky* effect, and the talkbox, which traditionally involves sticking a special rubber tube into the mouth of Peter Frampton or Roger Troutman. Here's a way of getting that talkbox effect with a fraction of the saliva: the ESX1, which pops around your neck, rests against your vocal chords, takes a guitar cable in the back and, yes, makes you sound like a robot. **www.electrospit.com**

SLEEPBUDS

I hereby reach out to fellow insomniacs who worry about the state of the planet (or even the kitchen) at four am. Bose have designed some earbuds to be worn overnight by the permanently anxious; light and unobtrusive, they pipe sound into your head in the dead of night via the magic of Bluetooth. Hilariously, however, you can only listen to 10 special tracks designed to make you fall asleep, including *Waterfall* and *Country Night*. At $249, that's one hell of an expensive LP, even if earbuds are included. **www.bose.com**

THE BENCH

Many of us spent years getting our guitars looking just the right level of battered by subjecting them to low-level abuse of various kinds. A chap from New York by the name of Keith, however, has created a magnificent junk guitar as a labour of love, by utilising old doors, workbench tops, door hinges, rulers and old vinyl records. It won't win any awards for precision engineering, but amazingly, it works. If you like instruments that look as if they've been hauled out of a skip, few are as beautiful as this. **www.keithdecent.com**

RICK WAKEMAN'S CAPED CRUSADES

ALL ROADS LEAD TO NOWHERE...

Rick takes a trip... or tries to.

There is a conservative estimate that there are 1,300,000 traffic cones on UK roads. There is also a conservative estimate that I've seen most of them. If only I could insert them into the rear ends of those responsible for them.

Travelling by road is the lifeblood of all musicians and much of that travelling is done at night or in the early hours of the morning. I will now relate a true story about my journey home from a show in the West Country last year that had a simple four-hour route of going up the A303, joining the M3, down to and around the M25 to the M11 then onto the A11, turning off at Bury St Edmunds to get home.

Reaching the A303 it was blocked off with ROAD CLOSED signs on the barrier and a diversion. Never mind, I thought, it'll take me down to Southampton and I can join the M3. Adds a few miles, but hey-ho...

True, it took me to the M3, but that was barriered off with diversion signs heading north. Never mind, I thought, I'll end up at the M4 somewhere and head east.

That diversion took me to the M4 which was also closed. Never mind, I thought. I'll get up to the M40 and head down to the M25.

I got diverted through villages, swamps, housing estates and cart tracks and finally ended up on the road from Cheltenham which took me into Oxford, which had loads of temporary roundabouts made out of cones with absolutely no diversion signs anywhere.

By now it was four am. I went around a cone roundabout twice and took what I thought was a way out. Then I stopped. Partly because I had no idea where I was and nor did the Sat Nav. Also the flashing blue lights were a bit of distraction.

"Good morning, sir," said the policeman as he stuck his head through my driver's side window. "And where are you going?"

"I'm trying to go home to Norfolk. I started down on the coast south of Southampton."

"Your best route would've been the A303, sir."

"Closed."

"Well, the M3 then."

"Closed."

"Then the M4."

"Closed. That's why I'm looking for the M40."

"That's closed, I'm afraid."

"Can you tell me how I can get home, please?"

By this time his partner had joined him from the police car.

"Could you tell me when you had your last drink of alcohol, please?"

"August 5, 1985."

He looked at me, bewildered.

"In that case, sir, it should have cleared your system by now."

I blew into the intoximeter, or whatever it's called.

"Zero," he said. His partner laughed.

"Okay," he said. "Follow us, we'll get you onto the M40. It's closed but there's no roadworks so you'll have the road to yourself. It's open at High Wycombe, you exit there. You might catch the morning rush at Heathrow, though."

I got home at 9.30am, had a shit, shower and shave and left for the next show at 10.30...

> **"I got diverted through villages, swamps, cart tracks..."**

KEVIN FEBRUARY

MELODY'S ECHO CHAMBER

Far-out French musician makes long-awaited, experimental return.

LIKE BLUE MOONS, Melody's Echo Chamber albums don't come around often. And like the moons, they're otherworldly, luminous and sound as if they're created with cosmic dust.

Provence-born Paris-based Melody Prochet released her self-titled debut in 2012, a bilingual psychedelic dreamscape produced by her then partner Kevin Parker of Tame Impala. Prochet's live band elicited much love from European audiences, while Prochet herself appeared in *Vogue* and other style bibles thanks to her sartorial élan and Anita Pallenberg bangs. And then, nothing. Well, almost nothing.

From Pink They Fell Into Blue was a digital-only EP released in 2013, a fêted second collaboration between Prochet and Parker that wasn't to be. So Melody's forthcoming second album *Bon Voyage* isn't so much a renaissance as an inspired reimagining: wilder, more experimental and teeming with vitality. The debut imbued the spirit of a more diaphanous Stereolab with lysergic rushes throughout, whereas *Bon Voyage* adds to the mix influences as diverse as old skool hip hop, Swedish jazz, Can and Alice Coltrane. It shouldn't work but it really does. The method in all the madness was to "never break the rhythm", explains Prochet.

Bon Voyage began when Prochet found kindred spirits in Swedish progressive rockers Dungen at the Levitation Festival in Angers in 2016. They talked of working together, which Prochet made happen when she relocated to Sweden to record in the studio of Fredrik Swahn of The Amazing, situated in a wood in Solna, north of Stockholm. With contributions from Swahn, Dungen guitarist Reine Fiske and some turntable dexterity from Dungen frontman Gustav Ejstes, it's a collaborative record with Prochet in full control.

"I was definitely the producer from the start," she says. "At the end I was sculpting the sessions all night. But Reine's sound makes the difference and Swahn's endless patience and mindfulness made everything possible."

Prochet resumed playing the violin — which she hadn't touched since childhood — and went back to school to learn the drums: "I returned to my childhood music conservatoire, which was very special at age 30. Drums have always been my obsession but had become a source of frustration. I worked on it and got to play many of the beats on the record and finally be satisfied."

Johan Holmegaard from Dungen, whom Melody calls "the master", provides some rhythmic motifs on the epic *Quand Les Larmes D'un Ange Font Danser Les Neige*. Pond musician Nicholas Allbrook also drops in to drop some freestyle poetry slam.

Visions Of Someone Special nods to Serge Gainsbourg's *Ford Mustang*, a guitar lick that was a happy accident. "We kept it in as a homage and made something special around it," says Prochet, "though we were mostly inspired by the nylon guitar from Milton Nascimento and Lô Borges' *Clube Da Esquina*."

And then there's *Desert Horse*, juxtaposing sparsity with wild bursts of arabesque ululations, backward loops and a cosmic vocoder.

Enjoy this incredible trip, because who knows when the next one will come around. **JA**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Melody Prochet *(vocals, guitar, keys, drums, violin),* **Reine Fiske** *(bass/guitar),* **Fredrik Swahn** *(bass/guitar),* **Nicholas Allbrook** *(vocals),* **Gustav Ejstes** *(turntables),* **John Holmegaard** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

A head-on collision between Broadcast and the instrumental section of *Tomorrow Never Knows*

CURRENT RELEASE

Bon Voyage is out now via Domino Records

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/MelodyProchet

"I returned to my childhood music conservatoire, which was very special at age 30."

Cosmic Chamber: Melody Prochet is set to enchant with her second album.

DIANE SAGNIER

YOUR PROG CHEF:

FABIO FRIZZI

On the menu: Tomorrow's Harvest (tagliatelle alla Bolognese)

"I was born in Bologna, a city famous for its food and in particular for its wonderful pasta dishes. My mother, my grandmothers, all aunts and even my mother-in-law have always been great pasta makers. My wife spoils me every day with extraordinary dishes. But I also inherited this passion – I often cook for the family and some of the best memories of my tours with Frizzi 2 Fulci are the pasta binges after the concerts. I remember one in Wales, and one incredible time in Los Angeles, always with the help of my musicians. This recipe is probably the pasta I prefer, a pleasure for the body and for the spirit. I hope you love it too!"

Ingredients

For the sauce: a stalk of celery, a carrot, an onion, ½ kg of ground beef, 2 cloves, ½ glass of white wine, 2 glasses of tomato sauce, salt, pepper, olive oil, a piece of butter
For the pasta: 3 eggs, 85g type 0 flour

Preparation

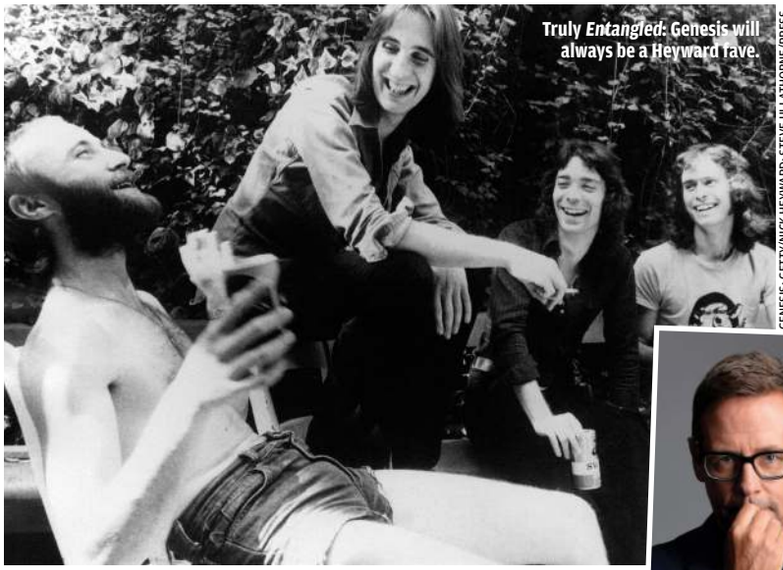
"For the sauce, finely chop the onion, carrot and celery, put the mixture in a saucepan on the fire or stove with olive oil, and brown for a few minutes. Add the ground beef and cloves. When the meat has browned, add the wine. When reduced, add the tomato puree, season with salt and pepper. Pour half a litre of water into the saucepan and cook for about 45 minutes.

"Meanwhile, prepare the pasta with the classic method [*Brits should Google this or cheat, using pre-made egg pasta – Supper's Ready! Ed*]. When the dough is dry, sprinkle flour, wrap over on itself and cut into strips about half a centimetre in width. Separate the noodles and place on a lightly floured cloth. Add the tagliatelle to plenty of boiling salted water and as soon as a froth builds, remove from the heat and drain. Pour the sauce over the pasta, adding a knob of butter and grated Parmesan, if you like.

"This recipe is like a miracle happened! In our family this ritual has taken place for generations and even respecting today's good eating rules, tagliatelle alla Bolognese is an absolutely healthy way to enjoy the pleasure of the dining table." **JK**

MY PROG HERO

Inspiring the wider music world…



Truly *Entangled*: Genesis will always be a Heyward fave.

GENESIS: GETTY/NICK HEYWARD: STEVE ULLATHORNE/PRESS

NICK HEYWARD

When the former Haircut One Hundred man discovered Genesis it was a *Fantastic Day* indeed…

"Prog set me up for life. Like the literary classics, prog bands set the foundation for modern music.

"This all filtered to me from my brother's bedroom. Pete had a purple room filled with amplifiers and incense. I lived in Beckenham and me and my mate Austin and I were into Bolan and Rory Gallagher. I have strong memories of bunking into gigs at Crystal Palace Park and Austin would always get us backstage. One time Gryphon had just finished and I heard *Breathe* coming out of the speakers. There was this connection with the sounds coming from Pete's room and a moment where I went, 'Wow, *this* is music.'

"The first Genesis song that got me was *I Know What I Like In Your Wardrobe*. Then I got into *A Trick Of The Tail*, especially *Entangled* and *Ripples*. I played it over and over, it was an intro to conceptual records and is like reading a book. This was not the music I knew from my parents — The Carpenters, or jazz. I wasn't playing an instrument yet and this music looked and sounded impossible. Pete could play; he taught me D major. I took that and worked on it, coming up with D, C and G. That's how I wrote *Fantastic Day*. I wanted to be XTC or Talking Heads but when I wrote the Haircut One Hundred album *Pelican West*, it had Genesis at the heart — and Chris Squire's *Fish Out Of Wate*r is how I got into bass.

"In the studio, I didn't have the musical ability for prog but I'd like a song to start with a car sound effect, or with birdsong, and I always wanted to tell a story. That's prog.

"I never crossed paths with Genesis but Mike & The Mechanics played a festival bill I was on. I hoped to meet Mike Rutherford, so I stood by their equipment — and I met Francis Rossi from Status Quo instead!

"Genesis are eternal and what they wrote became like a Bible; open it up, everything rings true. You marvel and go, 'What gods wrote that?' My new album is called *Woodland Echoes*, the influence of prog is becoming more apparent. I'll probably be full-on prog in a year, bursting out… like a dance on a volcano!" **JK**

"I hoped to meet Mike Rutherford - so I stood by his equipment."

Woodland Echoes is out now. See nickheyward.com.

PROG IN BRIEF

It's taken a while but **Peter Gabriel** finally has a presence on Spotify. His first four solo albums, *So*, *Us* and *Up* are available to listen to now, plus compilations *Shaking The Tree* and *Hit*. More will follow in a monthly roll-out.

We wish **InsideOut Records** a very happy 25th birthday! The label is celebrating with a special European tour, featuring Spock's Beard and Roine Stolt's (left) The Flower Kings Revisited. Dates start on Nov 30 in Oslo and finish in Manchester Dec 10.

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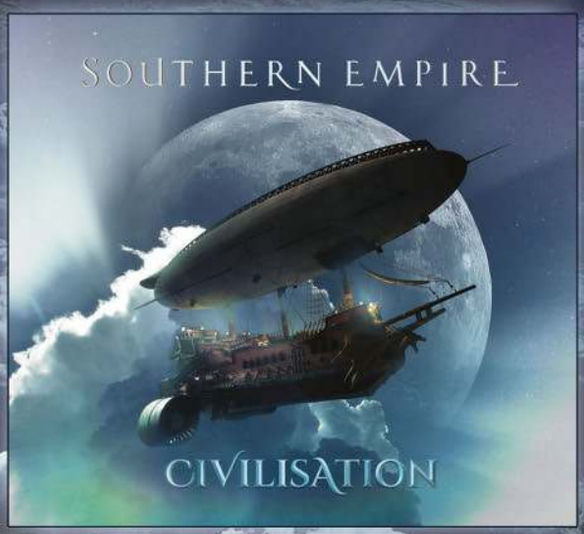
Song within a song

SOUTHERN EMPIRE

"This is one empire that's surely on the rise" - PROG mag



CIVILISATION

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THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND

THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND

[CAPRICORN, 1973]

"We have so many people who have been in the band over the years and the original band had so many musical tastes, which is why we can play a jazz festival one day and a blues festival another," The Marshall Tucker Band's frontman Doug Gray told *The Sarasota Post* in 2014. "Our music fits in just about anywhere."

Released in April 1973, the first Marshall Tucker Band album emerged at the perfect moment, as the phenomenon known as southern rock began to widely exert its charms. Superficially at least, MTB weren't radically different from their more prominent peers in Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers Band. But in reality, founder Gray (vocals) and Toy Caldwell (guitar/vocals) had taken a circuitous route to the genre. In the late 60s, Gray and Caldwell had been members of a band called The Toy Factory, based in their native Spartanburg, South Carolina. Both subsequently served in Vietnam, during which time Caldwell was wounded, eventually being discharged in 1969.

On returning home, the musical landscape was changing, and by 1972, Gray and Caldwell had formed a new group with Tommy Caldwell on bass, George McCorkle on rhythm guitar and Paul Riddle on drums. Newly dubbed The Marshall Tucker Band (supposedly after a blind piano tuner who had earlier rented the band's rehearsal space), they also added flute player and saxophonist Jerry Eubanks to their ranks. As a result, *Take The Highway*, the opening track on the band's debut album, sounded quite unlike anything else around at that point. It's southern rock, of course, but with strong jazzy hues and the distinctly psychedelic rush of that flute: at points it sounds more like Camel than Skynyrd.

The young band's early influences, which ranged from their country music heritage to legends from other fields such as Dr John and BB King, had gently collided to create something subtly idiosyncratic and very much in keeping with the free spirit of the era.

The rest of the album, while not quite as startling, sustains that level of gently expressed imagination and verve. *Can't You See* is a beautifully mellifluous psychedelic amble, *Ramblin'* is a joyous slab of prime jam-band soul replete with a euphoric brass section, and *My Jesus Told Me So* sounds like early Chicago going gospel after an epic weed binge.

As time progressed, the band's sound settled into a slightly more conventional groove, but Eubanks' flute and sax continued to set the group apart from their more texturally prosaic brethren. They're still motoring along today.

DOM LAWSON

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Our far-out trip to far-flung prog

***Bravo*, Melange: the Madrid proggers are making waves.**

MELANGE

Say hello to the multicoloured Madrid proggers who are making waves in Spain and beyond.

It's fair to say that Melange have a pretty fitting moniker. The Madrid prog rockers' sound straddles myriad genres, including world music and jazz, but they manage to do it without feeling lost at sea.

"It's a very diverse, texture-based sound with a wide amalgam between dark and bright," explains keyboard player and vocalist Mario Zamora. "It also has intense and explosive rhythmic sections, matching with rich harmonies full of varied reminiscences."

The quintet's latest release, the trippy full-lengther *Viento Bravo*, is their second album since officially forming a few years ago. Opener *Rio Revuelto* sounds like Syd Arthur sunlounging in the Mediterranean on a summer evening, while there are liberal lashings of 70s prog strewn throughout, too.

"We met each other over 10 years ago but the first time we played together was back in 2015," Zamora reflects. "Miguel [Rosón], who is our lead guitarist and singer, contacted the rest of us and we started playing his old demos, but later we were all making our songs together."

The group don't feel there's a distinct experimental scene in their native Spain at the moment. "We cannot see any kind of prog scene in Spain or Madrid, but there are a lot of good Spanish bands, such as MKM, Alberto Montero, Mohama Saz, Víctor Herrero, Guerrera, et cetera," Zamora says. "There's a lot of Spanish popular music influence in our music, as well as lots of popular and ancient music from all over the world. There's also some Spanish Jewish medieval sounds, flamenco roots, or other countries' missing links, like Greece, Mali and West Africa."

Melange's absorbing sound is a melting pot of colour, but this approach to songwriting isn't premeditated or written as a box-ticking exercise in breaking boundaries and straying from the norm. Instead, it comes from deep within.

"We just want to feel free, honest and create our 'inner folk'," Zamora says. "It's a heart's impulse. To do what we want to do is simply great and it gives us power and energy to continue. We'd love to do it for a long time." **CC**

"We want to feel free, honest and create our 'inner folk'."

For more, see melangebbib.bandcamp.com.

PROG IN BRIEF

STUART WOOD

A feature-length film about **Sparks** is in progress, helmed by *Baby Driver*/*Shaun Of The Dead* director Edgar Wright. "I've been a fan since I saw them on *Top Of The Pops* in 1979," he told *Indiewire*. It will be Wright's first music documentary.

It's the height of summer, so the perfect time to announce three **Jethro Tull** Christmas Cathedral concerts! Ian Anderson (left) and band will play: Chester, Dec 1, Birmingham, Dec 17 and Hereford, Dec 18. Find more solstice bell-ringing at www.jethrotull.com.

THE PARADOX TWIN

Close encounters of the prog kind on English rockers' debut album.

YOU ARE UNLIKELY to find a proggier album concept this year than the plotline that runs through The Paradox Twin's debut record, *The Importance Of Mr Bedlam*.

"The world is essentially being controlled by extraterrestrials, and in the story you have a couple, with the guy constantly being contacted and taken up on a ship by these extraterrestrials," principal songwriter Danny Sorrell says, surprisingly matter-of-factly.

"The world is being controlled by a bad race of aliens, but the good race are trying to take up the couple to tell them about the story and what's happening to mankind."

Good thing then that the music underpinning the Reading quartet's impressive album is suitably forward-thinking too, with the seven tracks straddling Floyd-esque melody and a fine chunk of Porcupine Tree bite.

The crown jewel is the 10-minute *Earthbound*, which chucks in some moody devilry before slathering on jagged riffs that could well have been zapped out of the wizard-fingers of one Mikael Åkerfeldt.

The inspiration has come from deep within, it seems, with Sorrell choosing to shut himself away musically during the writing process to stave off any interloping outside inspiration seeping in.

"When you do listen to music, other influences creep in," he says. "I've got a very wide range of music that I listen to — I listen to the heavy prog metal like bands like Opeth, or Steven Wilson and Porcupine Tree. And I listen to a bit of classical, as well as a lot of bands from the 70s, like Yes and Genesis. In the writing process, I try to cut myself off."

The Paradox Twin formed like a phoenix out of the ashes of Sorrell's previous band Formby, who channelled a more alt-rock ethos.

Despite gaining momentum, the band lost two members a few years ago, while Sorrell also stepped back from music as he stepped into fatherhood.

"It was around when my son was six or seven months old I started writing *The Importance of Mr Bedlam*, because I had a bit more time at home as I was getting used to being a dad," he says.

"We toyed with the idea of Formby coming back, but as it was a new start and we had two new members, I decided to change the name and start with a fresh look."

Previous interest from Frost* man John Mitchell maintained through to the new project, with the band snapped up on a two-album deal by his White Star label.

Mitchell produced *The Importance Of Mr Bedlam*, while he also guests on the record alongside label buddy Kim Seviour.

"I'm really excited now, because we had these issues when my son was born. I thought not only is my time going to be taken up by being a dad, the band is now in half," Sorrell reflects.

"I had to put a lot of work in to write the album and get the band together. It feels like stuff is slowly starting to speed up now." **CC**

"In the writing process, I try to cut myself off."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Danny Sorrell *(vocals, guitar, keyboard)*, **Diane Fox** *(bass)*, **Leland Freeman** *(guitar)*, **Rob McGregor** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Seventies prog being teleported into the 21st century

CURRENT RELEASE

The Importance Of Mr Bedlam is out now via White Star Records

WEBSITE

www.theparadoxtwin.com

Tunnel Vision: Danny Sorrell leads The Paradox Twin.

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

The death of the iPod Classic was another brick in the industry wall.

I remember receiving the announcement that Apple were discontinuing their iconic iPod Classic in 2014 like a punch in the gut. My knee-jerk reaction was to go deep survivalist, stockpiling iPods like my life was dependent on it, which at the time it felt like it was: as a painfully awkward early 20-something that hadn't long since lost a parent, the Classic gave me permission to tune in and space out in the chaotic maelstrom of London.

While it's easy to get misty-eyed about the simple pleasure of the clicky iPod wheel or the fact it was built like an armoured personnel carrier, it was the glorious, forgiving amount of space I cherished – which fellow prog fans will appreciate, I'm sure.

In hindsight, I actually think the untimely demise of the iPod marked a change in the way we fundamentally listen to, and appreciate, music. By 2014, Apple had created millions of Classic advocates – not just because they did the digital music thing better than anyone else, but because of a combination of Apple's massive ecosystem (think iPhones, iPads and so on), which created brand loyalty, and their rather possessive digital rights management, meaning songs bought on iTunes couldn't be played on other devices.

By killing off the Classic, Apple gave devotees the option to switch to another portable player and risk not being able to listen to hundreds of tracks they'd bought, or downsize to one of the weedier Apple options, such as the Shuffle or Touch.

Behind door number three was the option that most people have taken – move to streaming services and retain your ability to listen to music on the go.

For everything that streaming has given us, it's also taken away. We now have near infinite choice, but we're also spoilt by that availability, flitting between tracks instead of sitting down with entire albums. Aisles' Germán Vergara agrees: "Streaming has changed the way we listen to music in that you may like one or two songs by an artist, add them to your library or playlist and discard the rest."

If a piece of music is trying, it's easier to find something else than take the time to really digest it. This creates barriers for new artists making different and outlandish music.

The vinyl revival is a symptom of how we long for more 'traditional' ways to enjoy music – as they were intended, as full-length compositions – but this hardly addresses the fact that most music is listened to on the go.

Apple's decision to kill off the Classic was a commercial response to the storming popularity of streaming, but this wholehearted revivalist movement indicates that this may well have been too premature.

DAVID KEEVILL

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

HAVE A CIGAR

Saluting the scene's supporting crew

Dynamic Duo: Candelot and Castel.

FLORENT MORTEL

VERY PROG FESTIVAL

Romain Castel and **Pauline Candelot** launch a new event in historic Toulouse with a metallic twist.

Frustrated that his own favourite genre appeared to be flagging behind the French renaissance in music festivals, prog metal drummer Romain Castel decided to take action and start building the Very Prog Festival, which takes place for the first time on October 12-13 in Toulouse.

"France is home to metal events like Hellfest, prog events like Crescendo and extreme metal fests," Castel says. "Somehow prog metal was missing, and I thought it was time to change things." With assistance from a wide range of supporters, he's secured supergroup Sons Of Apollo and Caligula's Horse for the debut event, with closer-to-home acts Persefone (Andorra), Spheric Universe Experience, DGM (both Italy) and others also on the bill.

Castel, who plays with local band Inepsys, admits it was a challenge to secure the line-up because no one had heard of his fledgling event. The solution was to spread the word, with help from press officer Pauline Candelot. "Romain has been a drummer in a band for 10 years and knows what bands expect," she notes. "We both attend prog festivals around Europe to meet people from the community and create links. We want to tailor make an event with its own expectations."

Castel adds: "We believe festivals should support each other — and so far that support has been great."

Along with a partnership deal with a microbrewery near the two-stage Le Metronum venue, the organisers are keen to encourage visitors to enjoy the beauty of historic Toulouse. Castel argues that prog fans are happy to travel to enjoy both new music and culture, and believes the southern French city has much to offer them.

Candelot believes the festival's future depends on establishing itself within the prog community. "We targeted French prog lovers at first, but now we have people coming from Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK," she reports. "We want to have other events," she continues, "and eventually make Very Prog one of the major prog festivals in Europe, alongside Be Prog! My Friend or ProgPower Europe. Having two major acts for our first event is a statement: it means we are here to stay." **MK**

"Prog metal was missing... it was time to change things."

For more, visit www.veryprogfestival.com.

PROG IN BRIEF

The **Wetton Downes iCon** trilogy of albums is available now, with bonus tracks. Geoff Downes has overseen the re-releases, saying, "All of these recordings mark special periods in our personal and creative lives."

A new documentary about former Can frontman **Damo Suzuki** (left) is in production. Titled *Energy*, it spotlights his past career and sees Suzuki battle colon cancer, while still performing. Find out more at www.damosuzuki.com.

There's a new label and a new album for **Dream Theater**. Now signed to InsideOut, they're working on their as-yet untitled 14th. Guitarist John Petrucci said: "So far the music is heavy, progressive, melodic, shredding and it's epic."

Claudio Simonneti's Goblin celebrate the 40th anniversary of the *Dawn Of The Dead* score with four live dates and screenings, at Edinburgh's Summerhall (August 5 and 6) and London Union Chapel (17 and 18). They'll also play *Suspiria*.

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Official Progressive Albums Chart

the prog top 30 albums

June 2018

Compiled by Official Charts Company

1	**WOODEN SHJIPS** V	*(THRILL JOCKEY)*
2	**A PERFECT CIRCLE** Eat The Elephant	*(BMG)*
3	**TAME IMPALA** Currents	*(FICTION)*
4	**AMORPHIS** Queen Of Time	*(NUCLEAR BLAST)*
5	**RADIOHEAD** OK Computer	*(XL RECORDINGS)*
6	**SPOCK'S BEARD** Noise Floor	*(INSIDE OUT)*
7	**PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING** Every Valley	*(PLAY IT AGAIN SAM)*
8	**GAZPACHO** Soyuz	*(KSCOPE)*
9	**FLAMING LIPS** Greatest Hits – Vol 1	*(RHINO)*
10	**WIRE** Chairs Missing	*(PINK FLAG)*
11	**WIRE** 154	*(PINK FLAG)*
12	**WIRE** Pink Flag	*(PINK FLAG)*
13	**ROGER WATERS** Is This The Life We Really Want	*(COLUMBIA)*
14	**KING GIZZARD & LIZARD WIZARD** Gumboot Soup	*(HEAVENLY)*
15	**JEFF LYNNE'S ELO** Wembley Or Bust	*(RCA)*
16	**ARENA** Double Vision	*(VERGLAS MUSIC)*
17	**TESSERACT** Sonder	*(KSCOPE)*
18	**ROXY MUSIC** Roxy Music	*(VIRGIN)*
19	**MARILLION** Misplaced Childhood	*(PARLOPHONE)*
20	**JETHRO TULL** Heavy Horses	*(RHINO)*
21	**STEVEN WILSON** To The Bone	*(CAROLINE)*
22	**MASTODON** Emperor Of Sand	*(REPRISE)*
23	**DAVID GILMOUR** Live At Pompeii	*(COLUMBIA)*
24	**MOGWAI** Every Country's Sun	*(ROCK ACTION)*
25	**RUSH** A Farewell To Kings	*(UMC/VIRGIN)*
26	**MOODY BLUES** Days Of Future Passed	*(DECCA)*
27	**JONATHAN WILSON** Rare Birds	*(BELLA UNION)*
28	**BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST** Barclay James Harvest	*(CHERRY RED/ESOTERIC)*
29	**IHSAHN** Àmr	*(CANDLELIGHT)*
30	**FIELD MUSIC** Open Here	*(MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES)*

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

WIN! YES: THE STEVEN WILSON REMIXES VINYL BOX SET

Yes released *Yes: The Steven Wilson Remixes* box set on June 29 via Rhino to celebrate their 50th anniversary, and we have one vinyl set to give away.

The vinyl set includes Steven Wilson's remixes of five classic albums: *The Yes Album* (1971), *Fragile* (1971), *Close To The Edge* (1972), *Tales From Topographic Oceans* (1973) and *Relayer* (1974).

The record case features artwork created specifically for the box set by Roger Dean, whose artwork and calligraphy are synonymous with the band. In addition, *Close To The Edge* and *Tales From Topographic Oceans* have new cover art, while the covers for *The Yes Album*, *Fragile* and *Relayer* have been reworked by Dean.

For your chance to win, answer the following question:

Who played keyboards on *Relayer*?

a) Rick Wakeman

b) Patrick Moraz

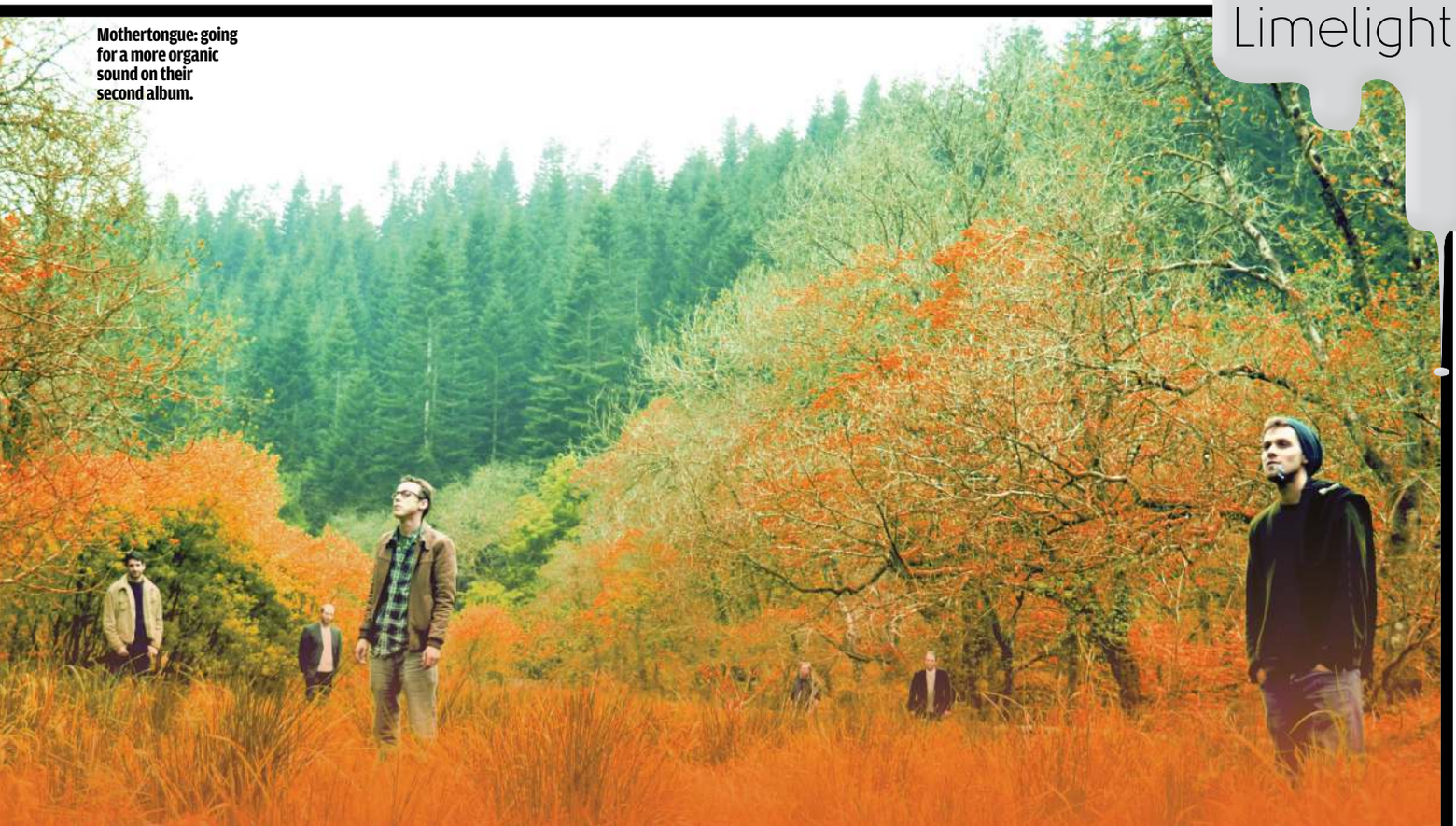
c) Tony Kaye

See www.yesworld.com for more information. The vinyl is also available from www.amazon.co.uk.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This online comp will be open from July 19 to August 23. 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	Rob Ramsay	Jeremy Allen	Lance Robertson
SPIRITUALIZED	**UNKH**	**RING VAN MÖBIUS**	**STEVEN WILSON**	**ALAIN GORAGUER**	**THE ENID**
And Nothing Hurt	**Innerverse**	**Past The Evening Sun**	**To The Bone**	**La Planète Sauvage**	**Aerie Faerie Nonsense**
BELLA UNION	FREYA RECORDS	APOLLON	CAROLINE	EMI PATHÉ MARCONI	EMI



Mothertongue: going for a more organic sound on their second album.

MOTHERTONGUE

Mancunian sextet making prog pop that is enterprising yet eccentric.

ON THE SURFACE, the term 'progressive pop' seems a silly description. Progressive music, inventive and eccentric in its nature, is the antithesis of the pop mantra, yet Manchester sextet Mothertongue have it making perfect sense. They take pop to ambitiously absurd plains: progressive in its mindset, but with an infectious, poppy beating heart beneath.

"There's a lot of precedent for things like progressive pop," says the band's frontman Louis Smith. "I think those first two syllables are the most important: go from wherever you're starting from and make progress, whatever direction that happens to be in. Our starting point is pop. What we try and do is write pop music that you wouldn't hear anywhere else, that's intelligent but still holding onto the fundamentals of what makes it worthwhile."

Mothertongue's 2016 debut album *Unsongs* paraded their musical adventurism with pomp and a smile. From the trumpet-tinted, triple guitar attack of its instrumentation to Smith's witty wordplay, glittered lyricisms and the band's utter disregard for staying in one time signature, it was a record that threw everything at you.

Fast forward two years and *Where The Moonlight Snows* is, initially, a moodier follow-up: a haunted melancholia coils itself around the joyous danceability. But give it time and its quirky, Beatles-esque charm will soon have you hooked.

"*Unsongs* was the first time we got to play with other musicians on our level so maybe we went a bit too far with it. But we had great fun writing it," guitarist Phil Dixon reflects. "So with the new album we wanted to do the opposite: it's bigger on romance and less of the self-conscious cleverness that was all over *Unsongs*. We don't feel like we have to show off this time. We wanted to make a much more organic-sounding record and concentrate on writing strong songs. Then we'd embellish those songs and make them as interesting as we could."

This time around they better translate their conglomeration of ideas into a more cohesive package, despite their desire to flirt with as many genres as possible. The chalk and cheese of their sound — bombastic ridiculousness versus a poetic, reserved but incisive approach — makes for a fantastic combination.

"Having six people with several genres skipping about in each of their heads means the unexpected comes naturally," Smith says.

And while his bandmates tuck into a buffet of genres and styles, it's his presence that anchors the band down. As bassist Will Holden states, Smith is their secret weapon: "Everything that we are is encapsulated in Louis. So that gives the rest of us freedom to experiment. With Louis we will always sound like Mothertongue no matter what direction the rest of us travel in."

Smith's razor sharp lyrics and characterful vocals reverberate as the soul of this band, allowing the others to go crazy. He is their centre of gravity, the method to the rest of the band's prog and electric madness and together they work in harmony. **POW**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Louis Smith *(guitars, vocals)*, **Mark Wall** *(guitars)*, **Will Holden** *(bass, vocals)*, **Phil Dixon** *(guitars, vocals)*, **Andy Malbon** *(trumpet, cornet)*, **Filip Pardej** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

They rock like The Who and dance like Talking Heads

CURRENT RELEASE

Where The Moonlight Snows is out now via Bad Elephant Music

WEBSITE

www.mothertongue.me.uk

"Having six people with several genres skipping about in each of their heads means the unexpected comes naturally."

HALO TORA

Scottish alt/post-proggers to release double concept album tackling mental health.

GLASWEGIANS HALO TORA aren't looking to fit into any boxes with their debut release.

"There are so many bands that you go see live and they tick all the usual boxes, with the same clichés repeated over and over," says frontman Chris Alexander. "This happens because those bands are not being themselves and are just trying to be something else. It's really important for musicians to not try to fit into any scene and just do what comes naturally.

"We all come from different backgrounds and we love really different kinds of music, but we try to incorporate all our influences into what we do and see if it works," he continues. "I think it's really important for bands to do that because I feel like the rock scene in the UK is very safe and everyone just works in order to get to Radio 1."

> **"We felt that this story had to be told over two chapters."**

The five-piece have just released the first of a two-part concept album, *Man Of Stone: First Chapter*, that tackles the subject of mental health.

"Topically and lyrically it has been a difficult record to write, as it covers a lot of our own personal experiences," explains Alexander. "We felt that this story had to be told over two chapters.

"The idea of the concept album is something that was born in the 70s, but there's definitely a new breed of bands that still make them, so it's something that still goes really strong," he continues. "Both us and our friends have had personal issues with mental health and, being such a big topic, we realised we couldn't really talk about it over just a couple of songs, so everything started to develop into an album: the first part — the introduction — is about dealing with mental health and the second one is about how you can get on with it."

The mental health topic has become a focal point in the music scene, especially after the tragic and recent losses of musicians like Chris Cornell and Chester Bennington. Alexander explains that Halo Tora are committed to raising awareness of problems such as depression and anxiety.

"People need to know that it's not just a couple of them dealing with it," he continues. "From my own research, I've seen that more than half of the world population has, at some point, gone through this kind of problem, and I believe that the stigma of it is starting to be lifted. This is also helping people to talk openly about it. That's the whole thing behind Halo Tora: people can relate to the music and start talking about it with their friends and family." **GMA**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Chris Alexander *(vocals, guitar)*, **Ian McCall** *(vocals, guitar)*, **Ryan Connery** *(keyboards)*, **Mark Young** *(bass)*, **Chris McKeown** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

A Mogwai and Leprous style mix of post- and alt-rock soundscapes

CURRENT RELEASE

Man Of Stone: First Chapter is out now via East End Records

WEBSITE

www.halotora.com

Halo Tora: unafraid to fully face sensitive subject matter.

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Nov 29. Focus (1865)

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www.thetalkingheads.co.uk
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My Record Collection

GRAHAM FELLOWS

He was initiated by *Tarkus* but soon shifted his focus to Yes – and Focus. The actor, musician and comedian whisks us around his proggy past, via Johns Jilted and Shuttleworth. Here we go, two, three, four…

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** David Wala

"I have all of this to blame on my proggy school friend, Nicholas Abbott. We were 13, living in Sheffield, and he was richer and more sophisticated than me. He sat me down to listen to *Tarkus* by ELP and I was struck by the cover. I listened, quite bemused. Musically, my background had been hymns — I loved singing hymns in junior school — so I was influenced by John Wesley, the pop chart, *The Sound Of Music* and *Oklahoma!*, which were regulars on my dad's hi-fi. *Tarkus* sounded very adult and rather cold, but I knew I was having to leave the world of The Monkees and Sweet behind me for a new horizon.

When I saw the cover of *Close To The Edge* by Yes, then heard the opening track, with the birdsong and that strange chord fading in, I knew I'd found a more interesting prog rock band for me. Greg Lake was a bit of a cabaret singer. Jon Anderson, whatever you think of his lyrics, bloody meant it, and his vocal meshed so beautifully with the instrumentation. *Yessongs* is my favourite of their records — it's fascinating to learn that Alan White had just three days to learn the songs. Steve Howe's guitar work on *And You And I* is unbelievable. I've used this for one of my character's exit music. In this moment, God made contact with Yes and something wonderful happened.

From Yes I got into **Rick Wakeman**'s *The Six Wives Of Henry XIII*. A copy was lent to me by my other proggy friend, Peter Beecroft, and I played it to death. But I foolishly left it on top of the television and it got very hot and it just sort of melted. I had to buy him a new copy and keep the warped one. *Anne Boleyn* and *Catherine Parr* are my favourites — Rick has the ability to write tunes that will make you weep. When he started appearing on TV, on things like *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*, I thought, 'He doesn't talk like that!' I thought he'd be a bit fey, but he's a geezer!

I bought *Hocus Pocus*, assuming **Focus** were a comedy rock band. I think their critical perception has suffered a little by them being Dutch and having no vocals but yodelling. I bought a Dutch version of *Moving Waves* teamed with *In And Out Of Focus*. Apart from *Sylvia*, a track I would happily die to, the actual track *Focus* is astonishing and just so beautiful. Thijs van Leer's an incredible songwriter; the chord changes are phenomenal. As you get older, you appreciate Focus more. I'm going to go and see them the next time that they tour.

"On *And You And I* God made contact with Yes and something wonderful happened."

I became aware of **The Enid** when I was a punk and people used to make fun of them. As a kid, I'd played melodica and a bit of piano, but it was only when I got to college at the age of 18 and wrote *Jilted John* that I learned to play guitar and that's what shows in the song. I signed to EMI and was given lots of free vinyl. *In The Region Of The Summer Stars* was in the bundle. I played it a lot. I'd compare them to Yes, but there were no lyrics and that shaped their sound. However, it's very listenable and admiring of classical music, with some great playing on it.

I was enjoying that at the height of my punk period, along with early **Pink Floyd**. I was 18 and a drama student in Manchester and the city was a modest, humble place back then, before the Madchester scene and the self-consciously aggressive city it would become. Suddenly tracks like *Interstellar Overdrive* came into vogue. The opening minute of that is like Sex Pistols! I'd listened to *The Dark Side Of The Moon* but it was too mainstream and I didn't buy into it. When you listen to Syd [Barrett] play, you're listening for the signs of madness. His life story almost dwarfs the music. *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* has some punk attitude.

I also listened to **The Doors** around this time. *Apocalypse Now* came out in 1979 and *The End* was on the soundtrack. That rekindled quite a bit of interest in The Doors and it became very cool to listen to them. *Light My Fire* is quite an accomplished song for a young man to write. I listen to them and I'm baffled by the apparent simplicity of what they're playing and marvelling at the way it meshes. The solo in *Light My Fire* is what makes the track so special. It's very good and inordinately long — five minutes of solo! You shouldn't do that in the middle of a pop song, but it works brilliantly.

The Doors make me think of **John Coltrane**. I only discovered him about five years ago, when I was a bit pissed at a friend's house, and he had *My Favorite Things* on in the background. I became mesmerised by this apparent tape loop of McCoy Tyner repeatedly playing these enchanting piano chords. It seemed so daring to be doing something so minimalist and repetitive back in '61. I had to stop the conversation and listen. It's a piece of music I can play over and over and get more from it each time. I do my daily pilates to it. Coltrane also provides a brilliant example of how to make your mark on a track by not being on it. He's off it for about five minutes and you're wondering when he'll come back in. When he does, it's amazing.

I like **The Beatles** at the start of their progginess. *Rubber Soul* is relaxed, together and psychedelic. It's the first album where they stop singing about boy meets girl, and it's quite introspective. They were listening to The Byrds, who were also listening to them. I came to them a little bit late, when I was 20. A lot of punks were into Dylan and when I realised **The Byrds** had covered *Mr Tambourine Man*, I went out and bought both collected hit singles albums. Their masterpieces are *Eight Miles High* and *Turn! Turn! Turn!*, which cost £30,000 to record. Knowing that detail, you listen to the production more closely — the multi-layering seems so effortless but took a lot of thought and arrangement.

In the later 80s I moved to London from Manchester, and signed a songwriting deal with Warner Music. I was a serious balladeer at the time, then I created John Shuttleworth, who took over my life for 25 years. **Shelleyan Orphan** were labelmates and I was given *Helleborine*. I fell in love with Caroline Crawley's voice. There's a link, I feel, between them and Yes. It's orchestral arrangements on a Pre-Raphaelite folk rock record and the lyrics remind me a little of Jon Anderson — they don't make much sense but they sound beautiful with the music. My mum had just died and my dog had just died and I was escaping from a destructive relationship. I used to sit in my flat in Muswell Hill and listen to this and get beautifully sad. Around this time I decided to give up music and help the community. I became a milkman in Wood Green. I was useless, though — I kept dropping the bottles — so I was soon back to what I do best."

Catch Graham live in Jilted John's first ever tour, from October 3. See www.jiltedjohn.co.uk for more information.

PINK FLOYD
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Q&A

LOREENA MCKENNITT

The multi-platinum-selling singer, harpist and global musical explorer returns with an album that's both old and new. *Prog* follows the long and winding road that led Loreena McKennitt to *Lost Souls*.

Words: David West
Portrait: Richard Haughton

For someone who wanted to be a veterinarian as a child, Loreena McKennitt has enjoyed a spectacular career in music. Since emerging from the Canadian folk scene in the mid-80s, McKennitt has captivated audiences with her blend of Celtic, flamenco and Middle Eastern influences and that hauntingly beautiful voice. Her gorgeous new album *Lost Souls* is her first collection of original material in 12 years. *Prog* finds out more...

It's been a long time since you released an album of your own music...
In 2006 I released *An Ancient Muse*. We did the concert at the Alhambra, we toured for a couple of years, then from 2009 to 2011 I looked after my mother in the last two years of her life. Following that I wanted to research the next chapter in the history of the Celts and that would take me to India, Rajasthan, and that was incredibly rich. I thought that was going to be the next recording of original material but once I started working at it, I realised it was going to be more complicated than I thought I had time for. I said to my colleagues, "I've got these songs that go back but that have not been put on a recording." I thought, "They're a bit like lost souls," so that's how I came up with the title.

In a way it's a compilation of material that was developed in different times and different circumstances. Now, at this stage of my career, I've got the resources to bring in great musicians and hurdy-gurdy players and nyckelharpas so I can give them the arrangements that I want, whereas 10, 20 years ago I would not have been able to do that.

"It's not all about a direct line from here to there to make a commodity. It's about enjoying the process along the way.

How important is the right setting, like Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios, to the creative process?
I find my whole creative sensibility is very much impacted by how close I am to the natural world. Being able to work in a residential studio in the countryside is a good starting point and that part of Wiltshire is just so gorgeous. The studio itself, the big room, has this big window and there's a pond in front of that. It's so nice to have the natural light come in and we watched swans and ducks and bluebirds and herons. There's something really grounding about that psychologically.

Almost every song that I've ever recorded, there's a visual in my mind. It might be a still picture, it might be a little vignette, so when I go into the studio, it's like a painter with a canvas and their palette, except I use instruments. I'm trying to get either the right instrument playing the right idiom or getting the right feel. It's less that they go off in an odd direction than the process of trying out different elements and stitching them in seems to be quite protracted. I think that's partially because I produce my own music and that's only every 12 years now it seems!

Is it tricky to maintain your objectivity when you're performer and producer?
I usually get to a saturation point where I don't know up from down and I don't know if it's good or bad, what's missing or if anything is missing. You feel helpless with it because you have to pass the track by other people and say, "How does it feel to you?" It feels like you're searching for compliments but in actual fact you're saying, "Does this feel complete?" There are so many choices.

Is it vital to have the musicians together in the studio?
I know that with technology you can fly in parts, but I love the whole spirit of getting together with people. It might be just my own indulgence but if I'm going to work hard, I want to enjoy working hard. I want to enjoy being with people. It's not all about a direct line from here to there to make a commodity. It's about enjoying the process along the way.

Is that approach in danger of being lost?
From an anthropological standpoint, I think it's just devastating. Music is this extraordinary, unique and potentially powerful medium that then became commodified into an industry, that in itself shifted how people engage with music. They thought, "Well, I don't have to learn to play the piano, other people will perform it," so it ceases to happen casually within families and communities. It's now more for artists.

Certainly, this time I became really quite frustrated with the technology, because although with Pro Tools you can take literally hundreds of takes, unless you're extremely disciplined and you've got really good note-taking, you're just pushing a lot of work down to the mixing. The great thing about working in tape is that you knew what it cost, you knew you only had a certain amount of time. In fact, I would argue that it caused musicians to play even better because now so much can be technically fixed by the engineer.

Then there's the shared experience. There's something about playing off each other rather than intellectually laying track after track. It speaks to something almost primal about sharing and reacting to the music you're hearing.

Do you find making music more enjoyable than touring?
Creating music often involves travel and research and reading and ruminating, then the very tough task of trying to come up with not only ideas but unique points of view. I don't feel my wordsmithing is the strongest thing that I do, which is why I revert to dead poets from time to time. Then the next phase is bringing that into the studio with the musicians and that glorified process of working with them, which is like a musical feast. But it's a very different process than the comfort, frankly, that comes with touring. You never know when you're developing a piece where it will end up and if it will end up well. By the time you get to performing, all that anxiety has gone away. Now you can just relax and have fun.

Lost Souls is out now via Quinlan Road. For more information, see www.loreenamckennitt.com.

Jon Hiseman, circa 1970.

Jon Hiseman R.I.P.

Prog pays tribute to the greatly missed drummer, composer, producer and bandleader.

Words: Sid Smith

"What makes it all the more shocking is we were working together as normal and looking forward to the future, making lots of plans," says Clem Clempson. By his own reckoning, the Colosseum and Humble Pie guitarist has spent the best part of 50 years working with Jon Hiseman, who died in June this year following his diagnosis of a brain tumour.

Clempson's voice frequently chokes with emotion as he recalls the man he was proud to call his friend. The pair had kept in touch after Colosseum played their farewell concert in 2015, and it was Hiseman who came up with the idea of forming JCM with Clempson and Colosseum's bassist and vocalist Mark Clarke, with the aim of recording an album that would pay tribute to some of the players they had all worked with over the years, but who had since passed away.

It was the sudden deaths of Larry Coryell and Allan Holdsworth in 2017 that spurred Hiseman into honouring their memories, as well as those of Jack Bruce, Steve Marriott, Gary Moore, Ollie Halsall, Graham Bond and Dick Heckstall-Smith.

"Because Mark Clarke lives in New York, Jon and myself were doing most of the production and planning for the album," Clempson says. "We were working together almost every day really from the middle of October last year to the middle of February. We worked very hard, remixing things over and over until we were both completely happy, and I'm so glad that we did that."

With tracks touching upon material Hiseman had played during his time with Graham Bond, Colosseum, Jack Bruce, Tempest, Colosseum II and beyond, the album can be seen as a kind of selected highlights of a busy, diverse and productive career spent in the pursuit of musical excellence. Clempson is especially pleased with the results.

"It would have been quite easy to have knocked the songs out. They were all great songs anyway and we could have done them very quickly in the studio, but we really put a lot into it and as it's turned out to be Jon's last ever recording, I'm glad it's something we can be proud of."

Although it wasn't their intention to form a full-on band, interest in JCM, particularly in Germany, meant that what had been intended as one or two gigs to launch the album quickly became an extensive European tour. However, it was early into the tour that alarm bells about Hiseman's health sounded for Clempson and Clarke, when they noticed an uncharacteristic drop in his energy levels.

"Suddenly he didn't seem to have much power or enthusiasm, which was very strange… It was obvious on the second gig he was struggling with that, and it got worse and worse as the gigs went on," sighs Clempson.

Hiseman's passing robbed music of an internationally respected player and bandleader. Best known as the animating force behind Colosseum, who emerged onto the burgeoning progressive rock scene with albums such as *Those Who Are About To Die Salute You* and *Valentyne Suite*, both from 1969, and 1970's *Daughter Of Time*, the band did much to define the era with a vibrant blend of jazz, blues and rock.

"He was a relentless driving force behind the band and although he was very rarely credited as a composer of any of the music, somehow he was always directing it," says Clempson. "Sometimes it could drive me crazy, to be honest!

"We could spend days or even weeks in rehearsals developing a piece of music and Jon would constantly be trying to achieve something more with it, pushing the composers forward all the time, which is really how something like *Valentyne Suite* came into being. That would never have existed without Jon, even though he actually didn't write any of the music. It was him directing it in the background all the time. When we thought it was done, he would say, 'Yes but what about some backing vocals?' or, 'What could we do there?' He was always pushing the rest of the band to surpass ourselves."

If you talk about Hiseman with those who knew him well, they'll

> "He was a relentless driving force behind the band and although he was very rarely credited as a composer of any of the music, somehow he was always directing it."
>
> **Clem Clempson**

GETTY

Colosseum in 2014, clockwise from left: Dave Greenslade, Clem Clempson, Jon Hiseman, Chris Farlowe, Mark Clarke, Barbara Thompson.

inevitably mention just how driven he was as a player and as an individual.

"I first met him in 1962 and he was playing drums in the house band of a club I was co-managing," recalls Colin Richardson, who would later become Colosseum's manager. "He was 19 or 20 and working at Unilever and gigging at the same time. He wasn't getting a lot of sleep: he'd go off and play two gigs on a Friday night, an all-nighter on Saturday and a gig on Sunday. So on Monday morning he'd be knackered!"

Finally quitting his day job in order to join Graham Bond's group, he eventually worked with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, recording the acclaimed *Bare Wires* in 1968, alongside saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith and bassist Tony Reeves. At the end of his time with Mayall, he knew his days as an itinerant jazz player were finished. Speaking to Nucleus trumpeter Ian Carr, he admitted: "I couldn't really face going back to playing in dreadful pubs to 40 people and doing a day job."

His solution was to form Colosseum – in his words, "To do all the things that a rock group does, but to play music that was as complex as anything that anybody was playing. And I proved to my own satisfaction that it could be done."

Richardson also recalls Hiseman's exacting standards when it came to delivering what the drummer called 'the goods'. "The band was made up of people who had a very high regard and respect for each other. I often went backstage after watching the show from the audience to pick up the vibe and instead of finding them all in high spirits, often they'd be arguing about things going wrong. The audience loved it and while I'm not going to say audience reaction didn't matter to Jon, because of course it did, for him it was about playing well. It wasn't enough for the audience to love them: if they didn't feel they played well then there'd be an inquest about it afterwards."

> "He was a true leader that we all looked up to and someone we all turned to for lots of reasons outside of music."
>
> **Clem Clempson**

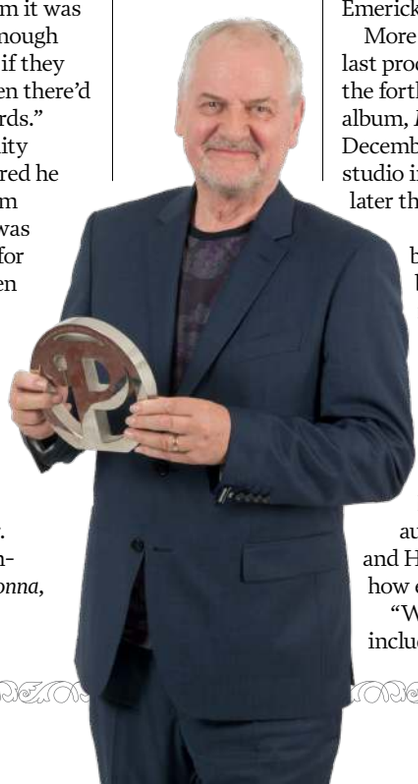
Hiseman's restless personality and ferocious work ethic ensured he was never idle when Colosseum juddered to a halt in 1971. He was always coming up with lyrics for songs that had yet to be written and he developed his skills as a record producer of merit early on in his career. He told this writer that when it came to the mixing of Dick Heckstall-Smith's criminally underrated 1972 solo release, *A Story Ended*, he took to producing like a duck to water.

His production on the much-revered Ian Carr album *Belladonna*, from the same year, similarly benefits from the clarity and muscularity of the sound Hiseman brought to the studio. Paying attention to the likes of Tom Newman and Geoff Emerick had paid off, he revealed.

More recently, one of the very last productions he worked on was the forthcoming new Soft Machine album, *Hidden Details*, recorded in December 2017 at his Temple Music studio in Sutton and due for release later this year.

I count myself lucky to have been able to talk to Jon after being asked to write liner notes for 1973's self-titled *Tempest* debut, featuring Allan Holdsworth, and 1974's *Living In Fear*, with the equally mercurial Ollie Halsall replacing Holdsworth, who had departed for Soft Machine. Tempest were an audaciously powerful outfit and Hiseman proudly recalled just how effective they could be.

"We did some great gigs, including a support gig to Yes



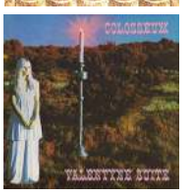
Hiseman with his 2016 Visionary Prog Award.

PROG AWARDS: KEVIN NIXON

Colosseum live at the National Jazz & Blues Festival, 1971.

in a 10,000-seater in Germany and we went on and we killed them! We had several shows like that where we went on as support to bigger groups and we blew them off as they were watching us from the wings. You could often hear them saying that they didn't feel like going on after us. But that's no good if you can't make a living, and we weren't selling the records."

An ability to read a balance sheet as fluently as he felt where the beat should go in a song gave Hiseman a practical and completely unsentimental approach to running a band. Richardson recalls that after every gig, while others may be relaxing, Hiseman would, without fail, get the computer out, open a spreadsheet and do the band's accounts. "He was the one who took care of the business, paying the royalties and doing the VAT returns."



Colosseum classics, from top: 1969's *Those Who Are About To Die Salute You* and *Valentyne Suite*, and Colosseum II's 1977 album *War Dance*.

As a drummer, composer, producer or bandleader, Jon Hiseman was obviously passionate about his chosen career, but the real love of his life was always his wife, sax player Barbara Thompson, whom he married in 1967 and with whom he collaborated in Paraphernalia, the United Jazz + Rock Ensemble and numerous other projects. Following her diagnosis with Parkinson's disease in the late 90s, it was thought she'd never work live again, but her appearances in the reformed Colosseum in 2004 and their farewell concert in 2015 were a source of great pride and unstinting admiration from Hiseman. It's no accident that his favourite track, *Foyers Of Fun*, from Tempest's debut, was written with Barbara in mind: *'There's no place I've not left in great haste/For the journey back home.'*

Colin Richardson remarks that their lifelong partnership was a symbiotic relationship that worked on every level. "There were times in their married life where they didn't see much of each other. Barbara was playing in Paraphernalia, Jon was in Colosseum II or Tempest. Then they were together in the United Jazz + Rock Ensemble. The best period was when Jon joined Paraphernalia and they had a system worked out where Barbara would record an album and then tour it. Then the next year, the UJ+RE would record and tour and then back to Paraphernalia, so it meant they were always available for each other.

"The fact is that for the last 20 years he's also been caring for Barbara, whose Parkinson's disease has gradually been getting worse. One of the things he said in his last email to me was, 'I can't go anywhere. I've got to take care of Barbara.' That sums up Jon in a nutshell."

Richardson, now aged 81, like others in Hiseman's immediate circle of friends and family, is simply stunned at his passing. "I can't stop thinking about him and I'm gutted that I will never ever be able to have another conversation with Jon."

In 2010, Martyn Hanson's biography of Hiseman, *Playing The Band*, was published. Coming in at nearly 500 pages, it was a weighty tome, but given the musical connections accrued over 60 years, it needed to be. In it, Hiseman said: "I... got the bug when I was in my teens and just went for it — seldom looking left or right, *never* looking down and just 'playing the band'. Life seemed pretty simple to me, in that every decision was made with the sole purpose of getting the current project brought home to a successful conclusion... then moving on to the next idea which was already taking shape."

Inspired by John Coltrane drummer Elvin Jones, mad about Mozart, an avid reader whose favourite books included Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, Jon Hiseman was a proud dad, devoted husband and beloved by fans who appreciated the time he would spend after a gig, signing albums and chatting.

Clem Clempson sums him up in this way: "Jon was one of the kindest and most gentle people you could ever wish to meet. I think a lot of people who worked with him stayed in touch with him after their working relationship ended, often calling him to seek his advice. Gary Moore did on many occasions, I know. He was a true leader that we all looked up to and someone that we all turned to for lots of reasons outside of music. It's been wonderful to have been so closely associated with him for most of my career and he will continue to be a good influence on me for the rest of it."

ANOTHER ME: PETER GABRIEL'S 'GAP YEAR' 1975-1976

Between leaving Genesis and starting to record his debut solo album, **Peter Gabriel** grew a lot: cabbages, his family, and his confidence as a musician and songwriter. This is the inside story, from Somerset allotment to American studio, of what he did on his summer holiday.

Words: Daryl Easlea **Portrait:** Clive Arrowsmith/Camera Press

When viewed retrospectively, the period between Peter Gabriel leaving Genesis and then releasing his first solo album seems like hardly any time at all. There were just 20 months between his final show with the group in France on May 22, 1975 and the release of his debut solo album in February 1977. At the time, however, it seemed an eternity.

Fuelled by his own grandiloquent statement of departure from Genesis in August 1975, which came nearly a year after he'd told the group he was going, and four months after he'd played that last show, it really did seem as if Gabriel was giving it all up and that would be the last we would see of him – at least the 'him' that people had come to know.

The length of time was amplified somewhat by the obsession the weekly UK rock press had then with generating stories and headlines – it highlighted the vestiges of the 60s mechanism of an artist releasing, at the very least, an album a year. On August 16, 1975, *Melody Maker* proclaimed, "Gabriel Out Of Genesis?" A fortnight later, the paper published Gabriel's humour-laden missive, "Why I Quit Genesis", in which he wittily assessed his future and his options.

Leaving a band so obviously on the verge of wider acceptance seemed simply unfathomable, not only to the group's fans, but to the music world as a whole. "When I left Genesis, I just wanted to be out of the music business," Gabriel told *Rolling Stone* in 2011. "I felt like I was just in the machinery. We knew what we were going to be doing in 18 months or two years ahead. I just did not enjoy that."

Gabriel's departing announcement was little short of a prescient mission statement for his immediate future, and for the rest of his career. Over 700-odd words, he looked at his life to date and his career going forward. It was unusual, too, for an artist just on the edge of hitting the big time to cite one of the reasons for packing it up as the "hidden delights of vegetable growing". This wasn't a euphemism for a prodigious drug habit, but a reference to his beloved cabbage patch at his home in Bath.

"My future within music, if it exists," Gabriel said, "will be in as many situations as possible. It's good to see a growing number of artists breaking down the pigeonholes. This is the difference between the profitable, compartmentalised battery chicken and the free range. Why did the chicken cross the road anyway?"

This idea especially encapsulated what he was to do for the following 18 months, as his chicken seemed to not just be crossing the road but veritably dancing right down the white line.

> "It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go."
> **Peter Gabriel**

It was a period that fashioned some true Gabriel oddities: a collaboration with a football-loving poet from Wolverhampton; a record with British comedic institution Charlie Drake; a Beatles cover version; and a single of brawny, long-forgotten pop, produced by Tony Visconti. It also involved cabbages, therapy, a partial Genesis reunion and visits to see Bruce Springsteen and the Sex Pistols.

Peter Gabriel shot by Clive Arrowsmith in 1974. Clive's new exhibition, entitled *Peter Gabriel Reflections: Iconic Photographs In Bath*, runs from December 1 to mid-February 2019 at the Museum Of Bath Architecture.

Peter Gabriel's retirement ended with the release of his self-titled debut album in February 1977: a record that combined muscular, straight-ahead Springsteen-esque rock with whimsy and flights of fancy. Not unlike a Genesis album, you may argue, but one made on his own terms. This was a period of exploration, of collaboration, and a most refreshing take on how to reinvent yourself.

First and foremost, Peter Gabriel needed to spend time with his young family. He had returned home at the end of the tour for *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* in May 1975 and dissolved into the community. In his statement, written at home, he said, "The increase in money and power, if I had stayed, would have anchored me to the spotlights. It was important to me to give space to my family, which I wanted to hold together, and to liberate the daddy in me."

Liberating the 'daddy in me' seemed an extremely unfashionable step at the time. Ahead of John Lennon watching the wheels with his baby Sean, at that time rock kids were often farmed out to wives and nannies, or taken on the road as an adjunct. It was well documented quite how difficult the birth of his first daughter had been for both wife Jill and baby Anna in July 1974. It was one of the principal factors in his departure from the band — as he had been the first to have children in Genesis, the group's relative lack of empathy hit him hard.

The family had relocated to Woolley Mill in Swainswick, north of Bath, which was to herald a steady trickle of musicians moving there and the birth of a scene. Jill, Gabriel and Anna were tight-knit at the old, once water-driven corn mill, with Gabriel tending his much-loved vegetable patch. It was a restful period, marking the first time Gabriel had dropped from the writing-recording-touring circle that had come to dominate his life in the preceding four years. He could do as he pleased.

The impact of this disappearance on the weekly UK rock press, needing column inches to fill, was marked. It was hardly Brian Wilson's retreat into his sandbox, but for some reason it absolutely fascinated the papers that a star, suddenly about to achieve what he had ostensibly craved, would turn his back on it at the age of 25 to pursue family life.

Gabriel at London's Empire Pool, April 1975, on his final tour with Genesis.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

It wasn't that Gabriel was a recluse: he would materialise in public sporadically. On June 7, 1975, he returned to his roots and appeared at a Stackridge concert at Friars, Aylesbury, where he leapt out of a birthday cake. There were no costumes, slide shows or synchronisation to worry about — just a bit of old-fashioned spectacle. Life was good, and the pressure of the music business seemed a long way away.

Long-term supporter Chris Welch interviewed Gabriel at the end of 1975 for *Melody Maker*. Gabriel had been exploring the possibilities of alternative lifestyles.

"I've also been trolling around seeing different people in various communities," he said. "One of the possibilities I've got on ice at the moment is joining a commune. It's not your drug-ridden sex orgies, but a group of people working together in a lot of areas, and one of the communes is called, by complete coincidence, Genesis... I can't get away from them. Let me out! There's another place in France I'm going to have a look at. I'm thinking of joining with my family."

Gabriel's final album with Genesis, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*.

"Peter did various spiritual seekings," school friend Richard Macphail recalls. "He looked at the Genesis commune and quite seriously contemplated the idea of joining them. I'm pretty sure Jill wouldn't have followed him there — not that she wasn't an advocate of all this."

Gabriel also partook in the then fashionable Silva Mind Control course, a form of extrasensory perception where participants aim to reach an alpha state, a clarity of thought. "He did that with Betsy Gibson, Simon Cowe from Lindisfarne's wife," Macphail says. "She was into all that stuff as well."

Two years later, Macphail, his then partner Janessa and the Gabriels would attend EST seminars, the controversial technique designed to challenge the very fabric of one's personality.

"It was all part of that theme, that process," Macphail reveals. "It leaves you open-hearted. It gave Peter and I's relationship a real grounding as we went through profound experiences together."

Gabriel's first new release of this period was his second daughter, Melanie, who was born on August 23, 1976. Although there was later to be considerable turbulence in his first marriage, there was no question how important the girls were to him and Jill.

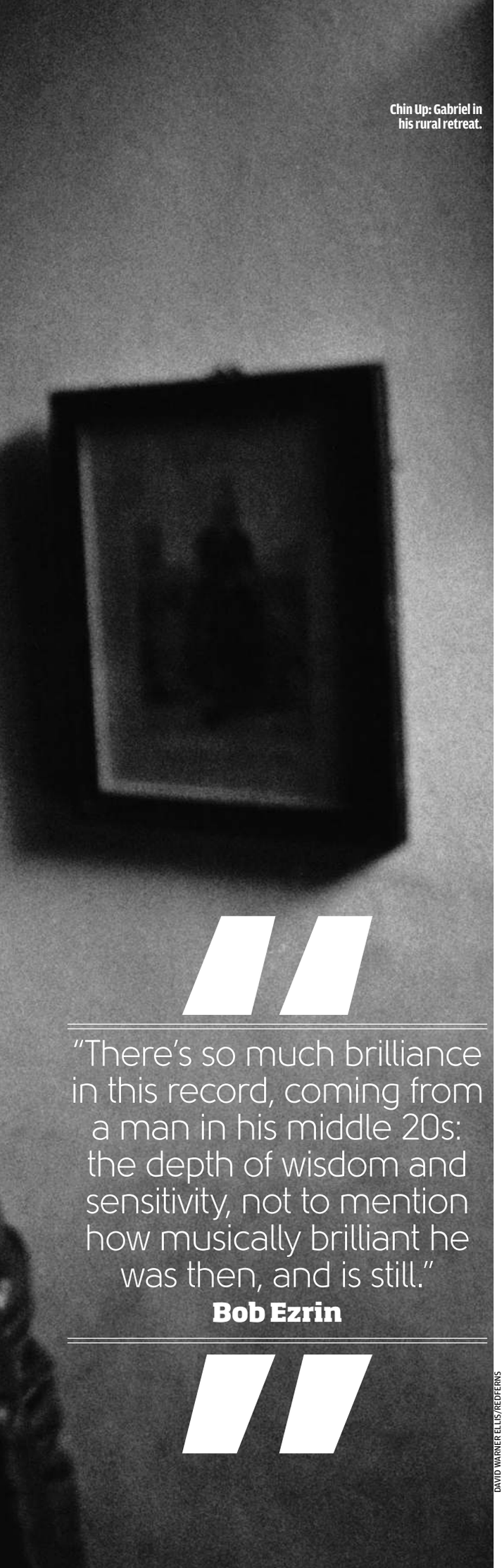
The success of Gabriel's home life was underlined by an interview Anna gave to *The Scotsman* in 2005, when she revealed: "We went to a little village school in the middle of the country and I knew he went to work and did music," she said. "But that was all I knew really until *Sledgehammer* came out."

***NME*'s front cover when Gabriel left Genesis (top), and his *Melody Maker* interview with Chris Welch (above).**

MARK KENYON/THE GENESIS ARCHIVE.CO.UK

CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE

Genesis in 1975, L-R: Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins.



Chin Up: Gabriel in his rural retreat.

DAVID WARNER ELLIS/REDFERNS

> "There's so much brilliance in this record, coming from a man in his middle 20s: the depth of wisdom and sensitivity, not to mention how musically brilliant he was then, and is still."
>
> **Bob Ezrin**

In his leaving statement, Peter Gabriel stated that there was "no animosity between myself and the band or management". (This was underlined by Gail Colson, Tony Stratton-Smith's General Manager at Charisma, who would later become Gabriel's manager: "We were quite confident that he would do something on his own," she said, "once he and his family had had some time together.")

Gabriel continued: "It is not impossible that some of them might work with me on other projects."

And this was immediately true in this first period: Gabriel was to work not only with Mike Rutherford and Phil Collins, but, going back to the early days, Anthony Phillips too.

Gabriel's first principal collaborator in his new life was someone not just outside his immediate social circle but someone on the very periphery of Genesis' world. Martin Hall was a poet and lyricist from Willenhall in Staffordshire who had been described as a 'Black Country Randy Newman'.

Hall had been introduced to Gabriel by producer John Anthony at the sessions for the Colin Scot album in 1971. Hall had been active since the late 60s, co-writing *Two's Company, Three's A Crowd*, the Brad Ford & The Sundowners single that was released on Phillips. In 1974, *Stan Cullis Blues*, Hall's book of poetry, was published by Charisma Books, complete with illustrations by Genesis artist Paul Whitehead.

Gabriel first mentioned the potential collaboration in an interview in 1973: "I do have things I'm interested in outside of the band. There is a songwriter called Martin Hall and there is a possibility of my doing an LP with him. As it is, the band comes first."

Indeed, the speculation of a collaboration was confirmed on the rear of the book, stating that Hall was "currently working on… an album with Genesis leader, Peter Gabriel".

Looking at *Stan Cullis Blues*, it's easy to see how Gabriel – fresh from battling at Epping Forest or getting them out by Friday – would have been motivated by Hall and vice versa, with the witty wordplay of poems like *Some Of My Best Words Are Friends* or the thought-provoking brevity of the eight words of *Photomatic*. *Eight Good Buys*, from Hall's 1972-'73 collection *The Songs Of The Bears Of Bilston* (the second half of the *Stan Cullis Blues* book) references deceased celebrities and death row author Caryl Chessman, providing possible inspiration for one of Gabriel's greatest lyrics, *Broadway Melody Of 1974*.

The two began writing, and three of their co-writes were to make it to vinyl. "I got to know Martin quite well," Anthony Phillips told this writer in 2013. "Martin was a big Wolves fan [Wolverhampton Wanderers FC], and a good lyricist. Looking back, you have to question why Peter was working with someone who was essentially a duplication, because Martin's strength was as a lyricist and Pete was already a brilliant lyricist."

Phillips added in 2018, "Martin was a very thoughtful guy, a really nice guy. It was a meeting of minds in the lyrical department."

"Whenever I went down to Woolley Mill Cottage where Peter was living at the time, Martin was around a lot," Richard Macphail adds. "He was quite eccentric, very likeable. He was nice to be around."

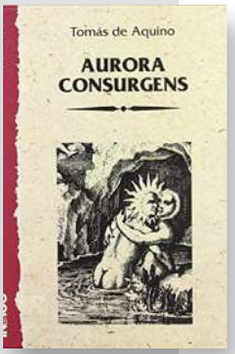
In May 1974, Gabriel recorded three demos at Anthony Phillips' parents' house in Send, near Woking, with Phil Collins, Phillips and

MOZO

Meet Mozo, Gabriel's long-lasting fictional multimedia character.

Despite all the difficulty associated with its delivery, Peter Gabriel enjoyed the extended narrative and utilisation of visuals on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, forever seen as 'his baby'. During this period, Gabriel considered the idea of *Mozo*, another multimedia concept.

Mozo was a 'mercurial stranger', an outsider based obliquely on the character of Moses. Mozo was to be a fictional character that came from nowhere, made changes to people's lives and then abruptly disappeared. His principal method of communication was through short-wave radio, something that had become an obsession for Gabriel during this period.



Mozo was inspired by the *Aurora Consurgens*, a medieval work. Carl Jung, whom Gabriel had recently become infatuated with as a writer, had attributed the work to St. Thomas Aquinas. Gabriel discussed the idea with Bob Ezrin, who in turn suggested he spoke with pioneering Czech theatre group Laterna Magica.

Gabriel would grapple with the overarching idea of Mozo right through into his *So* album in 1986. The character of Mozo is introduced by name in *On The Air*, the opening track of his second album, yet there's evidence that *Down The Dolce Vita* and *Here Comes The Flood* were also at one point intended for use in this concept. **DE**

Hall himself. "It was just before Pete started recording *The Lamb...*," Phillips recalls. "I had fairly primitive recording equipment. I don't think Pete had any; Martin certainly didn't have any. They were simple demos — they didn't get taken round anywhere."

Three Gabriel-Hall songs were committed to tape. *You Never Know* was a cheeky, upbeat track, extending out the Gabriel we knew and loved from *Willow Farm*. *Firebirds* was a beautifully emotional piano-led number, complete with Phillips quoting from Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* at the start. *You Get What You Want (When You Rip It Off)* was the most interesting — a parody of the Stones, sarcastically eyeing the music industry, and with Gabriel sending himself up with the line, *'There's always the middle-class Rolling Stones, getting out the marrow in your backbones.'*

When Gabriel left the day job, he set about recording one of these songs. As he harboured the idea of producing and writing for other people, both yearnings converged on his first post-Genesis recordings. It's ironic, and somewhat telling, that when David Bowie got his first flush of success and could produce other artists, he chose Lou Reed and Iggy Pop. When Gabriel had the opportunity, he chose Charlie Drake.

Drake was a diminutive comedy star who had been popular in Britain for the best part of two decades. With his everyman demeanour, he had built upon his initial fame in the 50s with the TV show *The Worker* between 1965 and 1970. In common with other comedians of the day, he had enjoyed several hit singles.

In July 1975, less than two months after finally embodying *The Lamb...*'s protagonist Rael on stage, Gabriel went to Studio 2 in AIR Studios, high above London's Oxford Circus, to record *You Never Know* with Drake.

The line-up of musicians was quite incredible: Robert Fripp — who, like Gabriel, was by then in the first phase of his self-imposed exile from the music business — on guitar, jazz pianist Keith Tippett, Phil Collins, Collins' Brand X bandmate Percy Jones on bass, and legendary folk vocalist Sandy Denny. Gabriel and Hall co-produced with engineer Steve Nye, later to be an esteemed producer and a member of the Penguin Café Orchestra.

Percy Jones takes up the story: "I had got a call from Phil about an upcoming session. We did quite a few together back in those days. I got to the studio and there's Robert Fripp, Peter Gabriel and Keith Tippett, who was a neighbour of mine at the time."

Joining this line-up was Martin Hall. "With that sort of line-up I anticipated some really interesting music coming up," Jones continues. "Gabriel appeared to be the producer. Anyway, it turned out to be a very straight-ahead pop tune, not at all what I had expected. It left me a bit puzzled as to why they got a line-up like that to record that style of music. We recorded the tune, which didn't take too long from what I remember... I was told it was a backing track for Charlie Drake."

Richard Macphail arrived at the studio just as the session for the backing track was finishing. "AIR was amazing at rush hour because you could stand at the window and watch all these people way below disappearing down the holes into the Tube station. It was an extraordinary sight."

> "He was never pushy. Stubbornness was his only 'fault', and sometimes you need to be stubborn when you're standing up for a point. He was always a sweetie to work with."
>
> **Anthony Phillips**

The other extraordinary sight was seeing Drake arrive just as the musicians were leaving. "We bumped into Charlie on his way in to overdub his vocal," Jones says. "I remember him as a very friendly guy dressed in what resembled a safari suit. He said hello to us in his characteristic squeaky voice as we passed."

Macphail saw the overdub, complete with Sandy Denny's voice-over. "Charlie went in and did the vocals. It was a typical Gabriel no-holds-barred type of thing."

Phil Collins seemed as puzzled as the wider world about it. He wrote on his website after Drake's death in 2006: "How he ended up with this line-up I have no idea... The whole session was one of life's interesting snapshots."

Country House: Gabriel on his retreat from the spotlight.

GRAHAM WOOD/EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

***You Never Know*, Gabriel's all-star single with comedian Charlie Drake.**

Fripp was later to comment: "This was arguably the strangest session of the entire era."

Jones concurs: "It was probably the most unusual session I have ever been involved in."

"I have no recollections of Martin Hall or Peter working on the Charlie Drake record or how it all come about," Gail Colson laughs. "I just remember it being delivered and then trying to work out how to sell the bloody thing! Apart from Peter and Martin, I defy anybody to remember the Charlie Drake record."

Her brother Glen, who was Charisma's Press Director at the time, goes one better: "I never heard about it and never saw any letters and Strat never mentioned it. Sounds a bit far-fetched, like shit from China, as my old man used to say!"

However, whoever wrote it, there *was* a press release that said, "The single is produced by Peter Gabriel. Erstwhile lead singer with Genesis, and sometimes human sunflower. It is a send-up of pop stardom which also features Sandy Denny, Eno [?] and Robert Fripp. As Drake is chalk to Gabriel's cheese, so is the idea of Charlie encountering a groupie — listen to the single and you'll discover what happened."

The single, credited to the production team of 'Gabriel Ear Wax' was backed with *I'm Big Enough For Me*, the theme to Drake's recent children's film series *Professor Popper's Problem*. It was released on November 21, 1975 and promptly did nothing. Drake's dreams of being a pop superstar were cruelly dashed.

"I thought he was having a bit of fun," Phillips says. "I didn't think it was going to go anywhere, but everyone was starting to flex their muscles and do different things, and I thought, 'Okay, life's been tough recently, why not have a bit of fun?' It did seem a bit strange, but then Pete was always a bit left-field."

Get The Guns, Gabriel's second Martin Hall collaboration, was covered by Alan Ross for a super-obscure Good Earth single produced by Tony Visconti in 1977. Nothing else came of the partnership with Hall, aside from *Excuse Me*, another collaboration they were demoing at this time, which was used when Gabriel finally came to record his first album proper.

"Martin wrote very good lyrics but it could never work out," Phillips says. "It was a meeting of minds with Pete, but ultimately it couldn't survive because you need to

be complementary, and they were cancelling each other out in a way."

After writing with Phillips and moving into music publishing, Martin Hall seems to have vanished. When researching, this writer almost began to wonder if Martin Hall was a pseudonym for Gabriel himself.

"I think probably a lot of people might think that!" Anthony Phillips says. "No, he very much did exist. I loved some of his poems, and some of his lyrics too. At least he'll be happy that Wolves are back in the top division!"

"I think it was a bit of a bridge thing for Peter because I think he felt quite lacking in self-confidence when he left the band," Richard Macphail adds. "He didn't know how it was going to go — he'd somehow found comfort and friendship in working with Martin. And then Peter got his confidence back — he wrote *Solsbury Hill* and *Here Comes The Flood*."

At the end of 1975, Gabriel recorded some demos on piano at old Charterhouse friend David Thomas' house in Putney, again with Hall. It was as if he was going straight back to school. These demos were interesting and diverse, of which *Howling At The Moon*, *Funny Man*, *No More Mickey* and *God Knows* — all Hall co-writes — have never turned up on any subsequent Gabriel recording. An early version of the game-changing new song *Here Comes The Flood* was tried out.

After their Send liaison in 1974, Gabriel again turned to Ant Phillips, who had also been using David Thomas' piano to rehearse on. "I was in London, I didn't have a piano and I used to go to David's and rehearse," Phillips says. "Pete didn't have a piano where he was so Pete taught me this stuff. It wasn't incredibly difficult in terms of needing hours to practise."

In the long, dry, drought-ridden summer of 1976, Gabriel took some ideas into Trident Studios in London's St. Anne's Court. The scene of the recording of *Trespass* and *Nursery Cryme*, it was a familiar and warm stamping ground for him. This can be seen as the start of Peter Gabriel's solo career proper.

Although nothing has ever been released from the Trident recordings, it provided another confidence boost for Gabriel, working again with Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford as his rhythm section, with another of Collins' Brand X buddies, John Goodsall, on guitar.

Get The Guns by Alan Ross, a cover of the song by Gabriel and Martin Hall.

Anthony Phillips played Trident's Bechstein piano: "I'd studied enough to play slightly more sophisticatedly than Peter, and I wouldn't argue."

He also may have been there for talismanic reasons — as the first significant member of Genesis to leave the group, Phillips had shown that there could be life afterwards. "I was open to a lot of things, and I think Pete quite liked that. If I'd just been the composer in Genesis I'd have been a bit narrow."

It was good to be back. "It was only then that I realised quite how good a rhythm section Mike and Phil were together," Phillips says. "They were astonishing. Dear old John Goodsall completed us; he was quite eccentric. It was a funny band. Mike and Phil were very pally, but it was very professional as well. It was strange looking back that so many members of Genesis past and present were there."

Recordings included the Hall co-write *Get The Guns*, alongside an unknown track and a track still to surface — *Mr Tattoo*. Three tracks played were to appear on subsequent albums: *Slowburn*, *Here Comes The Flood* and, to be held back to 1978, *Flotsam And Jetsam*.

Did Phillips see a completely different man in Peter Gabriel after the six years since they had last been together in Trident? "Not really, no," he says. "He was always slightly vague and a bit otherworldly, but basically always gentlemanly and patient. Maybe a little bit more confident, I guess. He was never pushy. Stubbornness was his only 'fault', and sometimes you need to be stubborn when you're standing up for a point. He was always a sweetie to work with.

"I think I was given a free-ish hand, with guidance. I was careful not to overplay, and careful not to overflower. I remember the sessions being very easy. I wasn't nervous, which you'd have thought I may have been, not having recorded in a big studio for five or six years. The last time I was there it was with John Anthony, and suddenly now these guys are not quite superstars, but pretty famous.

Peter Gabriel at his Wiltshire retreat.

OF CABBAGES AND ANGELS

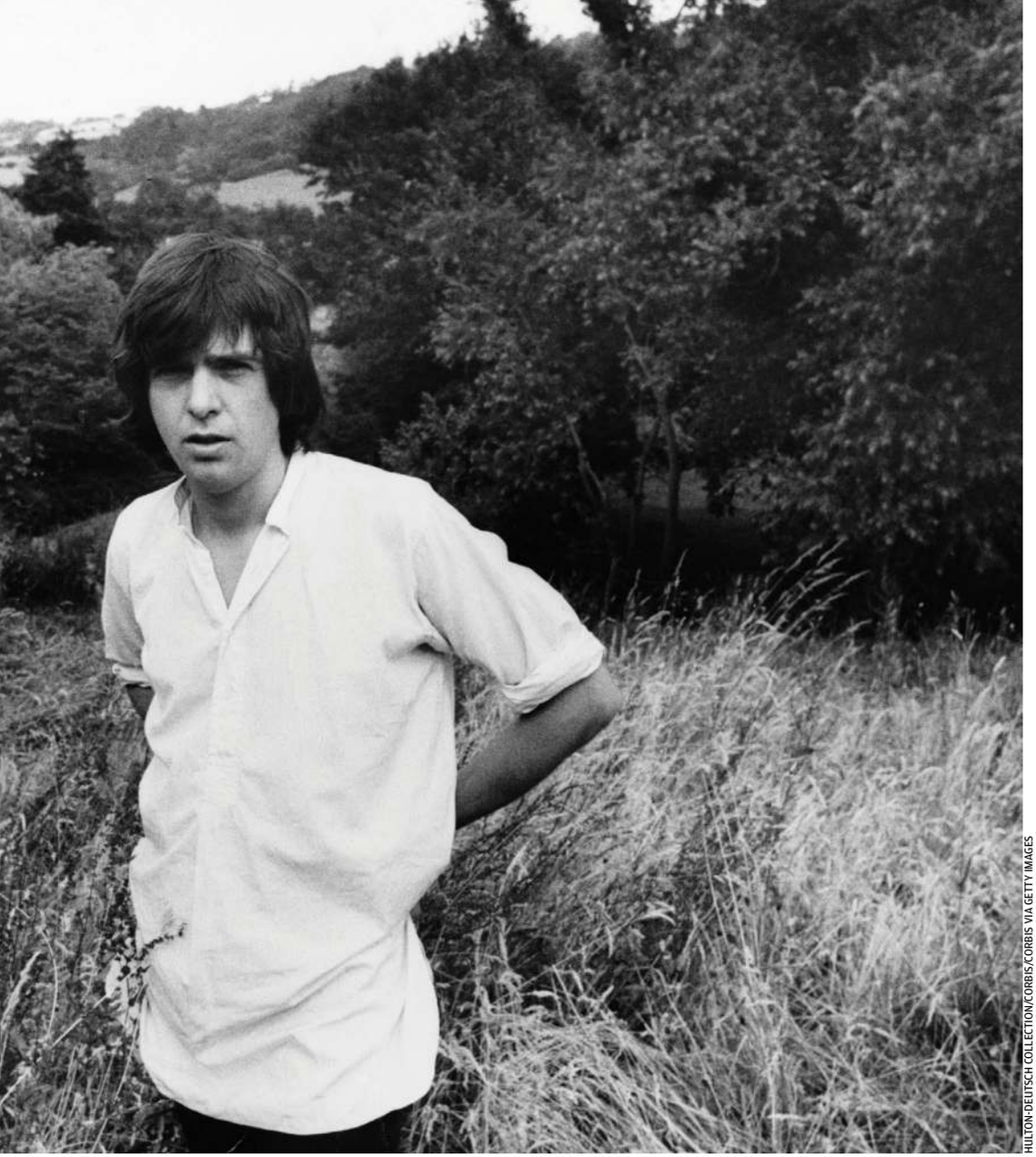
Tales from topographic allotments: Gabriel's vegetable patch revealed, by a man who witnessed it in all its glory.

One of the paragraphs in Peter Gabriel's leaving letter that gained the most attention was: "Even the hidden delights of vegetable growing and community living are beginning to reveal their secrets. I could not expect the band to tie in their schedules with my bondage to cabbages."

Gabriel remained proud of this period in his life. He was to say as late as 2012 that he took "two years off, growing cabbages and children".

Richard Macphail says: "Yes, Peter had a vegetable garden. His mother, Irene, had always had one, so it wasn't completely out of the blue. He loved growing his veg and feeding his family. He had part of the garden turned over to veg. It wasn't a big area by any means, but it's surprising, if you're good at it, how much you can grow in quite a small plot. Someone worked out around the time of the First World War that you could feed a family of four from an allotment of 50 foot by 30 foot – this became a standard plot. Peter's was half that, more 30 foot by 30 foot.

"Peter was a vegetarian by then. I'd been through my vegetarian phase and had gone back to being a carnivore because I couldn't live without bacon. Their real favourite meal was the macrobiotic thing of brown rice and vegetables. That was the Woolley Mill standard diet, and I used to go and hang out at Woolley Mill a lot." **DE**



HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

"Pete created a very relaxed atmosphere around him, which was great, but there was a feeling that he needed a bit of help as well," Phillips continues. "He was definitely finding his way. We now know a lot of these tracks are great, but we didn't know that at the time. It was terra incognita for him."

Although matters were to take a different turn, the results of the sessions, which unsurprisingly sounded a bit like Genesis, showed that Gabriel was ready to begin his return to the album and stage. He'd been with safe pairs of hands. It was now time to go into the unknown.

The first time the public heard Gabriel sing on record since *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* was on his heartfelt version of *Strawberry Fields Forever*, which he contributed to the soundtrack of the ill-fated film *All This And World War II*, which married stock footage of the Second World War and old MGM film clips with a soundtrack of cover versions of The Beatles' songs. Conceived by record company man Russ Regan for The Beatles themselves to supply their catalogue, musical director Lou Reizner decided it could prove more lucrative to have well-known artists provide cover versions.

> "It was only then that I realised quite how good a rhythm section Mike and Phil were together. They were astonishing."
>
> **Anthony Phillips**

Gabriel's contribution was recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at Olympic Studios in Barnes. It underlined Gabriel's significance when you look at the company he was in: Elton John, Rod Stewart, the Bee Gees, Bryan Ferry, Frankie Valli and Tina Turner were just some of the stellar names involved. Although the film was withdrawn from cinemas after just two weeks and has never had an official DVD release, the soundtrack was a modest success, reaching No.23 on the UK albums chart on its release in November 1976. As such, it became the first official Peter Gabriel solo release.

By October 1976, Gabriel was on the other side of the Atlantic working with a team of session musicians, finally making his first solo album. After considering Todd Rundgren, Gabriel hooked up with young Canadian producer Bob Ezrin, who had made his name producing Alice Cooper and Lou Reed. Ezrin first saw Gabriel when Genesis supported Reed at Toronto's Massey Hall in 1973. Tony Smith, Gabriel's then manager, put in the call.

All This And World War II included Gabriel's cover of *Strawberry Fields Forever*.

"When Tony asked if I would be interested in working with Peter as a solo artist, I didn't hesitate for one second," Ezrin told this writer in 2013. "He's a brilliant man and I would love to work with him."

It was imperative that they work fast and that Ezrin had a hand in picking Gabriel's team. To that end, Ezrin chose virtually *all* the album's players, trusted session hands used to working at speed with demanding artists.

"I had developed this crew of regulars that I would work with," Ezrin says. "I put them together for when I worked with solo artists who didn't come with their own band. They were very versatile — some of them were New York session players I had encountered in different situations, but in whom I'd seen a spark. These were the outlaws of the studio musician set, the guys who often felt constrained by what they were trying to do, and liked to stretch out."

These included drummer Allan Schwartzberg and Tony Levin, who would go on to become Gabriel's long-serving bassist. Gabriel added Nektar keys player Larry Fast, and for old times sake and continuity, Robert Fripp, latterly sighted with Gabriel at the Charlie Drake session, on guitar. The team worked fast, recording at Nimbus Studios in Toronto.

"Peter thrived on the characters," Ezrin continued. "He negotiated with me, asking if he could have one Brit. I felt we were doing a sports deal, like a football club needing a striker. I agreed. He said, 'Can it be Robert Fripp?' Robert perfectly rounded out this group of misfits and musical outlaws. He was the proper Brit, in total contrast to the improper Americans — and we had Canadians too. It was a very ecumenical date."

The album, simply titled *Peter Gabriel*, was released in the UK on February 25, 1977. It came encased in a Hipgnosis-designed sleeve: a heavily colourised image that featured Gabriel sat in Storm Thorgerson's rain-soaked vehicle. It had an otherworldliness about it, looking distant, strange and mysterious. It gave the album its simple, colloquial name of *Car*.

Of the album's nine tracks, two stood out clearly and established Gabriel at once as a credible artist. *Solsbury Hill* was released as a single ahead of the album and soon was sitting in the UK Top 40, becoming the first release associated with Genesis to reach the Top 10 singles chart. With it, Gabriel proved he had more than enough commercial nous to go it alone. As he said, "It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go."

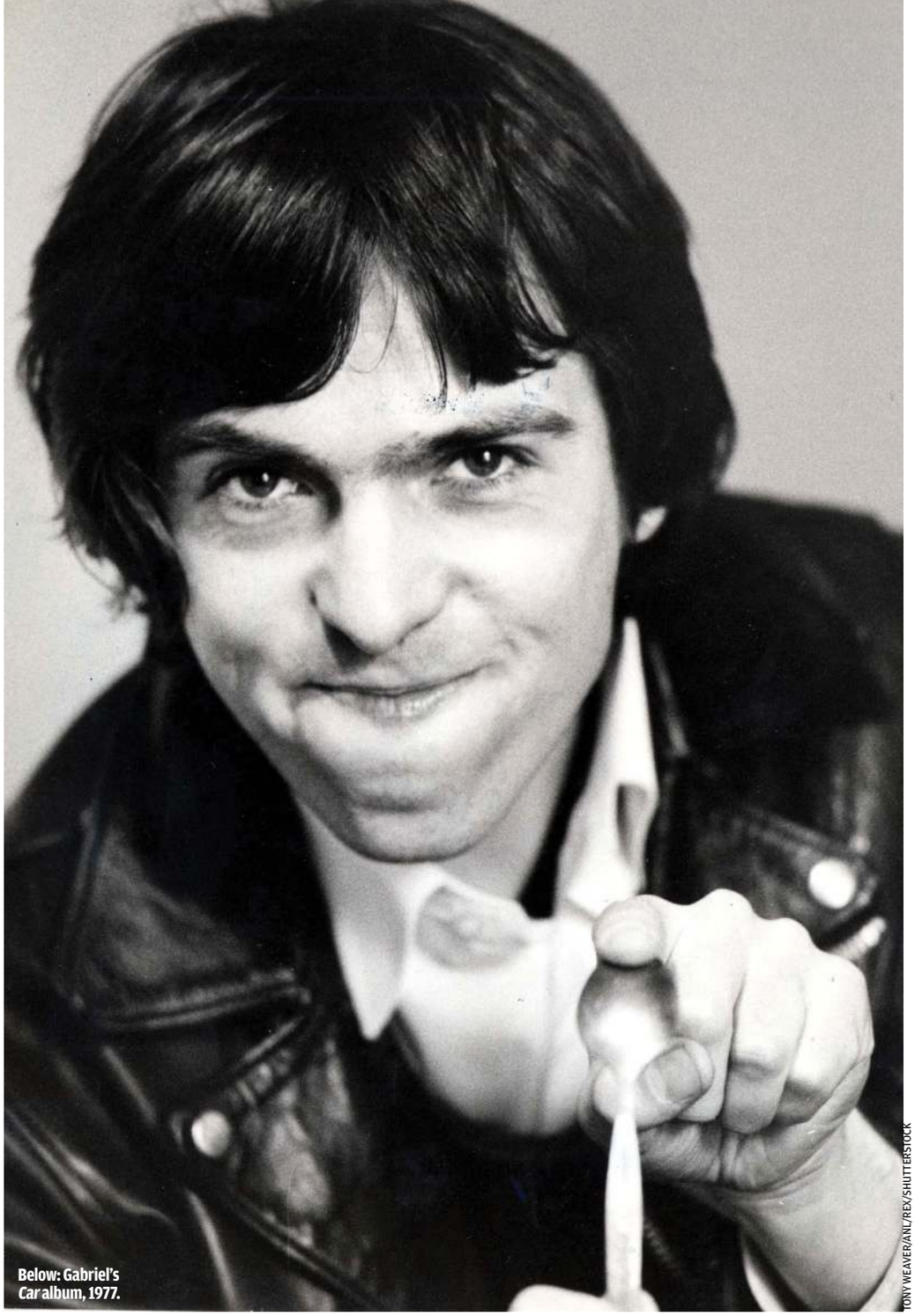
A thinly veiled reference to his departure from Genesis, it's set over an infectious, acoustic guitar-driven folk groove, played by Steve Hunter. Its optimism is heart-warming and its manifesto is clear: to succeed, you must take risks. Fortune favours the brave. His choice of the line *'walked right out of the machinery'* echoes his 1975 interview where he said that Rael "feels as if he's a waste of material, part of the machinery".

Here Comes The Flood was the album's triumph. "All I know is that Peter played me *Here Comes The Flood* in my living room on our first meeting," Bob Ezrin said. "I was in the middle of producing albums for KISS and Alice Cooper. In the midst of all *that*, I went to bed singing *Here Comes The Flood* instead of my own records!"

Inspired by the writings of Carlos Castaneda and recent reading about native Americans, Gabriel was fascinated with short-wave radio, and was amazed by the way signal strength would become stronger as daylight faded. All of this fed into the tale of barriers in individuals' thought processes being broken down so anyone could see into others' minds, and as Gabriel said, "those inclined to concealment would drown in it".

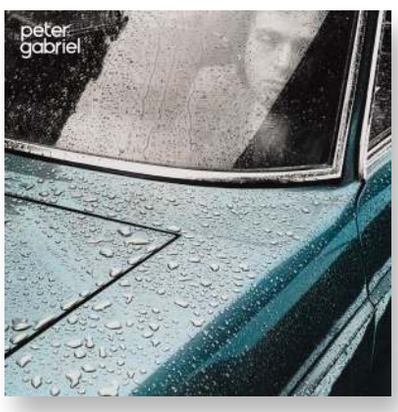
"What an amazing song," Ezrin said. "There's so much brilliance in this record, coming from a man in his middle 20s: the depth of wisdom and sensitivity, not to mention how musically brilliant he was then, and is still."

With a tagline of 'expect the unexpected on the new Peter Gabriel



Below: Gabriel's *Car* album, 1977.

TONY WEAVER/ANL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



"He's a brilliant man and I would love to work with him."

Bob Ezrin

album', *Car* reached a respectable No.7 in the UK and No.38 in the US. Gabriel was pleased with this performance: "Success no longer holds the key to happiness for me," he told Barbara Charone at *Circus* magazine. "I wanted it badly once but it's an experience I had. I've got complete control now. The rock business is a strange hybrid of hypocrisy. You get to the point where you're not really being yourself. You're selling something. You get the feeling that the rock star is some sort of teenage creation realised by people who are no longer teenagers."

Most definitely *not* a teenager, Peter Gabriel's retreat to his cabbages lasted less than six months. However, the 20 months, his 'gap year' in which it was set, and the empowerment it offered him, was to reverberate throughout his career to this very day: if you can walk away from what you had worked so hard for and start again, put your family first, you can do anything.

It was a period of the most incredible cleansing and confidence building. Stepping out from behind the flower and growing up in public. His prolonged absence from the pop eye seemed an eternity — today, in the 21st century, a year off is common; longer is positively expected to allow tour cycles to finish and marketing departments to work through any residual magic or life there may be left in a product.

"Generally, there's only one golden egg in a band, as far as business goes," Gabriel reflected in 1977. "It's very rare when people split up or break off that you get two successful acts. The chances are remote. The longer I didn't do anything, the bigger the question mark. I wouldn't describe myself as a golden egg yet. But I'm in a strong position — certainly much stronger than I was a year ago."

Within a handful of years, with the release of *So*, Gabriel did indeed become this golden egg. And once he did, with that gold he walked right out of the machinery again. This time, he wouldn't have to borrow his friend's piano — he would set up his own studio and label. He would become the factory owner, allowing him the freedom to take as much time between releases as possible. For sure, the 26-month gap in releases between *The Lamb...* and his first album now seems like barely a nanosecond compared to the 16 years it has been since the release of *Up...*

Daryl Easlea's Without Frontiers: The Life And Music Of Peter Gabriel, the revised and updated version is available now through Omnibus Press. Richard Macphail's My Book Of Genesis is available at www.mybookofgenesis.com. Anthony Phillips' Private Parts & Pieces Vol. IX-XI is out now via Esoteric. See www.anthonyphillips.co.uk for details.

BOLLOCKS AND BRUCEY

How the sound and spirit of the Sex Pistols and Springsteen fed into Gabriel's work.

The Sex Pistols at the 100 Club in London.

HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Gabriel's sabbatical allowed him time to fully appreciate the music of others, and he was deeply receptive to the change in the air. Before punk ripped up the rule book, the arrival on British shores of Bruce Springsteen had a profound effect on Gabriel. On November 18, 1975, he went to see Springsteen and his E Street Band at their debut UK concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon.

"I remember Peter phoning me and saying he'd gone to see Springsteen and that he was very impressed with him," David Stopps, a close friend who ran Friars in Aylesbury, told this writer in 2013. "He was overwhelmed with how good he was live – it had a major effect on him."

Gabriel's writing could now absorb all his influences, away from the constraints of his band. "Springsteen was a huge influence," says Richard Macphail. "He wouldn't stop going on about that – it really made a huge impression."

Gabriel has said this concert was second only to his fabled viewing of Otis Redding on the Stax/Volt Revue in the 60s. Stopps added: "I later saw Peter at Hammersmith Odeon on his first tour and you could see the influence of Springsteen on his show."

This infatuation increased when Roy Bittan of the E Street Band played on *Scratch*. Later, Gabriel was to appear on Steve Van Zandt's *Sun City* project, before working with the Boss himself on 1988's *Human Rights Now!* tour.

Gabriel was to see another life-changing concert the year after he saw Springsteen when he went to London's Oxford Street and saw the Sex Pistols at one of the 10 fabled gigs they played at the 100 Club that year. Already enamoured with the stripped-down bombast of Springsteen, Gabriel knew this was another part of the jigsaw of change, and that something new was in the air.

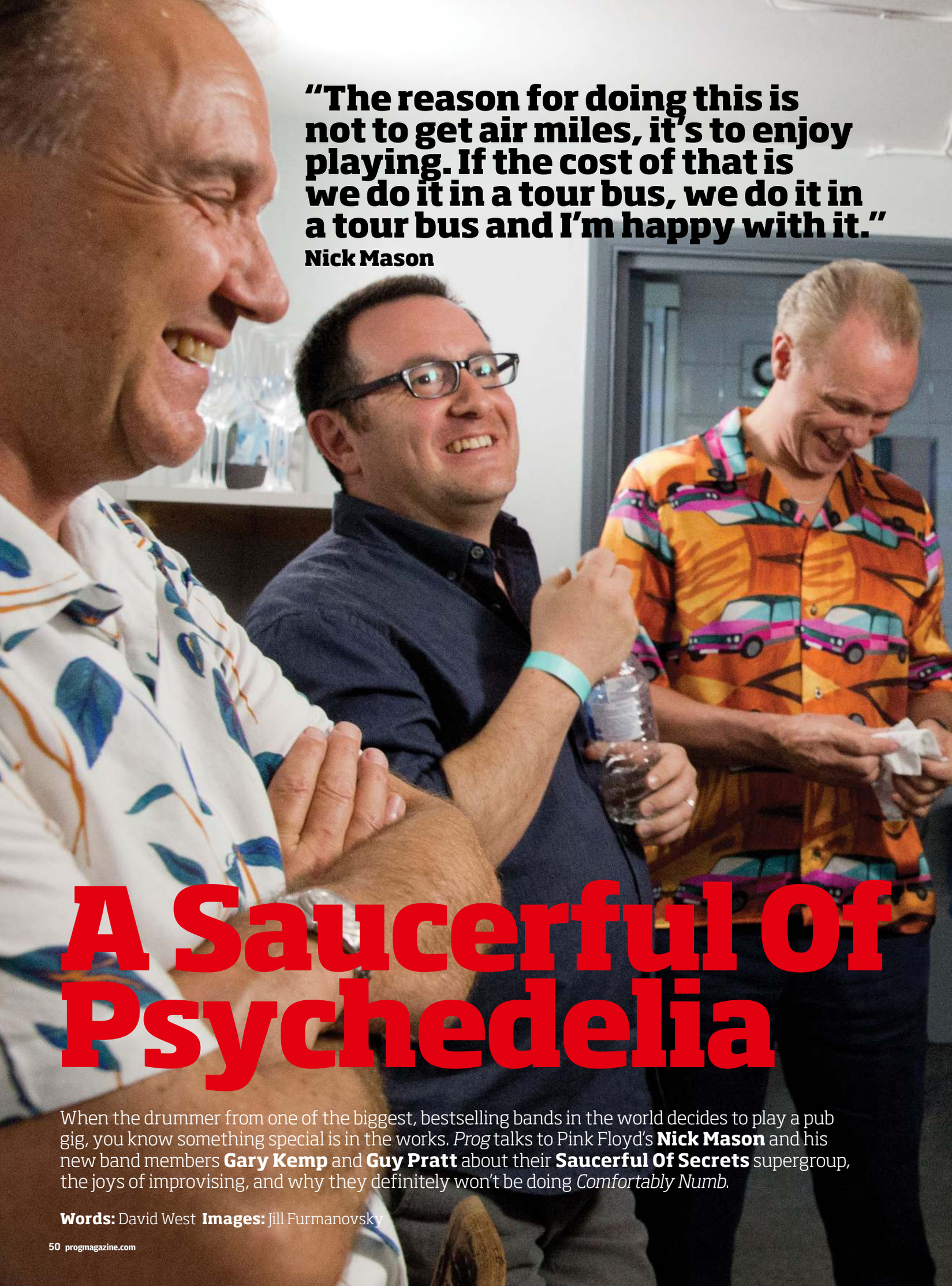
"He was deeply impressed," Richard Macphail says. "I was deeply unimpressed, I must say. Peter saw the bigger picture better than I did. All he talked about was the Pistols and Johnny Rotten. He loved the rawness of it – it really appealed to him."

Although hardly ready to go to Pistols-like extremes, both these artists showed clearly to Gabriel that he could easily attempt something different. While in Toronto recording *Car*, he and Larry Fast went to see the Ramones. Gabriel seemed to have escaped the enormous backlash that progressive rock was getting in the media – it was as if he'd jumped off the juggernaut exactly at the right time.

With punk's 'year zero' revisionist approach, all of these new characters – many of whom were of a similar age or only slightly younger than the bands they were taking swipes at – pretended they had no time for any of the music they had spent the previous three years listening to. Gabriel was pleased that *Car* was displayed in Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's SEX shop in Kings Road and that Nick Kent, then the hottest, most revered rock critic, was onside with his new work. **DE**

Bruce Springsteen onstage at Hammersmith Odeon in 1975, his first performance in England.

TOM SHEEHAN/SONY MUSIC ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



"The reason for doing this is not to get air miles, it's to enjoy playing. If the cost of that is we do it in a tour bus, we do it in a tour bus and I'm happy with it."
Nick Mason

A Saucerful Of Psychedelia

When the drummer from one of the biggest, bestselling bands in the world decides to play a pub gig, you know something special is in the works. *Prog* talks to Pink Floyd's **Nick Mason** and his new band members **Gary Kemp** and **Guy Pratt** about their **Saucerful Of Secrets** supergroup, the joys of improvising, and why they definitely won't be doing *Comfortably Numb*.

Words: David West **Images:** Jill Furmanovsky

Not many famous musicians go from playing at Live 8 (three million viewers globally) and the closing ceremony of the London Olympics (UK TV audience of 26 million) to The Half Moon, Putney (capacity 250) and Dingwalls, Camden (capacity 500), but Nick Mason seems to be loving every minute of performing with his new band. Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets pulls together Gary Kemp from Spandau Ballet, Pink Floyd touring and recording bassist Guy Pratt, guitarist Lee Harris from the Blockheads and The Orb's Dom Beken on keys to celebrate Floyd's earliest work in all its psychedelic, freaked-out glory.

It was while participating in the V&A Museum's Pink Floyd exhibition *Their Mortal Remains* last year that Mason started to feel the itch to dust off the drums and play live again. "There's a point at which after you've done the fourth Q&A, you think, 'This is all about ancient history,'" he says. "It's like talking to someone from the Second World War or whatever. I just felt, God, that happened 40 years ago so I began to think, 'Actually, I prefer the fun of playing.' The timing was really good because Lee Harris was talking to Guy Pratt: 'Do you think Nick would be interested?' Guy said, 'I've no idea, you ask him.'"

Where Mason is unassuming and laid-back in person, Gary Kemp positively buzzes with energy when talking about the group. "The first song I ever played in a band with anyone was *Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun*, and we played it all day long, which it often feels like now onstage!" he says, laughing. "It's the commitment to make this music fresh, to take inspiration from the tracks but to make it not like a bunch of session players just trying to emulate what's on the record."

Kemp points to the way that Saucerful approach the breakdown sections in *Interstellar Overdrive* and *Set The Controls For The Heart Of Sun*, which exemplify early Floyd at their most experimental and free-form. "Whatever recording you listen to over the years, they're all different," says Kemp. "Improvisation is key. Rather than saying, 'Right, that's the best one, let's just copy that,' the answer is, 'No, improvise yourself.' Doing stuff that's musically atonal, abstract, is very hard for musicians because we're used to following the line, playing together, getting in key, getting in the groove, but to actually try to work away from that and be abstract, it's a bit like splash painting, like a musical Jackson Pollock. It's never going to be the same painting twice."

Kemp shares the vocal duties in Saucerful with Guy Pratt, who is more than familiar with Floyd's catalogue, having spent 30-plus years playing with Floyd and David Gilmour's solo band. "You can't have a singer because there's not enough singing," observes Pratt about the lack of a designated frontman. "You can't have someone just standing there for 20 minutes at a time while we're messing about. I like the fact that it's mainly about Nick."

With Saucerful, Mason and co are only exploring Floyd's output pre-*Dark Side Of The Moon*, and their setlist for the first four shows

Secrets Society, L-R: Guy Pratt, Lee Harris, Gary Kemp, Dom Beken, Nick Mason.

Let There Be Lights: Saucerful live at The Half Moon in Putney.

at Dingwall's and The Half Moon was drawn from *Meddle*, *More*, *Obscured By Clouds*, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* and the *Saucerful Of Secrets* albums.

"I've only played three of these songs ever in my 32 years' association with them," says Pratt, who had worked previously with Kemp as a writing partner, but never in a band. "His manager was an old friend of mine and when Gary did his solo album, I was brought in to help him put a band together and organise everything. We got on so well we had this idea of writing a musical together. Then we did another musical for the National Theatre youth programme, so we've never done any rock'n'roll together. We've only really known each other as West End Wendies. He's got this fantastic rock'n'roll frontman in him, which he's never got to let out and he's so good at it. That's the thing, everyone is getting to do stuff they never did. Nick's getting to do stuff he hasn't done for years."

With Waters and Gilmour both still active, Mason wasn't looking to draw comparisons with the other Floyd alumni. "I wanted to avoid being judged on how good a version of *Comfortably Numb* we did. I didn't want to go there. I think as soon as you get into all that stuff, then you start thinking, 'Well, we'll need some film and this, that and the other.'

"What I really like is going back to the idea of actually improvising," adds Mason, who is only too aware of the flourishing industry built around Pink Floyd tribute bands. "First of all, there are people carefully studying every mistake I've ever made and recreating it. Although my favourite is still The Australian Pink Floyd, who had musical differences and split into the Brit Floyd. You'd have thought they'd have seen it coming. They do a great job, it's not that I want to stop them, but I still have that rather pathetic notion that rock music is a sort of opportunity to express yourself. It's this liberating thing, a bit loose and a bit wild, an opportunity for lots of new ideas, so in many ways I'm more comfortable when people take something and rework it. I thought *Dub Side Of The Moon* was terrific."

From playing blue-eyed soul and pop in Spandau Ballet, Gary Kemp might not look like the obvious choice to celebrate Syd Barrett and early Floyd, but he's proved to be the perfect fit. "In a way the last thing you need is somebody who has spent the last 50 years studying Pink Floyd," says Mason, although that might be short-changing Kemp, who grew up on everything from Marc Bolan and Bowie to ELP, Yes and Genesis.

While the advent of punk saw Kemp sell his prog albums to Cheapo Cheapo Records in Soho, he never parted with his Floyd records (and fear not, he's since rebuilt his prog collection). And he clearly has a great love for the Syd Barrett era.

"Probably the first great British glam rock pop star was Syd," says Kemp. "There would have been no Bowie if it wasn't for Syd. Bowie wouldn't have cut his hair like that. There would have been no Johnny Rotten cutting his hair like that if it hadn't been for the way Syd looked. Syd was our Velvet Underground, really. He was art school, he was dangerous, he was beautiful, he was living on the edge — all of those things that we find deadly attractive as rock musicians."

Then there's Barrett's groundbreaking work weaving soundscapes out of his Binson Echorec to consider. "He was more than a musician, more than a songwriter or performer — he was a performance artist manipulating sound in a way I don't think anyone had done before," says Kemp. "Sure, The Beatles were doing stuff on *Sgt. Pepper's*... in the studio, manipulating sound, so I think that was an inspiration, but Syd was going out there and doing that live."

Barrett's idiosyncratic songwriting is very evident in the track *Bike*, which all three agree is one of the trickiest songs in the Saucerful set. "That's the Pink Floyd that Blur and everyone comes from," says Pratt. "The funny thing is, it's incredibly difficult to play because the end of every verse is different. It's in Syd time. It took us ages to work it out, whereas for Nick it poses no problem at all. He plays right through it and is completely on it. It's great to play stuff that's silly as opposed to all the Pink Floyd I'm used to playing, which is so important and weighty."

"*Bike* is actually great fun," confirms Mason, "but *Bike* is a funny one where there's no way you can freestyle off it. It's a particular song in its own right, but the way we do it is a slightly harder version and that's true of probably *Arnold Layne* and *See Emily Play*. To some extent they need to be done as the singles. I say that — don't hold me to account when you come to a show and we do a 20-minute version of *Arnold Layne*! We've only done four shows — it's not very many really. We're still forgetting things."

They may be having a blast, but that's not to say the band are lightweight and fluffy. Far from it. "We've been starting these shows with *Interstellar Overdrive*," says Kemp. "We lay down our marker from the beginning. This is what we're about, guys — we're taking risks onstage. We're doing an eight-minute version. It's not the longest

"We've been starting these shows with *Interstellar Overdrive*. We lay down our marker from the beginning. This is what we're about, guys - we're taking risks onstage."
Gary Kemp

version you're ever going to hear because we're just starting off, but it has a complete freak-out in it. We don't do all the pretty stuff first and save the difficult stuff for the end. *Interstellar...* is one of the greatest riffs of all time. That riff is up there with Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* and *Smoke On The Water*, one of the greatest guitar riffs ever written."

And digging deeper into the vaults, there's *The Nile Song* from *More* in all its crushing, screaming heaviness. "I don't think *The Nile Song* was ever played live by Floyd, so it gives us something unique and of course it's all about Nick's drumming," says Kemp. "For me, Nick's drumming on the early stuff is much more apparent. He was much more into a jazz style of mallets and free-flowing tom-tom work. I think later on, *Dark Side...* and onwards, it settled down into a much more solid groove, but the early stuff was much more inspired and improvisational.

"I think he's enjoying going back to those because he's the focus of our attention. I'm just trying to get him to do *Scream Thy Last Scream* but I'm not sure he's up for singing!"

Following their debut four-gig run, Saucerful will be undertaking a month-long European tour in September playing theatres and mid-sized venues, a far cry from Floyd's stadium-packing heyday. Not that Mason seems to mind one bit.

"I'm looking forward to it, ill-advisedly," he says. "Maybe I'll be going, 'Where's the jet?' I'm really enjoying this. It goes with playing the music like this. If we're not doing stadiums then there probably isn't the budget for the jet, so if that's the deal, that's the deal. The reason for doing this is not to get air miles, it's to enjoy playing. If the cost of that is we do it in a tour bus, we do it in a tour bus and I'm happy with it." PP

Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets will be on tour throughout September. For more information visit www.thesaucerfulofsecrets.com.

MUSIC LEFT UNATTENDED MAY BE DESTROYED

Take a peek inside Mason's new *Luggage* box set.

August 31 will see the release of *Unattended Luggage*, a box set containing three of Mason's solo releases. Joining *Fictitious Sports*, which saw him working with free jazz pianist Carla Bley, will be two of his collaborations with 10cc's Rick Fenn: *Profiles* and *White Of The Eye*.

"The thing I really enjoyed was listening to the Carla Bley stuff, which is nearly 40 years old," says Mason. "I just love the brass sections on that. Did we do that? It's really good! We were finishing *The Wall* and there was a hiatus while overdubs were being done in America. I think Carla loved the idea of doing something a little bit more rock'n'roll than jazzy, and I thought I'd like to go jazzy, so it was one of those really good moments."

White Of The Eye was the soundtrack to a British thriller. "Rick and I did two or three films at the time, some of which are so bad that fortunately they've been lost forever," says Mason. "There was one called *Tank Malling*, which is truly average. *White Of The Eye* was a pretty gloomy film, but it was a great opportunity for us to do some soundtracks." **DW**

Strange Ma

Psychedelic duo **Cobalt Chapel** unite the traditional and the modern perfectly in their acid folk-tinged choral prog. The pair meet *Prog* to discuss their classic prog inspirations from Van der Graaf Generator to Mike Oldfield, their new EP *Mountain* and how they're continuing to develop their sound.

Words: Rob Hughes **Images:** Alex Lake

"What's really wonderful about progressive music is that it feels like there are no rules."
Cecilia Fage

"What's really wonderful about progressive music is that it feels like there are no rules," marvels Cecilia Fage of Cobalt Chapel. "In fact, the more you want to experiment or tell a big story, the more it feels like that's embraced. There doesn't seem to be any limits to how theatrical you can go and it's not pretentious or looked down upon."

Cobalt Chapel are a living expression of this philosophy. Formed in 2014 when a mutual friend put Fage in touch with Jarrod Gosling — best known for his work in I Monster and Regal Worm — the duo set about shaping a spooky blend of acid folk, choral prog and psychedelia. At the heart of their sound, as heard on last year's self-titled debut album, were Fage's exquisite vocal layers and the textural otherness of Gosling's vast collection of vintage organs.

"I'd been thinking about how to make a psychedelic album that didn't have guitars or synths on it," recalls Gosling. "Bo Hansson was a Swedish guy from the 60s who formed an instrumental duo called Hansson & Karlsson, which was just organ and drums. The whole sound came from just these two people and it was amazing.

"Another of my favourite bands is Van der Graaf Generator. For most of the 70s they didn't have a bass player because Hugh Banton played the organ pedals as well. So you get this deep, dense sound. By limiting what sort of a sound you're going to get, you can be more creative with the processing afterwards."

The songs on Cobalt Chapel's debut took inspiration from old folklore, sci-fi and obscure horror soundtracks, chiming with lyrical themes of suburban disquiet and everyday dread. A similar quality informs latest EP *Mountain*, though this time they've gone a little further out. The three tracks have a more pronounced electronic feel, making for a sharper contrast between Fage's haunting English tones and Gosling's pulsing rhythms: a union of the traditional and the modern.

This also happens to be an echo of the locale in which it was created. "There's a repetitiveness to the verses on the title track," muses sometime actress Fage, who has prior form as singer, arranger and woodwind player in Matt Berry & The Maypoles, "which almost feels like the idea of travelling and moving forward. For example, there's a place near us in the Yorkshire Dales where people used to rest their dead hundreds of years ago. Back then, there was such a large distance between two parishes on the moors that they'd reach a particular stone, rest the coffin, take the load off, then carry on to the other side, where they could get a decent burial. You can feel the history around you in this area."

Having uprooted her family and moved to West Yorkshire from London at the end of last year, Fage is now much nearer to Sheffield-based Gosling. The pair can collaborate in real time, as opposed to sharing ideas across the internet. This perhaps accounts for the more spontaneous nature of the new EP, and nowhere is this more apparent than on the epic *Canticle*, a song that journeys from gentle

ambience to a thunderous psychedelic blowout across 10-plus minutes. Fage explains that the lyrics were written as a response to last year's terrorist attacks in London and Manchester.

"The world has changed, so it's a question of how we adjust to it," she says. "For me, moving into a rural area has been a really wonderful thing. *Canticle* was inspired by not wanting to be ruled by that mindset of feeling so anxious. The song is partly an expression of that fight on a personal level — an exploration of how ordinary people are brainwashed into committing such terrible acts — and a larger resistance against the dark power of these events themselves. It's also an expression of my anger about the way these attacks are exploited to create divisions and push a racist, bigoted agenda."

On a musical level, *Canticle* started out as a drone and just kept gathering layers. In addition to various organs ("My latest is an Elektronika, an ex-Soviet one shipped over from Poland," Gosling enthuses), it makes use of Mellotron and sampled loops. "You end up with a weirder, eerie sound," says Gosling, "with stops and starts in strange places. That's prog and psychedelia, really. Those elements on the EP — experiments, I suppose — are going to find their way into the next album."

Fage and Gosling aren't hanging about. They're already working on melodies and ideas for the follow-up to 2017's self-titled debut album. "We're both keen to try things and just see where they take us," Fage says. "I think we're going to use a few flutes and clarinets on the next one. And also we're interested in sampling, using a lot of the things that Jarrod has in his arsenal of effects."

In the meantime, this summer promises a third album under Gosling's prog rocking Regal Worm banner. There's also what he calls a "soft" Cobalt Chapel release, due later in the year. "I suppose it's us working from the first album, but stripping and reimagining what we've done," Fage explains. "It's like remixes, but *not* remixes, if that makes sense."

Amid this flurry of activity, prog remains an important touchstone for both of them. Gosling grew up listening to his dad's collection of Yes and Genesis cassettes, an experience that fed into his formative years with Dean Honer in electronica duo I Monster.

"When Dean and I started I Monster in the 90s, I began sampling Mellotrons and flutes and getting those kinds of prog elements into techno," Gosling explains.

His prog instincts bisect with those of Fage, especially when it comes to Mike Oldfield. "*Ommadawn* and *Incantations* are like desert island albums for me," he states. "It's the way they're put together, building tracks up."

Fage adds: "When I first started working on stuff with Matt Berry years ago, we both brought Mike Oldfield influences to what we were doing. As well as the fact that he had all these different instruments, there was an unashamed use of recorder and clarinet. And, of course, the female vocals. I've always wanted to make a track where I can just wail!"

Mountain is available now via Klove. For more information, see www.facebook.com/cobaltchapel.

Laura Meade: beating the odds to return with new album *Remedium*.

Once More with Healing

A degenerative condition almost stopped **Laura Meade** from continuing her music career. But the singer-songwriter battled through, and her new solo album looks back on a difficult journey.

Words: Dom Lawson **Images:** Madison Fender

In 2007, Laura Meade was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. A prodigious musical talent, best known as vocalist with NYC prog stalwarts IZZ, she faced an uncertain future and the very real possibility that the degenerative condition would put an abrupt end to her career. Fast forward 11 years, however, and Meade is in great health and has just released her first solo album, *Remedium*. It's a fascinating and frequently beautiful record that delves deep into the emotional heights and depths of the singer's journey from devastating diagnosis to remarkable recovery.

"The diagnosis was out of the blue, as these things often are," she tells *Prog*. "I don't know how much you know about MS or what it does, but it affects different things in different people. It can take away your ability to speak or, in my case, I was unable to sing for a while, which was a very painful thing for me. So being unable to do what it is that I do, that was painful, but out of that experience came this album, eventually. At this point I can't be angry about what happened. I'm thankful for the diagnosis. And I'm feeling great now, which is a plus!"

The prevailing view of multiple sclerosis is that it's a degenerative condition that few people ever defeat, which makes Laura Meade's recovery even more extraordinary.

After that initial diagnosis, she was prescribed the usual disease-modifying drugs to manage the illness, but something in the back of her mind persuaded her to take a less conventional route to wellbeing. A decade ago, Meade was studying horticulture at college and stumbled upon a potential new approach to combating the symptoms of her condition.

"Through my studies I realised that what I really loved about horticulture wasn't floral design or landscape design, it was herbs and healing, with these medicinal plants. I just became obsessed with learning about how that could help *anyone*, but also how it could help me. It was a different route to go down and you have to make a commitment, because it changes everything. But through that I started making herbal remedies and I've found the thing that works for me. I make salves and tinctures, mostly for myself but I give them away to family and friends too. It's healing to make the product. It's so great to work with nature and natural substances."

Buoyed by her herbal revelation, Meade was soon able to recommence her musical career, and it soon became apparent that a strong idea was forming in her mind. Over several years, she began to piece together the songs and musical pieces that would eventually coalesce to become *Remedium*.

"Some of it existed before I was diagnosed," she explains. "There were little pieces, phrases and fragments. It was all just hanging around in the ether, waiting to be made into something more. When I put my mind to it, thinking, 'Okay, let's make an album,' I started to see that it would be about healing and about rebirth. Looking back now, the diagnosis helped the music but the music helped with dealing with and processing the emotions that came from the diagnosis. So they fed into each other

Flower Power: Meade's new album is a magical blend of hope and horticulture.

"Being unable to do what it is that I do, that was painful, but out of that experience came this album, eventually."

in this beautiful way that I think really comes through in the feel of these songs."

Remedium begins with a distinctly progressive flourish. A deeply atmospheric 10 minutes full of blissful melodies and elegant melodrama, *Sunflowers At Chernobyl* provides prog fans with an instantly absorbing entry point. What may not be immediately apparent is how the song's theme harks back to Meade's horticultural studies, once again feeding into the album's overriding concept of healing and rebirth. Not content with making great music, she also seems determined to provide us with educational benefits too.

"In one class we learned about phytoremediation, which is basically using plants to heal the soil," she notes, her voice alive with enthusiasm. "If you plant mustard seed or peppermint or sunflowers, they will leech toxins from the soil. That idea to me struck a chord and I couldn't get it out of my head. What we had learned is that at Chernobyl they had planted sunflowers. Now that's not going to heal the whole land — that would take much more than sunflowers — but it was a start!

"They found that these sunflowers were pulling toxins and lead and radiation from the soil, and I thought, 'What a beautiful and horrific thing!' You then have these radioactive sunflowers than need to be disposed of properly, but the flowers have given the soil life."

Part of *Remedium*'s simple appeal is the way Meade seems able to inhabit many different styles of song, all with a similarly effortless grace. While prog fans will inevitably be thrilled by the album's epics — *Sunflowers At Chernobyl* and the dazzling, exploratory *Dragons* — it's the album's quieter and more fragile moments that really take the breath away. Most potent are the breezy jazz pop of *Conquer The World*, the delicate, ukulele-driven *Home Movies* and, most striking of all, the closing *Irradiation*: a shimmering, ethereal ballad that brings the album to a rounded and uplifting close.

"I just knew, after this roller-coaster ride of an album, that something simple yet meaningful should be at the end of it," Meade states. "It needed something that sums up the album and also that sums up my journey. I'd been tossing around ideas and trying to write something that would be appropriate, but it just wasn't working. Then John [Galgano, IZZ guitarist and Meade's husband] came to me one day and said, 'How about this?' and he had the whole thing, the lyrics and the melody.

"He started playing it on the piano and I started crying, which I don't do very easily or very often. I thought, 'Okay, this is the song! It's hopeful. It's all okay.' That's the feeling I got from the song right away, and to this day I still feel like that when I hear it."

With *Remedium* already receiving positive reviews, Meade is understandably excited by her future prospects. Having faced the possibility that her musical adventures could end, she clearly has no intention of wasting a single second from this point on. There are new songs in the works, lots of IZZ live shows and other performance opportunities on the horizon, but perhaps what the singer is most looking forward to is the ongoing response to *Remedium*.

These songs hold such self-evident meaning for Meade and her collaborators — most significantly John Galgano — that she simply can't wait to perform them onstage and extend this exercise in healing and catharsis a little bit further.

"I love performing live — I absolutely *adore* it, so the more the better," she grins. "I just want as many people to hear this album as possible because I'm so proud of it. I think people will understand it and get *something* from it. Maybe something will resonate or change their mind and they'll be like, 'I totally get that!' That's my hope.

"At this point I'm holding steady and I'm feeling good. I'm in what you could call remission. I manage things that arise day by day and it's on the upside. Everything's good, so I can't wait to get out there."

There will be few albums released in 2018 that explore such intensely personal and potentially devastating themes, and yet *Remedium* is an album that proclaims its creator's optimism and unerring spirit from first to last. But beyond the exorcising of demons and the unravelling of emotions, Meade's solo work also exudes great warmth and a strong sense of inclusivity. Whoever you are, whatever you find yourself struggling with, there's a message of hope contained within this music that may prove to be the best remedy of all.

"That's the thing," Meade concludes. "You create things and here I am, creating this album and it did come from my own personal journey of healing and my own experiences, but you can widen every song out and it's so much bigger.

"That's the beauty of it. It can hit different people in different ways and in ways I didn't intend, but that's *gorgeous*. That's why you do it. It's a fantastic thing, to be able to create."

Remedium is out now via Doone Records. See www.laurameademusic.com for more information.

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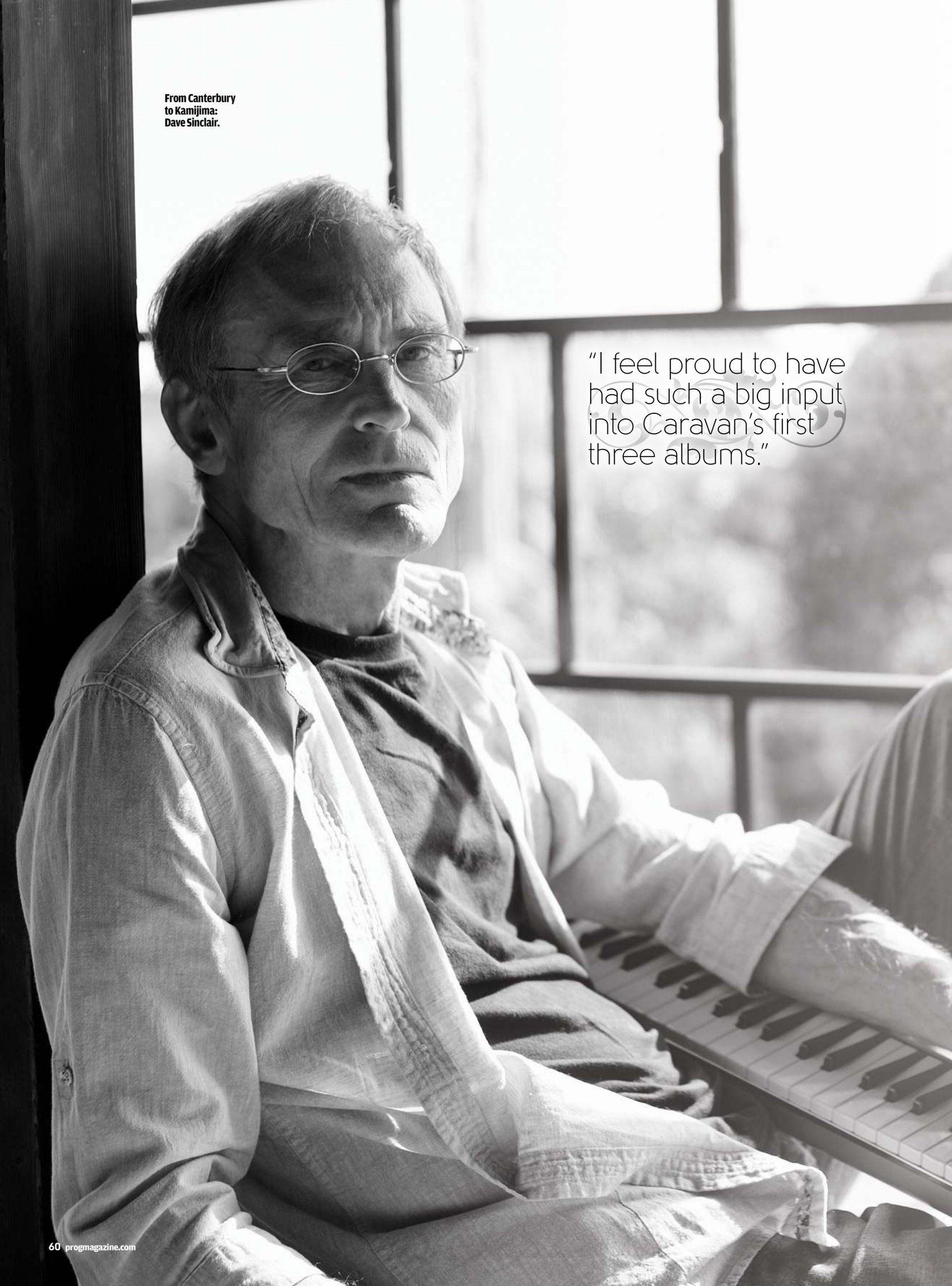

From Canterbury to Kamijima: Dave Sinclair.

"I feel proud to have had such a big input into Caravan's first three albums."

With An Ear To The Ground

Former Caravan, Camel and Matching Mole man **Dave Sinclair** is back with a new album that embraces modern technology yet has direct links back to his Canterbury scene heyday. From his home in Japan, he gives *Prog* the low-down on *Out Of Sinc…*

Words: Malcolm Dome **Images:** Kiyoshi Takebayashi

Even in the eccentric world of progressive music, it's unusual for anyone to claim to have been inspired by a 17th-century choirmaster at St. Paul's Cathedral. But that's exactly what Dave Sinclair does.

"John Blow, my ancestor, was organist and composer to five kings and queens of England, and is buried in Westminster Abbey. My mother's maiden name is Blow, and although she has no particular musical talent, her brother had an excellent tenor voice and sang in various choirs. His son, Nigel Blow, my cousin, also had a talent for music and composed tunes with fluent melodies. It was one of those tunes that inspired me to start writing what became the consistently top-voted Caravan track of all time, *Nine Feet Underground*."

When he was young, Sinclair joined a Canterbury choir and enjoyed singing hymns, playing the piano and composing: "But I only remembered the compositions I really liked as there was no way of recording available to me then. At that time, composers using orchestras with lots of percussion along with choral backing held a big attraction for me.

"It wasn't until I was much older that I found out about John Blow, hearing that he had been the first composer of operatic pieces in England. And the *Home Again* track on my new album was expanded into a lengthy piece partly due to his musical influence."

Sinclair is unquestionably one of the most important musicians to be associated with the renowned Canterbury Scene. A founder member of Caravan in 1968, he has also been a member of Matching Mole, Camel, Hatfield And The North and Polite Force.

Sinclair last left Caravan in October 2002, and left these shores for Japan in 2005, where he has continued pursuing a fascinating solo career. And with *Out Of Sinc*, the sixth album he's released in the last 15 years, he has shown a capacity for adapting to modern circumstances by raising the finances required through PledgeMusic. However, he admits that it was necessity that drove him in this direction.

"Although I had prepared most of the material and ideas for the album by 2014, it proved to be an uphill struggle getting underway, with so little finance available. Things moved along very slowly on borrowed money until I met [Caravan frontman] Pye Hastings in 2016 and he suggested I run a PledgeMusic campaign as he thought it would be very successful. I eventually started this in late 2017.

"You have to be pretty dedicated to work through a campaign like this, but I was lucky to have amazing support from my wife and Kyoto Mothership Studio [where *Out Of Sinc* was recorded], along with all the great musicians who played on the album – and, of course, those fans who supported me by pledging. It was this support that made it possible for me to complete the album in a much shorter time than expected."

Through his extensive contacts, Sinclair was able to call on the services of such guitar masters as the aforementioned Hastings, Andy Latimer of Camel, and Doug Boyle (associated with Caravan, as well as Robert Plant) to play on the album, all of them recording their parts remotely.

"That's a good thing," he says of this modern way of working, "because it's reasonably easy and cheap for anyone to have some kind of recording gear at home. Doing it this way also gives you more of a chance to practise and hone the part in order to get the right feel, sound and rhythm. It works well for some people, but obviously not for everyone. When Doug Boyle played guitar parts on my *Full Circle* album [2003], he did it in the studio without previously listening to the tracks, but on that occasion his approach worked extremely well."

However, there were also downsides to creating an album with the musicians spread across the globe. Sinclair says, "Working from a distance can be negative in the sense that some recordings can sound a bit mechanical, due to the technical way of recording using computers and click tracks. But I also appreciate that in the studio you're sometimes limited by time and can feel pressurised to perform well. I was very careful in my choice of guitarists for each track, depending on their style of playing and the sort of track they might prefer playing on."

Sinclair was, however, determined to collaborate with a rhythm section who were on the spot with him in Japan.

"I was adamant that I needed to work more closely with a drummer and to that purpose I brought [rock and jazz percussionist] Jim Bashford over to Japan. We'd already played a small gig together in the UK and he was a keen fan of my kind of music, apart from being an extraordinarily talented musician playing many different styles. He already had a sponsorship with Canopus drums in Tokyo, and they very quickly shipped a full kit down to Kyoto from Tokyo.

Caravan in 1969, and they're still motoring today.

"After rehearsals at my friend's lakeside house in Makino with Jim and Larry Fujimoto – the bass player and owner of the Mothership studio in Kyoto where I was recording – the three of us went into the studio. Later, other musicians sent in their recorded parts and we added those into the mix."

Sinclair sings on the tracks himself, along with Yammy, a Japanese vocalist. "I recorded all my backing, harmony and lead vocals at my home," he says. "Yammy recorded in the studio. I first met Yammy at Mothership Studio, but it was two years later that I went along to one of her gigs. I was so knocked out with the live performances, her charisma and vocals that I asked Yammy straight after the gig if she would sing on my album. And because of her participation, I was able to record some tracks which until then I hadn't been able to find a singer for."

One track that will catch the attention of those with an in-depth knowledge of Sinclair's history will be *If I Run*. It dates back to 1971 and his days with Matching Mole, but remained unrecorded until now.

"In 1971, after the release of *In The Land Of Grey And Pink*, I left the band and spent some time in Portugal working with guitarist John Murphy. I returned to the UK after receiving a telegram from Robert Wyatt, saying, 'Come back, your country needs you!' I moved to London to join Matching Mole. The band rehearsed and played *If I Run* live with Robert's vocals and lyrics, although at the time I believe it was called *Run And Hide*. I wrote the music for it."

The song was never recorded, and was eventually forgotten – in a similar way, Sinclair says, to another track he wrote in Matching Mole called *Amewsing*, the title alluding to Robert Wyatt's house where the band stayed and rehearsed in London. (This track has also been rejuvenated, with Sinclair recording it for his 2004 *Full Circle* album, renaming it *Peace In Time*.)

"Both these tracks came back to life when Richard Sinclair, my old Caravan bandmate, dug out and played some old tapes to me during rehearsals with his band in the 1990s. It wasn't until much later that I added the extra solo section at the end of *If I Run*.

"After moving to Japan in 2005 I made some demo recordings with Hideyuki Shima, a composer, bass player and Berkeley student from the Japanese band Six-North. We recorded *If I Run* with Hide's arrangement and Percy Jones on bass, and later Phil Miller, who had played guitar in Matching Mole, played a solo. When I returned to the UK to record Robert for my *Stream* album [2011], I asked if he could also sing on our *If I Run* demo, but he was unable to find his original lyrics for the track and the demo was never completed.

"Thankfully, around the same time I was recording with Robert, I was able to record Tony Coe's brilliant clarinet solo on *If I Run* in a Canterbury studio. Finally I rewrote Robert's original lyrics

Dave Sinclair: in sync and on a creative roll.

"I'm hoping to get a more permanent band together in the future for touring purposes – it's something I miss a lot."

in the first section with an interesting story on similar lines to his but with a different subject matter, bearing in mind the whisky bottles and the aroma in my old Canterbury flat, and the significant transition from alcohol to marijuana… from an alcoholic haze to a soporific daze if you like!"

Some veteran musicians these days feel that recording new music is a waste of time, because there's no call for this from fans. Sinclair accepts this restriction, even if he doesn't entirely agree with the sentiment.

"Yes, to a certain extent I think that's probably so. But for some musicians, as they grow older they gain knowledge, experience and insight into life in an interesting way and continue to be progressive in their outlook. This, reflected in their compositions, can sometimes be understood and appreciated by the fans or other people of a similar age."

Indeed, Sinclair's 2005 move to Japan had a significant influence on his musical approach.

"Interestingly, soon after arriving in Japan, I was told by many fans that some of my more folky songs had a sort of Japanese feel to them, and that if the lyrics were in Japanese, this would be even more appreciated. Maybe it's because there's a rich tradition of Japanese folk-type songs here called Enka, and in a strange way some of my songs are leaning slightly in that direction, the folky influence probably due to my Irish ancestry.

"I'm now working on a Japanese version of *Island Of Dreams*, the English version of which is on my new album. The Mayor of Kamijima, where I live, has asked if they can use the song as a theme tune for the town, which is wonderful. I'll be recording that with some other new tracks soon and we'll release this as a single. Yammy will be the vocalist."

Sinclair will always be closely linked to Caravan, even though he left the group 16 years ago. And in the year when that band reach the landmark of their 50th anniversary, the keyboard player is very proud of his input and impact.

"In the early days of Caravan I don't think we gave much thought to the future, except that sooner or later we'd have to give up our wonderful and exciting lifestyle and get a proper job. I never even dreamed that after turning 30 years old I would still be going on stage to play to people… it seemed we'd be far too old!"

Sinclair feels it's quite an achievement that Caravan are still up and running after all these years. "I feel proud to have had such a big input into Caravan's first three albums," he says. "But also looking back now to that time 50 years ago, I realise that *Nine Feet Underground* was merely a series of riffs and chordal sequences I liked soloing over all slung together into one track. Although it worked as a band project and has been much appreciated over the years, it can't be compared to my new 18-minute *Home Again* composition, which I feel helps to show my maturity as a musician in a completely new light."

Dave Sinclair still believes he has much to offer musically, and he hopes to be able to tour his new material soon. "It's a bit tough organising anything on a grand scale without an agent, booker, manager or record company. I am hoping to get a more permanent band together in the future for touring purposes – it's something I miss a lot."

So, after such a lengthy career, is Sinclair surprised that there's still interest in what he has to say musically? "In a word," he says, "yes. In two words: yes, very!"

Out Of Sinc is out now. For more information, see www.dave-sinclair.com.

From Thrash To Prog: Canadian pioneers Voivod.

THE BIRTH OF PROG METAL

Many assume that progressive music was going through something of a lull in the 1980s. But over in the US and Canada, a new, exciting scene was bubbling into existence. *Prog* goes in deep on the history of **progressive metal**...

Words: Dave Everley

Voivod drummer Michel 'Away' Langevin remembers the first night his band opened for Rush. It was March 20, 1990, in Edmonton, Alberta, and the iconic Canadian trio were touring their home country in support of *Presto*, a record that found them gently rowing back from the synth-heavy furrow they'd been pursuing during the previous decade.

By contrast, Voivod were heading in the opposite direction, relatively speaking. The Quebec quartet had begun life as a primitive thrash metal band, all white hi-top sneakers and flailing hair. But their recent albums had seen them introducing more complex musical and lyrical themes into their music. Their latest, the previous year's prog metal landmark *Nothingface*, had even included a cover of Pink Floyd's space cadet anthem *Astronomy Domine* — something that would have been unthinkable for their 80s thrash contemporaries Metallica or Slayer to do.

As Away and his bandmates walked backstage that first night, they found a bottle of champagne waiting for them. Accompanying it was a note signed by Rush's Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart wishing them luck.

"That was a huge moment for us," says Away now. "Rush were so influential. The fact that the drummer wrote the lyrics and the concepts was big for me. And Alex Lifeson was one of [Voivod's then-six-stringer] Piggy's favourite guitarists."

But there was much more significance to that bottle of bubbly than just the best wishes of one of prog rock's great bands. Consciously or not, it was a baton being handed down from one generation to the next — an acknowledgement that the future, or one strand of it, belonged to Voivod and their ilk.

Voivod's support slot with Rush was one of the key stepping stones in the upward trajectory of prog metal, a genre that had risen from nothing in a handful of unconnected hotspots across North America less than a decade before to become an emerging musical force. There was Watchtower from Texas and Fates Warning from Connecticut, Queensrÿche from Seattle and Crimson Glory from Florida. And there was a band named Majesty from Boston, who had recently changed their name to Dream Theater and would eventually go on to be the most successful of them all.

> "We wanted to take the music as far as it would go, take the instruments as far as they would go, take the composition to extremes." **Mike Portnoy**

Charlie Griffiths, guitarist with British prog metallers Haken, is a diehard fan of the early prog metal pioneers. "The music I hear in my head is definitely shaped by those early formative years listening to bands like Watchtower and Fates Warning," he says. "They were totally ahead of their time."

Contrary to received wisdom, prog wasn't on the ropes in the 1980s — it was evolving. As Genesis, Yes, Rush and the other giants of the previous decade dressed themselves up in pop drag and reinvented themselves, a group of British diehards were marrying the old values to new ones under the banner of 'neo-prog'.

But the most interesting grassroots developments were happening in the US, in the unlikely confines of the heavy metal scene. Talking to the prime movers of the nascent prog metal movement three and a half decades on, it becomes clear that it was as much a product of coincidence as it was forward-thinking.

"We were just filling a void," says former Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy. "We wanted to take the music as far as it would go, take the instruments as far as they would go, take the composition to extremes. If we thought there was a gap, we knew there had to be an audience for it."

The idea of progressive rock and heavy metal coming together wasn't new. Rush and Yes played to as many long-haired, denim-clad rockers as they did professorial prog fans, while young bands such as Iron Maiden

BERTRAND ALARY/PHOTOSHOT/AVALON

GIORDANO/PHOTOS.HOT/AVALON

Connecticut's Fates Warning.

were prog connoisseurs underneath the denim and leather, their record collections filled with Jethro Tull and Gentle Giant albums alongside Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin.

But by the early 80s, metal was accelerating, literally and philosophically. Proponents and fans alike were more interested in speed, heaviness and outrageousness than they were musical complexity. In the US, 1982 saw the birth of the thrash metal movement, in which everything was sacrificed on the altar of velocity.

"It wasn't like you had to keep quiet about your love of progressive rock," says Jim Matheos, guitarist and linchpin with prog metal pioneers Fates Warning. "We were totally open about it. But there was definitely a slump in interest in prog at that time among rock musicians. People were more into the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal."

Matheos founded Fates Warning in Hartford, Connecticut with original vocalist John Arch in 1982. They took their influences from both sides of the musical coin: in their heads, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and Danish occultists Mercyful Fate happily co-existed with prime Genesis, Jethro Tull and Yes.

Fates Warning's first album, 1984's *Night On Bröcken*, was standard issue 80s heavy metal, distinguished only by John Arch's helium-pitch vocals – a characteristic shared by many of the prog metal bands who followed.

"The first record stands alone – there's a lot of the Maiden influences there," says Matheos. "But after that we became more confident as musicians, we became better writers. We wanted to expand our sound a little bit. We wanted to challenge ourselves as musicians and as listeners."

By their second and third albums, 1985's *The Spectre Within* and the following year's *Awaken The Guardian*, Fates Warning were beginning to shake off their rudimentary musical approach. The songs were becoming bolder and more complex, wearing their progressive influences on their denim jacket sleeves. It was the sound of a band liberating themselves.

"I don't think we felt like we were being held back by anything," says Matheos. "It was the whole experience of exploring new things, especially when you're that age."

The period between 1982 and 1985 represented the first stirrings of what would go on to become progressive metal.

"We were aware of something because we subscribed to all the magazines," says Matheos. "But at the same time, coming from where we did in the backwoods of Connecticut, we were isolated from the whole thing too. That drove what we were doing. We didn't want to get folded in with the rest of them."

Nearly 2,000 miles away in Austin, Texas, another group of like-minded musicians were thinking exactly the same thing. Watchtower had been put together by Rick Colaluca, bassist Doug Keyser, guitarist Billy White and singer Jason McMaster in 1982 – coincidentally the same year as Fates Warning.

The two bands didn't became aware of each other until much later, but there are vivid parallels to their stories. Like their north-eastern counterparts, the members of Watchtower grew up listening to contemporary rock and metal outfits like KISS, Aerosmith, Iron Maiden and the emerging NWOBHM bands before gravitating to the more challenging end of the prog spectrum: King Crimson, Van der Graaf Generator, Frank Zappa.

"When we started, it wasn't really a conscious decision to do what we ended up doing," says Rick Colaluca. "It wasn't like, 'Okay, we're going to do all this technical math stuff.' It was more, 'We love this heavy, fast stuff and we love this other, more complicated stuff – let's do something different and incorporate both parts.'"

Like Fates Warning, Watchtower started out as a route-one heavy metal band but rapidly became something else. Between 1982 and the release of their debut album, 1985's remarkable *Energetic Disassembly*, they didn't so much jettison their heavy metal beginnings as warp them out of recognition. Marrying the velocity and violence of the newly birthed thrash metal scene to the complexity of prog and jazz rock, they forged an unlikely missing link between Metallica and Mahavishnu Orchestra. Even more than Fates Warning, Watchtower were a band ahead of their time.

"Once we latched on to the concept of what we wanted to do with our music, we were just driven to do it," says Colaluca. "It wasn't about competing with anyone or trying to outdo anyone. It was just about doing the same thing we all seemed to be of the same mindset about, and we pressed forward with it."

Austin had long garnered a reputation as a hothouse for mavericks, and Watchtower's horizon-expanding approach was embraced by the city's rock community. It helped that their shows were visual spectacles, more in tune with the frantic energy release of thrash metal than prog's studied musicianship.

"For some people, progressive rock is boring and kind of stuffy live: 'Okay, we're going to be this perfect thing,'" says Colaluca. "We decided to lay it all on the line and go crazy. If we made mistakes here or there, fine.

"There wasn't really any great collective of people demanding a sound that mixed progressive rock and heavy metal. So we weren't consciously aiming ourselves at them. We weren't aiming ourselves at anyone." **Jim Matheos**

Queensrÿche in 1983, L-R: Eddie Jackson, Geoff Tate, Chris DeGarmo, Scott Rockenfield (back), Michael Wilton.

When we were hitting on all cylinders, it was a fucking thing of beauty. It wasn't just out there playing a record. It was like, 'Holy fuck, that was fucking awesome.'"

Having built up a loyal following in Austin, Watchtower began to venture further afield, testing the water for their new prog metal hybrid.

"Most of the other bands we played with were straightforward metal bands and there were some people who just didn't get it," says Colaluca. "It felt like we were definitely out there on our own."

Half a continent away, Fates Warning were going about things in a different way. They found it harder to play gigs — partly because of their geographical location, tucked away in the north-eastern corner of the US, but partly because, unlike their southern counterparts, no one knew quite what to make of them.

"We didn't really do a proper tour until 1988," says Matheos. "Before that, we would play local gigs, go to New York, maybe play as far out as Cleveland, but we were really doing 10, 12, 15 gigs a year for the first three or four years of this band's existence. When we did tour, we'd get paired up with some odd groups — Motörhead or Anthrax. People were a little bit baffled by us."

Instead, they existed on the record sales that came on the back of the buzz built via appearances in heavy metal magazines such as *Kerrang!*. But the prog community, such as it was, seemed largely oblivious to their existence.

"There wasn't really any great collective of people demanding a sound that mixed progressive rock and heavy metal," says Matheos. "So we weren't consciously aiming ourselves at them. We weren't aiming ourselves at anyone."

One person who was paying attention was a teenage New Yorker named Mike Portnoy, a precociously talented drummer and rapacious devourer of new music. Portnoy had put together his own band, Majesty, at the Berklee College Of Music with guitarist John Petrucci and bassist John Myung. They shared a vision of uniting the prog music they'd been weaned on in the 70s with metal's contemporary new styles.

"At that time the pure prog scene was pretty much non-existent," says Portnoy today. "I was missing those kinds of bands, but I was also a full-on metalhead into Slayer and Exodus and all that stuff. When I met the other guys, we all wanted to combine the two things, like a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup."

Portnoy was heavily involved in the thrash metal tape-trading scene — a pre-internet network of fans swapping new music via the post. "I knew of Fates Warning and Watchtower and Crimson Glory and all those kinds of bands because of tape trading," says Portnoy today. "I remember Watchtower's first American tour — a couple of the guys stayed at my house. They were like Rush on steroids. I went to see Fates Warning whenever they came to New York."

As Majesty's de facto manager, he was the one who would send out their own tapes to promoters, labels and other bands. One of these, the semi-legendary Majesty Demos, came into the hands of Jim Matheos.

"Oh, I totally heard the potential," says Matheos. "I knew something was going to happen. I listened to their tape over and over again. I was amazed at what they were doing. And I was a huge fan of Voivod, who were already putting out albums. Especially the guitar playing."

Like Fates Warning and Watchtower, Voivod came from a metal background, but the Canadians' transition was an even bigger jump. Their debut album, 1984's *War And Pain*, was a brutal, punk-influenced assault, and the follow-up, *Rrröööaaarrr*, was only marginally more refined. By the time of 1987's *Killing Technology*, though, they were beginning to incorporate more complex musical explorations in their thrashy sound, while a central concept themed around an intergalactic warlord would provide an overarching narrative not just for the album but for their entire career.

It was no coincidence that Voivod had toured the US with Swiss avant-gardists Celtic Frost a year earlier, and the opening band in Austin was Watchtower.

"They were one of the first thrash bands I'd seen playing prog rock," says Away, who grew up listening to VdGG and King Crimson.

It was an approach that Voivod themselves began to take onboard, inspired partly by their own developing musical skills.

"Between 1983 and 1988 we rehearsed every single night," Away says. "We were ready to add a little bit more of the prog rock thing into our music. When we toured in 1987, we noticed the metal audiences were a little puzzled by our style."

Voivod's new approach reached fruition on 1988's

QUEENSRŸCHE: GETTY

Dream Theater with new singer James LaBrie (centre).

VILLALONGA/PHOTOSHOT/AVALON

Dimension Hatröss, a fully fledged prog metal concept album. Jettisoning the 100mph thrashings of old, its complex musicality, shifting rhythms and science fiction leaning positioned the Canadians as the Van der Graaf Generator of metal. Its follow-up, 1989's *Nothingface*, was even more assured, ramping up the prog aspects and throwing in a cover of *Astronomy Domine*, just in case anyone hadn't got the message.

"1989 and 1990 were great for us," says Away. "The video for *Astronomy Domine* had a lot of airplay on MTV, we got offered big tours with bands like Rush and the album sold quite a lot. To us, it felt like justification that what we were doing musically was right."

In New York, Mike Portnoy wasn't having as much luck. His band had changed their name from Majesty to Dream Theater and signed a deal with major label offshoot Mechanic Records, who released their debut album, 1989's *When Dream And Day Unite*. That record — featuring singer Charlie Dominici — was a fine calling card, tempering its intricate metal riffing with swathes of keyboards.

The band had, not unfairly, been marketed as "Metallica meets Rush" — only the masses weren't quite ready for that combination yet, and the record sank without trace.

"We never went on tour, never made a music video, which was absolutely crucial back then," says Portnoy. "We were watching Voivod and Queensrÿche doing really well and going, 'Wait a minute, we're different but not that different.' We started to get discouraged."

Rather than quitting, the band doubled down on their initial gameplan. They fired Dominici and spent the next two years working on the music for what would become their breakthrough album, *Images And Words*.

"We were working day jobs every day, going to band practice every night, looking for a new singer, looking for a new record deal," says Portnoy. "It was a very hard time. I'm shocked we made it through. But we persevered and we finally got the payoff with *Images And Words*."

Released in 1992 and featuring new singer James LaBrie, *Images And Words* was more than just a lifeline for Dream Theater. The single *Pull Me Under* gave them a bona fide hit, dragging the album along in its wake.

"We were plastered all over radio and MTV with an eight-and-a-half-minute song," says Portnoy. "That hadn't happened since the days of Yes and ELP in the 70s."

Dream Theater had finally blown the doors off, allowing prog metal to step through into the mainstream. The only problem was that many of their peers either weren't ready or weren't able to step through with them. Voivod had faltered with *Angel Rat*, the follow-up to *Nothingface*. A shifting line-up and lack of laser-sharp ambition meant that Fates Warning had never made the leap from culthood to mainstream acceptance. And Watchtower — the band who brought together prog and metal like no one else — had simply fallen apart after their astonishing second album, 1989's *Control And Resistance*.

"We took four years between albums, which didn't help us," says Watchtower's Colaluca. "But we had line-up problems and we just hit a barrier so we decided to shut the whole thing down. We did continue writing piecemeal after that, but real life got in the way."

"Watchtower are the band from that scene that should have made it," says Portnoy. "They were the most extreme ones from that genre. And Fates Warning too — as well as they did, they should have had the success Dream Theater had, especially with the *Parallels* album, which came out about a year before *Images And Words*."

"Maybe there were missed opportunities back then," says Fates Warning's Matheos. "I don't know why the guys from Dream Theater became superstars and we didn't. But they were an amazing band, and they worked hard and deserved it."

Dream Theater and Queensrÿche — whose 1988 album *Operation: Mindcrime* remains a landmark of the genre — may have been the only two bands to have emerged from prog metal's primordial soup who went on to genuine success, but the legacy of those early innovators resonates down the years. It's there in everyone from Meshuggah — who have taken Watchtower's prog thrash to sometimes unfeasible new levels of extremity and complexity — to new-school heroes

Watchtower: the great forgotten band of prog metal.

> "It wasn't like, 'Okay, we're going to do all this technical math stuff.' It was more, 'We love this heavy, fast stuff and we love this other, more complicated stuff – let's do something different and incorporate both parts.'" **Rick Colaluca**

such as Leprous, Between The Buried And Me and Haken.

"When I think about how they recorded all those parts without all the computer and studio tools we have today, it blows my mind," says Haken's Charlie Griffiths. "When Haken played Prog Power USA last year, Fates Warning played the *Awaken The Guardian* album with the original line-up, so it was a real 'full circle' kind of feeling."

Today, Dream Theater remain the flag-bearers for the original prog metal scene, though they don't stand alone. Despite having gone through many ups and downs, Voivod have continued to innovate and the Canadians are set to release a new album this year. Fates Warning still put out albums and play live on a semi-regular basis, while Watchtower reunited and have released a slow but steady drip of songs this decade, culminating in 2016's *Concepts Of Math* EP.

"I don't want to say Dream Theater created a new market, because bands like Fates Warning, Watchtower and Voivod were all doing it before us," reflects Mike Portnoy. "But I think collectively we all definitely created something that did change music and kept prog's spirit alive in a radically different form."

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PROG METAL

Fates Warning – *Awaken The Guardian* (1986)
The Connecticut pioneers' third album was the one where they truly came into their own. "We reached a peak with that one," says guitarist Jim Matheos. "It's innovative and musical and somewhat commercial."

Queensrÿche – *Rage For Order* (1986)
Operation: Mindcrime two years later was their magnum opus, but *Rage For Order* was arguably more revolutionary at the time: laser-tooled art rock that predicted a bleak digital future in which no one comes out on top.

Voivod – *Dimension Hatröss* (1988)
The one-time thrash savages reached full prog metal velocity on their fourth album, a dizzying, juddering behemoth as fearsome as the intergalactic warlord that gave the band their name.

Metallica – *...And Justice For All* (1988)
The metal giants' fourth album tore up their thrash metal blueprint in favour of complex time changes and long songs. The most commercially successful prog metal album, even if no one admits that it is one.

Crimson Glory – *Transcendence* (1988)
They started out as a Queensrÿche knock-off, but by their second album, they'd found their own voice. *Transcendence* was prog at its most vaulting and operatic.

Watchtower – *Control And Resistance* (1989)
Their debut album sounded like nothing else before it, but the Austin visionaries followed it up with something even greater. Prog thrash, math metal – call it you want, but its echoes still resonate today.

Dream Theater – *When Dream And Day Unite* (1989)
They went on to bigger things, but DT's debut album remains both a prog metal benchmark and a cult classic.

Sieges Even – *Steps* (1990)
Watchtower's influence was under the radar at the time, but those who caught on really picked it up and ran with it – none more so than Germany's Sieges Even, whose complex thrash made them sound like the Texans' European cousins.

Atheist – *Unquestionable Presence* (1991)
By the turn of the 90s, even death metallers were getting with the programme, including Florida's Atheist, who folded elements of prog, jazz and the technical brilliance of bassist Tony Choy into the mix.

Cynic – *Focus* (1993)
After Watchtower, Cynic were arguably the apex of prog metal's early incarnation – their debut was technically astounding without losing any of its razor-edged heaviness. A real tipping point. **DEV**

Ring Van Möbius, with frontman Thor Erik Helgesen (centre).

"When I played black metal, I always envied progressive rock bands when it came to dynamics. So I *really* enjoy that side of this band."

Go Your Own Way

Despite their founder's black metal beginnings, **Ring Van Möbius** look and sound as though they were transported straight from 1971's prog rock scene, with fans of ELP and VdGG sure to love their debut. From old school style recording to ditching guitars, we find out more about Norway's latest prog export…

Words: Dom Lawson
Portraits: Knut Even Medhaug

What a difference a few years can make. Emerging in a shower of psychedelic sparks and old school fervour, Ring Van Möbius have just released one of 2018's most authentically unhinged prog records in the form of debut *Past The Evening Sun*. Formed barely four years ago in Karmøy, Norway, the band are led by Hammond organ maestro Thor Erik Helgesen: a vision in suede and paisley, he and his band give the distinct impression that they've been teleported forward from 1971.

For those music fans with a taste for the extreme, however, Helgesen is far better known as Infamroth, founder and creative mastermind behind cult black metal band Throne Of Katarsis, whose visceral, primitive epics could hardly be further away from Ring Van Möbius' boisterous prog noir. With his former band firmly on the back-burner, Helgesen has clearly immersed himself in prog's kaleidoscopic essence, but his past works still seem a little at odds with his current artistic persona…

"I guess you might think that," he chuckles, clearly having heard the same observation countless times before. "But it's all me and I do think there are similarities between Throne Of Katarsis and what we're doing now. What's really different is the means of expression. Music-wise, in terms of the arrangements and lengthy songs with a lot of different emotions being released, that's all familiar from where I come from in the black metal scene. But the truth is that I've been listening to progressive rock for a long time now.

"I had a friend who showed me bands like Camel and King Crimson. He was *completely* into the 70s style and there were no albums in his universe after 1975! Somehow I just connected with this music and this is what's inspiring me right now, for sure."

Helgesen is happy to admit that he never had any specific plans to form a prog band. Instead, he was simply enjoying being a prog fan. Fate has a tendency to intervene when great ideas are floating idly in the ether, though, and a chance meeting led to the genesis of the Norwegian's best idea yet.

"Four years ago I met this guy who played the flute," he explains. "I was playing guitar at the time and we were just jamming, playing some classical stuff and then doing some Jethro Tull songs, and suddenly I had this cool riff in my head. I got the guy to play a melody and I had that riff going on underneath, and from that point on the riffs just came out of me, for three or four months, *every* day. There were *loads* of riffs so I had to record something. I didn't have a choice. I couldn't have all these cool riffs just lying around, so suddenly I needed a band to do this with!"

Brimming with inspiration, Helgesen embarked on a mission to recruit musicians for his new project. Norway has a perfectly serviceable prog scene of its own, of course, but it soon became apparent that spending the best part of two decades in the black metal scene had limited the aspiring bandleader's options somewhat.

"To be honest, I didn't know any musicians at all. All the guys I know are black metal dudes! I was living in a parallel universe, I guess. But eventually I found two guys. Håvard [Rasmussen, bassist] was involved in part of the production for the last Throne Of Katarsis album. He had all these old tape machines, which was a good omen, and he was also into progressive rock, so I phoned him and that was it. He was in. He was really keen to do it. Then I also found a drummer… and he's married to my sister now! But I knew Dag [Olav Husås] from before that. He was a thrash metal drummer but also a big Rush fan so I thought, 'Okay, that sounds about right, let's give it a try!' We've all got a more metal background than anything else but we were all quite keen to do this. We didn't have that specific 70s thing going on at first. We just wanted to make music, but after a while we realised it had that 70s vibe."

He's not kidding. *Past The Evening Sun* doesn't militantly adhere to some preconceived, misty-eyed notion of old school prog, but its debt to the darker, weirder end of the genre's golden first wave is undeniable.

Flamin' Hell! Ring Van Möbius turn up the heat in new video, *Past The Evening Sun*.

Fans of ELP and Van der Graaf Generator will be particularly well served by the crazed arrangements and Hammond-powered fury of the three epics on the album, not least due to the total absence of six-string guitars.

"Actually, I started off as the guitarist and we had another organ player at the beginning," Helgesen says, "but somehow I got hooked on playing the Hammond organ. The more I played the organ, the more I'd get annoyed by the sound of guitars on old songs. There would be some cool Hammond organ going on but the guitarist was always soloing

"We had to build our own analogue studio to record this. We're all very much into the possibilities of sound, so we were quite focused on doing it with the old techniques."

away and taking all the attention. So we thought, 'Let's do this differently, and not have a guitar player.' We do have a saxophonist every now and then, but a guitarist wouldn't have a very steady job in this band!"

From the wonky-eyed keyboard line that ushers in the album's Crimson-like opening riff, *Past The Evening Sun* is an album that proudly salutes the past, both in terms of the songs themselves *and* on a sonic level. Echoing the intensity of focus that typified the music he made in the black metal scene, Helgesen's approach to committing Ring Van Möbius to tape — and it had to be *actual* tape — is as holistic and feverishly authentic as can be.

"Oh yeah, man, we had to build our own analogue studio to record this," he grins. "Even though there are plenty of analogue studios around the world, and some really great ones, we're all very much into sounds, the *possibilities* of sound, and the whole creative process, being truly *connected* to that side of it. So we were quite focused on doing it with the old techniques of tape phasing and singing through organ speakers and a lot of things that are perhaps not so normal any more. I've recorded with analogue equipment many times, of course, but this was the first time I've been sitting at the desk. It was a very steep learning curve but we're really happy with how everything turned out."

Clocking in at 22 minutes, *Past The Evening Sun*'s title track is an extravagant way to introduce your new band to the world, with numerous moments of jarring mischief and psychedelic flair. The message lurking within the song's surreal monologue is far more restrained and rooted in the frustrations of real life. As the crescendos and changes of pace and mood swirl around you, there's a palpable sense of melancholy and disquiet looming amid the chaos, as Helgesen observes.

Sax Appeal: the video for *Past The Evening Sun* was shot in one take.

"I'm questioning the term 'freedom' in this life, balanced against the obligations and the roles we have to fill. Even when we are free, it seems that we might be trapped in a game, you know? On this record, the lyrics are stories and observations from the somewhat schizophrenic world that we live in. There's the more ordinary stuff about everyday life, because everyday life can also be very psychologically challenging. Not to mention the general situation in the world today, of course. But I tend to focus on mental aspects, rather than the actual actions of man. It's always quite abstract, but you can follow the lyrics to a certain point."

Call it evolution. Call it an awakening. Call it, as Helgesen does, "a different means of expression". Whatever you call it, Ring Van Möbius' music has given their founder a new lease of creative life. He talks about tentative plans to recruit a chamber quartet for the band's next album, much of which is already written, and a fervent desire to connect with a rapidly expanding international fan base.

"When starting this band, we had no goals other than just making the music," Helgesen says. "But we're getting a lot of attention now and we're really enjoying playing live and getting all the positive feedback afterwards, so we will be doing shows outside of Norway. Doing this is terrific and it's inspiring.

"When I played black metal," he adds, "I always envied prog rock bands when it came to dynamics, so I *really* enjoy that side of this band, that's for sure. Sometimes there's almost no sound at all, and then you have the other end of things, where it's just *madness*."

Past The Evening Sun is out now via Apollon Records. See www.apollonrecords.no for details.

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Chris Carter

He was the synth player in industrial pioneers Throbbing Gristle, has produced light shows for bands such as Hawkwind, started his own label with his partner and has just released a new solo album. So now we have to ask: **how prog is Chris Carter? Words:** Rob Hughes

At face value, there doesn't seem to be much in common between prog and industrial rock. Yet peel back the skin and the similarities start to reveal themselves: the love of experimental forms, fluid time signatures, weird instrumentation, provocative visuals, the concept of performance art. And, of course, great song titles.

Step forward Throbbing Gristle, the insurgents of noise who unpacked such industro-prog terrors as *Maggot Death*, *Zyklon B Zombie*, *Perception Is The Only Reality*, *His Arm Was Her Leg* and *Hamburger Lady*. The band's rise may have coincided with the onset of punk, but the creative liberties of prog provided their fuel.

"I was a terrible proghead growing up," states synth player and electronics pioneer Chris Carter, who co-founded Throbbing Gristle with Genesis P-Orridge, Cosey Fanni Tutti and Peter 'Sleazy' Christopherson in late 1975.

> **"I was a terrible proghead growing up. It was my passion. I used to go to gigs every weekend – Genesis, Van der Graaf Generator, King Crimson, Pink Floyd, Yes, anything."**

Carter's new album, *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume One*.

TG, L-R: Chris Carter, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Peter 'Sleazy' Christopherson, Genesis P-Orridge.

"It was my passion. I used to go to gigs every weekend — Genesis, Van der Graaf Generator, King Crimson, Pink Floyd, Yes, anything. You mention it and I'd be at all those big shows."

Carter's immersion in prog fed directly into his earliest work: producing light shows for some of his favourite bands, such as Hawkwind. "I had a little van and would travel around the country doing work for all sorts of prog rock bands," he recalls. "You could be experimental because they were quite open to what you were trying to do. Hawkwind actually had their own light show as well, with Liquid Len [Jonathan Smeeton], who I met a couple of times. The biggest one I ever did was Yes, at a university up north somewhere. It was my first interaction with a really large audience and was definitely a seed for me going on to do my own multimedia thing."

Prior to Throbbing Gristle, Carter would play colleges and universities as Waveforms, a solo act that combined art films with light effects and avant-garde drones, courtesy of a handful of bespoke synths and keyboards.

"My friend John Lacey, son of the artist Bruce Lacey, used to give me circuits and we would swap ideas," Carter explains. "He showed me how to build some of these synth circuits that were coming onto the market.

"I was lucky with Waveforms because I had a couple of friends who were helping out — one doing quad sound and the other doing the lights. It was just me on stage, doing this weird ambient set. There was a lot of head-scratching and chin-rubbing in the audience. I could see people thinking, 'Do we *like* this?'"

It was through Lacey that Carter met his future bandmates in Throbbing Gristle in the mid-70s. At that point they were involved in COUM Transmissions, a performance art collective out to subvert the tenets of acceptable British society.

The ensemble's notorious final show, *Prostitution*, took place at London's ICA in October 1976 and included pornography, strippers, chains, bottles of blood and used Tampax in glass cases. It was scandalous enough to elicit questions in the House of Commons, where Tory MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn lambasted P-Orridge and Tutti as "wreckers of civilisation".

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

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STEVE DOUBLE/CAMERA PRESS

2012's *Desertshore/The Final Report*, featuring 'Sleazy' Christopherson's posthumous recordings.

TG partners Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti.

COSEY FANNI TUTTI

The same spirit of anarchy drove Throbbing Gristle — motto: "Industrial Music For Industrial People" — creating work that relied heavily on samples, distortion, spoken-word passages and electronica for full effect. No subject was off limits, however grotesque. Live gigs offered a sensory jolt of disturbing imagery in a self-styled quest to confront national decay, bigotry and intolerance in all its forms.

"The establishment was railing against us at the time," Carter says. "It was a very intense period of my life. I'd also fallen madly in love with Cosey, so there was that whole thing going on, as well as keeping TG running and building all these things for the band.

"I was just completely enthralled by the whole thing — it was as if I'd found my place. There seemed to be no boundaries for TG: we could just invent all this new sound. And people would quite happily listen to it. I found it such an exciting time, listening to new experimental and electronic music. But then it's also that cliché about being the best of times, the worst of times. It could get pretty scary."

Carter also reveals that he despised the name Throbbing Gristle. He still feels the same today: "I just hate it! It really rubs me up the wrong way. Wherever I can, I'll abbreviate it to TG and I love the fact that a lot of people do. But they [the others in TG] wouldn't change it for anything."

> **"Even if I hadn't met Cosey and joined TG, I think I would've gone on to do something parallel to what they were doing, or something more experimental of my own."**

By the time internal tensions led to TG splitting in 1981 — leaving behind three essential albums and signing off with the bald declaration: "the mission is terminated" — Carter was already underway with his solo career. *The Space Between* had been released a year earlier on TG's own Industrial label.

He may well have gone on to make more, but his personal and professional relationship with Cosey resulted in the pair of them forming the Conspiracy International label (CTI) and pooling their talents as Chris & Cosey. It was a prolific union that grew to encompass video work and soundtracks, plus collaborations with the likes of Robert Wyatt, Coil and Monte Cazazza.

Carter also found room for music journalism, graphic design and photography, with he and Cosey branching out into album cover artwork during the 90s. Factor in various remix projects and a couple of latter-day TG reunions and it's easy to see how Carter's solo output has taken a back seat over the decades.

Now he's returned with *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume One*, whose roots, fittingly enough, are tangled up in the last days of TG. Shortly after Genesis P-Orridge quit the band for good at the back end of 2010, 'Sleazy' Christopherson died in his sleep, aged 55. The album he was planning, a reimagining of Nico's 1970 opus *Desertshore*, had been earmarked as a Throbbing Gristle release.

Chris and Cosey then took it on to its conclusion, using Sleazy's recordings and new ones of their own. *Desertshore/The Final Report* finally landed in November 2012, with an

Industrial Introduction: one band and its dog in Hackney, 1981.

TG PRESS

Chris Carter at TG's Industrial Records studio in Hackney, London, 1981.

array of guest vocalists. "The day after Sleazy died, Cosey and I were still getting emails coming in from him, as if he was alive, talking about the album," Carter says. "So we had to finish it because he'd taken all those things we'd done here in our studio back to Bangkok with him. And he was working on it when he died."

The upshot of all this was that *Chemistry Lessons...* has taken longer to arrive than it otherwise would have. "I started it at the end of the last time TG was together," explains Carter. "I needed something else to do because TG was so intense. And then Sleazy died around the same period, so I sort of shelved it for about a year. I just couldn't face it because it was quite an emotional time."

The album is a dazzling synthesis of tones and textures, a rich panorama of patterns and sequencers, dotted with treated vocal samples and drum machines. There are traces of TG-ish industrial noise, though tempered by gliding melodies and ambient rhythms. Its moods are varied too, ranging from playful to sinister to sombre.

The more melancholy tracks date from the time of Sleazy's death: "They're probably reflections of how I was feeling when I did them, because some of them are five or six years old. And I guess they do reflect the emotions I was going through then."

For a record so steeped in electronica, it's surprising to discover that one of its major influences is antique folk music. "I found a load of really old files – regular English folk – that I'd been listening to years and years ago," Carter says. "Then I found this other stuff that was like medieval folk music, almost primeval. It hit me somewhere and I really connected with it, especially some of the melodies and time signatures. In a way I was trying to incorporate that into all the electronics, which I can't imagine people usually do."

The three essential TG albums, from top: *The Second Annual Report* (1977), *D.o.A. The Third And Final Report* (1978) and *20 Jazz Funk Greats* (1979).

The bridge from there to the present came courtesy of Carter's long-standing fixation with the Radiophonic Workshop. "I've always listened to them, from the 60s onwards. It's one of my favourite things to do. Their music covers such a broad spectrum and encompasses all sorts of things – pop songs, soundtracks, sound effects. I like the idea of having a playful, melodic tune with these weird, unsettling noises in the background."

In many ways, *Chemistry Lessons...* is the sound of Carter coming full circle. The DIY aesthetic of the Radiophonic Workshop informed his attitude to music from the start. When he was 11 or 12, his parents bought him a home radio kit to build, after which he began making his own circuits.

"I used to buy electronics magazines and see all these big synths and think, 'There's no way I'm going to be able to afford that,'" he recalls. "But in my own little way I could build an oscillator and a filter and make small steps towards that. So I got into it slowly, gradually building up my knowledge."

Like his contemporary Brian Eno, Carter insists he's no musician, which he says can be an advantage. "I've had conversations with Cosey about this, because she had piano lessons and learned how to play really well. Of the two of us, she's by far the better keyboard player and I'm slightly musically dyslexic – I still have the notes written on my keyboard because I constantly forget them. In some ways, though, I think it gives me greater scope to try different things out.

"Even if I hadn't met Cosey and joined TG, I think I would've gone on to do something parallel to what they were doing, or something more experimental of my own," he adds. "I was heading down that path already.

"Making music is more like a way of relaxing to me. I can do my solo stuff and not be beholden to anybody else. I don't care whether people like it or not, I just do what I do." PM

Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume One is out now via Mute. For more information, see www.chriscarter.co.uk.

YOUR SHOUT!

From lighting shows for Yes and Hawkwind to the groundbreaking sounds of Throbbing Gristle, you simply have to ask the question: how prog is Chris Carter?

"You don't know the meaning of the word 'progressive' if you don't consider something like *Hamburger Lady* to be progressive. That's exactly what prog should be - pushing boundaries. Not much music genuinely frightens me. Throbbing Gristle frighten me. And I like it."
Rich Goodall

"He's a really cool guy who's done great music and who Cosey Fanni Tutti thinks looks like a stud in jeans. All good things!"
Lachlan Lachlan

"I love the first album (*The Second Annual Report*). Side one is as extreme as it gets! Amazing synth sounds."
Matt Baber

"Loved TG, Chris & Cosey, CCI, X-TG etc... Industrial, electronica, experimental... Many things but not prog!"
Rob Hurst

"Not progressive prog, too intense."
Steve Harrison

"Anyone who begins their career doing light shows and visual effects for Yes and Hawkwind, becomes a starting point of industrial music with the experimental band Throbbing Gristle and collaborates with Dave Stewart and Robert Wyatt as Chris & Cosey gets a loud shout from me."
Paul Leader

"Not prog. Or jazz funk."
Tim Collins

"Go for it - definitely progressive in the sense of pushing boundaries, if not the genre."
Steve Tilling

"The fact that Chris Carter made a type of sampling keyboard for live performance in the 70s before digital samplers makes him more than a worthy subject in talking about progressive music!"
Kirk D. Calton

"Oh, a million times yes , but only if Cosey's contribution is equally recognised. Also G P-O, a towering figure with Psychic TV."
Mini Kingman

"While Throbbing Gristle is very much industrial music and synonymous with the creation of Industrial Records (Hertford Road, Hackney), Chris Carter brought a new musical dimension to the act, which was fully matured in Chris & Cosey. The shift away from COUM and art performance, into experimental synth/industrial, is definitely relevant to the prog genre. I believe that this wouldn't have happened without Chris Carter's immense influence on Cosey Tutti Fanni and their musical development together."
Isere Lloyd-Davis

"Never heard of him."
Mike Attwood

"Not related to Wonder Woman Linda Carter or to former US president Jimmy Carter? Don't know him..."
Enrique Montiel

"A record like Genesis' *Seconds Out* or Gentle Giant's *Playing The Fool* really represents their work over time. How a band plays live is really important."

Lost In Music: Ross Jennings with Yes' *Yessongs* live album.

We've Got A Live One Here...

Ten years into their career, leading UK proggers **Haken** are releasing their first concert recording. **Ross Jennings** tells us how fan power made *L-1VE* happen, and reveals his six all-time favourite live albums.

Words: Grant Moon **Images:** Yulia Teruel

"I'm a big fan of live albums," says Haken's Ross Jennings. "Whenever I'd want to discover new bands, instead of buying their whole discography, I'd approach their live album first. When a band goes out to promote their latest release, they've also got to serve up the greatest hits, so a record like Genesis' *Seconds Out* or Gentle Giant's *Playing The Fool* really represents their work over time. How a band plays live is really important."

Last year Haken played across Europe and the US on their 10th-anniversary tour, and the time was right for their own first foray into concert recording. *L-1VE* ("You can call it *Live One*," says the singer helpfully) was recorded last April on the final date of the tour at Amsterdam's Melkweg, one of that city's more storied venues.

Haken's new live album *L-1VE* marks where the band are at, 10 years in.

Capturing a band clearly in their stride, *L-1VE* serves as a timely reminder of the music that's earned the sextet their place at modern prog's top table. With a set drawing on 2010 debut *Aquarius*, *Visions*, their towering breakthrough record *The Mountain* and acclaimed current offering *Affinity*, it certainly lives up to Jennings' 'greatest hits' criterion.

"For me it's always been a bucket-list item," he reveals. "Every band wants to tick the live album box, the acoustic album box and the covers album box, so for now at least we can tick one of those three.

"To be honest we'd always been in two minds about it. We thought we'd wait until the next tour, and then the next. But we started receiving a lot of email and Facebook messages from fans crying out for a live album. It started off casual, then they started sending emails to the label requesting it. Then they started a petition on our Facebook group, Haken Haven, obtaining signatures. The power of the people got to us in the end!"

That level of fan fervour is pretty reassuring for the band, and it's interesting to know there's still an undiminished appetite for live records. Just what is it about a good concert recording that retains such allure?

"Playing live is a different beast," offers Jennings, "and I guess people want to 'own' that live experience and draw on it, relive it, at home. There's something quite magical when we play live that I can't really explain.

"With *L-1ve* we wanted to capture how it felt to be in the audience, in the pit. It took months of hard work to put all the elements together, to mix the sound and edit the film footage. Each member of the band had to listen all the way through to make sure they were happy with their parts.

"These days you can take little pieces from other shows, but we haven't done much of that at all. We just fixed a few small technical glitches we really couldn't live with."

You can almost hear the purists' hackles rise, but when you're going to this trouble to make a one-off document of your band's first decade, you can surely be forgiven a few little tweaks in post.

With the sextet already working on their fifth album and looking ahead, the release of their debut live record feels like a career landmark. "We wanted to celebrate our anniversary," explains Jennings. "It made sense to draw a line under those 10 years, and with this live album there's a sense of the end of a chapter."

L-1ve is out now via InsideOut. For more information, see www.hakenmusic.com.

Six Of The Best!

Live album aficionado **Ross Jennings** selects his all-time favourite concert recordings from prog artists old and new, spanning four decades and three continents...

Yes - *Yessongs* (1973)

"This is Yes at the height of their golden era. I think it's so nice that it captures that raw essence of them playing live, rather than being too perfect. That's something Haken can learn from in future – we're perfectionists whereas sometimes it's the imperfections that add something.

"The rawness of the quality is one of the things I like about *Yessongs*, but you can still hear the nuances of the performance and I find the mix well done. Considering it's an analogue mix, everything is separated and clear. There's young muscle behind the performance which, understandably, you wouldn't get from Yes these days, and the album caught something really special.

"A lot of people I've spoken to regard this as one of Yes' greatest outputs. The setlist is flawless and functions as a greatest hits of their early era. I've seen Rick Wakeman recently and he's still a master, but there's something from that time that's captured here, something you can't put a formula to. There's magic here – I can really hear that.

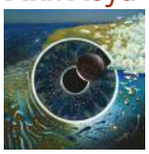
"You could argue that the album's aged in terms of sound quality, but you could also argue the other way – you'll never capture something like this again. It's timeless."

Frank Zappa - *Broadway The Hard Way* (1988)

"I couldn't go on *Mastermind* answering questions about Zappa, but I really appreciate what he did – he's one of the legends of rock. I absolutely love *Broadway The Hard Way*. It was played to me during a great time in my life and quickly won a place in my heart as one of my favourite live records. I was in university and discovering lots of new music and collecting this whole database of stuff I love. The music here is so eclectic – it's comedy, it's rock, jazz, big band and swing. Sting's on there doing a cover of *Murder By Numbers* – I'm a big fan of The Police so that's cool.

"I was really into the song *Any Kind Of Pain*. It captures Zappa as I perceive him – this incredible musician, a director of other musicians, and a comedian. It sits quite well next to the other parts of his legacy. I have a lot of his albums but don't own many of the live ones, and while I'm sure the purists have their favourites, *Broadway The Hard Way* is the one that spoke to me personally. This is the Zappa album I keep coming back to."

Pink Floyd - *Pulse* (1995)



"This was one of my first experiences of getting into music seriously. My dad worked in the exhibition industry and was at Earls Court when *Pulse* was recorded. He's not a huge prog fan but it became a big thing for him to see the members of Pink Floyd in the corridors backstage. He bought this on VHS when it came out, and it was a massive influence on the 11-year-old me, and led to me exploring everything Pink Floyd ever did. They played the whole of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* and a load of other greatest hits.

"I like all of Floyd's stuff, but I've always been more a fan of David Gilmour than of Roger Waters. I love his voice, his guitar tones... that whole *Division Bell* era was magic for me. The light show and the other visual elements on *Pulse* were mind-blowing to watch, even on a VHS tape. I made sure we had a copy of the live album itself and that became a staple on our hi-fi at home.

"The music here is incredibly performed. Hearing *Dark Side...* from front to back was mesmerising, and the extra musicians they brought in enhanced the experience. It's something that's never going to happen again and it needs to be cherished."

Dream Theater - *Live Scenes From New York* (2001)

"Without doubt one of my biggest influences, one of the main reasons I'm doing this, is Dream Theater. This is over three hours of music over three discs. They play arguably their best album, *Scenes From A Memory*, in full, along with other selections from their repertoire. Charlie [Griffiths, Haken guitarist] was at that show and I wish I'd been there too.

"My CD copy of this is completely weathered: it's probably the most used disc in my collection. Some guy introduced me and Rich [Henshall, Haken's other guitarist] to Dream Theater at a rock club and they completely blew me away. I hit HMV the next day and grabbed as many albums as I could.

"John Petrucci's guitar solo spots always get to me, and there's a great one before *Through Her Eyes*. In those days we thought Kirk Hammett was the world's best guitarist, but John opened a new set of doors. James LaBrie's vocal solo spot is mesmerising too. He's a big influence on me, and the stamina he has to pull this show off is impressive.

Jennings with Dream Theater's *Live Scenes From New York*.

"Without doubt one of my biggest influences, one of the main reasons I'm doing this, is Dream Theater."

"Listening to all this complicated music being played so perfectly and passionately is just fantastic. Again, it's a great entry point for those who don't know Dream Theater well. They played *Acid Rain* from Liquid Tension Experiment, who I wasn't aware of before, so it also introduced me to Mike Portnoy's extracurricular activities.

"The encore's *A Change Of Seasons*, and it's the end of an incredible, epic night."

Rush - *Rush In Rio* (2003)

"I knew about Rush before this but wasn't heavily into them. Someone lent this to me on DVD – I work visually and that's just the way I am – but I quickly went on to buy the album too. Rush probably have better live albums than this – I know *Exit... Stage Left* is considered the classic – but this is my go-to one. Through *Rush In Rio*, I really started taking them seriously and got into their back catalogue. There's just something about their performance on here, and the crowd is just insane. That crowd noise is high up in the mix like nothing I'd ever heard, and it definitely adds something to the experience – it's part of what makes it great.

"I've played in South America and the energy and noise the audiences make is incredible. I don't know if it's because they appreciate the music more or if it's in the nature of the people, but it's great for musicians to have that energy sent back at you. I'd love to go back there with Haken.

"Rush's setlist is great here, and there are three discs of it! This is a really good entry point for anyone not quite as into Rush as they should be. I did see them a few times, on the *Clockwork Angels* tour. I'm really sorry they've thrown in the towel, but I'm so glad I caught them at the end of a great era."

Pain Of Salvation - *12:5* (2004)

"This is a bit of an unconventional one. Pain Of Salvation take some of the best tracks from their first three albums and perform them in an acoustic setting in front of a live audience, à la *MTV Unplugged*. I'm really not sure what the consensus is among their hardcore fans, but I think they do it really well.

"It's one of the first albums of theirs that I heard, which is quite strange, and it serves as a really good introduction to their stuff. Any part of *Remedy Lane* stands out to me – the instrumental *Dryad Of The Woods* benefits from the acoustic setting. The mixing on their first album *Entropia* wasn't to my taste, but they work in tracks from it on *12:5* and hearing them acoustically made me appreciate that album more.

"It was brave of them to do this, especially in a live setting. Not many bands would dare to try that, but they pull it off. Daniel Gildenlöw has an amazing voice, one of my favourites among the modern prog bands. What an incredible tone he has: passionate, raw and gritty, and that comes across.

"We did an acoustic show in Israel once and it went really well. The crowd was just wild – it didn't matter how many mistakes we made! It's definitely something I'd like to do again, and potentially record it. That'd be our acoustic album – another tick off the bucket list..." **GRM**

Matt Baber: going solo with a 10-part suite.

Suite Sensation

With *Suite For Piano And Electronics*, **Matt Baber** has finally shared some of his solo work with the world. The Sanguine Hum man tells *Prog* about being lost in space, the importance of intricacy, and why he won't be widdling.

Words: Sid Smith **Images:** Carl Glover

"I saw the first *Star Wars* film when I was four or five in 1981. My parents had the John Williams soundtrack album and I used to have the record playing over and over again while I played with my Star Wars toys. Certain bits of that score elicited a real response in me that I can't quite explain," says Matt Baber, recounting his earliest memory of music's capacity to alter mood and heighten consciousness, exerting an unseen but tangible force that he would encounter throughout his life.

It's an encounter that can come as either blinding and Damascene or a slow awareness, sitting at the edge of our perception. "It's the 'something elseness' of it — you're getting a glimpse of something else going on in the world that no one can adequately put their finger on," he says.

The full range of similarly intense epiphanies has been part of Baber's experience both as a co-founder and keyboardist with Oxfordshire-based Sanguine Hum and as a solo artist. "I think if you asked most musicians, the real motivation is the connection between yourself and whatever is the creative process that connects you to the universe, for want of a better description, in a unique way," he muses.

Over the years it's been an especially productive connection. By his own admission, Baber has amassed hundreds of hours of solo piano music. Yet apart from the occasional download release via the Sanguine Hum website or dropping individual tracks for streaming on his SoundCloud page, including a glistening cover of *To Be Over* by Yes, the vast bulk has been left unreleased. So what made the 10 pieces that comprise his new album *Suite For Piano And Electronics* different?

"I suppose what made me decide I was going to put this one out was maybe a bunch of life stuff like turning 40 and getting the sense that there's literally no point keeping them on a hard drive," he laughs. "There's an element where you're working on something and it's just you and the keyboard — there's no way that anything that happens after that can actually improve upon that experience. So the only other reason for doing it is to hope that other people can share in the feeling you get from writing it."

> "The real motivation is the connection between yourself and whatever is the creative process that connects you to the universe in a unique way."

The origins of this particular album came in part as a result of the seasonal downturn he experiences as a drum tutor, his principal method of putting bread and butter on the table. Being a self-employed teacher means he's used to what he describes as "the lull".

"It's when loads of people go away during the summer and you don't earn that much money so it's always good to have a project across the summer," he explains, "and so this album was my project."

Dominating the record are the bright tones and cascading notes from Baber's piano. Those rhapsodic flurries and uplifting themes sparkle against a backdrop of subtle and painterly electronica. Sometimes heavily daubed, sometimes gently layered, they form shimmering backdrops, radiating a harmonic luminosity around Baber's melodies or gathering into knots of pulses that bring a rhythmic impetus to a piece.

The album is almost defiantly old school in that the tracks are carefully blended and segued into each other. It's not just about the songs individually, says Baber, but how they relate and fold into each other.

"Frank Zappa was a master of the segue and Todd Rundgren was another great one on *A Wizard, A True Star*. The experiencing of the whole record becomes something rather than just the songs themselves."

Co-opting electronica wasn't a result of some accident or mere whim. "A few years back I'd had a bit of a writer's drought and to keep me going I'd started setting up synthesiser apps on an iPad, just to make *something* and thinking that one day they may be useful."

Revisiting these loops, Baber set them up and began improvising piano parts against them. "That's when it started feeling like a thing. The first complete piece I finished was *Part Ten*, the longest track and a suite within a suite. The funny thing was I was

Baber is already looking forward to Sanguine Hum's new album and tour.

"I was ultra-conscious about not doing the widdly-widdly kind of solos. Unless you're an absolutely amazing soloist, it's best to not bother."

really struggling to finish it and just adding that slight touch of ambient electronics to it was the texture it actually needed. For me it was a radical thing to do because I'd normally keep the electronics and the ambient stuff completely separate from the piano stuff."

While the stereotypical prog rock keyboard player is found whizzing up and down the notes as fast as they can among the banks of keyboards stacked so high they need a stepladder to hit top C, Baber is as far removed from that cliche as it's possible to get. He certainly isn't interested in shows of technique, either on this record or within Sanguine Hum.

"The word we use in the band is 'intricate' rather than 'complicated'," he says. "Intricate can be problematic because it's harder to learn, harder to remember, harder to orchestrate with the band and can end up causing massive headaches when we come to remind ourselves how these things go."

As far as *Suite For Piano And Electronics* goes, the approach was about meshing texture with melody. "I was ultra-conscious about not doing the widdly-widdly kind of solos. Unless you're an absolutely amazing soloist then it's probably best to not bother and do something else."

Matt Baber's first solo album, *Suite For Piano And Electronics*.

The making of Baber's solo record coincided with a sense that after the release of Sanguine Hum's 2015 album *Now We Have Light*, he and the others in the band were left feeling burnt out.

"We knew that when we decided to record again, it was going to be slow and gradual and without a deadline," he says, acknowledging that this space in the band's schedule also opened up an opportunity for his own work, which he was keen to take.

With Sanguine Hum's fifth album, *Now We Have Power* scheduled for release later this year, and plans for live work by the group in the offing, there's a sense that it was now or never for this particular record.

Baber's happy that this collection didn't go the way of his other music, becoming lost on one of his numerous hard drives. "I just want people to be able to discover it," he says. "I think all you can ask for in this day and age is that it gets out there and that it finds people."

Sanguine Hum's Now We Have Power is out on October 12, while Baber's Suite For Piano And Electronics is out now, both via Bad Elephant. For more information, see www.sanguinehum.com and mattbaber.bandcamp.com.

NOW HE HAS LIGHT

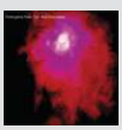
Matt Baber's formative five.

Genesis
The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway
Seconds Out was the big discovery for me, but I used to lose myself in this. The sound world and piano techniques and sense of otherness have stuck with me. I listened to it and began to figure out what Tony Banks was doing. There's probably a lot of Tony Banks in my new record, in that he would do that intricate thing that wasn't necessarily flashy, but then you try to figure it out and you go, "Wow!"

ELP
Pictures At An Exhibition
The first ELP thing I got was a VHS tape of *Pictures At An Exhibition* playing at the Lyceum and covered in awful special effects. Not long after, I got the sheet music for the piano score, just to work out bits but also just to explore what ELP did and didn't take from Mussorgsky. It was fascinating how this music that was exciting me from 1970 was taken from something 100 years before and how it was relevant. That opened up the classical world for me.

Aphex Twin
Richard D James Album
It felt like wandering into an entirely new world. Back then, drum and bass was a 'thing', and this was Richard D James' closest foray. But there was so much more to it: the chords, melodies and unpredictable nature of the barrage of rhythm caught my ear. Later on, I realised that Aphex Twin shared much with artists from the 70s, especially Brian Eno and Tangerine Dream.

Keith Jarrett
The Köln Concert
I'd encountered this without knowing it was improvised. In my mid-20s, I'd got bored with where rock music was at and this album shot through my whole system, changing my perspective on music. I think I listened to jazz pretty much exclusively for the next few years, developing a passion for the ECM label in particular. Jarrett's solo concerts, especially from the 1970s, have something magical going on in them.



Porcupine Tree
Up The Downstair
I discovered this in 1993, just after it had come out and there was a real sense of finding a band doing something unique and current but with progressive influences. Since this album, both Steven Wilson and Richard Barbieri have been big influences on me. I think having Richard on keyboards and the intriguing textures he created kind of offset where Porcupine Tree could have gone into the more prog metal kind of thing. **SS**

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PROG

STRENGTH TO DREAM

Beginn is aptly titled: the album sees Tangerine Dream's **Jerome Froese** and Propaganda's **Claudia Brücken** making a fresh start, free to do the unexpected. The pair tell *Prog* about their progressive ideals, their former bands, and how they came to team up for their avant-pop project.

Words: Dave Everley **Images:** Will ireland

Claudia Brücken was in her teens when she first heard Tangerine Dream. Growing up in Germany in the 70s, they were hard to avoid – not so much a mainstream presence as part of the musical fabric at a time when the country was leading the way in forward-looking experimental music.

"When you were exploring new electronic music, Tangerine Dream were just there," says Brücken, who, as a former member of early-80s art pop group Propaganda, knows a thing or two about the subject. "They were part of this whole wave of artists who were creating new sounds, which was really exciting to be in the middle of."

Next to her, Jerome Froese smiles. He's the son of visionary Tangerine Dream founder Edgar Froese, and he was a member of that band between 1990 and 2006. "It was hard for me to measure their importance back then because I was around them since I was a young child," he says. "But I know how much my father and his music were respected."

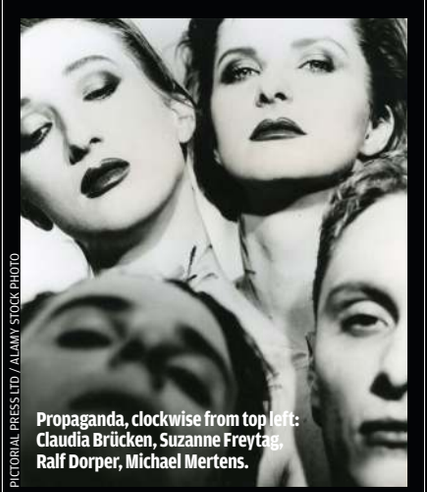
The two of them are sitting attentively at a table in the restaurant of an unassuming Central London hotel. Froese arrived from his home in Berlin yesterday, landing in the middle of one of the most ferocious thunderstorms of recent memory.

"We circled around for about an hour," he says, pulling up a photo on his phone of a biblical deluge taken from the plane's window. "We didn't even know if we could land."

Brücken has made the short journey from her flat in north London. She has called the capital home since moving here in the early 80s, when Propaganda became the first band to sign to Buggles/Yes producer Trevor Horn's record label/art pop collective, ZTT.

The pair have united for a new collaborative album, *Beginn*, which marries Froese's exploratory music to Brücken's emotive voice. The German-language title is just a consonant away from its British equivalent, though the meaning is clear anyway. "This is the start of it," says Brücken of their musical union. "It's our beginning."

Aptly enough given their respective pedigrees, Brücken and Froese met electronically before they came together in the flesh. In 2014, he was looking for someone to sing on some new songs he was writing. A mutual friend suggested Brücken, whom Froese knew of via her work with Propaganda, as well as her latter-day solo career.



PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Propaganda, clockwise from top left: Claudia Brücken, Suzanne Freytag, Ralf Dorper, Michael Mertens.

"I discovered [Propaganda's landmark 1985 debut album] *A Secret Wish* when I was a teenager," he says. "It's not a question of whether you know it or not – if Trevor Horn is involved and you're a musician, you have to know it."

The two of them spoke via Skype – "For two and a half hours," says Froese – and they found out they had more in common than just a shared nationality and an involvement in music that pushes at the boundaries.

"We told each other our horror stories about business, about what happened," says Brücken. "And we were both like, 'You're not telling me anything new.'"

> "I discovered Propaganda's *A Secret Wish* when I was a teenager. It's not a question of whether you know it or not – if Trevor Horn is involved and you're a musician, you have to know it."
>
> **Jerome Froese**

On paper, the pair are a slightly odd match. Froese is the baby-faced son of German prog royalty, Brücken is the elegant art student turned synth-pop star. But the parallels between them aren't hard to draw, not least the fact that they both started out in music when they were in their teens.

Jerome Froese and Claudia Brücken: stepping out of the shadows of their former bands.

Dream Team: Jerome Froese and Claudia Brücken, June 2018.

Brücken grew up in Düsseldorf, the industrial city located on the Rhine in the north-west of Germany. Kraftwerk and Neu! had emerged from the city's experimental underground a few years earlier, and Brücken threw herself into the local music and art scene.

"We didn't have computers or iPhones, and for us, making music was our way to communicate," she says. "It's what we would do on a Saturday. We'd go in a rehearsal room and make music, make sounds, create. That was our way of entertaining ourselves."

Brücken was in her last year of school when she was invited to join Propaganda. The band were already negotiating a deal with the newly launched ZTT when she came on board. Their first two singles — the icy, industrial-tinged *Dr Mabuse* and the classy synth-pop of *Duel* — were both hits at home and in the UK.

"We were quite arty and experimental, but we had been given this chance to work with Trevor, so we were being treated like, I don't know... Seal!" she says with a laugh. "I remember at the time, all the artists and musicians in Düsseldorf couldn't believe it — everyone wanted to work with Trevor Horn. A lot of people were like, 'Why them and not us?'"

> "Stephen Lipson had no idea what to do in that section of the song. He walked out of the studio and there was Steve Howe. Steven said, 'Do you fancy popping in and doing a bit of noodling?' And he said, 'Sure.' You couldn't have planned it."
>
> **Claudia Brücken**

Despite Horn's association with Yes, ZTT was geared towards cutting-edge pop rather than prog rock. But it was infused with the same forward-looking spirit, as well as an electrifying sense of community: the studio was a magnet for passing musicians, including Propaganda's early labelmates Frankie Goes To Hollywood and Art Of Noise.

"There was definitely a progressive spirit to it," Brücken says. "It was just this explosion of creativity. You'd run into the different studios and they would be full of musicians using the latest gear that Trevor had bought. Paul Morley [journalist and ZTT propaganda minister, and Brücken's ex-husband] was from Manchester and he knew the people who had set up Factory Records. They shared an ideology."

This air of controlled chaos was what drew Steve Howe into Propaganda's orbit. He played a solo on *The Murder Of Love*, a track on the German band's debut album, *A Secret Wish*.

"It was exactly that — controlled chaos," says Brücken. "[Producer] Stephen Lipson had no idea what to do in that section of the song. He said, 'It needs some jazzy solo.' He walked out of the studio and there was Steve Howe. He was working with Trevor on something. Stephen said, 'Do you fancy popping in and doing a bit of noodling?' And he said, 'Sure.' You couldn't have planned it."

When Propaganda became embroiled in contractual and legal issues with ZTT in 1986, Brücken left the band. Her subsequent career saw various collaborations and solo projects, though her most recent album, 2014's *Where Else...* found her blending electronics with washes of evocative guitar. The cover even featured her with an instrument slung over her shoulder like a classic rock troubadour.

"It was super different for me and I really liked making it, but I was very happy when Jerome contacted me," she says. "I wanted to make electronic music again."

The ironic thing is that Jerome Froese isn't an electronic musician. Or at least, he isn't *just* an electronic musician. He writes mostly on the guitar, then proceeds to feed it through all manner off effects pedals and computer software. He calls the results 'Guitartronica'.

"Most guitar players only play in a rock'n'roll way," he says. "My intention was to let the guitar sound like a keyboard, like a sequencer. There are so many sounds and so many possibilities to explore. I did many guitars on this album as well, but mainly they don't sound like a guitar."

Froese literally grew up in a creatively fertile environment. He was born in 1970, the same year his father's band released their debut album, *Electronic Meditation*. At two, he appeared on the cover of Tangerine Dream's *Atem* album. He was always destined to join the family business, though he resisted until he was 19.

He had been writing and playing music on the keyboards and computers his father would cast off every time he got new equipment. Then, in 1990, Tangerine Dream were booked to

play a gig in the former East Berlin to mark the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year.

"I said to Edgar, 'Hey, the highlight of every concert is your guitar solo — how about I join you for that? I walk onstage, play the guitar solo, walk off, end.' And he said, 'Yeah, let's do that.' Then he came back and said, 'There's a slight change — you play the guitar solo, but you're onstage the whole time.' And then I was in the band."

Jerome remained a member of the group for the next 16 years. He says it was "a special affair" working with his father. But around the turn of the millennium, his mother died and things began to change.

"My father got into another relationship and married again," he says. "My mother always kept Edgar grounded — she was the leveller. My stepmother was a whole other way: 'Hey, you are so good.' My father's character changed. It was difficult to work with him because my stepmother was also trying to move the band in several directions. I thought, 'That's not my thing.' So I told Edgar, 'I think we have to part ways.' But it was not a decision he wanted. He always wanted to keep the family business intact."

Froese began juggling new projects — his solo work; a record label, Moonpop; the electronic band Loom, formed with fellow ex-TD refugee Johannes Schmoelling; and now the album he's made with Claudia Brücken. This latest collaboration started out with a song they worked on together for Loom.

"We did that one song together, which hasn't actually been released yet," says Brücken. "And Jerome had this idea: 'Let's do more together.'"

The new union was temporarily put on hold in early 2015 when Edgar Froese died. But the two reconvened later that year, with Brücken flying to Berlin so the two could begin work in earnest. Given their respective CVs, it wouldn't have been a surprise if *Beginn* sounded like Propaganda meeting Tangerine Dream in an Apple shop. But that was something both were keen to avoid.

"I'm aware that people will go, 'Well, why doesn't it sound like Propaganda? Why doesn't it sound like Tangerine Dream?'" says Brücken, trying and failing not to roll her eyes. "But we wanted to make music that didn't sound like what we'd done before."

Refusing to explicitly trade on their past bands' achievements is a brave move. Brücken acknowledges that her days of pop stardom are a thing of the past — "Everything apart from Top 40 music is niche now" — but what she's lost in fame, she's gained in other things.

"Instead of starting small and growing bigger, I've had the opposite path," she says. "For the first Propaganda album, we had an absurd budget. But working with Jerome is different — it's liberating. In the past, I've always been aware that people will go, 'Well, why doesn't it sound like Propaganda?' But with this one, it was, 'Let's just make some music and be free about it.'"

The pair say they intend to work together again on a follow-up album: "It will be called *End*," Froese laughs.

There are no plans for gigs, though that's more a case of waiting for the right offer than a lack of desire to recreate the new songs live.

"We didn't have to satisfy anyone with this album," says Froese. "We did it for ourselves. Not everyone is in that position, despite what they say. And it's a great position to be in."

Beginn is out now on Esoteric. For more information, see www.jeromefroese.com and www.claudiabrucken.co.uk.

DREAM NO MORE

Froese Jr on why the Dream should end.

Tangerine Dream in 2006, with Edgar Froese (far left) and Jerome (far right).

CHRISTIAN JAKUBASZEK/GETTY IMAGES

It's been 12 years since Jerome Froese left the band his father founded. But since the death of Edgar Froese in 2015, he's been less than happy with Tangerine Dream's continued existence – despite Froese Sr giving the current line-up his blessing to continue his work.

"When I was still in the band, many people asked me, 'If Edgar quits one day, will you continue the band?'" says Jerome. "I always said, 'No, Tangerine Dream is Edgar Froese, Edgar Froese is Tangerine Dream. Why should I continue with that?' So why do they have to take the name? These are people who have so little impact in the whole history of Tangerine Dream. Eighty per cent of the music they are playing they haven't composed. They're like The Australian Pink Floyd or something."

Have you tried to stop them?

"I haven't," he replies, "because I'm not in the position to stop them. I guess if somebody says, 'Okay, let's move on with sketches or notes or something Edgar did,' that's fine. But this is different. I guess it's some kind of cash cow to keep the money coming in for them." **DEV**

A SHOT IN THE DARK

Icelandic quintet **Kontinuum** meld goth, post-rock and a blend of heavy and ambient to make an emotionally charged offering of beautiful soundscapes. From the 80s post-punk scene to gender ideas to the intense seasonal shifts of their homeland, they discuss the making of their third album *No Need To Reason.*

Words: Dannii Leivers

Iceland is a country renowned for natural extremes, bringing to mind rugged black beaches, bleak landscapes and midnight sun. It's isolated, a few degrees south from the Arctic Circle, with a population smaller than Manchester. In the summer, the long days see 18 hours of daylight, while the harsh winters see 20 hours of darkness. For Reykjavik's Kontinuum, who have shed their black metal roots to grapple with progressive post-punk at the heavier end of the spectrum, those intense seasonal shifts have seeped into new album *No Need To Reason*.

"Maybe not on the recording but I think it definitely has an impact on your mentality," frontman and guitarist Birgir Thorgeirsson explains. "[*No Need To Reason*] was written across both seasons. In the winter it's total darkness when you wake up and when you go to sleep so it definitely has an impact on the writing process. Some of the darker concepts came in one batch and then another batch was… maybe brighter."

Thorgeirsson started his musical career as guitarist and keyboardist in Potentiam, one of the first black metal bands in Iceland to release their music to an international market. However, feeling typecast and restricted, it wasn't long until he sought out a new band where he could enjoy a wider sonic palette. Even though Kontinuum embrace black metal tropes, they're more defined by their palpable disregard for genre stereotypes.

"We always wanted to be avant-garde," Thorgeirsson muses. "Even though we didn't sound like a typical black metal band, conceptually I just felt freer — I could express whatever I felt like. I wouldn't categorise ourselves as a prog band but we're definitely progressive in our attitude. I appreciate being surprised — it's a challenge to have your own identity. We would just get bored if we didn't try to go outside our comfort zone."

No Need To Reason, the band's third album, was written in Iceland and recorded and self-produced in Sigur Rós' Reykjavik Sundlaugin studio over the course of the last year — and it shows. Showcasing a bruised coalescence of fragility and despair, light and shade, ambience and crushing despondence, it harnesses the attributes of the Icelandic

Kontinuum, with frontman Birgir Thorgeirsson (centre).

seasons, fusing together elements of post-rock and black metal with a touch of icy 80s post-punk goth. Much like the violent geysers and bejewelled glaciers of their homeland, the industrial edge of Killing Joke and the glimmering underbelly of The Cure erupt and creep throughout the music.

"It's more ambient, more fluid and natural," agrees Thorgeirsson. "We wanted an album that sounds like what we do live because essentially we're a live band, not a studio band.

"We were also thinking about the Icelandic post-punk scene in the 80s — you know, when Björk was screaming in a punk band. We all have these 80s tendencies and a band like Killing Joke is the one that unites us, so we had some reference to that when we started out. I think we definitely take some of that feeling, some of the atmosphere."

In many ways, Kontinuum are a product of their environment, part of a scene renowned for its close-knit, community approach, where bands of all scenes are friends, line-ups are inclusive and the fans are just as progressive in their mindset as the musicians they love. That attitude, Thorgeirsson says, has been a crucial part of Kontinuum's success.

> "We would just get bored if we didn't try to go outside our comfort zone."

"It's a tiny, tiny scene," he says. "You can reach everyone with one phone call. If it's not your friend, it's a friend of a friend. You need people that are open-minded — someone who's hardcore black metal wouldn't appreciate our music. But I think people today just are way more open-minded than they were. Most fans of black metal that I've met listen to Sigur Rós, which is the most beautiful, softest music you can hear, and you see kids in black metal T-shirts at Sigur Rós shows."

That appetite for boundary pushing has also bled into Kontinuum's songwriting habits. Thorgeirsson assumes responsibility for the band's overarching lyrical concepts, and it's his tendency for storytelling that has injected a healthy dose of prog into their records. Their 2015 album *Kyrr* dealt with themes of introspective and natural-world exploration.

However, this time the concepts are heavier. "Heavy isn't just how much distortion you use on a guitar or how loud the bass is — it's also how heavy it is in your head," Thorgeirsson explains. "The album is based on the future of our civilisation and the future of gender. If either of the genders might not be relevant any more, what sort of a society would that be? How would we, as a rational society, deal with that and the emotional impact of it on society, or even on religion? I wouldn't be surprised to see there was some evidence that males might even be extinct in the future.

"I think we, as humans, have all the instincts to survive in the short-term but we fail miserably in the long run. If you look at the instincts of humans as a species, it doesn't look very good. I think civilisation will need an updated version of our brain. We're still wired for short-term survival."

In these uncertain, unpredictable times, who knows what the future holds, but with their clear lust for epic storylines, we're hoping Kontinuum are around for the long run.

No Need To Reason is out now via Season Of Mist. See www.facebook.com/kontinuumice for details.

THE PROG INTERVIEW

BEV BEVAN

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 **Bev Bevan**. The Birmingham-based drummer was an original member of both The Move and ELO, followed by ELO II, and has toured and recorded with Black Sabbath, as well as numerous others. Bevan gives us a glimpse into his long career, from his early influences to the musical freedom of the 70s, playing with one of the biggest-selling groups in the world and beyond.

Words: Mike Barnes **Portrait:** Rob Groucutt

In 1965, Birmingham-based guitarist Trevor Burton and bass guitarist Ace Kefford were putting together a group. They went to see a young David Jones — who seemed on the verge of success and was just about to change his stage name to Bowie — and after the show they asked him for some advice on how to crack the music business. He told them: "Find the best people in Birmingham and rehearse like crazy. Then move to London and get yourself a manager."

They recruited Bev Bevan on drums and Carl Wayne on vocals — Bevan had played in local bands since his schooldays and had recently played with Carl Wayne And The Vikings on the gruelling German club circuit — and Roy Wood on guitar and vocals.

This new band, The Move, quickly established themselves as one of the premier British groups of the 60s, notching up 10 Top 40 hits, nine of which made the Top 20. They made four albums, which encompassed pop, psychedelia, heavy rock, eccentric cover versions, classical quotations and the odd lengthy proto-progressive rock excursion.

Following Wayne's departure in 1970, guitarist and vocalist Jeff Lynne — who had previously been in The Idle Race — joined The Move for their third album, *Looking On*. That same year, Lynne, Bevan and Wood began working together for the first time as Electric Light Orchestra. They scoring an immediate hit with *10538 Overture* and recorded a self-titled album in 1972.

Quill's 2018 album Grey Goose Call, featuring Bev Bevan.

The Move folded and Lynne and Bevan carried on as ELO, a journey that would take them from baroque oddity to string-driven progressive rockers to purveyors of lavish orchestral pop. ELO were one of the world's biggest-selling groups, with No.1 albums and 20 hit singles by 1980, but their popularity waned and they disbanded in 1986. Bevan then played in ELO Part II with ex-members from 1989-'99.

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES
The Move in 1967, L-R: Carl Wayne, Bev Bevan, Trevor Burton, Ace Kefford (standing), Roy Wood.

> The 1979 *Out Of The Blue* tour was amazing and a lot of people have said it was the best show they've ever seen — it was spectacular.

He has enjoyed a remarkable, wide-ranging career, most of it involving friends from Birmingham and the Midlands. These have included spells as live drummer in Black Sabbath and playing percussion on *The Eternal Idol* (1987), hooking up with Trevor Burton again in The Move Featuring Bev Bevan And Trevor Burton, and touring this year with a friend from his schooldays, Jasper Carrott, in the live show *Stand Up & Rock*.

Bevan joined Midlands group Quill — self-described as country/folk/rock — as drummer and percussionist in 2017 and has played on and contributed material to their new EP *Grey Goose Call*.

You initially played in beat groups, but with The Move you drummed in a more expansive and flamboyant style. Who influenced your playing?

Early on I didn't know the names of my favourite drummers, but they turned out to be people like Hal Blaine [of the Wrecking

Mover And Shaker:
Bev Bevan, June 2018.

Crew session group], and I used to love Phil Spector records and the bigness of the drums. So I was influenced by listening to records, rather than seeing people.

Tony Secunda became our manager and got us a residency at the Marquee in 1966. That's when I started seeing drummers like Keith Moon and Ginger Baker, and learning from them as well.

When The Move was formed I'd developed a reputation for certainly being the loudest drummer in the Birmingham area until John Bonham came along. He used to come and watch me when he was in a band called Terry Webb And The Spiders, from Redditch.

He did learn stuff from me but, of course, within a year I was watching him and he became probably the best rock drummer in the world. We were really good friends. [Later on] I used to go to his house in Hadley, where he had a couple of kits set up, and this tiny little kit made by Ludwig for his son Jason, and the three of us would play together.

> The Move were always a great band to play in as you always had total freedom to play exactly what you wanted. No one said, 'Hey, keep it simple.' I could do whatever I liked.

Tony Secunda and Don Arden. What did they add to the group?

Don Arden never really managed The Move. He was involved but he was more of an agent. Tony Secunda was a good manager, but he made mistakes and the biggest was not sending us to America in 1967–1968 as I think we would have done well. We only did one tour there in 1969.

The other one was issuing that libellous postcard [a cartoon of PM Harold Wilson in bed with his secretary Marcia Williams] with *Flowers In The Rain*, which gave us front page coverage but lost us the royalties, including Roy's songwriting royalties [which Wilson was awarded in the libel case], which he's still fighting to this day to get back.

So Tony did make mistakes, but he was a great ideas man. We'd turn up in London looking like The Who, really, with mod gear, and he turned that round completely, and put us in gangster suits and really cool-looking clothes, and hired a great photographer called Bobby Davidson. He gave us an image. And the smashing of the TVs [onstage], that was another idea of Tony Secunda's – destroying the one-eyed monster in the living room.

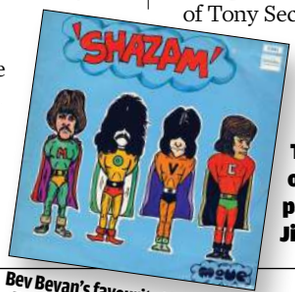
DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Bev Bevan, Jeff Lynne and Roy Wood on *Top Of The Pops*, circa 1970-'71,

The Move's records are so exciting because one can feel that things were changing quickly and lots of ideas were coming through. How did it feel to you at the time?

The Move were always a great band to play in as you always had total freedom to play exactly what you wanted. No one said, "Hey, keep it simple." I could do whatever I liked.

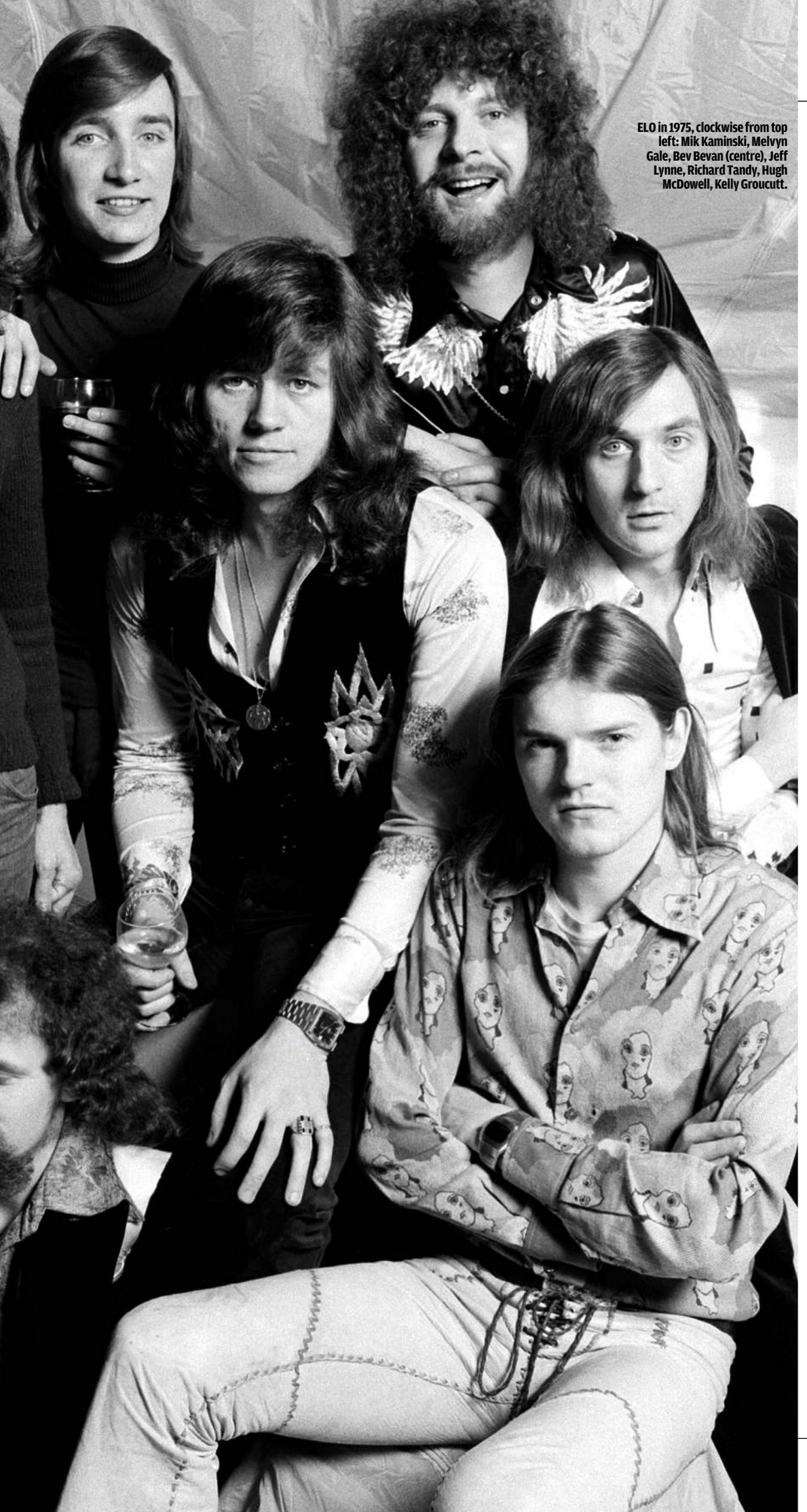
The album I like most is *Shazam* [1969]. It's an eclectic mix alright, and by the time you get to *Message From The Country* [1970], you've even got some country and western in there.



Bev Bevan's favourite Move album, 1969's eclectic *Shazam*.

You had some pretty heavyweight management in The Move played on the famous 1967 package tour with Jimi Hendrix, Pink

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES



ELO in 1975, clockwise from top left: Mik Kaminski, Melvyn Gale, Bev Bevan (centre), Jeff Lynne, Richard Tandy, Hugh McDowell, Kelly Groucutt.

Floyd, Amen Corner, The Nice and Eire Apparent. Do you have any particular memories of that?
It was two shows a night, in theatres. The opening act were Pink Floyd and they got to play two songs — their two hits, *See Emily Play* and *Arnold Layne*.

Pink Floyd were difficult; they kept themselves to themselves. Nick Mason was fine, but drummers always speak to each other. I remember Syd Barrett being a bit weird. He seemed out of it most of the time. I don't think he was even speaking to the others much.

But everyone else was really friendly. Amen Corner asked Roy Wood to write them a song, which he did, *Hello Susie*, and it became a big hit. Hendrix, and Noel [Redding, bass] and Mitch [Mitchell, drums] were great guys and we got on very well. The Move closed the first half — we played about half an hour — and Hendrix closed the second half, as there was no way you would want to follow Hendrix onstage.

What was it like seeing Roy Wood become one of the best UK songwriters of the 60s?
We were playing the Marquee to sell-out crowds every Thursday night and it was a great show, and they were queuing around the block to see it, but it was all covers. We had record companies wanting to sign us, but Tony Secunda said, "It's all very well, but if we get a record deal, you guys have got to write some original songs."

None of us were songwriters, including Roy, but he was the closest thing we'd got to one so Tony said, "Here's a reel-to-reel tape recorder and a mic — get writing." And he would come up with these extraordinary songs. He couldn't churn them out, but he could write a good song in a couple of weeks.

Roy wasn't that prolific, so when he came up with a new song, everyone wanted to sing it, including Roy. Trevor and Ace would also say they'd like to sing it and Carl said, "I'm the lead singer — I should sing it."

So that's why when you listen to *I Can Hear The Grass Grow,* you can hear three different lead singers. Someone would sing the verse, someone would sing the chorus, someone else would sing the middle eight. I did bass vocals on a lot of the records as well.

Electric Light Orchestra formed while The Move were still going. Was it always the plan to run the two groups simultaneously?
The Move were signed to EMI Harvest and had what turned out to be the last ever single *California Man* [in 1972], which was a massive hit. So EMI were saying, "We want The Move. We've got this hit band and you want to do this thing called Electric Light Orchestra?"

They weren't very keen on the idea. So whatever recording costs were involved in the first ELO album were made from an advance that we got for The Move. So they did coexist for a little while.

Is it true that ELO were thought of as a conceptual group in which you would expand on the arrangement ideas of Beatles songs like *I Am The Walrus*?
Jeff, myself and Roy were huge Beatles fans and we loved *Strawberry Fields...* and *I Am The Walrus*, and we were attempting to do something like that, but onstage. The first album, *The Electric Light Orchestra*, took forever to record. Roy played all the cello parts and it was just overdubbing and overdubbing!

We did one British tour with ELO and then went abroad to Italy, and it was a bit of a mess as we were trying to amplify violins and cellos and we didn't really know how to do it.

Then we came back and for a couple of weeks neither Jeff nor myself had heard from Roy Wood. Don Arden, who was managing us by then, said, "He's left and taken some of the guys with him. He's formed this band called Wizzard, so do you want to carry on with this Electric Light Orchestra idea or go back to being The Move?" Jeff said, "We'll carry on as ELO." We got a couple of proper cellists in, so that made a hell of a difference.

Like The Move, early ELO were difficult to categorise. The first album was a baroque oddity and *ELO 2* was basically progressive rock, but with more melodic songs than most.
It was totally experimental. We didn't know which direction we were going in to begin with. I like *ELO 2*, but the tracks go on and on. *Kuiama* is about 11 minutes long. But you could do it back then in '73. And you would get [FM] radio stations in America that would play long tracks.

The turning point was probably *Eldorado* in '74, which was a concept album and I think it really worked. That's when Jeff really began to blossom as a songwriter, and he became a lot more confident in his singing ability and his production ability.

Wolverhampton Wanderers fans Bev Bevan, Robert Plant and Ian 'Sludge' Lees at Molineux in 1980.

DAVID BAGNALL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Black Sabbath at the 1983 Reading Festival, L-R: Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler, Ian Gillan, Bev Bevan.

GEORGE BODNAR ARCHIVE/ICONICPIX

Can't Get It Out Of My Head is a beautiful song and was a Top 10 single in America. The album was our first gold in America, which was an incredible thrill, but it didn't sell in Britain.

Once we started using orchestras, we didn't use the cello players in the studio, although [violinist] Mik Kaminski got featured on a couple of solos. Lou Clark was a great arranger and conducted the orchestra, and sometimes there was a choir. It was a massive production and Jeff was having a ball.

With ELO we used to double track the drums, which gave it a unique sound. I had to keep the drumming solid and pretty simple because there was so much else to be put on after me – Kelly Groucutt's bass, Jeff's guitars and Richard Tandy's keyboards, and an 80-piece orchestra.

What was it like playing in the spaceship on the 1978 *Out Of The Blue* tour?
It was an amazing tour and a lot of people have said it was the best show they've ever seen. It was absolutely spectacular, the spaceship opening, and you knew it was the end of the show when the spaceship closed. It was flying off to another planet!

But it wasn't a comfortable experience at all because whatever it was made of – kind of Perspex-y stuff – the sound wasn't very good in there. You'd get an awful bounceback.

And we had these electronic lifts, risers, for the drum kit, for the keyboards, for everybody. Some nights they didn't work, so the show would start with *Standin' In The Rain* and one night the drum kit didn't come up. The risers all came up eventually as they could be hand-cranked by the crew. On another occasion the kit had come up and Jeff's riser hadn't come up. You could see him clambering out of a hole to get onstage.

You made a solo single in 1976, a cover of Sandy Nelson's *Let There Be Drums*.

It wasn't a hit, but it was fun to do. I've been touring this year with Jasper Carrott's *Stand Up & Rock* and I've brought that back. I've been doing it onstage.

How did you end up playing with Black Sabbath on the *Born Again* tour in 1983-'84?

Jeff wanted to make records and didn't want to tour, but as a drummer I just wanted to work. I had an offer from Tony Iommi, who is my best friend in the rock'n'roll business, because Bill Ward wasn't fit enough to do a Black Sabbath set. We did a European tour, we headlined at Reading Festival, we did two American tours. This was with Ian Gillan, who was someone I admired as a singer. I had a great time. It was a bit like being back in The Move where I was allowed to do whatever I liked, really – play as loudly as I wanted to.

Electric Light Orchestra's classic 1974 concept album, Eldorado.

Why did you leave ELO in 1986?

We were contracted to make one more album, which was *Balance Of Power*. The single, *Calling America*, was a minor hit, but the album didn't sell well and Jeff wanted to work with other artists and produce other people. So that was the end, really, of ELO. There were no plans, as far as I know, to record any more albums or to tour. So I didn't exactly leave, it just ceased to be.

Quill, L-R: Matt Worley, Kate McWilliam, Andy Edwards, Bev Bevan, Joy Strachan-Brain, Jo Bates, Phil Bates.

ROB GROUCUTT

Then you played and recorded as ELO Part II for nearly 10 years. What was that like?

I had a number of former members of ELO involved – Lou Clark, Mik Kaminski and Kelly Groucutt. And again I enjoyed it. We went all over the world to places that ELO had never been before. We played just about every country in South America, for example, and we got to play with a lot of symphony orchestras, which was another thing that ELO themselves had never done live on stage.

But I had a legal agreement with Jeff Lynne and the legalities got broken several times. You'd turn up in somewhere like Brazil and the strict rules were that we were called ELO Part II and you'd get to some venue somewhere and it would just say ELO. That was the cause of the problems and Jeff objected. It was going to carry on happening because it was difficult to control those situations, so I left in 1999. They carried on and as far as I know they still exist as The Orchestra.

You reacquainted yourself with Trevor Burton in Bev Bevan's Move. What was it like revisiting that material?

The Bev Bevan Band was formed in 2005. That was a good little band. We were asked to do some shows as Bev Bevan's Move and Trevor Burton was interested. We only did one tour and it was fun to play the old Move songs again. Roy Wood wasn't very happy, although I did ask him if he wanted to join us, but he didn't. People wanted us to carry on, but I wouldn't want to do it again as it was a backward step.

> "Jeff, myself and Roy were huge Beatles fans and we loved *Strawberry Fields...* and *I Am The Walrus*, and we were attempting to do something like that, but onstage."

Have you switched to being a percussionist in Quill?

There's a drummer in the band called Andy Edwards and I play drums too, and I've got a massive percussion set. It's a new lease of life for me now to be playing original songs. I'm writing lyrics, and [vocalist] Joy Strachan-Brain and myself write most of the songs. It's really eclectic stuff and I haven't been as excited about music for a long time.

We did Cropredy last year to 20-odd thousand people, which was great. Robert Plant, who is a good pal, got us that gig, and we're hoping to do some more festivals next year and to put a new album together as well.

What about the *Emerald Sabbath* project of rearrangements of Black Sabbath songs put together by Mad Mike 666?

Some of it is beautiful – there are some orchestral arrangements, brass sections, string quartets, and on every track there are at least two or three people who played with Black Sabbath, including Adam Wakeman, who played on the farewell tour on keyboards. I think Sabbath fans will love it.

I play percussion on two versions of *Embryo* and drums on *Changes* and *Trashed*. They're mixing it now. At first I thought it might be nonsense – now I'm proud to be on the album.

You also played with Paul Weller in 2010 on his album *Wake Up The Nation*.

That was a funny phone call. I don't know how he got my number. He said, "There are a couple of tracks I'd like you to play drums on. Actually, you're my second choice. I really wanted Keith Moon, but he's been dead about 30 years and you're the nearest thing."

Had you thought about doing more sessions with other people?

I think some people think I've retired, but I would love to do stuff with other people. Yeah, please get in touch!

Bev Bevan is playing with Jasper Carrott on his Stand Up & Rock tour. See www.jaspercarrott.com and www.facebook.com/bevbevannews for more information.

Edited by Jo Kendall
jo.kendall@futurenet.com

New spins...

3.2

Completing a circle that began 30 years ago with the Emerson, Berry and Palmer project 3, Robert Berry brings his late bandmate's ideas and arrangements into the light.

Words: Philip Wilding **Illustration:** Stuart Briers

Keith Emerson remains strangely prolific for a man who died in 2016. To paraphrase the song: death brings many changes, while an artist's death brings deluxe reissues and unearthed demos. There's no denying the power of Emerson's music or the reasons why it should echo through history. That said, no one needs another edition of *Tarkus* because someone at the record label thought to remaster it and add an essay that has about as much worth as a Wikipedia entry. You might think it's akin to dancing on a dead man's grave. And you'd be right.

The original 3 album, *To The Power Of Three*, featuring Emerson, Carl Palmer and Robert Berry, was forged in the twin flames of creativity and opportunity in 1988 when marketing was still considered an art form. It's fair to say that ELP were breathing hard at that point, still struggling, even 10 years later, in the shadow of the cumbersome *Love Beach*, while 1992's redemptive *Black Moon* seemed an impossibly long way off.

It's not hard to understand what they were thinking. Palmer's other project, Asia, had burned briefly but brightly, especially in the USA where they turned platinum with what seemed like indecent haste. Another Asia alumnus, in the shape of Steve Howe, had also troubled the *Billboard* charts when he teamed up with Steve Hackett for their GTR band that turned over a surprise smash in the shape of *When The Heart Rules The Mind*. Pop prog – it really was a thing. Well, for a little while.

In an age when the Geffen label was adopting a scattergun approach to A&R that was more reminiscent of a chef throwing spaghetti at a wall to see what sticks than a considered strategy of release schedules and advertising campaigns, it was no surprise that this take on the supergroup was snapped up almost instantly. It paid dividends, too: the album charted and the single, *Talkin' Bout*, went into the Top 10. And then, as quickly as they appeared, and with Emerson unhappy at the direction Geffen were pushing the band in, they folded like a cheap deckchair in a storm. But, surprisingly, not before Emerson and Berry had already started writing new material for the follow-up record.

The Rules Have Changed

FRONTIERS

> **Pomp, prog and AOR colliding in a fizzing display that's both pop hit and Emerson solo spot.**

In the autumn of 2015, Keith Emerson and Robert Berry (who had reworked some of those unheard songs for his *Pilgrimage To A Point* album) began talking again, and rehashing the musical ideas from what must have seemed like another time. Old cassettes were unearthed, and new piano parts recorded and exchanged via email in a flurry of renewed energy and activity. And then, like all the best-laid plans, fate intervened and Emerson was gone just six months later.

It's unclear what happened in the intervening two years, Berry's industrious endeavour notwithstanding, but 3.2 sounds like it could have landed in, say, 1989. And we mean that in the kindest way: 3 should have been on tour with Asia, criss-crossing the globe, Palmer rushing from one drum kit to the next.

It's a glorious racket, pomp, prog and AOR colliding in a fizzing display that wants to be both a pop hit and the jumping-off point for another Emerson solo spot. Case in point, the lush-sounding *Somebody's Watching*, which could have sat quite comfortably on the *St. Elmo's Fire* soundtrack until the keyboard line pops up and Berry recreates a dexterous and dizzying Emerson solo that sounds like it would have encompassed every keyboard he's ever owned.

Opener *One By One*, which goes rattling by to belie its erratic seven minutes, puts Emerson's delicate piano arrangement front and centre, opening on a tantalising, almost languid note before a rich, dense AOR hook, a baffling synth solo and then some beautifully underplayed, loose jazz riff. Berry really does a great job of capturing his bandmate's spirit – it makes you reflect, sadly, that he's no longer here to dizzy our senses.

What You're Dreamin' Now is a relatively scant four minutes of rolling piano and stabs of dense synthesiser that, sound-wise, is reminiscent of the palette Rush were using on their *Hold Your Fire* album, with Berry's rousing, raucous vocal making it sound like Graham Bonnet jamming with Rick Wakeman. If they'd managed to place it in a film montage at the time, it would have sold enough copies to have bought them all second homes.

The whole thing's tinged with sadness that Emerson never got to realise this record when he was alive, but glory in the moment instead, that timeless snapshot of Emerson without limits, zigzagging through life.

Gibson
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BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME

Automata II SUMERIAN

Raleigh's math metal pioneers hit their progressive stride.

There was a time when Between The Buried And Me seemed to be conflicted about how far to venture into traditional prog territory. Intrinsically linked to the math metal scene that spawned them back in the late 90s, the North Carolina quintet have always made deeply progressive music, but it wasn't until *Coma Ecliptic* in 2015 that they

> **It's ridiculously exciting and heavy as hell.**

finally seemed to realise the extent of their own potential. The result was that this most ingenious of modern metal bands had found their natural habitat and *Coma Ecliptic* was its magnificent blossoming.

Newly emboldened, their decision to release eighth album *Automata* in two distinct chapters made perfect sense for a band with a bigger, more attentive audience: with music this good, why squander half of it to today's short-attention-span, pick'n'mix culture? That said, waiting for the concluding part of the album has been hugely frustrating. Which, presumably, was all part of the plan. The cunning bastards.

Joyously, while more a straightforward continuation of *Coma Ecliptic*'s liberated prog metal splurge than a comparably bold leap forward, the first part of *Automata* contained more than its fair share of surprises, not least the exquisite *Millions*: a simple but powerful song that the band would never have contemplated attempting in their early days.

Similarly, *Automata II* veers off on one most unexpected tangent, and one that many *Prog* readers will find easy to embrace. *Voice Of Trespass* is a demented exercise in big-band jazz metal, replete with parping brass section and some outrageous, Zappa-like syncopation. BTBAM's debt to Mike Patton's alma mater Mr. Bungle has always been apparent, of course, and it's not hard to trace this curveball back to a love of that band's John Zorn-produced first album, but this is no lazy tribute or goofy pastiche: instead, it's ridiculously exciting, heavy as hell and provides the perfect, grotesquely melodramatic set-up for the grand finale, *The Grid*.

Automata II begins with the frankly overwhelming grandeur and intricacy of *The Proverbial Bellow*, a song that contains so many ideas, it deserves its own review. *The Grid* is much the same, only more so. A masterclass in ebb and flow, it comes imbued with a rich, melancholic core, Tommy Rogers' understated vocals fading away to allow Paul Waggoner to play one of his finest solos yet, a gorgeously emotive spiral of melodic finesse that provides *Automata* with a sense of musical, if not conceptual, resolution. And yes, there is an intriguing narrative threaded through this mind-bending concept piece, but the real story here is that BTBAM are neck deep in prog and loving every minute.

DOM LAWSON

ANUBIS

Different Stories SELF-RELEASED

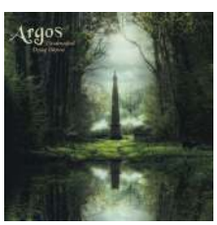
Acoustic risk pays off for these Aussies.

After four studio albums, Australian prog rockers Anubis have decided to rework old songs for an acoustic record to help fund an upcoming tour. Midlife crisis or divine inspiration? The eight songs on *Different Stories* seem to nudge towards the latter, with the record conjuring up its own unique aura rather than feeling like a hotchpotch, futile attempt at breathing new life into past material. The album opens with the 13-minute saga *The Passing Bell*, which, thanks to a finale of dreamy keys slathered over subtle drum work, recalls Opeth's fellow acoustic release *Damnation*. The song choice here seems to work, with the undressed nature of *The Holy Innocent* allowing a triumphant sax solo to breathe easy, although tracks like *Fool's Gold* can lag. The album ties up with the first airing of *Technicolour Afterlife*, which was originally written as the conclusion to Anubis' 2009 debut record *230503* before being trimmed off. It ends up being one of the most beguiling and captivating moments on *Different Stories*, with the chorus melody grabbing you firmly by the collar and refusing to let go. Regardless of whether this is one purely for the purists, the risk has paid off. **CC**

ARGOS

Unidentified Dying Objects BAD ELEPHANT

Canterbury-influenced Germans' freewheeling fifth.



For their first album on UK prog label BEM, this Mainz-based quintet are sounding as Anglophile as ever. And while they're unashamed in claiming inspiration from Canterbury prog, just like the broad variety of music that came out of that movement, they're as keen on freewheeling avant-garde fusion as they are bucolic folk rock. It doesn't always make for the easiest listen. The free-form turbo jazz soloing on *The Hunter's Last Stand* offers very little in the way of hooks to cling onto. Elsewhere, though, they hop from choppy avant-garde waters into more inviting seas, as when *Unpainted Dreams* trades upbeat trad rock riffs with angular, abrasive guitar indulgence and spidery keyboard improvisation. Some aspects of Argos' sound will probably polarise their audience – the Caravan-esque whimsy of *The Days Of Perky Pat* will charm as many ears as it will chafe against. But at other times they can really hypnotise, as on *Still Fighting Gravity*, a mostly instrumental piece that floats for four minutes on waves of atmospheric organ before being joined by smoky sax and tiptoeing piano, then the dazed vocal and some manic fret-hopping guitar helps it reach an ebullient climax. **JS**

BC CAMPLIGHT

Deportation Blues BELLA UNION

Italian-American Manc's second album is an oddball treat.

After Brian Christinzio fled mental illness and addictions in the US and relocated to Manchester, his change of scenery bore fruit in a record deal and a debut album, *How To Die In The North*. However, he was later deported back to his native New Jersey and only made it back here after wangling an Italian passport through his relatives, in time to pour out his troubles in truly inimitable style on a second album. The opening title track recalls Talk Talk's more adventurous moments, all high, emotive tenor interspersed with Bee Gees falsetto, fizzing synth shimmers, breathy backing vocals and beautiful sadness, with a fartingly distorted fuzz-bass thrown in at times. He continues to pick and mix styles with aplomb: rock'n'roll piano combined with Krauty techno throb, synth sting and Ali Bell's guest vocal on *I'm Desperate* makes for a truly unique sound. The beguilingly bipolar *Hell Or Pennsylvania* begins as a barroom piano lament, turns *Surfin' USA*-era Beach Boys, then sinks back into a horn-smoked noirscape. *'So it's come to this... another bag of lemon twirls gone,'* he mutters. We hereby launch a campaign to keep this singular talent in the country long-term. **JS**

CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY

Live BMG

Pictures from a tribute concert.

It takes guts to run a band without a keyboard player or vocalist when classic ELP repertoire is the primary focus, but Carl Palmer has plenty of fire in his belly and the chutzpah to front it up. The all-instrumental interpretations are pulled off with gusto and varying degrees of success, with a savage *Knife-Edge* standing out on the first disc. While there's no doubting the prowess of bassist Simon Fitzpatrick and guitarist Paul Bielatowicz, who has to do all the heavy lifting, sadly this power trio often miss the tonal range hardwired into the music. In the heat of the moment, it probably works and diehard fans will love it. However, away from the live environment, it's difficult to avoid making some unfavourable comparisons with the ELP originals. Some of that deficiency is ameliorated by Vanilla Fudge's Mark Stein who guests on Hammond organ on a couple of tracks during the concert DVD. Originally intended to celebrate Palmer's 50 years in the business with Emerson guesting, the keyboardist's death meant Palmer recast the show as a memorial concert. Though the energy expended on a crowd-pleasing setlist is commendable, the translations sometimes come perilously unstuck. **SS**

JOHN COLTRANE

Both Directions At Once - The Lost Album IMPULSE!

No dusty footnote, this is an important undiscovered work.

Imagine if the original King Crimson had recorded another studio album in 1969, but that it had only now been discovered. That gives a hint as to why John Coltrane fans' jaws hit the floor following the discovery of a previously unheard recording that hadn't seen the light of day in the 55 years since it was laid down. Recorded in a single session in March 1963, this is no mere collectors-only curiosity or dusty footnote. Brimming with the energetic conviction that puts it up there with the rest of this golden period of Coltrane's classic quartet, it's a dazzling insight into the group's progress and their arrival at the massively influential *A Love Supreme* 19 months later. The pristine sound and surging riptide pace within *Untitled Original 11383 - Take 1* and *Impressions - Take 3* finds bassist Jimmy Garrison and McCoy Tyner's glancing piano acting as an ice cool complement to drummer Elvin Jones and Coltrane's white-hot squalls. Coltrane's freewheeling, ferocious invention excitedly points towards future excursions into a freer, abstract expression for which he's rightly feted. Hype and novelty aside, this music is as magnificent as it is welcome. **SS**

EVIL BLIZZARD

The Worst Show On Earth CRACKEDANKLES

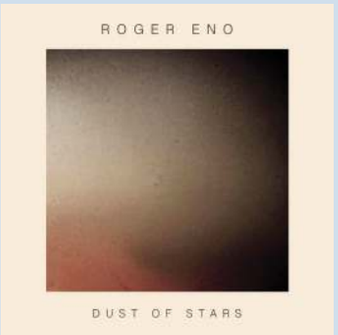
Much more than just the pound-shop Slipknot.

If you've noted the masks and the four-bassist line-up and dismissed Evil Blizzard as a novelty band, now is the time to recant. With claims of having only ever rehearsed five times, it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that *The Worst Show On Earth* is going to be 50 minutes of formless noise, but it's actually a tightly arranged and melodic slab of riff-driven cosmic post-punk. Opening track *Hello* is a case in point, minor key piano prefacing a verse swathed in spacey reverb before a Nirvana-meets-Hawkwind chorus blows the song wide open. Recent single *Fast Forward Rewind* is bass-stabbing industrial pop, while *Unleash The Misery* recalls Crippled Black Phoenix. The songs are based around control and release rather than outright bludgeon, with singing drummer Side pitched midway between Lemmy and Bowie. Things get more experimental, but no less compelling, on the album's final two extended tracks. *Pull God From The Sky* features gothic picking and a young girl speaking ominous words as the song slowly processes towards a hammering crescendo. The title track is similarly apocalyptic, mournful piano and cello suddenly obliterated by a crushing downpour of noise. **JB**

ROGER ENO

Dust Of Stars PAINTED WORD

Eno junior's first release, produced by Youth and released on new label.



It must be frustrating having Brian Eno as an older brother. With all his concepts and theoretical bon mots — not to mention his production work — he does cast rather a long shadow. Yet *Dust Of Stars* suggests that Roger is the one making the more engaging music these days, certainly when compared to Brian's growing catalogue of generative music albums, which, although possessed of an aloof beauty, are essentially one dimensional and only marginally interesting.

> **A thread of reflective romanticism runs through the music... it haunts the imagination.**

A thread of reflective romanticism also runs through the music of both Enos, and surfaces here in this collection of piano pieces set within Youth's subtle soundscapes. Based on a gently undulating two-note figure, *Moonlight Drive* is reminiscent of Philip Glass' *Metamorphosis* solo piano series, but leads us into a less introspective, more opened out sound world, with nocturnal twangs and slide guitar that, oddly enough, obliquely nod to The Doors' track of the same name. As the piece progresses, the top piano line subtly morphs into a melody that feels like its going to turn into a slow version of The Shadows' *Apache*.

Salty Tears begins with some bittersweet, spartan piano chords that find Eno operating in a similar area to Hans-Joachim Röedelius and Harold Budd. Eno's piano is gradually augmented over its eight-minute course by flowing trumpet lines and the most spartan guitar, bass, drum brushwork and sizzling ride cymbal, like a kind of deconstructed jazz ensemble.

Youth's production typically involves a kind of ambient wash and gently moving electronic currents, with a generous dose of reverb that gives a sonic halo to the piano and allows individual notes to hang in space. It adds to the sense of unease on the strange, descending figures of *Velvet Minute*. But this device is already a bit of a cliche in ambient piano music, and on *Gliding Albatross* and *Live Forever* it's rather overdone.

Eno's music here haunts the imagination, but then compare it to this writer's favourite album of his, 1996's *Swimming*. There the romanticism has a bleak and melancholy feel that evokes the vast expanses of the Suffolk coast near where the Enos hail from — you can almost smell the seaweed and taste of salt in the air. *Dust Of Stars* is a sensual collection, but by comparison it does feel rather pristine, more like a weightless spell in a flotation tank. *Forgotten Song* is the nearest we get to a sense of place with Eno's piano accompanied by background sounds that evoke strange birds calling across empty marshlands.

MIKE BARNES

REGAL WORM

Pig Views URANIUM CLUB/QUATERMASS

Prog Award-winning illustrator delivers his musical magnum opus.

Brace yourselves, because here comes a big one... Regal Worm is the brainchild of Sheffield-based polymath Jarrod Gosling, a man who clearly doesn't do things by halves. There won't be many albums this year, or indeed any year, that deliver the same level of crazily ambitious, musically Byzantine, balls-out prog that *Pig Views* supplies. But, crucially, it's also an album that constantly intrigues and compels the listener onwards, its complex, tightly-wound arrangements never a barrier to enjoyment.

Since the 90s, Gosling has been responsible for boundary-pushing music, most notably as one half of electro trip hop

> **A fever dream of prog battering at the doors of perception.**

duo I Monster, who scored a big hit in 2001 with the breezy library pop meets radiophonic funk of *Daydream In Blue*. More recently he's been the instrumental half of gothic psychtronicist duo Cobalt Chapel (read about their new EP in Rob Hughes' column in this issue). But Regal Worm is where Gosling dusts down his collection of vintage keyboards and gives full vent to his hardcore progressive tendencies.

Pig Views is the third in a loose trilogy of similarly themed albums, those themes including "vampire folk tales, potential antichrists, the majesty of the sun, and a ghostly doomed love affair". Yet what's most impressive about this expansive, double-length set is the way in which Gosling draws from the various schools of prog while creating a sound that's both cohesive and wholly his own. *Rose, Rubus, Smilax, Vulkan* is like *Camberwick Green* in a war zone, its twinkling guitar figure punctuated by sudden explosions of bombast before morphing into a breathless, headlong pelt swathed in choral vocals and omnipresent Mellotron. *Revealed As A True Future Tyrant* takes a similar tack, but ups the ante with some filthy sax, while *Rose Parkington, They Would Not Let You Leave* is picaresque in the extreme, nimbly skipping from one strange scene to the next. Imagine Gentle Giant jamming with the Cardiacs while Kate Bush gives notes.

After the lovely female-voiced interlude of *Jag Vet* comes the epic three-part (though it might as well be a hundred) manic baroque of *The Dreaded Lurg*, an astonishing fever dream of every piece of prog you've ever heard battering at the doors of perception as the world comes to an end. Finally, the hymnal, melodica-led *Huge Machine, You Are So Heavy* brings the album to a wonkily dramatic conclusion.

Resplendent in a surreal, pastoral fantasia of a sleeve illustrated by Gosling himself, *Pig Views* is a labyrinthine but endlessly fascinating work. Far more than just the eccentric indulgence of a one-man band, it feels instead like the flowering of a major talent in the prog universe.

JOE BANKS

FIFTH SPECIES

Life In The Punch Line SELF-RELEASED

North Carolina trio's debut blends 70s Brit-prog with dollops of jam.

You can tell who the dominant figure is in any band by listening to which instrument is highest in the mix. So the fact that this North Carolina three-piece's debut is smothered in keyboards signals that the man tinkling the ivories is in charge. Composer and piano teacher Jeremy Reiser named this band after a form of counterpoint harmony, and *...Punch Line* isn't scared to show off the musical proficiency of the players that contributed. Reiser seems determined that the instrumentalists should serve the song, rather than vice versa. Hence the knotty, intricately interwoven musical figures that underpin *Open* are the launch pad of an off-kilter pop song coloured with the male-female harmonies of Reiser and bassist Kristen Stevenson. Imagine Ben Folds playing six keyboards at once and you're not far off. While FS are Gentle Giant fans, they're also Deadheads partial to a jam band or two, and that comes through on *Lines* and *Presage*, which benefit from complex but infectious grooves. They're nothing if not versatile, and the final track *Elegy* offers a beautifully beatific Axelrod-esque organ and guitar reverie, suggesting they're only just beginning to explore their capabilities. **JS**

FORMA

Semblance KRANKY

Electro-acoustic hybrid is a winner.

Hindsight tells us that all schools of music have albums that either push the envelope or mirror the status quo. It's probably too early to tell where the fourth release from this Brooklyn trio sits, but it's enjoyable trying to figure it out. Wielding swirling notes and rumbling grooves, on pieces like *Crossings* they gracefully interlock and coalesce into potent earworms. Over broad analogue sounds, an ascending five-note theme rises up in a stately march that assumes a swaggering, anthemic grandeur. That string-etched melody finds similar variants and echoes elsewhere, offering a kind of mnemonic continuity across the whole album. And if their steely-cold sequencers occasionally threaten to become too grinding in their metronomic tyranny, Forma's habit of ceding the patterns to lush orchestral sweeps, brassy flourishes, rippling piano and ravishing tunes ensures there's no sense that the autopilot has taken over. Steeped in deep cuts from 60s electronica, pen portraits of Terry Riley, Tonto's Expanding Headband and Wendy Carlos are fashioned into less cerebral spaces where the prevailing mood is optimistic. They say they want their music to be more direct: here they succeed. **SS**

GALASPHERE 347

Galasphere 347 KARISMA

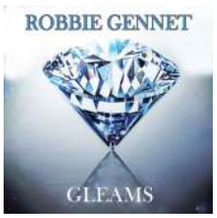
Promising if patchy debut from Anglo-Scandi quartet.

Featuring members of White Willow, Henry Fool and Tim Bowness' band, Galasphere 347 are, if not exactly a supergroup, an appetising proposition. Three Scandinavians and one Brit (vocalist Stephen James Bennett), they proffer a 'loose' concept album tracking a night out in a city, with all the hope and resignation that entails. Three long tracks – suites really – cover a sequence of moods in a manner that's inspired by vintage prog. It's mastered by Andy 'Pink Floyd' Jackson, and you can hear elements of early Caravan and mellow Genesis. Curiously, and presumably unwittingly, there's one spell where the melody is lifted note-for-note from Simple Minds' *Don't You Forget About Me*. It's smoothly welded together and the fixtures and fittings – Mellotron, Moogs, stylophones, glockenspiels – shuffle the decor tastefully. Yet it can feel a little vague, *Barbarella's Lover* meandering when it could march. You sense the intent is there, and the talent certainly is. The weak link is Bennett's voice, which lacks individuality and definition, and reminds you how much personality a Gabriel or Fish brings to such material. Galasphere 347 aren't there yet, but they're in transit. **CR**

ROBBIE GENNET

Gleams SELF-RELEASED

Little gem of an album by American sideman.



Gleams is a modest little album with a mere seven tracks running to under half an hour. With a career most notable for touring with mainstream American rock bands Seven Mary Three, Saigon Kick and Everclear, the name Robbie Gennet may not set *Prog* readers' pulses racing. So far, so unpromising. But don't let Gennet's potted CV deter you from investigating *Gleams*. While Gennet himself handles much of the playing on this solo album, he has also roped in a handful of names more familiar to prog cognoscenti, such as the ubiquitous Fernando Perdomo (who co-produces with Gennet), drummer Ryan Brown (from Dweezil Zappa's band) and vocalist Durga McBroom (of Pink Floyd vocal fame). While Gennet may have earned his primary crust with Seven Mary Three et al, *Gleams* suggests a solid grounding in the more accessible end of prog rock. These concise tracks have immediate appeal but plenty of depth too, revolving principally around Gennet's sparkling piano playing. There's lots of lush instrumentation, including plenty of strings, and some Jellyfish-style quirks. If there's a weak link, Gennet's vocal skills are fairly limited, but that's a minor quibble. **NS**

HILLSPHERE

Florescence LAYERED REALITY

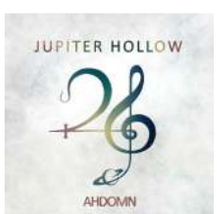
Dutch prog metallers who could blossom.

Progressive post-metal covers any number of musical moods, from Cult Of Luna through to Alcest and Sólstafir. The Netherlands' Hillsphere find themselves at the melodic end of the spectrum, combining elements of recent Anathema along with occasional forays into the darkness of Wolves In The Throne Room. At the heart of *Florescence* are two giant slabs of atmospheric prog: *Ghost Of You*, a mesmerising song of longing and angst, and the labyrinthine *Mind At Rest*. Like many debuts, this album is a showcase for the band's different registers. It reveals that there's very little main man Elias Meyer can't handle, from tech metal breakdowns through to dreamy motifs and, on *Our Physical Way Of Speaking*, a bit of poppy near-metalcore. What we hear is a gifted band laying out their stall with confidence and skill. Now the debut is out, it will be fascinating to see how Meyer and co shape things. Given the strength of the longer tracks, including closer *Clairvoyance*, it may be that the space they find in extended forms is the future. *Florescence* is the process of flowering or developing richly. Hillsphere could develop into something fantastic indeed. **RM**

JUPITER HOLLOW

AHDOMN SELF-RELEASED

Canadian prog metal prodigies earn their spurs.



Sometimes at prog shows it's easy to feel a tinge of worry for the genre's future due to the dearth of young fans, but reports of prog's impending demise look to be presumptuous. Jupiter Hollow's Grant MacKenzie and Kenny Parry are scarcely in their 20s, but *AHDOMN* reveals a wealth of talent. MacKenzie plays guitar and bass, Parry handles vocals and drums, and they share the keyboard duties between them. No idea how they do this live – presumably they must utilise backing tracks – but in the studio they've built a prog monster. Influences available to the ear include Leprous and Coheed And Cambria, while Parry hits some high notes worthy of a young Geddy Lee. *Deep In Space* boasts excellent interplay in the rhythm section, and *Over 50 Years* adds djent crunch to the sound. However, it's the ambitious 16 minutes of *Null Without Praise* that most effectively reveals the full scope of their talents, featuring a labyrinthine structure that moves between lush harmonies to screamed vocals, from delicate guitar lines to pummelling riff workouts. If Jupiter Hollow are emblematic of the next generation of prog bands, a bright tomorrow lies ahead. Hugely impressive. **DW**

JAZZ PROG

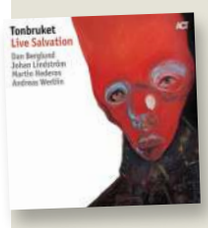
Sid Smith rounds up the best releases from prog's jazzier reaches.

Gordon Beck: Jubilation (Turtle) is a beautifully packaged three-disc set crammed with previously unreleased performances and voluminous, authoritative liner notes. **Gordon Beck**, who died in 2011 and worked with John McLaughlin and Nucleus, among others, is heard in a variety of line-ups between 1964 and 1984, featuring some of British jazz's finest. Be it dreamy introspection or melodically deft interventions, Beck's work on acoustic and electric piano acts as an accelerant on these priceless live and studio recordings. A brilliant tribute to a gifted player.

Mike Gibbs' work as an arranger and composer has always been a rallying point for some of the best players on the planet. *Symphony Hall, Birmingham 1991* (Dusk Fire) captures him in charge of a 12-piece band, with guitarist John Scofield adding his trademark finesse. Bursting with his customarily rich orchestration, Gibbs leaves plenty of space across two discs for Scofield and his fellow soloists, trumpeter Kenny Wheeler and pianist John Taylor — all sadly no longer with us — to infuse their graceful magic into the music.

SkyDive Trio's *Sun Sparkle* (Hubro) effortlessly tumbles through the spaces between explosive rock, contemplative jazz and pensive post-rock atmospherics. Knitting smartly crafted tunes to a capricious expressionism, guitarist Thomas T Dahl channels gnarly experimentalist tones, wiry county twanging and glistening meteoric arcs that occasionally suggest a pre-*Dark Side Of The Moon* Floyd. Drummer Olavi Louhivuori and Mats Eilertsen's supple bass dig deep into harder, darker sonics, not only leavening the mix, but also adding to a sense that nowhere is out of bounds.

Trippy electronics, punchy beats and distortion-saturated guitar and keyboards occupy the foreground of **Tonbruket**'s *Live Salvation* (Act). Bassist Dan Berglund's guiding presence presides over a powerful, sometimes transgressive force that thrashes with a knowing bravado and full-on risk-taking that leaves you wondering how they'll bring it home. Exciting stuff. It's released at the same time as *e.s.t Live In London* (Act) marking the 10th anniversary of the tragic and premature death of Berglund's friend and colleague, pianist Esbjorn Svensson.



In the late 70s, **Weather Report** began losing their edge in concert thanks to crowd-pleasing medleys and onstage showbiz showboating. Back in the studio, 1980's *Night Passage* (Vocalion) was a welcome return to form. Leaving the standard CD dead in the water, this SACD version brings both focus and intensity to the Ellingtonian swagger of Joe Zawinul's keyboards and Jaco Pastorius' typically nimble percolations. Wayne Shorter remains a frustratingly reticent presence but when he does step forward, it's quite simply a blast from heaven. With fresh context-setting liner notes, this album has never sounded as good as it does here.

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KOMIE

Afterglow SELF-RELEASED

LA-based soundtrack maestro turns guitar hero.

Komie is one of those gifted people who has probably slipped under your radar. A winner of several Emmys, he's created music for Ozzy Osbourne, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Coca-Cola, NASCAR and *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*, to name but a few. This is a man who has kept in the background, producing soundtrack and incidental music. Well, no more. *Afterglow* is Komie's coming-out party, and brings his guitar virtuosity – by turns meditative, by turns searing – centre stage. A rather beautiful thing it is too. By combining elements of post-rock and New Age chill-out, *Afterglow* supplies a soundtrack to lose yourself in. Tracks such as *Driftwood* and *Breathe In You* take the listener off on aural dream rivers, and Komie's echoey, delayed guitar is spacey and gritty. But there are also poppier grooves such as *Power Surge*, and tense post-industrial soundtracks like *Inhumanly Possible*. There are a lot of guitar virtuosos, and Komie's desire to keep his technique subservient to the needs of the song won't be to everyone's taste. His effortless runs and dives, however, are arguably an object lesson to the ill-disciplined wig-out boys letting rip over less distinguished efforts. **RM**

MELODY'S ECHO CHAMBER

Bon Voyage DOMINO

Delicious second from eclectic French songwriter.

The long wait for a follow-up to Melody Prochet's 2012 debut hasn't been without drama. After scrapping recording sessions with ex-boyfriend and Tame Impala man Kevin Parker (producer of said debut), she moved to Sweden. Most traumatically, last year saw her suffer a serious accident. *Bon Voyage*, again issued under her Melody's Echo Chamber alias, is a wonderfully kinetic work that seems to suggest she's made a full recovery. Aided by Reine Fiske of Dungen and The Amazing's Fredrik Swahn, it's marked by a dazzling sense of exploration. Prochet dispenses songs in French, English and Swedish, while making playmates of avant-psych, ethno-jazz, prog pop and weirdo Eastern space rock. Nowhere is this more explicit than on *Desert Horse*, with its trippy pan-cultural flavours, backwards effects and spurts of vocoder. *Cross My Heart* is driven by a similarly experimental feel, Prochet and colleagues squaring the circle between Shuggie Otis, Sun Ra and early Traffic. Aside from other members of Dungen, it's fitting that her other guest is Nick Allbrook of Pond, whose florid pop art textures are very much aligned to Prochet's own creative vision. **RH**

PINIOL

Bran Coucou DUR ET DOUX

This musical ménage à sept makes for a thrilling French connection.

Until now there were two French bands doing fine under their own steam. PoiL purveyed a head-wrecking mishmash of experimental, piano-led jazz and avant-garde rock. Ni were also way out there melodically, with a rockier heft to their discombobulations. The two have joined forces as PinioL (there's a mucky French pun in there apparently), keyboardist/vocalist Antoine Arnera the pivotal player between what are effectively two bass/drum/guitar trios playing at once. So far, so Crimson, but this sort of organised aural chaos only comes from musical discipline and a real esprit de corps. There's exciting energy to the silly, intense and wonderful 14-minuters *Pilon Bran Coucou* and *Shô Shin*, the metallic and psych *Pogne*, and frenetic math rock assault *Mimolle*. With its insistent outré grooves and synth chirrups, *François 1er* comes at you like a blizzard, *Kerberos* is a roller-coaster ride through Hades, and *Orbite* closes the bacchanalian feast on a doomed-out, downtuned note. Ni's fuzzy aesthetic is more to the fore but doesn't dominate, and *chapeaux* off to whoever corralled two guitarists, two bassists and two drummers into one room together to produce something so substantial. Quel trip! **GRM**

SENDELICA

Cromlech Chronicles III FRUITS DE MER

Instrumental psychedelia of megalithic proportions.

Cromlech are small megaliths that were used as both basic shelters and burial chambers. They were the first stone structures to be built in Wales, where Sendelica hail from, and supposedly predate the pyramids of Egypt. The album gets its title simply because the studio where it was recorded is near to a cromlech, and the record's attempt to channel the pagan mysticism of yore is slightly undercut by the fact that, in the grand tradition of *Jaws 3*, it comes with a pair of 3D glasses to view the wobbly vision sleeve with. And yet, the classic underground sound that Sendelica are masterful proponents of — long-form, psychedelic space rock — has a particular resonance in this country, tapping into a tradition of free festivals and free music that might not be as ancient as a Stone Age monument, but embodies the same Arcadian view of history.

Music of celebration and consolation, a pure distillation of the underground spirit.

Sendelica are a lot more than just your average hippie jam band, though. Much of the music they make has the undeniable aroma of joss sticks and dope smoke about it, but the perfectly judged ebb and flow of the six tracks here is only possible when the players involved are operating at a near-telepathic level of instrumental understanding. For example, just listen to how opener *Slow Burner* lives up to its title — beginning with a fanfare of lazy guitar, it comes together around a majestically steadfast rhythm, ecstatic sax weaving across an incandescent riff which sounds as though it's about to burst into Neil Young's *Like A Hurricane* at any moment. This is music of celebration and consolation, a pure distillation of the underground spirit, oblivious and impervious to the vagaries of fashion.

In contrast, *'BS'* comes out swinging with a massive stoner prog riff, King Crimson trying to play *21st Century Schizoid Man* after imbibing monster quantities of Red Leb.

Elsewhere, the mood is decidedly more mellow, the reverb and tremolo of *12 Shades Revisited* evoking the blissed-out psych mantras of Spacemen 3, smoky sax cutting through the womb-like fug. *Starflower Blossom* starts with a similar vibe, but gradually pushes itself towards the sky — this is music to live inside, an environment of the senses, a sonic state of mind. But don't get too relaxed, because here comes the radioactive cosmic metal of *Lost City Of Cardiza*, which is basically *Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun* as interstellar battering ram rather than trippy meditation.

Like the cromlech on the cover, Sendelica are a beacon from the past still transmitting into the future.

JOE BANKS

MICHAEL ROMEO

War Of The Worlds, Part 1 MASCOT

The Symphony X man goes solo – with added dubstep.

Despite having spent nearly 25 years as guitarist and chief driving force behind Symphony X, not to mention being one of the most revered shredders on the planet, Michael Romeo has never actually made a solo record before. This may explain why *War Of The Worlds, Part 1* sounds like a bloody great bomb going off for a full, breathless 54 minutes.

Every bit as overblown and epic as its mischievous title suggests, this is prog metal at its heaviest, but with a cinematic streak a mile wide, *and* several eccentric detours that firmly separate this from Romeo's day job.

> **Prog metal at its heaviest, but with a cinematic streak.**

Long-time fans will be more than comfortable with the majority of the music on *War Of The Worlds, Part 1*. The opening *Introduction* is a riot of dark Disney orchestration, spiralling tech metal histrionics and a general sense of impending chaos. Meanwhile, *Fear The Unknown* is an exhilarating slab of prime Michael Romeo metal that's not a million miles from the mothership, but with Rick Castellano's vocals nudging the interstellar rudder in a new direction. Similarly, *Black* is a brooding, prog thrash monolith, as murderously heavy as anything on Symphony X's 2015 album *Underworld* but full of subtle quirks and lead breaks that twist and warp in unexpected ways.

Quite what the faithful will make of *Fucking Robots* is anyone's guess, though. Augmented with more orchestral eruptions and precise, propulsive riffs, it's the startling and potentially divisive sound of Michael Romeo plunging into the world of speaker-shattering dubstep.

Much as Muse did on their sixth studio album *The 2nd Law* in 2012, the guitarist's harnessing of something that will almost certainly freak a few people out is used sparingly: the wub-wub of glowstick-friendly sub-bass doesn't appear again, but its presence here injects a gently thrilling sense of anarchy into an otherwise sterling exercise in delivering the goods.

There are plenty of other stunning moments on *War Of The Worlds, Part 1*: *Djinn*'s seven meandering minutes are as perfect an example of this strain of progressive metal's imaginative potential; *Believe* is a gargantuan, gothic ballad that provides the versatile Castellano with a perfect showcase; and *War Machine* is a riff-driven but intricate alien onslaught worthy of HG Wells' titular tale.

Everything sounds immaculate and Romeo's playing is mind-blowing throughout. It may have taken him three decades, but he's nailed it first time out and delivered an album of preposterous brilliance. Roll on *Part 2*.

DOM LAWSON

RED BEE

Silent Enemy DINNER FOR WOLVES

Thinking man's prog metal from Down Under.

The first 30 seconds of Red Bee's second studio album *Silent Enemy* just about sums things up: you've got the spider-fingered prog metal riffs and fleeting hints of Dillinger Escape Plan-esque discord before flighted, melodic vocals swoop in. This first snatch of opener *Dead Inside* is heady stuff, and it paves the way for another eight tracks, which don't always break new ground but give things a right bloody good go. The record is a step up from the Australian trio's previous album *Ictus*, with the production also another rung up the ladder. Proglodytes will get their kicks from the slithering, snaking jolts and the meshing of light and dark, but metalheads might get a little bit more as they lap up the thrash-leaning riffola. The title track teases dreamy tech musings before going a bit like if Korn tuned up and indulged their inner prog yearnings. Meanwhile, *Autumn Blood Horizon* is a ripsnorter that chucks in blastbeats, wonky twiddling and djent deliveries. Big riffs, big choruses and just about enough left turns in all the right places, Red Bee could well become Australia's next big thing. Whether that's in the prog or metal scene remains to be seen. **CC**

SPURV

Myra FYSISK FORMAT

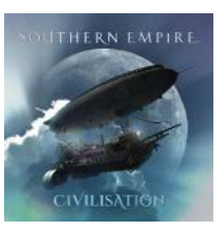
Post-prog majesty from the mean streets of Oslo.

There are so many bands operating in that hazy realm between thunderous post-metal and beatific post-rock that it becomes hard to sort the wheat from the chaff. When a band of rare quality do emerge, the power of this kind of atmospheric, left-field, instrumental rock can knock you off your feet. Spurv are one such band and *Myra* is a triumph. With a sinewy rhythmic undercarriage ensuring that rock'n'roll's physicality is never forgotten, these noise-laced bursts of reverb-sodden guitar worship repeatedly hit that tricky to define emotional sweet spot where it feels like everything and nothing are colliding inside your skull. The surging crescendos and urgency of the eight-minute *Fra Dypet Under Stenen* are particularly exhausting, but in the most satisfying way. An omnipresent wall of guitars powers *Et Blekt Lys Lyder* and dramatic opener *Og Ny Skog Bæres Frem*, but the Norwegians are masters of space and dynamics too, evoking the twinkling euphoria of the Cocteau Twins and My Bloody Valentine. Best of all, the closing *Allting Får Sin Ende, Også Natten* is an extraordinary piece of refined self-indulgence that confirms Spurv as post-everything heavyweights. **DL**

SOUTHERN EMPIRE

Civilization GEP

Antipodean proggers drop a slab of sunshine.



Even in the world of prog, it's a bold band that dare to release an album comprising a mere four tracks. Part of the brilliance of Australia's Southern Empire, however, is their willingness to go where others fear to tread. With only four songs, though, cynics might suggest that this follow-up to 2016's eponymous debut could do with a little more shaping. They would be wrong. If the debut was crisp and appealing, *Civilization* is joyous, wild and delightful. Opener *Goliath's Moon* combines the sophistication of Transatlantic with the pop metal hooks of David Coverdale at his most winsome. The harmony work between lead vocalist Danny Lopresto and the rest of the band is luscious and, hell, can Cam Blokland wrangle a guitar. *Cries For the Lonely* supplies a feast of cosmic keyboards courtesy of Sean Timms, but for sheer ambition, look no further than the 30-minute *Crossroads*. Combining jazz, spooky metal and catchy hooks, it's a giant statement of intent. This is prog unafraid of grooviness and sweet melody, and fans of the techier end of the spectrum should take note: Southern Empire show how to be both clever and melodic. They deserve a wide audience. **RM**

SWEET BILLY PILGRIM

Wapentak SELF-RELEASED

Gentler direction for perennially neglected talents.

Remember when Obama was President, David Cameron was famous and Sweet Billy Pilgrim were a grandiose, six-piece swell of melodramatic art prog? Ah, different times, my friend. Get with it – SBP are now a stripped-back duo, harmonising deftly like Angus & Julia Stone, closer to King Creosote than King Crimson. It's always a joy to hear the contrasting yet complementary voices of Tim Elsenburg and Jana Carpenter interweaving over the former's intricate lyrics. Yet *Wapentak* will be a culture shock for the faithful few who 'got' the band, as 12 years, four albums and critical acclaim failed to pay their bills. They've downsized, albeit with rhythm and strings. Not that they've lost their ability to create a big mood, and Elsenburg's vocal technique couldn't be small if it knelt. Sylvia Plath, Betty Boop, *Blood On The Tracks* and hearts made of cinder are referenced across what at first seems a melancholy group of songs but ultimately translates into a display of hope, compassion and defiance. *Junkyard Dogs* emits echoes of their previous pomp-tastic incarnation, while *The Briar Bell* chimes with that trademark blend of sorrow and stargazing. A quieter storm. **CR**

TALONS

We All Know HOLY ROAR

English instrumentalists take a journey on album number three.

Talons were always destined to be an instrumental act, with the band keen to draw inspiration from the likes of post-rock peers Explosions In The Sky. The key to vocal-free music is mastering the fine art of sucking in the listener in the absence of lyrics. Over their last two albums, the Hereford sextet have managed to do just that, with the inclusion of violin giving their soundscapes a particularly unique twist. Their third release *We All Know* is just as sharp as their past work, with intro track *The Drowning* a masterclass in the art of swelling and shrinking, swelling and shrinking. The record sounds big, not just in its post-rock dynamics but also in its chunky guitar, stabbing drums and textures – *Movements On Seven*, for instance, builds to crashing distortion, violin motifs and rhythms with the punch of Nine Inch Nails. But these lads aren't afraid to probe the boundaries, with the following *Long Reading Room* a lush, string-only antidote to the noise. By the time the rowdy closer *Quiet* comes forth, it feels like the listener has been led on a relentless journey through both calm and cataclysm. Who needs vocals when you can have this much fun? **CC**

TARJA

Act II EARMUSIC

Rock operatics taken to the max.

Never knowingly understated, Finnish soprano Tarja Turunen has released two rock albums and one classical/opera album since 2012's *Act I*, her first live album. She puts her three octaves to powerful use on *Act II*, an album/DVD filmed during a world tour that wowed over a million people across 40 countries. Gathered here are an intimate 75-minute set at London's Metropolis Studios, a larger-scale show from a Milan theatre and an added acoustic set. There's a Nightwish medley (she left them in 2005), a cover of Muse's *Supremacy* – which makes the often bombastic Muse sound like Low unplugged – and a window-rattling take on *Goldfinger* that makes Shirley Bassey seem shy and retiring by comparison. If perchance you didn't know that operatic diva-emoting over heavy symphonic rock was a thing, two minutes of Tarja will ensure you never forget. Two hours is like gorging on very rich food, but initially the frenetic Finn will unclog your ears with her piercing tones and render you giddy with her over-the-top recipe of rampaging riffs and thunderous trills. She may be an acquired taste, but plenty have it. This is one night at the opera that's more headbanger than nutcracker. **CR**

PSYCHEDELIC PROG

Take a trip with **Rob Hughes** as he seeks out the latest mind-expanding music.

The return of **Cobalt Chapel** can only be a good thing. While we await a follow-up to last year's sublime debut album (the new full-length is due in early 2019), Jarrod Gosling and Cecilia Fage offer up a tantalising EP, *Mountain* (Klove). There's a greater emphasis on electronica in the scuttling title track, but it's the combustible psych noise of the epic *Canticle* that really catches the breath.

Not content with issuing one of this year's best psychedelic offerings in *Freedom's Goblin*, **Ty Segall** has now reunited with fellow Californian Tim Presley, aka **White Fence**, for their second album together. *Joy* (Drag City) sees the duo experiment with form, shifting moods with elastic frequency on trippy folk prog songs that dash between Syd-ish reverie (*Good Boy*; *Do Your Hair*) to waking nightmares (*She Is Gold*) to modernist visions of Arthur Lee's Love (*Body Behaviour*). And there's a knowing wink to the past on the spidery *Hey Joel, Where You Going With That?*.

Things take an altogether heavier turn on *Under The Influence*, the new EP from Philadelphia's **Ecstatic Vision**. Making good on last year's aptly named *Raw Rock Fury*, the stoner psych quartet serve up a torrent of noise lashed to hard-smacking grooves as they cover six songs from some of their major inspirations. Brace yourself for mighty reconfigurations of Hawkwind's *Master Of The Universe* and *Born To Go*, plus a wild distortion of the MC5's *Come Together* and a mind-mashing *The Bad Will Die*, a lesser-known gem from the vault of Zambia's leading guitar guru of the 70s, Keith Mlevhu.

On a more cosmic tip, the second coming of **Idris Ackamoor & The Pyramids** continues with the exquisite *An Angel Fell* (Strut). The Chicago native, born Bruce Baker, started touring his Afro-jazz sound in the 70s, before making a welcome return to the studio in 2016. The latest album is a triumphant mix of Afrobeat, psychedelia and left-field jazz, with Ackamoor's tenor sax blowing free on *Tinoge* and the ravishing interstellar dub of *Land Of Ra*.

Thrills of a more esoteric kind are the stock-in-trade of German collective **Datashock**. *Kräuter der Provinz* (Bureau B) is motored by early-70s kosmische, but morphs constantly over seven improvised tracks of varying strangeness. *Hullu Gullu, wir liefern Shizz* fuses tribal elements with violins and ambient drones, though the real keeper is *Im Zuchtstall der Existenzhengste*. An open-ended jam that exists in the nebulous area between psych and prog, a steady hum gradually gives way to restless beats, before subsiding into the ether.

And there's just enough space to flag up *Beach Burrito* (Stolen Body), the debut EP from the promising Bristol quartet **Captain Süün**. Their riffy, psychedelic fuzz is intoxicating in full flow, particularly on the lawless title track.

NIK TURNER & YOUTH

Pharaohs From Outer Space PAINTED WORD

Hawkwind veteran and ambient house pioneer team up in space.

Anybody familiar with Nik Turner's oeuvre will no doubt raise a knowing eyebrow upon seeing the title of this collaboration with uber producer and Killing Joke bassist Youth. After being kicked out of Hawkwind in 1976, Turner travelled to Egypt and ended up recording a series of flute improvisations in the Grand Pyramid of Giza. These would be the foundation of *Xitintoday* by Nik Turner's Sphynx, an album recorded with various members of Gong and based on the *Egyptian Book Of The Dead*.

Pharaohs From Outer Space has other musical resonances as well, the most telling one being its evocation of Sun Ra's

> **A 21st-century take on electro-ambient cosmic jazz.**

Egyptology-entwined music of the spheres. These echoes and references are no doubt deliberate, but what this album delivers is a very 21st-century take on electro-ambient cosmic jazz, Turner's sax and flute weaving their way through widescreen Logic-driven soundscapes. But it's testament to Youth's considerable skill as a composer and sonic alchemist that *Pharaohs...* feels vital and organic. Rather than set the controls for the heart of the drone, these tracks unfurl in multiple directions without just drifting into the void.

What's really pleasing to hear is how well Turner has been recorded. Often criticised for lacking traditional technique, the feeling and emotion he puts into his playing comes over clearly here, and far outweighs any quibbles about his chops. Also striking is the lack of effects on his sound, in contrast to the alien glossolalia he's usually associated with. Instead, his tone throughout is warm and rich, the human element inside Youth's complex interstellar simulations.

Almost inevitably, the graceful note clusters of sax and chiming electronica of tracks such as *Toltec Flying Pyramid* recall the melancholy futurism of Vangelis' *Blade Runner* soundtrack, but there are also strong hints of players such as textural minimalist Jan Garbarek and 'Fourth World' fusioneer Jon Hassell. Unsurprisingly, Youth has cited ECM as a major inspiration for his new label Painted Word, of which *Pharaohs...* is a flagship release.

Another key track is the ecstatic techno of *Junk DNA*, which could almost be Tangerine Dream interpreting Floyd's *One Of These Days*. Turner takes his time and picks his phrases carefully, projecting a sense of space into the music. The luminous digital waltz of *Heruxuti* and the urgent, pulsating title track similarly draw on Youth's ambient trance background, but there are more reflective moments too, such as the sombre piano and flute of *Don't Stand Still In The Sky*.

Gloriously out-there, this album reaffirms Nik Turner's status as a cosmic citizen par excellence.

JOE BANKS

THE PARADOX TWIN

The Importance Of Mr Bedlam WHITE STAR

Berkshire proggies impress, with a little help from John Mitchell and friends.

Even the greatest debut albums tend to exhibit a dash of naivety, but The Paradox Twin have clearly been putting in the hours on their first full-length. Produced by John Mitchell and boasting cameos from Kim Seviour and Mitchell, *The Importance Of Mr Bedlam* is the kind of audacious, sprawling sonic travelogue that bands usually attempt on their second or third trip to the studio. Opener *The Mir* sets the band's stall out with great elegance: a fluid and highly melodic blend of modern prog tropes, it owes a gentle debt to Marillion and Porcupine Tree but manages to wring freshness from those influences. The title track, redolent of Gazpacho in anguished mode, is a rumbling, propulsive psych-prog mantra, with a slow-build melody that delivers a startling Neal Morse-esque payoff. As the album progresses, the Twin's ambition expands: *Earthbound* adds hissing synths and a dash of Opeth-like pomp to its 10-minute swirl of structural sleight of hand and muscular riffing, while *Moonblood* is an old school prog song realised via modern means. By the time you reach painfully pretty closer *Gravity Time Dilation*, your surrender to these bold ingénues will be complete. **DL**

THE STANLEY CLARKE BAND

The Message MACK AVENUE

The bass great is joined by young hotshots on his new missive.

After his brilliant 2014 release *Up*, here's more proof that there's still plenty of fuel in this bass great's tank. The rap, soul and beatboxing elements of *The Message* might alienate more conservative listeners, but for the rest of us, it's an album brimming with dizzying musical brilliance. Jazzy, breezy and complex, it's a product of our times: the material evolved from writing sessions in Paris during the band's 2016 European tour, when a terrorist attack in Tunisia stranded them in their hotel. Clarke's pedigree radiates from every track, notably the retooling of Return To Forever's *After The Cosmic Rain*, his tendon-stretching read of Bach's *Cello Suite No.1* on bowed contrabass, and the title track, a lyrical bass solo. But its his kick-ass young band that really drive *The Message* home. Keyboardist Cameron Graves and drummer Mike Mitchell are monster musicians, but 21-year-old Georgian pianist Beka Gochiashvili is simply terrifying – *The Rugged Truth* and *Alternative Facts* showcase his fast, tasteful playing. A few false steps aside (*Combat Continuum*), this is a diverse collection, the vintage virtuoso turbocharged by the energy of his gifted acolytes. **GRM**

TUMBLETOWN

Never Too Late FREIA

Clever playing in search of a song.

Five years on from their debut *Done With The Coldness*, TumbleTown return with *Never Too Late*. The core of the group has expanded from a duo to a trio, with keys player Erik Laan joining vocalist/guitarist Hans Uil and guitarist/bassist Aldo Adema. Their sound leans towards the more modern side of prog. Tracks like *All Because Of Me* recall Spock's Beard and Neal Morse without the religious overtones, though that one is a bit of a plodder. There's plenty of melodrama, particularly in *Do Not Leave Me Now*, while Adema's bass work in *Avalon* is similar to Nick Beggs'. What the album lacks is a standout track that immediately grabs the listener. As skilful as the players are, there aren't a lot of hooks among all the dense arrangements. *Transatlantic* is the centrepiece of the record, but Uil's verbose lyrics and the absence of any memorable melody mean it can feel like a clinical exercise in prog box-checking rather than a compelling piece of music in its own right. Competing for space and attention alongside bands such as Lifesigns and IO Earth, both of whom have stronger material, TumbleTown are left to run with the pack, but they're not leading it. **DW**

UNKH

Innerverse FREYA

Netherlands outfit transcend the sum of their influences.

Dutch four-piece Unkh, formed in the 90s, profess their love of 70s prog, citing Camel, Genesis and Yes as heroes. They also revere Talk Talk and Muse, but their stirring of these role models with a big spoon results in something that doesn't labour under the yoke of copyism. They coax out a lush, dreamy, unhurried sound, and the five songs here exude patient confidence (*Paranoid Void* is 10 minutes, *Dreamcatcher* is 19), as if they know, without trying too hard, that their combinations have that special something. They also have depth, which is just as well when they've displayed the chutzpah to declare the album's theme to be "existential loneliness". From the opening piano stabs and heavy breathing, atmosphere is established. Then songs build and swell with emotional sensitivity. In phases they veer smartly into repetitive kosmische riffs. Jeroen Habraken's voice is sometimes trickily treated but it oozes character, while Maarten Peerlings' guitar breaks through like the sun through clouds. *Dreamcatcher* is an astutely judged journey through off-kilter keyboard flourishes and rhythmic raunch, culminating in a cheeky nod to Floyd's *Echoes*. **CR**

YAWNING MAN

The Revolt Against Tired Noises HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

The desert rock pioneers offer up a strong toke of the good stuff.

Yawning Man is a name mentioned reverently in desert rock circles. Formed in the mid-80s, the California band are the Grateful Dead of the genre, and their early gigs – when they'd rock up in their van, spark up and play to parties in the Cali wilderness – are underground legend. Josh Homme and his Kyuss bandmates were there, and later covered one of their tunes, *Catamaran*, which has finally been recorded on this, Yawning Man's sixth release. Their reputation was founded on experimental jams, but it's clear from opener *Black Kite* that the trio have an innate sense of musical structure and a focused mastery of woozy texture. Gary Arce's baroque guitar arpeggios on the likes of *Skyline Pressure* will delight the ears of math- and post-rock listeners. Mario Lalli's bass pins down and decorates the melodies, and there are grungy guts to his two rare vocal stints (that urgent *Catamaran* and *Grant's Heart*). Bill Stinson's drums are deceptively refined, even when he's smashing up the bronzeware on *Ghost Beach*. For fans of everyone from QOTSA to The Verve to The Fierce And The Dead, this album wears its title well. Its creators' name was never more ironic. **GRM**

WALKING ACROSS JUPITER

Oneiroid SELF-RELEASED

Russian prog newbies whip up a potent blend.

As the post-djent generation become more fully woven into prog's tapestry, it will be records like this that unite the tribes. Based in St Petersburg, Russia, Walking Across Jupiter are the model of a modern prog metal hybrid: you can hear everything from Meshuggah's polyrhythmic punch to Devin Townsend's cinematic soundscapes here, but there's never a sense that *Oneiroid* is a mishmash of tropes. Instead, this inventive duo make the whole shebang flow beautifully. Whether finding a place for what sounds like synthesised bagpipes on the stately *Unus Multorum* or filtering their Rush fantasies through a prism of symphonic bluster on *Hymns Of The Valiant*, melodies are always front and centre, those underpinning wonky riffs adding texture rather than dwarfing the subtleties. If there is a downside, it's that you may find yourself wishing the band would stretch out a little more and explore certain ideas further, as they do on a startling bonus cover of Bowie's *Space Oddity*. Otherwise, this is a dazzling and daring debut that gleefully and fruitfully blurs the lines between several contemporary prog strains. **DL**

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

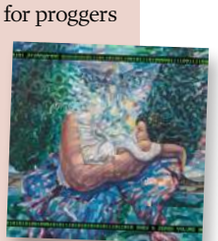
Grant Moon has a rummage down the back of the *Prog* sofa for the ones that nearly got away...

Brummie folk proggers **Quill** first fledged in the early 70s, and over the years their line-up has included Diamond Head guitarist Brian Tatler and ELO/The Move's Bev Bevan. Bevan's back as their percussionist now, IQ/Frost's Andy Edwards is on drums, and the band have taken flight again of late, recently playing Cropredy. Current EP *Grey Goose Call* (www.quilluk.com) sees them in moody, dark and sensual form, with Joy Strachan-Brain's seasoned vocals on *Little Affection* and *Skin On Skin* nestled in a sweet spot between Sonja Kristina and Alison Goldfrapp.

The Dame are a band from The Hague setting themselves the unenviable task of making prog 'sexy'. As you can see from the leggy lovely adorning their debut LP *Losing Sight Of What You Want* (www.thedameband.com), their aesthetic is 1920s chic, but their music is unreconstructed, live-sounding neo. Marian van Charante's voice is distinctive and she really commits to tunes like *Faking It In Monaco*, and if the 19-minute *Conveniently Distant* doesn't totally hang together as a piece, at least it proves they're serious about establishing their prog credentials.

Star Period Star formed in Chicago and now play out of Savannah, Georgia, and numerous styles collide on their fourth album, *Daylight Spending* (Jet Propulsion). There's a little Rush on the title track, *Dust Storm* has a strong desert rock riff at its core, and the mini-triumph *Bully Pulpit* nods towards Canterbury way. Dan Sweigert's vocals may be technically lacking, but his alt-rock attitude might just win you over, and avant-garde gems like *The Pragmatist* make the album well worth bearing with.

Far more radio-friendly is *Tales Of Torment* (Filthy Princess), by LA prog metal quintet **The Longing**. Now out in a deluxe version, it's packed with songs so catchy, anthemic and symphonic that you hardly notice the fiddly, widdly instrumental parts and dark subject matter sneaking past. Singer/songwriter Laura Bradley is charismatic and seems to be in complete control, and if their metal mauling of *To Make You Feel My Love* is sure to appal Bob Dylan fans, this is otherwise shrewd stuff, a guided missile of a record.



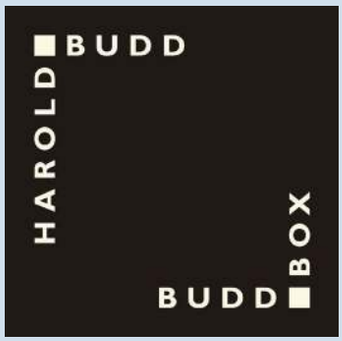
The rapid advance of technology is a rich seam for proggers of all stripes. Last month we had Mile Marker Zero's *The Fifth Row* and now we have New Jersey's **3RDegree** with their concept album *Ones & Zeros: vol. 0* (10T Records). Here the subject is given the neo treatment, and it makes for detailed, textured music with some gorgeous harmonies and a real sense of purpose. Singer George Dobbs channels Peter Gabriel and Andy Partridge in parts, but he's compelling on his own terms, and the human thought and warmth of the record serves to enhance its cautionary theme.

Meanwhile on the lighter, brighter indie side of the prog planet, there's the debut album from Liverpool space cadets **The Vryll Society**. Trippy beats, Kraut, psych and hooky pop all orbit *Course Of The Satellite* (Deltasonic), a set of beautifully produced, woozy tunes topped by Mike Ellis's blissful tones. The product of listening to a lot of the right records, it's lovely stuff.

HAROLD BUDD

Budd Box ALL SAINTS

Eno cohort's quiet revolution.



There's always been something enigmatic and magical about Harold Budd's music. He first appeared on record in the early 70s, but it was thanks to Brian Eno's Obscure label and 1978's *The Pavilion Of Dreams* that his name rippled out to find a wider world of listeners. Through a series of meticulously crafted solo albums and incredibly productive collaborations, his reputation as a master of downtempo, otherworldly compositions has been secured.

> **A deep, poetic understanding of stillness.**

Though now revered, it's worth remembering that Budd sometimes caught flak and accusations of New Age blandness largely because of his music's downtempo personality and simplistic structure. Such criticism betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of his approach.

Having deliberately detached himself from the terse, often austere vocabulary of the 1960s avant-garde contemporary classical world he inhabited, Budd wilfully embraced a slower and harmonically warmer method of composition distilled from a deep, poetic understanding and appreciation of stillness. On a cursory listen, you might assume Budd's work lacks bite or is simply in thrall to a languid but essentially vacuous aesthetic. But you'd be wrong.

Gathered within this black box, *The Serpent (In Quicksilver)*, *Abandoned Cities*, *The White Arcades*, *By The Dawn's Early Light*, *Music For 3 Pianos* and *Luxa*, all released between 1981 and 1996, form an alluring body of work. Within many of these gracefully evolving pieces, there's the hint of fretful ennui gnawing at the edges. Mournful wind-blown melodies evoke regret, loss or dislocation. Between the reverb-becalmed chords, the yearning violin or the gauzy folds of synth, Budd's palette of sonic colouring sometimes finds a brooding echo of the contemplative interior Mark Rothko explored on canvas: beauty is sometimes skin deep; a pretty melody doesn't mean it lacks emotional depth.

Presented in elegant, pastel-shaded card sleeves, this set comes with a useful 68-page booklet of interviews with Budd and various commentaries on each of the albums within. Hardcore fans should note, however, that although this appears to be a straightforward reissue of the 2013 *Budd Box*, then liveried in arctic white, in fact this new collection is missing *Through The Hill*, the 1994 partnership with XTC's Andy Partridge, and there are also significant differences in the content of the accompanying book.

Regardless of such omissions, Budd's work commands surprisingly powerful and moving forces. The ambient pigeonholing over the years suggests this is some kind of background music. The reality is that it is anything but.

SID SMITH

BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST

Barclay James Harvest CHERRY RED/ESOTERIC

Remastering BJH's debut – and the spirit of the 60s.

In this modern era when record labels will drop an artist if they fail to chart with their first single, it seems almost quaint that Barclay James Harvest were given record label support for so long with such little chart success at the dawn of their career. This expanded version of their debut album is a reminder that their initial lack of popular acclaim was inversely proportional to the quality of their material.

The record is presented here in a remastered version of the original mix, a new stereo mix, a 5.1 surround sound mix on DVD, plus assorted bonus tracks, including a rare Woolly Wolstenholme solo demo from 1969 of *The Sun Will Never Shine*. There's also a short film for *Mr. Sunshine* and a 68-page book of photos.

Following in the wake of The Moody Blues' *Days Of Future Passed*, the eponymous Barclay James Harvest album pulls in folk, symphonic rock, psychedelia and even a dash of pop. The jaunty and distinctly English *Taking Some Time On* opens the album in style, while *Good Love Child* is pure 60s pop with a gorgeous guitar lick that's so catchy The Monkees could have cut it.

Most striking of all is *Dark Now My Sky*, which is included here in three versions: its original studio form where that Moody Blues influence is most apparent, a curtailed radio session version, and an absolutely scorching live performance from a 1971 John Peel Radio One concert where the band are on blazing form.

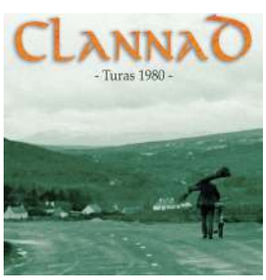
By contrast, the tracks that predate the recording of the album tend to be more pastoral and playful in style, such as the two sides of their 1968 debut single, *Early Morning* and *Mr. Sunshine*. That said, *I Can't Go On Without You* is the sort of melancholy folk that Nick Drake did so beautifully.

In addition to the wallet-busting four-disc boxed package, there's also a single disc edition of the remastered album available that comes loaded up with nine bonus tracks, making it pretty much irresistible. **DW**

CLANNAD

Turas 1980 MIG

Celtic masters hit an early high point.



For many of us, it was the haunting tones of *Theme From Harry's Game* that baptised us into the unique power of Clannad. It's easy, then, to forget that before their mainstream breakout, the Gweedore, County Donegal group had complete mastery of Gaelic folk.

This previously unreleased album – recorded by Radio Bremen (but never broadcast) during the band's 1980 concert tour of Germany – serves as a timely reminder of Clannad's understanding of the roots material on which they drew. With the death of founding member Padraig Duggan in 2016, *Turas 1980* also acts as a fitting tribute to him, and to the music of the band's youth.

If nothing else, *Turas* reminds the casual listener of the fearsome skills and passion possessed by a band that have too readily been thrown into the New Age category. Recorded just before Enya joined the band, this album is a veritable feast of traditional music, Irish craic and beery crowd responses.

It begins gently enough with Moya Brennan's dreamy harp and Pol Brennan's flute on *Turas O'Carolan*. It's truly magical, and if this recording is nearly 40 years old and lacks all the high-tech production of later years, it's a foretaste of their work on the *Robin Of Sherwood* soundtrack. What really gives this session take-off, however, is the interplay between Moya's plaintive voice and the sweet harmonies of the men, as on *An tOileán Úr*.

There's an amusing song about magic mushrooms and a shattering version of *Down By The Salley Gardens*, but the album's lack of English-language songs allows the listener to get lost in a ravishing soundscape.

The between song banter is witty and, joy, there are singalong choruses on songs such as *Crann Úll*. The album closes with the incomparable *Níl Sé'n Lá* – a full 10 minutes of supple folk prog that both hints at the path the band would go on to travel, and which brings out Clannad's rich roots. An absolute must-buy. **RM**

CURVED AIR

Phantasmagoria ESOTERIC

Two-disc remastering spotlights a commercially popular and pioneering set.

While reappraised in recent years as an innovative member of the early 70s progressive scene, you get the sense that Curved Air were never fully accepted into the executive club of acts such as Genesis, Yes, ELP, etc. And that's despite them having a bona fide hit single with *Back Street Luv* in 1971 and their first three albums going Top 20.

Phantasmagoria is the third of those albums, and the last one to feature both of the band's classically trained songwriters, Darryl Way and Francis Monkman.

The band had been at the centre of a bidding war only a few months after forming, but by 1972, they were under financial pressure and close to burnout. The spectre of musical differences had also arisen, with Way and Monkman at loggerheads over the band's direction.

It's no surprise, then, that both tonally and compositionally, *Phantasmagoria* oscillates wildly between extremes. Yet there's still much to enjoy here. *Marie Antoinette* is a wonderfully odd blend of groovy library music and the Canterbury sound, its mellow opening half building towards the galloping piano and needling guitar of its dramatic finale. Here and throughout, Sonja Kristina's voice is calmly authoritative, the very definition of soft power, and a unifying presence across the various styles on offer. *Melinda (More Or Less)* is slightly spooky orchestral pop, while the aggressive instrumental *Cheetah* is essentially a punch-up between High Tide and King Crimson.

The upbeat organ-driven rock of the title track is prog as pure entertainment rather than grand statement, and in no way prepares you for the following proto-hauntological weirdness of *Whose Shoulder Are You Looking Over Anyway?*, where Kristina's voice is fed through an EMS Synthi – an early recorded example of the instrument – or the freak-out of *Over And Above*.

The album comes with French and Italian version bonus tracks and a DVD featuring appearances on Belgium's *Pop Shop* and Austrian TV's *Spotlight*. **JB**

FUSION ORCHESTRA

Live At The Marquee 1974 SECRET

London proggers' recently unearthed bootleg, recorded by a Japanese tourist.

Jill Saward is currently the lead singer with Shakatak, but she first fronted Fusion Orchestra as a 15-year-old – also playing guitar, keyboards and flute – and was only 20 when this gig was recorded.

The group only made one album, 1973's *Skeleton In Armour*, and although they thrived on live work, performing around 500 shows in six years, Saward writes in her sleevenotes that some of the energy had gone by the time they split in 1975.

But energy is what hallmarks this performance and Fusion Orchestra were clearly a terrific live group. There were so few women singers in progressive rock that Saward demands attention straight away. Her vocals veer from bluesy and gritty to a freewheeling upper register. She would have fitted in at the rockier end of the spectrum – like Maggie Bell in Stone The Crows or Elkie Brooks in Vinegar Joe – but Fusion Orchestra were a different proposition.

From Dave Bell's intricate, hyperactive drum intro, through the episodic 11 minutes of the opener *Beginning End*, the five-piece play with an intensity that cuts through the less-than-pristine sound quality. A brief interlude with vocals and keyboards and they all hare off into another speedy passage, with Saward's flute solo and Colin Dawson delivering some speedy lead guitar. When Saward starts strumming a 12-string on *Sister Reno*, it feels like its shaping up to be a ballad but soon veers off in a number of different directions, while *Man In The Sky* features a wig-out synth solo.

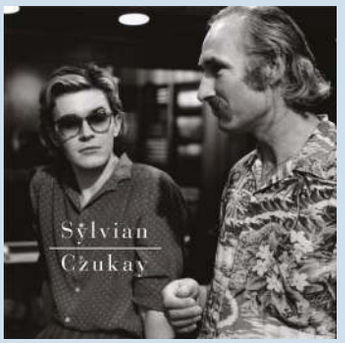
Fusion Orchestra had a very individual style but maybe that made them a little too difficult to pigeonhole. The tricky riffs in six and seven time suggest jazz by default, but it's more like rock pulled and stretched in all sorts of different directions in a way that accentuates each song's dynamics.

Like many live shows of the time, there's a drum solo on *Spinedance* that's impressive but a tad superfluous. There's also that other 70s staple, the rock'n'roll encore, with *Whole Lotta Shakin'* offering some light relief. **MB**

DAVID SYLVIAN & HOLGER CZUKAY

Plight & Premonition/Flux & Mutability GRONLAND

Near-mythical improv team-ups re-enter our atmosphere.



It's rare for David Sylvian to admit he's satisfied with his earlier work, so the remastered reissues of these instrumental collaborations with Holger Czukay suggest they're among his personal favourites. The two minimalist pieces — strictly four, as each consists of two distinct movements — were then categorised as New Age or ambient, boxes both musicians struggled to inhabit. Yet it's a reasonable call: rather than root for momentum or craft for melody, they murmur, exploring the spaces between sounds.

> **Collaborations that float and shimmer outside of time.**

Perhaps their low profile when released in 1988 and 1989 frustrated Sylvian. Between the pair, he responded to Virgin's pleas for something more commercial with the 'difficult' single *Pop Song*, its ironic title as subtle as a sledgehammer. Next to these, though, it was doing jazz hands.

Czukay had invited his Brilliant Trees bro to Can Studios in Cologne in late '86 to contribute to his own album *Rome Remains Rome*. When they strayed off-grid, Sylvian wishing to eschew singing and create 'environmental' music, Czukay directed the flow. Over a three-day session with Jaki Liebezeit, *Plight* and *Premonition* emerged. As Sylvian enthused, "Holger works in a technically 'wrong' way — that's what makes it so exciting."

That's a given with Czukay, but regarding Sylvian, there persisted the hangover of his pop idol image. Record companies struggled to place him, and it was almost 18 months before the album got released. This version is a 2002 remix by Sylvian, which if anything accentuates the slow-boat cruise, echoes and delays of *Plight*, and the church-like quivers and gentle, lulling drones of *Premonition*.

The briefly dynamic duo had meanwhile reconvened in Cologne to go again, producing *Flux* and *Mutability*. By comparison, these sound broader. Liebezeit dabbled in percussion on the first piece but was on African flute on the second. *Mutability* sprang up in a day, and it's the stillest of all four, making every note count. *Flux* saw Sylvian begging for repeated takes, wanting more aural space. It has hints of the restrained, insistent rhythmic backdrop found on Sylvian's 'song' albums of the 80s. Czukay called it "spiritual".

While Sylvian was used to critics decrying his Tarkovsky-like gloom, Czukay was getting stick for not doing another *Movies*. Three decades later, these four enigmatic, signpost-free whisperings enchant and beguile. As the artists intended, they float and shimmer outside time, evocative of yearning, regret and desire.

CHRIS ROBERTS

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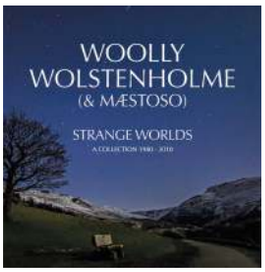
WOOLLY WOLSTENHOLME & MAESTOSO

Strange Worlds: A Collection 1980 - 2010 ESOTERIC

Exhaustive anthology of late, lamented BJH keyboardist's solo work.



It's now not far short of a decade since the suicide of Stuart 'Woolly' Wolstenholme. Inevitably Wolstenholme remains best known for his membership of Barclay James Harvest. But while BJH dominated his career, to confine one's exposure to him just to Oldham's finest excludes hearing a body of other work by an often underappreciated talent.

Having been a co-founder of BJH way back in 1966, Wolstenholme chose to decamp from the band in 1979 following the release of the previous year's *XII* album. His first move was to become a bandleader, fronting his own Maestoso project and releasing an eponymous nine-track debut album in 1980.

That debut – on which he sang and played keys, guitar and bass – has withstood the passage of almost 40 years admirably. Opener *Sail Away* bears an audible resemblance to Gerry Rafferty's *Baker Street* and in more prominent hands might have yielded a hit. Elsewhere, Wolstenholme stretches the musical boundaries to a greater and thoroughly satisfying extent.

But his efforts ultimately found scant commercial reward and, following a tour, work on a successor to Maestoso was abandoned. He turned his focus away from music until he reunited with BJH, or more specifically the John Lees-helmed iteration, in 1998.

Wolstenholme's return to the musical fray with BJH presaged further solo work, beginning with 2003's *Black Box Recovered*, the recordings from the shelved second album. While that and 2004's *One Drop In A Dry World* don't match the heights of the debut, there are plenty of enjoyable moments.

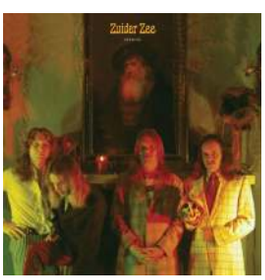
The other four discs in this seven-CD clamshell box set are *Fiddling Meanly*, a 2005 live album recorded at London's Mean Fiddler venue, *Grim* and *Caterwauling* from 2006 and 2007 respectively, plus a collection of previously unreleased demos and "fragments". This last 20-track CD does what it says on the tin and has some intriguing moments for the completist.

Strange Worlds does detailed justice to Wolstenholme's singular talent. **NS**

ZUIDER ZEE

Zeenith LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

Belated release for 1970s US power poppers' more intriguing early work.



We like to think that bands choose their musical direction through a clear creative philosophy arching over everything they do. In truth, of course, it's invariably far more chaotic, organic and plain accidental than that. They're feeling their way far more often than they are beating a path to a predetermined artistic goal.

So while those of you who have heard the one officially released LP by 1970s Memphis power pop quartet Zuider Zee might think they don't have a lot in common with prog, this compilation of earlier material suggests otherwise.

These previously unreleased songs, recorded between 1972 and 1974, reveal a band whose more appealing idiosyncracies might later have been ironed out in the pursuit of power pop mass appeal, but who were capable of a much more diverse sound.

You can see the conflict within their music right from the opening song. Richard Orange's trippy, slightly breathless vocals on *Haunter Of The Darkness* initially set up camp at the darker end of psych rock, while angsty Hammond organ chords and yelps of guitar add to the sense of foreboding, until they're incongruously offset with snatches of honky-tonk piano and summery vocal harmonies.

Again, the pastoral flute that introduces *Lancelot's Theme* pushes us further down a proggy path, before Orange's McCartney-esque vocals and an upbeat chorus is abridged by a gorgeous trickle of minor chord piano. Will the real Zuider Zee please stand up?

Then again, there's something gloriously unpredictable about this 12-track set, as *Old* echoes *Paperback Writer*'s classic riff and then seems to channel ELO's symph boogie before *After The Shine's Gone* points to the Big Star-y direction they'd later take, punctuated by tempo jumps, acid-streaked synth distortion and warped guitar hooks. Then *Royal Command Performance* resembles 10cc after being spiked by pre-*Dark Side...* Pink Floyd and joining in a festival jam with Caravan. Curiouser and curiouser... **JS**

YES

The Steven Wilson Remixes RHINO

Five-LP box set is no disgrace.

For some prog fans, even the thought of Steven Wilson coming along to prise open the soundworld they've inhabited for decades is enough to prompt cries of sacrilege and accusations of sonic vandalism. However, in the real world where, lest we forget, those hallowed original mixes remain intact and readily available, Wilson's work brings us an alternative perspective that doesn't claim any superiority but is simply fresh and different. It's a chance to see an old classic in a new light.

> **Greater depth, clarity and clout - and often a few surprises.**

As with King Crimson, Jethro Tull and others, Wilson's reimagining of Yes' output from 1971's *The Yes Album* through to 1974's *Relayer* coaxes and teases out hitherto obscured details from the murk of the master tapes, giving new life to what is arguably the consistently strongest sequential run of albums by any artist in the 1970s.

While Wilson's surround sound mixes take greater risks due to the format's spatial considerations, he tends to stay reasonably loyal to the spirit of the originals in stereo presentations. What this lends these Yes albums is a greater depth, clarity and clout — and often a few surprises. A guitar part is brought forward; an instrumental pass previously unheard; an improved lucidity around the drums; an enhanced presence within certain vocal sections. Such small additions build a momentum that sounds outstanding on *The Yes Album*, *...Topographic Oceans* and especially *Relayer*.

Housed in a sturdy slipcase boasting Roger Dean's signature artwork, if hardcore fans get frothy around the mouth about the sound being tinkered with, Dean's redesign of some of the sleeves isn't likely to improve their mood. The most radical alteration is found on *Close To The Edge*. Now transformed from its original verdant green into a deep oceanic blue, the depiction of a wave-weathered shoreline viewed from space is a smart foreshadowing of the journey Yes would embark upon next.

Bizarrely, it lacks the lyric-inscribed inner bag, a frankly baffling omission given that *Relayer*'s insert is included. That *The Yes Album*'s cover remains untouched by Dean is another odd decision that awkwardly separates it out from the rest of the pack, spoiling the carefully considered visual continuity.

Overall, though, the combined package is undoubtedly a thing of beauty, not only to look at but to listen to — it must be said, the pressings throughout are all very impressive. If you already own Wilson's stereo remixes previously released on Blu-ray, CD and DVD-A then you might well ask yourself whether you really need this set. If vinyl is the object of your desire, then the answer's an emphatic yes.

SID SMITH

NICK MASON'S

SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS

SEPTEMBER 2018

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TUE 25 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
THU 27 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO
FRI 28 GLASGOW SEC ARMADILLO
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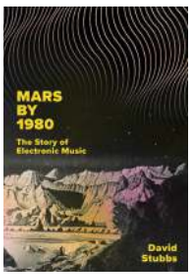
MARS BY 1980: THE STORY OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC

David Stubbs FABER & FABER

***Future Days* author extrapolates from electronica.**



Rare is the book that incorporates articulate discussion of The SOS Band, Cabaret Voltaire, the Futurist Manifesto and Umberto Boccioni's paintings *States Of Mind*. *Mars By 1980* is such a book, bursting with links – what Baudelaire called "correspondences" – between acts of creativity historic and modern, which in some way contributed to the evolution of electronic music. The author clarifies that it's a personal, subjective impression, not an encyclopaedia. This seems appropriate for a genre which, now dominant after decades of wresting control from guitars, has served up the sublime (Scritti Politti, Eno, Soft Cell, Moroder) and belched out the banal (the current pop chart). As Stubbs notes, it's about what humans do with the technology rather than the machines themselves. In the past, the future – 1980, imagine! – seemed thrilling. It's still "retrievable". There's an astute perception, too, that growing up in the north in the 70s was *not* monochrome – it was "hideous oranges and browns. Monochrome felt like an escape". An insightful, droll work, bouncing brightly between themes like the film criticism of David Thomson. Open your mind. **CR**

THE HEATHER FINDLAY TRIO

Aces And Eights: A Night In The Saloon Bar BLACK SAND

Doncaster diva commemorates an intimate 'Evening With'.

It's been 18 months since Heather Findlay gave us a lil' Christmas present with her lovely winter album *I Am Snow*. Recently on tour with Thunder, prog activity for Findlay has been... lacking. Good news, then, of an album expected in 2019, with Thunder pal Luke Morley as collaborator and producer. While we twiddle our thumbs, *Aces And Eights* showcases an intimate gig played last April in Tufnell Park, alongside harpist Sarah Dean and guitarist Martin Ledger. Knowing this rock and blues bar-cum-comedy venue well, it's interesting to see how the bijou space is used, the red-shaded standard lamp illuminating the background, the trio with just enough room to manoeuvre out front. Close-ups and multi-angles are nicely employed and the sound is warm and crisp. It's a shame there are no moments to give context – other parts of the building, behind-the-scenes set-ups, interviews, crowd shots – but there *is* 90 minutes of music, in two acts, from three fine players. Findlay's shy on chat but her voice is bold and bright on *Inner Dream* and *Day 13*, while Ledger's guitar is superlative throughout, ruling *Dark Eyes* and injecting some *Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You* Zep into *Evergreen*. **JK**

THE NEAL MORSE BAND

The Similitude Of A Dream Live In Tilburg 2017 RADIANT

Prog's resident proselytiser feels the spirit live.

If you enjoyed Neal Morse's grandiose 2016 concept double album *The Similitude Of A Dream* but felt it needed more crowd noise, you're in luck. Playing the entire thing front-to-back before an appreciative Dutch audience, this live release isn't about casting the material in a new light. The music is as bombastic as ever and Morse makes up for his limited vocal abilities – he has little tone, no vibrato and can't quite hold a note for any length of time – by belting everything out with his trademark theatrical style. There's a fun a cappella section in *The Ways Of A Fool*, Bill Hubauer's organ work in *The Slough* channels ELP, while *So Far Gone* is a catchy rocker, but the band tend to play flat-out all the time, which can be overwhelming across such a long running time. There's a brief respite from the overload of musical pomp in the acoustic *Freedom Song*, although those lyrics about the grace of God are a little toe-curling for the non-religious. The band instantly come back at full tilt for the deeply cheesy *I'm Running*, with Morse's voice on the verge of cracking as he pushes for the high notes. Big ideas, though, and a big performance. **DW**

MARILLION

All One Tonight (Live At The Royal Albert Hall) EARMUSIC

Fine film of 2017's Albert Hall exultation.

Steve Hogarth looks euphoric and moved, but not as much as the audience. Rarely in its storied past can the Albert Hall have hosted such an enthusiastic, partisan crowd, many of whom, one strongly suspects, are *Prog* readers. This emotional concert film, from Marillion's sold-out debut at the venue last October, feels like vindication for the band. After decades of post-Fish rebuilding, then consolidation and expansion outside of fashion, they find themselves exactly where they deserve to be: playing, consummately, to scenes of acclaim and adoration.

> **Exactly where they deserve to be, playing to scenes of adoration.**

The thing with Marillion is they earn it. Stick a pin in their setlist and you'd find a track that would be most bands' show-stopping epic finale. Every song here is lovingly wrought, embroidered and, even when a lengthy suite, honed for maximum melodramatic impact. There's not a single nod to the pre-Hogarth-era material, which is some indication of the way their fans have travelled with them. This reviewer, always more sentimentally attached to *Misplaced Childhood* and *Clutching At Straws*, was belatedly converted by this undeniable triumph.

The show is split into two sections. The first sees the band play their *FEAR* album in full, and it seems to grow in grandeur on the night. For the second half they're joined by In Praise Of Folly, a string quartet with flute and French horn, and adapt some of their best-loved numbers accordingly: *Afraid Of Sunlight*, *The Great Escape*, *Neverland*. Which is not to suggest they strip things down. Marillion are very adept at light and shade, make no mistake, but even their relatively subdued, reflective moments conjure up images of near-apocalyptic, epoch-rattling events. As filmed by director Tim Sidwell, the lights, lasers and films are splendidly judged, laying back when appropriate, going large when most hoped for. What the visuals convey best, however, is the tangible atmosphere in the room as the stream of standing ovations appear to take place in a magical, underwater fairy grotto.

Hogarth comes across well, a likeable blend of mild nerves, humour and bonhomie early on who grows into the role of spotlit frontman, acting out lines in a jitter of theatrical hand movements, which only accomplished focal points can pull off. And as *Prog* readers, you hardly need us to enlighten you as to how adept and expressive the musicians are.

The dynamics, the drama, the cult that refused to die: this classily produced document is obviously essential for Marillion diehards but powerful enough to pummel sceptics into happy submission too.

CHRIS ROBERTS

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Take a bow

STONE FREE FESTIVAL

VENUE	O2 ARENA, LONDON
DATE	18/06/2018

Providing a mix of hard rock, metal and prog, Stone Free takes place at London's O2 Arena and its more intimate satellite the IndigO2 over two days. Sunday is traditionally the prog rock day at the Arena, with past headliners including Rick Wakeman. 2018 marks the third year of the festival, but despite the positive things that could be written about it — and there are many — poor ticket sales suggest that only a brave man would bet upon it happening again.

Stone Free won't be the first festival to struggle with ticket sales this summer, and neither will it be the last. There are simply too many festivals and insufficient established headline acts to put bums on seats.

This year's sole proggers at the IndigO2, **Godsticks** are watched by 14 people at the beginning of the venue's shift. The rumbling menace of *Guilt* from the Welshmen's new album *Faced With Rage* provides a useful bridge between the previous day's more classic rock elements and the progressive delights to follow. If there's any disappointment at the miserly turnout, it doesn't show, the band departing with a cheery cry of: "We've been Godsticks — good morning!"

Several hours later, the prog day begins in earnest inside the main O2 auditorium. This time we're seated, but the array of bizarre multicoloured objects at the back of the hall fails dismally to disguise the evening's poor attendance.

Introduced by *Prog* editor Jerry Ewing as, "One of the greatest modern-day progressive artists," **Anathema** fully deserve their spot on one of the world's biggest and most prestigious stages. A 40-minute timeframe only allows the band to reveal a mere thumbprint of their ability, but this negative is balanced out by the use of clever back-projected visuals and a near-pristine front-of-house sound.

Much of the set is ambient in nature, a sublime *Untouchable Pt 1* enriched by the perfectly blended vocals of Vincent Cavanagh and Lee Douglas. And when Anathema depart to the sound of that song's sequel, the results are simply breathtaking.

The subsequent presence of British blues rock guitarist Joanne Shaw Taylor is baffling, undermining the show's focus and flow... what were the organisers thinking?

Luckily, help is at hand. Backed by a watertight four-piece group, **Roger Hodgson** arrives to almost casually dispatch a string of Supertramp greats — *Take The Long Way Home*, *School*, *Breakfast In America*, *Hide In Your Shell*, *The Logical Song* and *Lord Is It Mine* — right off the bat.

"I've only got an hour, so I'm going to play the songs I think you'll want to hear," the 68-year-old tells us, and by golly he's right. Hodgson is in fine voice and *Dreamer*, one of the all-time great pop-pomp-prog anthems, gets the crowd on its feet. Much like Hodgson himself, *Fool's Overture*, from *Even In The Quietest Moments...*, is quintessentially English, and after raising the roof again with *Give A Little Bit*, Hodgson's encore of *It's Raining Again* is fully deserved.

"Hodgson is in fine voice and *Dreamer*, one of the all-time great pop-pomp-prog anthems, gets the crowd on its feet."

By the time the headliners arrive, the main arena is somewhere between one-third and a quarter full. Take your pick as to whether a pair of sold-out Hammersmith Apollo shows from a year ago, Father's Day, inter-brand loyalty or the World Cup is to blame.

Whatever the reason, a stage backdrop welcomes **Jon Anderson, Trevor Rabin and Rick Wakeman** as "Quintessential Yes". This is fighting talk, of course. Also, said banner namechecks the act's current 50th anniversary year — unlike Anderson, none of the co-existing 'Yes' were members back in 1968. Clearly, some heritage reclamation is going on here. And why not? On evidence this strong, few could disagree that ARW hold the upper hand over their esteemed rivals.

An entrancing mix of Rabin-era material and 1970s classics begins with *Cinema* and *Hold On*, channelling Wakeman's extravagant, squealing keys, Rabin's unmistakable guitar and the still-impressive vocals of Anderson. That's followed by *Perpetual Change*, *I've Seen All Good People*, *And You And I* and a sprawling rendition of *Awaken*.

At 73, and despite a serious illness that almost killed him, Anderson cannot have too many tours like this left. However, amid bouts of harp-plucking, synchronised clapping and the gentle chiming of Tibetan temple bells, the man who once declared himself "the master-conductor of Yes" remains at the heart of it all. A grinning Wakeman goes walkabout with his keytar during *Owner Of A Lonely Heart*, and as the band sign off with *Roundabout*, it's impossible not to be swept away by the show's joy.

The next set of albums will reveal exactly which band really can be considered the "Quintessential Yes". It's going to be fascinating.

DAVE LING

Roger Hodgson and his brilliant band.

Trevor Rabin: quintessential guitarist.

Anathema's Lee Douglas.

Giving A Little Bit: Roger Hodgson plays the hits.

Vincent Cavanagh: untouchable.

Yes man Jon Anderson.

Planet Of The Capes: Yes' Rick Wakeman.

KEVIN NIXON

A PERFECT CIRCLE

VENUE	BRIXTON ACADEMY, LONDON
DATE	13/06/18

Given the level of agonizing that goes into his work — *Eat The Elephant* is A Perfect Circle's first album in 14 years, and Tool's last effort surfaced 12 years ago — frontman Maynard James Keenan is clearly the kind of man who begins deliberating over his Christmas card salutations in July. And even then, you can be sure that you'll be warned off from wasting your time on anything as trite as organised religion or the concept of a supernatural power greater than yourself.

And so it proves tonight, as A Perfect Circle's disciples, here gathered at the first of two sold-out shows at this celebrated venue, are cautioned by a stentorian, robotic voice emanating from the PA that any usage of mobile phones for photographic and recording purposes will result in immediate expulsion from the venue. Though that sounds more than a little pompous, it makes perfect sense as A Perfect Circle ease themselves from set opener *Eat The Elephant* to the critique of the digital age that is *Disillusioned*.

Keenan's detractors have had a field day attempting to paint him as an out-of-touch curmudgeon, railing against gadgets and gizmos like some kind of contemporary Canute. Yet to take a glance at the rammed audience, whose gaze is transfixed at what's going on in front of them and not at a pixellated screen, is to be reminded of a time when this was the norm. The only things missing are plumes of exotically fragranced smoke wafting across the venue, but hey, you can't have everything.

The stage set is certainly worth savouring. Three LED light strips, their images altering throughout, are placed above the stage and on the three risers positioned upstage, each one from left to right bigger than its predecessor. Multi-instrumentalist Greg Edwards takes the smallest, Keenan is silhouetted in the middle and drummer Jeff Friedl occupies the largest, stage left. This leaves guitarist Billy Howerdel — tight of trouser and shiny of head — and bassist Matt McJunkins to prowl the sizeable downstage area left for them. Above and behind, spotlights strafe the stage and the audience, and such is the hypnotic power of the lights that on more than occasion, people's hands reach out to grab them.

A Perfect Circle are a band who make few concessions. Their music is frequently dense and oppressive and the audience go to them, because they sure as hell aren't coming for the audience. The only thing asked — by implication — is whether the crowd take or leave it. But on this occasion, the covers offered tonight — Brinsley Schwarz's *(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love And Understanding* and John Lennon's *Imagine* — we could do without. At least the lyrical concerns of a heavy-handed reading of AC/DC's *Dog Eat Dog* match their aesthetic.

Yet these sins aside, A Perfect Circle come into their own during the second half of the set. Blending newer cuts such as a pummelling *The Contrarian* and *TalkTalk* with the established *The Outsider* and *Counting Bodies Like Sheep To The Rhythm Of The War Drums*, the night is theirs for the taking. The onslaught is relentless and the spellbound audience greedily lap it up.

"It's our job as artists to observe, interpret and report," Keenan reminds the audience. "We're merchants of emotion. We need to spread love like chlamydia, as often as we can."

Don't leave it so long next time, then, and bring the antibiotics with you.

JULIAN MARSZALEK

> **"A Perfect Circle are a band who make few concessions - their music is frequently dense and oppressive."**

***Elephant* man: APC's Maynard James Keenan.**

CLOSE TO THE RAIN

VENUE	GARAGE, BERGEN
DATE	07-09/06/2018

It's ironic that Bergen's Close To The Rain festival, named after both the Yes album and the Norwegian city's familiarity with the wet stuff, takes place in a heatwave, with not a drop falling from the sky over its three days.

It's hot inside the venue on the first night too, with **Det Skandaløse Orkester** juggling Zappa trickery with theatrics. It's entertaining stuff, and by the end of the set, half the band are prancing about in their underwear. **Kabaret Makaber** are more reserved, channelling jazz vibes as Marita Vangen Bratteteig's operatic voice shoots up to the Norse gods.

Headliners **Major Parkinson** are playing their home city with stellar new album *Blackbox* in tow, and its kaleidoscopic tracks *Isabel* and *Baseball* are superb microcosms of how the group juggle the hyperactive mania of Cardiacs with the accessibility of The Beatles.

There are no underwear-donning mischief-makers on stage as the second night opens, with **Alwanzatar** instead opting for a cape as the one-man band indulges himself in demonic electronica.

Jordsjø inject some vitality with a rousing set of atmospheric, retro-tinged tunes, finger-sapping bass guitar work at the fore, before **Tusmørke** discharge a unique sound that feels as much like it's from the Bronze Age as it does 2018.

Lights fantastic: the band's stunning set.

Jeff Friedl: beat machine.

Greg Andrews, filling in for James Iha who's on tour with Smashing Pumpkins.

Matt McJunkins: in-your-face bass.

Billy Howerdel: bald of head, god of guitar.

WILL IRELAND

The night is closed by **Saluki**, who only ever released one album, back in the 70s. They're clearly chuffed to be back, with cheek-stretching smiles mixed in with their retro prog.

It's up to **Pixie Ninja** to open the final night, with the quartet channelling post-rock's spectrum of sounds to usher things back into the 21st century. But **Ring Van Möbius** time travel straight back to the 70s. Their set concludes with exuberant ringleader Thor Erik Helgesen lobbing his Hammond organ around the place, à la Keith Emerson.

Arabs In Aspic drop in some Sabbath chunk amid the prog meanderings, before Sweden's **Anekdoten**, the festival's only group from outside Norway, close up shop. The Opeth-esque *Shooting Star* is one of the most tantalising tracks of the weekend.

Norway has a population of just over five million, but the endless downpour of talent here shows that the country punches well above its weight when it comes to progressive music.

CHRIS COPE

BENT KNEE

VENUE	BOOT & SADDLE, PHILADELPHIA
DATE	08/06/2018
SUPPORT	IN THE PRESENCE OF WOLVES, GATHERERS

Boston's Bent Knee are a band unlike any other. Formed in 2009, the sextet quickly earned a stellar reputation for their inventive and eccentric blends of rock, pop, minimalist and avant-garde sounds. As such, their live renditions are always fascinating and endearing, and this headlining show at Boot & Saddle in Philadelphia is no different.

New Jersey quartet In The Presence Of Wolves waste no time blowing away the crowd with their impassioned songwriting and intricate arrangements. Influenced by genre icons such as Between The Buried And Me and Coheed And Cambria, they merge complexity and catchiness, while replicating tracks from both 2014's *Thalassas* (*Palladium*, *Thalassas II*) and last year's *Of Two Minds* EP (*White Noise*, *The One Who Fell To Earth*).

With barely any coloured lights to add visual appeal, they successfully rely on amiable banter to maintain engagement between their masterfully performed material, which also involves an inspired take on Toto's *Africa*.

Fellow New Jersey troupe Gatherers offer a similarly lengthy excursion of emo/post-hardcore fury. They focus almost entirely on new album *We Are Alive Beyond Repair*. Highlights include the imposing *The Floorboards Are Breathing* and the crushingly effective *Ann Liv Young*. That said, some technical limitations lead to slightly less nuanced versions of those tracks, resulting in tedious hostility by the end. Still, there's enough ingenuity and variety to sustain appeal for most of their set.

As expected, Bent Knee pull off several songs from their last two albums (2017's *Land Animal* and the previous year's *Say So*) without trouble, such as *Time Deer*, *Boxes*, *Leak Water* and *Hands Up*. (Sophomore effort *Shiny Eyed Babies* is represented by *Being Human* too.)

While those selections certainly satisfy, it's the inclusion of three new compositions – the tentatively titled *Bone Rage*, *Garbage Shark* and *Mother's Day* – that truly delight, since they reveal both a progression in their sound and an openness to test out new work on fans.

On that note, the sextet engage with humility, honesty and humour throughout their wildly dynamic hour, revealing themselves as equally modest, relatable, talented and striving. With such a strong opening pair warming up the increasingly dense and enthusiastic crowd, it's a communally thrilling and touching show that demonstrates exactly why Bent Knee deserve all the acclaim they've accumulated thus far.

JORDAN BLUM

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL

VENUE	CASTLE DONINGTON
DATE	08-10/06/2018

While Download 2018 will be remembered for an entire festival line-up playing sideshow to a Guns N' Roses set dotted with unexpected cover versions (an instrumental *Wish You Were Here*, anyone?), there's plenty to enjoy in Donington's murkier corners.

Friday's adventures kick off with **Gold Key**, who belong to that modern breed of angular alt-rock acts whose sound is heavy on the atmospherics, with ringing chords and choruses not designed for shows under canvas. Steve Sears' vocals tend to wobble dangerously off-key, but *Creep In Slowly* lurches along with malevolent intent.

Later, on the same stage, **TesseracT** fill the tent to tinned sardine capacity and appear to have spent an entire year's tour budget on a spectacular, occasionally disorientating light show. It's clearly a statement of intent, but the set is equally commanding. Every change of key or sudden, unexpected pause serves a purpose, as if to ramp up the drama further, with *Smile* and *King* both being shattering highlights.

> **"TesseracT fill the tent to tinned sardine capacity and appear to have spent an entire year's tour budget on a spectacular, occasionally disorientating light show."**

Last time the **Von Hertzen Brothers** played Download, they didn't go down too well with some of the battle-jacket brigade, but Saturday's set on the second stage shows the brothers to be as capable of bombast and fury as anyone. *War Is Over* finds them throwing rock shapes and tearing up the stage, and an epic *New Day Rising* pumps along vigorously.

Back at the Dogtooth, **Plini** claims to be the first purely instrumental act to play the festival, and while the audience might be thin — he's competing with the undignified jostle for viewing spots for Axl & Co. — the band's tumultuous set of prog-metal-djent-jazz-wonk goes down well.

Sunday service starts with **KOYO**. Last time *Prog* saw them was in the basement of an East London pub, but here they perform like natural-born headliners, and *Tetrachromat* is given a furious working-over, aided by a blistering saxophone wig-out from Nick Baya.

To the uninitiated, **Meshuggah** might sound like an army of demented robots clanging into battle, but they possess a hypnotic, melt-your-face intensity, switching baffling time signatures around with abandon, and both *Pravus* and *Straws Pulled At Random* compete for the weekend's most terrifying song award.

Meanwhile, **Myrkur**'s quieter, Norse folk moments don't translate terribly well on a big stage, but *Ulvinde* is a towering, exultant piece of black metal shoegaze.

It's left to **Baroness** to round off the weekend as far as progressive music goes, and it's a triumphant set, as befits a band whose songs are triumphant by design. They soar, and *Shock Me* is possibly the most jubilant moment of the entire festival, a fact amplified by the large inflatable lobster being joyfully tossed around the mosh pit.

FRASER LEWRY

TesseracT: djent in a tent.

Plini takes on GN'R single-handed.

Prog Rock Royalty: Baroness.

Myrkur's Amalie Bruun.

Meshuggah man Jens Kidman.

BARONESS, TESSERACT, MYRKUR: WILL IRELAND/PLINI, MESUGGAH: KEVIN NIXON

THE CONTORTIONIST

VENUE	MAX WATT'S HOUSE OF MUSIC, MELBOURNE
DATE	31/05/2018
SUPPORT	SIKTH

This night is quite a momentous occasion. Although they formed almost two decades ago, British trailblazers SikTh have never made it to Australian shores – until now. And for fans Down Under, their first taste of this band's polyrhythmic mayhem and ridiculously extroverted stage performance is one they're keen to savour.

That said, there's a brief 'feeling out' period between band and audience. The wall-to-wall crowd, possibly not knowing quite what to expect from this unpredictable group, hold back just a touch for the first few tunes, a little tentative about giving their all. However, SikTh work overtime to win them over, especially trade-off frontmen Mikee Goodman and Joe Rosser, and by a third of the way into their set, they have the audience eating out of the palm of their collective hand.

The way in which Goodman and Rosser juxtapose and configure their sometimes intertwining, sometimes harmonising, sometimes enjoyably competing vocal lines is unique, and quite mesmerising. And their between-song banter is high on entertainment and low on cheese and condescension.

The band behind them peel off their frantic and frenetic notes and bent-out-of-shape grooves with almost nonchalant aplomb. Put the two together and you have an intense, frenzied assault on the senses for 60 minutes, a timespan that for this band is absolutely spot on: any more and it would probably all become just a little too much.

By blissful contrast, US masters The Contortionist take to the stage to the dulcet strains of Seal's *Kiss From A Rose* and *Main Titles* from the *Blade Runner* soundtrack. This Indianapolis band have left their frenetic metal past behind them – on their latest 2017 album *Clairvoyant* anyway – and they lean heavily on the more ambient approach of this record throughout their 55-minute set, following up with an encore of parts one and two of the title track from 2014's *Language* album.

While more atmospheric and almost Floydian in its creation of intoxicating soundscapes at times, the band's latest material is no less powerful in a live setting. It walks a finely balanced line between the smooth, the exultant and the subtly crushing, and this makes The Contortionist live a transcendent experience. It's also an experience that features musicianship of a most supreme and sublime kind from all six members. It's always a delight to witness artists who are masters of all facets of their craft.

Tonight showcases two scintillating international bands with a marvellous contrast between them, making for a wonderful night of modern progressive music.

ROD WHITFIELD

NEAL MORSE

VENUE	BOSTON MUSIC ROOM, LONDON
DATE	22/06/2018

For a Friday night at the Boston Music Room in Tufnell Park, tonight's gig feels an awful lot like the Sunday service at an evangelical church. Relocated at the last minute from the larger space of The Dome, the venue is filled with rows of chairs for the seated faithful to give their fullest attention to Neal Morse on this solo acoustic tour.

It's a significantly smaller crowd than the ones that turn out for the full Neal Morse Band — perhaps that's due to the absence of Mike Portnoy, who always brings out his own legion of air-drumming fans.

Following an introduction from tour manager Todd Morrell, who exhorts the locals to be loud like "crazy Americans", Morse kicks off with a new tune, *Songs Of Freedom*, which is essentially his answer to Bryan Adams' *Summer Of '69*, all about the joys of picking up a guitar and getting into rock music.

One of the surprises in the set is a cover of Peter Gabriel's *Solsbury Hill*, and he throws a little of Neil Young's *Southern Man* into *Livin' Lightly*, but the bulk of the music is drawn from the *Life & Times* album and the Transatlantic vaults, with a heavy emphasis on overtly religious compositions. With *Bridge Across Forever*, *The Temple Of The Living God*, *We All Need Some Light* and *Stranger In Your Soul*, it's clear that Morse isn't shy about proclaiming his faith loud and clear. Proselytising and rock music aren't the most comfortable of bedfellows, though: the devil has always had the best music, from the blues to Black Sabbath.

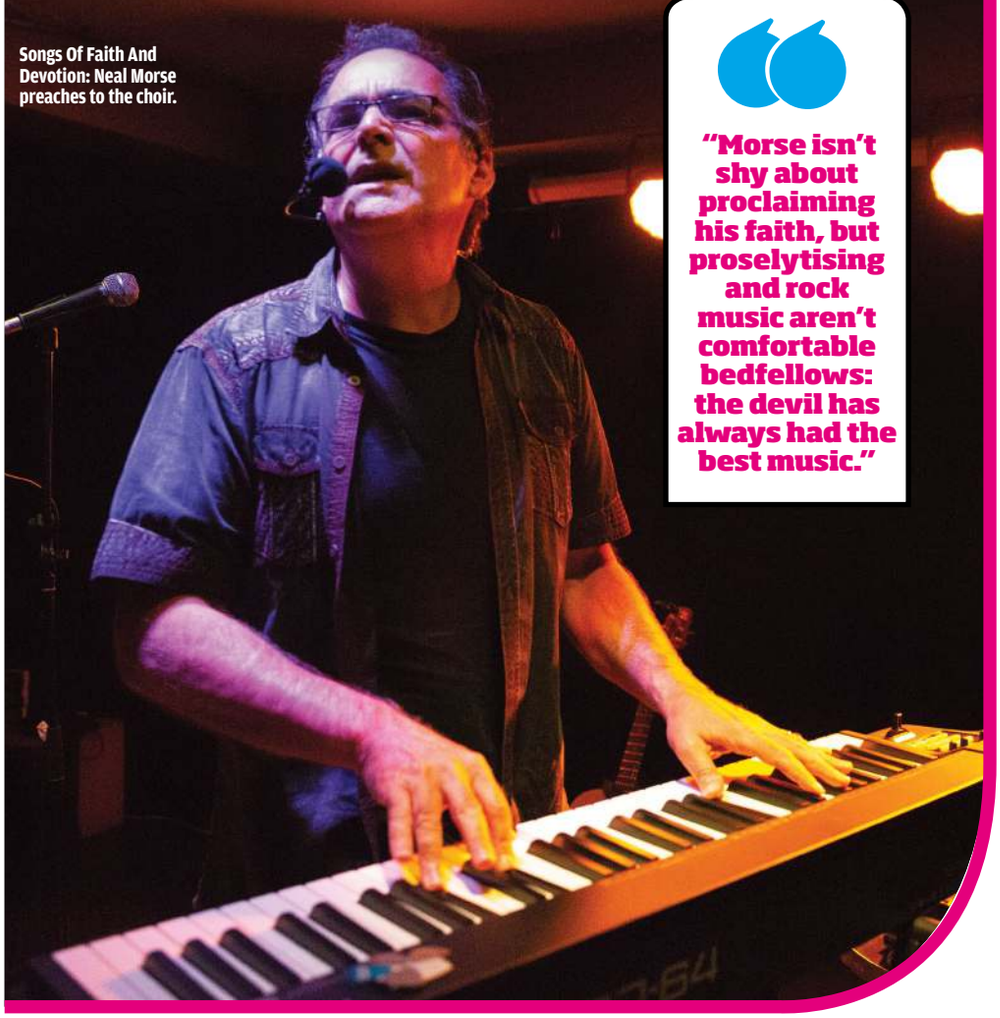
The singer may be flying alone, but he's got a loop pedal that allows him to accompany himself, and which he uses to impressively demonstrate the art of harmonising with a snippet of Spock's Beard's *Thoughts* parts one and two. The *Life & Times* material sees Morse very much in singer-songwriter mode, with straightforward guitar playing and music that's a far cry from his proggier works. Tracks such as *Good Love Is On The Way*, *Selfie In The Square* and *JoAnna* would fit right in at the open mic night at your local pub or on a Radio 2 playlist. They're perfectly pleasant, if a little bland.

He Died At Home is more potent, even if Morse has a tendency towards the trite in his lyrics. After that, he lightens the mood with the bouncy catchiness of *Manchester*. The fans devour every note, calling for two encores, and Morse finishes with *Sing It High*.

There's absolutely no doubting Neal Morse's sincerity, but if you're not in the choir, you might not want to hear a musical sermon on a Friday night.

DAVID WEST

DAVID WALA



Songs Of Faith And Devotion: Neal Morse preaches to the choir.

"Morse isn't shy about proclaiming his faith, but proselytising and rock music aren't comfortable bedfellows: the devil has always had the best music."

JENNY HVAL

VENUE	ST. JOHN ON BETHNAL GREEN, LONDON
DATE	09/06/2018
SUPPORT	ROCHEMAN

Forget bars, raves, revamped warehouses or actual designated gig venues — avant-garde electronic music should always be performed in churches. There's something about the combination of brilliant acoustics, high ceilings and aged, reverential atmosphere that welcomes strange echoes, unconventional chord structures and otherworldly vocal lines. And it's perhaps particularly fitting for tonight's headliner.

Jenny Hval has never claimed to be a conventional performer, and her strange, highly conceptual brand of progressive noise makes sense in this visually arresting setting, one designed for reflection, rather than rocking. St John On Bethnal Green — a fully functioning house of God by day — is no stranger to lay artistes. Indeed, it's widely recognised for an appreciation of art alongside worship.

Punters shuffle down the wooden pews clutching plastic cups of wine and beer as support act Rocheman sets the evening in motion. The London-based stage composer/sound designer has a modest stage presence, but doesn't struggle to fill the space with enveloping basslines, new wave strains and vocal melodies caught somewhere between Joy Division and Scott Walker. By the last couple of tracks, drums and guitars have reached pounding, rockier levels and we're thoroughly tuned in to the blend of centuries-old architecture and contemporary sound.

With her boyish pink pageboy crop, petite frame and blue vest adorned with pink flamingos, Jenny Hval has a surreal, almost cartoon-like presence — an impression boosted by the enormous crucifix looming over the altar behind her, and the giant inflatable clamshell in front of a table strewn with cables and laptops.

Hval is no fool, though. After an opening burst of reverb, she stops, then says wryly, "That was the first song." As the laughter dies down, waves of curious cinematic samples emerge alongside trancey beats and jazzy sax and trumpet. And then, of course, there's Hval's own voice. A high-pitched wail that nods to the likes of Björk and PJ Harvey, it drives an odd but strangely commanding cocktail of avant-pop, progressive and electronic music.

> **"If Kate Bush had stumbled into an avant-jazz jam night, it might've sounded like this."**

"You can't see me now, but I'm just lying in a clam," she says, having left her table, people at the back standing to get a better look. "Nothing interesting is happening..."

By this point, the whole band have gathered in the clam, twisting and contorting around for a few moments before returning to laptops, brass and guitar jerks, reflecting the looser, more free-form approach of latest EP *The Long Sleep*. If Kate Bush had stumbled into an avant-jazz jam night, it might've sounded like this.

Devoid of the compelling setting and performance art element, Hval would be a harder sell. Here, however, her oddness and knack for creating alternative atmospheric sound is a stimulating escape from the everyday.

POLLY GLASS

KEVIN NIXON

Clamming Up: Hval comes out of her shell.

Jenny Hval: art-rock extraordinaire.

AL DI MEOLA

VENUE	PARK WEST, CHICAGO
DATE	24/06/2018

Excitement fills the air as legendary guitarist Al Di Meola explains that the current tour may be his last, and that he's "really pushing it". The only thing Di Meola is pushing would be the limits of human ability, as no one has ever played a guitar faster than him, something he proves yet again at the age of 63.

The set features new material alongside familiar songs of old. The crowd has an international vibe, with every continent represented, and the same can be said for the spices Di Meola gives to his music. From flares of Latin to the grooving of jazz fusion, Di Meola displays his versatility and how well rounded a player he is.

Accompanying Di Meola are two percussionists, a keyboardist and a violinist, which gives the performance many layers of sound to accompany the master's playing. *Notorious* features a catchy, slow-creeping riff that ultimately transitions into a furious lead from Di Meola. This is a reoccurring theme during the night – the music slows down before smacking the audience in the face with a loud and heavy guitar tone. Di Meola plays with toughness, often putting the guitar above his head before bringing it back down swiftly, causing fans to hoot and holler in delight.

For the past two decades plus, Di Meola has transitioned into an acoustic guitarist nearly exclusively, so it isn't surprising that a third of this set is dedicated to that realm of his work. While the acoustic set is pleasant and his picking impressive, after being treated to some serious amplification earlier in the show, these offerings aren't the strong suit of the performance. Speaking of amplification, Di Meola tells the crowd that the pink amplifier he's using for the electric guitar was previously owned by Prince, and he surely makes Prince proud by the way he commands the attention of those in attendance with his musical prowess and stage presence.

The show ends with a long jam and one of his most popular songs, *Race With Devil On Spanish Highway*. This is a 10-minute journey that paints a picture and kicks a lot of ass. If this is the last tour for Di Meola, he goes without putting a foot wrong, ensuring his name will be remembered long after these farewell live performances.

TREVOR WOODS

KEPLER TEN

VENUE	THE TALKING HEADS, SOUTHAMPTON
DATE	23/06/2018

After opening their own concert under the pseudonym of R2 – a Rush tribute that perform everything from *The Temples of Syrinx* to *Subdivisions* – Steve Hales, James Durand and Mike Tillotson return to The Talking Heads' stage as Kepler Ten. After providing a collection of magnificently executed cover renditions, the Southampton-based power trio now switch gears to entirely original material for their headline slot, delivering a showcase of progressive perfection that mixes the compositions and technicality of the previously mentioned Rush with the heavy, muscular proficiency of Dream Theater.

The band kick-start their set with the 10-minute *Ultraviolet*. The opening track of their recent debut album *Delta-v* (which is tonight played in its entirety), this actually begins Kepler Ten's display with a whimper instead of a bang, drawing a near-full Talking Heads crowd in with slow-building ambience and synthesisers, followed by eerily dissonant, singular guitar notes. Dulcet keyboards then take hold, complemented by Durand's uncompromisingly clean vocals, all building up to the climactic crash that occurs with the abrupt arrival of Hales' percussion.

Within the first five minutes alone, the three-piece have already demonstrated that they belong within the modern prog landscape, boasting a plethora of instruments, dynamics and tones within their impressive arsenal.

The arrival of the more succinct *The Shallows* immediately thereafter only continues to convince onlookers of Kepler Ten's expansive musical canon, packing a hugely melodic chorus that balances sophistication with the innate catchiness of arena rock. With their harmonies already strong enough to shine in a stadium-sized environment, it's fitting that the live show is as well.

The stalwarts use their standing as a trio to give themselves as much freedom onstage as possible, with new guitarist Tillotson particularly mobile, fitting in with his colleagues seamlessly. It would be a great joy, in the very near future, to see these men playing in larger venues under the wing of names such as Watchtower.

The ballad *Swallowtail* injects some acoustic respite into the hard-rocking affair, giving way to a brand new song entitled *Icarus' Eyes*, taken from an impending sophomore record. Interestingly, the softer cut evokes the blues in its clean and sombre yet continually dancing guitar work. This unexpected entry into the evening's set makes it apparent that today, the name of the game is eclecticism – blending variety and skill with just enough soul to prevent it from becoming excessive.

Kepler Ten have all the tools required to shine. And after tonight's magnificence, it feels like they are undeniably destined for experimental greatness.

MATT MILLS

KAPREKAR'S CONSTANT

VENUE	THE TALKING HEADS, SOUTHAMPTON
DATE	08/06/2018
SUPPORT	THE GIFT, UNREAL CITY

More than 6,000 people are otherwise engaged in Southampton tonight. Over half of them set sail on board the cruise ship Ventura and the other segment enjoy West End smash *War Horse* at the Mayflower Theatre. Just a quick canter away at the less crowded Talking Heads, the aggregate of musicians onstage outnumbers the audience — a statistic that's disappointing at best, tragic at worst.

Given this startling ratio, the extant atmosphere is like a final rehearsal. And without introduction, Kaprekar's Constant end their soundcheck and launch straight into their time-limited set. Their pastoral pleasantness instils a benign quality into their live presence, despite there being seven of them on stage. No histrionics, no gimmicks, they go about their business methodically, faithfully recreating five of the six songs from much vaunted debut album *Fate Outsmarts Desire*.

It's easy to become immersed in the gentle ebb and flow of their song-stories, which sail along on laid-back grooves, though at times they do feel a little one-paced. However, the fact that singers Dorie Jackson and Bill Jefferson have to refer to lyric crib sheets throughout becomes a visual distraction.

On the plus side, the presence of Jackson's dad jettisons this lilting loveliness into extraordinary new territory. Best known as the 'lungs' of Van der Graaf Generator, her old man David Jackson uses his collection of saxophones, flute and Dixon traditional D whistle to inject his hallmark jagged, edgy textures. Even a major microphone malfunction fails to stop him in his tracks.

MARTIN REIJMAN

VdGG's David Jackson lends his lungs.

An edited version of the epic *Bluebird* still delivers numerous twists and turns, and on *Houdini — King Of Cards*, Dorie Jackson finally gets a chance to unleash her fine, understated voice.

However, the band are something of a curate's egg in that the stage show needs to reveal more of their collective characters, rather than letting Jackson père constantly steal the limelight. Come Summer's End in October, we may yet witness something special from them, but for now, their live show remains a work in progress.

By contrast, The Gift are slightly overblown and highly energetic, frontman Mike Morton's eye-popping visuals extending to a gold and black lamé jacket. Despite the minuscule audience, they don't hold back.

Rounding off this surreal evening, Italian proggers Unreal City are a small revelation, a dynamic five-piece with a charismatic keyboard player, Emanuele Tarasconi, who resembles a Latino Adam Warne (Kyros). Upbeat and entertaining, they're definitely one for the Summer's/Winter's End organisers to investigate further.

ALISON REIJMAN

> **"We may yet witness something special from Kaprekar's Constant, but for now, their live show remains a work in progress."**

Bill Jefferson and Dorie Jackson leading Kaprekar's Constant.

GAZPACHO

VENUE	THE DOME, LONDON
DATE	28/05/2018

There are few things as predictable on a British bank holiday Monday as weather more suited to waterfowl and planned engineering works on London's transport network. Norway's premier conceptual art-rockers have been paying attention, and thoughtfully issued a notification that tonight's show will forego its customary interval to allow punters to get home safely at a reasonable hour.

As latecomers shake off the last of the thunderstorm, the house lights dim, the artwork of Antonio Seijas illuminates the stage and the melancholic beats of *Soyuz One* enter the atmosphere. As the song builds, it soon becomes apparent that Jon-Arne Vilbo's guitar is very high in the mix. Whether by accident or design, it adds a metallic edge to Gazpacho's typically self-effacing, meticulously crafted sound. The alt-rocker *Hypomania* benefits even more from this happy chance, its already huge airplay-friendly hooks coming over like a cathedral of Radiohead-style indie prog noise.

The guitar eventually settles back in the mix and, moving away from the current cinematic *Soyuz* opus, *The Wizard Of Altai Mountains* zooms the camera in to a more intimate setting. Its folk-tinged melodies give Gazpacho's secret weapon Mikael Krømer some time under the spotlight, his Eastern European violin weaving among the threads of keyboardist Thomas Andersen's faux-accordion accompaniment. Gazpacho are nothing if not eclectic.

A spectral procession of *Black Lily, The Dumb* and *Golem* represents three visitations from 2012's *March Of Ghosts*. Their yearning refrains over cyclical guitar figures mixed with haunting, faceless visuals are affecting. Jan Henrik Ohme's singular voice is at once dissociated and heart-rendingly passionate, evoking an eerie disconnect between the corporeal and spiritual — a divide Gazpacho span expertly.

Dream Of Stone begins its inexorable creep. As repetitive and soporific as this track may seem on the surface, it bubbles with magic across its 15-plus minutes. There's no sign that this breakthrough, watershed song in the Norwegians' catalogue holds any less interest for the musicians playing it now than it does for their audience. It radiates a hypnotic and unique quality a decade on.

Ohme reveals that he put his foot down to include *The Walk* from *Tick Tock* in this setlist. Thank goodness his cohorts acquiesced. This is where all the elements of Gazpacho's music gel perfectly — the lavish storytelling, the widescreen grandeur and the very human call of Krømer's violin.

Soyuz Out is accompanied by images depicting the life and tragic death of Cosmonaut Komarov. The cumulative effect is as emotive as the footage of Donald Campbell's ill-fated water speed record attempt when Marillion play *Out Of This World*. This is epic music in every sense.

The scale of tonight's 140-minute show demonstrates that this is a band full of confidence. They should be. Their performance here has been faultless.

CHRIS MCGAREL

GERIANNE BRENTERS

Gazpacho frontman Jan Henrik Ohme.

> **"A cathedral of Radiohead-style indie prog noise."**

HAZE

VENUE	THE TALKING HEADS, SOUTHAMPTON
DATE	24/06/2018

A scorching hot evening on the south coast greets Haze, one of prog's great enigmas. Once regular visitors to Southampton, they're now seldom seen in the southern shires. However, this historical connection is one reason why they're back on their 40th anniversary weekend for the second of two special celebration shows.

A cluster of diehard fans make this a highly personal, intimate night for the performing McMahons. The clan comprises founders and brothers Paul and Chris, joined by Paul's son Danny on drums, along with Chris' significant other, goth-booted flautist Ceri Ashton.

Haze are always entertaining, eccentric and, as tonight reveals, unpredictable. In his cloak and crooked hat, barefooted bassist and keyboard player Chris McMahon resembles the love child of Merlin and Catweasel. Apart from his extravagant onstage armoury of axes, brother Paul plays a straight bat, his warm, mellow voice and fluid, penetrating guitar runs a great foil for his brother's hippie tomfoolery.

A Celtic fanfare heralds the start of a two-hour trip through the annals of time, opener *The Last Battle* channelling their inner Jethro Tull through Ashton's folkish flute flourishes. *Train* takes off on a funkadelic folk ride, while the dramatic new nine-minute prog epic *A Call To Arms* shows there's plenty of creativity left in Clan McMahon's musical well.

For *Wilderness Of Eden*, Paul McMahon starts a series of elaborate acoustic guitar loops that build into a great overlooked psychedelic prog anthem that references Babel and unicorns. He then delivers a remarkably straight-faced, acoustic-folkie version of "Mr Jonathan Osbourne's" *Paranoid* – yes, the Sabbath classic.

Old crowd-pleaser *In The Universe* morphs into their unashamedly Genesis-inspired song *Dig Them Mushrooms*, ending with Chris McMahon recreating the beautiful flowing keyboard section of that band's *The Cinema Show*.

A Sunday curfew means they have to cut out the planned encores. However, evenings don't come more joyful and delightfully dotty than this. A DVD and double CD of this weekend's merrymaking, which are now in production, will ultimately confirm this.

ALISON REIJMAN

BARDO POND

VENUE	100 CLUB, LONDON
DATE	06/06/2018
SUPPORT	THE OSCILLATION

As Bardo Pond themselves acknowledged on the title of their fourth album, the psychedelic experience has always been reliant on set and setting. No strangers to third-eye-opening allusions, the Philadelphian sonic astronauts have made little secret of laying bare their mind-altering intentions with barely disguised album names and side projects. Yet for all that, tonight's performance feels like a doobie rolled from roaches and one that fails to truly hit home.

But first up are openers The Oscillation. Trimmed to a trio with the adept Jeremy Doulton replacing the idiosyncratic drumming skills of Valentina Magaletti, their variant of psychedelia is fuelled by a desire to mine all possibilities for all that they're worth. So it is that *Take Us To The Moon* adopts a far more aggressive stance than its recorded version. There's a brutalism in Demian Castellanos' guitar playing that's tempered by flights of fancy as his feet dance across his pedal board.

Likewise, bassist Tom Relleen isn't backwards about coming forwards. With his low end smothered in fuzz, he locks in with Doulton to create a watertight pulse that sends Castellanos off to burn the sky.

Part of the problem with Bardo Pond tonight is the one-dimensional nature of the music, which remains on a fairly even keel throughout. With Michael and John Gibbons' guitars screaming and droning at a satisfyingly high volume, and Clint Takeda's fearsome bass rumblings, the stage should be set for a journey deep into the psyche. Alas, texture and dynamics are eschewed for a relentless wall of sound that feels flat rather than rounded.

Not that Bardo Pond are without charm. *Out Of Reach* is a particular highlight, thanks to a charismatic and emotional delivery from singer Isobel Sollenberger, who reaches deep within herself to expose a naked and red raw honesty. Yet such moments are few and far between, and on more than one occasion there's a palpable tension between the singer and her rhythm section.

It's within this part of the band that further cracks begin to appear. Drummer Scott Verrastro, substituting for Jason Kourkounis, takes a heavy-handed and leaden approach, and where the music should be reaching for the sky, it remains resolutely earthbound. There's redemption towards the end with a reinvigorated reading of *Under The Pines* that makes some attempt at lifting anchor, but it feels like too little too late.

A concert of diverging performances, The Oscillation's flair for layering is in stark contrast to a consistency in sound and lack of variation from Bardo Pond that peaks all too early.

JULIAN MARSZALEK

MOSTLY AUTUMN

VENUE	ISLINGTON O2 ACADEMY, LONDON
DATE	08/06/2018

Bryan Josh: Gilmour-esque guitars.

JAMES SHARROCK

The last time Mostly Autumn played a headline show in London, one uncommonly chilly and drizzly night last September, they performed their most recent album *Sight Of Day* in its entirety. Perhaps it was the relative unfamiliarity of the material, but they seemed just a little stiff on that occasion.

Tonight, however, there's a fresh face behind the drum kit, with Touchstone's Henry Rogers taking over from Alex Cromarty, and there's a new energy onstage as they deliver a pumped-up performance that refuses to be derailed, even when beset by some early technical gremlins.

There's an odd crackle in Bryan Josh's guitar in the opening *Sight Of Day*, and it persists through *In For The Bite*, from Josh's 2016 solo album. His guitar cuts out completely midway through *Simple Ways*. Fortunately, frontwoman Olivia Sparnenn and the rest of the group have more than enough power to carry the tune to the finish line without their leader. "I could sing all your solos, Bryan," volunteers Sparnenn.

Silhouettes Of Stolen Ghosts, primarily a duet between the vocalist and Iain Jennings on keys, is not only beautifully performed but also allows Josh the time to remedy the fault. The band then come back in full force for *Evergreen*, with the guitarist giving full rein to his Gilmour-esque bluesy style.

Some of the arrangements touch on the grandeur and pomp that Jim Steinman brings to every album he produces. *Tomorrow Dies* is a fine example, with its dramatic drop down to just Sparnenn and the piano, before it builds back up to full power again.

> **"Questioning Eyes is the high-water mark of the set, an arena-friendly power ballad with a scorcher of a solo."**

Robert Fripp once said he believes that if you change the drummer, you change the band, and Rogers' presence behind the kit has undeniably had an impact. He leads into *Pocket Watch* with cascading rolls around the tom-toms, and he lights a fire under *Mother Nature*. Where Rogers is all exuberance, Andy Smith is the archetypal withdrawn, introverted bassist, never making eye contact with the audience or even the other players onstage.

Chris Johnson takes lead vocal twice tonight, on *Silver Glass* and *Changing Lives*, and it's a crying shame that he hasn't put out a solo record yet. *Questioning Eyes* is the high-water mark of the set, an arena-friendly power ballad with a scorcher of a solo from Josh, and they never quite manage to top that.

They encore with *Storms Over Still Water*, *Heroes Never Die* and *Forever And Beyond*, although Josh fluffs the harmonies on the latter, playing just out of tune with Angela Gordon's flute. Of course, that's not what the fans will take away from this evening. It's much more likely that they'll remember Sparnenn's shimmering voice or the spectacular instrumental section of *Mother Nature*. Absolutely smashing.

DAVID WEST

Olivia Sparnenn: leading the way.

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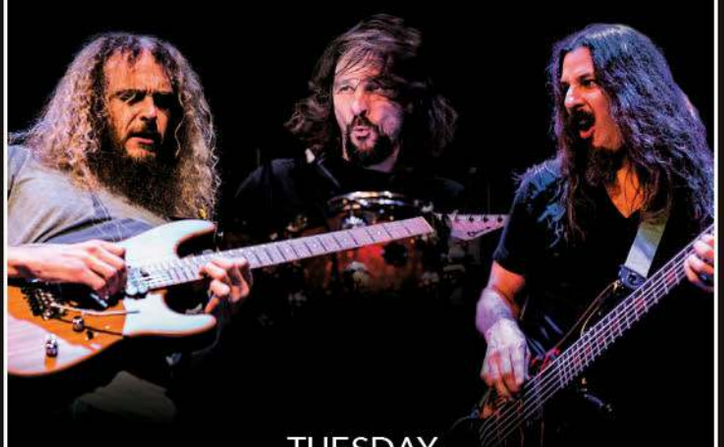

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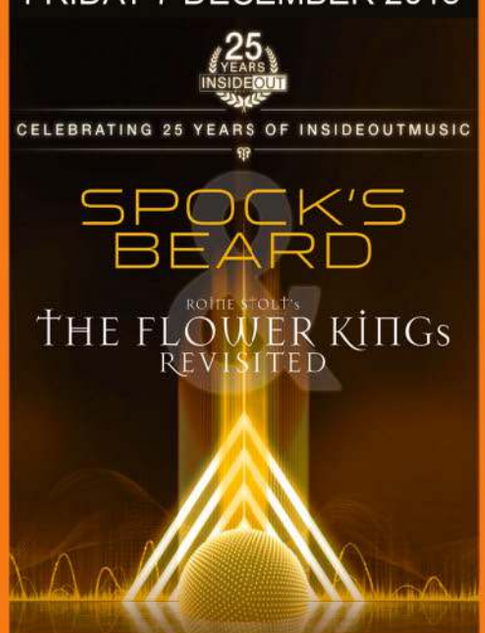

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MY PROG

Lifesigns' John Young

The great and good of progressive music give us a glimpse into their prog worlds. **As told to Grant Moon**

Where's home?
Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. It's the unconfirmed capital of prog! Loads of people live round here — I can see Nick Beggs' house from mine…

Your first prog memory?

My dad buying me a copy of The Beach Boys' *Good Vibrations* in the mid-60s. That, and Alan 'Fluff' Freeman playing great stuff on his *Saturday Rock Show*, like Edgar Winter's *Frankenstein*.

First prog gig?
Queen at the Liverpool Empire in 1974. They were still doing stuff from *Queen II* like *Ogre Battle*, which I loved.

The first prog record you bought?
The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway by Genesis. I went to their show at the Liverpool Empire on the Friday night [in 1975], bought the album on Saturday, and went to the show again on the Sunday, by which time I knew all the words.

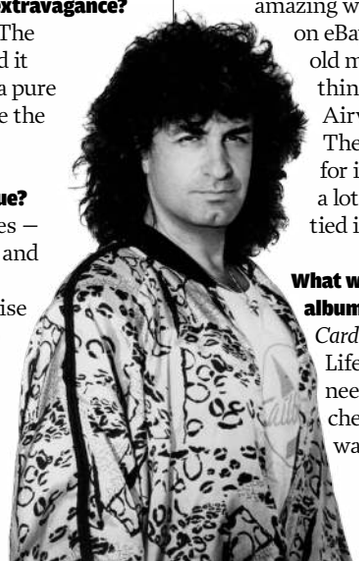
Favourite piece of technology?
My MacBook Pro is permanently attached to me. It's like taking your office with you wherever you go.

Any guilty pleasures in your music collection?
Eva Cassidy's *Songbird*. Her version of *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* gets me every time. How did a record company not find her earlier? How could you miss a voice like that? It sums up the state of the business completely.

What would your *Mastermind* specialist subject be?
British Civil Aviation from 1945 to 1970.

Your biggest prog extravagance?
Maybe Cruise To The Edge. We've played it ourselves, but it's a pure joy to go just to see the other bands.

Your favourite venue?
Trading Boundaries — it's an exceptional and unique gig. There should be a franchise of them — they do such a great job. And I do wish The Marquee was still there.



GETTY

Outside of prog, what else are you into?
Outside of aviation? Country walks and riding my bike. It's a bit boring really, isn't it?!

Who is your prog hero?
Patrick Moraz. I loved his creativity, his sense of melody and soul. So much prog is mathematical, but he brought romance to it, and to Yes.

Are you a collector?
Of nerdy aviation stuff. It's amazing what people sell on eBay these days: old manuals and things from Imperial Airways and BOAC. There's a big market for it — there's a lot of history tied in there.

What was the last album you bought?
Cardington by Lifesigns! We needed to check Amazon was working properly for us, so I bought one. Other than that, *Life* by Knower, a great pop/jazz/funk band from the US.

What was the last gig you went to?
Cruise To The Edge, in February. We were playing, but the favourite things I saw were Adrian Belew and Focus. I'm gutted I missed Gong.

Have you ever been on a prog date?
Is there such a thing? My first girlfriend and I used to go to a club in Liverpool called Le Metro, and once the DJ played all four sides of *Tales From Topographic Oceans*. He must've wanted an easy night.

> Eva Cassidy's *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* gets me every time.

Who do you call in the prog community for a good night out?
Generally it's the band. We're all good friends, as well as being in the group together, which is the beauty of it. The lovely thing about prog is you make such good friends through it.

What's the most important prog song for you?
Sound Chaser off Yes' *Relayer*. I used to sing the opening line when I worked at the till at a bank. It didn't go down well and I didn't last very long.

Which prog muso would you love to work with?
Kate Bush. I'd happily watch her bake cakes! She's genius personified, and I'd love her to hear what we do.

Which is the prog album that always gets you in a good mood?

Garden Shed by England. It's pure English prog joy.

Who is the best prog artist you've ever seen live?
Gentle Giant. Dave Bainbridge and I both saw them separately during that *Playing The Fool* tour in 1976. You can hear me screaming on that record — they blew me away.

Recommend us a good proggy read.

Arthur C Clarke's *Childhood's End*. It's a beautiful way of looking at the world.

What's your favourite prog album cover?
I do love the covers that Brett Wilde's done for us, but I'll say Frank Zappa's *Ship Arriving Too Late To Save A Drowning Witch*. It makes me laugh every time I see it. It's so clever.

What else are you up to at the moment?
I'm re-releasing a solo album of mine, *Significance*, we're reissuing the first Lifesigns album and working towards the third one, and we're also playing four shows that we've got lined up in September. We're keeping our hand in…

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PLENTY | IT COULD BE HOME

Formed in 1986, **Plenty** was **Tim Bowness**'s immediate pre-**no-man** band. In 2016 and 2017, Bowness and fellow founder members Brian Hulse and David K Jones re-recorded Plenty's catalogue of 1980s songs, which alternating between anthemic pop, poignant ballads and ambient experiments. An album 30 years in the making!

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