THE FLOWER KINGS

"Tomas and I aren't working..."

What's gone wrong with Sweden's top proggers?

10 YEARS OF KSCOPE

From Anathema to Steven Wilson

Celebrating a decade of post-progressive sounds

WIN! SIGNED GEDDY LEE BASS BOOK

PROG

ASTOUNDING SOUNDS AMAZING MUSIC

RUSH

"*Hemispheres* felt like the end of an era."

The inside story of the band's last epic prog rock album

IRMIN SCHMIDT

His unique journey from krautrock to classical

TWELFTH NIGHT

80s pioneers make shock return with new recordings

ENGLAND

The story behind prog's great forgotten band

+

Sanguine Hum
Antimatter
Gungfly
Shattered Skies

SR Productions presents

A COLLECTION OF

MUSICAL Curiosities

Featuring

THE STEVE ROTHERY BAND

Two performances each featuring a different classic Marillion album as well as tracks from the 'Ghosts of Pripyat'

RANESTRANE

Playing tracks from their brand new album 'Starchild'

The Dave Foster Experience

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

RICCARDO ROMANO

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

SYLF

Playing tracks from the upcoming EP

at The Junction, Clifton Way, Cambridge

FEBRUARY 23RD & 24TH 2019

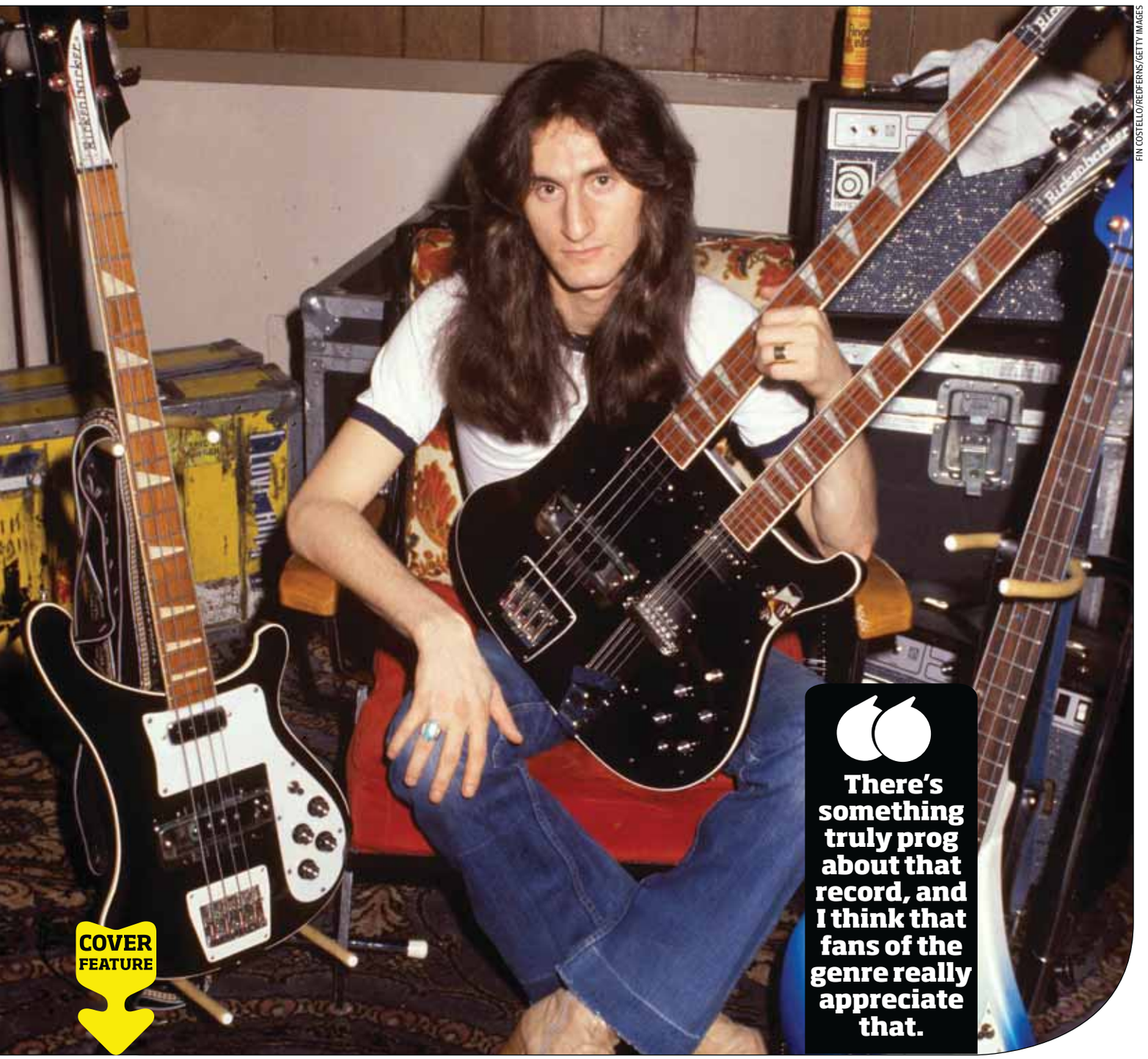
Tickets £50 : www.junction.co.uk/steve-rothery and www.wegottickets.com

All the best Freaks are here!

ISSUE 93 30.11.18

Contents

IF IT'S IN THERE IT'S ON HERE



FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

COVER FEATURE

There's something truly prog about that record, and I think that fans of the genre really appreciate that.

Rush p34

The story behind *Hemispheres*, and Geddy Lee schools us on bass guitars…

Contents

REGULARS

BLOODY WELL WRITE pg 10
Missives, musings and tweets from Planet Prog.

THE INTRO pg 12
We've got the very latest on the new Dream Theater album, plus news from Thomas Giles, Soen, Claypool Lennon Delirium, Ramblin' Man Fair, Jacco Gardner, Kikagaku Moyo, Emperor Norton and more…

RECORD COLLECTION pg 30
Comedy writers Jason Hazeley and Joel Morris, responsible for the *Ladybird Books For Grown Ups*, BBC TV's Philomena Crunk and more, find that prog is no laughing matter. As their record collections prove…

Q&A pg 32
Former XTC bassist Colin Moulding is back making music with drummer Terry Chambers. Here he reveals all about their new outfit, TC&I.

OUTER LIMITS pg 68
She lost her heart to a starship trooper and inspired the likes of Nightwish and Within Temptation along the way. So we ask ourselves, how prog is the darling of the musical theatre world, Sarah Brightman?

THE PROG INTERVIEW pg 92
Irmin Schmidt was a founding member of the revolutionary Can, and now he creates film scores and classical music. This is his story.

THE MUSICAL BOX pg 98
Album reviews from Rush, Keith Emerson, Within Temptation, Andy Mackay, Barclay James Harvest and more…

TAKE A BOW pg 118
We've seen King Crimson, Haken, ELO, Pendragon, Riverside, ZIO, Caligula's Horse and more…

MY PROG pg 130
The ever-delightful Anneke van Giersbergen reveals what goes on in her own prog world.

FEATURES

The Flower Kings Pg 46
Keyboard player Tomas Bodin isn't on the new album… is there trouble afoot? *Prog* finds out…

AlithiA Pg 50
The Australian proggers recall the harrowing experience of recording *The Moon Has Fallen*.

Kscope Pg 54
We celebrate the record label's decade of post-progressive sounds.

Gungfly Pg 60
Rikard Sjöblom ponders childhood innocence and memory on his new album, *Friendship*.

Twelfth Night Pg 64
Surprise! The 80s neo-proggers find themselves back in the studio…

Voices from The Fuselage Pg 72
Singer Ashe O'Hara digs deep on the band's new album, *Odyssey: The Founder Of Dreams*.

England Pg 76
The amazing story of the greatest prog band you've probably never heard of!

Shattered Skies Pg 80
The Anglo-Irish proggers muse on the impact of social media in today's world.

Sanguine Hum Pg84
The complexities of the buttered cat still occupy their thoughts on new album *Now We Have Light*.

Antimatter Pg 88
Uncomfortable tales from the dark side from Liverpool's Mick Moss on *Black Market Enlightenment*.

BUTLIN'S PROUDLY PRESENTS

GIANTS OF ROCK

with live performances From

FRI 25 - MON 28 JANUARY 2019, BUTLIN'S MINEHEAD

SKID ROW

ROGER CHAPMAN FAMILY & FRIENDS

FM / U.D.O. / SWEET

ATOMIC ROOSTER / H.E.A.T

DARE GEORDIE / FOCUS

KINGDOM OF MADNESS: CLASSIC MAGNUM

CATS IN SPACE

THE CHRIS SLADE TIMELINE (FROM AC/DC)

MARTIN BARRE'S JETHRO TULL

BRIAN DOWNEY'S ALIVE AND DANGEROUS (EX THIN LIZZY)

ERIC BELL BAND (EX THIN LIZZY)

3 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION

FROM £99pp

4 LIVE MUSIC VENUES

Visit BIGWEEKENDS.COM or call on 0330 100 9742

QUOTE PROGROCK

Prices shown are per person per break based on four sharing a Silver self-catering apartment and include all discounts and £s off. Prices and line-ups are correct as of 14.11.18 but are subject to change. From £15 per person deposit is only valid when using the auto pay feature and applies to new bookings only when booking more than 84 days before break start date. Deposits are non-refundable and your final payment will be debited 12 weeks before you arrive. All offers are subject to promotional availability, may be withdrawn at any time and cannot be combined with any other offer or internet code except the 5% Premier Club loyalty discount. For full terms and conditions please visit butlins.com/terms. Calls to 03 numbers are charged at standard UK rates and may vary from mobiles. These calls are included in any inclusive packages. Butlins Skyline Limited, 1 Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4YL. Registered in England No. 04011665.

BE BOP DELUXE

'SUNBURST FINISH'

(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 SUNBURST FINISH the legendary 1976 album by BE BOP DELUXE. Features 39 bonus tracks, including stunning 5.1 surround sound & stereo mixes by award-winning engineer Stephen W Tayler, previously unreleased out-takes, rare BBC & John Peel sessions, a previously unissued '76 promo video for Ships in the Night and a session for the Old Grey Whistle Test.
- Completed with a lavish 68-page book with photographs and recollections by Bill Nelson Music, a facsimile of the '76 Sunburst Finish tour programme, postcards and a replica poster.

Release Date 16th November 2018
PECLEC42642

'SUNBURST FINISH'

(2CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- A new re-mastered and expanded 2 CD edition of SUNBURST FINISH the legendary 1976 album by BE BOP DELUXE.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS

'FIELD DAY'

(2CD/1DVD DIGIPAK EDITION)

- The beautiful instrumental double album originally released in 2005 by GENESIS founding member ANTHONY PHILLIPS. With this new edition, Anthony has revisited the recordings, re-mastering the original stereo mixes and has created a 5.1 Surround sound mix with engineer James Collins. The results bring a new life to the compositions and a much loved album.

TIM BLAKE

'TIM BLAKE 'LIGHTHOUSE: AN ANTHOLOGY 1973-2012'

(3CD/1DVD REMASTERED CLAMSHELL BOX SET)

- A new re-mastered 3CD and DVD clamshell boxed set anthology celebrating the career of celebrated synthesiser and electronic ambient music pioneer TIM BLAKE. Features eight previously unreleased recordings and a bonus DVD featuring a previously unreleased recording of Tim Blake's appearance on French television in April 1979

JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST

'THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT'

(2CD/1DVD DIGIPAK EDITION)

- Lepidoptera Records are happy to announce the release of a wonderful 2CD & DVD set which captures the very special John Lees' Barclay James Harvest concert staged at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester on Sunday 6th May 2018 to celebrate 50 years of Barclay James Harvest music. The 50th Anniversary Concert is a 3 disc digipack release which features the entire concert both in sound and vision over two CDs and a DVD (NTSC – Region Free) and is a fine reminder of a truly wonderful evening of music.

DEL BROMHAM

'WHITE FEATHER'

(NEW STUDIO ALBUM)

- The wonderful new studio album by Del Bromham. Best known for being guitarist and principal song-writer for the classic rock band STRAY, White Feather sees Del explore a series of musical styles over 12 intensely personal songs, all with his inimitable approach.

PFM

THE MANTICORE STUDIO ALBUMS 1973-1977'

(4CD CLAMSHELL BOX SET)

- A 4CD clamshell boxed set by PFM, "The Manticore Studio Albums 1973 – 1977". This clamshell boxed set gathers these four albums in replica album sleeve wallets and also includes a new poster. It is a fine celebration of the band's studio work for the Manticore label.

THIRD EAR BAND

'THIRD EAR BAND'

(3CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- This 3 disc digipack edition of THIRD EAR BAND features eleven previously unreleased tracks; the entire "Dragon Awakes" sessions, all previously unreleased, along with alternate session takes, two BBC John Peel sessions from 1970 and 1971 and a newly re-mastered version of the "Abelard and Heloise" soundtrack produced from recently discovered first generation master tapes. The set also includes a booklet with new essay by Third Ear Band aficionado Luca Ferrari.

GREENSLADE

'BEDSIDE MANNERS ARE EXTRA'

(REMASTERED & EXPANDED CD/1DVD EDITION))

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

'SPYGLASS GUEST'

(2CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

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

PROCOL HARUM

'LIVE IN CONCERT WITH THE EDMONTON ORCHESTRA'

(REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

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

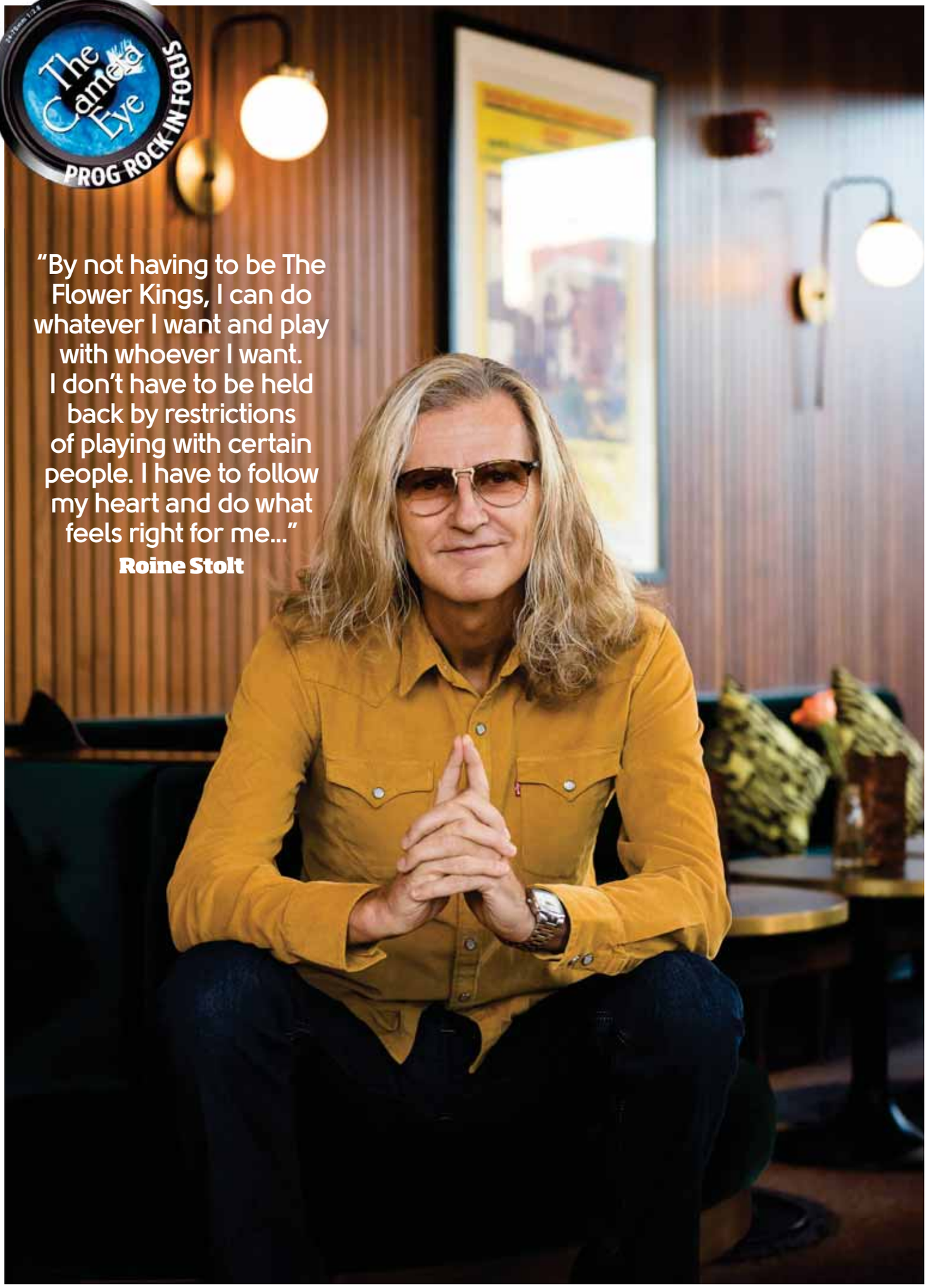
'PROCOL'S NINTH'

(REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

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

Esoteric Recordings Remastering and Expanding the Classics

ESOTERIC RECORDINGS CHERRY RED RECORDS
www.esotericrecordings.com



"By not having to be The Flower Kings, I can do whatever I want and play with whoever I want. I don't have to be held back by restrictions of playing with certain people. I have to follow my heart and do what feels right for me..."

Roine Stolt

WILL IRELAND

Ed's Letter

Where does Rush's *Hemispheres* sit in their impressive canon of work for you? I know for a fact that it is both Steven Wilson and Les Claypool's favourite Rush album. And if I remember correctly, *Prog* readers rated it just behind the twin behemoths of *2112* and *Moving Pictures* as the band's greatest work.

Whatever your thoughts, it stands as a bastion of creativity at a time when musical values were being questioned and re-evaluated. Upon its release in October 1978, punk had already burnt itself out, the strains of new wave were starting to sound distinctly old wave and the NWOBHM was about to blow in, carrying Rush as one of its prominent bands.

Hemispheres itself, as Geddy Lee himself says, felt like the end of an era. It represents the band at their most flamboyantly creative (*Cygnus X-1 Book II: Hemispheres* and *La Villa Strangiato*) and their most rockingly forthright (*Circumstances* and *The Trees*). Acknowledging their past and looking towards their future. As ever, restlessly progressive.

That's why it's a delight to celebrate the album's 40th anniversary this issue. To look back and admire how these albums of our youth have held up over the years. And in this case, I'd say remarkably well.

We've a strong supporting cast, too. Can's Irmin Schmidt, the story of the Kscope label, Twelfth Night, Anneke van Giersbergen, England, The Flower Kings, Sanguine Hum, Antimatter and loads more.

I hope you enjoy it all. We're back with the last issue of the year on December 28. Which means, even though I am writing this in November, I really should wish you all a happy and suitably proggy Xmas.

Peace and love to all...

Jerry Ewing - Editor

NEXT ISSUE Dec 28 ON SALE

You can subscribe to Prog at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/PROG. See page 116 for further details.

FIND US ON-LINE

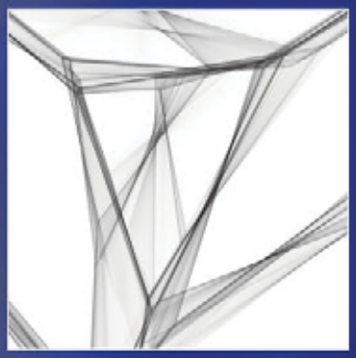
progmagazine.com

Get your daily fix of prog news and features at www.progmagazine.com

25 YEARS INSIDE OUT

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE FINEST IN PROGRESSIVE MUSIC, WITH THE BEST RELEASES OF 2018!

KAYAK
Seventeen



PERFECT BEINGS
Vier

STEVE HACKETT
Wuthering Nights: Live in Birmingham

LONG DISTANCE CALLING
Boundless

KINO
Radio Voltaire

TOUNDRA
Vortex

SPOCK'S BEARD
Noise Floor

THE SEA WITHIN
The Sea Within

FATES WARNING
Live Over Europe

DEVIN TOWNSEND PROJECT
Ocean Machine: Live at the Ancient Roman Theatre Plovdiv

RIVERSIDE
Wasteland

GÖSTA BERLINGS SAGA
ET EX

HAKEN
Vector

RIKARD SJÖBLOM'S GUNGFLY
Friendship

THE TANGENT
Proxy

ROINE STOLT'S THE FLOWER KING
Manifesto of an Alchemist

SONY MUSIC

Available from amazon.co.uk

www.insideoutmusic.com
INSIDE OUT

Bloody Well Write

Send your letters to us at: *Prog*, Future Publishing, 4th Floor, The Emerson Building, 4-8 Emerson Street, London, SE1 9DU, 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*.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

Those of us of a certain age will remember clearly experiencing the raw excitement, originality and sheer quality of the music of the 60s. The eager anticipation of a new single or album by any one of a number of amazing artists, all of whom delivered the goods regularly and without fail, was almost unbearable. Two of my favourites in those halcyon days were, no surprises, The Beatles and Eric Clapton: both of whom were unquestionably 'progressive' (using the word in its original sense).

The brilliance of The Beatles is well documented, as, of course, is the genius of Lennon and McCartney. I tended to prefer the Lennon songs but McCartney wrote some indisputable masterpieces: *The Fool On The Hill*, *Eleanor Rigby* and *Let It Be* to name but three.

Eric Clapton moved around a bit in the 60s — The Yardbirds, John Mayall, Cream, Blind Faith and solo — and yet he established the role of the lead electric guitar virtually single handedly (or should that be slow handedly) with his groundbreaking guitar playing (at least until the arrival of a certain Jimi Hendrix).

So here we are in 2018, 50 years since the release of two of the greatest double albums ever in The Beatles' *White Album* and Cream's *Wheels Of Fire*. Indeed, The Beatles and Eric Clapton even got together on the *White Album* to produce the stunning *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, with a piano intro from McCartney and one of most emotional guitar solos you'll ever hear from Clapton: still one of the greatest songs ever by anyone. And if you need another demonstration of guitar virtuosity, just listen to Clapton's soloing on *Crossroads* — that's live, one take!

Still in 2018 and what have we got? New albums from both musical legends: *Egypt Station* by McCartney and *Happy Xmas* by Clapton. Should be amazing right? Er, well not quite. *Egypt Station* sounds like an album by an also-ran 60s band given a one LP record deal and then allowed to fade into obscurity as they couldn't compete, either lyrically or musically, with the likes of, inter alia, The Beatles. As for *Happy Xmas*, if you'd said to me in 1968 that Clapton would be releasing an album of Christmas carols, including *Jingle Bells*, *Silent Night* and *White Christmas* 50 years later… well, my reply would have been unprintable. Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra have already been there, done that and produced the album (rather more than 50 years ago).

Thankfully we still have musicians from that era, or thereabouts, producing the goods: Yes, Ian Anderson/Jethro Tull and, of course, until their recent retirement, Rush. No coincidence, methinks, that those three bands are prog and how wonderful that we have a seemingly inexhaustible supply of top-quality new and not-so-new prog bands making quality music and flying the flag. Of the better-known bands, Opeth top the list for me along with Steven Wilson, Mostly Autumn and Riverside. Of the lesser-known bands, take a listen to Cloud Over Jupiter, Koneskin, Kylver and Chaometry to name but a few: none of whom I would have picked up on were it not for the excellent *Prog* mag CD (long may it last).

Graham Smith

Opeth: better than Paul McCartney?

PRESS/STEVE THRASHER

VIP OR RIP-OFF?

From a reader who lives in Australia, I would like to respond to Chris Robert's Paperlate piece in *Prog* 91 about the rise and rise of the VIP packages as a fund-raising model for artists of all types (prog and otherwise).

I am lucky enough to know a couple of local promoters, who make two points quite clear. Firstly, Australia is an expensive country to tour if you're an

TWEET TALK

Follow us on twitter.com/progmagazineUK

MATTHEW WRIGHT
@Matthew_Wright
Think I'm having a religious experience... @HawkwindHQ

CRAIG BLUNDELL
@craigblundell
#Tokyo #Japan it's been very special, next up it's #Brisbane #Australia on Wednesday #stevenwilson

RICK WAKEMAN
@GrumpyOldRick
The Victoria Theatre in Halifax is one of the most beautiful theatres I have ever played in. Lovely people too. Hope I can play there again some time in the future.

Something happened recently that I have not seen before in the plethora of gigs I have attended over the years.

Having arrived at the 1865 Club In Southampton to see Magenta, I made the effort to be on time to catch the support band When Mary. I don't think I was alone in wondering who they were.

Well, their performance blew my socks off. The duo gave an amazing, powerful, professional and just awe-inspiring show. And they had a standing ovation. If they had played all night and I had missed Magenta, for once it would not have mattered. Trude Eidtang, the lead singer and multi-faceted sounds/effects keyboard player, was so cool and smooth in delivery, with Christian Paulsen on guitar who was just on it, like clotted cream on scones.

Several of your readers might already know When Mary [*We featured them as a Limelight band in Prog 84. — Deputy Ed.*], but for the 1865 few on a Sunday night, we saw and heard one of the great undiscovered prog bands and I hope we will get another chance to see these Norwegian greats again in the UK soon.

I don't normally write to magazines, but this band's performance was just exceptional, off the charts.

Launce Morgan

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

overseas musician of any genre. Secondly, sales of tickets to prog gigs in Australia are often 'lacklustre'. It's hard to guarantee a profit for any artist, and sadly in many cases the economic reality is that touring 'Down Under' is certain to make a loss, and therefore isn't worth bothering with.

PAPER LATE

FOOTBRIGHT OPINIONS AND PROG

GRAB THAT CASH AND MAKE A STASH

A *Prog* writer asks if VIP tickets are really worth the dosh?

Asked about deluxe ticketing packages in 2010, Bruce Springsteen's longtime manager Jon Landau replied that such add-ons were likely to become a fixture on the scene. "If you call something deluxe or unique," he mused, "this is America – someone will buy it." He'd seen the future of rock'n'roll and its name was the VIP hospitality package.

Above: Paperlate in issue 91 has inspired some debate...

Obviously, in the current day, to make money as a musician you need to be a businessman as well as an artist. Selling the sizzle as well as the sausage is an essential tool towards making ends meet. The number of deluxe vinyl box sets and the like currently on the market are a testament to this. The VIP packages we see are clearly a part of this survival strategy. I consider that the VIP packages are a bit like business class seats on the plane: they help to subsidise the cost of the tour and keep the costs down for the economy class 'passengers'.

The reality currently is that many (probably a majority) of artists visiting Australia offer VIP experiences as a part of their tour. The difference between the prog artists and many of the rest is the level of commitment shown by the artist. Yes, as Chris states, many offer nice seats, VIP merch, pre-show parties and the like, but no actual interaction with the artist. In my experience the prog VIP is a bit different: you get to meet the artist and actually spend some quality time with them.

Yes, I admit I'm one of the lucky ones. When there's a good gig in town, I'm usually looking for a VIP ticket. I don't mind paying a premium for a chance to say thank you to somebody who genuinely has gone to the effort to come all the way to Australia and perform live for me here.

I guess that's the key. Some artists use VIP tickets as an easy way to make extra money for little personal effort for their already profitable tours. Many prog artists use VIP tickets as a way to survive in a harsh economic climate and go out of their way to make the effort to look after their serious fans. Without the extra VIP dollars, they probably wouldn't be here at all. For that, they deserve my support, and I expect to continue buying VIP tickets into the future.

Philip Briddon

COOKING WITH *PROG*

I'm following dear Pete Trewavas' Caribbean Chicken thighs recipe you published in *Prog* 91, huddled in the safety of my pseudo silk kimono, for better results...

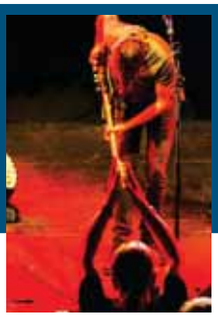
Cheers from Buenos Aires! Buen apetito!

Alberto Lago

Below: Alberto takes inspiration from *Prog* 91's Supper's Ready...

MARJANA SEMKINA
@marjanasemkina
Twitter, I got my visa ❤ we won.

BRUCE SOORD
@bsoord
Thief!
#pineapplethief
#guitarthief



PROG

Future PLC 4th Floor, The Emerson Building, 4-8 Emerson Street, London SE1 9DU
Email prog@futurenet.com
twitter.com/ProgMagazineUK
You can also find us on **facebook.com** under Prog

Editorial
Editor **Jerry Ewing**
Deputy Editor **Hannah May Kilroy**
Art Editor **Russell Fairbrother**
Production Editor **Vanessa Thorpe**
News Editor **Natasha Scharf**
Reviews Editor **Jo Kendall**
Lives Editor **Malcolm Dome**
Designer **Louise Brock**
Editor in Chief **Scott Rowley**

Contributors
Olivier Zoltar Badin (OZB), Joe Banks (JB), Mike Barnes (MB), Chris Cope (CC), Isere Lloyd-Davis (ILD), Daryl Easlea (DE), Briony Edwards (BE), Dave Everley (DEV), Ian Fortnam (IF), Pete Fowler (PF), Thea de Gallier (TDG), Polly Glass (PG), Eleanor Goodman (EG), Rob Hughes (RH), Stephen Humphries (SH), Will Ireland (WI), Emma Johnston (EJ), David Keevill (DK), Dom Lawson (DL), Fraser Lewry (FL), Dannii Lievers (DIL), Dave Ling (DML), Roger Lotring (RL), Alex Lynham (AL), Gary Mackenzie (GMZ), Rachel Mann (RM), Rhodri Marsden (RHM), Clay Marshall (CM), Julian Marszalek (JM), Giulia Mascheroni (GMA), Chris McGarel (CMG), Greg Moffitt (GMM), Grant Moon (GM), Ben Myers (BM), Kris Needs (KN), Kevin Nixon (KNI), Matt Parker (MP), Steve Pilkington (SP), Alison Reijman (AR), Chris Roberts (CR), Paul Sexton (PS), Johnny Sharp (JS), Nick Shilton (NS), Sid Smith (SS), Joseph Stannard (JSS), Rick Wakeman (RW), Phil Weller (POW), David West (DW), Philip Wilding (PW), Lois Wilson (LW), Rich Wilson (RW), Holly Wright (HW)

Cover images
Shutterstock, Getty Images. Cover manipulation: **Sam Williams at MagicTorch**

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Group Advertising Director **Mark Wright**
mark.wright@futurenet.com
Advertising Manager **Kate Colgan**
kate.colgan@futurenet.com
Account Director **Anastasia Meldrum**
anastasia.meldrum@futurenet.com
Account Manager **Jason Harwood**
jason.harwood@futurenet.com

International
Prog is available for licensing. Contact the International department to discuss partnership opportunities
International Licensing Director **Matt Ellis**
matt.ellis@futurenet.com

Subscriptions
Email enquiries **contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**
UK orderline & enquiries **0344 848 2852**
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0)344 848 2852**
Online orders & enquiries **www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/PROG**
Head of subscriptions **Sharon Todd**

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Keely Miller**

Management
Managing Director **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Editorial Director **Paul Newman**
Head of Art & Design **Brad Merrett**

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk
Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 2045-2260

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill holds full FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2018 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein. If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Peter Allen**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

INTRO

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

DREAM THEATER INJECT VELOCITY INTO THEIR 14TH STUDIO ALBUM

US-based proggers celebrate new label deal with InsideOut and announce the first dates of their anniversary tour for *Metropolis Pt 2: Scenes From A Memory*.

Dream Theater have revisited the old ways of working on *Distance Over Time*, out on February 22 through InsideOut. It's the first time since 1992's *Images And Words* that the full band have written and recorded together.

"It was so cool for the whole band to be together and that really lent itself to the spirit of the album," says singer James LaBrie. "This is the culmination of what I think represents Dream Theater musically."

The album was crafted between June and September, with the band splitting their time between an old barn-turned-recording studio in Monticello, upstate New York, and a nearby residence. Being on site without interruptions fuelled their creativity and they completed the songwriting in record-breaking time.

"[After 17 days] we said, 'Holy smokes, I think we just finished our last song!'" says LaBrie. "We were isolated so there were no distractions. When you're in Manhattan, you walk out the door and you can pretty much go to incredible culinary destinations, they're right at your fingertips. [This time] we were able to really focus on why we were there. That's why it was so productive. We had such a great experience we were like, 'It's kind of a no-brainer. When we do the next album, this is definitely where we should be coming.'"

But anyone expecting a sequel to 2016's grandiose *The Astonishing* is in for a shock. On Facebook, keyboard virtuoso Jordan Rudess has described one of the songs as having "an awesome Yes meets Rush" chord concept, but the rest of the album is quite different.

"This album is really gonna hit people upside the head."

"As proud as we are of *The Astonishing*, it definitely did polarise our fans," says LaBrie. "I think the progressive heads and the theatre music heads loved the album but the metal heads were a little perplexed! I think what's cool about *Distance Over Time* is that there are definitely the classic progressive moments throughout the album with the instrumentation and virtuosity that happens with Dream Theater. At the same time, I think the more predominant element is the heaviness. It's really gonna hit people upside the head but there's also a beautiful balance between the progressive end and more subtle, ethereal side."

The album is produced by guitarist John Petrucci and has been mixed by Ben Grosse (Depeche Mode, The Flaming Lips). LaBrie describes the results as "very organic-sounding".

"What Ben has done is incredible. He's really bringing out the sonic representation of the songs which is so important because there's a lot of

MARK MARYANOVICH

stuff going on. I think once the fans hear this, they're gonna be flippin' out!"

The band also regrouped with long-time collaborator Hugh Syme (Rush, Iron Maiden) for the striking cover artwork.

Teaser tracks are now online, and Dream Theater will be playing material from *Distance Over Time* on their forthcoming tour, which begins in San Diego on March 20, 2019. Inspired by last year's successful *Images And Words* shows, the evening will be in two parts as the band are also celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Metropolis Pt 2: Scenes From A Memory*.

"It'll be an evening with Dream Theater and we're going to be playing that album in its entirety," says LaBrie of their fifth studio recording. "We have to nod our hat to *Awake* as well because that will be 25 years [old]. Everything's coming up on anniversaries!"

Further dates are still to be announced and the band plan to return to the European festival circuit next year. For the full list of shows as they're announced, visit the official website www.dreamtheater.net. **NRS**

This month, Intro was compiled by
Jordan Blum
Malcolm Dome
Jerry Ewing
Jo Kendall
Martin Kielty
Hannah May Kilroy
Rhodri Marsden
Matt Mills
Mike Orvis
Natasha Scharf
Johnny Sharp
Rick Wakeman
Rich Wilson

CLAYPOOL AND LENNON GET REAL

Primus bassist and GOASTT musician team up for second magical mystery.

Sean Lennon and Les Claypool: under the magnifying glass.

Les Claypool and Sean Lennon have reunited as The Claypool Lennon Delirium to release *South Of Reality* on February 22 via ATO. The nine-track recording mixes psychedelic sounds with satirical social commentary. It was self-produced and mixed by Claypool at his own Rancho Relaxo studio.

Lead song, the six-and-a-half minute *Blood And Rockets*, pays tribute to American rocket engineer Jack Parsons who was also a leading member of Aleister Crowley's occult group, Ordo Templi Orientis. Says Lennon, "The end bit [of the song] is in 5/8, which I thought was funny because a pentagram has five points. It cuts to the section when, in my mind, he's crossing the threshold from this reality to another dimension."

Another track, *Boriska*, takes musical inspiration from 70s pop-proggers Klaatu and tells the true story of a Russian child who claimed he was a Martian in a former life.

"I think we excel at encapsulating wild stories in song," says The Ghost Of A Saber Tooth Tiger musician. "I think that partially comes from working with Les because so many of his songs are very funny stories about very odd people, like [Primus track] *Wynona's Big Brown Beaver*."

The pair have described *South Of Reality* as the "organic extension" of their 2016 debut *Monolith Of Phobos*. It follows on from last year's covers EP, *Lime And Limpid Green*.

The Claypool Lennon Delirium play three live shows in California in late December with more dates expected in 2019. For full details, see www.theclaypoollennondelirium.com. **NRS**

ELO'S HUGH MCDOWELL DIES

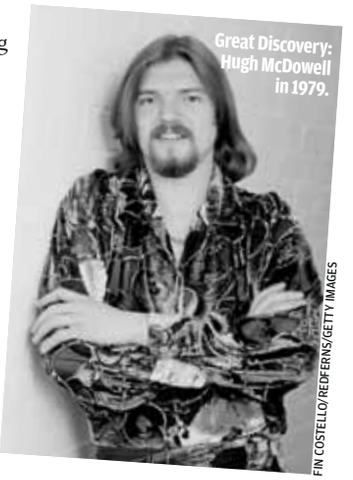
Cellist Melvyn Gale pays tribute to his celebrated ELO predecessor and the John Wetton collaborator.

Hugh McDowell, former cellist with ELO and Wizzard, died on November 6 after a long illness. He was 65.

McDowell, whose first professional musical performance took place when he was 11, joined ELO aged 19 in time to take part in their first live shows. He briefly followed Roy Wood to Wizzard but returned to Jeff Lynne's group and was part of what's regarded as ELO's classic line-up.

He was dismissed in 1980 when Lynne decided to abandon string instruments. He went on to teach music, took part in Bev Bevan's ELO Part II, and also appeared on Asia's 2008 album *Phoenix*.

Fellow ELO cellist Melvyn Gale said, "We met in our mid-teens and were close until 1980. He was a beautiful free spirit, had such a natural gift as a cellist and [was] just a lovely bloke." **MK**



Great Discovery: Hugh McDowell in 1979.

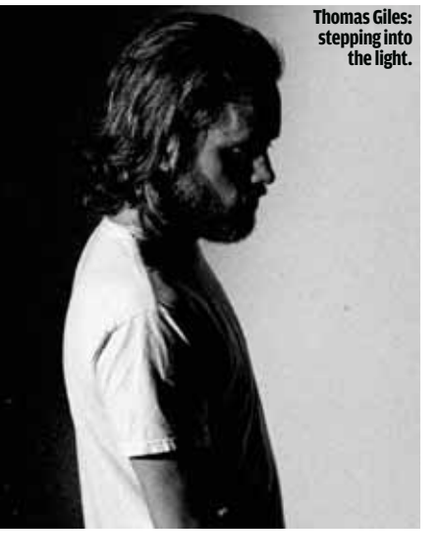
FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

THOMAS GILES BLURS THE GENRES ON HIS LATEST SOLO ALBUM

Between The Buried And Me's frontman enlists key guest players on fourth outing.

Thomas Giles (aka Tommy Rogers) has teamed up with bandmates Dan Briggs (bass) and Blake Richardson (drums) on *Don't Touch The Outside*, out now through Sumerian. The album is his most emblematic yet, and also includes appearances from guitarist Wes Hauch (Alluvial) and vocalists Kristoffer Rygg (Ulver), Einar Solberg (Leprous), and Carley Coma (Candiria).

"Kristoffer was on my bucket list," says Giles, acknowledging the creative role that Ulver's visionary played on the album. "Because his voice is so deep and distinguishable, our voices work well together. He sent me a lot of ideas that ended up being in *Milan*."



Thomas Giles: stepping into the light.

STEVEN CONTRERAS

Giles also tells *Prog* that the 70s soul-influenced lead track *Milan* is one of his favourite solo songs that he's written.

Giles brought in Coma for *I Win* because he knew he couldn't rap, and wanted to put Solberg "outside of his comfort zone by throwing him on an electronic track [*Everyone Is Everywhere*]".

Musician Wes Hauch created a big contrast with *Mr Sunshine*'s shredding guitar solo, leading Giles to conclude, "Sometimes I have to pinch myself. I try to get guys that I really admire, either as I was growing up or influencing me later. It's amazing to work with these people."

Giles says he lived and breathed the record for a week in the studio, allowing him to find a different inspiration to experiment and try new things each time. In this way, *Don't Touch The Outside* signifies a move away from the electronic focus of his 2016 album *Velcro Kid* and towards a varied representation of the many different kinds and moods of music that the keyboard player and singer enjoys.

"There's a lot of personal stuff, too," he continues, "like *Sway*, which is about my wife and I, and *Exordium*, which is about me moving west. I tend to get more personal with the solo material. Lyrically, they hold a special place because of that.

"There's not an overall concept or anything," he continues. "I take it song by song with my solo stuff."

He reveals the title and cover art were inspired by the notion that being anonymous today is difficult, inspiring him to "represent what a lot of people miss about not always being engaged with humanity".

Thomas Giles is currently on tour in Europe with Between The Buried And Me, and joint headliners TesseracT. Although he has no immediate plans to play *Don't Touch The Outside* live, he says he's open to figuring something out later in 2019. **JB**

For more, see www.thomasgilesmusic.com.

"It's amazing to work with these people."

INTRO extras

BBT UK TOUR FOR 2019

Big Big Train have announced their biggest UK tour so far with six shows scheduled for next autumn. The dates, which kick off at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh on October 26, will also see them perform with a five-piece brass ensemble. The international collective are expected to tease some material from their as-yet-untitled next studio album as well as songs from *The Underfall Yard*. Sweet Billy Pilgrim will support them on the tour. For the full list of shows, visit www.bigbigtrain.com.

Soen: as their sound unfolds...

SOEN FIND THEIR IDENTITY ON *LOTUS*

New sound and new guitarist for the band founded by Opeth's former drummer.

Swedish supergroup Soen release their fourth album *Lotus* via Silver Lining Music on February 1, and drummer Martin Lopez regards it as a work that's "realistic" about the modern world.

"It's a natural step to finding our own identity," he tells *Prog*. "That's been happening over the last two albums. There's a lot of honesty – we feel we should enjoy writing music for ourselves and we'll have a following. I think there's a lot more energy on this album."

Lotus explores the mid-life experience of "feeling trapped in the wheel" of society, he explains. "The older you get, the more you start wondering, 'What the fuck have I done?' You say, 99 per cent of people don't agree with the system, but we're still trapped in it and pay to make it work."

He also adds that they're neither positive or negative about the observations made.

The release is Soen's first to feature Canadian guitarist Cody Ford who, says Lopez, brings a heavier element to their sound. "We've kind of had different guitarists on every album," he adds, admitting he's not sure how it happened. "But the songs are always mainly written by Joel Ekelöf and myself, so that's the same. Marcus Jidell, who's not in the band any more, had more of a vintage sound. Now we have more of a current sound but keeping the same core."

Soen play the O2 Academy Islington on March 25 as part of their European tour. The full dates can be found on their website www.soenmusic.com. **MK**

ANATHEMA TO HEADLINE RAMBLIN' MAN'S PROG STAGE

First wave of progressive acts announced for 2019.

Anathema have been confirmed as headliners for the Prog In The Park Stage at next year's Ramblin' Man Fair. They played at the inaugural event in 2015. "It was still daylight when we came on," recalls Daniel Cavanagh. "For me, though, it's always better when it's getting dark and you use your own lighting."

Anathema: playing over the summer night horizon.

WILL IRELAND

It'll be the first time Anathema have headlined any major UK festival stage. Says Cavanagh, "I can't think of a better place to do it. Nice location, good facilities and great people. It's too early to say what we'll do in our set. But even if we've finished our new album by then, we won't play any of it at Ramblin' Man, as no one will know the material!"

Riverside and Pain Of Salvation have also been confirmed. Ramblin' Man runs from July 19-21 at Mote Park in Maidstone. For more, see www.ramblinmanfair.com. **MD**

10 Years of Kscope

The Best of 2018

TesseracT

Sonder

2CD/CD/2LP/DL

"the band's most complete and enveloping album to date"

PROG

Mansun

Attack of the Grey Lantern

3CD+DVD BOOK/CD/2LP/DL

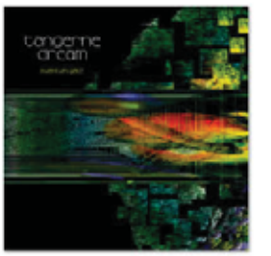
Iamthemorning

Ocean Sounds

BLU-RAY+CD/2LP/DL

"Quite simply, a sensational piece of work"

ECHOES & DUST



Tangerine Dream

Quantum Gate

2CD/CD/2LP/DL

"An impressive celebration of both past and future"

PROG

White Moth Black Butterfly

(TesseracT / Skyharbor)

Atone 2CD/LP/DL

"the music and its messages are truly universal"

PROG

The Pineapple Thief

Dissolution

BLU-RAY+DVD+2CD BOOK/CD/ COLOURED 2LP/2LP/DL

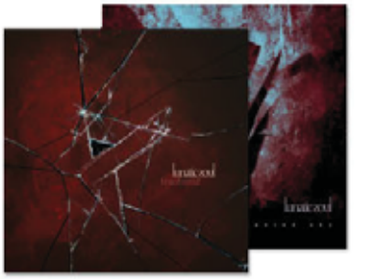
THE PINEAPPLE THIEF
LIVE IN THE UK 2019

20/3	O2 Academy,	**NEWCASTLE**
21/3	Saint Luke's,	**GLASGOW**
22/3	O2 The Ritz,	**MANCHESTER**
23/3	O2 The Institute 2,	**BIRMINGHAM**
24/3	SWX,	**BRISTOL** (VENUE UPGRADE)

Gleb Kolyadin

Gleb Kolyadin

CD/LP/DL



Lunatic Soul

Fractured & Under the Fragmented Sky

CD/LP/DL

"a brooding synth-scape"
"A triumph"

PROG

Blackfield

Open Mind: The Best of

CD/COLOURED 2LP/DL

"A masterclass of songwriting"

PROG

Nosound

Allow Yourself

2CD/CD/LP/DL

Gazpacho

Soyuz

CD/LP/DL

"one of their most stellar achievements yet"

PROG

Anathema

Internal Landscapes: 2008-2018

CD/COLOURED 2LP/DL

"everything is a high point - no filler at all"

PROG

ANATHEMA LIVE IN THE UK 2019
19th July headlining
PROG IN THE PARK stage at
RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR

Kscope Podcast

#103 is a live episode from our ten year anniversary concert at the Union Chapel, London. Featuring music and interviews from Anathema, Paul Draper, Nosound, Godsticks & Gleb Kolyadin.

Listen here: kscopemusic.com/podcasts

kscope

kscopemusic.com *@kscopemusic*

HEXVESSEL RETURN WITH TREE STORIES

Helsinki-based folk proggers promise to get 'back to basics' on fourth full-length album.

Conjuring woodland spirits: Hexvessel get back to nature.

Finnish-British folk prog collective Hexvessel release *All Tree* on Century Media on February 15, 2019. The first song from the album will be unveiled in early December, and frontman Mat 'Kvohst' McNerney reckons that the follow-up to 2016's *When We Are Death* will be "perhaps the most Hexvessel record we have ever made".

"The songs that grew into this record are the purest to what I feel the concept of Hexvessel truly is," he says. "There are still some strong progressive elements and psych rock influences but I think they're more integrated to the songs."

The title reflects Hexvessel's enduring fascination with the magic and spirituality of nature, says McNerney.

"*All Tree* is our mantra. Nature is our interface to godliness. For me it always comes back to that. It's the word 'tree'; the root of all existence, from which everything springs."

Englishman McNerney spent his summers in Ireland as a child, captivated by ghost stories and Celtic mythology. He's now based in Finland, having moved on from his work with Norwegian extreme metal bands Dødheimsgard and Code to write songs with a more bucolic feel for the six-piece he regards as a community.

"Mythology and tradition is still alive in Finland," he says, "and there's still a keen interest in their old pagan heritage. They're in constant reflection, revival and preservation of their past, and in that you'll find a lot of secret knowledge about the meaning of the universe."

There have been line-up changes since Hexvessel's last album too, with Simo Kuosmanen replaced by Jesse Heikkenen on lead guitar, and bassist Niini Rossi also departing. However McNerney is enthused to reconnect with long-time collaborator and Code co-founder Andrew 'Aort' McIvor, who guests on acoustic guitar.

"His love of old English folk and prog music can be heard throughout," McNerney commented recently on Facebook, but while the band's style continues to evolve, there's still that same immediacy to many of the songs that was a winning trait of previous records.

"There will always be a catchy chorus on my albums," says McNerney, "since I like to communicate. I think when a song speaks to us and we get hooked to it, we feel more in touch. It strengthens our sense of community and in that we come close to godliness. We become more at one with the universe." **JS**

"There will always be a catchy chorus on my albums."

See www.facebook.com/hexvessel.

INTRO extras

ROB REED'S FESTIVE SINGLE

Magenta's Rob Reed has teamed up with Mike Oldfield collaborator Les Penning for a very special Christmas single. The pair have reworked Oldfield's 1975 hit *In Dulci Jubilo* and it's available from Burning Shed on December 10. "We didn't want to do a copy as it's a classic, so we came more from the original spirit of the piece," says Reed. "Our version has all the trappings of a Christmas classic: monks, a friendly narrator, church bells and choir singing. It's been great fun."

The Neal Morse Band: heading for a great adventure.

PRESS/ROBERT SMITH

NEAL MORSE BAND'S NEXT ADVENTURE

US five-piece revisit *The Pilgrim's Progress* ahead of their international tour.

The Neal Morse Band release double concept album *The Great Adventure* on January 25 via Radiant /Metal Blade. It can be regarded as a direct sequel to their 2016 masterpiece *The Similitude Of A Dream* – although it took until 45 minutes before the end of the recording sessions for Morse to feel it had worked out.

"Some of the guys didn't want to do a *Similitude... Part 2*, and I wasn't sure," Morse tells *Prog*. "I thought if it wasn't coming to me, maybe it wasn't the way we should go. You can have a bunch of great themes and a bunch of great songs, but it can still not be satisfying."

Writing went right to the wire, with drummer Mike Portnoy only having a matter of minutes left before other commitments took him away. Morse recalls, "It didn't really all fall together until the final hour. We were trying to put together the very last bit."

He told bandmate Bill Hubauer they only had 45 minutes to work it out. Fortunately, they did.

The Similitude... was based on John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the new title explores the "angrier" story of Pilgrim's abandoned son. Fans can expect to hear the whole double album on the band's upcoming tour, principally on Portnoy's insistence.

Morse admits, "It's going to be amazing. It's still coming together for me, to be honest."

The Neal Morse Band play London's Islington Assembly Hall on March 24 towards the end of their international tour. For the full list of dates, visit www.nealmorse.com. **MK**

GREAVES SIZES UP NEW DEAL

Former Henry Cow and National Health bassist signs to Manticore and revisits old tunes on his latest solo record.

John Greaves, a one-time member of Henry Cow, releases the album *Life Size* through Manticore on November 30. It's a mixture of new and old material, including spoken word pieces.

Says Greaves, "I was asked to do this album by [Manticore's artistic director] Max Marchini. It was originally for his Dark Companion label, but then he took over the reactivated Manticore, so it was switched."

According to the musician, the album was developed over two years.

"I had complete freedom to do what I liked at my own pace. So I could do things as they occurred to me. I've been lucky enough to have input from some great musical guests, like King Crimson's Jakko Jakszyk on guitar, cellist Vincent Courtois and Zeena Parkins on the harp. The whole project is selfish, in that I had no thought of having to be commercial."

For more, visit Manticore's website www.manticorerecords.com/life-size. **MD**

John Greaves: getting to the point of it.

NORTH AMERICA'S PREMIER PROGRESSIVE ROCK MUSIC FESTIVAL NOW IN OUR 16TH YEAR!

Now in Tropical Sarasota, Florida

MAY 3 - MAY 5, 2019

RoSFEST™

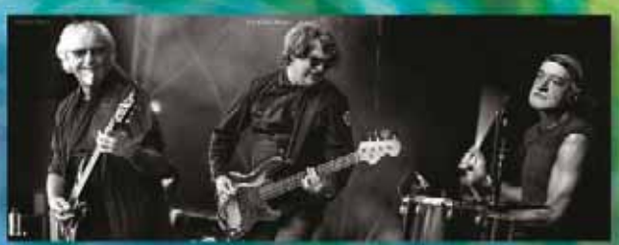
THE RITES OF SPRING FESTIVAL

SCAN THE CODE TO experience a sampling of the talent for RoSfest 2019!

Featuring 11 Bands from around the globe!

50 Years of Jethro Tull

Performed by official members, Martin Barre, Clive Bunker, & Jonathan Noyce.



Riverside

VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

phideaux

Flor de Loto

KARMAMOI

ENTRANSIENT

EDGE OF REALITY

TRAVERSER

CRYPTIC VISION

MILE MARKER ZERO

GOLD SEAT TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

GENERAL 3 DAY PASS ON SALE DECEMBER 7TH, 2018

ROLDAN ENTERTAINMENT

GO TO ROSFEST.COM FOR TICKET, VENUE & HOTEL DISCOUNT DETAILS!

FAD GADGETS

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

STYLOPHONE BEATBOX

The original Stylophone, launched by Dubreq in the late 1960s, became a much-loved instrument despite its limitations (you could only play one note at a time) and its inadequacies (it sounded like an insect). It's been used by everyone from Bowie to Little Boots, and a few years back a reconstituted Dubreq relaunched it. This pocket drum machine is its little brother, incorporating a bass synth, electronic drums and human beatbox sounds. You prod the pads with the stylus, creating a lopsided but rather charming noise – just like the original.
www.dubreq.com

SPIRIT PRO

Slowly but surely, headphones with wires are being replaced by their Bluetooth counterparts. These beasts caught my eye because of the big deal the firm make about them being sweat resistant. They're evidently pitching at fitness fanatics, with blurb promising a "heavy-hitting wave of sound" to help you "break through the wall", but they shouldn't ignore the appeal to someone like me, who sweats like a pig when he hangs up the washing.
www.soundcore.com

MODULAR FIDDLE

This isn't the first 3D-printed violin, but it might be the first that doesn't sound like a rusty hinge. Created by David Perry, its modular design means that all the pieces are replaceable in about 10 minutes, and you can either buy the bits online or download them and build it yourself. In the words of Stradivarius, "It actually sounds… okay!" – which might sound like faint praise, but those Stradivarius dudes have pretty high standards.
www.openfabpdx.com

RICK WAKEMAN'S CAPED CRUSADES

THIS STRANGE ENGINE

A case of mistaken identity leaves Rick in a bit of a pickle!

I was stood on the platform of the wonderful North Norfolk Railway in Holt when a well-dressed gentleman approached me.

He asked politely, "Do you still own the Flying Scotsman? Wonderful engine…"

I smiled back politely and replied, "Sorry to disappoint you, but you're confusing me with the songwriter and producer Pete Waterman. I've met him; he's an amazing man and a train fanatic. I love trains as well, but could never afford anything like the Flying Scotsman."

"Isn't that amazing that you should have the same name as him! Did you ever consider buying something smaller like a tank engine, Mr Waterman?"

"Actually, I'm Mr Wakeman".

"As in Pete Wakeman-Waterman?"

He was so polite that I couldn't be rude and call him an ignorant twat, and so once again, I smiled politely and tried to get through to him.

"I don't have a Pete or a Waterman in my name. It's just Wakeman, Rick Wakeman."

"Very wise. I'm sure it must have been confusing for both you and Pete."

We shook hands and he wandered off to a group of enthusiasts at the far end of the platform. That's when I overheard him telling them, "That's Pete Waterman over there, you know, but he's changed his name to Rickman or something like that to avoid being recognised."

"Looks like Rick Wakeman to me," said one chap, gazing in my direction.

> **"He was so polite that I couldn't be rude and call him a twat."**

"Yes, he mentioned that name as well. I wonder which he uses on his passport?"

"Probably Mike Stock," said another. "They used three different names when they recorded that Kylie Minogue. He went under Stock, Aitken and Waterman."

"Oh, I know who he is!" said another in the group. "That's Rick Perfect from Status Quo."

"I don't recall him ever buying a train," said one with a hat. "And didn't he pass away recently?"

One chap, who had remained silent throughout the whole discussion suddenly piped up. "I think you'll find that *is* Rick Wakeman. He was in a band called Yes who became ARW and then Yes featuring ARW, or something like that."

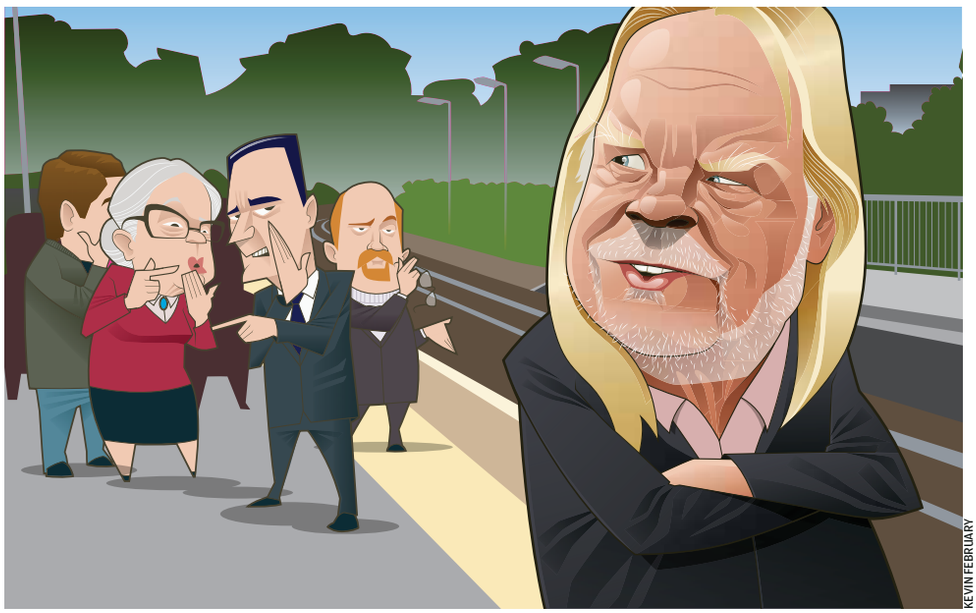
"So what's his real name then?"

The one lady in the group joined the conversation and muttered, "I'm not sure, but he had a big solo album called *Tubular Balls*. I know, I'll go and ask him!"

She wandered over to me and very politely said, "I'm sorry to bother you, we know you've got *Tubular Balls* but we're very confused as to what your real name is. Can you tell me? It'll put us all out of our misery."

I smiled sweetly and replied, "Of course, I'm Richard Branson."

"Thank you", she said, completely missing my sarcasm. She wandered back to the group and said, "We were all wrong. He's that one who makes the chutney and pickle."



KEVIN FEBRUARY

Look To The East: Kikagaku Moyo are making their own stamp on psychedelia.

KIKAGAKU MOYO

Former buskers from Tokyo turn Europe on to Eastern psychedelia.

YOU ONLY GET one chance to make a first impression. Unfortunately for Japanese experimentalists Kikagaku Moyo, they haven't always made the impression they intended.

"When we started, we couldn't really play very well," explains drummer and vocalist Go Kurosawa. "So we thought we'd create a bit of mystery around us by playing one of our early shows in Tokyo completely covered in smoke.

"We thought, 'No one will be able to see us because we're invisible, and people will think we're special.'"

Unfortunately, there were unintended side-effects.

"The venue thought that something had been set on fire, so they called the fire brigade, stopped the show and we were banned from the venue for life."

Thankfully, in the years since their 2012 formation as a "free music collective", the band have gone on to find more understanding homes for their shows, a stable line-up and an enthusiastic following, even after revealing their faces to the world. We meet them as they prepare to release their fourth album, *Masana Temples*, their most focused, groove-based release yet, but one which retains a freewheeling, genre-fluid vibe about it, born of their origins busking for hours on end in the lesser-populated metro stations of Tokyo, which served as their rehearsal spaces in the early days.

"On the street or in the metro you can play forever," says guitarist Tomo Katsurada. "We'd only make three or four euros a day but we didn't care. We'd get kicked out a lot and moved on but some stations, where there were less cops, you could play all night. It was better than paying for a studio or practice room."

If that sounds like the kind of bohemian, improv-heavy origins that spawned the early krautrock bands and many more late-60s prog groups formed out of communal living and a shared creative philosophy, it's no accident. Echoes of krautrock and the Canterbury scene are evident alongside hints of David Axelrod's psychedelic studio visions.

"Can were a big inspiration for us, and also the British folk rock movement," Kurosawa admits. "We're fans of people like Soft Machine, but we also like the jazz approach of Magma. Yet all of this is combined, I think, with a Japanese sense of melody."

They mostly record live with few overdubs, and share the psych era's interest in Eastern exotica, evidenced in the sitar playing of Go's brother Ryu, who was taught by legendary maestro Manilal Nag.

"He still goes to India once a year, and has Skype lessons from his guru," says the elder Kurosawa.

Despite their Japanese origins, the five-piece are now an international affair, partly based in Amsterdam. That's where Go and Tomo run Guruguru Brain, a label aiming to promote south-east Asian prog and psych music to western audiences. Can they recommend any of their roster?

"Minami Deutsch have a great new record this year and will be touring Europe next year, and Sundays & Cybele, from Hokkaido, play in the UK this autumn – they're more like Japanese prog.

"What they have in common with us is that they take Western rock forms and add their own Asian identity." **JS**

"Can were a big inspiration for us, and also the British folk rock movement."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Go Kurosawa *(drums, vocals)*, **Tomo Katsurada** *(guitar, vocals)*, **Daoud Popal** *(guitar)*, **Ryu Kurosawa** *(sitar)*, **Kotsu Guy** *(bass)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Stoned, sitar-wielding Canterbury hippies jamming with early krautrockers on the foothills of Mount Fuji

CURRENT RELEASE

Masana Temples is out now via Guruguru Brain

WEBSITE

gurugurubrain.bandcamp.com

YOUR PROG CHEF: CECILIA FAGE (COBALT CHAPEL)

On the menu: Lamb Ashes Are Burning (aka Bonfire Lamb)

"I only started to love cooking a few years ago – my husband's a great cook and after one of my particularly failed attempts ('Well, thankfully salmon's a very forgiving fish') he showed me some tips about flavour which gave me more confidence. We live in the country and often have a bonfire in the evening, and an episode of [Netflix show] *Chef's Table* inspired me to try fire roasting. It's lovely for having friends over: Jarrod [Gosling, Cobalt Chapel partner] and our live band are visiting soon, and will be my guinea pigs for a fish and vegetarian/vegan version. Once the food's cooking you can relax around the bonfire – though if you're fond of floaty nylon dresses like me, be careful not to set yourself alight!"

Ingredients (serves 4)

Lamb shoulder, 4 large sweet potatoes, 4 corn on the cobs, 2 handfuls of mushrooms, a head of garlic cloves, 2 red or yellow peppers, olive oil, several sprigs of rosemary, butter, salt, pepper.

Preparation

"Soak the cobs in cold water for 15 minutes beforehand and use butter to coat. Meanwhile, rub olive oil, salt and pepper over the lamb and vegetables. Make small incisions in the lamb and stuff with fresh rosemary and garlic. I got carried away and picked some wild garlic too, but didn't like the taste so I'd leave that out.

"Fire up your bonfire and once it's raging and there's a good build-up of embers underneath, wrap everything separately in two-to-three layers of kitchen foil, and nestle it in the ash under the flames to cook. Gardening gloves are handy here.

"The lamb takes about one hour and 15 minutes to cook until slightly pink inside. The vegetables take 30 minutes and the corn 15 minutes until it's quite blackened on the outside, but tender inside. Because the seasoning's simple, the roasting enhances each vegetable's individual flavour. And what better excuse to toast marshmallows for dessert?

"*Prog* readers should make this dish because it's experimental, dramatic, and not without risk – much like prog! I love this recipe because it's fun, easy and versatile. You can try different veg or leave out the meat entirely." **JK**

MY PROG HERO

Inspiring the wider music world…

The Watchers: Nik Fiend has been hugely influenced by Hawkwind's sound.

PER-ÅKE WÄRN

NIK FIEND

From fan to labelmate, Alien Sex Fiend's frontman says **Hawkwind** are the masters of his universe.

"I started getting into Hawkwind when I was cleaning windows. Some of it was a bit too far-out for me when I was 13 or 14, but I'd heard *Silver Machine* and picked up this sampler that had *Master Of The Universe* on. That was the beginning and I wanted to find out more.

The first guys I did music with had an echo unit and that was the first time I heard Pink Floyd's *Relics*, which is one of my favourites. Then, [in the late 70s, with former band Demon Preacher] we went to the Isle Of Wight to do a gig and ended up doing magic mushrooms. That changed my headset. I'd been quite rude to [wife and synth player] Mrs Fiend not long before saying, 'All that weird stuff is shit! I don't wanna hear it!' When I came back, I said to her, 'Can you play me all that weird shit that I was rude about?!' Now I love Can's *Tago Mago*, Neu!, King Crimson's *In The Court Of The Crimson King* – when she played me *21st Century Schizoid Man*, my head nearly flew off! I was mad on Frank Zappa too: his music would set me off doing big murals on my bedsit walls.

Hawkwind's *In Search Of Space* is mine and Mrs Fiend's ultimate favourite album and we've been playing it back-to-back in recent times. It really takes me on a journey. *Master Of The Universe* is our favourite track and I still get a rush when I hear those words, *'The wind of time is blowing through me…'* They were cooking when that one was going down. I like the new stuff too. I've just been listening to *Tunnels Of Darkness* off *The Machine Stops*.

Hawkwind inadvertently influenced Alien Sex Fiend. When we first started out, we used to jam indefinitely and we did a cover version of *Silver Machine* as well. Lemmy said he liked it. We've been in and around their music with our funny career. We did [single] *I Walk The Line* at Flicknife when they were doing *The Chronicle Of The Black Sword* and now we're both on Cherry Red. It's mental. Mrs Fiend and I looked at each other and went, 'Fuckin' 'ell! This is unreal!' Hawkwind deserve a lot more credit." **NRS**

"In Search Of Space is my favourite album. It really takes me on a journey."

Possessed is out now via Cherry Red. Visit www.asf-13thmoon.demon.co.uk.

PROG IN BRIEF

Annie Haslam, Sonja Kristina, Steve Hogarth and Patrick Moraz are among the artists honouring **Chris Squire** (right) on *A Life In Yes: The Chris Squire Tribute*. The covers album is out via Purple Pyramid and produced by Billy Sherwood.

Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson has teamed up with drummer Marco Minnemann (Steven Wilson, The Mute Gods) for an unnamed new project. More updates are expected soon. The pair previously worked together on Minnemann's 2017 album *Borrego*.

TOSKA

Instrumental three-piece finally find their feet with latest project.

WHEN YOU'RE IN a band, there is no substitute for chemistry. You can be the best musician on the planet, but if you can't connect with the other members of your group, you won't be climbing the ladder of success any time soon. Luckily, this isn't a problem that plagues Brighton's cosmic instrumentalists Toska.

Toska debuted in 2016 with their *Ode To The Author* EP, but the power trio of guitarist Rabea Massaad, bassist Dave Hollingworth and drummer Ben Minal have actually been playing together in a plethora of different bands for more than a decade.

"The first band was ChasinJade, which was a teenage passion project," Massaad recalls of their metal beginnings. "I met Dave first. I was at Leeds College Of Music when I was 16. I was just jamming in a room and he came in. He was like, 'You sound pretty good! Wanna jam?' Four or five months later, I met Ben through the singer of ChasinJade. When Dave and Ben came to jam, it seemed the three of us just had that mutual connection between us. That was 13 years ago now!"

Fear not, ChasinJade's metal is a far cry from the experimental, cinematic heaviness that Massaad and co now specialise in. After Chasinjade's 2012 split, its three instrumentalists stuck together, refining their repertoire by playing for various bands like Toseland, Dorje and, ultimately, Toska. Interestingly, despite the trio's technical prowess, Toska is their first-ever purely instrumental outing.

"We initially auditioned singers," Massaad reveals, "but it just didn't happen. Then we did the first EP, so we thought, 'Let's just stick this out!' Because of bands like Animals As Leaders, we felt that there was a level of relevance to instrumental prog. Plus, we've experienced other singers saying, 'Can we chop this or shorten that?' while we'd be thinking, 'Oh, those are good bits!'"

Tosca's 70-minute concept album *Fire By The Silos* successfully balances Massaad, Hollingworth and Minal's obvious talents with the heaviness of pounding grooves and the ambience of spoken-word interludes. When all of these elements combine on tracks like *Prayermonger*, the result is a dark, atmospheric journey befitting of the album's dystopian storyline.

"It's set 20 years from now," Massaad explains. "The government requires people under a certain wage to pay their debts by, basically, being cast out from society. And it focuses on one individual's mental journey through this. Throughout the album, he gets more angry and twisted, but then he realises, because of that, he's no better than the people he wanted to stand up against."

On *Fire By The Silos*, Toska challenge with ethical quandaries that accompany their hard-hitting metal. With the complexity of its music and its concept, it goes without saying that the album is a triumphant leap forward for these progressive comrades. **MM**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Rabea Massaad *(guitar)*, **Dave Hollingworth** *(bass)*, **Ben Minal** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Space-age instrumental metal that uses dark riffs to create vast cosmic landscapes

CURRENT RELEASE

Fire By The Silos is out now and self-released

WEBSITE

www.toska.tv

"Because of bands like Animals As Leaders, we felt that there was a level of relevance to instrumental prog."

CARLA MUNDY

Toska, L-R: Ben Minal, Rabea Massaad, Dave Hollingworth.

SWEET
LEVEL HEADED

(POLYDOR, 1978)

Sweet, eh? The acknowledged masters of 70s bubblegum pop rock. And yet here they are in *Prog*. Surely a mistake, right? Absolutely not. Because on their sixth album, the band were shifting into musical areas which had perhaps been off limits to them before.

Not that the four had ever been prepared to stand still. They had long taken leaps into a more powerful, aggressive rock style on album tracks, something at odds with their charting singles. Now, in what would prove to be the final release from the classic line-up, Sweet went even further. They brought in psychedelic twists and daubs of progression to augment the melodic nature of the music.

It meant that *Level Headed* was an ambitious project, one that stretched the four-piece's talents in a way that had never been done previously. They led off by taking the listener on an expected journey, offering only glimpses of what was to come. So, *Love Is Like Oxygen*, their last big hit, mingled an opaque psychedelic intricacy with an obvious pop rock tune. It's interesting to note, though, that the album version is a lot longer and has more depth that the edited single.

The same can also be said of *California Nights* and *Strong Love*, both of which offer the semblance of being prime style Sweet, yet also have a slightly bolder approach. This is developed with *Silverbird*, which allows itself to get lost in a swirl reminiscent of Jefferson Airplane.

But it's on *Anthem No I (Lady Of The Lake)* and *Anthem No II* where things really depart from the norm. Here Sweet go for what can only be described as an art rock indulgence, with the articulate guitar work from Andy Scott complemented by classical style keyboard and string sections. It says much of how creative the band could be that it never sounds forced.

Self-produced, this album represents Sweet as you'd never heard them before, going for a more introspective and adventurous path. They weren't prepared to give fans what was perhaps expected, but instead took musical leaps off the edge of the cliff.

It would be foolhardy and misleading to suggest the band fully embraced progressive music. But on *Level Headed* they moved a lot closer to 10cc and Supertramp than anybody might have expected. The album wasn't a commercial success, but now stands as arguably the most fascinating and challenging release of their career.

Who knows what might have been achieved if vocalist Brian Connolly hadn't left in 1979, and this quartet had stayed together. *Level Headed* shows what potential Sweet had as they deliberately abandoned playing safe.

MALCOLM DOME

ALL AROUND THE WORLD
Our far-out trip to far-flung prog

Lucky Number: short-haired prog rockers 22.

IDA VIE/PRESS

22

Norwegian guitarist **Magnus Børmark** and his cohorts find their musical home via Queen and a robot mascot.

Norway's city of Trondheim is steeped in musical history with strong ties to the worlds of jazz and classical. Motorpsycho come from the area and so do the self-described "short-haired prog rock" quartet 22.

"When we made the first EP [2008's *ESP*], our vision was clear; we wondered what kind of music we would make if we got up at five in the morning to do rehearsals!" reveals guitarist and main songwriter Magnus Børmark. "We wanted to tap into that creative realm, straight from dream state. That became our sound: a lot of notes per second!"

Although they formed more than a decade ago, 22 have spent the last few years on hiatus. In 2017, they returned to the studio reinvigorated with the early Muse-like *You Are Creating: Limb1*. It's just been repackaged with the second instalment and released as a double album via Long Branch. The concept, which explores the listener's active role in defining music, blends their love of technical wizards Mars Volta and Meshuggah with the quirky pop sensibilities of Queen and Kate Bush. And, after spending many years in musical wilderness, they've finally found their niche in prog thanks to a tour with Leprous and Agent Fresco.

"We'd been trying to go more mainstream rock and hit that audience but couldn't really break through. Now we've found lots of people who really appreciate what we're doing," says the guitarist. "I wouldn't have described us as progressive [before this tour] because I had just associated that with capes and dwarves [laughs] but I've come to understand that's not the case!"

They might be dwarf-free, but 22's creative concept is bolstered by another popular motif; the robot. Their digital human synergy enabler is called HAL 22000 and it's one of the key characters in the ambitious video quadrilogy for *You Are Creating*.

"We're telling the story of the robot we use on stage, HAL 22000, and a renaissance kid called Akira. It's quite ambitious," says Børmark. The first two instalments, *Sum Of Parts* and *Call Me Trimtab*, are already online and 22 are now looking forward to playing the tracks live next year. **NRS**

> **"I had just associated prog with capes and dwarves!"**

We Are Creating is out now via Long Branch. For more, visit www.22.no.

PROG IN BRIEF

Devin Townsend heads out to Europe next spring for a solo acoustic tour. 'An Evening With' starts on March 30 in Helsinki and includes six UK shows in April. The intimate event will feature material from his catalogue and a Q&A.

Riverside (left) return to the UK next March with four bonus dates on their *Wasteland* tour. Tickets are now on sale for the shows in Bristol, Leeds, Glasgow and Birmingham. The Polish band will also perform at Cruise To The Edge next February.

JACCO GARDNER

Dutch traveller puts down the mic to explore the cosmos.

IF A PICTURE can paint a thousand words, sometimes it feels like a passage of music can do much more. Dutch singer-songwriter Jacco Gardner increasingly felt that way when he decided to leave his new, third album vocal-free.

"I noticed the instrumental records I was listening to seemed to be giving me more intimate experiences than hearing someone singing something," the 30-year-old tells *Prog* over a Skype call from Lisbon, where he's now based after many years of touring. "You don't immediately think of the person singing when you hear the music or visualise their face, so your imagination is free to roam."

On that basis, he created *Somnium*, a set of cinematic, highly atmospheric pieces that evoke some of prog's most distinctive soundscape designers, from Mike Oldfield to Tangerine Dream to Goblin and even French electronic mavericks Air.

Absence of lyrics hasn't stopped the multi-instrumentalist from telling a tale and following a vividly illustrated narrative, and he based *Somnium* on a pioneering, stargazing 17th-century novel of the same name.

"It's by Johannes Kepler," he explains, "an Austrian astronomer and alchemist. He wrote the book *Somnium* in 1608 [although it wasn't published until 1634] and it's about a dream in which he visualises what it's like to travel to another world.

"I liked the combination of science fiction – the book is regarded as one of the first ever written in the genre – and the mysterious, powerful aspect of the human imagination and dreams."

Growing up in the small Friesland town of Zwaag in the north of Holland, young Gardner always had his head in the clouds, he says, and those dreams went from black and white to technicolour with the help of one particular prog icon.

"The turning point for me as a teenager was discovering Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd," he says, "and through that I discovered more psychedelic and progressive music."

In due course, Gardner would gig and make an album with drummer Hugo van de Poel as "freakbeat psych duo" The Skywalkers, but his reputation was truly cemented with two solo albums of what he calls 'baroque pop', 2013 debut *Cabinet Of Curiosities* and 2015's *Hypnophobia*. They are records strikingly influenced by the late Mr Barrett, but they also showcase a talent for evocative melodies and potent atmospherics.

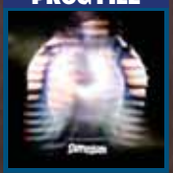
Somnium is another big leap forward, and although he's always produced his own records, this one was mastered by someone who knows a fair bit about ambitious studio undertakings – *Tubular Bells* co-producer Simon Heyworth.

"Simon mastered or remastered a lot of albums that I love – folk, synth and progressive. A lot of them have a unique sound because of the different studios they were made in. As a mastering engineer you have to work with sounds like that and I imagined my own sound was even more weird, so I needed someone to bring everything the right balance together, so Simon was perfect."

The album has been two years in gestation, partly due to Gardner intending the album to be performed live. And although dates over here are TBC, he has lofty ambitions: "I'd love to play it in London Planetarium. I don't know how easy that will be to set up, but if it happens, I hope to see you and lots of *Prog* readers there!" **JS**

"The turning point for me as a teenager was discovering Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd."

PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Jacco Gardner *(drums, bass, guitars, keys)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Mike Oldfield and Air tripping on a space station with vintage synthesisers and ancient novels for company

CURRENT RELEASE

Somnium is out now via Full Time Hobby

WEBSITE

www.jaccogardner.bandcamp.com

Stargazer: Gardner finds inspiration in a 17th-century sci-fi novel...

MARIA PANDIELLO

THE BIG QUESTION

A *Prog* reader wonders why some fans can't help asking the same thing...

As any socio-economics expert can tell you, when a group expands there are bound to be problems. Any group that gets too large becomes hard to manage and it's human nature to want to branch off into smaller tribes. Another problem with large, established groups is the need to reassure new members that they are welcome and as much a part of the ecosystem as anyone else. Now that progressive music has entered its second renaissance with an explosion of fresh talent flooding the airwaves with exciting sounds and fascinating compositions, this has naturally led to an influx of fresh-faced fans eager to join in the conversation both on and offline.

While there have been some absolutely fascinating discussions, there is one question that has raised its ugly head time and time again:

'Is [insert band name] prog?'

This banal line of questioning sends a shiver down my spine as my forehead swiftly meets my hands for a little rest. It's usually well-natured in origin but causes a large and collective moan from across the community. This isn't to say I don't understand the reasoning behind it: everyone wants to know if their favourite artist fits in with everyone else's. We need to feel included, especially when we're new!

With the internet (for better or for worse) giving everybody the ability to take part in global discussions regarding their niche, this question has become prolific across the board. You'll see it crop up in almost any thread regarding the subject of prog. While seemingly innocuous, it's bound to put a multitude of people on the back foot and will lead to responses made harsher by the relative anonymity a forum can bring.

The answer to the question is very simple: if it feels like the music transcends what you consider 'normal' or 'mainstream', then the likelihood is that, yes, it's prog.

Prog doesn't care that you didn't like Mikael Åkerfeldt when he sounded like a lion. It doesn't matter what your opinions are about Genesis post Peter Gabriel. Prog doesn't care if you think a particular King Crimson album isn't using enough wafty time signatures. As a musician who's played his fair share of venues, I can tell you that half the bands you call prog will undoubtedly be referred to as 'rock' by most landlords and venue owners anyway.

Prog is an over-arching concept; one that's just as nourishing, exciting and indeed broad today as when it started. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if no one else but you thinks a band is prog or not, because for you that band is special, transcendent, and evokes emotion. That's what prog *really* is, friends.

MIKE ORVIS

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

HAVE A CIGAR

Saluting the scene's supporting crew

Riverboat Song: Luke Guilford and his floating music shop.

INSTAGRAM.COM/THERECORDDECKUK/

THE RECORD DECK

Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream... but bring a wallet for the UK's water-based music vendor.

Wander slightly off-grid from Fairport Convention's yearly Cropredy festival and you might find yourself on the Grand Union Canal, amid boaters and traders making the most of the atmosphere. One trader is, erm, making waves: Luke Guilford, with his floating music shop The Record Deck. After four years' trading, the 40-foot narrowboat named Tashtar is Guilford's home and business, and an essential stop-off for proggers.

"I come from the boating side anyway," says Guilford, who's lived on board for 20 years. "My mum's got a boat and she used to take it to Cropredy. I saw other traders there and it sowed the seed."

A kid in the 90s, Guilford admits that he and his friend "had the biggest paper round in Northamptonshire purely to fund our record buying habits" as they visited record fairs and built up their collection and knowledge. Later, Guilford worked in a library in Hackney for a number of years but "never really enjoyed the regular nine to five," so decided to take his record collecting nous and try and to make a living from it.

"I had the boat as a home, so I built shelves, made a hatch in the side and built a sofa bed that fits eight crates of vinyl under it," he says. "This is the most stock that I can carry. I'm looking at the place now, it's full of records!"

Cropredy isn't his only stop-off; Guilford books in a year of canal-side events across the Midlands, home counties, and London with a regular mooring in Hackney on the river Lea. He looks out for new releases and even hosts 'on-store' gigs.

Stock comes from markets, private collections or other boaters selling up and moving on. Guilford's preference is "old Fairport, Pentangle and folk crossover stuff from '68 to '72," but today he's handling a bundle that features Hatfield & The North, Henry Cow and Matching Mole to file alongside rare items such as Fruupp, an original *Joy Of A Toy*, and *The Madcap Laughs*.

The fun part of the business is meeting people. "Every day's an education," he says. "You learn something from every customer." **JK**

"I'm looking at the place now, it's full of records!"

See www.facebook.com/therecorddeckuk for more.

PROG IN BRIEF

Swallow The Sun release the 14-minute single *Lumina Aurea* on December 21 via Century Media. It's followed by the album, *When A Shadow Is Forced Into The Light* on January 25. It's their first new material since 2015.

ANNE YALEUR

Susanna Wallumrød's (left) concept album about Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch is out on February 22 via SusannaSonata. Susanna & The Brotherhood Of Our Lady's *Garden Of Earthly Delights* was originally performed live last year.

Lost Crowns' debut album *Every Night Something Happens* comes out through Bad Elephant on January 25. The supergroup, led by Stars In Battledress' Richard Larcombe, also features Knifeworld's Charlie Cawood and *Prog*'s Rhodri Marsden.

Quantum Pig are about to release their new single *Citizen And State* on John Mitchell's White Star. The duo, formed by multi-instrumentalist Ian Faragher and author Mark Stevenson, release their as yet-untitled album in 2019.

"Square One" – the brand new album by Purser Deverill!

A proggressive rock experience created by
the two former members of Tygers Of Pan Tang
Fred Purser & Jon Deverill!

'It's kind of proggy really I suppose' says the Fred,'
With a good helping of rock' adds Jon.

For fans of Yes, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd
& of course Tygers Of Pan Tang

NEW ALBUM "SQUARE ONE"
OUT ON LP, CD & DIGITAL 14/12 2018

Former members of TYGERS OF PAN TANG

NEW ALBUM "THE GHOST WARD DIARIES"
OUT ON LTD GOLD LP, LP, CD & DIGITAL 23/11 2018

6/7 METAL HAMMER (DE)
8.5/10 ROCK IT! MAGAZINE (DE)
8/10 POWERPLAY MAGAZINE (UK)
8/10 SWEDEN ROCK MAGAZINE (SE)

New album "The Ghost Ward Diaries"
from the Swedish classic rock masters, Electric Boys.
Together with all original members.

ALSO OUT ON MIGHTY MUSIC

BLACK BOOK LODGE
ALBUM OUT NOW
ON LP, CD & DIGITAL
INTOXICATING IN ALL THE RIGHT WAYS.
AS FAR AS MODERN DAY PROG ALBUMS GO.
THIS IS CERTAINLY UP THERE – PROG

MIKE TRAMP – CAPRICORN (reissue)
ALBUM OUT NOW
ON LTD WHITE LP, CD & DIGITAL
ON VINYL FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME
Not prog – but you get it?

BLACKDRAFT – THE QUEST
ALBUM OUT ON DECEMBER 14TH
ON CD & DIGITAL
FOR FANS OF HALESTORM & ARCH ENEMY

WWW.MIGHTYMUSIC.DK

MIGHTY MUSIC CDS, LPS & MERCH
AVAILABLE AT WWW.TARGETSHOP.DK

target MIGHTY MUSIC
SCANDINAVIAN PREMIER ROCK/METAL LABEL

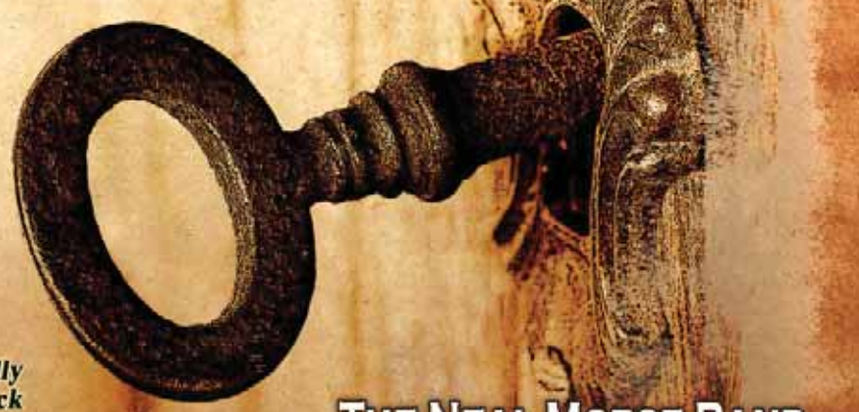
The Great Adventure

In Stores on January 25th, 2019

Available as a Double CD, a Special Edition 3 Disc Digi Pack including a DVD feature "The Adventure Begins" showing the making of the album. Also available as a 180g 3 LP Gatefold Edition (CDs are included) and Digital Download.

The follow-up and ultimate companion to 2016's critically acclaimed "The Similitude of a Dream", hailed as a prog-rock masterpiece by fans and critics alike!

the neal morse band



Pre-Orders begin on December 4th

WWW.RADIANTRECORDS.COM

Radiant Records

The Neal Morse Band World Tour 2019

All Tour Dates & Ticket Links:
WWW.NEALMORSEBAND.COM

Official Progressive Albums Chart

The prog top 30 albums

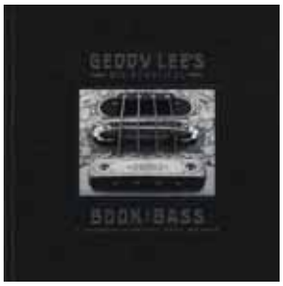
October 2018

Compiled by Official Charts Company

1	**RICK WAKEMAN**	Piano Odyssey *SONY CLASSICAL*
2	**TAME IMPALA**	Currents *FICTION*
3	**COHEED & CAMBRIA**	The Unheavenly Creatures *ROADRUNNER*
4	**MATT BERRY**	Television Themes *ACID JAZZ*
5	**HAKEN**	Vector *INSIDE OUT*
6	**SPIRITUALIZED**	And Nothing Hurt *BELLA UNION*
7	**JEAN MICHEL JARRE**	Planet Jarre *SONY MUSIC CG*
8	**JEFF LYNNE'S ELO**	Wembley Or Bust *RCA*
9	**MOODY BLUES**	In Search Of The Lost Chord *UMC*
10	**POLYPHIA**	New Levels New Devils *RUDE RECORDS*
11	**HAWKLORDS**	Brave New World *HAWKLORDS*
12	**RIVERSIDE**	Wasteland *INSIDE OUT*
13	**BLACK PEAKS**	All That Divides *RISE RECORDS*
14	**URIAH HEEP**	Living The Dream *FRONTIERS*
15	**A PERFECT CIRCLE**	Eat The Elephant *BMG*
16	**HAWKWIND**	Road To Utopia *CHERRY RED*
17	**MOGWAI**	Kin - OST *ROCK ACTION*
18	**IAMTHEMORNING**	Ocean Sounds *KSCOPE*
19	**PINEAPPLE THIEF**	Dissolution *KSCOPE*
20	**ROGER WATERS**	Is This The Life We Really Want *COLUMBIA*
21	**RUSH**	A Farewell To Kings *UMC/VIRGIN*
22	**TOSKA**	Fire By The Silos *DISTROKID.COM*
23	**ROXY MUSIC**	Roxy Music *VIRGIN*
24	**MASTODON**	Emperor Of Sand *REPRISE*
25	**MOODY BLUES**	Days Of Future Passed *DECCA*
26	**MARILLION**	All One Tonight - Live At The Royal *EAR MUSIC*
27	**JOHN MCLAUGHLIN/JIMMY HERRING**	Live In San Francisco *ABSTRACT LOGIX*
28	**ELO**	Secret Messages *EPIC*
29	**JETHRO TULL**	Heavy Horses *RHINO*
30	**ORB**	No Sounds Are Out Of Bounds *COOKING VINYL*

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

WIN! SIGNED *GEDDY LEE'S BIG BEAUTIFUL BOOK OF BASS*!



Rush vocalist and bassist Geddy Lee will release a book showcasing his collection of bass guitars and the stories behind them later this year.

Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass will be published on December 4 via Harper Collins and will also see the Rush star explore the history of the instrument and features contributions from vintage expert Terry Foster and his Rush bandmate and guitarist Alex Lifeson.

The 400-page book will also include interviews with artists including John Paul Jones, Adam Clayton, Robert Trujillo, Bill Wyman, Les Claypool and Bob Daisley, and we have one signed copy to give away.

The synopsis of the book reads: "From Rush frontman Geddy Lee's personal collection of vintage electric bass guitars, dating from the 1950s to the 1980s, comes the definitive volume on the subject.

"For the past seven years, Geddy's dedicated himself to studying the history of the instrument that's been so essential to his career, collecting hundreds of basses from around the globe, 250 of which are presented here in breathtaking detail with specially commissioned photography by Richard Sibbald.

"Representing every tone in the bass palette, every nuance of the rock and roll genre as well as blues, jazz, pop, and country, this one-of-a-kind collection features so-called 'beauty queens' - pristine instruments never lifted from their cases - as well as 'road warriors' - well-worn, sweat-soaked basses that proudly show their age and use.

"Complete with personal commentary from Geddy that showcases his knowledge both as a musician and an aficionado, this luxuriously produced volume is a revelatory look at the heavy hitters in the world of bass - Fender, Gibson/Epiphone, Rickenbacker, Höfner, Ampeg-and lesser known but influential global luthiers such as Antonio Wandr Pioli, Dan Armstrong, and Tony Zemaitis."

The book will also take a closer look at the instruments Lee used on Rush's final R40 tour, along with his stage and recording gear used between 1968 - 2017.

For your chance to win, visit www.bit.do/rushcomp and answer the following:

What year were Rush inducted into the Juno Hall Of Fame?

a) 1991

b) 1997

c) 1994

See www.rush.com and www.harpercollins.com for more information.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:This competition will be open from 30 November to 28 December. By entering the competition you agree to our competition rules (available at www.futureplc.com/competition-rules). The winner will be selected 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
Jerry Ewing

THOM YORKE

Suspira (Music for the Luca Guadagnino Film)
XL

The Art Guy
Russell Fairbrother

HEDVIG MOLLESTAD TRIO

Smells Funny
RUNE GRAMMOFON

The Lone Office Lady
Hannah May Kilroy

ANTIMATTER

Black Market Enlightenment
MUSIC IN STONE

Musician
Keshav Dhar

BEN HOWARD

Noonday Dream
ISLAND

The Writer
Daryl Easlea

THE BETA BAND

The Beta Band
REGAL/ASTRALWERKS

The Reader
Jeff Cooper

RIKARD SLÖBLOM'S GUNGFLY

Friendship
INSIDEOUT

EMPEROR NORTON

Young proggers take their cues from the classics.

THE LONGEVITY AND ongoing inventiveness of the progressive genre remains startling and the current wave of younger bands bodes well for the genre's future. And while these musicians may not have grown up in the age of classic prog, many felt a serious sense of excitement when they discovered the music of that era. Emperor Norton are one such band.

"At the age of 13, I was listening to the sort of music that a skateboarding kid would until one day my grandfather put on *Close To The Edge*," recalls guitarist Scott Neumann. "He told me to have a listen to it and it just made my mind explode. We never wanted to be copycats or be accused of simply parroting bands that have influenced us. One of the ways we addressed that was to explicitly reference those influences, so for example, there's a guitar line on one of our tracks which is from *Close To The Edge*. We just wanted to celebrate the music that we enjoy. But I would say that at no point did we sit down in say the first session and discuss what music we wanted to write. We just played what we liked."

"We all have a lot of old influences, despite being fairly young for a prog band," suggests singer Matthew Corry. "We take our influences from bands like King Crimson… for me, Frost is a big one… and there's Yes and Gentle Giant. We wanted to evolve that music as best we could and develop that sound, as that's the music that means so much to us."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Matthew Corry *(vocals)*, **Scott Neumann** *(guitar)*, **Marc Green** *(keyboard)*, **James Kulmer** *(bass)*, **Joe Rees-Jones** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Classic 70s prog with a twist of modernity

CURRENT RELEASE

Emperor Norton is out now and is self-released

WEBSITE

www.facebook.com/EmpNortonBand

Emperor Norton formed in York at the end of February 2017, and quietly honed their material before trying to develop a momentum on the live circuit. Their first gig was supporting Syd Arthur, which Corry describes as a "pretty horrible" experience, with a poor sound hampering their determination. However, despite their troubles, the crowd reaction was positive, which encouraged them to press ahead with their approach.

"A lot of the places we were trying to get gigs in were refusing to let us play because we didn't have a recording," recalls keyboard player Marc Green. "We did a really rough-and-ready recording and then got a gig. Then we were all aware that we needed to record it properly before we moved on to the next stage."

The result is their engaging, self-titled debut album, which was released earlier this year, and it's a recording that has already garnered a number of positive reviews, much to their entertainment.

"The feedback has been unexpected and overwhelming," says Corry. "We got a comment on YouTube where one of our tracks was compared directly to *2112* by Rush. I mean, we really don't deserve that, but people seem to genuinely like the music."

The band have already gathered together material for another album, which is slated for release next year. **RW**

"I was listening to the sort of music that a skateboarding kid would until one day my grandfather put on *Close To The Edge*."

Emperor Norton: they love to get *Close To The Edge*...

MATTHEW KULMER

MUSIC
TRUMP(ET)S WAR

Once upon a time, there was a man with a trumpet. And when he was a soldier in the US Army landing on the beaches of Normandy, he kept it by his side. Once, when he was standing guard at night, his captain told him: "Don't play tonight, there's a sharpshooter out there." But our man thought: "That guy out there is just as scared and lonely as me. I'll play a piece for him." The next day, a POW was brought into the camp, and he asked: "Who is the trumpeter that played 'Lili Marleen' last night? When I heard that song, the war was over for me - I just couldn't use my gun any more." The man with the trumpet was called Jack Leroy Tueller. And though it may sound like a fairy tale, this is a true story. A story only music can write.

th•mann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION

My Record Collection

JASON HAZELEY AND JOEL MORRIS

They met as kids and subverted the school paper. Now they're doing the same with *Ladybird Books For Grown-Ups*, BBC TV's Philomena Cunk and more, with Ravel, Radiohead and Jeff Wayne in their heads…

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** Will Ireland

"If you grew up in the 70s you were steeped in prog anyway," begins **Joel Morris**. "We both love **Jeff Wayne's** *The War Of The Worlds*, which was the first cassette of music that I owned."

Jason Hazeley: "I love it so much I've got the multi-disc coffee table version. I'd loved to have been at the meeting where Jeff announced a multi-record concept album based on a Victorian sci-fi novel with the best session guys in town and an orchestra and someone said, 'That sounds like a reasonable commercial prospect.'"

Joel: "People who said Rick Wakeman's *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth* was 'prog nonsense' would have this. It's not seen as prog, it's seen as retro. But it's the last of a cycle of prog records based on a novel."

Jason: "It's also very good — Richard Burton's narration then that fucking great D minor string section. Bernard Herrmann would have been proud of this. Then there's those electronic sounds, all really well done."

Joel: "Because of the electronics, it plugged straight into the first LP I ever had, the **Radiophonic Workshop**'s *BBC Sound Effects No 19*. If you liked *Doctor Who*, Jeff Wayne was completely comprehensible to a kid who has listened to TARDIS sound effects. But you weren't into prog rock, were you?"

Jason: "I tried Tangerine Dream but they wouldn't let me in. I played classical piano since I was about four."

Joel: "When we met we crossed into each other's musical worlds. I'd been into rock and heavy metal. When I first heard Led Zeppelin I expected them to be heavy, but there was folk and prog and flutes and Sandy Denny, songs about Hobbits and shagging. I went looking for who else was doing that and someone recommended **Yes**. I got *Relayer*, which I bought second hand for 25p. The first time I put it on I thought it was at the wrong speed. Recently I tried to learn the guitar parts and found I didn't have enough frets. I love the bigness of it, the art… the after-the-battle bit in *The Gates Of Delirium* is one of the finest pieces of music I've heard."

"The first time that I put *Relayer* on, I thought it was at the wrong speed!"

Jason: "At this time I'm listening to *Changes* by **John Williams**, put together by **Stanley Myers** and his orchestra. Myers is a ludicrously underrated musician most famous for writing the tune on this album, *Cavatina*. He's a great orchestrator and this is a brilliant album that says, 'I've got John Williams who can play the guitar really well, what can we do with him?' So there's a thing based on a Bach prelude strung out to four minutes of weirdness. After this, I move into Brian Eno and minimalism."

Joel: "I shared a flat in college with a guy whose record collection started with **Roxy Music** and then got into all the bands that sprang from that. Knowing Eno was ambient I was surprised to find guitary, poppy stuff such as *Before And After Science*. It's not only got *King's Lead Hat*, the audition for him to produce Talking Heads, it's also got all the German musicians, like Cluster and Roedelius. It's got a lovely British pop sensibility."

Jason: "This is the most important record I ever bought: **John Adams**' *Harmonium*. I used to record things from Radio 3 and if there was a name I didn't recognise I thought, 'I'll give that a whirl.' Through this I discovered Ligeti, Judith Weir, Xenakis and John Adams. I couldn't stop listening to this. It starts with a sound of just a single D emerging out of a vast space. Then it gets gigantic."

Joel: "You got me into Adams 'cos you'd play that a lot in the car when we were kids."

Jason: "I found out *Harmonium* was minimalism so I went in search of more, and then bought *Shaker Loops* featuring Steve Reich. I played it recently with [conductor] Charles Hazlewood at Colston Hall in Bristol and he arranged us over the floor of the venue so the audience could walk around and get a different sonic experience. I've followed minimalism my whole adult life and I started going to as many Adams premieres as I can. Last year, as one of the celebrations for his 70th birthday, I went to a premiere in Berlin of *The Gospel According To The Other Mary*. On the flight back, I noticed John Adams. He was in business, I wasn't. I bowled over and said, 'Great gig last night!' and he said, 'Thanks, man.' I went back to my seat and then thought I should have said to him, 'You're the reason I'm on this plane.' Him and Ravel are the two most important things in my head."

Joel: "We both were in bands; in the 90s mine found itself sliding towards folk, based on a gut feeling that I'd been raised by *Bagpuss* and *The Wicker Man* soundtrack. We were doing a TV show with [presenter and *Prog* supporter] Matthew Wright and he said, 'Have you heard the **Strawbs**? You remind me of them.' I sought out *From The Witchwood*, which I found very powerful.

"Thinking about bands that fed into Britpop, has anyone mentioned **Camel**? There are lines from Britpop to prog, such as Damon Albarn's dad managing Soft Machine. A friend played me *Breathless*, saying, 'You'll like this,' putting on *Down On The Farm*, which is Blur's career in one song. It's a whimsical take on country life interspersed with 'doo-doo' harmonies and big guitars."

Jason: "**Mike Oldfield** has *Tubular Bells* hanging around his shoulders to the extent that he's made about nine versions of it. But *Amarok* is a delightful, surprising, weird and accessible album. A friend told me, 'It's one track, it requires some commitment, but go with it.' It's great, it starts with a fidgety thing that can't make up its mind as a time signature, then the thing goes 'blam!' and comes to life. His stuff is great to work to."

Joel: "I work to **Mogwai** and **Midlake**, to their album *Antiphon*. I used to like Midlake for the lyrics, but this is great, very anti-verbal and minimal — a psychedelic prog record to get lost in. I need music to blot out…"

Jason: "Me."

Joel: "We both love **Talk Talk**'s *Spirit Of Eden*. I can't think of another album like it apart from **Robert Wyatt**'s *Rock Bottom*. An album of isolation, people in a strange mental space. The only band that have taken that forward is **Radiohead**. All these bands can write a pop song but what happens when you go beyond that? That's what prog is."

Jason: "For a band everyone regards as very serious and worthy, the opening track on each Radiohead album is a burst of joy."

Ladybird's Story Of Brexit is out now, also Cunk On Everything: The Encyclopedia Philomena is available now via www.tworoadsbooks.com.

Joel Morris (left) and Jason Hazeley.

Q&A

COLIN MOULDING

Keeping the home fires burning in Swindon, it's a new EP and a return to the live fray for the XTC bassist, alongside former bandmate Terry Chambers. But things might have been different if he'd taken up an offer from a certain Mr Gilmour…

Words: Jo Kendall **Portrait:** Lou Dommett Young

Out of the spotlight since XTC broke up in 2006, Colin Moulding found himself back in (music) business at the end of 2017 alongside former bandmate and drummer Terry Chambers in a new configuration called TC&I. So far, they've released a four-track EP, *Great Aspirations*, and have just done a handful of live shows in their hometown of Swindon. With *Great Aspirations* out now on limited 10-inch vinyl — and a mighty 40 years since XTC released their debut album *White Music* — it was time for a catch-up with the celebrated bassist.

What's TC&I all about? Is it a nod to the film *Withnail & I*?
[Laughs] I suppose the name *is* with *Withnail* in mind. Lovely film, isn't it? Terry had been married and living in Australia, but divorced and came home. I had some songs I'd been working on when I heard he was back, so we went out, had a few drinks and I sort of popped the question. It was quite well-received.

It's all very home-grown, isn't it?
Yes, it was recorded in my music room and very hands on. When one was singing the other was working the controls, just two of us flying this plane. I'd recorded my voice before but I hadn't much experience of recording other things. That was a learning process as one went along.

And you've released it yourself, with the help of PledgeMusic and Burning Shed?
I could have got assistance — I'm used to being signed to a label — but I didn't. It's a shock to the system, suddenly you've got to go out and get your own milk [laughs]. The DIY world is really nice, though. We had the CD out then somebody said, "You need to do vinyl, Colin." Really? Oh, alright. So we are.

"David Gilmour called asking me to come to the studio…"

There are four songs on the EP. *Comrades Of Pop* seems pointed in the direction of XTC?
It's not, it's my outstretched hand is offering new bands a bit of advice. We've been singed. A lot of people get burned at the stake. Our manager was a very naughty man but we lived to tell the tale. Then when we left Virgin in '87 and went into the independent label world, that was murky and a mistake. I thought, "Come back Virgin, all is forgiven!"

What about the track *Kenny*?
It's about building on playing fields and asking where will the children play? We knew a Kenny at school who went on to play professional football. He played on the fields and waste grounds of old Swindon and nurtured his imagination there. I was the son of a caretaker at the biggest school in Swindon with the biggest playing field and it's now been built on. The bungalow where we lived has gone too. The summers of '69-'71 were idyllic, I'd go out of my gate and there were 10 acres of freshly mown field ahead. Not anymore.

***Scatter Me* sounds light and fun, but is quite heavy?**
I wanted to prove that you can write about death and it would still be a positive thing. There's been lots of poetry about death and when I read it, there was a connection for me. I think it sounds uplifting. *Scatter Me* also comes from a lovely walk I do outside Swindon. The Marlborough Downs, the Cotswolds, Uffington White Horse. It's good exercise, but you also see these little shrines — a photograph, a posy — for people who also walked there.

What were you doing before TC&I?
XTC fizzled out in 2006 when me and Andy [Partridge] had differing visions of how we'd like to see the band. It was a shock when it all ended. Expected, but a shock. It was like getting a divorce, you can't take on a new love because you're still betrothed to the old one in a way. I went into tailspin for a couple of years, wondering what the fuck I was going to do. So I didn't do anything, I just sat and watched TV. I missed the human connection. It's pretty soul-destroying working on your own.

You did contribute to Billy Sherwood's *Return To The Dark Side Of The Moon* project, though?
Oh yes, and that was good. Also working with Allyson Seconds and Anton Barbeau. I'm proud of those songs. I've never been one for being a hired hand, though. I didn't want to be the outsider.

You were asked to join Pink Floyd, too?
They were looking for a bass player and singer as they were going out on tour. I had a phone call from Dave Gilmour and he said, "Would you be interested in coming down?" I said, "I haven't toured for 25 years," and there was a big silence at the other end of the line. They wanted to go out for a year and that's just not me. So I said, "It's very kind but I wouldn't be interested," and we left it.

Are you surprised that XTC are so loved by prog fans?
We dipped our toe in the warm waters of prog a few times. We're not huffy about different areas of music, it's all music, good or bad. It's my background; I was a big Tull fan, and Atomic Rooster.

And for a bass hero, Chris Squire?
I was a Chris Squire fan, absolutely. We were working on *Oranges And Lemons* in LA and I was putting on a bass part and [laughs] you don't want Chris Squire walking through the door at that point, do you? He stood in the doorway, this imposing figure, nodding his head. It was slightly off-putting, but I bore it as best I could.

You've been partial to a pseudonym: The Colonel, The Red Curtain (in The Dukes Of Stratosphear)… what's the appeal?
Most people do that as a slight disclaimer so if the whole thing explodes they can walk away from it with some dignity. It takes the pressure off, you can be anyone. One time, Andy and I thought about doing a bubblegum pop sampler. We thought, "Why don't we invent 10 different groups for this?" Ludicrous, really. You go to the record company with the idea and their face just drops. The success of The Dukes was a shot across their boughs, though.

Great Aspirations is out now. See www.pledgemusic.com/projects/tc-and-i for more information.

Colin Moulding (left) with Terry Chambers.

An Exercise In Self-Indulgence...

This year marks the 40th anniversary of **Rush**'s *Hemispheres*, well-known as one of their most challenging records to make, but its stunning 36 minutes remain a clear indication of the band's incredible chemistry. **Geddy Lee** remembers its creation, and ponders its legacy...

Words: Dom Lawson **Portraits:** Fin Costello/Getty Images

"When you've been a band for as long as we've been around, almost every day at this time of year, it's an anniversary of *something*..."

Poor old Geddy Lee. Just as the legendary bassist thought he was at least temporarily relieved of the task of talking about Rush, another gargantuan anniversary loomed over the horizon. Forty years have passed since the release of *Hemispheres*: not just one of Rush's most widely beloved records, but arguably the one that most thrillingly encapsulates the progressive abandon of the Canadians' first decade together. Recently reissued in ultra-lavish, multi-format form, *Hemispheres* certainly deserves a louder commemorative cheer than most, even though Lee remains sceptical about the need to mark every possible milestone.

"We always tried to release our records before Christmas or just after Christmas, if we could, so this time of year is flooded with memories of release dates for me," he notes. "It's a bit crazy at times. I saw somebody posted a celebration of the 33rd anniversary of *Mystic Rhythms* [from 1985's *Power Windows*] today, on some internet site. Well, thank you very much! [Laughs] This guy was doing a rendition of *Mystic Rhythms,* which was actually quite beautiful and it was nice to hear it played on just acoustic guitar and voice. He did a great job, but do you celebrate the 33rd anniversary of *anything*? It's a bit mental."

When it comes to *Hemispheres*, Lee is more than happy to regale *Prog* with the inside story. One of the most vociferously debated and lauded albums in Rush's vast catalogue, these 36 minutes of explosive, pioneering prog are notorious for having pushed the three musicians to the limit of their abilities. In fact, *Hemispheres* is often cited as the album that nearly broke Rush for good. In truth, as Lee explains, as they arrived in the spring of 1978 after finishing a gruelling world tour in support of the hugely successful *A Farewell To Kings*, Rush were too full of ideas to contemplate taking a rest.

ILLUSTRATION COMPOSITE: MAGICTORCH, SHUTTTERSTOCK AND GETTY IMAGES

"I remember writing *La Villa Strangiato* was great fun because the whole inspiration was these crazy dreams that Alex used to foist upon us every morning at breakfast. He'd start, 'You'll never guess what I dreamed last night...' and the groaning would begin."

"I think we were tired after the touring but at the same time we were also feeling pretty good," he says. "Our range was expanding and we were feeling pretty ambitious at that time, which is evidenced in the crazy record that we made in Wales! We'd had a good experience working at Rockfield Studios before and that left a good taste about the whole idea of recording in Britain again. When we arrived in Wales we were psyched, we were excited, but at the same time we were not super well prepared. Although we had a lot of ideas, we hadn't really hammered them out, so we found ourselves in a new situation, in a house not far from Rockfield. We'd planned to be there for a short time and it turned into a much longer time, as *everything* to do with that album did. I'd say we were excited and a little bit nervous about the lack of preparation, but we were ready to dig in."

Hemispheres' reputation as a difficult album to make is arguably well-founded. With nothing concrete to lay down on tape, Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer Neil Peart were under considerable pressure to conjure an album's worth of material within a few short weeks. It is perhaps indicative of exactly how potent the chemistry was between the trio at this time, that being woefully underprepared seems to have pushed them to unexpected new heights. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the songwriting sessions were spent working on *Hemispheres*' grandiloquent opener, *Cygnus X-1 Book II: Hemispheres*, the sequel to *A Farewell To Kings*' grand, conceptual closer, *Cygnus X-1 Book I: The Voyage*.

"Once the lyrics started coming together and we saw that Neil had this strong conceptual piece in his head, that sort of helped us to form a plan of action and so I think it was quite an exciting way to work," states Lee. "In the past, we'd usually save one song on any album to write while we were in the studio, just off-the-cuff. Usually those songs would point us in a different direction for the next record, songs like *The Twilight Zone* [from *2112*, 1976], *Vital Signs* [from *Moving Pictures*, 1981] and *New World Man* [from *Signals*, 1982], for example. But *this* was a lot more than just 'Let's write a short, five-minute tune.'

"We'd get together in this room in the house where our gear was set up and we'd just wrestle with the lyrics and put together melodies," he continues. "We'd do all of that sitting around with each other, not necessarily plugged in, with Alex on an acoustic guitar, perhaps, and me on my bass, or sometimes we'd both write on acoustics. Then, with Neil, we'd hammer out a loose structure and then we'd take it to the next step, get behind the machinery and start playing it out until we were able to form the song. It was very much a three-way street in terms of coming up with the final version of the song."

Rush in May 1979. Recording *Hemispheres* the previous year had pushed them to their limit.

"*The Trees* song was one of the most fun that we were working on at that time, for sure. We were surrounded by all that nature at Rockfield and it just made sense."

One familiar apocryphal tale about the making of *Hemispheres* posits that Neil Peart was struggling with the job of writing lyrics and felt under immense pressure to deliver something special. Not so, according to Lee, who notes that continuing the *Cygnus* saga was fundamental to defining the new music's direction.

"I think [writing a sequel] made it *easier* for him, to be honest. I think he'd been thinking about this for a while and I think he knew where he wanted to go. It was just a matter of fleshing it

Screen Time: the guys chilling backstage at the Gaumont, Southampton on May 13, 1979.

Alex Lifeson on the first UK date of Hemispheres tour.

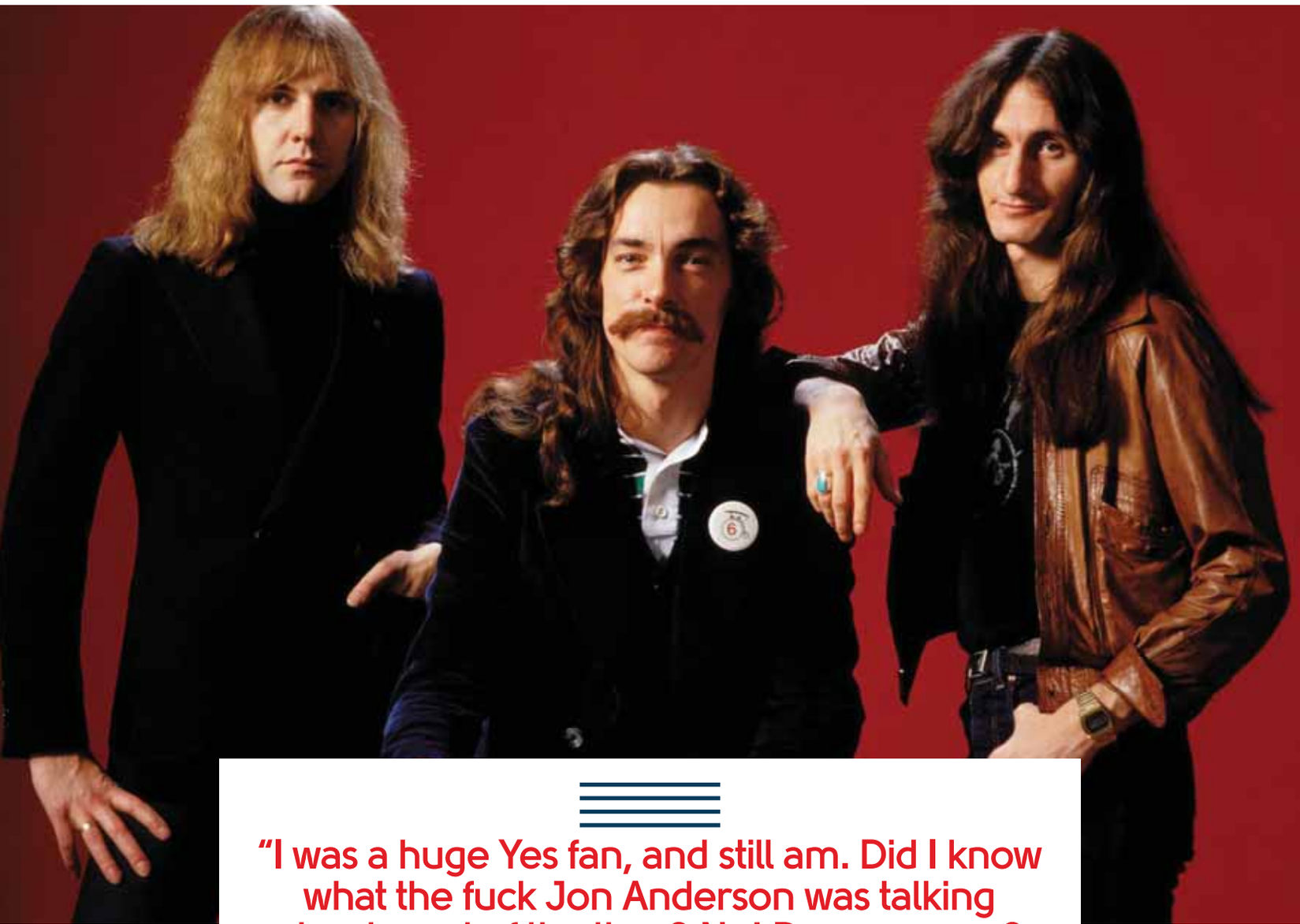
out. He was probably more prepared lyrically than we were musically. Alex and I were really playing catch-up."

Hemispheres is best known for its two magnicient bookends: the sprawling, joyously intricate title track and the instrumental, showboating blitzkrieg of *La Villa Strangiato*. But at a time when Rush were significant figures in the rock world and increasingly in demand on US rock radio, *Hemispheres* also managed to conjure two of the band's most succinct and enduring songs. The sub-four-minute splendour of *Circumstances*, in particular, hinted strongly at another possible direction for these young masters to pursue, while giving them a much-needed break from the arduous longform songwriting process.

"Yeah, that song was a bit of a holiday for us at that time, like, 'Let's do something short…!'" Lee laughs. "The truth is, we don't write more than we can use. If, along the way, a song doesn't cut it, we just kick it out. We famously have no hidden tracks because every song took maximum effort and we didn't see the point in putting in maximum effort for a song we had doubts about. So we decided that we needed one more song for *Hemispheres*, Neil had these *Circumstances* lyrics, and it became a great opportunity to do something different. Working on a side-long piece is so draining on many levels, you feel like you're a slave to this concept, so anything that's *not* like that feels way more fun!"

Strangely, the song that became one of Rush's biggest ever hits, both on the radio and within their enormous fan base, was *Hemispheres*' skewed, side-two curio *The Trees*. A deceptively spiky tale, this disquieting fantasy about oaks and maples competing for the sunlight is an unlikely anthem, particularly given its rather unpleasant denouement. (Spoiler alert: the oaks get chopped down to size.)

"That song was one of the most fun that we were working on at that time, for sure," Lee says. "We were surrounded by all that nature at Rockfield and it just made sense. I remember mixing it at Trident Studios, and the engineer was a lovely guy. He was new to our music and I remember him, after one run-through of the mix, saying, 'This is a nasty little tune, isn't it?' I said, 'Well, maybe a *little*…' But yeah, it was great fun to do that song. I loved the textures and the changes. It just turned into one of our classic songs, I think. Surprisingly, I still hear it a lot travelling around America. I remember reading, when it first came out, that it was a big radio song on some big FM station in Texas, and I thought, 'Wow, that's weird…' It *is*



> "I was a huge Yes fan, and still am. Did I know what the fuck Jon Anderson was talking about most of the time? No! Does anyone? Does Jon?"

kind of odd, but it's sort of become one of our iconic songs."

There remains something wonderfully subversive about the thought of hearing *The Trees* nestling alongside *More Than A Feeling* and *The Joker* on US rock radio rotation, but Lee attributes the song's enduring success to Neil Peart's unerring ability to leave room for manoeuvre in Rush's lyrical world.

"Well, one thing that was always important to me, as a songwriter and regardless of what Neil was talking about, was I always felt the audience needed to have a choice," Lee avows. "You need to have the option of what *you* get out of the song, whether it's just a musical thing or if it's the sound of the lyrics or whatever, that's fine. You don't have to understand it the way *I* understand it. And I don't always understand it the way *Neil* understood it. I'm the first interpreter in that chain and the audience are the next set of interpreters. That's the beauty of art, it's what makes it so alive. It should be communal and international in a way. It should be open to interpretation."

Above: Rush looking dapper in 1978.

Is that another one of the benefits of playing progressive rock? It's a genre that deals in so many ideas and concepts that the unexpected is almost expected...

"That's true. You can't really write a rootsy country song about an egg-sucking dog [he's referring to Johnny Cash's *Dirty Old Egg Sucking Dog*] and keep any kind of mystery about what it's about! I hate having things so explained to me sometimes. I was a huge Yes fan, and still am. Did I know what the fuck Jon Anderson was talking about most of the time? No! Does *anyone*? Does *Jon*? [Laughs] He had an idea and only really he knows what he was trying to get across. I have my own takeaway from those songs and I think it's important to have that in music."

Take a quick straw poll of any random gaggle of Rush fans and it seems safe to say that *La Villa Strangiato* would come out on top of any list of favourite songs from *Hemispheres* (although, it has to be said, there are only four songs on it in the first place). Perhaps the ultimate showcase for the mind-bending musical chemistry between Lee, Lifeson and Peart, it has weathered 40 years impeccably and still sounds like what it truly is: the sound of three young, preternaturally gifted musicians showing off and being insanely, joyfully inventive in the process. Thinking back to Rockfield, Lee notes that the sense of utmost urgency we hear on *Hemispheres*' closing track is the result of a lot of blood, sweat, tears and insanity.

"I don't really remember how the writing came together but I do

remember rehearsing the *hell* out of it beforehand. We really wanted to record it all in one go. It's about 10 minutes long and we wanted to do it in one shot. I remember writing it was great fun because the whole inspiration was, of course, these crazy dreams that Alex used to foist upon us every morning at breakfast. He'd start, 'You'll never guess what I dreamed last night…' and the groaning would begin! But it was a really fun, visual and musical exercise, constructing a soundtrack to an insane person's dreams! [Laughs]"

More than any other Rush song, *La Villa Strangiato* captures the wild energy that drove the band in their early days. You can almost hear them grinning as they switch moods and tempos on the head of a pin.

"Doing something like that gave us licence to change as often as we wanted, to make the music as complicated as we wanted, to stylistically shift gears every 30 seconds. All of that is *free* and open to you. That's the beauty of doing that kind of instrumental. You can make it up as you go along, you can decide what the script should be and it doesn't have to bear any relation to anybody's idea of what an instrumental song should be. So it was super fun to do and it's *still* super fun to play live. It's one of my favourite songs to play."

Legend has it that they recorded more than 40 takes of *La Villa Strangiato* before nailing the final version. Is that close to the truth?

"I don't remember how many takes it took but I do know that we never got it in one go!" Lee chuckles. "We'd set out to get it in one 10-minute go, but again, our ideas were more solid than our ability to play them! So we settled for doing it in four pieces. We divided it into four, focused on those and then used the good old magic of editing tape to stick them together into one cohesive piece. Those were the days before click tracks and that digital, metronomic attitude towards putting music together. So it was very much down to how you felt in the moment. Sometimes you'd get excited and you'd speed up, and sometimes that's the way it should be. That's why it feels so *live*."

Originally planned as a four-week excursion to Rockfield, the *Hemispheres* sessions steadily turned into a much lengthier mission for all concerned. Due to both the complex nature of the music and the efforts required to perform it properly *and* to various technical problems that slowed the recording process, Rush and co-producer Terry Brown found themselves running out of time, working around the clock to somehow piece this preposterous magnum opus together.

"At this time we'd developed this crazy foot pedal system, kind of a version of MIDI before that existed, and it arrived in time for the writing sessions in Wales but it didn't work," Lee recalls. "We were so upset about that and we spent way too many hours trying to make it work. We got some semblance of it working, certainly enough to be able to record. We really had a lot of fun working there, but the hours were getting later and later. We were sleeping until four in the afternoon and having breakfast at supper time, and then before you know it we were up until six in the morning again, going to sleep as the birds were tweeting and the sheep were baa-ing,

Three Kings: *Hemispheres* was three incredibly gifted young musicians showing off and being wildly inventive.

Choose Your Weapon: Alex Lifeson during rehearsals at Shepperton Studios, Surrey, in April 1979.

Above: Neil Peart behind his beloved kit during soundcheck at the Gaumont in 1979.

you know? It was a crazy schedule and we ran out of time there. They had other people coming in, so we had to high-tail it, so we didn't use the time we had set aside for mixing at Advision [Studio]. We used that to record vocals."

Famously, Neil Peart introduced a gong into his percussive arsenal on *Hemispheres*. Meanwhile, Lee was experimenting with new effects pedals. Added to the intricacy of the songs themselves, is it any wonder that Rush struggled to get everything done in time?

"I think basically what we wanted was to record everything live on the floor. We wanted to record the songs in long pieces. *Cygnus Book II* was an adventurous piece of music to play and it was much more difficult than we expected, so in a way our skill set wasn't as polished as our ideas were. What's the expression, 'Our reach exceeded our grasp?' So it was difficult. We had to raise our game and that's really what that album was all about, raising our game."

Another well-worn snippet of Rush mythology concludes that the band struggled during the *Hemispheres* sessions because they were deeply unhappy about the state of their living conditions at Rockfield. Again, Lee dismisses the idea, noting that they had been there before — to record *A Farewell To Kings* — and were more than aware of what to expect.

"Oh, it was fine. I mean, you need *something* to complain about, right? Otherwise you start picking on each other. But I think we were okay there. We were happy there. I mean, we were there for far too long and after doing two projects in a row, we didn't really want to go back there again! I think we set a record for the number of grey-skied days we spent in Wales, but at that time of year, it's fairly typical for Great Britain, right? At *any* time of year, in fact… But we really liked the people at Rockfield, they took great care of us. We have very fond memories of Kingsley [Ward], who ran the place, and Otto [Garms], their in-house tech who was desperately trying to help me to fix my technical issues."

With the four new songs committed to tape, Rush abandoned their Rockfield hideaway and headed for Advision Studios in London to add Lee's final vocals. By this point, the band were perilously over-schedule and while they still felt hugely positive about the music they were making, the atmosphere in the studio was undeniably tense: not the ideal environment for hitting some of the highest notes that the frontman has ever attempted.

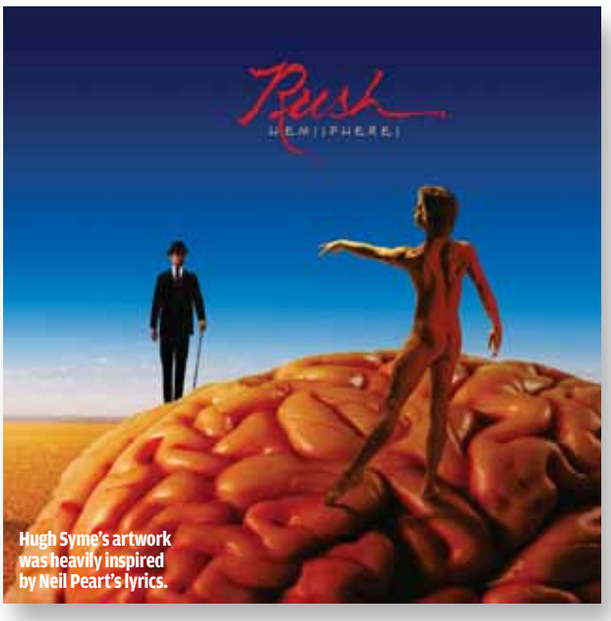
"It was getting later and later and people were getting a bit gnarly about the record and when it would be finished," says Lee. "I was certainly a bit gnarly when I was doing the vocals. The difficult thing was that as we'd sketched these songs out, sitting around in a casual manner and humming the melodies — I hadn't really sung them out against recorded, heavy tracks. When I came to record the vocals, of course, it was all in a very difficult key and it really pushed my range. That made me a very unhappy puppy! Unfortunately, I gave our producer Terry Brown a very rough time while I was recording, because I was so frustrated. I was in that vocal booth at Advision trying to hit those notes over and over again, trying to make them as perfect as I could, and it was tough. It was really up there!"

Forty years on, those absurdly high notes have simply become a recognised part of Geddy Lee's vocal repertoire. Looking back, however, he cites those sessions as an extremely educational moment in the band's evolution as songwriters and album-makers.

"Oh, it was a *major* lesson learned. It was a major faux pas," he admits. "I think part of it was that I was angry at Terry, in a way, because I thought, 'This is what producers are supposed to do, isn't it?' You know? Shouldn't he have come in and said, 'Do you think that's in the right key?' but that was something that almost never happened with Terry. Whatever we wrote, he made sure we recorded. He would, of course, question arrangements and make suggestions on structure, but I don't think he ever suggested I try something in another key. It wasn't until I started working with Peter Collins [on *Power Windows*, 1985] that it became a matter of course and you did that with every song. He'd say, 'Let's try this song in different keys!', 'Let's see where your voice goes!' or 'Let's see what works best!' Those were things I was still learning when we made *Hemispheres*, so yes, lesson learned on that one!"

Can you still hit those notes, 40 years later?

"For short periods of time? Absolutely. When we went out on the R40 tour, we realised we were going to play some oldies, like *Lakeside Park*, which is another song that's way up in the stratosphere. I kept wanting to transpose the song down and Alex kept saying, 'No, you can do it!' We tried different transpositions and he was like, 'They don't sound good, Ged, come on…' So when we got into doing it at rehearsals, yeah, I could hit those notes and I managed to do it for the whole tour, so I can do it if I rehearse



Hugh Syme's artwork was heavily inspired by Neil Peart's lyrics.

properly and take care of my voice. But I couldn't do it night after night."

Hemispheres was released on October 29, 1978, resplendent in its none-more-prog artwork, courtesy of regular Rush collaborator Hugh Syme. Artfully capturing the album's lyrical preoccupation with duelling sides of mind and spirit, the cover's giant floating brains added an extra layer of intrigue and eccentricity to what was already the band's most ambitious and thought-provoking record to date.

"Yes, the artwork definitely helped," Lee grins. "Hugh was very much wanting to express the ideas that came out of Neil's lyrics. He was really into that whole thing, what the songs were trying to say and how that should be expressed somehow in the artwork. Neil and Hugh went to town, they'd run it by Alex and I and we'd give them our opinion. I think both of the chaps on the cover are Hugh's pals. One was a ballet dancer and the other guy, I think, was a bank robber! I'm not sure if I've remember that correctly. But it's a weird cover. It freaked people out. The brains were not received well by all, but it's definitely very proggy."

A surprising critical success, *Hemispheres* did not take off in quite the way that Rush's record label bosses may have wanted, but its initial, solid performance in charts worldwide – including reaching number 14 in the UK – confirmed that the band were still heading onwards and upwards. For Lee, Lifeson and Peart, it was a case of sitting back and waiting for the fans' responses to start trickling down to them. As far as they were concerned, they had made a great, if challenging, new record, but there was no guarantee that everyone else would agree...

"No, I had absolutely no idea how people would take it," says Lee. "I just thought people would think it was way too weird! We had no idea. I knew it would be a tough sell to radio, because these pieces were so long. But you can't worry about that stuff when you're doing it. I saw this interview with Robert Redford the other day and he quoted TS Eliot, and Eliot said that it's all about the *trying*, and what happens after that is none of our

"It's a weird cover. It freaked people out. The brains were not received well by all, but it's definitely very proggy."

Above: Geddy Lee at a studio in Shepperton, December 2, 1978. He's playing a small Moog synthesiser with his foot... because he can.

business. I'd say that sums up how we felt after making *Hemispheres*."

Were you surprised by how well received it eventually was?

"Yes, yes I was. It wasn't initially *super* successful, it was a slow burn. But what surprises me to this day is that I have so many fans come up to me and say that they think it's the ultimate Rush album. *That* surprises me! Les Claypool is among them, that's *his* Rush album. So it has become iconic in a way, for our band, as a representation of our most complex period."

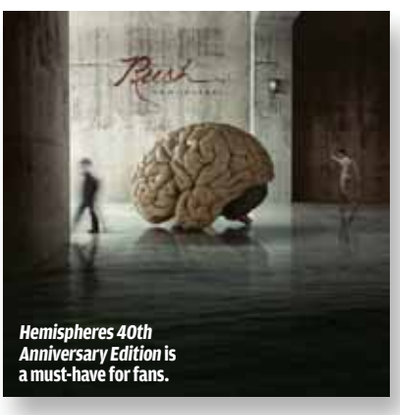
A mere 15 months after the release of *Hemispheres*, Rush would casually redefine their entire sound, ushering in a new decade with the timely sheen of *Permanent Waves*. But while history may remember *Hemispheres* as a moment of transition, wherein Rush began to fully embrace music's limitless potential, Geddy Lee remembers the album as an exhausting, if momentous, full-stop at the end of Rush's rise to prominence.

"It didn't feel like a transitional record. It felt like the end of an era for me," he concludes. "I felt that the side-long thing was getting predictable for me as a writer and I wanted to bust out of that. In a sense, it felt like saying goodbye to that period. I had ideas of where I wanted us to go. Songs like *The Trees* and *Circumstances* pointed in that direction. I wanted to tell stories but I didn't want to be weighed down by themes that had to keep repeating over a 25-minute period. I wanted to be able to accomplish many more musical ideas over 25 minutes, you know?"

Nonetheless, for many, *Hemispheres* remains the ultimate Rush album: 36 minutes of jaw-dropping, no-holds-barred prog rock, conjured from nowhere and delivered with ageless, life-affirming enthusiasm. And that's worth an exuberant anniversary in anyone's book.

"I don't know if I can ever possess the necessary objectivity to be able to see and hear what people see and hear in *Hemispheres*," Lee concludes. "But I like to think that it's the ambitiousness in the effort we put in. There's something truly prog about that record and I think that fans of that genre really appreciate that."

Hemispheres 40th Anniversary Edition is available now in three versions of Super Deluxe, 2CD Deluxe and 3LP Vinyl. See www.rush.com for more information.

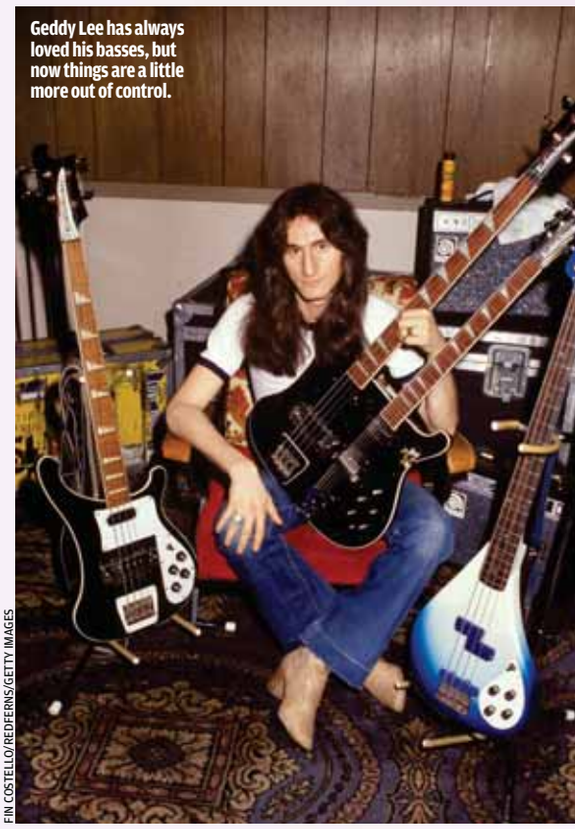


Hemispheres 40th Anniversary Edition is a must-have for fans.

Beauty & The Bass

In recent years, Rush's **Geddy Lee** has dedicated himself to collecting bass guitars and studying the history of the instrument. He's just released a breathtaking book, *Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass*, that delves into the world of bass in lavish detail, and includes interviews with fellow bass greats. He tells *Prog* more…

Words: Dom Lawson

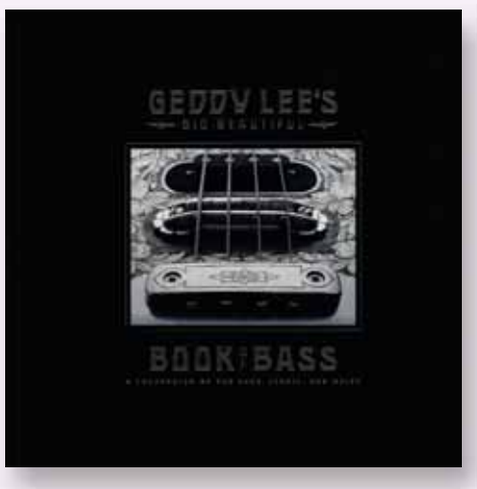


Geddy Lee has always loved his basses, but now things are a little more out of control.

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

"I have this bass, it's a '64 Dakota Red Fender Jazz bass that I bought from a fellow in Dublin. He owned it his whole life and played it in an Irish showband. When I got it, I opened the case and you could smell Guinness and cigarettes. I *love* that bass."

It may come as a huge surprise to many readers, but Geddy Lee has only recently turned into a massive bass guitar nerd. Despite being routinely cited as one of rock's all-time greatest bassists, the Rush frontman has largely regarded his instrument as a means to an end: a conduit for musical ideas, rather than the star of the show. All that has changed, however, and Lee has spent the last eight years immersing himself in the world of classic basses, amassing an extraordinary collection along the way. The results can be seen in all their full guitar-porn glory in the Canadian's new book, *Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass*: a lavish, hardback coffee table-flattener, full of gorgeous photos, interviews with an eclectic selection of legendary bass players and collectors, plus plenty of anecdotal colour from the man himself.



***Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass*: it's time to reinforce your coffee table, folks…**

"The first good bass I ever bought was Fender Precision," Lee begins, by way of explanation. "It was all I could afford. The salesman in the shop told me it was workhorse and I could rely on it, and he was right. I played on that in all my Rush pre-history, all through the high school gigs and bars, at a bazillion shows. Then when I got my first record deal, I was able to buy a Rickenbacker and that was another big change for me. But I was never a collector of basses. For me, for the longest time, basses were tools. In the process of making this book, I've learned that musicians *mostly* look at their instruments as tools first. Then there are guys like [The Who's] John Entwistle, and they're *collectors*."

Primarily known for playing his trusty Fender Jazz, Geddy Lee has long since passed into bass guitar folklore as one of the instrument's greatest ever exponents. But, as he insists, the *Big Beautiful Book Of Bass* is not a book about bassists: it's about these rare, iconic guitars themselves, the people who played them and the obsessives, like Lee, that spend countless hours hunting them down.

"Guys like Entwistle, they couldn't keep playing the same bass and they kept switching. Bill Wyman was the same, always restless. To begin with, I was looking for the sound and the tools that could give me my sound, and that was it. But in the last eight or so years of my life, I became interested in the romantic idea of basses that my heroes played. Why didn't I ever play a Gibson bass like Jack Bruce? Why didn't I ever play a Höfner

"I became interested in the romantic idea of basses that my heroes played. Why didn't I ever play a Gibson bass like Jack Bruce? Why didn't I ever play a Höfner violin bass like Paul McCartney?"

Geddy Lee and his trusty Fender Jazz.

PRESS/ ANDREW MACNAUGHTAN

violin bass like Paul McCartney? So I thought it would fun to put together a modest collection of iconic basses, and just play them for my own satisfaction, to see how my now developed, confident fingers would feel on those instruments… and that's when my troubles began!"

As all dedicated nerds will be aware, the most innocent of hobbies can easily spiral out of control. Lee's initial plan to collect a few bass guitars for his own personal use and enjoyment would not have lent itself to a weighty 400-page tome, so it seems safe to say that a lot of cash has changed hands over the last eight years…

"Oh yeah, what was supposed to be 12 instruments has grown into over 250 instruments," he notes, audibly wincing. "I guess that's just how I roll! But along the way, I realised that I needed to justify this in some way, so why don't I do a book about the electric bass? If you go into book stores and look at books about the bass, they always seem a little incomplete and there's not enough artful glory in showing these instruments. They're not *romantic* enough for me. So being the completist kind of dude that I am, I decided to do a book where I brought these things together and showed how beautiful they are to me and try to get other people to see how beautiful they are, too."

From its not inconsiderable size and weight ("Don't drop it on your foot!" Lee advises) to its classy design, Lee's book is every inch the painstakingly conceived and executed labour of love. The original plan was to focus on the sheer visual charm of the instruments, but as the project escalated, Lee caught the author's bug and began to expand the book to include the nerd-friendly detail and debate that lies at the heart of his new obsession.

"Originally I didn't want *any* text in the book, so it would be like an arty thing, the beauty of the bass guitar elevated to its full glory," says Lee. "But then I felt I'd be selling people short if I didn't explain certain things. Obviously the guitar nerds and the people I chitchat with about basses, they know most of this stuff already, but by virtue of who I am, other people are going to come to this book and be interested, perhaps. So I felt I owed it to them to tell certain stories and to do it in an unobtrusive way. The pictures speak for themselves. You don't need to read the text, but it's there."

Lee's modesty is endearing but he's being daft. It's hard to imagine there will be many Rush fans, let alone bass guitar nerds, that won't want to pore over the Canadian's observations or read his interviews with four-string luminaries ranging from John Paul Jones and Les Claypool to Bill Wyman and Bob Daisley. In essence, it's a history of rock'n'roll from the bottom end up. The book also provides great insight into the musicians that influenced Lee in his formative years. Today he talks excitedly about his heroes, citing Cream's Jack Bruce, Yes' Chris Squire, John Entwistle and Jefferson Airplane's

Jack Casady as his biggest inspirations. Still very much a fan, Lee brims with the irresistible enthusiasm of someone who has some *really cool shit* to share with you.

"Part of the beauty of doing the book and having this collection is that you have all the amazing stories that go along with these instruments and *I* think they're interesting. Other people may not! I think it's nice when you get an instrument that someone has played for 40 years and he has made a life with that instrument. *That's* a story. So to me, these basses represent the artfulness of the middle of the 20th century. They represent the people that made a living playing them and using them. And that to me is pretty cool."

It's also clear that Lee has really enjoyed taking on the role of interviewer, after decades of being the one batting away silly questions. Chewing the bass-related fat with certified megastars like U2's Adam Clayton is a tough job, but Geddy's happy to do it.

"I could have done a book that was nothing but interviews with other bass players. It was so enjoyable. It was the biggest surprise to me, how much fun I was having talking to people in their homes and studios and so on. I tried to put together a grouping that wasn't obvious. For example, one of the nicest interviews in the book is with Jeff Tweedy from Wilco, who many people don't realise is a bass player. They have a very good bass player in Wilco, John Stirratt, but he was away at the time. Jeff's first instrument is bass and he still has his first Precision and he's a *mad* collector of things. But I could've easily called all the people I know and respect and just talked about bass playing. Maybe that's my next project?"

Aside from musicians' war stories, the *Big Beautiful Book Of Bass* is also a heartfelt tribute to those next-level nerds, the bass guitar collectors. Having not dabbled with many different makes or models over his time in Rush, Lee has clearly taken to his new hobby with something approaching rabid alacrity. He has embraced both the historical value of unearthing the guitars' stories *and*, for maximum nerd points, the finer details of the instruments' specifications and design.

"One of the great stories in the book is about Paul McCartney's first bass, which is legendary," says Lee. "It was his first Höfner, which is a model called a Cavern. I felt one of the jobs I had to do was to explain *exactly* what a Cavern is, because there are many basses referred to as a Beatle bass or a Cavern bass, but they only made that exact model that Paul played for four months in 1961, with those exact features. There are others that came out afterwards that *sort of* look like it, but they're not a Cavern. A true Cavern has to have certain specifications. So that was one of the hardest basses for me to find."

Non-musicians should not panic, by the way. Despite its density of detail and chief target audience of bass freaks, Lee's book retains the wry, self-effacing tone that Rush fans have come to expect from him over the years. Where many books about musical

Above and right: it's a stunning-looking book, and not just for bass obsessives.

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

"Once I've finished promoting this book, I do hope to become a musician again! But I have no idea what form that will take. I have no plans and I don't know where I'm headed."

Geddy Lee, backstage with his guitar collection on the *All The World's A Stage* tour, 1976.

instruments are needlessly exclusive and bogged down with technical waffle, this hefty volume was written with a firm "Welcome one, welcome all" philosophy in mind.

"I just tried to make sure that the book was like a conversation," Lee notes. "That's what I hoped to achieve, with comical asides. Just have some fun with it, you know? Sometimes you have to take the piss out of the nerdiness yourself! It was great fun to do. It was *way* more work that I ever imagined it to be and it really does feel like quite an accomplishment.

"I wish I'd had more pages, to be honest," he continues. "I fought for 408. I had to cut it from the original 600 or so! But there are potted histories in there, there are collector's tales and what I call 'nerd bubbles', pointing out the most obscure details. Sometimes we take the instruments apart so you can have a look under the hood. It's fun to do that. So *this* is what I've been doing in my spare time!"

Now that he has completed his paean to the bass, Lee is bracing himself for the onslaught of questions about his future musical plans. Nearly a year has passed since Rush announced their retirement, and little has been heard from any of the band. Lee is perhaps the Rush member most expected to re-enter the fray, so *Prog* asks if there is any prospect of new music on the horizon.

"The honest answer is no. Not really," Lee chuckles. "I go down to my studio, which I do, and I play these bass guitars because I have quite a few of them and they're fun to play. I like to keep my fingers in shape. When I play, ideas come out, so I record them and then I forget about them. When I go back to them, I'm sure half of them will be shit and I'll erase them. But I fully intend to go down one day and see what I've gathered down there. Once I've finished promoting this book, I do hope to become a musician again! But I have no idea what form that will take. I have no plans and I don't know where I'm headed."

Whatever he does end up doing, it's a safe bet that Geddy Lee will be armed with more bass guitars than he actually needs. And he'll be loving every single nerdy second of it.

"I took about 27 various guitars out on the last Rush tour and it was super fun," he concludes. "People expect me to be playing my [Fender] Jazz and I remember the looks on people's faces when I first went onstage with a Gibson Thunderbird… it was like, 'What the hell is he doing with that? Why would he *do* that?' It was funny. And if I'm honest, I can't imagine ever doing a tour again without taking a *bunch* of basses with me."

Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass is out now via Harper Design. Turn to page 26 for your chance to win a signed copy. See www.rush.com and www.harpercollins.co.uk for more information.

In The Court Of The Swedish King

It seemed that supergroup The Sea Within would be this year's primary focus for guitarist Roine Stolt, but suddenly he's reappeared in his **Flower King** guise…

Words: Nick Shilton
Images: Will Ireland

Some albums are long in the making and well signposted, while others are not. Announced only in September and released in November, Roine Stolt's new Flower King album, *Manifesto Of An Alchemist*, falls clearly into the latter category.

Manifesto… follows hot on the heels of Stolt's new supergroup The Sea Within's eponymous debut album, which was only released in June, just before that band's live debut at the famed Night Of The Prog festival at Loreley in Germany.

It transpires that the genesis for a new Flower King album — we'll revert to the nuance of 'King' in the singular — was in fact the preparations for The Sea Within's NOTP show. Given NOTP's stipulation that The Sea Within's debut live appearance should constitute a European exclusive, drummer Marco Minnemann was faced with a long journey from his California home for a single show.

"I was thinking about how we could motivate Marco to come to play the Loreley show," Stolt explains. A convenient solution was to involve the drummer in a recording session for what has become *Manifesto Of An Alchemist*. "It was very spontaneous. I hadn't really figured out which songs to record," Stolt professes.

Indeed, Stolt explains that without the tour that they are currently on (alongside Spock's Beard to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the InsideOut label, preceded by a handful of dates this month in Mexico and South America earlier in November), he would probably only have started work on the album next year.

However, when InsideOut boss Thomas Waber suggested a joint Flower Kings/Spock's Beard tour, Stolt had to tell him that there wasn't currently a Flower Kings in existence. Waber pointed out that Stolt has written the vast majority of The Flower Kings' dozen albums, plus his solo 1994 album *The Flower King*, and that there was plenty of music to play.

And so Minnemann's visit to Europe meant that drums were recorded in Holland this summer, before Stolt returned home to Sweden to continue work on the album, which InsideOut proceeded to fast track for a pre-Christmas release.

"That forced me to record and mix the album within a month, which is something I haven't done in the last 25 years. I found it interesting. Now with everyone having a computer-based recording and mixing studio at home you can go on forever, spending months polishing your recording to perfection. There's a certain level of perfection that you want, but I was thinking I could do things in a different way this time."

With five years having elapsed since the last Flower Kings album, *Desolation Rose*, Stolt solicited various other musicians to join him for *Manifesto…*, albeit juggling the logistics of trying to assemble an album during the summer holiday season.

"It's not the ideal time to record an album, but in a strange way I enjoyed being forced to record very quickly and having people

"The Flower Kings may look like a tight unit, a band sharing everything, but we're not. We're friends and at certain times we can make good music together, but at other times it doesn't work out."

Roine Stolt: in a reflective mood.

Flower King Stolt is (ahem) blooming loving his independence.

"In the end, bandmembers turn their back on you anyway and you realise you're alone. I've come to terms with that."

coming in with spontaneous stuff and trying to make sense of everything. So this album was a very unusual experience for me. With other albums I've always had lots of time… sometimes too much time."

With Minnemann having recorded drums, Stolt considered reuniting the rest of the Flower Kings line-up from *Desolation Rose*. Vocalist Hasse Fröberg and bassist Jonas Reingold were swiftly on board. Stolt's brother Michael, an early member of The Flower Kings, also returns on bass. But long-time Flower Kings keyboardist Tomas Bodin is conspicuous by his absence and Stolt is touring with American keyboardist Zach Kamins of An Endless Sporadic (who appears on *Manifesto…*) and Italian drummer Mirkko DeMaio.

Stolt is very alive to fans' reaction to Bodin's absence from the album and tour. "Some people are really upset about it," he admits.

So why isn't Bodin involved? "Let's put it this way: things haven't worked out that well on the last few albums and tours," Stolt says. "Also, Tomas works as a music teacher now, which makes it difficult to tour. Sometimes you work really well together, sometimes not. You shouldn't force things. You should just work with the people that you feel you're creative with in a particular moment in time. And in this particular moment in time it really doesn't work for me to work with Tomas."

So are the issues personal, musical or both? "Well, both probably."

Stolt appreciates that Bodin remains close to many Flower Kings' fans' hearts. However, he is keen to clarify the keyboardist's contribution to the band. "The fans probably think that he did more than he actually did. Tomas has been on every Flower Kings album apart from [2001's] *The Rainmaker*, because it was a difficult time in his life and he'd gone through a divorce. He's credited on the album sleeve, but I played all the keyboards.

"That's not to downsize his involvement or importance for the band," Stolt continues. "Tomas has been a very important part of the band."

Indeed, Stolt cites Bodin's contributions to early (and standout) Flower Kings' albums *Retropolis*, *Stardust We Are* and, in particular, *Flower Power*: "We wrote *Garden Of Dreams* together and had a really good working relationship at the time.

"But then people start doing solo albums and can't devote time. It could be about money or involvement. It's natural. There's no way you can work for so many years without friction. People looking at this album will ask why Tomas doesn't play on it. Well, I wrote all the music and it doesn't mean I have to work with people that I've worked with before."

There's also a myth that Stolt is keen to explode about The Flower Kings: "People look at The Flower Kings as a band. But The Flower Kings has never been a band like The Beatles. The Flower Kings has been a band on a payroll. People don't understand that. If I lose a lot of money on a tour, the other guys walk out with money. I have nothing.

"From the outside people think we're a tight unit, but there could be months when we haven't talked to each other," he adds. "It's not like we're sitting in a rehearsal room, living and eating together all year long. People walk in and out of it. Sometimes Karmakanic is more important to Jonas; Tomas makes his solo albums. Everyone is waiting for me to call them and say, 'Let's make a Flower Kings album or do a tour.' But I'm the guy who's paying them. The Flower Kings may look from the outside like a tight unit, a band sharing everything, but in reality we're not. We're friends and at certain times we can make good music together, but at other times it doesn't work out."

Stolt is conscious that The Flower Kings have churned their way through drummers in particular over the years but is at pains to stress that the desire to part company with various players has frequently not been his. "Usually it's other people in the band, but I have to make the painful telephone call. That's my reality, but the fans never understand because they don't see it from the inside."

Conceptually, being in a true band scenario holds considerable appeal to Stolt. "The vision is beautiful. I always wanted to be in a band like The Beatles. But without Paul McCartney The Beatles would have collapsed around *Revolver* or *Sgt. Pepper*. Money keeps the band going. In a band where you're sharing everything, there's always one or two guys who want their money now to buy a new car or whatever. In a band that's a true collective it could be chaos."

According to Stolt, The Flower Kings have never been a true collective but rather he has operated as the de facto owner and CEO, with all the other musicians earning session and live fees.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the continuing involvement of Reingold and Fröberg, Stolt has chosen now to revert to the billing of The Flower King rather than Kings. "It's out of respect for the guys who were in the band when we stopped four years ago," he explains. "I didn't want to upset people or have lots of discussions about, 'This is not The Flower Kings.' Because I pay for everything I have the right to the name 'The Flower Kings' and I own all the recordings. Frankly, I wanted to tour just as Roine Stolt."

While fans may get excited about the brand under which Stolt is issuing *Manifesto…* and touring, the man himself professes ambivalence. "To me, it doesn't matter. All I want to do is continue making music and touring. I don't want any circumstances around people I've been working with to stop me, or want more money, or not want certain songs on the album."

He's also fatalistic about band members: "In the end they turn their back on you anyway and you realise you're alone. I've come to terms with that. But it's not bad — I have my family and music, which is what keeps me going. This romantic idea of a band worked for some years with The Flower Kings, but doesn't work every time.

"By taking control and not having to be The Flower Kings, I can do whatever I want and play with whoever I want. That situation now feels more exciting for me. I don't have to be held back by restrictions of playing with certain people. I have to follow my heart and do what feels right for me…"

Manifesto Of An Alchemist is out now via InsideOut.
See www.roinestolt.com for more information.

TURBULENT WATERS

Roine Stolt discusses the state of supergroup **The Sea Within**…

The Sea Within: still very much afloat.

While Stolt is enthroned again as The Flower King, The Sea Within remains very much a going concern. The supergroup got off to a less than auspicious start when they proceeded to lose their charismatic singer, Pain Of Salvation leader Daniel Gildenlöw, almost as soon as they had begun. "Maybe it was a bad idea in the first place that Daniel was in the band," Stolt sighs.

The Sea Within's launch stuttered further when bassist Jonas Reingold proved unavailable for their live debut at Loreley, with Marillion's Pete Trewavas subbing, while Flying Colors' vocalist Casey McPherson has apparently permanently replaced Gildenlöw. Strangely – and contrary to Stolt's own wishes – The Sea Within have yet to tour, although they are scheduled to play Cruise To The Edge next February.

Together with some mixed reviews for their eponymous debut album, Stolt acknowledges that the first year of The Sea Within has been far from plain sailing. "People get confused with someone else coming in singing, even though Casey sang a couple of songs on the album. And while Loreley wasn't super, it was OK. We did a good job given we didn't even have a soundcheck. We all agreed when we left Loreley what a great week we'd had rehearsing and playing. We could feel the chemistry."

Consequently, Stolt is optimistic that The Sea Within will rise to greater heights. "So far it has turned out a bit strange, but we are now planning a spring tour. I think we can solidify and build up momentum. It's weird to have this gap of six to eight months between releasing the album and touring. Also, once we get out and play live and make a second album, the dynamics within the band will be clear."

Stolt takes encouragement from the last rehearsal that The Sea Within undertook prior to performing at Loreley. "I've never been in a band that sounded so perfect," he enthuses. "Transatlantic for sure didn't sound that perfect! Neither did The Flower Kings. I know The Sea Within will sound fantastic once we get 10 shows under our belt. And after another album we can judge whether it really works or not. The last word hasn't been said about The Sea Within!" **NS**

In The Mouth Of Madness

AlithiA, L-R: Nguyen Phambam, Mark 'Vel' Vella, Jeffrey Ortiz Raul Castro, John Rousvanis, Danny Costantino, Tibor Gede.

Aussie psych proggers **AlithiA** decamped to Athens to create their second album, but it very nearly broke them. They discuss their journey "to the edge of chaos"...

Words: Dannii Leivers
Images: Andrew Basso

Melbourne's AlithiA first crash-landed on *Prog*'s radar with their 2014 album *To The Edge Of Time*, knocking us sideways with their ambitious, accurately self-described "astral space core". A transcendent, interstellar mix of post-rock, tribal rhythms and ethereal epics, it placed the band firmly alongside their peers Voyager, Jericco and The Red Paintings as another band owning the thriving Aussie psych prog scene.

To The Edge Of Time was recorded in Budapest. After all, music which flings the listener past several moons and planets should, where possible, be created in far-flung destinations, and since guitarist Tibor Gede had a Hungarian passport and connections there, it seemed a good choice. The band spent almost two months living like locals and absorbing their environment while working with esteemed noise rock producer and Thurston Moore collaborator Daniel Sandor. The result was an album that pushed boundaries and expanded on sonic conventions as insistently as the very edges of space.

"No one was in their day jobs, no one was in their regular lives," remembers Gede, talking to us via Skype where he's back in Budapest for a few months before his bandmates join him for their European tour with Norway's avant-garde prog metallers Shining. "We were living and breathing the album, nothing else existed."

That immersive experience had a huge impact on AlithiA. Keen to repeat it, they made plans to record their follow-up, *The Moon Has Fallen*, in Istanbul, until a spate of ISIS attacks forced them to rethink. Instead, they ended up decamping in Athens.

"We're big admirers of the 70s Greek prog scene," enthuses Gede, explaining why they chose the city as their next stomping ground.

> "We're big admirers of the 70s Greek prog scene: Aphrodite's Child are a big influence on us, and also a band called Mother Of Millions, who have a big carnival influence."

"Aphrodite's Child are a big influence on us. Also a band called Mother Of Millions, who have a big carnival influence, and Villagers Of Ioannina City, who mix 70s prog with stoner rock and Greek traditional instruments to make this weird ancient fusion. There are some great bands in Athens."

The band piled themselves and their crew into a 14-bed house and got Sandor back to produce, preparing to recapture that creative fire. Athens, however, turned out to be quite a different experience.

"Unlike Budapest, where we had a really positive energy around us, Athens was the opposite," Gede says. "We ended up booking the cheapest Airbnb we could find and it was in the most dangerous part of Athens. We saw stabbings on the street, drug deals and homeless refugees. We were next to this strip where all the sex slavery was

> "There was about 10-15 minutes where the band was probably broken up and not going to exist anymore. We were around so much dark energy that it got into our psyche…"

happening and it was fucking intense. You could see packs of men, like 10 or a dozen of them, going from door to door to these cheap brothels where there were women that had their passports taken off them and were forced to be prostitutes for like 20 euros.

"We were surrounded by this beautiful city but the area we were living in was the heart of extreme negative energy. There were a lot of crazy moments where we pushed ourselves into a negative headspace. One day our singer got super drunk and high and tried to leap off the balcony from our apartment. Me and the percussionist were grabbing him for a solid hour from the edge, our producer was grabbing his face and crying, saying, 'Don't jump!' And he was like, 'I'm good, I'm fine…' We tried to kill each other at the airport as well. Everyone was pretty pissed, we were at the airport and we started throwing punches at each other. The next day we all laughed about it, but there was about 10-15 minutes where the band was probably broken up and not going to exist anymore. We were around so much dark energy that it got into our psyche…"

Some music simply can't be rushed, especially for a band like AlithiA where one song can span four genres. The band had spent seven weeks in Budapest creating their debut, but due to tight scheduling, they had only 18 days for *The Moon Has Fallen*.

"This time we really felt the pressure of needing to finish the record to a clock, which is a really unnatural way to finish a record, especially in our kind of music," says Gede. "We're really egalitarian in everything we do. We write the songs together, there's not one principal songwriter. We decide on everything in a democratic way. It takes a long time to work things out. There's something special about having the space and energy to be spontaneous in the studio. Some really exciting ideas come out from that and that energy wasn't there all the time."

When AlithiA first announced *The Moon Has Fallen*, the band's enigmatic singer John Rousvanis told *Prog*: "We didn't choose to make this album, rather it was its own entity already in the etheric plane, which chose us as its conduit birthing parents. In turn, the writing process affected myself and the other members of the band in an extremely challenging way, leading to tumultuous ups and downs." When we repeat back this quote to Gede, he chuckles, shaking his head. "I saw that statement and had a bit of a laugh: it's comically poetic. He's in his own galaxy, and I say that with admiration and respect."

However, Rousvanis' mind-boggling words do highlight the challenges AlithiA have overcome, and we're not just talking about recording prog space rock in one of Athens' dodgiest neighbourhoods. After years of touring, the frontman was forced to either step back from the band's 2017 tour with Leprous and Agent Fresco, or face serious damage to his hearing. The band had two choices: pull out of the dates, or go ahead without their singer. They chose the latter, hiring Marjana Semkina from Russian duo iamthemorning to fill in temporarily on vocals.

"John was advised by every doctor not to go on tour but it was such a huge opportunity for the band," explains Gede. "He really suffered a lot. We'd long announced that tour in advance and cancelling a month away would have done us a lot of harm. We had to do it.

"John didn't know if he would be able to play music anymore due to tinnitus. He's said, 'Music is the only thing I have going for me in my life.' That frightening concept that if he doesn't have music, then his life doesn't mean anything at all is always there for him. That really came to the surface on that balcony."

John has now resumed vocal duties although he needs to take precautions to look after his hearing. "He can't check out the supports, he can only come in, play the set then he has to get out of the building," explains Gede.

When Gede talks about his life in AlithiA, it's clear he and his comrades would slog through hell and high water for their band. And it seems to have been worth it: *The Moon Has Fallen* is a triumph. Although it's every bit as out-there as the band's debut, this time around everything feels bigger, bolder and brighter. With kaleidoscopic colours and celestial crescendos melding with Latin rhythms from new full-time percussionist Jeffrey Ortiz Raul Castro, the album's eight tracks are a testament to perseverance.

"We've always had odds against us. It's never made logical sense for us to be in this band because it's cost us so much over the years," says Gede. "It's not like someone's financing us to do this. But we've made insane decisions like, 'Let's go do a nine-date tour of Russia and record albums in Greece or Hungary.' We can't help it. We've got to a point where we're playing good shows back at home and on good tours in Europe but for us to get there we've had to fight against odds and do tours where we played night after night in front of no people. Most bands break up from that because it's disheartening."

The music industry is a tough gig these days and Alithia are by no means alone in their struggle to find their footing while the goalposts change around them. Yet what's abundantly clear is their commitment to fight until their music is heard. Looking back on it, was recording in Athens a positive experience?

"Of course!" says Tibor emphatically. "We sent ourselves to the edge of chaos and learnt a lot about ourselves. So many crazy things have happened and we're still here. The one member you should never replace in your band is your singer, and we still did the tour, we still needed to move forward and now we're stronger than ever. We learned that you could throw a 10-ton truck at this band and we'll still be there. That's a good feeling to have."

The Moon Has Fallen is out now via Wild Thing. See www.facebook.com/alithiaband for more.

Dark Side Of The Tune: *The Moon Has Fallen* was created in chaotic circumstances.

JACCO GARDNER'S

Somnium

out now

A voyage into the deepest corners of your mind.
A 43 minute transformative journey into the unknown.

FULL TIME HOBBY

JACCO GARDNER
Hypnophobia
Yellow vinyl re-press
Out February19

TUNNG
Songs You Make at Night
The New Album
Out Now

www.fulltimehobby.co.uk

KEITH EMERSON
BEYOND THE STARS

LIMITED EDITION CLEAR VINYL

RACHEL FLOWERS · ETHAN EMERSON · MARC BONILLA
ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS
-MÜNCHNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER
TERJE MIKKELSEN

SIMAX classics

RACHEL FLOWERS

MARC BONILLA

ETHAN EMERSON

BLACK VINYL GATEFOLD

PLACE YOUR ORDER AT
WWW.KEITHEMERSON.NO

A Decade Of Post-Progressive Sounds

From Anathema to Steven Wilson, British record label **Kscope** have produced some seriously impressive releases within the modern prog world. With the label celebrating their 10th anniversary this year, *Prog* delves into their story.

Words: Dave Everley

2008 wasn't the worst 12 months in the history of prog, but neither was it shaping up to be a banner year. The giants of the scene were either inactive (Genesis, Floyd, ELP), in creative holding patterns (Tull, King Crimson) or in their customary state of late-career disarray (Yes).

The bright spots came from a generation of bands who were helping pull prog out of its decades-long slump. Opeth, Meshuggah and The Mars Volta all released significant records: *Watershed, ObZen* and *The Bedlam In Goliath* respectively.

But there was another, less heralded release that would prove to be a landmark for different reasons. Released in May 2008, *Tightly Unwound* was the seventh album from West Country art rockers The Pineapple Thief. The previous six had come out via Cyclops Records – a passionate but small bedroom operation – but this was the first release on a brand new label, one that would come to define

Anathema: if HMV ask, they're definitely *not* metal, okay?

"Any contribution I had to the direction was only in the sense that my various projects were – at least in the beginning – the foundation of the label's catalogue."

Steven Wilson

Steven Wilson: a big hitter for Kscope.

the sound, feel and look of modern progressive music: Kscope.

"Before that, the prog scene was probably at its lowest ebb," says The Pineapple Thief's frontman/mastermind Bruce Soord today. "The 90s and early 00s had been pretty bad in terms of being in a band and reaching people. But from the start, Kscope had a real passion for what they were doing. Suddenly, it felt really exciting again."

Ten years after that first release, Kscope have grown into one of the great labels of the modern prog era: a self-contained powerhouse that nurtures and elevates the kind of supposedly 'fringe' music that the mainstream industry lost interest in a long time ago. Today, they're home to acts as diverse as Anathema, Tangerine Dream, TesseracT, iamthemorning and ex-Mansun singer Paul Draper – a corps of artists who sound nothing like each other, but all of whom share a left-of-centre aesthetic.

"Kscope have made a place for themselves in the music industry," says Catherine Anne Davies, aka The Anchoress, who released her 2016 debut album, *Confessions Of A Romance Novelist*, via Kscope. "They've helped revitalise progressive music or art rock or whatever you want to call it."

The notion of the Great Progressive Rock Label is almost as old as progressive rock itself. Charisma, Harvest, Vertigo – they all came into existence shortly after prog's Big Bang, providing not just a home for this new wave of sonic explorers but also a shared identity. Nearly 50 years on, it's a role that Kscope fulfil.

"People would buy records purely because they came out on Charisma or Vertigo or [iconic punk-era label] Stiff," says Tony Harris, one of Kscope's co-founders. "That was in our minds when we set it up. We thought, 'As long as we're putting out music that's good, people will listen to it.'"

We're sitting in a pub near the label's offices in Marylebone, London. Harris is a music industry veteran whose time on the frontline stretches back to the 1970s. He's wry and reserved, with the air of someone whose tolerance for bullshit expired a long time ago.

Next to him is Kscope co-founder Johnny Wilks, the livewire yang to his colleague's laconic yin. Both men are still hands-on with the label's day-to-day running, even if they're vague about job titles. "My card's got nothing on it," says Harris. "I'm part of the furniture."

The two of them were integral to the birth of Kscope along with MD Fred Jude, though the label's beginnings stretch back to 1999, long before its official inception. At the time, Harris, Wilks and Jude were working at

Snapper Music, an independent British label founded a few years earlier. "We didn't really focus on specific genres," says Wilks of Snapper, which remain Kscope's parent company. "We did a bit of rock, a bit of blues, a bit of prog."

In late 1998, Wilks received a demo of *Stupid Dream*, the new album from Porcupine Tree, a band who were almost single-handedly keeping the British prog scene alive. Porcupine Tree were looking for a bigger label than their current home, Delirium, and Snapper were a potential option. Wilks listened to the tracks and loved what he heard.

"I remember running up to our A&R guy at the time, going, 'This is fantastic, we should do it!'" he recalls. "There was a lot of excitement."

This enthusiasm was a big draw for Porcupine Tree leader Steven Wilson and his manager. They liked the idea of signing to Snapper. But there was one condition.

"The label were just starting to branch out, but were still predominantly known as a budget reissue/back catalogue label," Wilson tells *Prog*. "I felt it was important that PT were not perceived to be a part of that."

Wilson asked that his band have their own imprint. He wanted to call it Kscope — partly a contraction of the word 'kaleidoscope', partly a nod to 70s budget label K-Tel. "K-Tel put out the cheesiest compilations, and I loved anything that made me nostalgic for my childhood," he explains.

When *Stupid Dream* was released via Snapper Music in 1999, Kscope was little more than a logo on the corner of the sleeve. It remained as such for the next few years, largely existing as an imprint for various Wilson-related projects: PT's *Lightbulb Sun*, No-Man's *Together We're Stranger*, the first two Blackfield albums.

That changed in 2008. On the advice of Wilson, Bruce Soord sent the demo for The Pineapple Thief's seventh album, *Tightly Unwound*, to Johnny Wilks. He loved it. "I had the same feeling I had when I listened to *Stupid Dream*," says Wilks.

Catherine Anne Davies, aka The Anchoress, signed to Kscope so she could retain her creative freedom.

Around the same time, Wilson himself wanted to make a solo album. Porcupine Tree had left the label for an ill-fated stint on Atlantic in the early 00s, but the frontman's other endeavours ensured he'd retained close links with Snapper.

Kscope founders Johnny Wilks and Tony Harris.

An idea struck Wilks. He collared Harris in the office kitchen. "I said, 'Wouldn't it be great if we had a label for bands who sound like this. I don't think anybody is really covering it.' And we went upstairs and had a conversation with the MD and he said, 'Yeah, let's do it.'" And so, over a cup of tea, Kscope graduated from a name on a record sleeve to a fully fledged label.

Tightly Unwound was released on May 19, 2008 with the catalogue number KSCOPE101. Other albums soon followed: Steven Wilson's solo debut *Insurgentes*; No-Man's *Schoolyard Ghosts*; *Hindsight* from the revitalised Anathema; and the self-titled debut from Riverside guitarist Mariusz Duda's Lunatic Soul side project. After a decade in the wings, Kscope were ready to step out into the spotlight.

Kscope's identity was in place early on: complex, cerebral yet emotional music that existed outside the parameters of what the gatekeepers of the record industry and the media deemed 'cool'. They offered a modern update of

"Steven Wilson said, 'You should sign to them.' He was nothing but positive about how they launched him as a solo artist."
Paul Draper

Paul Draper: the ex-Mansun singer was brought into the Kscope family by Steven Wilson.

Kscope MD Fred Jude.

progressive rock's boundary-pushing approach, yet were firmly focused on the here and now.

Harris and Wilks both laugh at the suggestion that they had a mission statement in place from the start. "If there was," says Wilks, "it was purely to provide a home for artists who wanted to be slightly more experimental."

The pair weren't unaware that progressive music was still in recovery and cut their cloth accordingly. "I never, ever felt like it was taking a chance," says Harris. "We didn't blow our brains out with advances. I felt pretty comfortable with everything we were putting out in those early days."

Harris identifies Steven Wilson's second solo album, 2011's *Grace For Drowning*, as the point where it became clear that Kscope was going to work. "Historically, when it comes to solo albums from successful bands, the success rate isn't huge," says Harris. "But Steven's wasn't like that – it was going up and up and up."

Wilson has been a totemic figure for the label over the years. His 2015 album, *Hand.Cannot.Erase*, remains Kscope's biggest seller, and the label's identity is intrinsically linked with his own. But Wilson bats back the suggestion that it was moulded in his image.

"Any contribution I had to the direction was only in the sense that my various projects were – at least in the beginning – the foundation of the label's catalogue," he says. "I suppose for the guys running the label it was then a question of bringing in other bands that had a similar approach."

Still, Wilson has acted as unofficial pitchman for Kscope more than once. A few years after pairing the label up with The Pineapple Thief, he played a part in convincing Paul Draper to join the label's roster. After Kscope approached the former Mansun frontman to see if he was interested in putting out a solo album, Draper met up with Wilson, a fan of his former outfit, for lunch.

"He said, 'You should sign to them,'" says Draper. "He was nothing but positive about how they launched him as a solo artist."

Where Wilson had come up through the prog rock underground, Draper had risen to prominence in the Britpop era. Mansun never hid their art rock ambitions, but their former singer was wary of being placed in the 'prog' pigeonhole.

"The label came down to my studio with a pile of CDs and said, 'Prog's not what you think it is these days, check it out,'" says Draper, who released his debut solo EP, *One*, on Kscope in June 2016. Tony Harris remembers it well: "We had to convince him that Kscope isn't a 'prog' label. It's progressive rather than prog."

Draper wasn't the first artist from outside prog's established boundaries to step into Kscope's orbit. Catherine Anne Davies, who collaborates with Draper in her guise as The Anchoress, released *Confessions Of A Romance Novelist* at the beginning of 2016.

"To be honest, I wasn't aware of them before that," she says now. "But seeing what Steven Wilson had been able to do in terms of keeping creative control was part of the reason I signed with them once my album was recorded. Not having someone sticking their oar in halfway through and going, 'Have you got a radio single here?' Or, 'Have you thought of putting some more flutes on it?'"

"We still get a lot of demos of 70s-style prog from people thinking we still want to hear a new band that sounds like Yes."
Tony Harris

Davies calls Kscope "the 4AD of progressive music", referencing the iconic British imprint that carved out its own unique identity in the 80s as home to such disparate artists as Bauhaus, The Cocteau Twins and the Pixies. "It's very eclectic, a very broad church," she says, "but everything sits under one roof."

In truth, it does more than just sit. An active collaborative network exists between many of the label's artists. As well as her work with Paul

Draper, Davies has appeared with both The Pineapple Thief (on a reworked version of their 2016 track *Fend For Yourself*) and Steven Wilson (both featured on Draper's 2016 song *No Ideas*). Draper himself has toured with Wilson's solo band. Wilson produced Anathema's 2010 comeback album *We're Here Because We're Here*. And on it goes.

This was the plan from the start, according to Johnny Wilks. "We wanted to have a family of artists that could work together, write together, produce each other," he says. "It was like the labels I listened to when I was growing up, whether it was Mute or 4AD or whoever."

This internal exchange of ideas isn't the only thing that helps gives Kscope its identity. Everyone we talk to points out the attention Kscope give to physical products: the lavish packaging that accompanies many of their new releases and reissues alike.

"They're brilliant at making desirable products," says Bruce Soord. "These ridiculously lavish box sets they do with 100-page booklets and four discs. It makes people want to put it on their shelves. Just bringing back quality."

Catherine Anne Davies singles out the label's creative director, Scott Robinson, for praise on this front. "There's a beautiful attention to detail with the artwork," she days. "I worked very closely with Scott on the conceptual ideas for *Confessions Of A Romance Novelist*, and I don't know how many labels would be willing to indulge that level of artistic expression."

"From the start, Kscope had a real passion for what they were doing. Suddenly, it felt really exciting again."
Bruce Soord

Mariusz Duda: his Lunatic Soul debut was one of Kscope's first releases.

Paul Draper, who helped oversee a lavish deluxe reissue of Mansun's debut album, *Attack Of The Grey Lantern*, puts it more bluntly: "When they do something like that, you know its going to be fucking good."

A decade after its inception, Kscope have carved out their own place in the wider music industry landscape, albeit comfortably and consciously towards the margins. They've successfully yoked an independent, individualistic spirit to what Paul Draper calls "the functions and levers of a major label – they operate in a mini-major way".

Kscope aren't a small operation by any stretch, but they do have an agility and boldness that their bigger contemporaries lack. Tony Harris says that they have released somewhere in the region of 380 records during their existence. He doesn't think they've put out an album that isn't, or hasn't been, available on vinyl – an industry standard now, but one the label was ahead of the curve with. It's a triumph of the physical in a digital age.

"We've been putting out vinyl a long time," says Harris. "I was getting it in the neck from the accountant: 'Oh, Tony's just old school, he wants vinyl.' But you could see this gradual increase."

The Pineapple Thief: their 2008 *Tightly Unwound* album was Kscope's first, and defining, release.

"One thing Kscope understand very well is that there are still potentially a lot of people out there who prefer to buy a physical CD or vinyl copy of an album if they feel there has been some care taken with the presentation and contents," says Steven Wilson. "In turn, Kscope have put a lot of attention into the way that the music is packaged, with bonus discs, 5.1 mixes, art direction, special editions, etc. All that contributes to the listeners wanting to own and cherish physical editions of the music, rather than just being happy with downloads and streaming."

Russians iamthemorning are one of the many diverse acts at home on Kscope.

Like any successful modern label, a chunk of Kscope's income comes from older records and reissues. According to Harris, "we currently have 25 Porcupine Tree titles, something like that".

But Kscope don't exist purely to fuel the nostalgia of prog fans. "We still get a lot of demos of 70s-style prog from people thinking we want to hear a new band that sounds like Yes," sighs Harris.

Instead, the label balance a respect for the genre's foundations with an eyes-fixed-forward ethos. While Kscope have signed numerous newly minted outfits over the years, Wilks and Harris point out that many bands had already released several albums before they signed to Kscope: The Pineapple Thief, Anathema, TesseracT, even Tangerine Dream, whose latest album, *Quantum Gate*, Kscope released last year.

For every band Kscope have picked up, there's been one that has got away. Harris cites Opeth's last album, *Sorceress*, as something he would have loved to have released on the label. "I really admire them, I like Michael Åkerfeldt, it would have been a good fit. But it wasn't to be." (Ironically, Kscope's sister label, Peaceville, own the rights to the records of the Swedish band in their metal incarnation.)

Then there's Steven Wilson. 2017's *To The Bone* album saw the man who helped lay down the foundations for Kscope nearly 20 years ago jump ship to Caroline Records, a subsidiary of multi-national major label Universal. Wilks and Harris understand why Wilson decided to leave Kscope, though they admit they're disappointed.

"Who wouldn't be?" says Wilks. "I can't lie to you. We loved working with him, massively admired what he does. He doesn't bow to anybody."

Harris: "He probably felt like he was in a bit of a prog bubble with Kscope."

Wilson doesn't refute that notion. "[Kscope's approach] means there is faith between the label and the listeners; the fans know that all releases on the label will share a similar musical vocabulary, and that strong recognisable identity can be good in terms of getting fans to buy albums 'blind' or check out less-known artists on the label," he says. "I think that's very important for independent labels. But by definition it's also means the label take a risk if they deviate too far from that sound, and I guess that's why I felt after four albums it was time to move on and work with a different label for *To The Bone*."

But the departure of their MVP hasn't taken the wind out of Kscope's sails. The Pineapple Thief's most recent album, *Dissolution*, became the band's first record to break into the UK Top 40. Anathema's last two albums, 2014's *Distant Satellites* and 2017's *The Optimist*, reached No.33 and 34 respectively. "They still give us a bad time if HMV puts their records in the 'Metal' racks," says Harris of the Liverpool band.

There are other, big-name artists they'd love to have on the label. Harris names Brian Eno and "the Talking Heads bloke, what's his name?" (He means David Byrne, obviously.)

Wilks: "We'd love to work with Nine Inch Nails, Radiohead. Bands who are experimental, who care about what they do."

Harris: "Thom Yorke? It annoys me – he's probably never heard of the label or the artists or any of the music."

In truth, he doesn't sound annoyed. Kscope have made it this far without feeling the need to reshape what they do to accommodate stars of a bigger magnitude than the ones they already work with. More importantly, they've done so while playing a significant part on the ongoing revitalisation of the prog scene. Though Harris and Wilks baulk at the suggestion.

"It's down to more than one label," says Harris. "It's down to the bands themselves, to the fans that have never gone away and to magazines like *Prog* as well."

"We're fans of the music we put out, that's the thing," says Wilks. "Yes, it's business, but we're passionate. You just assume that something's going to be successful."

"Sometimes wrongly," adds Harris.

Maybe. But if the last 10 years have proved anything, mostly not.

See www.kscopemusic.com for more information.

SPECIAL K
Ten essential Kscope albums.

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF
***Tightly Unwound* (2008)**
The album that kicked off the Kscope revolution, and one that would help shape the sound of things to come: artful, intelligent post-progressive rock that looked forwards rather than back.

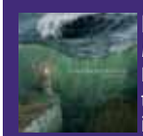
ENGINEERS
***Three Fact Fader* (2009)**
The second album from arguably the most overlooked band in the Kscope family, *Three Fact Fader* sits somewhere between indie rock, dream pop and the epic soundscapes of Sigur Rós. Even on a label where no one sounds like no one else, this *really* sounds like nothing else.

ANATHEMA
***We're Here Because We're Here* (2010)**
The Liverpool band hadn't put out an album of new material in seven years when Kscope signed them. The Floydian *We're Here Because We're Here* was the perfect comeback and the start of their metamorphosis from a metal band into something else.

STEVEN WILSON
***Grace For Drowning* (2011)**
Wilson played a pivotal part in founding Kscope, and remains the label's best-selling artist. The breadth of his sprawling second solo album (his first following Porcupine Tree's split) summed up Wilson's restless spirit – and that of the label, too.

BRUCE SOORD WITH JONAS RENKSE
***Wisdom Of Crowds* (2013)**
On paper, the union of The Pineapple Tree's Bruce Soord and Jonas Renkse, singer with one-time Swedish death metallers Katatonia, should have been a disaster. In reality, their evocative, hands-across-the-ocean approach turned out to be a thing of beauty.

NORDIC GIANTS
***A Séance Of Dark Delusions* (2014)**
The debut album from mask-wearing post-rock duo Nordic Giants brought together evocative electronica, movie soundtracks and general weirdness in one striking package.



IAMTHEMORNING
***Lighthouse* (2016)**
Prog, classical and East European folk music came together on the second album from Russia's iamthemorning. In pianist Gleb Kolyadin, the band have one of the most prodigious talents in modern music.

THE ANCHORESS
***Confessions Of A Romance Novelist* (2016)**
Catherine Anne Davies' first album as The Anchoress is surely the most left-field release yet on this left-field label: vivid, baroque pop that was as perfectly placed on daytime radio as it was within *Prog* magazine.

PAUL DRAPER
***Spooky Action* (2017)**
The ex-Mansun singer had taken a step back from the frontline before he signed with Kscope. But the deal revitalised him – as well as releasing his long-gestating debut solo album, the label also reissued a lavish deluxe version of Mansun's classic *Attack Of The Grey Lantern.*

TESSERACT
***Sonder* (2018)**
Showcasing the edgier side of the label's aesthetic, Brit prog metal mainstays TesseracT signed with Kscope for their third album, 2015's intricate *Polaris.* This follow-up brought the mammoth riffs back without returning to their 'djent' sound of old. For both band and label, the future looks bright. **DEV**

Misplaced Child

Taking inspiration from an idyllic childhood and friendships left behind, **Rikard Sjöblom's Gungfly**'s fourth album takes the listener on an emotional and nostalgic journey. The former Beardfish and current Big Big Trainer tells *Prog* more...

Words: Dom Lawson **Images:** Lisa Marklund

You never know what a good rummage will unearth. Being the helpful soul that he is, Rikard Sjöblom was assisting his parents with a house move when he stumbled upon a stack of old photos. Among them was one particular snap that immediately triggered a flood of childhood memories in the Gungfly man's mind. You can see the photo on the cover of Sjöblom's new album, *Friendship* (below right): there he is, the young Swede, perched on top of a perilous-looking treehouse, peering down and surveying the world below.

"My uncle took the picture. I actually remember staring down at him from that angle," he notes. "The treehouse was in the woods behind my parents' place, where I grew up. I was actually on top of the goddamn thing! I can't believe they even let us build it because it was pretty high up in the trees. We built like four or five treehouses and that was one of the bigger ones, or one of the higher ones at least. It was probably seven or eight metres up in the air. You were standing without a railing or *anything* so it was kind of insane!"

The way he describes it, Sjöblom's childhood was idyllic. Growing up in a small village just outside the also fairly small town of Gävle in Sweden, his formative years were a blur of long summers spent outdoors and a real sense of freedom. Most importantly, Sjöblom had numerous close friends of a similar age and spent countless hours in their company. On discovering the aforementioned photo, his first thought was to wonder how, as the decades drifted by, those incredibly close friendships had eventually faded away.

"Where we lived, it was just a small village and I think there were three or four families that had kids the same age, so we'd all hang out every day and get up to no good, as kids do," Sjöblom recalls. "I started thinking about all these friends that you grow up with and all of a sudden you lose touch with them, which has always been a weird thing to me. You're the best of friends and then the next day, you're gone from each other's lives. You know everything about each other and then suddenly there is nothing there anymore. It's very strange."

As with most of the records Sjöblom has released over the years, both as a solo artist and formerly with the much-missed Beardfish, there is a strong air of both melancholy and optimism written through *Friendship*, Sjöblom's new full-length endeavour. The melancholy seems to come from that gentle sense of loss, when once closely linked lives split apart and cherished childhood allies vanish into the ether.

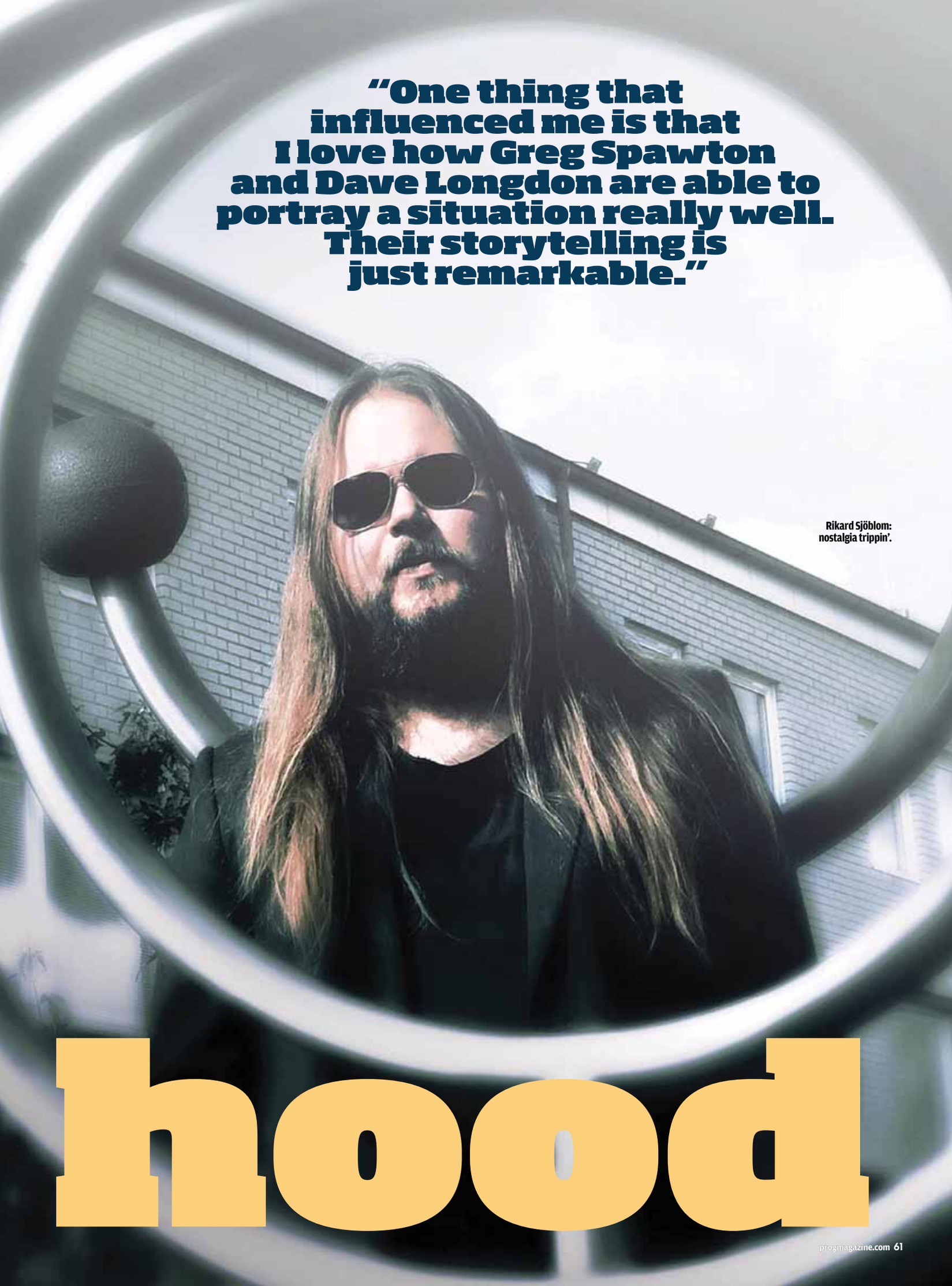
"For my own part, I don't think I felt that way at the time that it happened. It's more about looking back at it. People go somewhere else and you don't keep track of each other anymore. Of course, Facebook helps with stuff like that these days, but you still lose that special connection that you had with that person, even though it's always gonna be there in a strange kind of way. It's a weird sensation. Thinking about that spawned several songs, even before this record. I guess I'm stuck in the past!"

One of the new album's most affecting and succinct moments, *They Fade* is the closest that Sjöblom comes to directly addressing the feelings conjured by that photographic glimpse of times long gone.

"It's the first song that I wrote for the album," he explains. "It was more inspired by the photo than any of the other songs. I started thinking about this friend that I built the treehouse with, and then for some reason I started thinking about two other friends too, who weren't even involved with it. Basically, there were some really important events in life that happened to me, with these three friends, so I wrote the song about the three of them, even though they didn't have anything to do with each other. One of my close friends from when I was young, he died after we lost touch. He drowned, actually, when he was only 13 years old, which was a really tough thing for me. Up until that point I had this feeling that I was kind of immortal, you know? That's how you feel as a kid. Then suddenly, one of my closest friends drowns, so it was a really weird thing to go through. That song has been waiting to be written for quite some time, I guess."

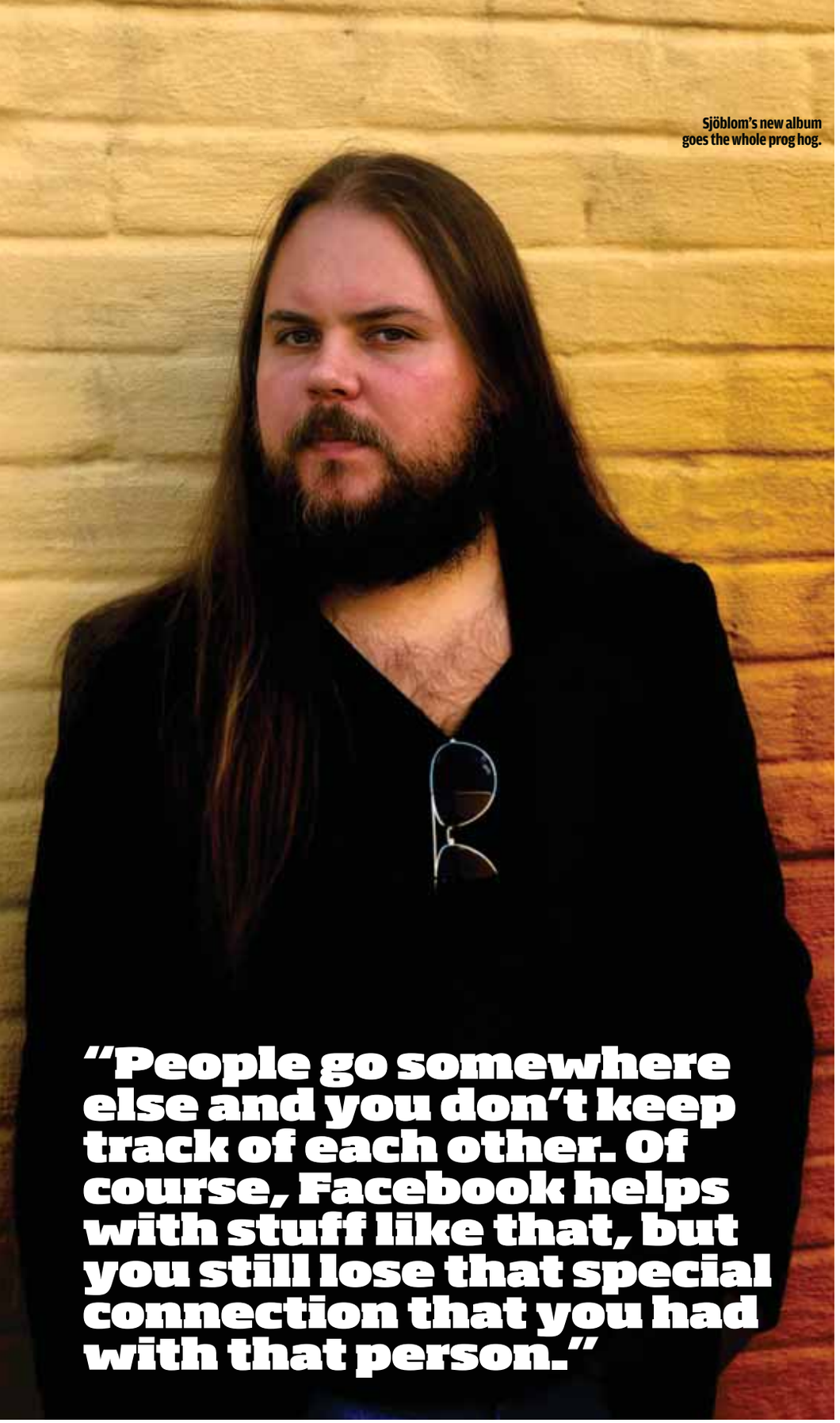
If you've followed Sjöblom's career for any length of time, you'll have noticed that he is one of those musicians that seems pathologically unable to stop making music. Beardfish fans barely

"One thing that influenced me is that I love how Greg Spawton and Dave Longdon are able to portray a situation really well. Their storytelling is just remarkable."



Rikard Sjöblom: nostalgia trippin'.

hood



Sjöblom's new album goes the whole prog hog.

"People go somewhere else and you don't keep track of each other. Of course, Facebook helps with stuff like that, but you still lose that special connection that you had with that person."

had a moment to mourn the demise of their favourite band when their leader came hurtling out of the traps with *On Her Journey To The Sun*: technically, the third Gungfly album, but arguably the first to present the whole thing as something more than an eclectic side project. *Friendship* is undoubtedly the next step in that evolutionary stroll and sounds even more like the work of a living, breathing prog rock band than its melodically rich and intricate predecessor.

"I know what you mean and I guess that's a good thing!" Sjöblom laughs. "I think that Gungfly is *always* a solo project, really, no matter how I try to turn it around in different variations. It's always been that way but there's still this really good connection within the *live band*, as we call it. I've known Petter [Diamant, drums] and Rasmus [Diamant, bass] for many years, since we went to music school, and we've been playing together for so long now. They don't mind it being this way, or at least that's what they tell me! It's just that Gungfly has always been my getaway, to do exactly what I want. Then I have the fortunate situation where there are musicians that like to play this music together with me, in a live situation."

Do you ever miss the slightly more intense band camaraderie that you had in Beardfish?

"Well, I do sometimes regret that this is not a band in *that* sense, even though I like this situation, too! But sure, I do miss the style we had with Beardfish and how we did things. Even though I wrote all of the songs there as well, there was still that garage band feeling. That's been kind of lost these days, but I don't think it would work, to start a new band like that for me right now."

In contrast with the first few Gungfly records, which were pointedly less prog-inclined than the music Sjöblom was making with Beardfish at the same time, *Friendship* exuberantly goes the whole prog hog. Epics like the multi-faceted, Floyd-tinged title track and the gorgeous, expansive *If You Fall, Pt. 2* (as you might imagine, the sequel to *If You Fall, Pt. 1* from *On Her Journey To The Sun*) showcase a refined updating of Sjöblom's trademark blend of traditional and esoteric prog tropes. You may also detect the occasional nod to Big Big Train, the now-legendary UK proggers that Sjöblom joined in 2014. The two projects have plenty of clear musical water between them, of course, but the Swede eagerly sings his British bandmates' praises and acknowledges the effect their music has had on his own.

"Oh, absolutely," Sjöblom nods. "One thing that influenced me quite a bit is that I love how Greg [Spawton] and Dave [Longdon] are able to portray a situation really well. I love their storytelling. It's just remarkable, and that's the thing that caught me when I was learning the songs, the first time I went over to play with them. I think it was *Summoned By Bells* from *English Electric* that really caught me. Also, I think they made me find a way to lay back a little in the music. I think they influenced me in that way, because I can be a little in-your-face with my songwriting! I'm not holding back *too* much, but I've learned I can back away every now and then."

The best part of 30 years have passed since Rikard Sjöblom stood on top of that treehouse, but he's still enjoying a life full of experiences, friendship and freedom. As he excitedly notes, 2019 looks like it will be one of his busiest years yet, with tentative plans for a full European Gungfly tour and, just maybe, a surprise performance at one of the UK's biggest historical tourist attractions.

"Since I have this connection with Big Big Train, I really do want to include England on every tour I do because I love being there," he concludes. "And not just in London! We went there with Beardfish a few times, but I've really grown to appreciate the countryside in England. I love travelling around. It's a beautiful landscape. Maybe we could play a show at Stonehenge? That would be very cool."

Friendship is out now via InsideOut.
See www.rikardsjoblom.com for more information.

NEW RELEASES FROM APOLLON RECORDS

THE WINDMILL
Tribus

ARABS IN ASPIC
Live At Avantgarden

SALUKI
Amazing Games

UNGDOMSKULEN
Gold Rush

RING VAN MÖBIUS
Past the Evening Sun

EMMERHOFF & THE MELANCHOLY BABIES
Circle Six

SIPHER
Atlas

MOONPEDRO AND THE GOLD FISH
The Beatles - The White Album Revisited

KISS KISS KING KONG
B/B

DISTRIBUTED BY:

WINTER CLEARANCE SALE AT OUT WEBSITE! AMAZING PRICES!

Visit our website/store: ***apollonrecords.no***

Apollon RECORDS

January 1st, 2019

GONE

For fans of Neal Morse, Ayreon, and Jethro Tull

Exclusive preview of

"Silence I Know"

on the sampler CD

preorder now

bandcamp

Facebook.com/chuchaka2112
Joeyfrevola.bandcamp.com

Twelfth Night today, L-R: Mark Spencer, Andy Revell and Brian Devoil.

Circa 1983, L-R: Andy Revell, Geoff Mann and Clive Mitten.

MARK HUGHES

Nights To REMEMBER

The 'Punk Floyd' of the neo-prog scene, **Twelfth Night** always stood apart from the crowd. Now with the band back in the recording studio, they're set to play on once again.

Words: Joe Banks

It's only towards the end of *Prog*'s chat with Brian Devoil – drummer, manager and keeper of the flame for neo-prog heroes Twelfth Night – that he drops the proverbial bombshell: for the first time in 25 years, the band are back in the recording studio. He won't be drawn on the details, other than to suggest the possibility of new material alongside recordings of old songs, but he does mention a tantalising, though at the time top secret, project that relates to this news.

By now, the cat is out of the bag. On Armistice Day (November 11), 100 years on from the end of World War I, Twelfth Night released a new recording of their anti-war epic *Sequences*. "We'd never released a studio version of the track, something that is true of a few other Twelfth Night classics, so the idea had been in my mind for several years," says Devoil. "It was the first time that the stars aligned and the opportunity presented itself to do justice to the track." Guitarist Andy Revell adds, "Although we kept faithful to the best-known arrangement, we expanded some sections, added some fantastic orchestration, and even re-instated some parts that appeared in earlier versions of the track."

It's 40 years since the band first came together at Reading University, and despite splitting up in 1987, their legacy is stronger than ever. For many of us who first came to music during the neo-prog glory years of the early 80s (this writer included), Twelfth Night remain the most innovative and enigmatic group of that era.

The roots of Twelfth Night stretch back to an instrumental duo formed by Revell and Devoil in the mid-70s, initially to enter a battle of the bands competition, which they subsequently won. The music was based around Revell's experiments with a WEM Copicat echo unit, creating a shimmering, propulsive guitar tone that would become central to Twelfth Night's sound. "I wanted to take the ambient atmospherics and driving rhythms of krautrock, but instead of using synths, marry those ideas with the more organic nature of the guitar and blues," says Revell.

The initial Twelfth Night line-up was completed by bassist Clive Mitten and classically trained keyboardist Rick Battersby. Artist and friend Geoff Mann joined briefly on vocals in 1979, but decided it wasn't what he wanted to do at that time. "He then spent the next two years badgering us to get back in the band!" chuckles Devoil.

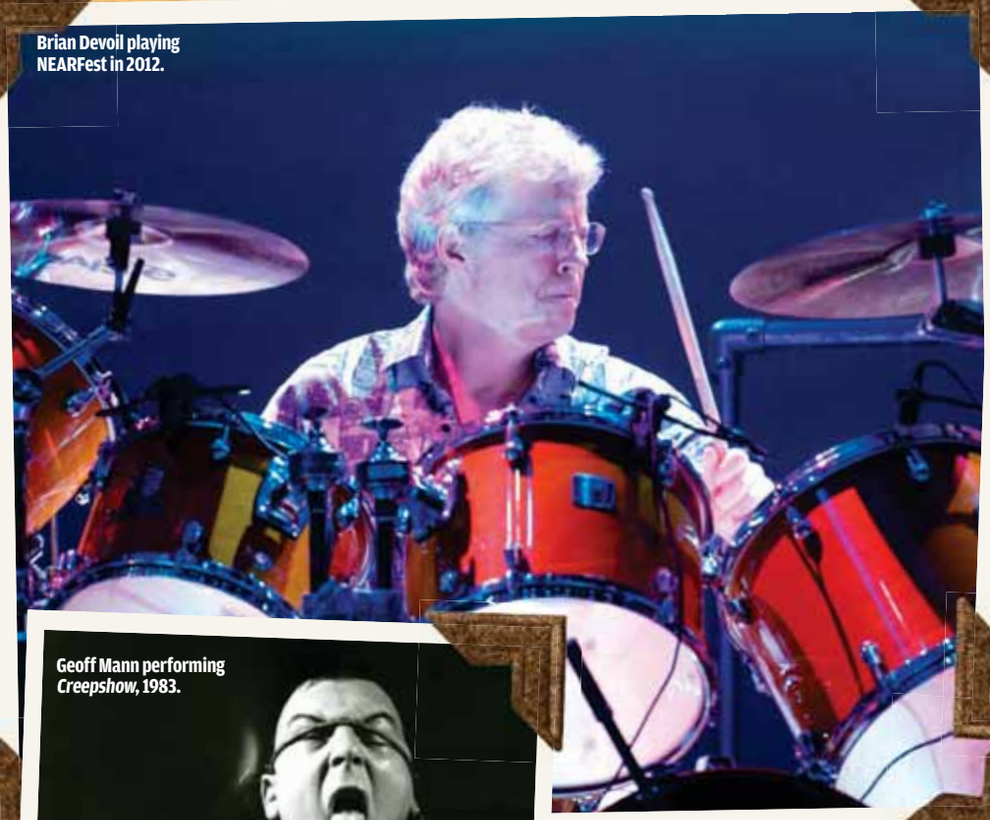
The band recruited American singer Electra MacLeod and self-released their first single, but soon reverted to playing as an instrumental quartet, and in 1981 put out the *Live At The Target* album, neo-prog's first significant release, once again on their own label. "One of the reasons I didn't have any issues with performing at the same time as punk is because we had that punk ethos in the sense that we did it ourselves," notes Devoil. Somewhat ironically then, a review of *Live At The Target* in *Musicians Only* magazine described Twelfth Night as the best band in the world after Genesis, which led to a rethink in direction, and the decision once again to find a vocalist.

Twelfth Night auditioned potential singers, but eventually realised that Geoff Mann was actually the man for the job after all. Devoil remembers, "He sent us our version of *Sequences* from *Live At The Target*, and he'd fleshed it out with a full set of lyrics and sung over it. And it was so much better than anything else we were getting. So we went up to see him in Manchester just before the [1981] Reading Festival and said, 'You know we've been saying for months you can't join the band... Erm, would you like to join the band?'"

> "I defy anyone to show me better lyrics in rock music. What Geoff wrote was just astonishing, and so true – it's exactly what's going on in the world now." **- Brian Devoil**

Andy Revell (left) and Clive Mitten playing Reading Festival in 1983.

MARK HUGHES



Brian Devoil playing NEARFest in 2012.

ROBERT WOLF

Mark Spencer, 2012.

Geoff Mann performing *Creepshow*, 1983.

MARK HUGHES

> "If I've got anything to say about it, then yes! I would love to be back on stage with the band."
> **- Mark Spencer**

Mann would go on to make his live debut with Twelfth Night in front of a festival crowd of thousands, and quickly established himself as both a riveting performer and supremely talented writer. While still an inventive and exciting musical unit, the focus of the band shifted to highlight Mann's uniquely expressed worldview and his rough-hewn, confrontational vocal style.

Back in June, the band released a 3CD Definitive Edition of their 1982 album *Fact And Fiction*. Lauded by this very magazine as one of 'The Albums That Saved Prog', it's a still stunning showcase for Mann's humane yet acerbic lyrics and the band's stark, modern updating of the progressive rock template. Along with a remastered version of the original album, the package also includes a disc of live interpretations of its tracks, plus a disc of covers from prog luminaries including Pendragon, Galahad and Tim Bowness – evidence, if it were needed, of *Fact And Fiction*'s enduring appeal.

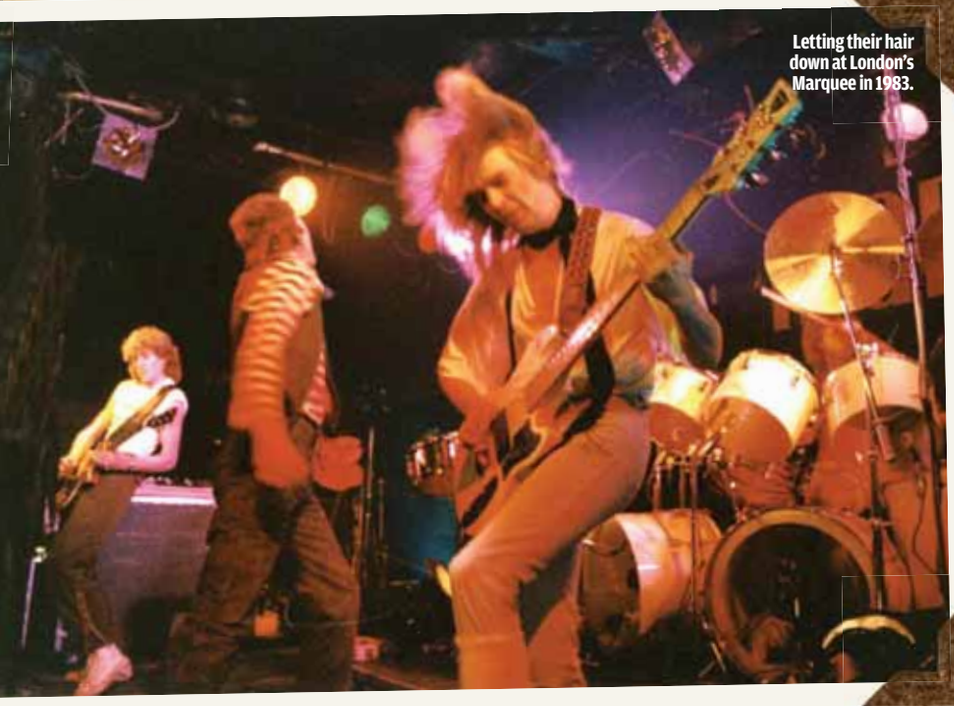
And yet *Fact And Fiction* was an album that only really came about by happenstance. Looking to land a record deal, the band had demoed a synth-based take on The Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby*. "And that came to the ear – I don't know how – of Andy Macpherson who ran Revolution Studios, and he thought it had hit potential," explains Deovil. "So he said come up and record this single, and we could use studio downtime to record other material. And that's how *Fact And Fiction* came about."

Working late at night injected the album with a nocturnal urgency, even if the in-house engineers didn't always share the band's enthusiasm. "Some of the engineering is really not up to standard," says Devoil. "In the end, [Macpherson] spent longer mixing the drums for *Eleanor Rigby* than it took for us to mix the rest of the album! We mixed it in two days, and of course, it was all hands to the pump and on the sliders, nothing automatic. And then we escaped with the tapes…"

Even if the finished product wasn't sonically perfect, the material on *Fact And Fiction* was stellar, with *We Are Sane* and *Creepshow* in particular being two of the stand-out tracks of the neo-prog period. Much of their impact was down to Geoff Mann's prescient words and impassioned delivery. Devoil concurs: "I defy anyone to show me better lyrics in rock music. What he wrote was just astonishing, and so true – it's exactly what's going on in the world now. One of the reasons I did the Definitive Edition was to focus on the lyrics and to make Geoff very much the central person in the packaging and pictures, because it's the lyrics that mark that album out."

Suffice to say that neither *Fact And Fiction* nor the *Eleanor Rigby* single set the charts on fire upon their release in 1982, but Twelfth Night were rapidly becoming one of the leading lights of the neo-prog scene. A stunning performance at the following year's Reading Festival, subsequently broadcast on Tommy Vance's *Friday Rock Show*, should have been a turning point for the band – and it was, but not in the way they expected.

Devoil explains, "We had a lot of interest from CBS at the time. We did some demos with them in the summer of '83, and we thought that was going to lead to a signing. And then they dropped their interest literally two days before Reading, which I didn't tell the rest of the guys in the band. They told me off for that afterwards…" And if that wasn't bad enough, soon afterwards Geoff Mann announced his decision to leave the band. "It was a shock initially, but what we were being told was that record companies didn't get Geoff, and



Letting their hair down at London's Marquee in 1983.

MARK HUGHES

we weren't going to get signed with him," says Devoil. "Although there was a huge similarity between Geoff and Fish, there was also a huge disparity. In retrospect, if he had stayed, I think we would have convinced the record companies that he was viable, but at the time they said no. So changing vocalists was a way for us to reposition ourselves.

"We did the same as Marillion and Pallas," continues Devoil. "We replaced our theatrical performer with someone who was a better singer. And Andy Sears was fabulously talented." He stresses there were no bad feelings though. "When we started auditioning for vocalists — several of whom came to those farewell shows at the Marquee, including Andy Sears — we took videos and sent them to Geoff for his opinion, so he was involved in looking for his successor."

Also present at Mann's farewell shows was Mark Spencer, singer at the time with LaHost and subsequently a session player for some of rock's biggest names. When Twelfth Night reformed as a live band in 2007, Spencer joined as a multi-instrumentalist, and by the time of the band's 'farewell' show at the Barbican's Guildhall in 2012, had graduated to lead vocalist. A Blu-ray, DVD and double-CD of that performance is due out by the end of the year, entitled *A Night To Remember*. It certainly was for Spencer:

"I'd just come off a mini-tour playing keyboards and bass with Alan Reed, supporting It Bites, and we'd all got really ill. I'd done a gig in Glasgow the night before, literally walked off stage, got in the car and started driving back down, unable to speak, and not entirely sure whether I'd be able to sing. So getting as close to singing as I did on the night is quite pleasing..."

Devoil adds, "One of [the Guildhall] students was doing a final year in lighting and production, and blagged about a million pounds worth of lighting equipment — apparently the company he went to, the main guy said, 'Twelfth Night, no problem, I used to see them at the Marquee, have whatever you like!'"

There are other retrospective releases potentially in the pipeline: footage and soundtracks from the band's performances at Loreley in Germany and Tiana in Spain, plus video of Geoff Mann's farewell shows. In addition, Spencer has recorded a solo version of the entire *Fact And Fiction* album, which should hopefully be released in the near future.

But with the band (based around a core trio of Devoil, Revell and Spencer) now back in the studio, the big question is: will Twelfth Night ever play live again? "If I've got anything to say about it, then yes! I would love to be back on stage with the band," enthuses Spencer. Devoil is more circumspect, but certainly doesn't rule it out: "If we were to create some new music, and there was clearly a demand, and somebody made us an offer we couldn't refuse, then I think it's possible."

The new version of Sequences is available from the Twelfth Night website. The Definitive Edition of Fact And Fiction is out now via F2/Festival. A Night To Remember is out soon. See www.twelfthnight.info.

Return To INSANITY

Ex-Twelfth Night bassist **Clive Mitten** on his new solo work.

Staying Sane: Mitten examines the modern world.

After an extended break away from music, Twelfth Night bassist and songwriter Clive Mitten has returned as The C:Live Collective and released *The Age Of Insanity*. Mainly comprised of instrumental suite *The Fifth Estate* (a full vocal version is due out early next year), the album also features radical reinterpretations of *Fact And Fiction* classics *We Are Sane* and *This City*. Mitten explains:

"*The Fifth Estate* deals with the world as we know it today, with social media controlling people's thinking, populist parties coming to the fore, the myth of nostalgia, and the manipulation of power. We foresaw in *We Are Sane* what I'm writing about now. Originally we were going to use it as an overture, but that sounded pretentious, so I made it 'Part One'! It's looking into the future, which is what Geoff did – and here it is now, but it's even worse!

"*This City* was purely because of Grenfell [the Grenfell tower fire in London, June 2017]. I wasn't particularly looking to do another Twelfth Night track, but Grenfell happened. In Kensington & Chelsea, you've got the richest people in London living across the street from the poorest. [Grenfell] showed you're either wealthy or you're ignored."

While still recognisably 'progressive', *The Fifth Estate* is a cinematic piece with strong orchestral and dance music influences. Mitten stresses that relations with Twelfth Night remain "cordial" – indeed, the album features Mark Spencer, as well as ex-LaHost and Pendragon drummer Fudge Smith – but states, "When I decided to do music again, I wanted to go in a new direction. I had to move my head on." **JB**

Sarah Brightman

She lost her disco heart to a Starship Trooper in 1978, but 20 years later would become one of the biggest classical crossover stars in the world. From Hot Gossip to *The Phantom Of The Opera* to concept albums about space, we have to ask: **how prog is Sarah Brightman?**

Long before her disco hit *I Fell In Love With A Starship Trooper*, space was the place for Sarah Brightman. A child of the 60s – born in 1961, in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire – when Apollo 11 reached the Moon in 1969, the historic event became her inspiration. "It changed me," she told TV show *Loose Women* in 2013. "I saw that human beings could do amazing things in their lives and think out of the box. It was the moment I started to really focus on what I could do."

If the seven-year-old Brightman sounds precocious, it's because she was. She'd been dancing and playing piano since age three. By 11, she'd won a place at a performing arts school in Tring, and trained in ballet in Birmingham. At 13, she was appearing on the West End. As her performance skills developed, so did a passion for prog. "I loved looking at my dad's records," she says. "He loved bands like Deep Purple and I was drawn to the covers, taking on board how important artwork was, alongside music."

And the first album that Brightman bought? "It was ELP's *Brain Salad Surgery*," she laughs. "I'd been listening to Floyd, Santana, Mike Oldfield, White Noise... when I think about it, I was pretty proggy very early on."

> **"I'd been listening to Floyd, Santana, Mike Oldfield, White Noise... when I think about it, I was pretty proggy very early on."**

Leaning to drama, Brightman needed to channel her focus. "Art school is a form you have to adhere to," she explains. "You have the ideas, strength and aptitude but you have to learn how to put your artistic spirit forward.

"I needed 'form' because I wasn't going to a be a rock singer, that wasn't my way of life," she says. "I was coming from something traditional but underneath there was always a rage and experimental things going on."

As a dancer, singer and songwriter, at 16 Brightman landed a job with *Top Of The Pops*' house dance group Pan's People before being recruited to Hot Gossip, who performed in clubs before being spotted by director David Mamet, who gave them a regular slot on ITV's *The Kenny Everett Video Show*. Their sexed-up, rock'n'roll routines made immediate waves, with anti-permissive activist Mary Whitehouse's open disapproval making them more popular. "I was always dressed as the virgin in that group," Brightman laughs. "I was 17, 18 and the first song we worked with was Kraftwerk's *Trans-Europe Express*. Because of Kraftwerk I went out and bought a Yamaha CS-80 synth, which was quite amazing. When I became a female solo recording artist I wrote a lot of my B-sides on that."

Above: 1978 single *I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper.*

One night, Brightman and a friend passed the village green where they lived in Little Gaddeston and heard a party at the nearby manor house. They gatecrashed.

"I said, 'We heard the music and wanted to come...'" Brightman said – to Andrew Graham-Stewart, the manor-owner and manager of Tangerine Dream. They began dating, and married within the year.

"He managed very interesting groups like Magazine, who were amazing. I was fascinated by electronica because I loved the layers it created. It was like a choir for me. Electronic music would become my future."

Brightman was selected to front a pop single, backed by Hot Gossip, called *I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper*. Written by Brit duo Typically Tropical, it cashed in on the sci-fi/*Star Wars* boom of the time (*'Flash Gordon's left me, he's gone to the stars/ An evil Darth Vader has me banished to Mars'*). Graham-Stewart helped out as a spotlight temporarily hit her "because I didn't know what was going on".

It went Top 10 in November 1978 and sold 500,000 copies, so Brightman recorded a few more disco singles, which she released on her own

SHUTTERSTOCK/REX

Pan's People in 1977, with Brightman second from right.

SIMON FOWLER/PRESS

Angel Of Music:
Sarah Brightman.

label, Whisper. These had less success, so it was time to recalibrate. Musical theatre was a chance to exercise her three-octave soprano vocal range.

Working her way up the cast rankings in *Cats* and *The Pirates Of Penzance* to become the lead in 1982 musical *Nightingale*, Brightman caught the eye of Andrew Lloyd Webber. They fell for one another romantically and artistically, separated from their respective partners and married in 1984. Two years later they'd hatched a hugely successful new rock musical, *The Phantom Of The Opera*. Brightman took the chief role of Christine.

"Andrew had grown up in the progressive era," she says. "He loved and was fascinated by progressive rock as well as Rachmaninoff and Puccini – he'd already done [the classical and rock fusion album] *Variations* [in 1978]."

PRESS

Tarja Turunen (left), formerly of Nightwish, and Sharon den Adel of Within Temptation have a similar gothic style to Brightman.

Brightman performs onstage at London's Royal Albert Hall, 2001.

GETTY

The pair's love of prog fed into their new project alongside nods to Meyerbeer, Mozart and Gilbert & Sullivan. "Classical composers were the prog artists of their day," she says. "But when I think of *Phantom*..., I think of Pink Floyd. They're in the main song [sings 'der-der-der-der-der'], that's from *Echoes*."

With *Phantom*..., Brightman's voice soared. "In rock," she explains, "you can let your voice go into all sorts of areas as an outpouring of emotion and the trials of human life. Think about Freddie Mercury and Queen: one isn't really polite about the voice and lets it just go there, which is what you do with opera as well. It takes the voice and thought into areas that you can't imagine – that's what makes it so grandiose. That's also the essence of prog."

As Brightman embraced opera and classical music, her image became more theatrical. In the hands of visionary costume and set designer Maria Bjornson, *Phantom*...'s gothic couture was revamped from a virginal white wedding dress and natural make-up to low-cut, corseted gowns and billowing, hooded satin cloaks set off by red lips, enormous mascara'd eyes and tumbling brunette locks. Around the world, female singers with a predilection for things gothic and operatic took notice: by the mid-90s this was part of the visual blueprint for a new wave of female-fronted symphonic prog and metal bands.

> **"Andrew [Lloyd Webber] had grown up in the progressive era. He loved and was fascinated by progressive rock as well as Rachmaninoff and Puccini."**

When *Prog* brings this up, Brightman seems unaware of her influence. "Do you mean Lady Gaga?" she asks. No, we mean Within Temptation, Nightwish, Therion, Epica... Nightwish even cover *The Phantom Of The Opera* with Tarja Turunen. "Oh, I didn't think in terms of fashion or inspiration, I was just doing it from passion," she laughs, before remembering her 2008 album in particular, *Symphony*. "The artwork for that with that bright red dress and that gothic look. The background's at an angle and I'm running away from something – I was going through a dark time in my life," she says.

Below: 2008's *Symphony* album.

The gothic operatic feel wasn't the only thing that Brightman wanted to explore musically. Her 1988 debut solo album, *The Trees They Grow So High*, looks like a 4AD album, and the tracklisting is versions of folk songs arranged by Benjamin Britten. Folk and musical theatre pervade the follow-up *As I Came Of Age*. By '93, Brightman had divorced Lloyd Webber and found a new direction – and a new love interest – with Enigma producer/engineer and samples man Frank Peterson on the water-themed album

Brightman in pure pop mode performing her hit, *I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper.*

GETTY

Sarah Brightman (right) with her *Cats* co-stars Finola Hughes and Paul Nicholas 1981.

SHUTTERSTOCK/REX

Dive, her image shifting to cyberpunk mermaid. Through Peterson, electronica was back in Brightman's toolbox. She heard of him while performing in New York in 1990.

"I was working on *Aspects Of Love* on Broadway and every day the sound guy would put on Enigma," she says. "I thought, 'What is this, it's absolutely amazing,' so I asked and got the album.

"I was looking at being a solo artist and getting out of theatre for a while and I was told that Frank had had the idea for using Gregorian chant in the band [he went under the name F Gregorian], so I got in touch."

Peterson lived in Hamburg and as they began working together and grew closer, Brightman found herself immersed in two musical worlds.

"During the week I'd be in Italy learning bel canto — the operatic form for classical music — and then I'd go clubbing in Hamburg at the weekends and be listening to people like Sven Väth," she says. "That's why my music got pretty fused and we ended up with the album *Fly* [1995] — a very pure progressive rock album with electronica, rock, classical and touches of opera [*La Wally*]. We kind of started the classical crossover genre."

Above: debut album *The Trees They Grow So High*, and new album *Hymn*.

Peterson was a prog fan and ready to push boundaries but he was, she admits, "the practical one. He'd rein my ideas in to not lose the audience."

The audience remained, and, through her classical connections, grew vastly. In 1996, her duet with Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, *Time To Say Goodbye*, sold 12 million copies. Brightman performed at huge televised events such as the 2007 Concert for Diana and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games with peers such as Domingo, Carreras and China's King Of Pop, Liu Huan. To date, she has sold more than 30 million units globally and is a UNESCO Artist For Peace. Brightman also champions young women in science and tech and sponsors new musical talent with scholarships to the Royal Northern College Of Music.

But the cosmos drew her back. 2013 album *Dreamchaser* reunited Brightman with producer Mike Hedges, once the 19-year-old engineer on *Starship Trooper*, for a space-themed record that prompted tutelage in Russia for an actual trip ad astra.

"I did all the training to go into space," she says, "then for reasons I can't go into I had to pull out. But being a trained cosmonaut is pretty proggy and out-there in itself, if you think of Floyd and Bowie…"

Prog is even at the heart of her new album, *Hymn*. Barclay James Harvest's 1977 track takes centre stage, sumptuously developed for the Brightman masses. "It a beautiful song, both grounded and heavenly," she says of a record bursting with influences and styles, and reflecting on the opulent artwork that she chose for its spiritual feel, loaded with symbolic references from Masonic to secular art.

Thirty years on from *Phantom…*, whether she is reimagining Sigur Rós and Cocteau Twins on *Dreamchaser* or mixing John Bonham samples with Procol Harum on *La Luna*, Brightman is compelled to keep experimenting, and her audience lap it up.

"It's always been about concept," she says. "The first time I heard Jeff Wayne's *The War Of The Worlds*, I knew I wanted to do *that*.

"Things just kept coming into my life," she continues. "I was a pop artist exploring electronica. I was a classical artist who loved dance music. When everything came together it created the career that I have now, which is very wonderful."

Hymn is out now via Decca. See www.sarahbrightman.com for more.

YOUR SHOUT!

She lost her heart to a starship trooper, and you didn't disappoint with the gags on that front. But most of you were ready to seriously ponder the question of Brightman's prog credentials…

"She sampled *Tubular Bells* and got Andrew Eldritch (Sisters Of Mercy) to sing backing vocals, so maybe she's on the very, very outer limits…"
Steve Hawkins

"I think her ex-husband has more of a claim than she does."
David Meadows

"She was in the German chant band Gregorian? Her sister is still a member. That sounds pretty prog to me."
Wedgepiece

"Her singing in *Phantom Of The Opera* is the gold standard that all female vocals for that genre should be measured against. True prog fans who haven't listened to that musical should check it out."
Tim Boucher

"She's currently been working with Yoshiki from X Japan so that should improve her credentials. Don't think she's into the visual Kei makeup, though."
Phil Hopwood

"Goddess."
Heather Findlay

"What are you on? Just no."
Steve Harrison

"Great dancer… some shite music behind her though. Has she flipped over from the dark side of light entertainment and started doing something good? I'm intrigued."
Martin Frankcom

"She took the career path I aspired to. Marry a millionaire then get divorced."
Jon White

"She pushed a lot of boundaries - and made the most of her talents. Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote to her strengths."
Mark Cotton

"*Fly* is a great album, not least due to the presence of the mighty Chris Thompson on *How Can Heaven Love Me?*"
Andy Rawll

"*Ghost In The Machinery* is somewhat proggish."
Alex Lazcano

"The Outer Limits feature should always be 'interesting'. And this sounds interesting. Looking forward to reading."
Jeff Cooper

"Her and Loreena McKennitt are top people. She definitely belongs within the progressive realm."
Jeramy Stanton Essary

"Just listened to her new version of Barclay James Harvest's *Hymn* and progressive wasn't the first word that sprang to mind… Nor was it the second or third!"
Stacy Dollar

"She did *Phantom Of The Opera* with Steve Harley, so definitely opening the doors of prog, and she was in Hot Gossip - let the Brightman in!"
Marc Hughes

Voices From The Fuselage, with Ashe O'Hara second from left.

WALK -INTO- LIGHT

With **Voices From The Fuselage**'s anticipated second album, that follows up conceptually from their 2015 debut, frontman **Ashe O'Hara** has opened up about his struggles, from mental health to substance abuse, like never before.

Words: Dannii Leivers

For many fans of prog music, Ashe O'Hara is a familiar face, and a much-loved voice. In 2014 he decided it was time to step down as vocalist in TesseracT, following a two-year stint during which the band released album *Altered State*. O'Hara's departure disappointed fans, but it meant he was able to turn his attention back to Voices From The Fuselage, the proggy post-rock outfit he'd co-founded and fronted since 2010.

"Lots of people have said, 'I'm so glad you're back in Voices,' but I never left Voices!" he protests. "I was doing a degree and the last two years of it was spent on the road with TesseracT. I barely had any time to do anything with Voices but they always said they never wanted to replace me and I never wanted to leave them either. They were happy to take a back seat and they were really supportive."

His return also enabled him to realise a musical vision he'd cooked up way back in college: the creation of two musical 'Odysseys', the first being sonically 'dark', and the second 'light'.

Voices From The Fuselage's debut album, 2015's *Odyssey: The Destroyer Of Worlds*, represented the first of those instalments: an intricate delight which balanced heaviness and pop-inspired melodies, technicality and accessibility, using the deftest of touches. Today though, we're here to chat to O'Hara about its successor, *Odyssey: The Founder Of Dreams*. As originally envisioned, it's the more ethereal of the two chapters, packed with simmering, radiant melodies. But you only need to take a closer look at the lyric sheet to recognise that these tracks come from a dark place, delving bravely into O'Hara's past, in particular his tumultuous childhood.

"With the release of this album, I feel like I owe it to the fans to be more honest and open about where my music comes from. I've been scared to do that," O'Hara explains. "My mum put me in a Catholic school for part of my childhood. I fucking hated my time in that school. As I got older, the pictures didn't make sense to me, the idea there is someone watching over us and trying to lead us through to a better path of righteousness, that everything we face is a challenge and we're being tested. With me coming to terms with the fact that I'm gay and everything negative that's happened in my life I thought, 'Fuck these tests.' It didn't add up to me.

"With the release of this album, I feel like I owe it to the fans to be more honest and open about where my music comes from. I've been scared to do that."

"When you're a kid it's difficult to define yourself because you're still trying to sense what everything around you is," he continues. "I was surrounded by Catholics and I felt very confused, a little bit lost. It was around that time that knew I liked boys in a different way, but I didn't know that was gay. I felt that way about Christianity. I knew I didn't believe in it, but I didn't know that was atheism."

O'Hara has never known his father, or "the sperm donor" as he refers to him with an edge in his voice, and instead was brought up, initially, by his mother. By the time he was 12 however, she had developed a serious drinking problem and needed to be hospitalised. At that point, O'Hara was placed

into foster care. It marked the beginning of a traumatic period which would continue into his adult years.

"We thought she was going to die, the doctor said she had two days left," he remembers. "My first foster mum took me to the hospital to say goodbye and she looked horrible, like a skeleton, with green skin, full-on liver damage and liver spots all over her body. She was so malnourished. It was horrible, possibly the worst day of my life. She's ok now, she recovered, went into rehab, got her own place and picked up her life. How can a doctor be so wrong? Nothing any doctor has told my mum has been right. I was 12, and it angers me when I look back because I was so young and vulnerable, and all that grief I felt at the time was unnecessary."

While his mother recovered in intensive care, O'Hara was moved between foster homes before settling with a couple called Lena and Dave, who he lived with until he was 20.

"I was broken, I'd had three foster homes which said they didn't want to look after me," he says. "The first was a short term one and it didn't work out well. Then I moved onto another place, that lady was in her 50s. She had three grown-up sons, her middle son was gay and she didn't have a good relationship with him. She secretly packed up my things when I was at school. My social worker came and told me I was being moved because she said I was 'strange' and that I reminded her of her son. I think it was because I was obviously gay, but I didn't know that at the time. As you can imagine that's why I felt very lost and didn't have much hope.

"After that I went into an emergency place for about a week and then I eventually moved into Lena and Dave's. I remember that night really clearly: I was outside the house crying up against a tree like a fucking child. But I spent about seven and a half years with them and they changed my life."

Fast forward to 2016. After living apart for many years, O'Hara moved in with his mother in Northampton in order to get a handle on his drug use, which had started to spiral.

"I moved down to Brighton to go to university and I had friends who probably weren't the healthiest relationships," he says frankly. "I don't blame them, I take full responsibility, but [they were] enablers and encouragers. I started taking methamphetamines, getting into all the horrible class A shit. There was a lot of Mandy [MDMA], a lot of meow [mephedrone] and a lot of coke. It's weird because I hated the idea of drugs, but it just took one sniff and it was downhill from there.

"When I moved to live with my mum I didn't stop taking drugs though," he admits. "I met a guy who

"There was a lot of Mandy [MDMA], a lot of meow [Mephedrone] and a lot of coke. It's weird because I hated the idea of drugs, but it just took one sniff and it was downhill from there."

Ashe O'Hara: back from the brink.

I was seeing, he is the inspiration behind *Via*, the first track on the new album. He was a ketamine dealer: he dragged me even further down. The reason I came off of it was because it was overflowing onto other people in my life. There was a point where I said, 'I can't do this anymore.'"

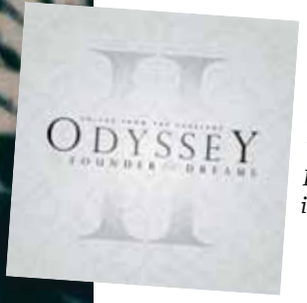
Not only did moving home eventually help O'Hara get off the drugs, it also gave him and his mother a chance to overcome their painful past. "It was a weird dynamic given we'd only lived together for 11 years of our lives prior to that, but I'm glad we did. She has been there, she has tried to raise me. Where the hell has my father been? Nowhere. I'll always forgive my mum and never hold against her what happened because I've recently gone down a similar path with drugs."

O'Hara wrote his first song when he was just nine years old and it quickly became a coping mechanism, a way to shrug off the unhappy realities of his home life. With *Odyssey: The Founder Of Dreams* however, escapism wasn't an option the singer laid out for himself on the table. On the contrary, these are easily the most on-the-nose, candid tracks he's ever written. Take a song like *The Monolith*, for instance, on which O'Hara sings about *'Wrestling, grappling with my demons.'* Elsewhere, single *Nine Levels* includes the lyric: *'Are you depraved are you depraved down here? Will you survive the place I've endured for several years? It pulled me underneath.'*

"They always say the most broken people make the best art," he muses. "I'm very much a 'beauty in sadness' songwriter. When I was about 12 I was diagnosed with depression. I've always felt depressed since then. I have good days, I've had laughs, I've had good times, but I've never been truly happy with my life or who I am. I've kind of made my peace with that, with the fact I'll never be truly satisfied and I don't think you're supposed to be."

Is O'Hara nervous about releasing such a personal record, especially given fans' tendencies to pore and theorise over his lyrics?

"No, I like it," he replies. "It's helped me. Some of the messages I get from fans are so encouraging. People have said my lyrics have stopped them wanting to kill themselves and given them a revived outlook on life. That's literally more than I could ever ask for."



Odyssey: The Founder Of Dreams is out now via White Star. See www.facebook.com/VoicesFromTheFuselage for more information.

Progmeister UK Presents

facebook.com/fusionmusicfestivals

MIDLANDS METALHEADS RADIO

The Civic Stourport

FUSION 2019

MUSIC WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

AMPLE PARKING | EXCELLENT BAR | STREET FOOD | MERCHANDISE

22ND–24TH MARCH 2019

STOURPORT CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN, DY13 8UJ

FRIDAY

FOCUS

The Gift

HEY JESTER

SATURDAY

ONE OFF PERFORMANCE

ENGLAND

GARDEN SHED MUSIC

The Book of GENESIS

DEC BURKE
(DARWIN'S RADIO, FROST*, AUDIOPLASTIK)

FINAL

I AM THE MANIC WHALE

ENCIRCLED

Hats Off Gentlemen It's Adequate

SUNDAY

EARTH

FRANCK CARDUCCI BAND

CIRCU5

spiral X key...

EMPEROR NORTON

Leafblade

TICKETS FROM £20

BOOK YOUR TICKETS TODAY

01299 823339

07932 617545

THECIVICSTOURPORT.CO.UK/FUSION

FRIDAY 6.45PM - MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY 11.45AM - MIDNIGHT

SUNDAY 11.45AM - 9PM

England circa *Garden Shed*, L-R: Frank Holland, Martin Hutchinson, Jode Leigh, Robert Webb.

Sons Of Albion

Timing is everything, as **England** know – their 1977 debut was released when prog was seemingly in decline. But with a new release and a live show announced, they're now back in business...

Words: Mike Barnes

"I believe England to be unique," says the group's keyboard player, Robert Webb. "It's a great musical achievement, both compositionally and as a performing group, and the chemistry between us made it extraordinary. *Garden Shed* has never gone away from me. I suppose if you are the composer as well as one of the players, it's a bit like giving birth."

In a time when anything old, well-known and of reasonable quality is likely to get labelled as "classic" or "legendary", we have over-enthusiastic fans mixing up rarity with quality and championing "great lost bands" who rarely live up to that description. But England's 1977 debut *Garden Shed* was, indeed, until its reissue on CD in 2005, something of a lost classic of 70s progressive rock. And over time, the group have deservingly achieved something of a legendary status among the cognoscenti.

Listening to the album now, it holds its own with those of the group's more illustrious peers. It's adventurously structured and richly melodic: the contrapuntal keyboard and vocal lines on a track like *Midnight Madness* are imaginative in a way that recalls Gentle Giant, and there are hints of Yes and Genesis. Jode Leigh's drumming — which he says was influenced by King Crimson's Michael Giles — is particularly individual, swelling from a deft, light touch to dynamic fills.

From Mike Cosford's cover artwork, which is a pastiche of the Robertson's Golden Shred marmalade label, to its pastoral Mellotron moments, there's something about the punningly titled *Garden Shed* that feels as English as tea, toast and marmalade.

Record labels had embraced the new progressive rock music into the 70s and, with groups like Jethro Tull and Family promoting their hit singles on *Top Of The Pops*, no one knew how far this new phenomenon would go. But come 1977, the year that punk broke big, if you were a band or artist with moderate sales you were unlikely to survive. David Bedford, for example, had made a number of moderate-selling orchestral and keyboard-based concept albums for Virgin, but when the label signed the Sex Pistols, he was soon dropped.

For a budding progressive rock band like England it was a cruel case of wrong place, wrong time. They formed in 1975 and by 1976 had landed a deal with Arista. They rehearsed at the Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone, where their gear was permanently set up, and they recorded some backing tracks there with the Rolling Stones Mobile.

Arista were keen to get them a producer, and one in the frame was a big name. "Several people were offered, one of whom was Keith Emerson, and like a twat I turned him away, because I would have felt awkward with such an amazing player," Webb admits. "Keith had been a great influence on me, and I would have found it difficult. Also, I saw him more as a keyboard player and a creative artist. He had no track record in producing."

Instead they agreed on David Hitchcock, who had produced Caravan and Genesis. He reckoned the group needed to finish off in a professional studio, so they decamped to Air Studios in London. As a producer he had a light touch and England felt that they needed something a bit more "directive" but they sent a demo to the label, who were happy with the results, and so the group basically ended up producing the album themselves.

With an excellent debut album in the can in early 1977, all looked set fair — in theory at least. Webb was disappointed when he got a proof of the cover artwork back from the printers and noticed that some of the colours were wrong and so he complained about it. What followed this shows just

Above: debut album *Garden Shed*. Right: Robert Webb in 2018.

> "I think there is a tendency to come up with a progressive rock sound, with singers either modelling themselves on Peter Gabriel or Jon Anderson in a loose kind of way. I don't think that's progressive."

how much and how quickly the musical landscape was changing.

"To get a new set of plates would have been expensive," says Webb. "And our manager said, 'If you don't accept the sleeve as it is, I don't think they're going to bother to put the album out', so I said, 'OK, I accept it!' Then when it was scheduled for release about a month later in March, there were two marketing guys, one was just about to come back from holiday and one was just about to go on holiday, and our album got put in a slot between the two. The guy who came back from holiday didn't want to carry on promoting what the other guy had started doing, and the other guy who was going on holiday didn't want to finish what he started. It was a right mess. So we left Arista."

If *Garden Shed* had been released a few years before the convulsion of punk or a few years after — when a second wave of progressive groups like Marillion, Pendragon and Twelfth Night appeared — it would surely have been a high-profile release. People's tastes didn't suddenly change overnight and the album gained some media attention — Radio 1 DJ Annie Nightingale was impressed — but without promotion it slipped under the radar.

The group then extricated themselves from their manager, who, although proud of *Garden Shed*, had turned his attentions to newer signings. Webb got a job as a musical director for a musical show, *Squeak*, in Hornchurch, with England members playing in the orchestra pit.

When the show finished, the group lived in a shop in Tunbridge Wells, where Webb assembled a PA, made a 24-channel mixing desk and, soldering iron in hand, repaired local musicians' amplifiers, while drummer Jode Leigh did up Morris Minors and sold them on. They got some gigs off their own bat but then hooked up with a London agent.

"Eventually it reached a head," Webb recalls. "We did three gigs — two with The Enid and one with Renaissance in Plymouth — and the money we got paid barely covered the petrol."

But the group were still expected to pay the agent his 10 per cent and, with two on the dole and no money coming in, they split. Webb joined Jenny Darren's touring band.

The *Melody Maker* review of *Garden Shed* described it as "Yes in Toyland", and although England didn't paint on quite so large a sonic canvas, the comment was both glib and far from accurate. But then there is a similar feel about some of the vocal harmonies, even the texture of the voices, particularly on *Three-Piece Suite*. Although the group didn't have a lead singer out front, Webb, Leigh and guitarist Frank Holland all had good voices.

"I'd been in Merlin before and a couple of other bands," says Webb. "We had written our own material, but I'd never written anything for voices that were in harmony, I just had a melody line that I sang or someone else sang.

Back In Business: England in 2006.

Robert Webb: taking a breather from Mellotron sawing...

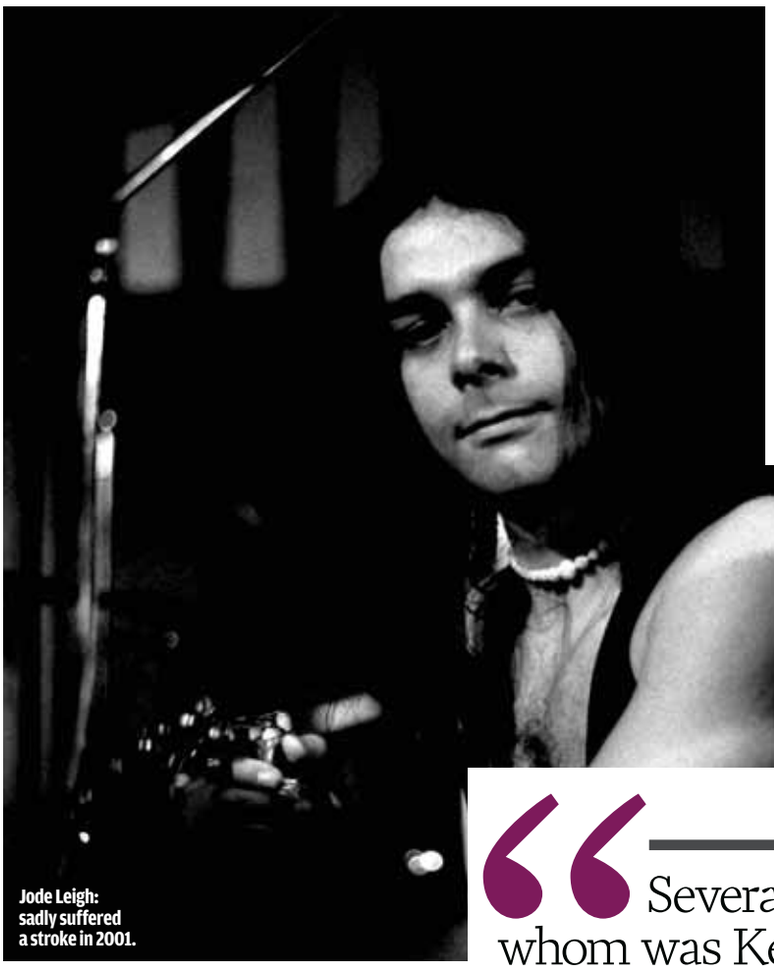
Above: 1997's *The Last Of The Jubblies*.

Cheery Chaps: Frank Holland (left) and Robert Webb.

"Because of hearing Yes, particularly *Fragile*, I thought, 'Ah, that's a great idea, maybe I could write some voices together?' I didn't copy anything, but it does sound a little bit Yes-like because of three different voices. But we found a blend that worked."

One of the stories circulating online is that Webb sawed a Mellotron in half. If this is true it needs some qualification, as it makes tales of Keith Emerson and his daggers between the keys seem quite tame by comparison.

"It's true," says Webb, "and the reason is because it's too big and incredibly heavy — a four-man job." The instrument, a Mark II Mellotron, once owned by Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, belonged to original drummer Mark Ibbotson and was languishing in the back of his three-ton truck "like a piece of furniture".



Jode Leigh: sadly suffered a stroke in 2001.

Martin Henderson: in the pink.

> Several people were offered, one of whom was Keith Emerson, and like a twat I turned him away, because I would have felt awkward with such an amazing player.

"One day the roadie said, 'Why don't we get that Mellotron out and see what it bloody does?' And we did. It had two three-octave keyboards side by side with a piece of wood in the middle, so you cut through that vertically. It's much easier than it sounds. I had to get various other bits cut in half, like the capstan wheel that drives the tapes across the heads, but I did eventually get both halves working.

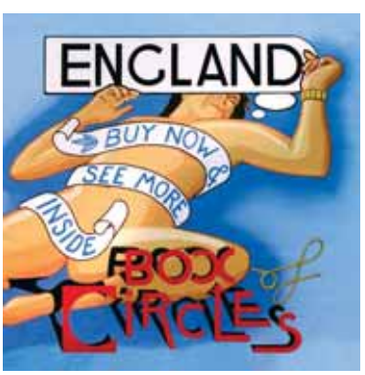
"With the Hammond C3 there wasn't really much happening in the bottom half, so in the late 60s it became quite common for people to cut them in half so you could carry them. We call it a 'split Hammond'. I think about half the Hammonds that survive have been split either by amateurs or by people working in the organ repair business."

Webb remembers that when he worked at Selmer in London in 1972 he offered to split a new Lowrey organ for a customer.

"I was downstairs in the shop – the organ department was with the drum department – and I pushed this brand new organ on its back and got my handsaw and started sawing through it, and the guy who was the drum salesman was saying, 'I don't believe it!' It was successful and the customer was happy."

Webb was always keen on modifying equipment, from changing the speaker cones in his Leslie Speaker to altering the vibrato effect on his Minimoog.

"The Fender Rhodes had drawing pins in it and was tuned an octave higher than it should be," he says. "I was very interested in finding new sounds and on *Garden Shed* it's got this really strange 'pingy' sound."



Above: 2018's *Box Of Circles*.

England's reputation has grown over the years. A compilation of unreleased tracks from 1976-'67, *The Last Of The Jubblies*, came out in '97, and the band reformed for some live dates in 2005. Sadly, Leigh had a debilitating stroke in 2001, but six of his drum tracks were recorded in 1998-'89 for a mooted England release. This appeared as *Box Of Circles*, this year.

"It's a very different album," says Webb. "It was always conceived as an England idea and I followed it through. It just took a long time to do. Only *Wheel Of Fortune* really reminds me of the early England days. But it's what I call progressive rock in the sense that you're not going to sit still, you're always learning, always progressing with your writing. I think there is a tendency to come up with a progressive rock sound, with singers either modelling themselves on Gabriel or Jon Anderson in a loose kind of way. I don't think that's progressive, I think it's progressive nostalgia, although I've got nothing against it.

"It features Jenny Darren on vocals on one track and Mark Atkinson of Riversea on another, so there's quite a bit of variety in there, and so we aren't going to be able to feature that all at one gig."

The gig is the Fusion Festival, Stourport in March 2019, where England will be performing *Garden Shed* and material from *Box Of Circles* with a line-up including Webb, guitarist Frank Holland and bassist Martin Henderson from the 70s line-up and singer Mike Morton, guitarist Dave Lloyd and keyboard player Gabriele Baldocci from The Gift.

"I'm interested in what younger people think of this style of music," says Webb. "There seems to be a deep interest from people who think that this is an artistic style of music, which is appreciated for its artistic value and should be kept alive."

Does Webb reckon that England will keep going and produce new material?

"I live in Greece now and the band need to get together to rehearse, so there's complications," he notes. "But if it goes forward, there'll be new material. As a keyboard player my ideas would change with what the other musicians added and that's not been the case with *Box Of Circles* because I've been more or less left on my own to come up with what I want. But if we can go on I'll write for these musicians knowing what their skills are and what they could explore."

Box Of Circles is out now via Nu Music – Green Tree Records. See www.englandprogrock.com for more information.

Glimmering Hope

Shattered Skies' second album examines the effects of social media and reality television on our mental health. From the idea of the 'tortured artist' to their forays into synthwave, they discuss the creation of *Muted Neon*.

Words: Sophie Maughan **Images:** Annie Batten

"I think it's a trope in pop culture. That the 'tortured' artist is going to produce the best, most beautiful and most emotional piece of work. I've been through that, and that's not what depression is. That's not what anxiety is. It doesn't make you create."

Shattered Skies' frontman Gerry Brown is pondering over the dangerous idea of the 'tortured artist', that mental health problems will result in the most stunning work. As

someone who has struggled with his own mental health, Brown believes that this idealised view is misguided.

"It's only when you come out the other side that you get that required energy and passion back in your life," he continues. "You can take things from it, those experiences, but they're not what make the art. There are stigmas surrounding mental health, but as someone who has struggled with it, I just don't have time to worry about them. You've just got to be who you are and do what you have to in order to get what you want to do done!"

Shattered Skies certainly do get things done. It's been a sometimes bumpy ride to get to where they are today: the band uprooted from Ireland to London in 2013 to further their career, only to have their original singer Sean Murphy leave amicably two years later. But thankfully, they found Brown, and the rest is history.

"Long term, I don't regret the move, we have had more opportunities here and the line-up we've ended up with I think is the strongest we've ever had, but it was difficult," guitarist Ian Rockett explains. "Trying to get up on our feet in a new country in terms of living, financially and everything else. Upheaval like that takes its toll."

"These societal and cultural trends make you want to compare yourselves to other people's bests - and subsequently, you're thinking about your worst."
Gerry Brown

The band are all also very aware of the toll that mental health problems can take on a person, both generally and within the music industry itself. Indeed, their second album, *Muted Neon*, examines a very modern mental health issue: warped societal ideals depicted on reality TV and social media, and the resulting damage we inflict upon ourselves in that constant quest for validation.

"These societal and cultural trends make you want to compare yourselves to other people's bests — and subsequently, you're thinking about your worst," says Brown. "The fact that you're connected to everyone all the time means that you don't ever feel *properly* connected and, more than that, you have got to think about the fact that social media is a tool. A tool that is being controlled and developed by someone else or some other organisation."

Rockett admits that rising above all of this is not easy.

"When I was writing those lyrics, I was basically picturing being like the average person you see trying out for stuff like *Big Brother* or *Britain's Got Talent*. People are literally willing to compromise their own

Shattered Skies: it's probably safe to say they're not fans of *Big Brother*...

character to try and get some sort of relevance," he sighs ruefully. "Initially when I first started to use stuff like Facebook, it was just a handy means to speak to your mates and post pictures and promote your band a bit. As it's progressed, it's become how people identify themselves by it. That said, there is no way you don't get a little adrenaline rush when you post something and it gets a lot of likes. All of us experience it, including me!

"It's a weird place to be right now," he continues, "and that's happening in conjunction with people confronting the mental health issue. I'm sure there are a lot of artists covering this right now, but that's because it is the main issue of our day. This is our approach to it."

The video for lead single *You Will Know My Name* examines these ideas further: conceived by Annie Batten, friend of the band and interdisciplinary artist and owner of visual arts company Tabula Rasa, it is a reflection on society's desperate and insatiable need for relevance.

"You've got this person staring down the camera trying to get in people's faces and getting weirder and worse and more desperate as it goes on," Brown explains of the concept. "The powder and the UV paint – that was someone trying to be as eye-grabbing as they could, even if they are masking themselves. The 'neon' part was the idea of getting someone to look less and less human. But as eye-catching as they can, because they're doing it on purpose."

"It represents him constantly trying to change and shift to become relevant in some way," says Rockett. "It's also a visual metaphor for the whole 'I'll turn myself into whatever you want as long as you just look at me' thing."

Boasting a vibrant, dynamic exploration of sound, *Muted Neon* takes the heavy prog of Shattered Skies' former material and adds even more memorable hooks, pushing further into accessible territory without compromising on the aggressive intensity or sense of hopeful exuberance that makes them so captivating.

From the grandiose bombast of opener *The Disaffected*, which arrives with heady twists and turns, to the uneasy sprawl of electro-tinged earworm *The First Circle*, the 11-track album is a powerful force. Between the album's moniker and two members of the band specifically handling synth programming, the 80s aesthetic throughout is undeniable. There are nods to *Escape From New York*-era John Carpenter sitting alongside the darkly melodic melange of classical composition and synthesisers mirroring the futuristic film noir of *Blade Runner*. But forays into synthwave aside, *Muted Neon* has more than enough substance and sonic complexity to keep any fan of progressive music gripped, with additional influences rooted in a range of acts associated with the genre.

"Devin [Townsend] is definitely one of those artists that we listened to when we were writing. Especially his earlier solo stuff," Rockett recalls. "I also took a lot of influence on the keyboards from early Dream Theater. *Images And Words* and *Awake* – specifically the keys on those. Their first keyboardist, Kevin Moore, did some really interesting things with these strange string patterns and pitch bends, and almost slightly computer game-esque-sounding synths and the way they mixed against heavy guitars."

"We've also got to give credit to Ross [McMahon, drums, programming]," Brown interjects. "He did all the mixing and mastering. We wanted to fit so much in, and to get that warp of sound without it becoming less was a huge ask. In all honesty, the drumming only comprises 30 or 40 per cent of what he actually does in the band!"

Shattered Skies have already conquered festival giants ProgPower, Euroblast and the UK's Bloodstock, and *Muted Neon* has just been released, but they're not about to rest on their laurels.

"It doesn't matter what type of band you're in – whether it's one that plays in the pub on a Friday night or one that's hitting up huge tours on a regular basis. Whatever category that band fall under, it needs to be part of the puzzle that makes up your life," Brown declares emphatically. "Because if that band is not essential to who you are as a person and what your life is, then you're never going to stick it out."

"I think we can probably speak for that more than most bands, having moved countries and having had those line-up changes," Rockett concludes. "Some would argue it's all about perseverance. Idiotic, relentless perseverance. You've got to *need* to do it – because if you only *want* to do it, something along the way will demotivate you enough to stop you doing it. When you get that feedback that people *really* love what you've written, and that they've gleaned something from it, that always drives you forward. That makes all the difference. It doesn't matter if you aren't making a huge amount financially – it's the passion that will drive you forward."

"I also took a lot of influence on the keyboards from early Dream Theater. *Images And Words* and *Awake* - specifically the keys on those."
Ian Rockett

Muted Neon is out now and is self-released. See www.facebook.com/shatteredskiesofficial for more information.

OFFER ENDS 31 DECEMBER 2018

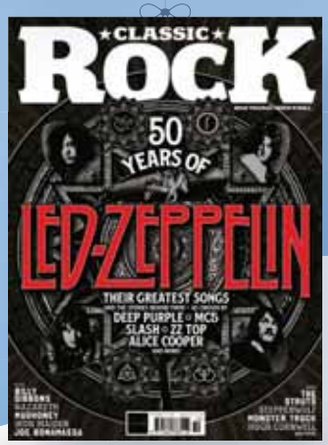
FROM £9.99 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€98.00 /$108.00 PER YEAR)

FROM £8.75 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€86.00 /$95.00 PER YEAR)

FROM £8.75 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€86.00 /$95.00 PER YEAR)

The perfect gift from just £7.50*

FROM £7.50 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€70/$87 PER YEAR)



FROM £8.75 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€86/$95 PER YEAR)

FROM £9.99 EVERY 3 MONTHS
(€60/$62 PER YEAR)

***Delivery included** in the price*

***Free personalised e-card** when buying for someone else*

Buy as a gift or treat yourself!

*Choose from a **huge range of titles***

SEE THE FULL RANGE AND ORDER ONLINE

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/xmas187

ORDER HOTLINE: 0344 848 2852

PLEASE QUOTE XMAS187 WHEN ORDERING BY PHONE
LINES ARE OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM TO 7PM AND SATURDAY 10AM TO 2PM (GMT)

***Terms and conditions:** Savings calculated against the full RRP (single issue price x frequency). Dollar prices quoted are for the United States, other global territory dollar pricing may vary. This offer is for new subscribers only. You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Your subscription is for the minimum specified and will expire at the end of the current term. Payment is non-refundable after the 14 day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. Full details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available on request. For full term and conditions please visit: bit.ly/magtandc. Offer ends 31st December 2018

Let There Be Light...

From buttered cats to soft synths, **Sanguine Hum**'s concept-heavy Canterbury-influenced sounds are a *purr-fect* addition to modern prog...

Words: Mike Barnes **Images:** Carl Glover

"I think that, for us, *Now We Have Power* is about enjoying playing the music, having fun realising it and making it as interesting as it can be," says Sanguine Hum's Matt Baber on their new album. "It's a much more expansive soundworld than we have achieved before."

Now We Have Power has the same sort of elegant intricacy as its 2015 predecessor, *Now We Have Light*, but Sanguine Hum's music is like an ongoing work-in-progress, mixing new compositions with music from their library of demos, some of which date back a number of years. And while on earlier albums they were keen to try to replicate these demos when they re-recorded them for release, here they have also reworked, rearranged and experimented with them.

This more open process has produced a greater feeling of scale and space, and yielded some particularly striking moments, like the chorales that open *The View Part One*, sung by guitarist, vocalist and keyboard player Joff Winks. Current drummer Paul Mallyon has contributed some sections, while bass guitarist Brad Waissman, although not a composer per se, is credited with arrangements and acts as the group's "arbiter of taste", in that songs that meet his disapproval have been dropped. Baber, who plays keyboards, reckons that although he might have written the majority of the musical ideas, it's their most collaborative recording to date.

The album is also more keyboard-orientated, with Winks playing less guitar and more keyboards this time around. "The acoustic piano plays a major part," says Baber. "And we spent a lot of time recording it in the Jacqueline Du Pre Music Building in Oxford, a specially built rehearsal and performing space where we rented the whole building and a Steinway piano for two days. But Joff in particular has been exploring a lot of software samples."

"We branched out into the 'soft synths', which are recreations of the classic synths, the ARP Solina, the Yamaha CS 80, the Oberheim SEM, the classic minimoog," Winks confirms. "So in a way, the new sounds that we have reached for are a recreation of the sounds that we grew up listening to, used by people we admired, like Bowie and Eno."

They also admit that Todd Rundgren — particularly *A Wizard, A True Star* and *Todd* — was an influence on some of the rippling background synths on tracks like *Skydive*. But the conceptual narrative that began on 2013's *The Weight Of The World* and is more overtly stated on *Now We Have Light* and *Now We Have Power* was also influenced by Rundgren's exploration of theosophical themes on albums like *Initiation*.

The story dates right back to 2001, years before the formation of Sanguine Hum, when Baber and Winks heard the buttered cat joke: that toast always lands on the buttered side and a cat always lands on its feet, so if you butter a cat's back and drop it, it will keep spinning. This prompted ideas of harnessing this energy for powering turbines and within a day or so Winks rang up Baber with news of a song he had written on this subject called *Chat Show*.

"I think that in the last 10 years or so, more and more bands are connecting in one way or another to prog rock and progressive music as a survival technique."

Matt Baber

Sanguine Hum, L-R: Brad Waissman, Matt Baber, Joff Winks.

The buttered cat conspiracy accreted over time into a kind of absurdist sci-fi construct, which comes in a booklet with the new album. This most recent instalment finds the protagonist Don, aka Bubble Man, bursting through a breach in the space-time continuum and falling to Earth, where, among other things, he is hailed as a new messiah. Also featuring in this story are Antique Seeking Nuns, a group the two were in before Sanguine Hum.

All of which begs the question: why did they want to write that most maligned of musical statements — the concept album — and one with such a bizarre story?

"For me, it was influenced by people who'd done those sort of albums, like Pink Floyd's *The Wall, The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, even Frank Zappa doing *Joe's Garage*," says Baber. "And Joff and I are both massive fans of David Bowie's *Outside* album and the idea of telling a story with music is just a very natural thing to do. And that was a nice way to write in that you could always dive into part of the story and you can start working on the lyrics without having a blank page and thinking, 'What do I feel like today?'"

Winks adds, "We've both been working away on the lyrics for some time, and they become kind of intertwined with what's going on in your personal life. As Matt was saying, the story provides a narrative arc that you can work with, but we've also got the opportunity to tell a different kind of story in the emotional feel of the pieces, and the lyrics can be read in different ways. If you don't know the story, I think you can listen to the songs and have them resonate with you on a personal level."

The concept could be described as pretty loose, or at least flexible, but does using it as a sort of template have much of a bearing on the way that you write the music?

"I think that it does as you are led by the story's events," says Baber. "But then you might have music that you have already written and you start mapping it onto the story and think, 'Ah, that bit's going to fit there.'"

"Also, the other way around, I think that the music has equal bearing on the story in many ways, so there's definitely a push and pull between those two elements," adds Winks.

Sanguine Hum's music is complex, but with a strong sense of melody. With their repetitive yet constantly shifting keyboard arpeggios, they create structures that remind *Prog* of some minimalist composers.

"There's a big nod in the Sanguine Hum sound to Steve Reich," Winks admits. "Even if it's not directly in the notes, there's an element of his approach to the writing. The kind of canoning that is going on in *Tehillim* is a massive influence. There's lots of canoning going on in *Flight Of The Uberloon* as well and the instrumentation is somewhat similar to a Reich chamber group. It's like our humble version of that."

Baber reckons that Reich's influence is so ingrained in the fabric of their writing that they couldn't ditch it now even if they tried. "On *Bedhead* we have those clouds of trumpets, literally stolen from Steve Reich's *Music For A Large Ensemble*," he admits. "It's the first time we've had trumpet on a record and it's played by Brad's cousin, Mark Kesel."

The 70s Canterbury scene bands are another influence on Sanguine Hum, particularly in regard to the fact that they tend to write music in irregular time signatures. But rather than ostentatiously lurching around from rhythm to rhythm — "Like a signpost has been put at the end of each bar," as Baber says — Sanguine Hum achieve a similar kind of swinging momentum, with some seesawing moments created by adding or dropping beats.

"On *Now We Have Light* Joff wrote the last section for *Derision* and the chord sequences slide around the rhythm, so you never get the chords in the same place twice, and it took just forever for me to get the hang of it," says Baber. "It was one of the hardest things for me to figure out. And I wrote a riff for *Now We Have Power*, the instrumental *A Tall Tale*, and it took just months and months to rehearse. I felt it naturally, but if you don't feel it naturally you have to sit down and work it out. Then we're often surprised when we find out it's in something like 19/16!"

But it's not just the mathematically impressive time signatures that can prompt some extra hours of practise to get the right feel for the music.

"On *Speech Day* we had gone through this meticulous process, mapping out the bars," says Winks. "We worked hard on getting it right and we came back to the song after [guest vocalist] Kimara Sajn had sung the melody and we realised, 'Oh, it's just in four.' It's a regular time signature but it's syncopated: it's just off beat here and there. We'd completely gone around the houses to get to that conclusion of, 'Oh yeah, it's just simple!'"

Sanguine Hum have been influenced by many groups and musicians who didn't have anything to do with 70s progressive rock, like electronica maverick Aphex Twin, neo-psychedelicists Flaming Lips and the jazz-infused post-rockers Tortoise.

"For me, it was influenced by people who'd done those sort of albums, like Pink Floyd's *The Wall, The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, even Frank Zappa doing *Joe's Garage*."

Matt Baber

Above: the lads enjoy a night on the tiles.

It's all categorisation, but if they deemed themselves post-rock, no one would bat an eyelid. But without wishing to resurrect the ages-old — and never satisfactorily answered — question, 'What is prog?', are they happy to be deemed a prog band, especially given some older listeners' reluctance to embrace new groups operating in that area?

"Even if we were vehemently saying, 'No, we're not prog', if someone sticks on *The View Part One* or *The View Part Two* and they are a Yes or Genesis fan, they might enjoy it," says Baber. "Then you might hit *Pen! Paper! Paper! Pen!* and say, 'Oh, it's Canterbury.'

"I think that in the last 10 years or so, more and more bands are connecting in one way or another to prog rock and progressive music as a survival technique — you have to align yourself to it just to be seen, to be listed on Prog Archives or to be chatted about on Progressive Ears [online forum], or to be in *Prog* magazine itself."

"It's still very hard to feel like you should fit into a category, somehow," Winks adds.

For practical reasons, Sanguine Hum don't play live as much as they used to do, not least because both Baber and Winks are full-time music teachers. They have played a duo gig recently, which Baber found "a real pleasure". But, as they say, with a full band onstage, they will always be chasing after the recorded sound, which is already layered and means that a number of lines might need to be synthesised into a single playable part. And *Now We Have Power* has become further textured by the involvement of several guest musicians, so some compromises have to be made and they are loath to have parts played onstage by a laptop.

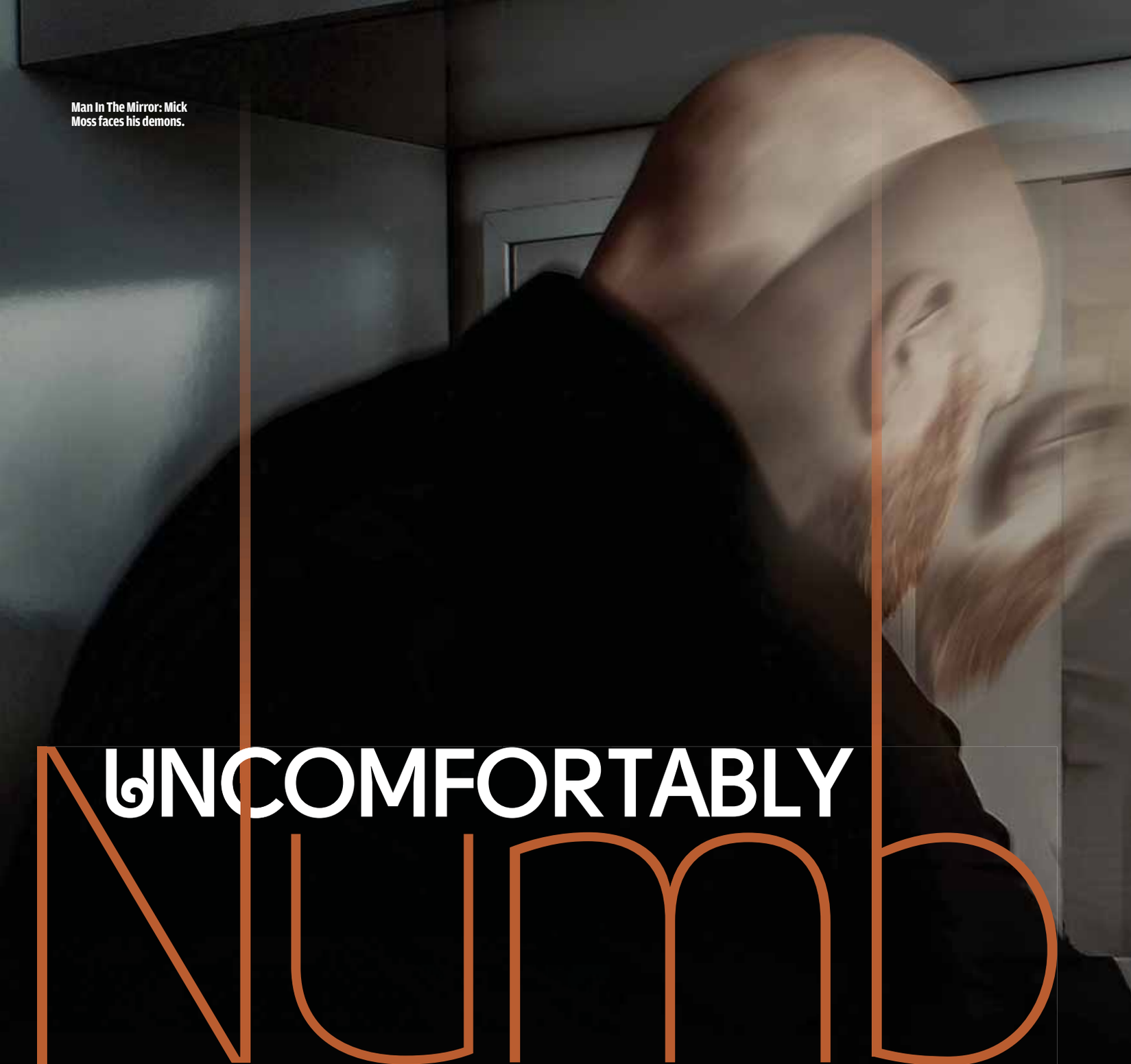
The band also recently changed record labels.

"Part of the reason that the group have moved from Cherry Red's Esoteric Antenna label onto Bad Elephant records was so there was less pressure to play gigs and more time to work on the music," says Baber. "We wanted to take our time more with this one and I think we wanted to relax a bit. Of course, Esoteric is part of Cherry Red, so whatever you do you are always going to be fighting for time a little bit and I think that we've enjoyed this time. They have been great and helpful, and they have certainly raised our profile and got us noticed. It's frustrating for them as well, as we were not able to do live work so much. It just felt a much more sensible approach. It's not that we can't play live but it has to be planned."

But right now — and without resorting to plot spoilers — the buttered cat conspiracy saga feels as if it ends a little inconclusively, rather like the proverbial shaggy-dog story. Is that the end of the trilogy, or might there be further instalments?

"We genuinely didn't know if there would be anything else and we were trying to make it as nice a conclusion as it could be if it was the last thing," says Baber. "But there's definitely room for us to come back to it at a later date. We are well into writing a new album that's completely free of the story. So it's a different experience for us now, having to sit down and actually think of something to write about."

Now We Have Light is out now via Bad Elephant. See www.sanguinehum.com for more information.



Man In The Mirror: Mick Moss faces his demons.

UNCOMFORTABLY Numb

Antimatter have never shied away from personal lyrics, but with new album *Black Market Enlightenment*, they've created one of their darkest and most honest recordings to date. *Prog* finds out what led frontman **Mick Moss** down that path.

Words: Natasha Scharf

A man in stained clothing awakes in a sparsely-furnished bedsit. His head still hurts from yesterday's excesses. If he can just make it through the day without using, he's taken his first steps towards sobriety. But he can't face up to his habit: he gives in and the cycle of his addiction continues.

The opening scene of Antimatter's video for *The Third Arm* could have been taken from mainman Mick Moss' own life. Between the ages of 16 and 21, the Liverpudlian singer-songwriter was addicted to street drugs, which eventually led to a complete mental breakdown. He explores this five-year period on the melancholic project's seventh studio album *Black Market Enlightenment*: a poignant journey through his soaring highs and crashing lows.

"It was weird [filming the video] but I love it," Moss admits. "I've been able to take a difficult, horrendous period of my life and turn it into a positive. I didn't shy away with the album cover either: that image is a sarcastic view of me and my life. I knocked it all in the end just after 2000 and it's been 18 years for me. I look back now and I feel sorry for myself."

Moss isn't the first progressive musician to have been drawn to mind-expanding substances, and he's

unlikely to be the last. Drugs have long played a creative role in the world of modern music. It's hard to imagine what The Beatles' playful *Sgt. Pepper's…* universe, Hawkwind's swirling space rock, or Pink Floyd's more 'experienced' work might have sounded like without a tab, sniff or toke. Each vibrant lyric, slinky bass line and otherworldly melody holds a message that's been passed down to subsequent generations. The teenage Mick Moss took this message to be one of approval as his musical tastes shifted from metal to psychedelic and progressive sounds.

"I was smoking cannabis from the moment I woke up until the moment I went to sleep, and I was dropping acid maybe two or three times a month. That went on for five years," he reveals. "Cannabis opened up a valve in my brain and put me in a relaxed state. When I tried LSD, it was like that times 100. It was the state I wanted to stay in. I couldn't be bothered with sobriety; that was just shit. I even took one of my GCSEs on LSD and it was the best fucking grade I got!

"But as with anything, you can't just bang it every day and there was no message like that in the music. Jim Morrison didn't sing, *'Break on through to the other side (but only do it once a month)'*! If you fast forward to '69, those original spokespeople were quiet. Syd Barrett, Peter Green [Fleetwood Mac] and Roky Erickson [The 13th Floor Elevators] had fried themselves… this is all mentioned in [*Black Market Enlightenment*'s final song] *Liquid Light*. Nobody was saying, 'We got it wrong and we realise that thousands of kids listened to what we said.' So those records continue playing for future generations to hear and take as a seal of approval."

> "It would really piss me off if I got hit by a tram and my unreleased songs just died with me."

Despite the heavy topics, Moss comes across as upbeat. His banter

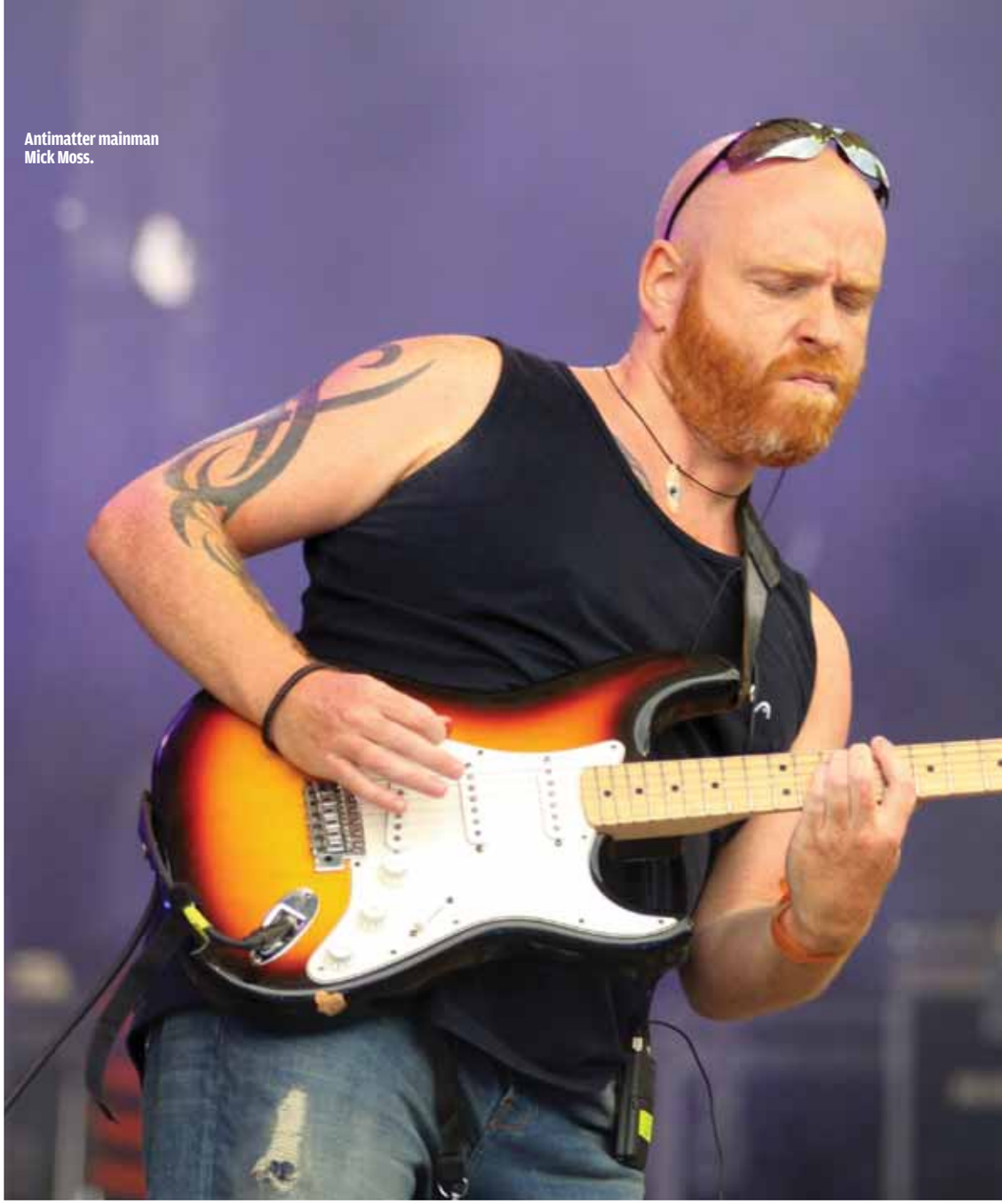
is interspersed with throaty chuckles, often as he laughs at his own reactions. But this cheerful exterior hides a troubled past that he's only hinted at on previous albums. Throughout our interview, he chooses his words carefully to make sure that he's fully understood. Several times, he even points out that *Black Market Enlightenment* is a commentary of *his* journey rather than a criticism of the path others may choose to follow. He's refreshingly open about his source material at a time when many of his peers prefer to shy away from revealing too much about the more personal aspects of their inspiration.

In *Black Market Enlightenment*'s raw lyrics, he explores the paranoia and dissociation that the songs of his youth failed to warn him about. It takes the listener on a personal journey from spiritual enlightenment to mental breakdown. There's no happy ending, just the unspoken knowledge that he eventually made it out the other side. In fact, it was during these uncertain times that he began crafting the music that eventually became Antimatter and gave his life new meaning.

Unlike the project's recent albums, which have mostly seen Moss digging into his extensive archive of ideas, he wrote this one from scratch. The results take him firmly out of his comfort zone with the bulk of the songs composed on keyboard and electric guitar rather than his trusty acoustic. Although album opener *The Third Arm* could be the sonic sequel to *Stillborn Empires* from 2015's *The Judas Table*, the remaining eight tracks follow a more electronic path with nuances of krautrock, the occasional echo of doom metal, a pinch of darkwave, a touch of 80s saxophone, and some delicious Middle Eastern flavours on *Existential*. The latter uses a particularly proggy instrumental and was inspired by Peter Gabriel's *The Last Temptation Of Christ*, and Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard (Dead Can Dance)'s soundtrack for Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*.

"I had this sound in my head and I asked Andre [Simonian, from The Beautified Project] if he could find me an Eastern bowed instrument. Vardan Baghdasaryan is one of *the* most famous Armenian qamancha players, but Andre had no idea this was who he was dealing with until he saw his face!" Moss explains of the unusual collaboration. "The way the qamancha is played, you don't rest on any single note; it's all over the fucking show. If you've got a 30-second solo, the amount of notes is outrageous. I'd love to play it live but really I can only ask the guys [in my live band] to jump on the less ridiculous pieces.

"These aren't straightforward songs and I tried to push the boundaries of what I'm doing in as many ways as I could. I succeeded… but at the cost of my own sanity!"



Antimatter mainman Mick Moss.

"I couldn't be bothered with sobriety; that was just shit. I even took one of my GCSEs on LSD."

Since 2007, Antimatter has been a one-man project with a revolving cast of collaborators, which has included both former and present members of Anathema. *Black Market Enlightenment* is no exception with multi-instrumentalist Daniel Cardoso in charge of mixing, but there are some new faces among the guests as well. Moss' distinctive vibrato vocals — as heard on *Astral Architecture*, the recent single from iamthemorning's piano virtuoso Gleb Kolyadin — are complemented not only by the warm tones of local singer Carla Lewis, but also by Aleah Starbridge's beautiful chants. The South African vocalist and Antimatter fan has popped up on several Swallow The Sun and Amorphis recordings, and was also part of the Swallow The Sun/Nightwish side project Trees Of Eternity. Although Starbridge died unexpectedly in 2016, she had been lined up to guest on *Black Market Enlightenment*. With a little help from her former partner, Swallow The Sun guitarist Juha Raivio, Moss was able to honour her memory with a haunting guest appearance.

"I've always been perversely and artistically interested in posthumous appearances. It would really piss me off if I got hit by a tram and [my unreleased songs] just died with me," admits Moss. "Juha sent me this piece and it was perfect for *Existential*, it's almost like she recorded it for the song. I wove the qamancha in and it sounds like they're doing this trade-off. I was glad I was able to do this for Aleah, and Juha is over the moon with it."

JAN VAN KLEEF

The more Moss reveals about the album, the more it's clear that he's really gone the extra mile. His ambition extends beyond the songs as well: it's Antimatter's first independently released studio album, a decision he partly attributes to the success of last year's DVD *Live Between The Earth & Clouds*.

"I've been watching small bands self release via Facebook. People are doing things themselves and something inside me felt it would appeal," he says. "I guess there's a control freak in a lot of creative people and there is one in me. I don't like to out-source jobs. The record company [Prophecy] did a great job and they wanted me to carry on, but I thought I'd do it this way, for better or for worse."

Is this now his preferred route for future releases too?

"Ha! Ask me in six months!" he says, laughing. "I've ended up having to do 14-hour days every day without a day off. I'm kind of shell-shocked and I feel like I've been down the rabbit hole for 18 months. I'd love to be able to hear the album with fresh ears. I've been asking friends, 'What's the album like?' I have no idea what I've just done!"

Moss has made life even tougher for himself by releasing the physical CD in three different packages. In addition to the standard album, there's a two-disc and special edition version of *Black Market Enlightenment* available, both of which come with the bonus DVD, *Finding Enlightenment*. This extra disc includes an in-depth documentary that explores the story behind the album as well as the promo for *The Third Arm*. The extended editions also have expanded liner notes and reproductions of watercolours that Moss painted during the 90s.

"People are interested in something that's exclusive and really personal, and all the way through the process, I wanted to do it in three tiers. The special edition has handwritten lyrics and I'm even doing a hand-numbered card with a section of guitar string from one of the instruments played on the album," he explains. "The idea is that if you watch the documentary and read through the lyrics, you'll realise what every song is about. It's quite personal to speak about it to the world, but I have in the hope I can help people understand what the album is about."

Moss' journey so far has been an incredibly emotional one and it's not over yet. Over the summer, Antimatter played in front of thousands at Germany's Night Of The Prog festival and, earlier this month, the live band finished up the first part of the Black Market Tour. The circuit has taken them around Europe although their itinerary only featured one UK show at London's intimate Black Heart. They're not the only UK progressive act to attract much larger crowds on the continent, but in their case a reluctance to tour the UK isn't entirely the fault of local audiences.

"Other bands have told me over the years, 'The UK is shit; shitty clubs, shitty audiences,' and that's soaked in. I've thought, let's not waste too much energy throwing something together when I feel it's doomed for failure. That said, [our gig at] the Camden Barfly was great two years ago," admits Moss. "I do prefer bigger clubs though because I'm not banging the head of my guitar into [bassist] Steve Hughes' shoulders and I've not got [drummer] Fab Regmann's cymbals literally three feet away from the back of my head. But I wasn't doing anything before Antimatter so any size audience or club is a bonus. There's no ego here: I've done living room concerts in front of 15-20 people with an acoustic guitar and I've played in front of thousands. It's all good."

With the second leg of the tour due to kick off next spring and rumours of some festival appearances on the horizon, there's no risk of Moss being bored. He's also been recording guest vocals for a handful of secret projects and is starting to think about a new album with electronic side-project Sleeping Pulse. Then there's his 25-song archive to go through.

"Music has been my best friend my whole life and it's a fantastic, positive distraction technique." He adds with an audible smile, "Besides, the Mick Moss of 2018 is a helluva lot more grounded than the Mick Moss of 1996."

Prog wonders whether that young man in his bedsit would have ever dreamed of this.

Below: the new Antimatter album *Black Market Enlightenment*.

Black Market Enlightenment is out now via Music In Stone. Visit www.antimatteronline.com for more information.

THE PROG INTERVIEW

IRMIN SCHMIDT

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 **Irmin Schmidt**. A founding member of German krautrockers Can and the last remaining original member, he began his career working as a conductor and has now written more than 100 film scores, an opera, a ballet and many solo works including a new album, *5 Klavierstücke*.

Words: Rob Hughes **Portait:** Diane Zillmer

As co-founder of Can, alongside Holger Czukay, Michael Karoli and Jaki Liebezeit, Irmin Schmidt left an indelible imprint on the musical landscape of the late 60s and 70s. The German collective, formed in Cologne in 1968, drew from elements of rock, jazz, ethnic funk, classical music and minimalism to create a new kind of language, governed by an intuitive sense of exploration. The band's keyboardist and (later on) occasional singer, Schmidt remained with Can through to their initial split in 1979, a run that included such peerless classics as *Tago Mago*, *Ege Bamyasi* and *Future Days*. "Everybody had ideas," he recalls of their unique chemistry. "The music had so many different styles because we all contributed everything we knew."

Schmidt happened to know a lot. Born in Berlin in 1937, he'd attended a handful of music universities across his homeland prior to studying composition with Karlheinz Stockhausen in Cologne during the first half of the 60s. Around the same time, Schmidt was busy as a conductor, performing with the Vienna Symphony and others, while also serving as a composer and concert pianist. All of this formal grounding – including work for film and theatre productions and a spell as pupil of György Ligeti – played into the approach of Can, who opted to reinvent themselves amid the cultural ruins of post-war Germany.

Following Can's first break-up, Schmidt moved to the South of France and immersed himself in soundtracks for film, TV and theatre. 1980 saw the arrival of his solo debut, *Filmmusik*, followed by the likes of *Toy Planet* (with Bruno Spoerri), *Musk At Dusk* and, in 1991, *Impossible Holidays*. Can briefly reformed in 1986 for *Rite Time*, eventually released three years later. Further reunions took place in 1991 and 1999, though any subsequent hopes of getting together were quashed when Karoli died in 2001. Liebezeit and Czukay both passed away last year.

New album 5 Klavierstücke.

> When I founded Can, I didn't think about a rock group. I wanted to bring together jazz, rock, new music and ethnic experiences of different people and find out what happens.

Among Schmidt's other exploits is *Gormenghast*, a three-act fantasy opera based on Mervyn Peake's celebrated *Gormenghast Trilogy*, that had its premiere in 1998. "I'm no longer an avant-garde artist, out to shock," he declared at the time. "I want people to enjoy my music." Factor in a ballet (2008's *La Fermosa*), various anthologies, collaborations, more film soundtracks and 2012's Schmidt-curated *The Lost Tapes* – a glorious three-album box of previously unheard Can treasures – and he's hardly stopped for breath over the past decade or so.

In 2015, he was knighted by the French Ministry of Culture and was made a Chevalier De L'Ordre Des Arts Et Des Lettres for his contribution to art and music. Despite his myriad endeavours, Can is an unshakeable part of

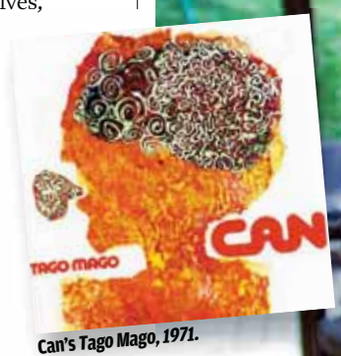
Can had a "unique chemistry".

PRESS

Irmin Schmidt: musical renaissance man.

Schmidt's artistic identity. Last year he premiered *Can Dialog*, two new pieces written for orchestra, at London's Barbican. The work is due to feature again this December, when Berlin's Volksbühne will host the piece alongside other treats. "I will conduct an orchestra with *Filmmusik* and *Can Dialog*," Schmidt explains to *Prog*. "*Can Dialog* is not orchestrated Can pieces. They appear as themes in an orchestra piece in its own right. And afterwards, like at the Barbican, a rock group made up of Berlin artists — put together by Jochen Arbeit of Einstürzende Neubauten — will play a Can tribute."

This all comes in the wake of the publication in May 2018 of *All Gates Open: The Story Of Can*. A book of two halves, Rob Young examines the history of Can in part one, before Schmidt tells his own story in the second section, which takes the format of famous-fan interviews and diary entries.

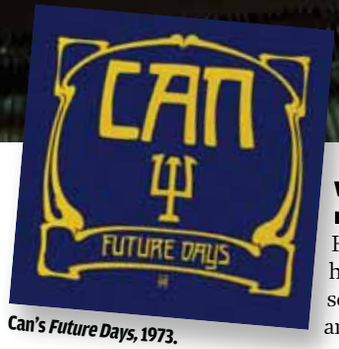


Can's Tago Mago, 1971.

And now comes Schmidt's new solo album, *5 Klavierstücke*. Consisting of five minimal piano pieces — what he calls "spontaneous meditations… formed from an emotional memory in which Schubert, Cage, Japan (Gagaku) and Can are equally present" — it was recorded in his South of France studio with producer Gareth Jones. Like just about everything Schmidt turns his hand to, it bears repeated listening.

How did the idea for *5 Klavierstücke* come about?

I wanted to make a piano record with both prepared and normal piano. I was one of the very first — and sometimes *the* first in certain cases — to perform John Cage music in Germany, like *Atlas Eclipticalis* with a symphony orchestra and *Winter Music* on piano. I'd met him and he showed me how a piano should be prepared, so I did it for *5 Klavierstücke* as I'd learned it from Cage in the 60s. Prepared piano is part of a certain tradition in Europe, from Haydn to Stockhausen. And since all my music plays with the consciousness of being in a tradition, my memory functions like this. I have travelled as a pianist doing recitals of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Cage. So it's all in my head. And of course, there's my personal tradition, where Can has a very important place.



Can's *Future Days*, 1973.

What kind of a mentor was Cage?

He had a lot of humour and seemed so natural and relaxed. He was extremely charming and very concentrated. *5 Klavierstücke* has so much of the spirit of Cage in it. You just let it happen. It has its own life presence and you don't interfere. That is very Cageian, very Zen. As a painter, you might spend your whole life trying to catch an image of a bird on a bramble. You try and try and paint again and again, then throw it away. Then one day you do it in five minutes and it's wonderful. That's the way these new piano pieces were done. Nothing was written beforehand, except for one little melody I wrote an hour earlier. All the rest is spontaneous, played once only and recorded at

Architecture’s loss is the music world’s gain.

PRESS/LUCI LUX

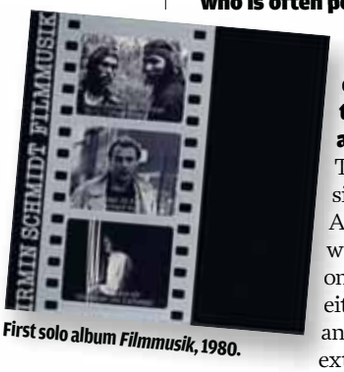
the same time. And afterwards no corrections. When I listened back to it with my sound engineer and producer, we didn’t find any reason to edit anything.

This is also an extension of the philosophy you’ve had right from the start: the idea of turning the acoustic environment into music...

Right. That’s what I did from the beginning. You’d go to dinner with Cage before a performance and he’d tell you about how he tried to find mushrooms in some swamp in Alaska, rather than tell you what’s happening onstage. Then when we’re in the hall, right before we’re due to start, he turns to me and says: “Why don’t we just push chairs around?” It was spontaneous and surprising. It gave the performance an impact that it wouldn’t have had if we’d prepared or composed the thing.

Throughout your life, you’ve placed a lot of value on surrounding yourself with silence on a regular basis. Why do you think people tend to be suspicious of silence?

It’s part of our contemporary culture or civilisation, where people have to have images and sound all the time. So I think it’s very necessary to make big holes into this constant noise. Again, this is very Cageian in a way. One of the reasons I was so attracted to this Cageian philosophy, which is very much influenced by Zen — he even wrote a book called *Silence* [1961] — is that I’d already been doing it before. It might have something to do with my childhood. I loved to sit all alone somewhere and just have silence around me. I have a very strong memory of sitting in this kind of tree cave and listening to silence or little rustles. My mother was a wonderfully understanding person, but sometimes, of course, parents want to punish you because you did some shit or other. I remember that she put me in my room, refused to let me leave and had the shutters closed. So I was sitting there all alone and I wasn’t unhappy at all. This wasn’t punishment to me. In fact, after some time she heard me singing. In the end, my mother became even more angry, because she had failed.



First solo album Filmmusik, 1980.

She should’ve put you in a noisy room instead...

Yeah, that would’ve been torture!

At the age of 14, you were either going to be a conductor or an architect. What swayed you towards music?

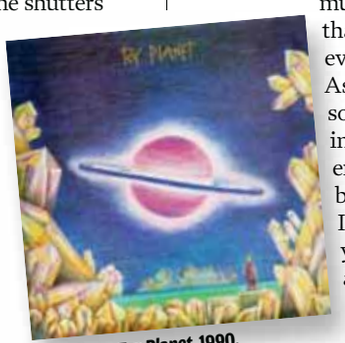
It was just a kind of need. My father was an architect and from him I learned how to draw and plan houses. And I liked the idea of creating form. It had something to do with structure, which music has too. But finally the attraction of music was so much stronger.

You studied with Stockhausen, who is often portrayed as an unwaveringly serious character. But is that an accurate assessment?

There were two sides to him. As long as he was working on composition, either teaching or analysing, he was extremely straight and severe. There was no humour in an analysis of *Gruppen* or whatever. It was very concentrated, serious work. But then he’d invite us to his house and we’d have parties, when he became just totally normal. You could laugh with him about silly things. He was able to separate himself like that, because that was his character. For him, music was something holy, like going to church mass.

Is that something you relate to from your own experience, too?

Yes, I can totally relate to that, because even if it’s a different spirit — whether it’s piano recitals or conducting or being on stage with Can — making music is something that absorbs everything of you. As an ego, you sort of disappear in it. You don’t entertain yourself by playing music. In the moment you become a kind of medium; you *become* the music. And if that doesn’t happen, then something’s not right. Ask any classical pianist and he or she will tell you the same.



Solo album Toy Planet, 1990.

In 1966 you visited New York, where you discovered Terry Riley, La Monte Young, Steve Reich and the Fluxus movement. Was it a big culture shock?

Quite. The most astonishing thing for me was that this strict separation between popular music and classical in Germany, between so-called

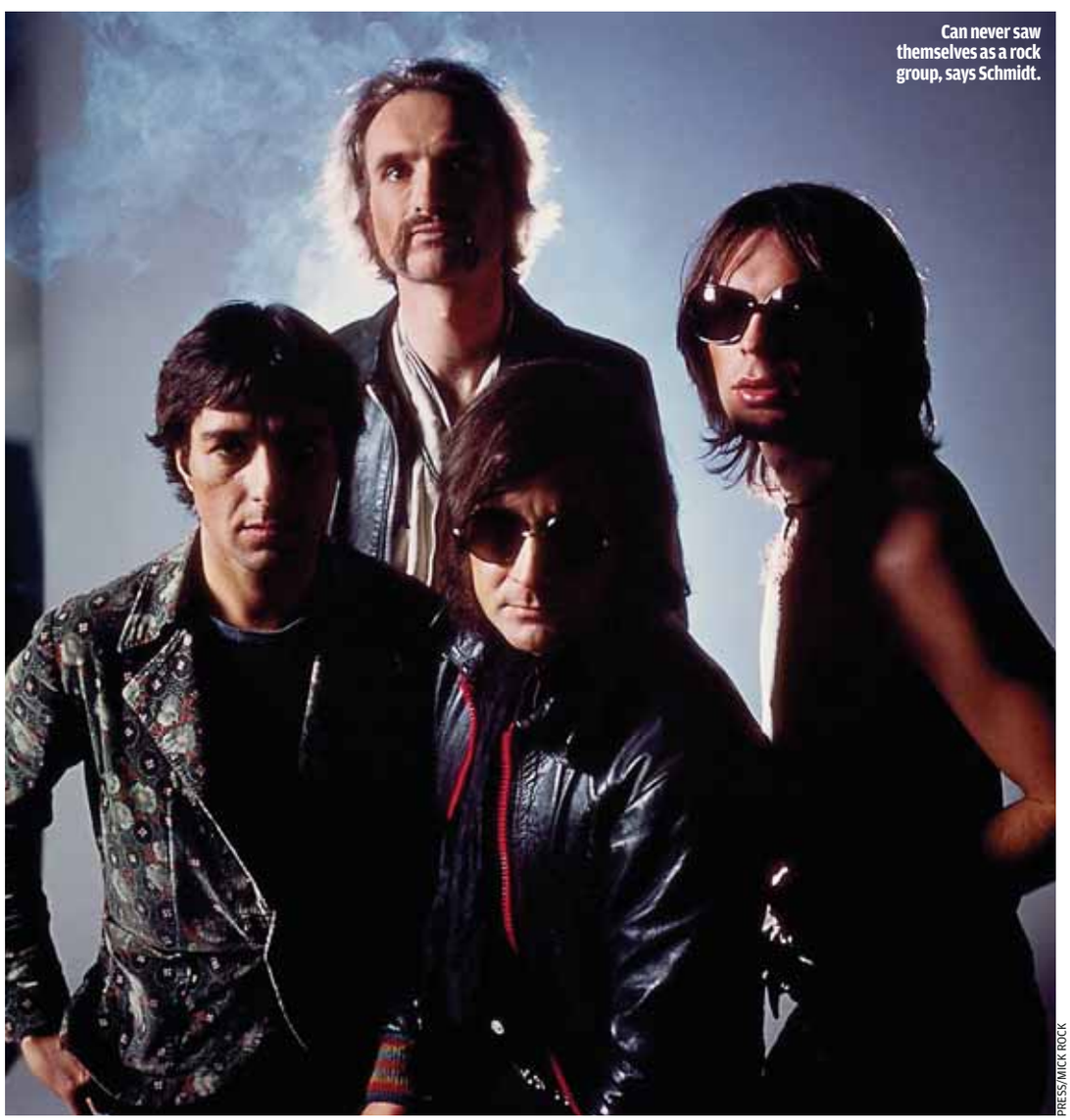
entertainment and serious music, didn't exist in New York. You just made music and found out whether it was good or not, or accepted or not. And you experimented. America has another music history because of the blues and the population spread of Africans into Western culture. It created a totally new tradition and consciousness for music. And that was really something totally new for me. It was a revelation.

Impossible Holidays, 1991.

So what did you do when you returned home?
I had several concerts with Cage music, then I travelled on my own and with a group of nine or 10 musicians, only playing [the genre] new music, like Stockhausen. But at the same time I was thinking, "I *have* to change something."

Most bands are founded by groups of friends, but when you formed Can you hardly knew each other. How critical was that?
I knew Holger [Czukay] from Stockhausen composition courses, but we weren't friends. And Michael [Karoli] was Holger's student, or pupil, at the boarding school where Holger taught. So I didn't know Michael at all when we got together for the first time in my house. As a person, I knew Jaki [Liebezeit] only vaguely. I'd been to see his free jazz group, the Manfred Schoof group, in concert in Cologne, but we didn't know each other very well. I didn't actually ask him to join the group, because I didn't want a free jazz drummer. I wanted somebody like Max Roach, so I asked Jaki if he knew of anybody. To my surprise, he came to me and said: "I'm ready to join you." I was very suspicious of that. I thought, "Shit, I don't want a free jazz drummer." And then it turned out that he didn't want to be one anymore anyway.

Was progressive music ever on your radar?
Not really. When I founded Can, I didn't think about a rock group. I wanted to bring together jazz, rock, new music and ethnic experiences of different people and find out what happens. We never saw ourselves as a rock group. We were a group that played something that might be *called* rock, but it was contemporary music.


Can never saw themselves as a rock group, says Schmidt.
PRESS/MICK ROCK

How difficult was it to implement the Can philosophy of creating music while trying to forget your formal training?
Well it *was* difficult. But we were hard-working and we were obsessed with inventing ourselves and finding out how to build a kind of organism that makes very genuine music.

> It's part of our contemporary culture or civilisation, where people have to have images and sound all the time. So I think it's very necessary to make big holes into this constant noise.

All these terms like 'effort' and 'work' are OK, but they miss the point, because there was so much *passion*. Something is in your head and you want to define it. And you want to be precise, you want to really *hit* the idea. You just do it.

Do you think Can were never fully appreciated in Germany?
You have to consider that, after the war, there was not the faintest idea left of a German pop tradition. The same applied to modern art and modern music. All this had been destroyed and had vanished. So art or music of the 20th century had to be re-imported to Germany after 1945. In the 50s and 60s, everybody thought that the real thing was what came from America and England. Nobody

believed in Germany's own production, which meant that slowly, in the 60s, culture and art had to be recreated and rebuilt. When we started Can, journalists thought that we couldn't play, because we didn't sound like what they were used to from America and England. But we didn't *want* to. This all goes back to tradition. When you listen to the melodies, whether it's with Can or later work, you'll find the German tradition of the *beginning* of the 20th century — Kurt Weill and that kind of music.

There's a story about you taking LSD and driving the van when Can toured the UK for the first time in 1971. Is that true?
Well, no. [Laughs] Sometimes Michael and I would take a tiny little bit of LSD, which doesn't give you any hallucinations or anything. It just makes everything look more brilliant, more shiny. But it's not the truth when it comes to that aspect of my life as an artist.

Were you surprised by the level of adoration Can often received from audiences on that first UK tour?
Not really. When you have something very strong, there's something vibrating between you and the audience. You feel it. Sometimes it goes wrong of course, because taking risks and inventing onstage isn't a guarantee for a successful concert.

Did it feel slightly surreal performing *I Want More* on *Top Of The Pops* in 1976?
Well, surrealism is part of the tradition of 20th-century art, so why not?

Was composing for film a natural medium for you?
Very much so. It sort of naturally grew out of my work as a student for theatre and making music for plays or conducting. I conducted two Brecht plays with a small orchestra, then I started making my own music for theatre plays and, after that, short films. Even before Can I made two or three film music pieces for movies, which I brought into Can. It was a good way to earn some money, because in the beginning we were very poor. After Can, I was offered film music and thought it was a nice way to do it again.

PRESS/GULLICK

Wonder what music is on loop in his head right now...

And during the 80s I did it a lot, though I stopped for a while in the 90s to write *Gormenghast*, the opera.

Is there a division between intuition and improv, in terms of the music you've made over the years?
I don't see it so much as a division, because sometimes my film music is created intuitively. I discuss the structure of the film with the director, and where to put music, and then I might get a very spontaneous idea. This happened, for instance, when I was sitting with Wim Wenders on *Palermo Shooting* [2008]. He'd asked me to write the music for it and we sat down to watch it together. At some point in the middle of the film I said to him: "I hear an accordion playing in this scene, like something from a certain opera." It was a totally intuitive idea and later I had to work this out to make it fit. Composing happens after something appears in your head and you start to shape and define it.

Gormenghast, 2000.

Do you still hear music in your head all the time?
Yes. And it's not always my own. I might wake up in the morning and have the last movement of Schumann's fourth symphony in my head, then go down to the studio, pick up the score and look to see if it's the same as how I hear it. It could be old music or classical, it might be a jazz record or whatever. But there is always music. Just once in my life, for 10 days, I did not. I had a kind of bleeding in my skull and it was hurting incredibly. But I got more scared by the fact that there was no music in my head. I didn't hear *anything* and it frightened me horribly. Then on the 11th day, all of a sudden I heard a violin concerto. And not an existing one — just a violin with a big orchestra. For six hours I didn't stop jubilating like mad. That was a very special moment in my life.

Has last year's sad passing of Jaki Liebezeit and Holger Czukay made you re-evaluate the legacy of Can in some ways? You're the last man standing from the very first line-up...
I don't have to re-evaluate. It's just *there*. Of course, Jaki and Holger disappearing is horrible. The work I did with them formed and marked me in such a strong way. Even after Can, on a lot of my solo work I made so much music with Jaki and Michael. So it's in *me*. The influence of these guys is part of my most important musical experience.

5 Klavierstücke is out now via Mute Records. See www.irminschmidt.com for more information.

Edited by Jo Kendall
jo.kendall@futurenet.com

New spins...

GEDDY LEE

As Rush exit stage left, the story continues with members indulging other avenues. In three editions – Ultra Limited, Luxe Limited and Standard, the band's bass ace tackles a book project of biblical proportions.

Words: Jerry Ewing **Illustration:** Pete Fowler

Let's get one thing straight: this book, much like a well-known outdoor wood care oil, does exactly what it says on the cover. It's very big — so big, in fact, that you should be careful lifting it. We're being serious. It did this writer's back some damage just carrying it home from work in a backpack! Little wonder that elsewhere in this issue Geddy Lee warns, "Don't drop it on your foot." It's also very beautiful. Eye-catchingly lavish, rich in detail and deep in thought. And yes, it's full of bass. Lots and lots of bass. More than 250 of the instruments spread across more than 400 pages, captured in crystal clear detail and in fulsome, striking colour. Never has the bass guitar appeared quite so beautiful before.

Throw in a series of candid interviews with some of the rock world's most prominent exponents and collectors of the bass, an engaging essay from the author, in which he declares that "It's not surprising that sooner or later I'd dive down the proverbial rabbit hole into the world of vintage bass guitars", an overview of Lee's own bass rig for the final Rush R40 tour, a look at his stage and recording gear from 1968 to 2017 and an engagingly humorous timeline of bass history, including such highpoints as when Rush donned kimonos for the first time for 1976's *2112*, and this is a most reasonably priced Christmas gift, not just for any bass head, but any Rush fan to boot.

As Lee explains in our feature starting on page 42, he didn't used to be much of a bass collector. Then, some eight years ago, he found himself drawn more to the idea of the instruments his own heroes collected and wondered why he hadn't followed suit.

The initial idea was to spend some time amassing a modest collection. Now he owns more than 250 bass guitars, from his trademark Rickenbacker and Fender, through Gibsons, Epiphones, Höfners and Ampegs, to the works of lesser-known luthiers such as Tony Zemaitis and Antonio Wandre Pioli. Finding time on his hands in the wake of Rush's last tour and with the band mothballed for the foreseeable future, the idea of a book about his chosen instrument reared its head, and *Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass* became a reality.

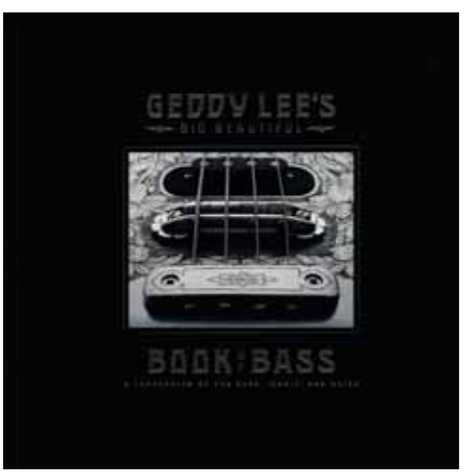
Along the way, Lee chats to a variety of some of the finest bassists in music, including John Paul Jones, Les Claypool, Rob Trujillo, Bill Wyman, Jeff Tweedy, Adam Clayton, Bob Daisley and more. Anyone who has interviewed Lee will tell you what a genial conversationalist he can be, and this comes through strongly in these interviews. When you read about these bass players sitting down and chewing the fat over their beloved instrument, the passion and musical intrigue they still clearly possess is evident. Reading about Claypool's love of Lee, Chris Squire and Tony Levin's bass sound, how the youthful Clayton dug Genesis and Pink Floyd or how Trujillo became the proud owner of Jaco Pastorius' bass of doom, both theirs and Lee's passion is infectious. It helps immeasurably, too, that Lee has no need to pander to the whims of a magazine or newspaper editor, just himself. These interviews are refreshing, open, insightful and, most importantly, great fun to read. One senses that they were also great fun to conduct. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall when John Paul Jones declared, tongue-in-cheek of course, that "Led Zeppelin is not my chosen subject".

One suspects that if Rush had chosen not to step back after R40, this book might never have seen the light of day. But, with his newfound free time, Lee has crafted something unique and quite wonderful. There are enough insights into his and Rush's lengthy career to pull in non-bass nerds, too, such is the relaxed, everyman nature of Lee's delivery, while his affection for the subject matter simply leaps off of every page.

And Rush fans? They'll be in seventh heaven. Especially with the look at Lee's equipment from over the years, as well as the detail on the 27 or so bass guitars he chose to take on the road for the band's final jaunt. Each and every one of them, however, is likely to catch a breath, as Alex Lifeson in his hilarious Backword at the start of the book opens with the line, "Geddy Lee is still my best friend." A lovely and fitting tribute in a wonderfully impressive book.

Geddy Lee's Big Beautiful Book Of Bass

HARPER DESIGN



> **An engagingly humorous timeline of bass history, including such highpoints as when Rush donned kimonos for the first time.**

ANTIMATTER

Black Market Enlightenment MUSIC IN STONE

Mick Moss gets gloomier and heavier, rekindling chemical memories.

If anger is an energy, Mick Moss has got a fair bit of mileage out of it in recent years. But now he seems to be exploring different shades of black mood. 2015's *The Judas Table* took lyrical aim at "the people whose callous and disrespectful, backstabbing actions caused me countless wasted years of depression", as he put it. A happy-clappy affair it wasn't, but the intensity of the songs made for a riveting listen, even if sometimes it felt like you were eavesdropping on a huge row.

> **Thundering, windswept dramatic soundscapes.**

But let's face it: rock musicians that gain most inspiration from happier periods in their lives are in a pretty small minority. So maybe that's why, for this seventh studio set, Moss seems to have once more reached back into the murkier corners of his past for creative fuel.

In the making-of documentary DVD included along with this seventh Antimatter album, he explains *Black Market Enlightenment* as an exploration of his younger days, where his habit of using acid trips and weed to open the doors of perception ended in him being "diagnosed with psychosis and suffering from derealisation and daily panic attacks".

There's also a distinctly different feel to the music. *The Judas Table*'s rage was punctuated with acoustic passages and more subtle electronic and singer-songwriter-ish textures. *Black Market Enlightenment* feels more insistently, sometimes claustrophobically heavy, the closest Antimatter have come to fully cloaked-up, symphonically enhanced gothic rock.

Thundering, windswept dramatic soundscapes are the order of the day as Moss rekindles the fires of his own drug hell, and while it might not offer the same degree of contrast or light-and-shade dynamics, it sure is effective.

'All it would take is a whisper or a kiss to seal my place within the abyss,' Moss sings in an Eddie Vedder-esque basso profondo as the sublime *Wish I Was Here* builds from piano-led soliloquy into sweeping, soaring melodrama driven by booming power chords.

There are also some intriguing light touches, though. *Sanctification* is similarly huge-sounding in parts, but before it ends in an apocalyptic storm of pummelling double-bass drum, clouds of Floydian sax float overhead before haunting Middle Eastern stringed instrument the qamancheh adds a really spellbinding diversion. When the qamancheh surfaces again later at the climax of *Between The Atoms* after our hero's vocal is reduced to a warped whisper of *'Am I still here?'* it initially sounds like a man attempting to sing underwater. Which may well be the intended effect.

So he's drowning, not waving, once again. But however grim Moss' situation, we just can't tear ourselves away...

JOHNNY SHARP

22

You Are Creating: Limb 2 LONG BRANCH

Arena-hankering Norwegians bring the tunes again on this sequel to *Limb 1*.

They took seven years to follow up 2010's debut album *Flux*, but now this Trondheim quartet are back in business, and clearly intent on making up for lost time, following up last year's *Limb 1* with – well done, everyone – *Limb 2*. Calling themselves "stadium-appealing progressive rock", 22 can certainly boast an ability to create big, fat arena-shaking hooks, albeit irregularly thrown in the air from the tumult of mathy prog grooves. And when you find some footholds, they're rock solid. The itchy, creeping bass groove beneath *Autumn Stream* really gets under your skin and *Dillemanns Clarity* has an irresistibly falsetto-boosted melody reminiscent of Muse as it tells a suitably oddball tale of a man's quest to *'compromise in life but not in art'* with the help of a pair of red boxing gloves. Admirably obtuse stuff, although at times, as on *Chroma Key*, it sounds like a battle between a conventional rock band with another bunch of musicians that want to rip said song to pieces with jerky-quirky shards of jazz rock. But when the Wagnerian Queenisms are allowed to take flight, as on the choral peaks of *Sylphs*, the joyous contrast only heightens the dramatic impact. **JS**

ABRAHAM MUSIC PROJECT

First The Honesty, Then The Promise SUNLIGHT DIGITAL

A conceptual smorgasbord of prog, classic rock and AOR.

There's no mistaking the fact that LA-based Abraham – no surname is offered – is a student of Floyd, The Beatles and Tull. His debut solo release suggests many hours spent poring over the classic records by those groups. An album for those that still believe music should tell stories, this is a lovingly produced, exquisite-sounding piece of work blessed with strong commercial potential – especially its first half, which soars with an almost evangelical melodic intent as its main character, called simply 'Horizon', journeys towards a revelation that changes his life. Just as you think you've got Abraham pegged, the electric guitars break out with a powerful instrumental called *Resist The Devil* that symbolises his moment of truth. The only way to follow such a display of vigour is *The Glory Be Suite*, 16 minutes of pure prog that encapsulates frenzied, Mellotron-driven arpeggios, crashing chord changes and harmonised subtlety. Neal Morse would surely applaud not only the apparently spiritual message, but also its musical delivery. Afterwards, the slightly clunky *There You Are* is a little anticlimactic, but boy... this album shows some potential. **DML**

ALEC K REDFEARN AND THE EYESORES

The Opposite CUNEIFORM

Definitely not your local polka band.

When a band describe their genre as Dada, refencing the avant-garde art movement that set out to challenge and offend the sensibilities of the bourgeoisie, it's a safe bet it's not going to be an easy listen. Alec K Redfearn And The Eyesores have grown and shrunk from project to project depending on the demands of their material. This latest iteration of the band for their eighth album is a quartet with Redfearn on accordion, horn player Ann Schattle, bassist Christopher Sadlers and Matt McLaren on drums. It's the accordion that dominates the music, which can sound like a folk band playing a blend of krautrock and post-rock while drawing influences from Can, Tangerine Dream and Residents. The tracks are built around droning, repetitive accordion riffs, with the other players there to either reinforce the main part or drop in and out to add dynamics. The arrangements and production can be repetitive, so there's not much to distinguish between *The Opposite* and *Carnivore*. *Bat In My Living Room* adds more distortion to the accordion while McLaren plays industrial style tom-tom beats. It's often abrasive and melodically inaccessible, but that seems to be the point. **DW**

AMGALA TEMPLE

Invisible Airships PEKULA

Superheroes of Norwegian jazz rock assemble: fireworks ensue.

Another week, another album of jazz-infused psych rock from Norway. It's striking how much excellent music of this persuasion comes from there, though it may be because everyone plays with everyone else. Amgala Temple are no exception, a trio comprising of multi-instrumentalist Lars Horntveth (Jaga Jazzist), drummer Gard Nilssen (Bushman's Revenge), and hotshot guitarist Amund Maarud. There are hints they want to break free from Nordic preconceptions – Amgala is an oasis in Western Sahara, the sleeve resembles a Japanese dreamscape – but fans of densely hatched, fiery out-there rock are in for a treat. Beginning with a slightly sinister, Radiohead-ish melody on treated piano, *Bosphorus* evokes an early morning in Istanbul before Maarud's heavily chorused guitar burns through the haze. There's a confluence between pure and impure sounds, a tight rhythm underpinning keening keys and a huge Hendrix-esque freak-out. *Avenue Amgala* is more nimble, but that rich, overdriven guitar still leaves scorch marks in the air. The sparse riff and spacy atmospherics of *The Eccentric* is the album's most prog-friendly track, like a crafty jam between King Crimson and Tangerine Dream. **JB**

RHETT BREWER

The Thaw HP RECORDINGS

Classical American ex-pat conjures a change in the weather.

How do you make contemporary classical music more attractive to modern audiences? Rhett Brewer may have done so by tapping into the topical theme of global warming. These 15 contemplative pieces may be more spirit than flesh and blood, but in lacing their New Age structures with subtle undercurrents of stress and strife he adds character to their coldness. We're in Michael Nyman or Arvo Part territory, but Brewer plants his own flags with atmospherics that evoke a sense of a planet expanding, cracking, melting. Inspired by experiencing a Russian winter 20 years ago, *The Thaw* is the result of years of commitment, with the British-based American composer having taken financial gambles to get it first played live with an orchestra, then recorded. It's sometimes minimalist, occasionally cinematic, with Brewer's use of his own voice as an emotionally suggestive instrument. It's a wilfully wintry listening experience, yet its shimmering quiet storms prompt inward-looking reflection as much as climate concerns. It also confirms that the xylophone and vibraphone are, in terms of impact, among the most underrated of musical tools. A slowly defrosting comfort. **CR**

DARWIN

Origin Of Species ORIGIN OF SPECIES LLC

Simon Phillips takes to the drumstool for an elaborate plot and marathon tracklist.

Are you sitting comfortably? The labyrinthine story behind DarWin's debut concept album *Origin Of Species* is set in 2028 where climate change has ravaged the world, and we find the perplexed protagonist awaking having no idea where or who he is. Over the ensuing 18 (!) songs the character, DarWin, attempts to rediscover his roots. Stoking the prog flames further, the rockers' "epic saga" will also be supported by graphic novels and videos. But what about the music? In the driving seat and drum seat too is veteran Toto/Oldfield sticksman Simon Phillips, and the tracks are a smorgasbord of styles, dipping into Yes pomp, melodic pop and riffy modern day rock. The chops are notable, as is the songwriting, with the theatrical *Escape The Maze* juggling swaying strings with harmonies that swaddle you like a warm blanket on a winter's night. If you ignore when it veers dangerously close to the edge (no pun intended) of cheesiness before pulling back in the nick of time, *Origin Of Species* is one hell of a ride – but just remember to clear your mind and get a comfy seat before jumping in. Great website too, at www.darwin.is. **CC**

KEITH EMERSON

Beyond The Stars SIMAX CLASSICS

Clear vinyl pressings for celebratory classical events.

On the sleevenotes for The Nice's 1970 album *Five Bridges*, Keith Emerson wrote, "On a journey from the almost utopian freedom of our music to the established music school I met Joseph Eger who was travelling in the opposite direction."

Eger conducted *The Five Bridges Suite*, which merged classical with pop and jazz and so, in Emerson's mind, the two musicians were no longer diverging. But the sort of crossover

> **The full blossoming of his voice as an orchestral composer.**

between rock and classical that Emerson was looking for was not straightforward. Some orchestral musicians at the *Five Bridges* concert made a statement by stuffing their ears with cotton wool and, frankly, The Nice's Sibelius and Tchaikovsky with a 4/4 beat now sounds clunky. Wind forward to 1977 and Leonard Bernstein was approached to conduct Emerson's *Piano Concerto No.1* for Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Works Vol. 1*, but the composer was derisive about the piece.

It all felt rather like rock upstarts going cap-in-hand to the classical establishment for their blessing, only to be told they had written "student pieces" because they weren't orchestrated in a certain way. But with the popularity of orchestral works by minimalist composers like Arvo Part and Philip Glass, and with recent orchestrations of electronicists such as Mouse On Mars and Aphex Twin, that proscriptive approach to deciding what orchestral music is worth listening to seems, thankfully, to belong to a bygone era.

Beyond The Stars features some of the pieces played at the Keith Emerson Tribute Concerts last year, beginning with Rachel Flowers playing the third movement from Emerson's *Piano Concerto No. 1* in a punchy, vivid recording, with the Academy Of Saint Martin In The Fields conducted by Terje Mikkelsen, which surely warrants the concise, attractive piece being released again in full. Emerson's grandson Ethan, a prodigiously talented 12-year-old, plays sparkling piano on *The Dreamer*.

Side two features The Keith Emerson Band playing pieces recorded at the sessions *Tarkus Concertante* in 2012 with the Munich Radio Orchestra, including Emerson's arrangement and orchestration of guitarist Marc Bonilla's *The Mourning Sun*. There's a version of Emerson's arrangement for Aaron Copland's *Fanfare For The Common Man*, with its dramatic melody lines arcing over a rock groove.

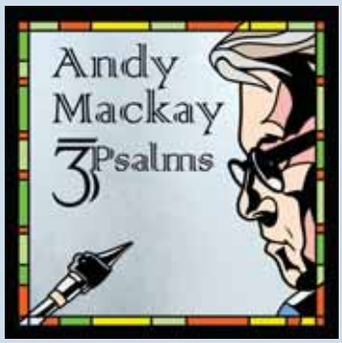
But the highlight is the title track, on which Emerson's crisp, intricate orchestration balances romantic melody with a modernist edge. It feels like the full blossoming of his individual voice as an orchestral composer, an avenue of expression that was sadly cut short.

MIKE BARNES

ANDY MACKAY

3Psalms GOOD DEEDS

All I want is pew: Roxy legend rewrites the book of psalms.



On their 1973 album *Stranded*, Roxy Music closed side one with the eight-minute *Psalm*. Debate still rages — politely — among Roxy fans as to whether Bryan Ferry was being ironic with its imagery. Forty-five years on, the man who played "oboe, saxophone and treatments" on that classic reveals an ongoing obsession with actual psalms. He began work on the three pieces (plus interlude) gathered here in the mid-90s, aspiring to interweave his varied musical passions from classical to rock, from choirs (he was a boy chorister) to electronica. Things lay

> **Rock follies are put away; this stretches for transcendence.**

fallow for a while, but in 2012 he picked up the threads, and now *3Psalms* gets us to the church on time. It's an extraordinary album, in that it's unusual. Laden with religiosity, it will have you anxiously counting your sins, or, if you've watched too many horror movies, expecting Damien Thorn to pop up at any moment.

Mackay's fascinated by ancient poetry and song, and often deploys the original Latin and Hebrew. Harry Day-Lewis (nephew of actor Daniel) delivers the strict, straight-backed lead vocals while the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra are predominant among the musicians constructing swelling backdrops. Phil Manzanera guests on guitar, but don't for a second expect this to revel in the realms of Roxy. Even the world's premier art rock outfit never got this rarefied. Eno brought the science, Ferry the romance. Mackay, it appears, has put all rock follies behind him and is stretching for a different kind of transcendence.

If you find marriages of music and religion too pure and goody goody for your blood, this will feel like dutifully sitting through an overlong Sunday service, even though it's only a half hour in total. Love is no longer the drug for Mackay, or at least not the earthly, sexy kind.

What might convert you is his playing, for the man still blows a mean instrument or three. *Praise: Psalm 150* examines motifs which find a lovely halfway-house between Philip Glass and Hovis ad, while the choir build in scale and Manzanera blasts in with a solo which rattles the stained glass windows. *Deep: Psalm 130* murmurs in with rippling waves, cymbals and subliminal voices, then asks a lot of Day-Lewis, but it's Mackay's solo passages which woo with charm.

The brief *Interlude* offers a welcome spell of ambient piano/synth haze, and *Refuge: Psalm 90* has Mackay duelling with himself in shapes staccato and serene. The climax is, inevitably, epic. While *3Psalms* is no fun-filled party, it witnesses a Roxy graduate still delivering the peculiar and unexpected. Amen to that.

CHRIS ROBERTS

EVERSHIP

Evership II ATKINSONG

Highly accessible mainstream prog from rising Nashville band.

As Chevy Chase's character observes to Burt Reynolds in *The Last Movie Star*, there's more to Nashville than country music. With prog luminary Neal Morse based nearby, Nashville is home to Evership and keyboardist Shane Atkinson. Since forsaking a career in the software industry, Atkinson has returned to music and is Evership's mastermind. With a couple of great guitarists on board and a versatile vocalist in Beau West, Evership's second voyage is hugely entertaining. The album gets off to a strong start with brooding opener *The Serious Room*, which explodes into life with a couple of terrific guitar solos. Elsewhere, *Wanderer* begins like Kansas at their most energetic before mellowing out into a lovely prog ballad helmed by West's gentle vocals and underpinned by some beautiful strings. *II* isn't perfect: the almost 30-minute epic album closer *Isle Of The Broken Tree* is compelling in places but overall feels a bit disjointed, while the drumming, credited to Atkinson, is pretty rudimentary and lacks subtlety. But overall this is an impressive sophomore effort, and with some fine tuning the good Evership's next voyage could be very exciting indeed. **NS**

JAN FELIX MAY

Red Messiah JAZZLINE

Think you know jazz/prog fusion? Think again.

Anyone who reckons that everything has already been done in jazz/prog fusion is cordially invited to sit down with *Red Messiah* for a bit of a rethink. On *Major*, for example, the band play terse, overlapping lines in different time signatures with dropped beats aplenty, and tricky unison sections – that Frank Zappa is one of May's major influences is no surprise. But all this is cut with more lyrical passages where rippling electric piano morphs into rhapsodic acoustic piano and sax solos, with the drummer and guitarist also let off the leash. *May Love*, featuring vocalist Torun Eriksen, has a jazz ballad lightness of touch, although the listener never knows quite what sort of odd musical byway the ensemble might veer into. The juddering pseudo-dance beats and techno synths on the nine-minute *Hardcore Bling* give way to kit drums and May's high velocity keyboard runs. It settles down after three minutes into a more sedate melodic mood, albeit with further twists and turns, but there's always compositional structure. If all that sounds like a bit over-egged, the German composer's strength is that he uses these devices for contrast rather than complexity for its own sake. **MB**

FOUR STROKE BARON

Planet Silver Screen PROSTHETIC

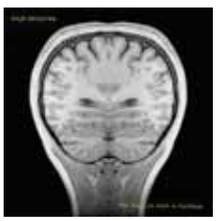
Nevada progressive rockers cook up distinct, catchy sound on second album.

Four Stroke Baron quip on their Facebook page that they're a band "over seven billion people don't know about", but their new album should make all the difference. Snatching explorative riffs, the spunky fun of Brit alt heroes Reuben and the booming vocals of Type O Negative together with new wave theatrics, this Nevada trio know how to party. Exuberant opener *Cut* acts as a microcosm of what's about to come, with a synthwave escapade morphing into a tech metal attack. While the band's second full-length doesn't quite excel enough to attract *all* of those uneducated billions out there, there's enough for both proggers and headbangers to grab onto. *A Matter Of Seconds* for instance, swoons with Mastodon groove, while *Neon Person* exudes a peculiar whiff of a jagged Jimmy Eat World conjoined with prog metal. The best is kept to last though, with the dreamy *Duplex* providing a moment of calm before Shining honcho Jørgen Munkeby pops up on the eight-minute *Video Maniacs* to slather on some sax and make you ponder why his greatness hadn't been unleashed earlier. Crunchy, clever and contagious, it feels like the only way is up. **CC**

ANJA GARBAREK

The Road Is Just A Surface DRABANT MUSIC/MEMBRAN

Conceptual soundscape from Norway's first lady of experimental pop.



Anja Garbarek's new album – her first since 2005 – comes in two editions: rest assured that *Prog* is reviewing the full length theatrical 'Red' version, described as an "occasionally sinister conceptual soundscape". Inspired by Garbarek's research into psychiatric disorders, it tells the story of Bob and his struggle with mental illness. That name conjures images of surreal Lynchian asylums, which the spooky, disconcerting feel of much of this album does little to dispel. Disembodied questions and stray piano notes give way to the bleeps and clanks of *In Between*, but Garbarek's calm, intimate voice is front and centre, with just a hint of Kate Bush as she skips nimbly into a higher register. During the first half of the album, she acts as our guide and focus, walking us through the caressing sound of *Lazy Predator* and the foreboding industrial ambient of *Heavy Forms*. These initial songs seem teased into existence by Garbarek, but the deeper we travel, the spikier the music becomes: the lilting, deconstructed art pop of *Less Lonely* is followed by the processed beats and discordance of *Bob's Song*. A film for the ears: a serious and ambitious work. **JB**

HAWKLORDS

Brave New World SHELLSHOCK

The puzzle of who carries the Hawkwind torch with greatest aplomb continues.

The latest instalment of Hawkwatch is further complicated by the fact that Dave Brock's actual Hawks have just delivered a disappointingly pedestrian, Mike Batt-orchestrated set of reimagined former glories, while the old master's former apprentice 'Lords continue to astound with amazing music. Favoured with the sort of rich, lush, modern production their evocative space rock demands, *Brave New World* improves upon last year's *Six* in both sonics and scope. Triumphal opener *Devil In Your Head* plummets out of the ether in similar style to latter-day Killing Joke, before breaking into a psych-dusted spoken word segment that's pure Robert Calvert. Even down to the clipped dramatic weightiness of his singular vocal delivery. Too much? Post-Zep newbies Greta Van Fleet, all bets seem off as regards trademarking a characteristic vocal intonation, and considering it sounds so right in this context, how can it be wrong? Today's four-piece 'Lords boast an intuitive gift for ensemble interplay that combines tightness with fluidity excellently. There are truly unshakeable rock hooks within these sometimes ambient off-the-hook grooves and plenty of them. **IF**

KARMAMOI

The Day Is Done SONICBOND

Hands across the sea in support of the Grenfell blaze.

The fourth album from these Italians focuses on the moving humanitarian tales which emerged in the wake of the Grenfell fire disaster, particularly that of two Syrian siblings, Omar and Mohammed Alhajali, who had fled to London in search of refuge and a new life. Mohammed became one of the 72 souls that perished, with his brother surviving. Karmamoi had already written a chunk of the album, so *The Day Is Done* isn't only about Grenfell. Instead the core duo of multi-musician Daniele Giovannoni and guitarist/backing vocalist Alex Massari seek to channel the sadness and anger they feel for innocent victims anywhere. With guest spots from ex-Porcupine Tree bassist Colin Edwin and Steven Wilson's flautist/saxophonist Geoff Leigh, the results are poignant: save for the subject matter, Karmamoi's minimalist approach could almost be termed soothing. The empty spaces allow vocalist Daniele Giovannoni room to radiate the lyrics with passion. The album's centrepiece is *Mother's Dirge*, a captivating nine-minute piece for which a compelling video has been filmed. Try it first on YouTube and then investigate this harrowing yet rewarding piece of work. **DML**

JAZZ PROG

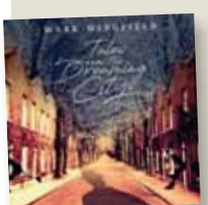
Sid Smith rounds up the best releases from prog's jazzier reaches.

This superbly curated set of previously unavailable in-concert material from **Michael Gibbs And The Gary Burton Quartet** *Festival 69* (Turtle) documents a stomping 49-year-old show from Belfast over two discs. A third album features solely the Gibbs band in Lancaster featuring luminaries such as Jack Bruce and John Marshall amid the cream of late 60s British jazz. One of the great vibraphone players, Burton's chiming harmonies dart across Gibbs' arrangements with a luminous intensity. Tightly structured, jazz and rock mix it up on these uninhibited performances.

Danish guitarist **Jakob Bro**'s *Bay Of Rainbows* (ECM) occupies a resplendently shimmering meditative space in which the light from Bro's radiant, dappled arpeggios play over cavernous pools of bass and trickling cymbals courtesy of Thomas Morgan and Joey Baron. This trio's capacity to quietly build from poetic, starry intervals and surge into abrupt gear shifts of passionate force is nothing short of spine-tingling.

When it comes to **Orchestra Of The Upper Atmosphere**'s *Theta 4* (Discus), describing it as 'epic' feels like selling it short. The large, Sheffield-based ensemble, directed by saxophonist/keyboardist Martin Archer, harnesses a hybrid patchwork of electro-acoustic textures that brings to mind the spacey explorations of Alice Coltrane, Terry Riley, Tangerine Dream, Can et al. Choirs, choppy strings, throbbing beats, dreamy vocals and snarling bass rise and soar into bold themes creating a diverse and thrilling listen. If you're unfamiliar with their previous three albums, then start here.

UK guitarist **Mark Wingfield**'s *Tales From The Dreaming City* (Moonjune) possesses a yearning, plaintive quality in his sound that occasionally echoes Terje Rypdal's patented melancholia. However, there's nothing dreamy or intangible about Wingfield's smartly choreographed writing, delivered here with a hefty galvanic punch via bassist Yaron Stavi and drummer Asaf Sirkis.



Saxophonist **Kjetil Møster**'s two-disc *States Of Mind* (Hubro) features a quintet that includes telling contributions from Motorpsycho's Snah and his one-time colleague, drummer Kenneth Kapstad. *Brainwave Entertainment* offers a fevered and sometimes manic collision of tense yet tonal music, filled with gestural splashes of vivid colour, pensive moods and thrumming resonant overtures. Led by Møster's rich tenor, the sepulchral *Mystère* evokes a mid-period VdGG as it snakes along while the hypnotic waves of glissando-like guitar in *Phantom Bandotron* add to a psychedelic, blissful air.

An impassioned, soulful mix of orchestral washes, ambient field recordings and subtle electronica percolate between **Arve Henriksen**'s trademark high-register trumpet and singing on *The Heights Of The Reeds* (Rune Grammofon). It coalesces with a rare power that is moving and intimate. A contender for the most glacially beautiful album you'll hear this year.

ON SALE NOW!

15 TRACK FREE CD!
HENDRIX
"WHAT THE HELL WERE WE DOING?"
ELECTRIC LADYLAND - 50 YEARS ON
RUSH
BASSES, BRUISES & BASEBALL
THE CLASSIC ROCK INTERVIEW
★CLASSIC★ ROCK
EXCLUSIVE: HENLEY, WALSH & SCHMIT
ON LIFE WITH AND WITHOUT GLENN FREY
EAGLES
"Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac – they were the competition..."
PLUS!
ROLLING STONES
RONNIE'S GOT THE BLUES
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
ROSE TATTOO
THE BAND THAT REFUSES TO DIE
WATCH OUT, BRITAIN, HERE COME
BLACK STONE CHERRY
+
THE CADILLAC THREE
+
MONSTER TRUCK
ROY BUCHANAN
THE DOOMED GENIUS WHO TURNED DOWN THE STONES
CLASSIC ROCK PRESENTS
New Kids In Town
15 TRACKS FROM THE BEST NEW BANDS
BON JOVI
THE LOST WEEK
"THE LONGEST AND WILDEST PARTY IN THE HISTORY OF ROCK'N'ROLL"
ALSO
ACE FREHLEY
UFO
DEF LEPPARD
GLENN HUGHES
KILLING JOKE
PEARL JAM
MAGNUM
ANGEL
& MORE
FUTURE

KUU!

Lampedusa Lullaby ACT

Pan-European quartet's alchemically complex jazz punk alloy.

On first stumbling into the discombobulating aural orbit of KUU! your mind might reel with bafflement. Lesser mortals might find their reason waving a little white flag of surrender in the face of such disorientating counter-grooves, but judging by the publication you're perusing, we can safely credit you with a rare taste for the sonically adventurous. And KUU! are just that. Comprised of Germans Christian Lillinger (drums) and Frank Möbus (guitar), Finnish guitarist Kalle Kalima and fronted by Jelena Kuljić, a Serbian vocalist of vision who's trained an instinctive punk penchant for the raw and disturbing toward a controlled, dependable, jazz-inclined, dark sophistication. As the appositely entitled *Impossible* casually jars its spectacular magic, you'd be forgiven for wondering if there's something wrong with KUU!. Have they lost their minds? And then, as you detect twisted elements of Yes emerging, you begin to wonder if *you've* lost your mind. But as *Scream* astounds in splashes of post-punk Crimson and *About Death* thrashes with hints of Nina Hagen, you recalibrate your expectations and come to accept a new norm that's really rather wonderful. **IF**

STEFANO LENTINI

Suite After The Furies COLOORA

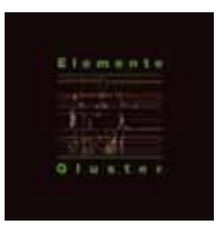
Roman composer presents a blend that's a classical gas.

By its very nature, prog can lend itself to the easy listening classical market, most recently with Rick Wakeman tinkling on TV ads. During the 50s, arranger Geoff Love successfully led orchestras behind Max Bygraves and light entertainment giants, hitting big himself as Manuel And His Music Of The Mountains; all swooning strings and wordless lonely siren chorales draped in rhapsodic ambience. Italian producer Stefano Lentini uses his experience in composing for TV and movies to make a lavish panoply of prime Manuel and cinematic classical flavours; heftier in emotional departments but happy to sculpt the odd dream sequence over soft-focus orchestral nirvana on *Shine On Darkness*, *Introitus* and *You Must Respect The Sea*. Throaty jazz sax rears in the churning title track and Gilda Butta casts the only vocal – in French – on *Les Fleur Du Mal*. Lentini is at his most evocative when he lets strings take over on the stunning *Stabat Mater (Concert For Violin and String Orchestra)*, although *White Fish Black Fish* – which could have been constructed from an early Genesis reverie – shows one foot holding up the prog canon. Obviously a major crossover talent afoot. **KN**

QLUSTER

Elemente BUREAU B

Roedelius and Bock keep the experimental synth flame burning.



The early 70s albums released as Cluster by Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius were beatless krautrock charting post-apocalyptic electronic soundscapes that influenced many, including Bowie and Eno. As Cluster continued sporadically, Roedelius pursued projects including Harmonia and the solo career that solidified his trademark haunting pianos and electronics. After Cluster returned to record 2009's *Qua*, Roedelius created Qluster when Onnen Bock replaced the departing Moebius, joined by Armin Metz for 2013's *Antworten* and the piano trio excursions of 2015's *Tasten*. Roedelius continues to make fearlessly-foraging music with his cohorts. This latest set sees the trio exhuming vintage analogue. *Xymelan* and *Perpetuum* start like coalescing globules in an intergalactic fish tank before expanding into astral fanfares or pulsing electronic meteor showers, joined by beats on *Tatum* and synth melodies on *Zeno*. But deepest, time-defying space is always at the core, venturing further than even Tangerine Dream's early voyages. Now 84, Roedelius is one of krautrock's few surviving founding fathers, and seems to be far from done yet. **KN**

THE ALGORITHM

Compiler Optimization Techniques SELF/ATONAL

An epic adventure in digital djent.

A metal guitarist first and foremost, Frenchman Rémi Gallego began experimenting with DIY recording and 80s-style software instruments in the late 00s, before the Algorithm eventually became a live beast. Those tempted to dismiss the complex instrumental blend of bleep, bludgeon and rhythmic wizardry as a cheap trick will now have witnessed a multi-album evolution: from the smashed Gameboy arpeggios of early demo collection *Critical Error*,

> **Rug-pulling smarts that demand concentration.**

through to 2014's *Octopus4*, which seemed to directly lie at the crossroads of djent and EDM, and then 2016's *Brute Force*, which sounded like Survive discovering blastbeats.

It takes a certain love of the niche, the heavy and the retro synth setting to dig into this stuff in depth, but once immersed, it is a heady trip through *Tron*-land. So, where next? Well, while *Brute Force* sounded reflective of a time when it was widely agreed the world was descending into darkness, fourth album *Compiler Optimization Techniques* is reflective of an era when the world does not widely agree on anything at all.

There's a clear sense that these ideas are more untapped at the start and more honed at the end than previous efforts, meaning the five tracks here are gigantic in their scale, yet seamless in their convergences. We are far from 'mash-up' territory, instead the songs on *COT* are closer to symphonies in terms of their arrangements — bizarre and grandiose as that claim may seem in this filthily distorted, futurist context. The 11.43 *Cluster*, for example, lays down a heavy gauntlet, mutating from Kavinsky-style cyber-punk to Iron Maiden gallop into an oddly uplifting jungle centrepiece — and that's only half of it. There's also a boss fight 8-bit maelstrom and a final djent beating.

Fragmentation initially seems to offer some much-needed respite, opening out into a drifting, spacious electronic arrangement, augmented by a slower *Stranger Things*-style heart beating kick drum, but this sense of security evaporates as it morphs into something altogether more menacing — all while finding a convincing rhythmic link between hip-hop and stoner metal as an electronic kick-snare gives way to a looming wall of riffs.

Gallego has made a record of rug-pulling, unbalancing smarts that demands concentration. Whether or not you see this as a flaw is up to you, but *Compiler Optimization Techniques* is certainly not dinner party music. Think of it instead as a *Ready Player One*-esque compilation of cultural reference, both disorientating and awe-inspiring. If you're a listener after a challenge, this might well be it.

MATT PARKER

TIGER MOTH TALES

Story Tellers Part Two WHITE KNIGHT

Pete Jones weaves tales of whimsy based on classic children's lit.

It's not unreasonable to suspect that there hasn't been an instrument invented yet that Pete Jones – otherwise known as Tiger Moth Tales – couldn't play if he decided to put his mind to it. He performs all of the musical parts on his new album *Story Tellers Part Two* himself, in the process covering everything from piano and guitar to clarinet and harmonica, and they're always performed with aplomb. On bass he doesn't simply plod away on the root notes, but deftly dances up and down the frets as though it were his life's calling.

> **His considerable talents as a songwriter and musician shine.**

His recent profile-boosting recruitment into Camel clearly hasn't consumed all his creative energies, although the main influence apparent here is Gabriel-era Genesis. *Story Tellers Part Two* is unashamedly melodic and English in character. Like the first *Story Tellers* album, the songs are inspired by fairy tales and writers that Jones loved as a child, a theme laid out most plainly in tracks like *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* and *Toad Of Toad Hall*. At times, the album has a family-friendly style, from the playful humour of *Three Little Pigs* to the big, Disney-esque ballads with lyrics about friendship and true love. On that front, *Eternity* features an impressive guest vocal from Emma Friend, while the album is bookended by *Best Friends* and *Best Friends Reprise*, the latter featuring a sweeping melody borne aloft by swelling strings.

There are three instrumentals: *Kai's Journey* has a classic prog vibe, *Hundred Acre Wood* is a lovely duet between piano and clarinet that's quite gorgeous, while *The Palace* reveals more of Jones' rock leanings with a showcase electric guitar solo. Jones' vocals on *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* certainly sound a fair bit like Peter Gabriel, while *Match Girl*, based on the tragic story by Hans Christian Andersen, conjures the sadness of its source with a bluesy, mournful harmonica and gentle piano.

Jones doesn't seem to be on a mission to chart the deepest water of prog, as there are tracks here that could fit comfortably on a children's album. So for those who take their prog po-faced and earnest, this isn't likely to be a good fit. There's nothing as grand in scale and ambition as *Winter Maker* from his *The Depths Of Winter* album, or *Tigers In The Butter* from *Cocoon*, but that's clearly not the goal behind the *Story Tellers* concept. This should find its home among those willing to embrace a distinctly English sense of whimsy, in the tradition of *Nursery Cryme*-era Genesis, and occasional bouts of silliness for its own sake. And Jones' considerable talents as both a songwriter and musician shine through every track.

DAVID WEST

RADIOPHONIC WORKSHOP

Possum (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) ROOM 13

RW's first film soundtrack, featuring Delia Derbyshire sketches. Be very afraid...

Sixty years since coming together at the BBC to provide electronic textures, sound effects and music such as the *Doctor Who* theme, the Radiophonic Workshop have composed their first ever movie soundtrack. Marking Matthew Holness' directorial debut, *Possum* is a horror film and the current Workshop (once only permitted to keep its technicians for three months in case it drove them nuts) rise to the occasion, building tracks (38, including nine bonus pieces) using drones and electronic sketches found in Delia Derbyshire's attic. Throughout, they create an unsettling backdrop of dread, fear and tension to fit the storyline about a children's puppeteer who faces his evil stepfather. Anchored by its recurring flute theme, screeches, eerie night howls, sudden attacks and brooding pulses litter tracks like *The Barracks*, *Nightmare 2* and *Pursuit*. The shock eruption in *Behind The Door/Mummy And Daddy* will catapult you clean out your seat. Incredibly for these tech-drenched times, the Workshop have upped the game of making alien sounds hit on the deepest emotional levels, particularly undiluted terror: just as they always have. **KN**

RAINBURN

Insignify SELF-RELEASED

Bangalore brethren add some spice.

The role of Indian music in widening prog rock's sonic horizons is well-established, so it was inevitable that the country's own bands would later be influenced by western developments. Bangalore's Rainburn – formed in 2011 by singer-guitarist Vats Iyengar – started with cover versions of Porcupine Tree and Rush. By 2014's debut EP *Canvas Of Silence*, they were playing their own songs. They are also the organisers of the Progworks festival, and became hailed as India's leading outfit on a scene that didn't exist when they started. *Insignify* sees Iyengar leading original drummer Praveen Kumar, bassist Ravi Nair and guitarist Paraj Kumar Singh on his concept album about existential angst, significance of life, narcissism and social alienation. It's deep stuff that avoids pretentious minefields through the music's well-oiled prog machinations, like the breakneck widdling on *The Wait* or the soaring jangle of *Merchant Of Dreams*. Convoluted time signatures add to their prog joyride, compounded by the flute solo on *School Of Atlantis*. Rainburn should be praised for shining a light on progressive music in a country where it came from afar. **KN**

RED DIRT SKINNERS

Under Utopian Skies RED DIRT SKINNERS

Country meets folk meets prog on this acclaimed duo's sixth record.

UK multi-instrumentalists Rob and Sarah Skinner formed the Red Dirt Skinners in 2011, and have since been recognised by the British Blues Awards, the UK Americana Association Awards and the JUNOs (they now live in Canada). Where's the prog in all this? Well, the husband and wife cite Pink Floyd, Supertramp and Dream Theater as influences, and these do leech through into the substantial, beautifully rendered folk music on their sixth album. Most obvious is their version of *Comfortably Numb*, a lilting take retrofitted with a waltzing 6/8 rhythm and Sarah Skinner's alto saxophone ably replacing Gilmour's Strat. That instrument evokes *Logical Song*-era 'Tramp elsewhere and – at a push – their lilting acoustic guitars evoke the gentler lulls of Petrucci and band. But strong songwriting crosses genres, and the wholehearted *Hey Crawford* (about a good teacher's legacy) is positive and catchy, and while its title might make even Fish blush, *An Isolated Episode Of Global Amnesia* is an engrossing, Canterbury-esque instrumental. The Skinners' trademark close harmonies elevate their uplifting, quality material throughout. **GRM**

SAGA

So Good So Far - Live At Rock Of Ages EAR MUSIC

You can have too much of a good thing.

Is it just us, or are there too many live albums these days? Regrettably for our fellow disciples of Saga since the 1980s, the Canadian pomp rock merchants are wrapping a 40-year career. By the time you read this, a final tearful goodbye will have been waved in the quintet's unofficial second home of Puerto Rico. No doubt it will be recorded and filmed for posterity. So why bestow the same honour upon this show from earlier on the Final Chapter tour – a festival in Seebronn, Germany – back in 2017? That said, here the sound quality and band performances are more than acceptable. Nonconformist as ever, Ian Crichton rips it up on *Careful Where You Step*, and Michael Sadler is in fine voice. Perhaps unsurprisingly, with eyes set firmly on the finishing line, *Sagacity*, their final studio release, is overlooked in favour of a 16-song setlist that delves all the way back to a self-titled first album in 1978. The band's early years are represented, though the nostalgia-fest somehow manages to overlook *How Long*, *The Perfectionist*, *Take It Or Leave It*, *What Do I Know?* and *Only Time Will Tell*. Save your pennies for the Puerto Rico DVD, maybe? It won't be far behind. **DML**

JAN SCHELHAAS

Ghosts Of Eden SHELL/PLEDGE

A downbeat set from Caravan's veteran keyboardist.

Ghosts Of Eden finds Jan Schelhaas, of Caravan and Camel fame, in a melancholy mood. Perhaps that's only fitting for a musician in their seventh decade. It's cut from the same cloth as 2017's *Living On A Little Blue Dot*, with lyrics that suggest someone looking back over their life and, at the risk of morbidity, looking to make peace with their past. *'In the blink of an eye, it's all over,'* he sings in *Blink*, *'No more fear or regret, we are stardust and new life is waiting.'* Such sentiments run through the album like a thread – *No Requiem*, *They'll Be Gone*, *Die Trying*, *Heaven Knows*... it's not exactly upbeat. Musically, Schelhaas' keys take the front seat and the overall sound isn't a far cry from Caravan tracks like *Better By Far*, just with notably less guitar. It lacks the fuller production of the classic Canterbury sound, with programmed drums and rather too much synth brass. Jimmy Hastings plays sax throughout the record, very much in a smooth jazz, mellow style. The whole experience is elegiac, with slow, unhurried tempos and Schelhaas' very soft, almost spoken vocals that typically sit low in the mix, creating a distinctly sombre listen. **DW**

TC&I

Great Aspirations TC&I/PLEDGE

Vinyl reissue for the 2017 EP by XTC's Colin Moulding and Terry Chambers.

For those of us who grew up adoring XTC's unique, sideways slant on music, hearing Colin Moulding again is quite the Proustian rush. The bassist/singer/songwriter was a vital part of the band's sound, and though he fell into a post-band-collapse slough in the noughties, the four new songs on this EP prove the now-63-year-old can still weave his brand of magic. The TC to his I is XTC's former drummer, Terry Chambers, whose presence only adds to the sense of pedigree and chemistry here. *Scatter Me* is a charmingly whimsical and brightly elegiac pop tune, its verses reminding what an important part of XTC's charm Moulding's phrasing was. Churchill, Spielberg and McCartney are cited on the pleasant *Greatness (The Aspiration Song)*, while *Comrades In Pop* is a bitter, knowing look at how money and lawyers can destroy bands. The real jewel here, though, is *Kenny*. Its oblique, catchy guitar riff is the kind Moulding and XTC comrade Andy Partridge specialised in; its lyrics harking back to innocent English days of allotment plots, falling conkers, tadpoles in jam jars. This is pop, yeah yeah, packed with character, meaning and nostalgia, and wearing its brilliance lightly. **GRM**

POST-ROCK

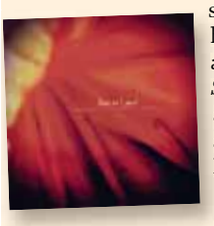
Alex Lynham guides us through the peaks and valleys of essential post-rock.

The biggest news in the post-rock and math rock scene at the moment isn't a record, a gig, or a festival. Sadly, it's the news that Dan Wild-Beesley, the guitarist of 'turbo prog' two-piece **Cleft**, has passed away after an extended fight against cancer. Following a fundraising effort from the whole of the scene, nearly £100,000 was raised, and with his current band GUG he played his final show at ArcTanGent this year. As part of this fundraising effort, a live recording of Cleft's gig at the now-defunct Stag And Hounds in Bristol from their farewell tour was released (cleft.bandcamp.com), and it's a fitting tribute to his power as a guitar player.

If you want to hear something you genuinely don't hear every day, then check out **Jo Quail**'s upcoming album *Exsolve* (self-released). A virtuoso cellist and composer, Quail uses looping and extended technique to conjure otherworldly soundscapes from her instrument. She's played a slew of festivals, supported Boris, completed two European tours with post-rock giants Caspian and performed two concerts for Robert Smith during his curation of the Southbank's Meltdown Festival. Naturally, *Exsolve* is meant to be experienced in full, but if *Causleen's Wheel* appeals, with its dark drones, choral layers and pounding percussion, then you're going to love the album.

Scottish proggers **Atlas:Empire** have finally come out with their debut LP, *The Stratosphere Beneath Our Feet* (self-released). It's very much crossover modern progressive rock in the vein of Arcane Roots, with nods to the atmospherics of post-rock and some of the eccentric timings of math rock. For a taste of the more intense, up-tempo side of the album, check out *The Moment We Were Exploding*. For something with more of a post-rock vibe to it, start with the brooding *Gethsemane*, which effortlessly builds from gentle acoustic figures to a squalling crescendo.

Since participating in the classic Sonic Cathedral singles series, **Daniel Land** has been reliably knocking out great shoegaze tunes for a decade, first with his band the Modern Painters, and now as a solo artist. *The Dream Of The Red Sails* (self-released) is his latest effort, and it sees the cult legend return to a dream pop sound that recalls the Painters' first album, *Love Songs For The Chemical Generation*. This reflective and self-referential style is reflected in the nostalgic quality of the songs, a loose theme triggered by a cancer scare last year. For a taste, try the lead track *Summer Song*, the conceptual centrepiece of the record.



Finally, post-rock titans **This Will Destroy You** have surprise-released a new album, *New Others Part Two* (Dark Operative). After teasing new material, the band released the album within 24 hours with the cheeky message, "Surpriiiiiiiiise! Sixth studio album," and that was that. It's a harder-hitting LP than their last. For a frenetic cut, try *Sound Of Your Death*, for dynamic shifts, try *Clubs* and for grooving whimsy, try *Jesse Ray*.

WITHIN TEMPTATION

Resist SPINEFARM

Den Adel's crew come back with galactic prog.

In their 20-plus years, Dutch symphonic proggers Within Temptation have never been afraid of bombast. Four years on from their sixth studio offering *Hydra*, Sharon den Adel and co deliver it again and then some. From its opening bars — all soaring fanfares and distorted guitars — *Resist* blasts off into the stratosphere and heads into orbit.

The level of accomplishment on display in *Resist* is spectacular. After den Adel's recent struggles with ill-health and writer's block, it would not have been unreasonable for Within Temptation to have called it a day. And when den Adel announced a solo album *My Indigo* in 2017, some thought it meant that the Within Temptation story might come to an end.

> **Themes of resistance, struggle and hope feel very contemporary.**

Resist is a reminder that this story has got a long way to go yet. Longtime fans will find much to satisfy them — the vast, soaring anthems, the wide-open production is all there — but this is also their darkest and most industrial album. This is an album where every line of music is urgent and hard-won. For all its pomp, *Resist* feels (in the light of den Adel's struggles) surprisingly intimate and revealing.

Set in a technologised world of violence and mechanised enslavement, the album's themes of resistance, struggle and hope feel very contemporary. Opener *The Reckoning* features Papa Roach frontman Jacoby Shaddix, and Shaddix and den Adel create a wall of vocal sound. When they sing, *'We've cried tears a thousand times, we rise against, we'll hold the line'*, they speak of personal struggles as much as global ones.

As on *Hydra* there are several more vocal collaborations: in Flames' Anders Fridén adds vox on *Raise Your Banner* and Arid's Jasper Steverlinck offers back-up on *Firelight*. *Resist* takes the groovier dance feel found on *Hydra* and develops it on tracks like *Supernova*, while Martijn Spierenburg's sequenced keys echo 80s electronica acts angling for a hit.

Lest anyone think Within Temptation have gone fey, these dancey gestures are always in service to the song, and while the band remain masters of melody — *Mad World* is seriously catchy Euro-Rock — their grooves are grounded in some mighty riffage. Closer *Trophy Hunter* announces itself with a beastly riff that could fill a stadium, while *Raise Your Banner* has growls and breakdowns to satisfy the most discerning prog metalhead.

On *Trophy Hunter* den Adel sings, *'Breathe, I need to breathe…'* By the end of this album you might feel the same way. *Resist* is immensely accomplished and satisfying. Within Temptation rightly have a large following already, and this album should take them to the next level.

RACHEL MANN

THAT JOE PAYNE

What Is The World Coming To THATJOEPAYNE.COM

The former Enid frontman strikes out with pride on his first EP release.

Could Joe Payne have picked a more timely name for his new EP? He's joined by some of his former Enid bandmates, including producer/choir wrangler Max Read, who excels on the title track. It's an epic symphonic piece that's almost crossover-classical in parts, with grand production, big strings and Payne in extraordinary, operatic mode. It's a little bit Queen, a little bit Andrea Bocelli, and, well, a lot Joe Payne. There's something of Muse's Matt Bellamy in his treatment of Henry Purcell's *Music For A While*, the singer gliding through the modulating keys with incredible control, attending faithfully to the song's baroque ornamentation. The CD release includes some piano versions of catalogue favourites. Taken from his debut single, *I Need A Change* and *Moonlit Love* are still powerful when shorn of their bombastic arrangements, and his take on Methexis' *The Origin Of Blame* plays like a character interlude from a top West End show. The two Enid tracks – *Who Created Me?* and *One And The Many* – are intimate and only confirm Payne's natural gifts. Whatever the world is coming to, it's a better place for him being in it. **GRM**

THE BEVIS FROND

We're Your Friends, Man FIRE

Brit-psych hero still in bloom on album 23.

At 65 years old and with more than 20 albums behind him, The Bevis Frond's Nick Saloman is forever industrious. As well as running his own label and record shop, he's come up with another double album's worth of songs. *We're Your Friends, Man* finds the veteran musician in reflective mood, although getting older by no means signals a slide into grouchiness. As he points out on *Theft*: *'I'm an old muso, an interesting relic, I've never been busted, so I'm not psychedelic.'* If you want to pick a theme, it's coming to terms with disappointment and lives gone slightly awry, punctuated with outbursts of frustration. Always masterfully understated, he makes quietly devastating, poignant asides, such as the reference in *Little Orchestras* to songs that are *'intended to console but hurt instead'*. Closing track *You're On Your Own* is a 13-minute tale of a hellish drive over London's Westway, ending in a squall of twin guitar duelling. Frond fans have come to expect the equivalent of an all-you-can-eat buffet with every release, but the glut of material here is difficult to get your head around in one sitting. A little more focus wouldn't have gone amiss, but life's messy like that. **CE**

THE INTERSPHERE

The Grand Delusion LONGBRANCH

Grand vision or smoke and mirrors?

There is an appropriately misleading quality to *The Grand Delusion*. The fifth album from German pop proggers The Intersphere sounds familiar in so many ways: there are alt-rock riff clichés, a clean nu-metal vocal straight out of the early 00s and those jerking guitar and drum thrashes first coined by Biffy Clyro. Yet all of these touchstones have been juggled and jumbled in such a way that it feels like an Eno cut-up. Things don't start well: *Don't Think Twice* is a slab of puce pop rock that sounds like the kind of meek B-side that the likes of Feeder would lay down on a spare studio day. *Mind Over Matter* has more cut and thrust to it, wrong-footing with snare snaps and aggressive guitar bursts that are interspersed amid big chords 'n' chorus sections that might otherwise sound stale. Things get more compelling as the record progresses and stretches. *Secret Place*, *Man On The Moon* and *New Maxim*, in particular, ably strike a balance between gut-punch and pop hook. Elsewhere the progressive elements are delivered in microbursts, amid some duller tropes. When it works though, we get anthemic pop rock with clever punctuation. **MP**

THE LAZE

Cryptic Plumage SELF-RELEASED

Wonderful Wirral wyrdness.

Sometimes there's nothing like bonkers prog, and Merseyside's The Laze are up there with the best on this cassette-download follow-up to their 2014 soundtrack to 1925 horror classic *Phantom Of The Opera*. There are seven musicians, including keys and sax, ejaculating what they describe as "Sexy stories that the Alpha mother dwarf recounts in her catacomb while the gods crack mountains in the barren surface of a demon-ridden world." They sound like they're all playing at the same time in perfect unison as they navigate Magma doom-bomb riffs, convoluted Mahavishnu rapids and resuscitate hoary prog motifs at treble velocity. After six relatively short tracks (with names like *Totally Sirius* and *Rainbow Amoeba*), the closing *Scaffolds* is the set's epic, tearing through Zeuhl-like bombardment until a 'normal' male voice glides in like any MOR prog warble: a shock after the mangled cement mixer vocals beamed up previously from Hell's latrine. You can picture them, sitting in clouds of smoke, cackling at the next move they'll pull off before hotwiring another VdGG-riffed demolition derby. Rock loves boxes: say hello to speed-prog. **KN**

TIM MORSE

III CYMBALICK

Heavily Yes-influenced third album by US multi-instrumentalist.

California-based Tim Morse is perhaps best known as the author of *Yesstories*. He's also served time as the keyboardist in Yes tribute band Parallels. That background provides a reasonable steer regarding the sound of Morse's own music, though he occupies the lighter end of the Yes style spectrum. For this – surprise! – third solo album, his stated goal was to "get to the 'emotional core' of the songs... and eliminate some of the fiddling about". That mission may have been additionally motivated by a more prosaic consideration, namely Morse's desire to see *III* released on vinyl. Consequently there's a discipline that informs five of the seven tracks, with Morse relaxing his self-imposed rule only for *Labyrinth* and *The Path*, two songs whose very titles demand a certain amount of musical elongation, such that the album runs only to 45 minutes. Musically, *III* is enjoyable. Morse is a skilled writer and player and an adequate, if unremarkable, vocalist, with a voice reminiscent of Ajalon's Wil Henderson. Given that his ego permitted employing a handful of guest instrumentalists, next time around he should consider sub-contracting some lead vocals as well. **NS**

THOM YORKE

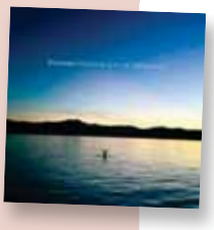
Suspiria (Music For The Luca Guadagnino Film) XL

Italian horror remake gets a Radioheader's soundtrack.

Reimagining the score for a film that already has one of cinema's most iconic soundtracks is a display of major artistic cojones on Yorke's part. But he pulls it off by supplying a central theme that's as haunting and unforgettable as the Goblin original – the song *Suspirium* is a thing of wonder, those blissful, looping piano arpeggios and Yorke's voice combining to create another benchmark in beautiful sadness. While it's the highlight of this collection, Yorke doesn't skimp on delivering the type of spooky mood pieces befitting a modern horror movie, many of them occupying the space between droning electronica and avant orchestral music: *The Hooks* features a panic-stricken string synth and the type of foley work last heard in *Berberian Sound Studio*, *Volk* is a prime slice of Radiophonic dread. But it's the vocal tracks that are the most compelling. Both *Has Ended* and *The Universe Is Indifferent* dive deeper into the mystic 60s psychedelic loam that *A Moon Shaped Pool* dabbled in, all smeary sitars and stoned incantations, while *Unmade* is almost in traditional singer songwriter territory, albeit like Harry Nilsson slowly descending into hell. **JB**

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

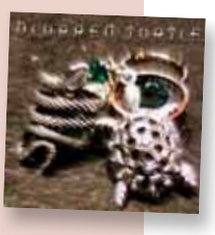
Grant Moon has a rummage down the back of the *Prog* sofa for the ones that nearly got away...



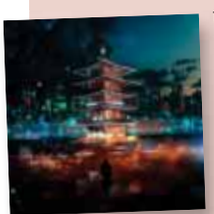
Included in the high-pedigree ranks of Dutch/Brit five-piece **Dilemma** are former Darwin's Radio frontman/Frost* guitarist Dec Burke and Kayak/Neal Morse drummer Collin Leijenaar. The band's sumptuous new platter *Random Acts Of Liberation* (Butler Records/Music On Vinyl) is steeped in modern prog textures and totally packed with hooks, moods and melodies. Twelve-minuter *The Inner Darkness* hits numerous prog G-spots, *Prodigal Son* touches on Steven Wilson/John Mitchell territory, and on the likes of the metallic *Pseudocomaphobia* Burke and Paul Crezee's guitars frequently succeed in boggling the mind.

Keiron Phelan's work with littlebow saw him classified as unclassifiable, and post-rockers State River Widening won the singer a certain cult following. On his likeably diverse and acerbic solo album *Peace Signs* (Gare Du Nord), he leads his collective through a crafted, slightly psych set that evokes Donovan, Tindersticks, Knifeworld and much in-between. Clever, melodic flute hooks are detailed by harp and organ, one of the songs is actually called *Canterbury*, and Brona McVittie offers beautiful, folky counterpoint to Phelan's pleasingly natural voice. The lyrics are wry (*New Swedish Fiction*), the music often mesmerising (*Satellite Hitori*, *Song For Ziggy*), and the Genesis-friendly 12-strings of *Apple Shades* are among the many things to enjoy here.

Seasoned keyboardist/guitarist Tim Brown's one-man project is **Blurred Turtle**, and it really sees him come out of his shell. The eponymous, self-released album is a fun, symphonic and at times avant-garde dive into Brown's synth-heavy, instrumental soundworld. You might hear some of these sound presets on a Rick Wakeman or John Carpenter record; other cheapo brass patches, you certainly wouldn't. There's a whole-heartedness to *Riding The Crests*, intense musicality in the surging *Heading Out*, and Brown's tongue-in-cheek sense of pomp throughout is contagious.



Two different bands supply our djenty goodness this time around. **Shading** are a progressive metal quintet from Venice, Italy. Their self-released album *The Vanishing Of Our Lore* posits 'a hostile world ruled by high-functioning machines and artificial intelligence'. Yes folks, another dystopian sci-fi world concept album, but a well done one at that. It's song-centric, atmospheric and packs a real punch, with eye-watering vocals from the brilliantly named Damiano Affinito. TesseracT's Acle Kahney mastered the brutal track *Breathless*, which gives you an idea of where they're coming from.



And last but by no means least, psychedelic trio **Little Jimi** are coming at you from a garage in Bordeaux, and they've clearly enjoyed something altogether more mind-expanding than a bottle of the local claret. On **EP.1** (MRS Red Sound) the young trio take the sledgehammer stoner rock of Queens Of The Stone Age and wreath it in a Hawkwind haze, and they're great. Modern vintage sounds, reverberating vocals and big, woozy riffs to nod your head to: what's French for 'Light 'em if you got 'em'?

BE-BOP DELUXE

Sunburst Finish: Expanded and Remastered ESOTERIC

Classic third album gets successful sonic zhoosh.

Ever since Be-Bop Deluxe's 1974 debut *Axe Victim*, a serious momentum had gathered behind the band who transitioned from a support act with attitude blowing the headliner off stage to one elbowing their way into the spotlight. Chief songwriter and frontman Bill Nelson candidly admits surprise that they were nudged towards a chart-friendly direction aided by the single *Ships In The Night* released primarily at EMI's behest.

> **Adds ravishing details that don't detract from its vital energy.**

In his essay accompanying this four-disc set celebrating the band's third album, Nelson says that he always regarded Be-Bop Deluxe primarily as an albums band. "I considered hit singles as belonging to the domain of ephemeral pop acts, rather than the currency of a 'serious' rock band."

Originally released in 1976, *Sunburst Finish* is the product of a band with road-honed confidence and technical prowess to match the aspiration tucked into some truly smart songwriting. Eager to build on their previous forays in the studio, newcomer keyboard player Andy Clark extends Be-Bop Deluxe's fluency and textural range, creating a complementary space within the foundations of Charlie Tumahai's sleek bass and Simon Fox's on-point drumming. Collected with a 68-page book, the audio content includes demos, radio and TV footage and six previously unreleased tracks. However, the real attraction in this package is Stephen W Tayler's new stereo and surround sound mixes, which add ravishing details that command attention without detracting from the vital energy accrued from the album's hurtling pace.

Nelson's guitar solos are constructed in the manner of a series of epic sagas, which draw upon the myths and legends of existing rock music while casting a visionary eye toward future times. Imbued with a striking theatricality, his runs evidence an inclination toward calculated precision on the one hand and reckless abandonment on the other. Much of the album reads like a seminar on how to create a rock'n'roll hybrid with dazzling illustrations. *Fair Exchange* showcases this souped-up approach at playing fast and loose with hairy-arsed riffing, a typically precocious reference to a rousing jig and later, polishing off the overdriven tones of Jimmy Page as the icing on the cake. *Crying To The Sky* and the sumptuous orchestral manoeuvrings during the Beatles homage *Crystal Gazing* add further testimony to the album's heroic scale.

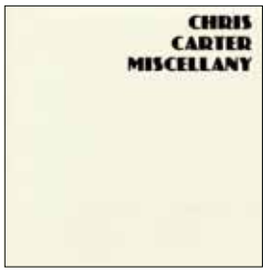
In order to fly you have to have the courage to jump. Nelson's ability to swoop between these various extremes with what appears to be greatest of ease remains a key factor in Be-Bop Deluxe's success back in their heyday, and in the inherent freshness that spills from them now.

SID SMITH

CHRIS CARTER

Chris Carter's Miscellany MUTE

Limited-edition box set of Throbbing Gristler's earlier machinations.



It's a measure of the esteem in which Chris Carter is held that even the Radiophonic Workshop are among remixers on a new EP drawn from his album. With the electronic blueprints he started unleashing more than 40 years ago with Throbbing Gristle and then with lifelong partner Cosey Fanni Tutti long ingrained in music's fabric, he's been enjoying another lease of life as a solo artist since releasing *Chris Carter's Chemistry Lessons Volume One* earlier this year. His first solo work this century, its success sparked live appearances and now a four-CD/six-LP box set comprising three earlier albums plus bonus 70s foragings.

If any further evidence is needed to position Carter as possibly the UK's greatest living keyboard exponent and sonic scientist, it's all here. These tracks capture this sonic activist/self-confessed tech geek in the ongoing search for the perfect sound, shade or beat that sometimes prompted his own inventions.

1985's *Mondo Beat* displays Carter plugging into the electro and proto-acid that was gripping the world then, but putting his own spin on *Noevil* and the title track before descending into the clammy sewer-vamp of *Nobadhairdo* and TG-like fever dream of *Beyond Temptation*.

Acid house had gone and techno moved in by the time Carter recorded 1998's *Disobedient* and '99's *Small Moon*. On vinyl for the first time (both coloured wax doubles), the former forges into fathomless deep space via a radioactive jungle river, deploying deep techno flavours on *Domank* and *Lixiez*, while the latter explores drum'n'bass on *Arcadia* before *Non-Pop* and sirens-draped *Soho...3am* twist the possibilities in electronically generated rhythms.

Archival Recordings 1973 To 1977 shows that Carter's trademark steely ambience and extra-terrestrial finesse had been there since before TG; he simply refined it as technology appeared to catch up with his rampant muse. And nothing here sounds dated. **KN**

PATRICK GRANT

Fields Amaze And Other Strange Music PEPPERGREEN MEDIA

Retitled 1997 album *Attack Decay Sustain Release*, remixed and expanded.

Grant has worked with musicians as diverse as avant-garde composer John Cage and Robert Fripp in The League Of Crafty Guitarists, and also participated in perhaps the most prog event ever – a performance by 175 keyboard players in New York City in 2012 – that has found its way into the Guinness Book Of Records. *Attack Decay Sustain Release* was recorded at Philip Glass' Looking Glass studios with additional material that Grant recorded later at his studio, using mainly piano, electronic keys, tuned and other percussion, wind instruments and occasional guitar.

And while there are significantly more differences than similarities between Grant's music and that of Glass, on the title track there is a procession of Glass-like chord changes and on *A Visible Track Of Turbulence I*, a similar perpetual motion of agitated activity. *...Turbulence II* begins with a formal introduction of wind chorales with a Stravinsky feel, but as the track progresses, keyboard themes circle round but sound like they are twisting themselves inside out on a Möebius strip.

Grant studied gamelan in Bali and you can clearly hear the influence of that musical culture on the title track where he plays gamelan orchestral instruments, and in the latter half of *Everything Distinct: Everything The Same* on which the pianos take the top lines, which is followed by drumming, and punctuated by low gong-like notes.

Although this music is richly melodic and rhythmic, some of the pieces do feel rather relentless. Light relief comes with the two "soundtracks", *Imaginary Horror Film – Part 1* and *2*, which move episodically from musical scene to scene, from gothic church bells, eerie dream sequences and spooky still-life passages to frantic chases through dark woods and dramatic surging guitar chords when the monster's face is finally revealed. Driven on by tom-toms, *The Weights Of Numbers* features an intricate mosaic of themes on electric keyboards, but there is a particular lightness about it, like a stone being skimmed across a lake. **MB**

MIKE + THE MECHANICS

The Living Years - Super Deluxe 30th Anniversary edition BMG

Four-disc vinyl/CD repackaging for Rutherford project's 1988 breakthrough.

The chief USP of this 30th anniversary edition of Mike + The Mechanics' massively successful second album is that, unlike the 25th anniversary edition that came out four years ago (bit of a production delay on that occasion), this one is available on vinyl. And not just any old flimsy platter but a double-LP version with remastered live tracks included, plus a two-CD version thrown in just in case vinyl goes back out of fashion again next year and those much-maligned shiny silver things begin to catch our eye once more.

Despite the rather dubious marketing announcements surrounding this release ("available on vinyl for the first time ever" – what a surprise for the millions who bought the LP in 1988), there's no new material included here, but if you're revisiting the album for the first time since the 1980s the 2014 remastering still sounds good and the 30-year-old material has held up well, despite the quintessentially 80s production. Gated drums, squelchy bass, tinny synths and anaemic 'Sussudio'-style funk rock touches abound. Yet it's a testament to the sheer strength of songwriting that it can't smother the heart of the music.

Even the uneven lyrics aren't a deal-breaker, although it's interesting to note that the same man – BA Robertson – wrote the bland truisms of *Nobody's Perfect* (key sentiment: *'We are what we are'*) and then on the very next track, the timelessly resonant, heartbreaking lyric of *The Living Years*.

There are punchy live renditions of several tracks from this album and previous hits including *Silent Running* and *A Call To Arms*, but most intriguing is the 2014 reimagining of *The Living Years*, with current M+TM frontman Andrew Roachford making a strong fist of emulating Paul Carrack's original vocal, and an African choir offering extra anthemic swell. To these ears, the original is still the best, but at least they've done something creative with it. **JS**

STEREOLAB

Peng! / The Groop Played "Space Age Batchelor Pad Music" TOO PURE / BEGGARS ARKIVE

Clear vinyl reissues of first two albums from indie's kraut-reviving revolutionaries.

Stereolab didn't exactly burst onto the scene in the early 90s, but inveigled their way into indie's collective consciousness via a series of limited edition singles and EPs, such that by the time of these two releases – their 1992 debut and a mini-LP from the 1993 – an underground buzz had grown up around them. They're one of the groops that matter, creating and defining a scene that combined fragments of the past – krautrock, library music, exotica, etc – in a way that sounded fresh. Compared to Britpop and grunge, it was a quiet revolution, but one nonetheless.

The great leap forward was still very much in the middle of happening on these early releases though, with *Peng!* tracks such as *Orgiastic* clearly in hock to the prevailing shoegaze sound of the time. But Stereolab's idea was to de-emphasise "noise-as-rush" and instead focus on drone and repetition as an expressway to yr skull – the beats may be more indie disco than motorik, but there's an immersive, hypnotic quality to these songs, and more often than not, no verse/chorus dynamic, just a sense of the constant now. Yet it's on the more contemplative material where they really shine, in particular when Laetitia Sadier's allusive, close-mic'ed vocals come to the fore against a backwash of Farfisa organ and Moog, such as on *Super Falling Star*. Elsewhere, there's an experimental, though never alienating, sensibility, whether it's the big effected drums of *You Little Shits* or the electro-shock throb of *Mellotron*.

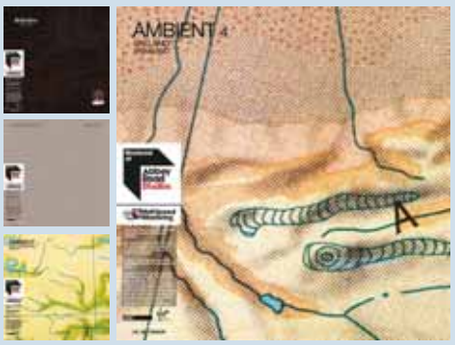
By the time of *Space Age Batchelor Pad Music*, their sound had evolved to encompass both a post-ironic easy listening vibe (*Ronco Symphony*) and the full-blooded embrace of Neu! (before everybody else got there) on *We're Not Adult Orientated*.

A re-flowering of progressive tendencies in alternative music, these albums reset the co-ordinates for a whole generation, not just in their influences, but in their attitude too. **JB**

BRIAN ENO

Discreet Music/Music For Films/Ambient 1: Music For Airports/On Land UMC/VIRGIN

Genre-naming chillout pioneer hiked back to wax, deluxe-style.



Sashaying into the 70s as Roxy Music's glam-peacock synth-mauler, Brian Eno already harboured the introverted experimental alter ego he liberated on the instrumental albums he slipped out between art pop sets. Preferring European sonic scientists to garish mainstream recycling, Eno pioneered a quieter deployment of electronics after returning to tape experiments started in 1967 that first

> **Quiet visions that helped shape modern music's future.**

manifested as "Frippertronics" with Fripp for 1973's *(No Pussyfooting)*, crystalising a genre that he called "ambient" .

Bedridden after an accident, when Eno couldn't turn the volume up on his 18th-century harp music LP, he received his ambient epiphany listening to it ripple against the rain outside "as part of the ambience of the environment". Inspired by Erik Satie's aural background 'Furniture Music' concepts, he left the kids romping noisily in their playpens to let two loops of synthesised melodies unfurl and overlap for 30 minutes to make the gorgeously pastoral *Discreet Music*. The flip saw the Cockpit Ensemble carving excerpts from the score with sighing strings as modern classical music.

1978's *Music For Films* presented 18 shorter pieces designed as soundtracks for imaginary films, bolstered by Fripp, John Cale, Phil Collins, Fred Frith and Dave Mattacks, flaunting styles that informed Bowie's Berlin Trilogy and other things to come on *M386*, *Events In Dense Fog* and three evocative sections of *Sparrowfall*. Heard now, such unearthly cinematic concoctions still resonate in modern prog and electronica, and from soundtracks they've appeared in.

Eno hatched *Ambient 1: Music For Airports* (first use of the word as title and concept as an entity) while endlessly waiting at Cologne Bonn Airport and becoming irritated by the soul-destroying canned clatter, designing four lengthy excursions into ethereal beauty as a sound installation to soften tension. Forty years later, it still works its unique slow-motion magic through minimal synth and piano motifs.

After albums with Harold Budd and Laraaji, 1982's *On Land* marked the fourth and final Ambient series missive, using found sounds like birds along with remodelling earlier works, bolstered by Jon Hassell's trumpet and Bill Laswell's bass. Having seen his innovations become a new musical language, tracks such as *Shadow* blueprinted new ones.

These seminal works are remastered at half speed to make 45rpm gatefold double albums, with Abbey Road certificates of authenticity, standing now as quiet visions that helped shape modern music's future, begging the question: what would it have been like without him?

KRIS NEEDS

THE UK'S BIGGEST HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE

METAL HAMMER

Available from all good newsagents and supermarkets

NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW

THE BIGGEST BANDS. THE HEAVIEST MUSIC.
WORLD-EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS.

BUY YOUR ISSUE TODAY

PRINT EDITION AVAILABLE FROM
HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/METALHAMMERSHOP

DIGITAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE ON IOS AND ANDROID

WWW.METALHAMMER.COM

/metalhammer /metalhammeruk /metalhammer

THE SYN

Syndestructible PLANE GROOVY

Dazzling vinyl makeover for Chris Squire side-project.

There's no doubt that Chris Squire's work with Yes will stand as his greatest achievement. Next to that monumental legacy, his solo album *Fish Out Of Water* also remains an eloquent testimonial to his musicality. Arguably the closest he came to following up his 1975 release was on The Syn's *Syndestructible*. Originally issued in 2005 and reuniting him with a pre-Yes bandmate, vocalist Steve Nardelli, this is no mere nostalgia-driven old pals act. The music has special vitality thanks to new recruits Jeremy Stacey, currently drumming with King Crimson, his guitarist brother Paul, and keyboardist Gerard Johnson.

If Squire and Nardelli had the overall vision for the project, then it's their trio of collaborators who provide the substance and detail on material that is beautifully melodic, overflowing with beautiful arrangements and panoramic production values. With Squire's bass prowling between Stacey's concise drumming, Johnson's glitter ball of swirling synths and organ provides space for Paul Stacey's on-point guitar work. Soaring backing vocals add an airy freedom while Nardelli's gravelly lead vocals anchor lyrics which celebrate the triumph of hope and the redemption to be found in love. A masterly command of light and shade with subtle evocations of Yes and Squire's solo album all add up to this being a substantial work.

The switch to LP isn't cynical. Extensively restored from deficient master tapes, the difference in audio quality between this and the old CD version is clear and striking, and while the original running order is altered to better suit the dynamics of vinyl, this change actually gives the second half of the record an increased energy. The 180g vinyl is housed in a gatefold sleeve that includes links to an mp3 download and a previously unreleased video of *The Syn Live At The Marquee*, the only live performance from this particular incarnation. In this truly stunning package, *Syndestructible* feels like it's finally found its true home. **SS**

THIRD EAR BAND

Elements - 1970-71 ESOTERIC

Definitive edition for instrumental improv'ers and post-rock pioneers.

Spare a thought for Third Ear Band biographer Luca Ferrari, whose informative liner notes grace the lavish reissue of this 1970 release. He was tasked with talking to the various participants to document their thoughts on the recording, but specific details are in short supply as the players were stoned at the time. Being out-there, in one form or another, is a recurring motif in the life and times of this group.

Existing on the edges of the blossoming underground scene of the late 60s, signed to the Harvest label and scoring regular appearances at high profile festivals and tours, the Third Ear Band didn't fit easily into any obvious category. Even in those open-minded times and with an audience willing to give experimental outfits a chance to explore trippier sonic spaces, the aleatoric impulses driving this London-based quartet are frequently infused with an unsettling, haunting presence.

Beautifully remastered, the original four-track suite has never sounded better. And considering all the extra material that comes with it, this set really is a cause for celebration.

Including unreleased outtakes and edits from the original album dates, off-air Radio 1 broadcasts, pristine sounding studio sessions for an abandoned third album and their improvised Belgian TV soundtrack, *Abelard And Heloise*, this album has never been better served than on this three-disc edition.

A strange and beguiling hybrid that sounds simultaneously medieval and futuristic, oboe-led themes rush and swirl like a cold wind through a post-apocalyptic Ladbroke Grove. Sawing cello drones and oscillating violin figures create a nagging tension that's underpinned by insistent hand percussion. Floating between dream-state associations and vibrating with a ritualistic vigour, the band's work is intimate in scale but maximalist in scope. Ultimately, Harvest didn't really know how to market such a curious mixture, but we should be mighty thankful for the magic they managed to capture so well. **SS**

RUSH

Hemispheres 40th Anniversary Two-CD Edition UMC/MERCURY

A prog landmark gets spruced up for its 40th birthday.

When *Prog* petitioned readers to name the 100 Greatest Prog Albums in 2014, *Hemispheres* polled at number 23, with only their seminal *2112* and *Moving Pictures* ranking higher. As Prog Nation's third-favourite Rush album, the 1978 release was a watershed for the trio, a last gasp attempt to perfect the side-long epic before facing a fresh decade as a sleeker model, ready to ride the new wave in a post-punk world.

> **The 1978 release was a watershed for the trio.**

Following similar reissue campaigns for *2112* and *A Farewell To Kings*, *Hemispheres*' 40th anniversary is being marked in multiple formats with previously unreleased live tracks, new Hugh Syme artwork, and essays. Replica memorabilia and a 40-page hardback book await those who choose the wallet-busting Super Deluxe Edition.

The two-CD release features the remaster from the same 2015 Abbey Road sessions which resulted in the recent audiophile vinyl reissues. This is the first time it has been made available on CD, and the difference in audio quality from previous CD incarnations is evident from that opening iconic suspended chord. Alex Lifeson's layered effects-laden guitar emerges as if materialising from a hyperspace jump. It hangs in space, punctuated by Geddy Lee's Taurus pedals and Neil Peart's cymbal stabs. Lee's serpentine basslines benefit greatly from the crystalline sheen of this remaster – growling one minute and cutting through the melee with that famous Rickenbacker twang the next.

Circumstances' galloping riffs propel the song along. Its instrumental bridge and the middle section of *The Trees* sound beautifully detailed. This certainly doesn't sound like a 40-year-old album.

Epic instrumental *La Villa Strangiato* will put any stereo through its paces. Its legendary dynamism and shifts of key and time signature have never sounded better. The seemingly endless creativity and variety in texture that these three musicians achieved still astonishes.

The second disc features a classic performance from 1979's Pinkpop Festival, polished to as good as it's ever going to sound. Versions of *Xanadu* and *Something For Nothing* stand out. Due to a recording fault on the night, *2112* is substituted by a rendition from Arizona in 1978. Delay pedals are set to stun and the slightly rawer sound quality is no barrier to enjoying a bizarre seat-of-the-pants take on the sci-fi suite.

The omission of any live document of *Hemispheres*' title track feels like a missed opportunity. Rush fans who have longed for this for 40 years will have to wait longer. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

CHRIS MCGAGREL

NEW HEAVY SOUNDS

LIMB
Saboteurs Of The Sun
LP/CD/DL

GRAVE LINES
Fed Into The Nihilist Engine
LP/CD/DL

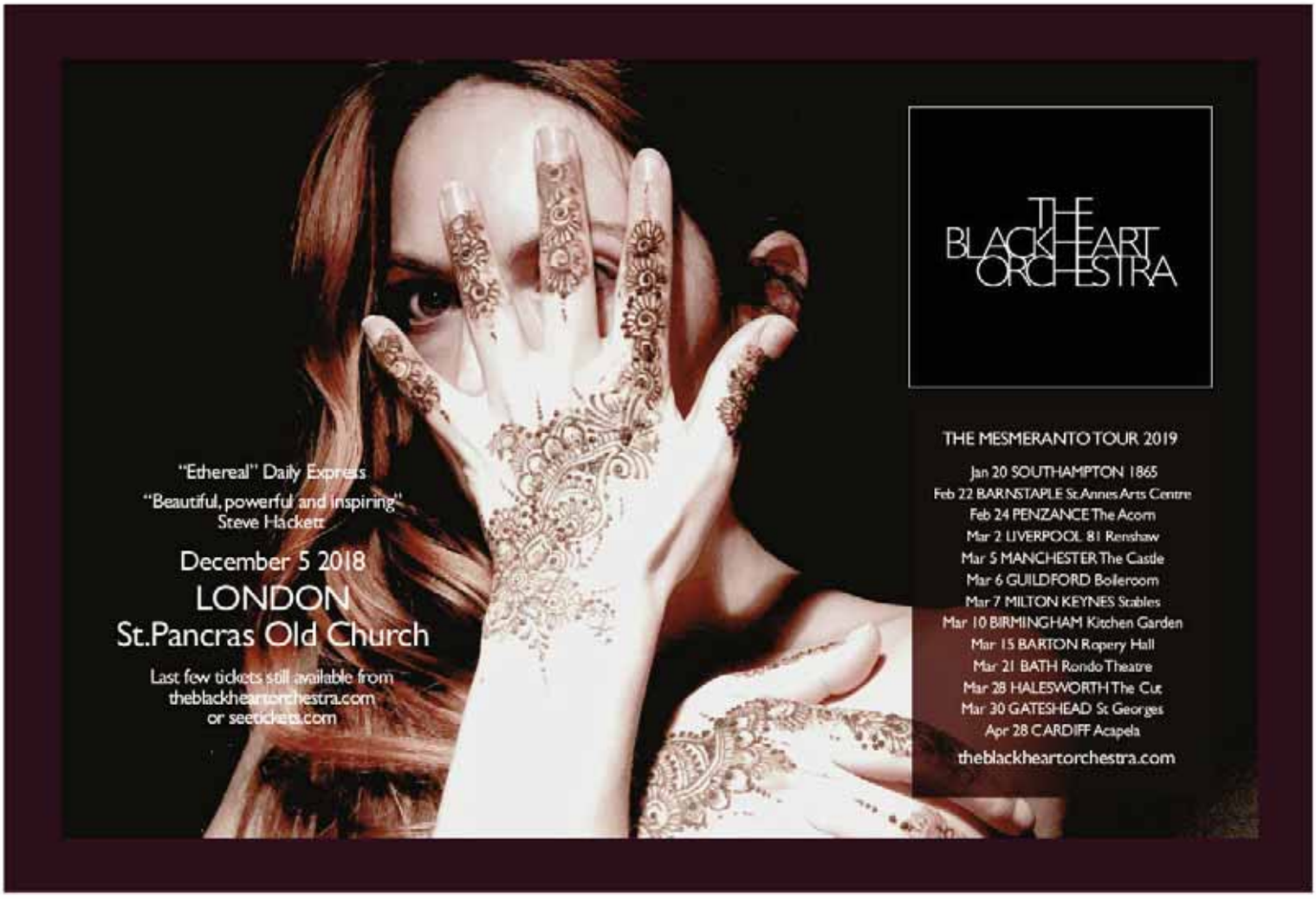
BLACKLAB
Under The Strawberry Moon 2.0
LP/CD/DL

TRANSMANIACON
feat Lydia Lunch and Maya Berlin
The Strange World Of Suzie Pellet
Ltd Green/Orange vinyl
CD/DL

VODUN
Ascend
Ltd Blue/White and Black vinyl
CD/DL

NEW HEAVY SOUNDS
CARGO RECORDS
hmv in-store | online

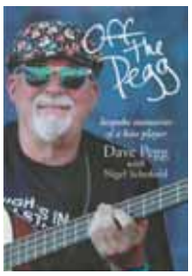
http://www.newheavysounds.com
www.cargorecordsdirect.co.uk/collections/new-heavy-sounds



OFF THE PEGG: BESPOKE MEMORIES OF A BASS PLAYER

Dave Pegg with Nigel Schofield PEGGLETS

The Fairport Convention bassist's hugely entertaining autobiography.



Off The Pegg is based on Fairport historian Schofield's interviews with Pegg, conducted between 1970 and 2017, and it's inspired by the published memoirs of Pegg's father Albert. His own story is still contemporary, but it goes right back to the morphing of folk into folk rock in the late 60s. Pegg regales us with tales of Fairport's 70s heyday, from their *Top Of The Pops* appearance to the time a lorry ploughed into the wall of The Angel, the pub they rented in Much Hadham in Hertfordshire, narrowly missing a recumbent Dave Swarbrick, and how their inebriated and audibly flatulent Radio 1 In Concert set irked presenter John Peel. When Vertigo paid Fairport not to make any more records in 1979, the band folded and folk rock seemed to have run its course. But they reformed and developed the annual Cropredy Festival, and are still going strong. And anyone who has heard their 1970 *Live At The LA Troubadour* album will be amazed that Pegg's playing sounds so accomplished after reading about his recreational activities with his pal John Bonham in the 24 hours before show time. **MB**

MUSICAL GUIDE TO LIZARD BY KING CRIMSON

Andrew Keeling SPACEWARD

Crimson's jazz opus under the microscope.

Composer Andrew Keeling's knowledge of the inner workings of King Crimson's music has resulted in several similar volumes chronicling the band's output in the last few years. This forensic examination of their third album goes deep into the architecture and internal structure of the notes and the times in which they were created and recorded. A traumatic recording that witnessed the breakdown in Robert Fripp and lyricist Peter Sinfield's creative partnership (both are interviewed here), for many years the guitarist couldn't listen to any of it. However, Steven Wilson's superb 2009 remix rehabilitated Fripp's opinion to the point where large sections of *Lizard* are now performed live. The book works best when accompanied by the album, with Keeling's commentary explaining what's going on. His observations make some interesting connections to the work of other performers, such as Black Sabbath and Henry Purcell. Exploring Miles Davis' unconscious influence upon the record, and Keith Tippett's work, whose actual presence throughout is a defining highlight, Keeling also offers convincing interpretations of the album's words and startling cover art. **SS**

ROCK GRAPHIC ORIGINALS – REVOLUTIONS IN SONIC ART FROM PLATE TO PRINT 55-88

Peter Golding with Barry Miles THAMES AND HUDSON

Poster art from rock to psych and beyond, curated by counterculture icons.

This sumptuous volume of psychedelic posters and related ephemera is from the collection of Peter Golding, a fashion entrepreneur known as "the Eric Clapton of denim". His archive, amassed over 50 years, covers the spectrum from early rock'n'roll package tours to blockbuster stadium shows. Context is provided by author Barry Miles. Midcentury America led the way in counterculture and the selection reflects this, concentrating on West Coast happenings. British clubs such as UFO are represented, as are key artists Mike McInnerney, Martin Sharp and more. Gary Grimshaw of the Grande Ballroom and *Detroit Free Press* is among the 'sonic art revolutionaries' who connected rock with politics. Lesser-known zines include *Gandalf's Garden*, which was produced from a tea shop in the King's Road that also sheltered the homeless. Background info is thorough, including progressive proofs in some cases, and you can learn more about each artist in the 'Bios of the dudes' listing. Stadium rock fans will love the section on festival stage sets. It's a fascinating visual trip through the history of rock'n'roll promotion. **CE**

JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST

The 50th Anniversary Concert ESOTERIC/LEPIDOPTERA

A beautiful record of 50 years of glory.

During this extraordinary concert's encore, the band play an audio from April 14, 1968. It features John Peel introducing Barclay James Harvest's first single, *Early Morning*. Peel says, "This is their first record, and it won't be their last. They're going on to do great things." Well, 50 years on, Peel's point has been certainly been proven a thousand times over.

Given Barclay James Harvest's gift for symphonic rock and their Mancunian roots, the Royal Northern College Of Music is the ideal setting for this celebration of 50 years of music making. Yet as the ever-witty bassist/vocalist Craig Fletcher points out, "This is not a concert, it's a celebration: you're all family."

> **The rapport and delight between band and crowd is a wonder.**

It's this sense of family that raises this recording beyond usual concert footage. Let's be clear, there is no attempt to use arty shots or cunning cross-cuts to make the film stand out. It relies on the quality of the music and the relationship between the bandmembers and the audience to do its work. It's all the better for that.

Given that it's a celebration of 50 years, there is music from every phase and incarnation of Barclay James Harvest. Lees and co's 2013 tribute to the late Woolly Wolstenholme, *On Leave*, is a match for any other tune in the set. Rightly, there is their song-for-the-ages, *Mockingbird*, but this concert also contains stand-out versions of *The Poet/After the Day*, *Summer Soldier* and *She Said*. Rarities abound, including *Delph Town Morn*, *In Memory Of The Martyrs* and *Paraiso Dos Cavalos*.

The rapport and delight between the bandmembers and the audience is a wonder to behold. In the shadow of Wolstenholme's death, Craig Fletcher, Jez Smith and Kevin Whitehead have brought the very best out of Lees. This incarnation of Barclay James Harvest has wit, northern warmth and deep respect for individual bandmember's gifts. Lees says at one point that he feels like "A rabbit in the headlights." In one sense, it's a remarkable thing for a man who has played in front of millions to say, yet it is also a token of humility. The audience and the band adore him for it.

About halfway through, Jez Smith takes to the grand piano and plays a moving version of *River Of Dreams*. Lees sings, *'When I was young man I was someone's hero...'* It's an honest song about fame and money. This writer remembers how much in awe of Lees they were when they first saw Barclay James Harvest as a child. He's still a hero, but in a different way. As Fletcher says, this concert records a family meeting together in celebration. Here's to many more.

RACHEL MANN

The perfect gift from just £19.99*

PLUS

FREE ‘IN PROG WE TRUST’ T-SHIRT

WORTH £15

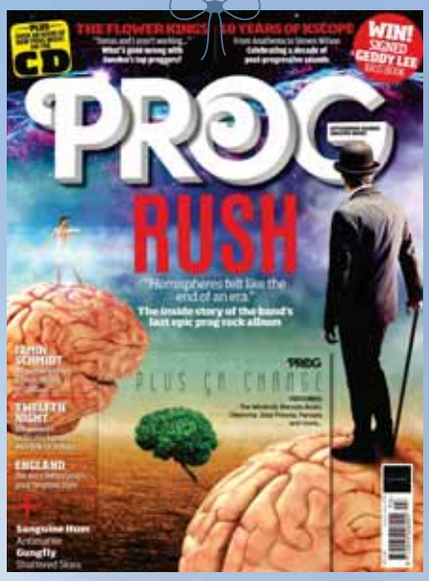
Order hotline 0344 848 2852

Please quote xmas182 when ordering by phone

Lines open Monday-Friday 8am to 7pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm (GMT)

FUTURE myfavouritemagazines
Official Magazine Subscription Store

SUBSCRIBE FROM JUST £19.99 EVERY 6 MONTHS*



Reasons to subscribe

- **Saving 55% against the shop price**
- **Never miss an issue**
- **Free delivery to your door**
- **The gift that keeps delivering**

Upgrade to include digital for only £2.50

- **Increase your saving to 66%**

SEE THE FULL RANGE AND ORDER ONLINE AT

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/prg/xmas182

Call UK 0344 848 2852 or overseas +44(0) 344 848 2852 & quote xmas182

***Terms and conditions:** Savings calculated against the full RRP (single issue price x frequency). You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Gift is only available for new UK subscribers. Gift is subject to availability. Please allow up to 60 days for the delivery of your gift. In the event of stocks being exhausted we reserve the right to replace with items of similar value. Your subscription is for the minimum term specified and will expire at the end of the current term. Payment is non-refundable after the 14 day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. All gift subscriptions will start with the first issue in January 2019. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. Full details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available on request. For full term and conditions please visit: bit.ly/magtandc. Offer ends 31st December 2018.

Take a bow

KING CRIMSON

VENUE	THE PALLADIUM, LONDON
DATE	03/11/2018

It's worth noting that, during its 108 years in existence and despite the venue's reputation for Royal-approved variety, the London Palladium has seen its share of rock royalty tread the boards. Beatlemania took a hold in the early 60s, Johnny Cash recorded an unreleased live album there, Marvin Gaye recorded one that *did* get released, and one-time owner Val Parnell almost managed to persuade Elvis Presley to perform what would have been his only ever live shows outside of the United States.

More recently, rock, and specifically prog, has further upped the ante after decades of theatrical fare, with Yes, Dream Theater, Steve Hackett and Hawkwind all playing the Palladium in recent years with aplomb. Yet tonight, on the second of two nights for King Crimson, it's isn't just the band's name that fits in with the regal past of the venue. One could argue that there is no better live rock band currently doing the rounds. Certainly not one that breaks the mould with three drummers, who then proceed to make a mockery of the complexity of much of the material they play for the next two and a half hours. Truly, they are the current progressive kings, and one hopes that the p-word-decrying Robert Fripp forgives us the imposition to call them that tonight.

> **"Set two offers far more on the nostalgia front, even if the old is always lent a newer twist."**

Those three drummers – Gavin Harrison, Jeremy Stacey and Pat Mastelotto – get things going tonight, smiling, taking their seats and getting down to the business of striking up an early beat, before the remainder of the current Crimson line-up join them and the band ease into *Larks Tongues In Aspic, Part One*, a set staple since the seven-piece Crim-beast reared its head in 2014.

Interestingly, despite Gavin Harrison's assertion last issue that Fripp could (and sometimes does) choose an entirely different set for consecutive nights, a large part of tonight's set features familiar songs that have been staples of the band's live shows for the past four years. That said, the set is largely different, certainly in terms of running order,

King Crimson: giving a truly majestic performance.

DAVID SINGLETON/DGM LTD

from the previous night's show in the same auditorium. Not, one suspects, that anyone's complaining. The presence of *In The Wake Of Poseidon*'s *Cadence And Cascade* four songs in is a delightful surprise greeted with hearty cheers, as is the harrowing anti-nuclear sentiment of *Epitaph*, while a brace of the band's intense new instrumentals give way to *Level Five* from the underrated *Power To Believe* and a languid *Islands* brings set one to a close.

Set two offers far more on the nostalgia front, even if the old is always lent a newer twist. Nothing detracts from the precision pacing of the material however, and the even more precise musicianship on show, from Mel Collins' often haunting melodies through Jakko Jakszyk's heartfelt, excellent vocal to Fripp's own mesmeric guitar runs. Underpinning it all, though never once overshadowing the music, are those three drummers, abetted by Tony Levin's masterful bass playing.

Discipline and *Indiscipline*, as well as *Beat*'s *Neurotica* later in the set, are the only nods to the Belew era on offer tonight; the remainder are a joyous reminder of the might of the earlier incarnations of the band, now made even more glorious by the modern-day octet. *Cirkus* and an almost funky *Lizard* display how discordant some of the band's music can be. This is offset by the elegiac *Moonchild*, which, after a bass and piano interlude opens up into the title track of its parent album, is itself a ride from dreamy soundscapes through abrasive cadenza and back to a fitting climactic finale. *Easy Money*, meanwhile, displays the proto heavy metal approach that began with *Larks Tongues In Aspic* and reached an initial apotheosis with *Red*. Fitting, then, that the peerless *Starless* closes the set proper, before the grinding riff of *21st Century Schizoid Man* as the encore brings the audience to their feet, united in their praise for a wonderful evening of music.

Quite where Crimson will go in their 50th year in 2019 remains to be seen. But they've already given fans four years of utter delight, four years that most fans thought they'd never see, four years reminding us of just how brilliant King Crimson can be. As Jakko fittingly intones mid-set, where he breaks vocal ranks, with tongue — as it so often was with Crimson — ever firmly in cheek: "Nice to see you, to see you, nice…"

JERRY EWING

HAKEN

VENUE	UNDERGROUND ARTS, PHILADELPHIA		
DATE	02/11/2018	SUPPORT	LEPROUS, BENT KNEE

With the recent release of the hypnotically heavy *Vector*, London sextet Haken further distinguish themselves as one of the most fertile, go-getting and unique bands in modern prog. Their most abrasive LP in years, *Vector* packs the kind of flamboyant intricacy and catchiness that demands faithful live reproductions. Thankfully, that's precisely what's delivered here. Co-headlining with Norwegian avant-garde heavy proggers Leprous, alongside support from Boston baroque rock troupe Bent Knee, Haken unveil top-tier skill amid a highly engaging and welcoming concert.

Bent Knee: showcasing "marvellous creativity".

Bent Knee hold marvellous creativity, expert musicianship and jovial humility from start to finish. The true treat of their set tonight is the succession of unreleased new material. The melancholic funk of *Hold Me In* is colourful and gripping, while the dreamy yet gothic splendour of *Egg Replacer* showcases prodigious, sparse fury. Some overwhelming effects notwithstanding, the instruments and vocals mix flawlessly, doing justice to Bent Knee's one-of-a-kind formula.

Leprous are wonderfully foreboding, sullen and dynamically rich. They begin with a haunting lone cello recital, and from there dive into faithful recreations of several gems from last year's *Malina* album, including the opener *Bonneville*, *Stuck* and *Illuminate*. Throughout their 75-minute stint, vocalist Einar Solberg oozes impassioned fragility while the rest of Leprous stand focused, making delicate transitions between each bombastic assault and ethereal harmony.

Visually, Leprous undoubtedly reign supreme tonight. While Bent Knee and Haken's multicoloured light oscillations certainly enhance their music, the Norwegian quintet's use of rhythmically timed and alternating bursts of white, red, green, yellow, and orange radiance just feels more thematically resonant. Coupled with the venue's post-Halloween decorations of spiderwebs and skeleton faces, in conjunction with abstract, Lasse Hoile-esque videos of nightly roads, shifting eyes and dancing figures, Leprous yield an unmatched emotional experience that lasts long after they leave the stage. They conclude their main set with a reprisal from the cello, giving the show meaningful continuity, before encoring with *Mirage* and *From The Flame*. It is a wholly affective and captivating set.

> **"Leprous yield an emotional experience that lasts long after they leave the stage."**

Of course, Haken don't disappoint either. Naturally favouring selections from the new album, their lengthy performance kicks off with *Vector*'s initial one-two punch of *Clear* and *The Good Doctor*. They also bring out what seems to be the fan favourite of the album, namely *Puzzle Box*, as well as brutal instrumental *Nil By Mouth* and the gorgeously temperamental track *Veil*.

Leprous get into the string of things.

Aside from those, the group earn massive cheers during *The Mountain*'s *Falling Back To Earth* and *Affinity*'s *1985*, during which vocalist Ross Jennings flaunts his tongue-in-cheek neon glasses, while Diego Tejeida enjoys the spotlight during his keytar solo.

The truly outstanding moment, however, comes when they pull out the epic *Crystallised* (from the *Restoration* EP) at the end. It is a faultless rendition that reveals how exceptionally united they are: even their interlocking harmonies are note-perfect.

All three bands delight and impress at Underground Arts tonight, reinforcing their place at the top of their respective subgenres. While their styles initially seem a bit incongruous for a shared concert, they actually complement each other quite fittingly, and the audience are visibly entranced by all of them.

JORDAN BLUM

Leprous: giving a "dynamically rich performance".

ENSLAVED

VENUE	THE DOME, LONDON
DATE	15/10/2018

The audience tonight have shown up as much to witness sludge metal co-headliners High On Fire as they have to see Enslaved, and it's only natural to wonder why the hell *Prog* are here. But the Norwegians aren't the traditional black metallers they once were, and over the course of nearly three decades their sound has slowly evolved, to the point where the band who made 1994's brutal *Vikingligr Veldi* are almost unrecognisable from the one that produced last year's densely atmospheric *E*. The music is no less violent, but is it more melodic, and less one-dimensional.

Live, they're a real force. The dynamic chasm between the growled vocals of frontman Grutle Kjellson and the clean singing style of new keyboard player Håkon Vinje – who wasn't born when the band formed – bring real light and shade to songs that might otherwise only be noted mostly for their malevolence.

Opener *Roots Of The Mountain* starts with a frantic thrash before a soaring chorus drops the tempo and lifts the mood. *Ruun* is almost the reverse, launching with sinister, symphonic riffs before climaxing in a furious, overwhelming froth. Momentum sags as the taped intro to *E* opener *Storm Son* plays – it's nearly a minute of bad weather and creaking wood before a whinnying horse signals the arrival of the song itself – but an intensely dramatic version of *The*

Crimson Kings: Haken certainly impress tonight.

Haken: showcasing their most abrasive album in years...

FRANK WHITE

Neon Nights: Haken's Ross Jennings.

River's Mouth and the breakneck *Isöders Dronning* put things back on an even keel, the latter being played in London for the first time since its recording almost a quarter of a century ago. *Sacred Horse* keeps the pot on a feverish boil, and the magnificent *Havenless* – a stirring mix of ancient Norse chant and demonic riffs – gets the hair really flying for the first time. The set ends with a chaotic, demented rush through *AllfÐðr Oðinn*, from the band's debut EP.

The real beauty of Enslaved is how their music somehow manages to conjure up the epic nature of their subject matter. At face value they may sound like a heavy rock act put through some kind of hellish meat grinder, but as dry ice billows up through red light as if from fissures in the earth, visions of fierce Viking battles, raging storms and long, terrible journeys quite naturally fill the imagination. It's some feat. And if the band's more experimental approach alienates black metal purists while the growled vocals give prog fans pause for thought, they're clearly doing something right: something progressive.

FRASER LEWRY

THRESHOLD

VENUE	THE DOME, LONDON
DATE	21/10/2018

After two weeks of performing their ambitious double album, *Legends Of The Shires*, in full, you might be forgiven for assuming that Threshold will be slowing down tonight. But the Brits are at peak level and the shires are in full bloom for the final show of this European tour. However, the same can't be said of their fans. Their only UK date has already been downgraded from the Islington Assembly Hall, and the Dome is scarcely half full. But if the British prog metallers are disappointed by the dwindling numbers, they're not letting it show.

From the opening notes of *The Shire (Part 1)* to the final throes of their encore, Threshold don't let anyone down. They're clearly having fun on stage too, especially guitarist Karl Groom and bassist Steve Anderson who are grinning from ear to ear and occasionally indulge in a spot of playful duelling. Out in the crowd, heads are nodding and feet are tapping as Glynn Morgan rouses the rabble. The new-old singer returned to the 'Hold last year, and his rock vocals – both in presentation and range – are quite different from the theatrical delivery of former frontman Damian Wilson. Perhaps this explains the band's decision to omit Wilson-era material from the current set? Yet Morgan looks just as comfortable progging out on an electric guitar as he does singing, especially during the multi-faceted *The Man Who Saw Through Time*. The huge applause this song earns almost makes up for the skimpy attendance.

The five-piece tackle the delicious crunch and grind of *Trust The Process*' schizophrenic rhythm section with just as much panache, climaxing with Yes-inspired vocal harmonies and a very satisfying drum roll. *State Of Independence* is elevated to an impressive power ballad, and Morgan admits to having "A bit of a tear" in his eye while performing it. *Lost In Translation* shows the band's classic roots and proves there's more to them than the heavy riffs they're best known for.

After an hour and a half, they meander from the tour concept to live favourites with encores of *Pressure* and *Slipstream*, which get everyone singing along. Based on tonight's performance alone, there's no reason why Threshold couldn't headline a venue four times the size with the addition of a fancy light show and a few projections. So it feels frustrating that a band who enjoy great success outside the UK, augmented by recent slots at Night Of The Prog and RosFest, aren't as recognised in their home country. Threshold deserve to be much bigger, if only more of their local fan base could be mobilised.

NATASHA SCHARF

PENDRAGON

VENUE	229, LONDON
DATE	09/11/2018

There's a moment, midway through tonight's rather epic, three-hour celebration of Pendragon's 40-year career, where both the sense of fun and the sense of occasion really take hold. Nick Barrett, tonight a jocular master of ceremonies, is passing comment on a series of historical photos of the band that are appearing on a screen behind him.

"Oh no," he declares, as a photo of him, resplendent in waistcoat and top hat, pops up and a rammed-to-the-rafters 229 hoots with laughter. It may be far cry from the surf-dad persona he now wears, but *Prog* wagers that for many here — this writer included — this was very much our introduction to Nick Barrett and Pendragon (December 28, 1982, supporting Marillion at The Marquee, if you must know).

Tonight Barrett, the ever-faithful Peter Gee, the musically precocious Clive Nolan and new-boy drummer Jan-Vincent Velazco (with a bit of help from backing singers and old friends) take in all 10 Pendragon studio albums, the 1984 *Fly High, Fall Far* EP and 1994's *Fallen Dreams And Angels* mini album in a set that not only highlights an incredibly rich repertoire, but equally what a remarkable achievement this year's milestone is. In 1991, they preceded many of their contemporaries by launching Toff Records and taking care of their own business, something that others — notably IQ and Marillion — would later replicate, and that would become the standard for bands with musically progressive ideals.

Barrett would be the first person to tell you it hasn't always been an easy ride, yet the sense of celebration that flows from the stage, alongside proclamations of "Here's to the next 40 years..." are heartfelt and infectious.

Strangely, it all starts in a rather low-key fashion, with both *If I Were The Wind (And You Were The Rain)* and *The Voyager* feeling their way around the audience, before The *Wishing Well: IV* and *Not Of This World Part 3* pick up the tempo. The band's nod to those early days (starting with *Fly High, Fall Far* and *Excalibur*) gains the loudest cheers thus far, although, admittedly, they could have played *The Jewel* in its entirety and this writer would have gone home a happy man.

From there, they don't put a foot wrong. *Dark Summer's Day* is an unexpected delight, as is the title track from *Fallen Dreams And Angels*, while the whole of *Queen Of Hearts* reminds the crowd of a time before Barrett decided to shake things up with more contemporary sounds aligned to his natural progressive inclinations.

The second set continues the sense of epic, with the band totally in their stride on the likes of *Masters Of Illusion* and *The Last Man On Earth*, the equally lengthy *Indigo* kicking off an encore that draws to a close with the much more gentle refrain of *Am I Really Losing You?* (they're most definitely not, if the crowd reaction is anything to go by).

Nick Barrett's call for another 40 years of Pendragon might be a slight stretch of the imagination, but the first 40 years have been, as tonight attests, quite wonderful. Who'd begrudge the old bugger a good few more yet?

JERRY EWING

WILL IRELAND

Nick Barrett in celebratory mode.

"The sense of celebration that flows from the stage is heartfelt and infectious."

A starry evening with Pendragon.

Prog is a breeze for Clive Nolan .

JOHN CARPENTER

VENUE	SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON
DATE	16/10/2018

There's long been a strong connection between iconic horror movie directors and composers of progressively slanted music. The collaborations of Dario Argento and Goblin, and of Lucio Fulci and Fabio Frizzi, immediately come to mind. But John Carpenter is unique in this regard, because he fulfils both creative roles. Not only is he one of the most acclaimed horror auteurs of all time, but he is also an accomplished musician, responsible for many of the soundtracks that are so crucial to his films.

Tonight, he shows off his skills behind the keyboards, and it is a triumph. If he had wanted to, Carpenter could certainly have carved out a successful career in music alone. He and his impressive band – including son and longtime soundtrack partner Cody, plus lead guitarist Daniel Davies, whose father is Dave Davies of The Kinks – play in what is effectively a box-style stage set. There are screens flanking the musicians on both sides, as well as above and behind them. These show clips from Carpenter's films while the main themes are being performed. The clips have been cleverly edited, effectively recounting the entire plots of the films.

Musically, Carpenter occasionally nudges into Jean-Michel Jarre and Mike Oldfield territory, but he clearly has his own style, one that effectively enhances rather than merely accompanies the scenes on screen.

The diverse crowd tonight – horror devotees, progressive music fans and even Vincent Cavanagh from Anathema – are held enthralled and delighted as the unmistakable images and themes from *Escape From New York* and *Assault On Precinct 13* open the night. These are followed by *Village Of The Damned* and *The Fog*, which in particular gets a massive reception. Of course, it helps the mood that we are seeing some fine film footage, but even without this device, Carpenter would still enthral everyone with his confident musical tapestries.

There are also moments of humour in the set tonight – for instance, when the entire band don shades during *They Live* (though you have to know the movie to get the reference). Carpenter talks sparingly, but does explain that *Vortex* and *Mystery* are "lost themes", passages of music for films that have only ever been imagined in his mind. It undeniably shows his innate ability to be able to compose music without images to work with.

There's a huge roar when the theme for the new *Halloween* film segues into the classic one for the original dating back 40 years. But oddly, the biggest reaction of the night comes not for this, nor *The Thing*, but *Prince Of Darkness*. This really resonates with everyone, before final piece *Christine* closes one of the best gigs of 2018. This man is imaginative and pushes boundaries. Truly progressive.

MALCOLM DOME

JEFF LYNNE'S ELO

VENUE	O2 ARENA, LONDON
DATE	20/10/2018

There's no denying that ELO are pop, but they are pop fuelled by firecracking pizazz: it's forward-thinking, multi-coloured, imaginative symphonic pomp, and tonight the music is augmented by a flurry of synths, stings and singers, and accompanied by a glittering light show and vivid visuals. Even the grumpiest music snob would struggle not to boogie when witnessing Jeff Lynne's ELO live.

The setlist on the first night of a two-day showcase at London's O2 Arena is a consistent bang-pow of hit after hit, and hearing them all in succession is an incredible reminder of what a colossal songwriting talent Jeff Lynne is. It also shows just how much his kaleidoscopic mega anthems like *Evil Woman*, accompanied by a sultry crimson light show, and *Livin' Thing*, set to psychedelic, flowery visuals, practically exude a potent puff of 70s nostalgia. That's not to say it sounds dated, however, and in recent years, with Lynne's music having graced film soundtracks from *Guardians Of The Galaxy* to *American Hustle*, you can bet that he's gained a new generation of fans in the process.

It's surprising that, given his ability to dream up such mammoth mega hits, Lynne is, as always, an unassuming figure, humbly thankful in the very few times that he addresses the crowd. He's the opposite of a gregarious frontman, and often gets lost within the spectacle of the showcase, not to mention overshadowed by the stunning talent that surrounds him. He's accompanied by a throng of musicians and backing singers, who take it in turns to shine, rightfully, in the spotlight, and their input elevates the songs to truly planetary heights.

Jeff Lynne: an unassuming frontman.

PRESS/CARSTEN WINDHORST

There's little post-70s, but Lynne also revisits The Travelling Wilburys with folk ditty *Handle With Care*, during which it's difficult not to dwell on the fact that he's now one of only two remaining Wilburys, alongside Bob Dylan. Then there's *When I Was A Boy*, the misty-eyed melody from 2015's *Alone In The Universe* album, far from an ELO-style boogie but definitely a clear indication that his songwriting is still strong.

However, there's no denying that it's the hits that get tonight's audience on their toes. *Shine A Little Love* is a highlight, with emerald lasers zapping and gleaming in tune to the spacey swirls of sound, while *Mr Blue Sky* pops alongside — you guessed it — screens of soft blue skies and fluffy clouds as the audience belts back every word, before his multi-layered, exploratory cover of *Roll Over Beethoven* ends things with a jive and a bang. Now for the question everyone wants to know: when is someone going to make an ELO musical?!

HANNAH MAY KILROY

> **"Even the grumpiest music snob would struggle not to boogie when witnessing Jeff Lynne's ELO live."**

Firecracking Fun: Jeff Lynne and co are on form.

Take a bow

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

VENUE	ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON
DATE	01/11/2018

If Public Service Broadcasting have sometimes suggested an air of fusty academia, all history lessons and libraries, tonight's the night they shake that off. Reaching a career pinnacle by selling out the Royal Albert Hall, they fill it with colour, physicality and even a dash of showbiz. By the time the brass section in gold sequinned jackets are gyrating downstage with two extras in astronaut suits, exhorting the audience to dance, there's no denying it: PSB are fun. Intelligent, innovative and atmospheric, yes, but also emotive and exciting. They're the little band that got big fast, but they're using the G-force to their advantage.

With tracks that marry krautrock-electronica instrumentals to astutely judged samples capturing the heroism and drama of mountain-climbing, space travel and the fall of the South Wales mining industry, they're not, on paper, a party band. Yet people have caught on to the adrenaline rush inherent in their sonic stories. *'A climber climbs with his guts, his brain, his soul and his feet,'* declares *Everest*. The band have realised the brain can't make the summit alone, so they've kept rising. Tonight's show simmers, then soars.

Diffident fulcrum J Wilgoose Esq plays guitars like Michael Rother and keyboards like OMD, while the rhythm section of drummer Wrigglesworth and bassist (and multi-instrumentalist) JF Abraham bring flesh and blood to the high concepts. Abraham is key to the visual element, his highly mobile enthusiasm a bridge to the crowd. Sure, the films (with relevant topics, from space modules to miners' wives) and lighting are impressive, but to see musicians playing and hitting stuff gives the mood a heat you wouldn't get with anonymous tweakers standing behind laptops. There's a string section and intermittent cameos, ensuring the Chemical Brothers-style electronic backdrops support rather than swallow the humanity. Given that PSB's chosen themes regard the best aspects of humanity — courage, nobility, resilience — that's shrewd.

White Star Liner, from the invigorating new EP concerning the Titanic, gets a London debut. Otherwise, the set swoops between favourites, from *Every Valley* to *Sputnik* to *Spitfire*. Tracyanne Campbell sings *Progress*, Haiku Salut perform *They Gave Me A Lamp* and Lisa Jên joins a bashful Wilgoose for the incongruous ballad duet *You + Me*.

Everyone's up and air-punching for the climax of *The Other Side* and *Go*. Clearly a rush for the incredulous South London band, it's been an inspiring, motivating night, co-opting the daring of the space race protagonists and the steadfast pathos of the neglected Welsh communities. Then, as the ensemble departs, the Beaufort Male Choir bestride the stage to sing *Take Me Home*, and we learn how many coals it takes to fill the Albert Hall. Not a dry eye in the house. We've been taken to the other side.

CHRIS ROBERTS

Sky High: tonight's show simmers, then soars.

CARSTEN WINDHORST

Not a 'party band' on paper, but in the flesh...

Public Service Broadcasting at the Royal Albert Hall: no miner victory.

"There's no denying it: PSB are fun. Intelligent, innovative and atmospheric, yes, but also emotive and exciting."

COHEED AND CAMBRIA

VENUE	THE ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON
DATE	16/10/2018

Bursting onto stage with a rousing *Prologue* as the lights spin and the crowd chant along like Viking warriors, Coheed And Cambria have momentum on their side from the opening seconds. The Roundhouse is a big venue, and like Marillion's trip to the Royal Albert Hall last year, this feels like a moment. An arrival. And as the band bounce and judder gleefully through *Here We Are Juggernaut*, *Devil In Jersey City*, *The Crowing*, *Blood Red Summer* and the rest, it's obvious the audience are just as committed to the journey.

Along with The Cure's Robert Smith, frontman Claudio Sanchez maintains one of the mostly defiantly recognisable silhouettes in rock'n'roll, but even that magnificent mane can get in the way, and by the time *Ten Speed (Of God's Blood And Burial)* thunders into gear he's gathered it all into a tidy man bun, an arrangement that doesn't last long before the curls are unleashed again.

If there's one criticism, it's that the set lacks variety. It rattles along at a fierce canter, the only real changes in either texture or tempo provided by the intros, or when the band slow things down entirely, as they do for the *Wake Up*.

Sanchez refers to the band as "rock's oddity", but the bond between them and their audience is clearly a strong one, with every song greeted by a roar within nano-seconds of liftoff (C&C aren't big on introductions), and every chorus treated as an opportunity to clear the lungs.

Sometimes the interplay between band and audience feels choreographed, as if everyone signed a contract on the way in that binds them to participate fully. And some of that back and forth *is* by design: the bubblegum-style naaa-naaa-naaa singalong that accompanies the set-ending *Old Flames* is clearly built so that the crowd can carry on singing once the song has finished. And after a rousing encore of *Welcome Home*, even the song that plays over the PA – Argent's *God Gave Rock And Roll To You* – is cued up so it kicks off just before the chorus, lest the revelry cease for as second.

Second perhaps only to Baroness, Coheed And Cambria's songs are triumphant by design, and the icing is in the implementation. Small quibbles aside, this was a masterclass in crowd control. And a very good night out.

FRASER LEWRY

PROGTOBERFEST IV

VENUE	REGGIES ROCK CLUB, CHICAGO
DATE	19-21/10/2018

Progtoberfest has become one of the mainstays among prog festivals in America, annually showcasing upwards of 30 artists over the course of a weekend, and this year provides a good mixture of up-and-comers playing alongside prog legends.

The Nick D'Virgilio Project get things off to a top notch start, with D'Virgilio (Big Big Train) showcasing his world-class drumming while mixing in covers of Jeff Beck, Genesis and Rush along with the band's new solo material, which they hope to record soon.

Neal Morse plays a mellow solo acoustic set that features songs from his new album *Life & Times*, which has much more of a folky vibe than a prog one.

A legendary violinist then graces the stage, namely Jerry Goodman of Mahavishnu Orchestra fame. Goodman is part of **Dinosaur Exhibit**, and when he showcases his skills, Mahavishnu flashbacks inevitable ensue.

Genesis tribute band **Abacab** blaze through the band's 70s catalogue. Note for note, they are able to duplicate songs, even though they don't attempt the theatrics of Peter Gabriel.

The cult band **French TV** perform a set that takes the audience back to early 80s prog, with retro synth sounds aplenty and off-beat guitar licks that sound like a mix of King Crimson and Talking Heads. This is followed by members of **District 97**, who opt to play the Bill Bruford album *One Of A Kind*, and do it great justice.

But the bands that most of the audience have come to see are the two that close the festival: Soft Machine and FM.

Along with Pink Floyd, **Soft Machine** were one of the major groups to usher in underground psychedelic music in England during the late 1960s, but they haven't played in America since 1974, which makes tonight's performance a real must-see for a lot of die-hard fans. Guitarist John Etheridge can still absolutely shred, and his interplay with drummer Gary Husband (best known for his work with John McLaughlin, Allan Holdsworth) is the undoubted highlight of the whole festival. The band's psychedelic qualities are still alive and well.

Careful, Mariusz – don't stare at Piotr's kit without shades.

Canada's **FM** haven't played a live gig for a decade, but they play their acclaimed album *Black Noise* in its entirety, giving the audience their fill of synth space rock with violin and mandolin accompaniment. The set is well received, bringing to an end Progtoberfest IV, a place where fans bond in an intimate venue to hear music from the genre they love most.

TREVOR WOODS

RIVERSIDE

VENUE	ELECTRIC BALLROOM, LONDON
DATE	10/11/2018

"This is really Polish weather," says Riverside frontman Mariusz Duda, but the rain hammering the capital hasn't dampened attendance at the Electric Ballroom, which is packed to capacity tonight. "I hope you like the new Riverside, because this is a new chapter for us," says Duda. It's heartening to find the band on such sterling form, given the sudden passing of guitarist Piotr Grudziński two years ago.

The set draws deeply from their latest album, *Wasteland*, completely skips 2016's *Eye Of The Soundscape*'s brief detour into electronica and ambient music, and dips selectively into the vaults. They open with *Acid Rain* and *Vale Of Tears* and it's a pleasure to find a band playing at a volume that doesn't leave the audience with their brains leaking out of their ears. *Reality Dream*, from 2004's *Out Of Myself*, is all odd measures, switching between sevens and nines, but still has a groove that you can nod your head to. *Lament* is a fine example of using pauses to add drama to a song, while the riff of *Second Life Syndrome* brings to mind vintage Yes with drummer Piotr Kozieradzki dusting off his snare drum rudiments.

Keyboardist Michał Łapaj really brings the classic prog vibes to *Left Out*, with his gorgeous organ playing and a dash of Theremin. The track provides a midway high point, building into a swaggering instrumental section where Łapaj and new guitarist Maciej Meller get to throw out some firepower. Duda switches from bass to acoustic guitar for *Guardian Angel*, providing a moment to cool off after the intensity of *Left Out*, before they make their sole excursion into 2015's *Love, Fear And The Time Machine* for *Lost (Why Should I Be Frightened By A Hat?)*. Another demonstration of Duda's skill as a composer, *Lost...* starts softly and holds at that low base dynamic for a long time, before being released to blossom into full colour.

Michał Łapaj has the keys to classic prog vibes.

WILL IRELAND

The Struggle For Survival is a standout instrumental packed with more shifts in tone and mood than some bands manage throughout entire albums, while Kozieradzki and Duda lock together on the syncopated accents as Meller cuts loose with a vigorous guitar solo.

The main set concludes with *Wasteland*, then in the encore Duda gives an impressive rendition of *The Night Before* accompanied only by Łapaj, and his speech about the importance of the unifying power of music in a time when Poland and UK are both gripped by nationalism receives loud applause.

They conclude with *O2 Panic Room* and the mellow *River Down Below*, sweeping aside any doubts that Riverside's future might be in jeopardy without their founding guitarist. Rain be damned, this is a performance of passion and vigour.

DAVID WEST

> **"Rain be damned, this is a performance of passion and vigour."**

Mariusz Duda knows rain doesn't stop play.

ZIO

VENUE	HALF MOON, LONDON
DATE	21/10/2018

The end of 2017 came with the news that Karnataka would be taking an indefinite hiatus. More recently, drummer Jimmy Pallagrosi revealed that he would be returning to the stage with a brand new band ZIO and a forthcoming album. That ex-The Enid singer Joe Payne and former Karnataka bandmate Hayley Griffiths join him on his crusade is a welcome remedy to a world without Karnataka.

On a quiet Sunday night, the venue houses ZIO in the shady back room beyond the sparkly gastro setting. It's not packed, but it's early days for ZIO, who released their first single *X-Ray* only days earlier. The band appear: Pallagrosi at the drum kit along with Franck Carducci keyboard player Olivier Castan, New Device bassist Liz Hayes and guitarist Marc Fascia.

The first of this three-part show begins as an instrumental segment, easing the audience into the groove with the unravelling psychedelic explosion of Hendrix's *If 6 Was 9*, after which Pellagrosi's jamming pal Aaron Grimes joins them for Toto's *Girl Goodbye*.

Pellagrosi plays a neat drum solo on a toy drum kit before taking to the real thing for Nirvana's *Territorial Pissings*, and the section ends with a proggy medley accompanied by Marco Casaluce on guitar, who gets a shout-out for mixing ZIO's first single. It's fun and funky, but with prog heads in the audience, the golden nugget is the appearance of Hayley Griffiths and Joe Payne for part two.

> **"It's not packed, but it's early days for ZIO, who released their first single *X-Ray* only days earlier."**

The big entrance of this splendid vocal twosome is halted, as Payne's microphone cuts out for *X-Ray*, and it's not until a mic switch that the song takes full flight. Payne and Griffiths look and sound great together, the unison of their well-trained voices anchoring the manic, zippy and heavy rocking performance.

This isn't the only ZIO track performed, the band performing a handful of songs from the upcoming album including *Ride Along* and *Wings Inside*.

Payne and Griffiths take the roles of the lead characters in the album's concept, which is inspired by videos games and fantasy. The show changes in style with each song, a throwback to Karnataka's eclectic edge, but with more psych and grit. At times it's a little rough around the edges, but Castan and Fascia pull it back and Hayes' edge on bass gives the set a furious energy.

A couple more covers close ZIO's introduction to the world. There's a lot more to see and hear from this band, and with practice and more live exposure they could be an exciting prospect for 2019.

HOLLY WRIGHT

WILL IRELAND

Right: ZIO mainman Jimmy Pallagrosi with Liz Hayes.

SLEEPMAKESWAVES

VENUE	MAX WATTS, MELBOURNE
DATE	05/10/2018
SUPPORT	AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR

Instrumental quartet and tonight's openers And So I Watch You From Afar have journeyed from Northern Ireland to the land Down Under for the very first time. Attempting to classify their sound is a pointless exercise, but if we were to try, it is Celtic-influenced punk rock and folk, placed in a progressive post-rock instrumental setting and delivered with a boyish charm and quirky swagger. Sounds odd and like it shouldn't work, perhaps, but somehow it just does, and their live set is all manner of fun.

While this band exist very much in the instrumental arena, there are *some* vocals, in the form of rousing three-way chants. They appear completely out of the blue and when they do, they lift the roof off the venue. ASIWYFA are given a hero's welcome from the packed Melbourne crowd, and *Prog* bets that it won't be their last time playing here.

Sydney instrumental maestros sleepmakeswaves are celebrating a decade since the release of their debut EP, and they create glorious post-rock symphonies with guitars, bass, drums, occasional keysboards and some subtle sampling.

Before this, however, is a 10-minute documentary about the band's career on the rear screen. Rounding up their releases, line-up changes and tours with the likes of Cog, Devin Townsend, The Contortionist and many more, it provides a short window into what this band have achieved. Following this is a magical 110-minute set that covers virtually everything they've released so far, delivered with the passion, dynamics and intensity that they have become famous for. In progressive music circles, anyway.

One minor disappointment is a lack of the epic *The Edge Of Everything* from their last album *Made Of Breath Only*, though fitting a 10-minute plus song into a set, even a lengthly one such as this, can be difficult.

Sleepmakeswaves are one of those bands who get better every time you see them, and some of us have been seeing them on a regular basis for 10 years.

That a band like this can survive, prosper and keep growing in profile for a decade is not just testament to the strength of their music, but also to the loyalty of their many fans.

ROD WHITFIELD

IHSAHN

VENUE	LA MACHINE DU MOULIN ROUGE, PARIS
DATE	05/11/2018
SUPPORT	NE OBLIVISCARIS

Ever since his origins as the young driving force of black metal titans Emperor, Ihsahn has been a musician who keeps his live excursions to a minimum. Even in 2018, it took the legendary Norwegian six months to embark on the tour supporting his latest solo album, *Ámr* – which only consists of one, fortnight-long European trek. Furthermore, his recent Emperor *Anthems To The Welkin At Dusk* anniversary shows have reserved themselves solely for summer festival slots. Thus, the anticipation in Paris' legendary La Machine du Moulin Rouge tonight is tangible.

The excitement is only amplified by the exhilarating Ne Obliviscaris. The Australians add so many progressive and unique flairs to the metal genre that they quickly soar to success. Through such lengthy tracks as *Devour Me, Colossus*, the key ingredient to their brilliance shines through: gorgeous trade-offs between seemingly incompatible dynamics.

Frontmen Xenoyr and Tim Charles constantly bounce growls and operatic clean vocals back and forth, while Charles' violin exchanges jaw-dropping solos with Benjamin Baret's lead guitar. All the while, a thrashing rhythm section is still able to construct an incessantly quick foundation, which neatly sews every aural deviation and diversion together.

Thereafter, Ihsahn is progressive in a wholly different manner. Whereas Ne Obliviscaris radiate through the many impressive layers they added to straight-shooting metal, the headliner opts to throw the genre rulebook out of the window entirely. This is obvious from the beginning, as Ihsahn commences with the electronic-cum-symphonic crawl of *Lend Me The Eyes Of Millennia*, segueing into the melodic bang of *Arcana Imperii* and then the hard rock ballad *Sámr*.

Despite the underlying melancholy of his music, the man himself is in high spirits, juxtaposing dark tunes with regular smiles, and clapping and proclaiming how happy he is to be playing in Paris. This vibrant sheen then infects the setlist with *Until I Too Dissolve* – his self-professed love letter to 80s metal. Its peppy riff may reek of Judas Priest, but the song's sombre theme of winter and a screeching refrain are both clearly Ihsahn's own.

The performance nears its conclusion as the epic *Celestial Violence* stakes its claim at being tonight's runaway highlight. Like rapidly shifting tides, keyboard- and clean vocal-driven verses beautifully give way to vicious choruses. Finally, *Frozen Lakes On Mars* makes for a sweltering encore. Its finger-distorting shredding, discordant wails, avant-garde breakdowns and anthemic apexes all epitomise the greatest aspects of Ihsahn's solo output, perfectly capping off a show that his Parisian followers have been demanding for a long time.

MATT MILLS

CALIGULA'S HORSE

VENUE	BOSTON MUSIC ROOM, LONDON
DATE	01/11/2018
SUPPORT	CIRCLES

Circles deliver high quality, hammering prog metal.

JAMES SHARROCK

The last time that Caligula's Horse graced British stages in the summer of 2017, it was a mixed affair. Their two-show mini-tour saw the Australian melody makers first play to a sparse Southampton crowd, with only 30 people showing up. Then the next night, they sold out Camden's Black Heart and performed for a throng of die-hard fans.

Tonight marks the band's return to the UK and, before they even grace the stage, things seem far more promising. The sold-out Boston Music Room is already packed as support act Circles appear. The Melbourne quartet deliver 45 minutes of hammering prog metal: the high-flying, classic rock melodies of frontman Ben Rechter juxtapose the band's musicianship, as they indulge in polyrhythm after twisted polyrhythm and invoke comparisons to TesseracT or even Meshuggah.

Circles' heavy approach with an accessible, catchy edge makes for an appropriate predecessor to tonight's headliner, though they stand out with their more direct approach. Songs often barely scrape past the five-minute mark, resulting in a focused and always-energised display.

Caligula's Horse, meanwhile, imbue their melodic prog with far more meandering dynamics, dancing from a subtle calm to a sudden, metallic bang. Their diversity is on display as they kick-start with the lengthy *Dream The Dead*, cut from their new album *In Contact*. As the night unfolds, it becomes apparent that it'll be a rough one for those who aren't fond of Caligula's Horse's latest release, as tracks from it totally dominate the setlist.

> **"The most grandiose, quintessential and significant concert of Caligula's Horse's career thus far."**

Luckily, London is not deterred at all, singing along to every lyric from frontman Jim Grey and humming along to Sam Vallen and Adrian Goleby's guitar harmonies. Proceedings then take a more straightforward detour as anthems *Will's Song* and *Dark Hair Down* assume control. Grey's masterful repartee with his audience ensues, as he encourages them to pick between *Turntail* and *Rust* as the next song.

Rust is the runaway victor, with the acidic refrain of *'Fuck your prayer for rain!'* becoming infectious. The 15-minute extravaganza *Graves* is the evening's apex, though, highlighting every member's instrumental talent through its tucks and dives between metal, rock, prog and even jazz fusion.

Vallen still shreds like his life depends on it, while Josh Griffin and Dave Couper's weighty rhythms elicit an unprecedented moshpit. The encore of *The Cannon's Mouth* concludes with a return to more constantly heavy territory, wrapping up what has been the most grandiose, quintessential and significant concert of Caligula's Horse's career thus far.

MATT MILLS

Caligula's Horse: no horsing around here...

FRI. 7 DECEMBER 2018
SPOCK'S BEARD
THE FLOWER KINGS
REVISITED
25 YEARS OF INSIDEOUTMUSIC
SAT. 8 DECEMBER 2018
RAY WILSON BAND
CLASSIC GENESIS SHOW
SAT. 15 DECEMBER 2018
IQ - X-MAS BASH
SAT. 12 JANUARY 2019
KAYAK
SAT. 26 JANUARY 2019
TIGER MOTH TALES
& RED BAZAR
SAT. 2 FEBRUARY 2019
PINK PROJECT
FRI. 1 MARCH 2019
PINEAPPLE THIEF
FRI. 8 MARCH 2019
DON AIREY
(DEEP PURPLE) & FRIENDS
SAT. 9 MARCH 2019
LIFESIGNS
DILEMMA

WWW.BOERDERIJ.ORG
ZOETERMEER, THE NETHERLANDS
TICKETS: WWW.TICKETMASTER.NL

FRI. 15 MARCH 2019
HAKEN
SAT. 16 MARCH 2019
SYSTEM 7
MIRROR SYSTEM
FEATURING STEVE HILLAGE
+ SPECIAL GUEST MIKE HOLMES (IQ)
SUN. 7 APRIL 2019
RPWL
SAT. 13 APRIL 2019
ARENA
FRI. 19 APRIL 2019
MIKE AND THE
MECHANICS
22, 23* & 24* MAY 2019
STEVE HACKETT
SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND
& SPECTRAL MORNINGS
(* SOLD OUT)
THU. 25 JULY 2019
RIVERSIDE
20, 21, 22 SEPTEMBER 2019
PROGDREAMS VIII
SAT. 2 NOVEMBER 2019
STILLMARILLION

ADVERTISE TODAY

Do you want to advertise in a magazine at the forefront of the modern day progressive music revival?

Call now on
01225 442244.

PROG

Find out more about advertising with Future at **www.futureplc.com**.

Digital Camera PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2019

NOW FREE TO ENTER!

Sponsored by

mpb.com

www.photocrowd.com/dcpoty

Digital Camera YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2019

Sponsored by

AFFINITY PHOTO

MARK LILY

Anneke Van Giersbergen

The great and good of progressive music give us a glimpse into their prog worlds. **As told to Grant Moon**

Where's home?
Eindhoven in Holland. It's a cool city for rock and turning into a prog city too – we've got the Prognosis Festival, The Progressive Alliance. It's small but there's a lot going on.

Your first prog memory?
My big brother was into metal and prog early on, and I grew up around him playing records by The Alan Parsons Project, Genesis, Pink Floyd. I felt very at home with prog from a very early age.

The first prog record you bought?
In our village there wasn't a record store, but the library had a huge selection of records, and we'd rent all the proggy stuff. The first one was *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which I think is quite prog.

First prog gig?
King Crimson in Utrecht. They toured Holland in the early 90s and I went to all their gigs.

Favourite piece of technology?
I'd be totally lost without my iPhone. I'm into everything: Apple, Spotify, social media, all of it.

Any guilty pleasures in your music collection?
I'm a huge Barbra Streisand fan. *The Broadway Album* is kind of cheesy but she's so, so good. She's got one of the best voices in the world ever, and I love her persona and how she looks.

What would be your *Mastermind* specialist subject?
I know way too much about Prince.

Your biggest prog extravagance?
I did the Progressive Nation At Sea cruise [in 2014] with Devin Townsend, and it was the best thing I've ever done. I spent a lot at the casino bar every night, so it was pretty extravagant.

BILL MARINO/SYGMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Prince: specialist subject.

Your favourite venue?
The O13 in Tilburg. It's one of the best venues in Holland, and we have a lot of them.

Outside of prog, what else are you into?
I love to read – religion, psychology, esoteric things. I love being outside, walking and cycling. And I like comedy and action movies, stuff to make me feel good.

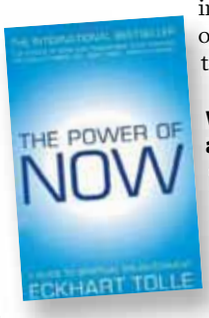
Who is your prog hero?
John Wetton. I love his voice. I had the pleasure to work with him, and I miss him very much.

Are you a collector?
I've got all my tour laminates going back to my very early shows. There's about 1000 of them on the back of one of my doors at home!

The last album you bought?
I bought the last Mastodon album [*Emperor Of Sand*] on vinyl, and downloaded Leprous' last one, *Malina*.

What was the last gig you went to?
Mastodon in Utrecht last year. Whenever they're in Holland I go, they're one of my favourite bands in the world.

Ever had a prog date?
Yes. I used to have a boyfriend in the early 90s and we went to see King Crimson, David Sylvian and lots of others. And I go with my husband now. We went to see Stick Men recently, I was one of three women in the audience!



Who do you call in the prog community for a good night out?
Julie Slick, she's Adrian Belew's bass player. I met her on that Progressive Nation cruise and we clicked like sisters. She's super cool, very funny and great fun to hang out with.

What's the most important prog song for you?

> I love to read – religion, psychology, esoteric things.

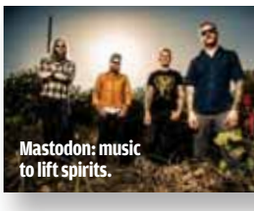
Starless. John [Wetton] singing on one of prog's most epic songs. It sums it all up, I truly love it.

Adrian Belew: Anneke's dream collaboration.

KEVIN NIXON

Which prog muso would you most like to work with?
Adrian Belew. Because of his voice, because of his persona.

Which prog album always gets you in a good mood?
Any of Mastodon's last three albums. Whether you're vacuum cleaning, driving, whatever, their music always lifts your spirit. They're totally up my alley.


Mastodon: music to lift spirits.

JIMMY HUBBARD

Who's the best prog artist you've ever seen?
Opeth at Be Prog! My Friend Festival in Spain [2016]. Their set started with my all-time favourite song of theirs, *Cusp Of Eternity*.

Recommend us a good proggy read.
My bible is *The Power Of Now* by Eckhart Tolle. Tolle's not airy-fairy, he's German and very to the point. It isn't simple to live in the present, but it will open up a whole universe to you.

What's your favourite album cover?
Going back to my brother's collection, I'm very fond of Alan Parsons' *Tales Of Mystery And Imagination – Edgar Allan Poe*. It's classically-orientated, but peaceful and with a lot of detail.

What are you up to at the moment?
Next year I'll be marking 25 years in 'the business', so my classical album *Symphonized* is out, and I'm working on a theatre show – 43 dates in Holland over January, February and March next year. I'll play music and tell stories from my whole career. It'll be fun.

See www.annekevangiersbergen.com for more information.

RICK WAKEMAN

RICK WAKEMAN OFFICIAL YOU TUBE CHANNEL
Launched now!

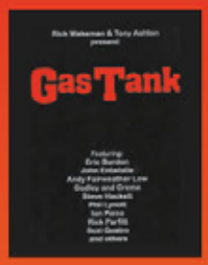
RICK WAKEMAN OFFICIAL YOU TUBE CHANNEL
Launched now!

www.rwcc.com

Two Sides of Yes
Double CD set. The very best of Yes, Wakeman style
MFGZ013CD

Live at Ronnie Scott's
Recorded live in 1997 in Birmingham
HST409CD

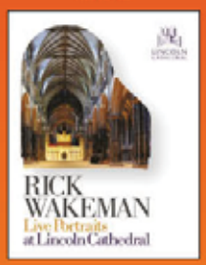
Time Machine
Guest vocalists include Ashley Holt, and Roy Wood
MFGZ018CD



Gas Tank
Double DVD set. Rick's classic 1982 music and chat show
MFGZ020DVD

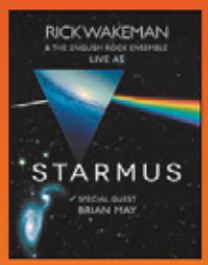
The Real Lisztomania
The soundtrack, as originally intended. Featuring Roger Daltrey
MFGZ028CD

Country Airs
The original recording, with two new tracks
MFGZ014CD



Live Portraits
Recorded live at Lincoln Cathedral – Truly glorious!
MFGZ009

Lure of the Wild
With Adam Wakeman. Entirely instrumental
MFGZ003CD



Starmus
With Brian May and The English Rock Ensemble. DVD
MFGZ019DVD

Myths and Legends
Double CD set. The expanded 2016 version
MFGZ017CD

Live at the Winterland Theatre 1975
Live in San Francisco
MFGZ015CD

The Phantom of the Opera
Double CD + DVD
MFGZ005CD

Can You Hear Me?
Featuring The English Chamber Choir
HRHCD005

Crimes of Passion
A wicked and erotic soundtrack!
MFGZ018CD

Beyond The Planets
With Jeff Wayne and Kevin Peek
MFG009CD

The Burning – Motion picture soundtrack

Limited edition signed and numbered box set
MFGZ024CD

CD1 – The soundtrack
DVD – The Burning, the movie

- 8 x replica lobby cards
- Replica Japanese press pack
- 6 x replica press pack photos
- A3 repro Japanese poster
- 10"x8" replica press photo
- Numbered certificate, signed by Rick Wakeman

PLEDGEMUSIC

WAKEMAN'S MUSIC EMPORIUM

Available from www.rickwakemansmusicemporium.com and all other good music retailers

Fish

WELTSCHMERZ

C·L·U·T·C·H·I·N·G · A·T · S·T·R·A·W·S

9021

TOUR 2018

DEC 02 • O2 ACADEMY / NEWCASTLE
DEC 03 • O2 RITZ / MANCHESTER
DEC 04 • U.E.A / NORWICH
DEC 07 • ASSEMBLY ROOMS / ISLINGTON
DEC 08 • ASSEMBLY ROOMS / ISLINGTON
DEC 09 • O2 ACADEMY / OXFORD
DEC 11 • ROCK CITY / NOTTINGHAM
DEC 12 • CITY HALL / HULL
DEC 13 • O2 ACADEMY / GLASGOW

'A Parley With Angels' EP with 3 new songs taken from Fish's forthcoming album Weltschmerz plus 4 live songs is now available

Clutching At Straws reissued as a 4CD+blu-ray deluxe edition and a 5LP vinyl box set. Both include a new stereo remix by Andy Bradfield and Avril Mackintosh (Mackintosh was the original mixing engineer for producer Chris Kimsey in Advision studios back in 1987) and a concert recording of the band performing at the Edinburgh Playhouse in December '87

9000

Both titles available on mail order at fishmusic.scot and on merch stall on UK tour
Fish can also be found on Instagram, FB & Twitter