

On Reflection

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The APEX

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"The popular music industry has tried, repeatedly, to do with music what Ford attempts with cars. It works better with cars."

—Tony Palmer

Holding Pattern's "Majestic" Yankee ingenuity meets West Coast innovation

The band: Holding Pattern (Hartford, CT). The label: Art Sublime (Gardena, CA). The album: *Majestic*. The album cover artwork is standard neo-progressive *faux*-Roger Dean. The album cover size is standard 12-plus inches tall with gatefold. The surprise is that the only vinyl inside is an ingenious CD holder.

Art Sublime President David Overstreet's brilliant solution to the jewel box could overshadow the music it encases if the featured artist wasn't up to snuff. That clearly isn't the case here. After ogling the packaging for a few minutes (see photo below), just

throw the disc in your player and enjoy some of the most intense musicianship and dynamic compositions I've ever heard from an independent band.

Holding Pattern has been hiding in southern New England for a decade. In 1981, they released a self-produced four-song EP. Those tracks are included in *Majestic*, along with some live tracks, a couple of new tunes, and other unreleased tracks. They are currently working on a new album and if enough copies of this 77-minute recording get out (only 1,000 have been pressed so far), there should



photo by Jon Hanauer

Relayer

STRICT STANDARDS

Dear Jason:

The June issue of *OR* was, as Robert Fripp might put it, a hummer. I thought your dissection of *Union* was excellent and I agree with virtually every point. I do think you overlooked "Angkor Wat," an excellent and very progressive track; in fact, it's so good that it was yanked from the vinyl LP released in Europe. Keep an eye out for a big (and wonderfully well-written, I might add) article on Yes in *Goldmine!*

It seems to me that you are applying very rigorous standards in evaluating the "progressiveness" of some artists. Steve Howe (on "Masquerade") and Mastermind don't get away with producing merely good music, they are criticized for not being on some theoretical cutting edge. I think this is laudable in a way but it is also unfair to some extent. I have no problem with Howe's pleasant doodle; even if it is no "Mood For a Day" at least it's not "The Clap," which tends to get on my nerves.

And I found Mastermind to be very exciting, even if they do wear their influences on their sleeves (actually, I also hear a Rush influence; they must have spent time in Canada.

Cheers,
Michael P. Dawson
San Mateo, CA

Editor's reply:

Mike, you ignorant slut (only kidding). I agree that applying the "theoretical cutting edge" litmus test to progressive artists can be inappropriate at times, though I won't agree that it is ever unfair. My stand on this issue sways from time to time, just as my taste for a particular artist or genre of music ebbs and flows on a regular basis.

At this time, I am feeling fairly conservative on the issue. The reason being that I am finding a certain disdain for some groups that I like who often, though they are by no means "progressive" as a *modus operandi*, consistently do work that is superior to a lot of what is produced by groups who wave the progressive banner.

Joe Jackson and XTC come to mind, as do Thomas Dolby and Todd Rundgren. The latter has released two or three albums that are clearly progressive; the rest, including his newer material, simply show that he is a very talented writer, performer, and producer of interesting music that sometimes swings

toward the commercial (*Hermit of Mink Hollow*) and sometimes toward the artistic (*A Cappella*). Thomas Dolby and XTC create distinctive and imaginative rhythms and odd melodic structures; while there is rarely a display of extraordinary musicianship exhibited in their recordings, their works are impeccably produced and are highly imaginative. Jackson has covered such a wide variety of genres (including his hugely underrated and overlooked orchestral masterpiece, *Will Power*) that I have no doubt that his only reason for not doing a "Close to the Edge"-type piece is that he simply has other things on his agenda.

Compare the quality of these artists' work with what you hear on *Union* (particularly the new single, "Saving My Heart") or from 3 or '80s Genesis or any newer band that sounds more like someone else than something new. I think you'll agree that while "progressive" is a marketing tag, it implies a certain uniqueness in structure and approach that is not found in the above quoted examples. I wouldn't argue against Howe being one of greatest guitarists of the rock era just because he has come up lame in recent years, but I'm also not going to let his sub-par efforts go without a knock when appropriate.

EPISODIC ADVENTURE

Dear Jason:

Thank you very much for the very positive review of our E.P. (May, 1991). Your interpretation of the "Edge of the Sky" storyline is pretty good. We originally had a very specific story but as we wrote it we made it a little more vague so it would be open to different interpretations. This is the original concept:

An explorer gets lost and ends up seeking shelter in a cave. While in the cave, he notices some drawings on the wall and as he's looking at them, they come to life. Suddenly, he is sucked into the drawings and becomes part of them. He ends up back in time and settles down to a simpler life. One day, he realizes that he is now back in time before any of the drawings were put on the walls of the cave. But without any drawings, there is no way he could have gotten into the past from the future. So he goes back to the cave and creates the drawings, which ultimately make the portal through which he travelled from the future to the past, making the whole story a closed loop.

As you can see, we were finding this very difficult to spell out specifically in

the lyrics, so we left it a little fuzzy so people can get their own story out of it. Your interpretation is also very good and just as valid. It's interesting for us to see what people come up with.

Sincerely,
Don Tyler, EPISODE
Corte Madera, CA

ANNIE HASLAM STUFF

The Annie Haslam Fan Club has a number of recordings, posters, and other merchandise available, including a recent recording she did with Japanese keyboardist Akio Dobashi. This 1990 release was only available in Japan but the fan club has it. Recent Japanese CD releases of *Annie in Wonderland* and *Novella* are also available, as well as her rare *Still Life*, recorded with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

You should also check out a rare 22-minute Renaissance video shot in 1979 and commercially available now for the first time. The video features four tracks from *Azure d'Or* plus "Carpet of the Sun."

For more information, write to Annie Haslam Fan Club, c/o Hoffman Bros. Management, P.O. Box 249, Montgomeryville, PA 18936. Phone: 215-646-8300; fax: 215-628-8473.

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Gold Nuggets: 2 from France

by Scott Gold

Europe, as you probably already know, was where the majority of our favorite progressive rock bands flourished. Name just about any progressive band from the '70s and chances are they came from "the Old World." Unfortunately, with the major labels' reluctance to invest in new progrock bands (despite the comments of Derek Shulman in last month's issue), Americans are left without a clue as to what is going on overseas.

After listening to two albums sent me by Musea, the progressive label/distributor based in France, I'm happy to say that there are still good bands from Europe that deserve our attention. Here are the two I can tell you about, both from France.

HECENIA

Légendes

FGBG 7001 AR (Tape)

Thierry Brandet – keyboards and drum programming
Pierre Yves Chiron – bass and guitar
Jean Paul Trutet – vocals
Daniel Trutet – lead guitar (on two songs)

Légendes is a tasty album of four songs, each over 10 minutes long. The compositions have a '70s classical rock feel to them, often bringing to mind Happy the Man and vintage Genesis. The keyboards add to this "retro" feel by using a lot of organ and analog-sounding synth programs. Most striking to me on this album are the drum programs. They are some of the most natural-sounding drum synth lines I've heard anywhere.

My favorite song on the tape is "Hecenia" (at 10:42, it's the shortest song). This is a high-energy composition with Bach-like keyboard lines and excellent guitar and bass work.

Another highlight is "Le Grimoire," which features a pastoral, almost new age beginning and end, and an explosive middle section that sports a very good Wakeman-style keyboard solo.

The recording itself is good, although on a normal bias tape the high end is a bit flat. The musicianship and vocals are on a par with most groups in the genre. I only wish my French wasn't so rusty so I could understand the lyrics. ☺

TIEMKO

Océan

FGBG 4013 AR (CD)

J.J. Toussaint – keyboards and contrabass
R. Chauvidan – acoustic and electric guitars
E. Delauney – vibes, drums, bongos,
gouloubougoula wagalabagou (whatever that is)

Every so often, an album comes along that just blows me away. The most recent have been *Armed Observation* by Dr. Nerve and *Tanna Voda* by Dark. Now I have to add *Océan* by Tiemko to that list.

My first impression was that if Stravinsky had written songs for Return to Forever or The Mahavishnu Orchestra, it would sound like Tiemko. Three songs on the album simply defy description: "Episode," "Hypercontraste," and "Vodka Frapée." These songs are fusion of the highest caliber, frenetic compositions of chord structures, melody patterns, and rhythm changes like you've never heard before.

"Bonbon Très Sucré," a more traditional sounding fusion piece, centers around some wonderful acoustic guitar playing by Chauvidan. And closing out the disc is "Océan," a 23-minute moody space trip where the band members stretch out a little.

It's my opinion that if you buy only one album this year, consider this album at the top. Really, it's that good. For a catalog of releases available from Musea, write to: Musea, 68, La Tinchotte, 57117 Retonfey, France. ☺

As always, send your CDs, tapes, or records for review to: Scott Gold c/o O-Zone Productions, P.O. Box 79163, Waverley, MA 02179 USA.



R. CHAUVIDAN J.-J. TOUSSAINT E. DELAUNAY

On behalf of the audience by Marc S. Tucker

The audience's role in the formulary of live music was recently discussed in *On Reflection* (January 1991). It is a topic worthy of entertaining as, for those of us who take our music seriously, the subject is a sore point. Too many of those who attend a concert seem to think it is a high school dance, to the detriment of the listening pleasure of the others in the audience.

On the other side of the coin is another facet that robs the listener of his or her full due. It is rarely discussed, as the prevalence of music magazines, newsletters, and other audio services/sources seem to have an inordinate fear of giving offense to businessmen. The reasons for that fear may be varied but the product of observing it is inevitably the same: poor quality for the customer/listener.

What I am referring to is the omnipresent harmful avarice that masks itself as ethical business and which no performer ever addresses directly, though to the minds of many, they have as much obligation to speak out against it as any person has in any similar situation.

The darker side of the much-lauded recent tour of Bill Bruford's Earthworks provides an excellent opportunity to cite an instance that I fear is familiar to many of us. The particulars are as follows.

I attended the Earthworks concert at a local yuppie haven, Redondo Beach's screamingly upscale music and dinner club, The Strand. I attended because a friend, who owns a local record shop specializing in progressive music, had an extra ticket and asked if I wanted to go. Not being insane at the moment, I gratefully accepted. We arrived a tad later than might be optimum for good seating and were greeted at the door by a denizen from one of the local iron-pumping palaces. We got the Stare, the Sneer, and the Begrudging Admission as this slab of beef took our tickets. No problem, we're hardened SoCal vets and are used to a circus atmosphere.

We entered and found that the joint was packed to the rafters. Immediately, a waitress hustled up to us and asked if we are thirsty *now*. We weren't. This didn't make her happy. We ignored her and roamed around a bit, scouting vacancies in the place. There were none.

The only conceivable way to obtain a seat would be to have the people

occupying the generous side-booths move over and make room. This, however, would infringe on their territorial imperative. The Underoccupied Booth is a status object in Southern California, and none of these kind patrons, as they make amply clear, is about to scamp on the ritual. We, therefore, ended up standing in a side aisle, right by the bar, where, due to tip-mongering, scampering, and scantily-clad waitresses, and impatient luses, all are obliged to be constantly shifting position and making way for any individual who feels the urge to imbibe.

Now the frequent concert-goer will say, "But that's not at all unusual. I've had to stand throughout many a concert. I was happy just to get in!" Having myself attended hundreds of concerts, I can attest to this. However, when I was obligated to stand, I knew about the possibility in advance and I sure as hell did not have to pay \$25 for the privilege of doing so. Needless to say, I was somewhat tear-ass over this tableau (I should point out that, due to graciousness of my friend, I received the ticket *gratis* but I also hasten to add that there were a lot of people standing; I'll get to that momentarily).

I asked a waitress why there was such an overflow. She tersely replied that this is not at all unusual and that the place is frequently oversold. I looked around and estimated that there must have been a 20% overage of people. In a place designed to hold several hundred, that's a lot. I comment to my friend that this is really mercenary. He gives a grimacing smile and nods his head.

Though we arrived only minutes before the show was scheduled to begin (8:00), by 9:00 we still saw neither hide nor hair of Earthworks. Not coincidentally, a lot of alcohol is being sold and at outrageous prices (I bought a beer and a glass of wine for myself and my friend: \$9, not including the tip that I *didn't* give anyway, consoling myself, in view of the grieving barman, that the help would not be the only ones with failed expectations that night).

Why the band took so damnably long to hit the stage was beyond me. It was obvious that they had been there for hours as the equipment was on stage and since no soundcheck had been conducted while we were there, that must already have been accomplished. Finally some pseudo-DJ walked on, took the mike, and, in unct-

ously camaraderistic tones, said, "Awfully sorry for the delay, folks!" even though his paid smile never left his face. He went on to make some inadequate justification for the delay and then admonished us urchin standees to take any seat we may see because "they're all paid for!" As if any of us, and we are all extremely disgruntled, needed to hear that. Sensitive our host was decidedly not.

The band finally came on. I will not give a review of the concert because, as should be obvious by now, I'm a little pissed with them for allowing this charade. My irritation was not assuaged when they pointedly ignored the audience for the most part and, when finally speaking, reeled off only song titles and wisecracks. Some of that humor could have been directed at the club but then again, few bite the hand that parsimoniously feeds them.

Suffice to say that the show was excellent, even beyond expectations. Earthworks tore into their repertoire with aggression and spirit, even if that spirit did not extend to an ethical and aesthetic concern for their audience. Make no mistake, this was not an arena with arc lights; Earthworks could very intimately see exactly what was going on.

But this is not a music review. It's a tirade and its intent is to expose a bit of the stranglehold business has on music. Whether or not it is particularly inimical to progressive music begs the point. It very much affects progressive music and it is the virulence of it, abetted by the audience and the musicians' participation in it, that makes it frightening. And which makes it unkillable. Look at what is evident, just in this one concert:

1. The ticket price was \$25. Normally, one would expect to see several groups for that kind of money. The Forum or the Greek Theater would have a hard time gouging for bucks like that without a several-act card. That The Strand has an "intimate atmosphere" is not only false but irrelevant. During the show, the main floating bar held a raucous bunch of predatory imbibers, constantly keeping a typical barhall din up. Moreover, standing in the aisle, being constantly jostled, does not constitute any definition of "intimate" that I've ever read.

2. The drinks were outrageously overpriced. A Coors Light (the beer equivalent of a yellow crayon dipped in water) cost \$4 and a glass of watered

continued next page

Audience, *continued*

burgundy was \$6; and for a measly six-ounce glass, if that. I have to wonder how the Strand pays both the artist and itself. Normally, agreements are made as to who gets the gate, who gets the food and drinks money, and who gets what percentage of which. With the unnecessary delay, I suspect that the Strand took the alcohol and food monies.

3. Though it's pertinent to nothing, this policy of hiring attitude flunkies gets annoying. I am not so glib as to paint the picture of any businessman connected to music as an angel come to earth, and I'm more than familiar with their proclivity to pay minimum wages, making the brunt of the employee's pay contingent on the whim of the client. But this mindset of waitresses regarding their work situation as a grant of fortune to the customer has to go. I don't care that these businesses inevitably hire women with zero-G breasts and legs up to their collective neck; I'm not buying a pound of flesh, I'm buying service. I don't expect MIT grads, but I don't want troglodytes either.

4. This arrogance of the artist thinking he or she can come on whenever he or she damn well feels like it has got to

go, too. Scheduling a concert for 8:00 and then starting after 9:00 is absolutely deplorable conduct. That it is a tradition is not an excuse, it just speaks loudly of the artists' irresponsibility. I can think of no situation where a contract is formed and it is excusable for the "employee" to show up late. The twist is that the group can be, and often is, held up by the club management so that more goods can be sold. Venue owners are uninterested in the arts, only in running a clip joint and making a lot of money.

5. This brings us to overselling. It is just naked greed on the part of the club owner. It is also a flagrant flouting of good business and law, as well as aesthetics. The disclaimer is that they are doing the audience a favor by letting more of them in. What they are really doing is violating occupancy rates.

6. The Strand hosts all manner of musical acts, from Robin Trower to Leon Redbone. Having seen the latter there, I can attest to the unsoundness of having several open walk-up bars. If you want to run a pick-up joint boozehall, do so; but if you're catering to a music crowd, this is crass. The Strand boasts two alcohol islands in the audience area, with a third

just to the side. The most grossly avaricious arena event is not this abundantly greed-headed; the Strand makes it their virtue. Lots of drinks are inevitably sold.

So then, artists, we have heard about the horrors of home taping (another sham concocted by business), bootlegging, ticket shystering and counterfeiting, all declaimed by you with very loud voices. Naturally, since these affect your paycheck. Where are those same voices when your audience is being ripped off?

And audiences, where are your spines that you continually put up with this and pay yet again to experience it the next time? Whatever happened to boycotts? And music press, where is *your* voice? It's not heard while the ad monies are flowing, when the free CDs are coming in, and when the press parties and backstage passes are being handed out. What happens when it comes time to pay attention to ethics? Everyone's out of the office and there's no forwarding address.

Want to know why progressive music has such a hard time getting an even break? Because there's not an even break to be had, and we're all silent partners in this negative scenario. ♡

Steve Howe's new album is released and reviewed

This lukewarm review of Steve Howe's new album, *Turbulence*, appeared in the Boston Globe on July 18. It was written by Paul Robicheau, whom I consider to be "one of the better ones" as far as critics go. I will do a more in-depth review when I get the album or if anybody else wants to share their opinions, please send a review in.

(*Late note:* I've just heard a tape of the album and I think it's quite good, better than this review suggests.)

"Steve Howe's third solo album sounds like something a guitar player would methodically piece together in his spare time. But one would hope for more from the versatile Howe.... Several years in the making, this overdue 10-track effort is thematically bland and less stylistically diverse than his stellar second solo release from 1979. As he did on that LP, Howe charts which instruments he uses on each song, and the results would indeed be of interest to guitar fans. The presence of Yes drummer Bill Bruford and ex-Ultravox keyboardist Billy Currie on most tracks is cursory. Howe adds attractive shading with koto on "Hint Hint" and dobro on "Fine Line" and rips on electric guitar during "Novalis" and "Sensitive Chaos," which sounds like a Yes outtake. But there isn't enough creative turbulence to make this all-instrumental disc stand out." ♡

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Holding Pattern, *continued*

be some rabid anticipation for it among progressive fans who are waiting to embrace the next wave of virtuosos.

Guitarist Tony Spada is the nerve center and sole remaining original member of Holding Pattern. As composer and producer of the music, Spada's sensibilities are a bicontinental mix of early-mid '70s British progressive rock à la King Crimson, Camel, and Genesis, and mid-late '70s (mostly) American prog/fusion, often recalling Happy the Man, Tony Williams' Lifetime, UK, and Mahavishnu Orchestra.

The emphasis is on guitar and keyboards, sometimes soaring together, sometimes sparring. Backed by a strong but never intrusive rhythm section, the instrumentals belie the group's name; indeed, most of the music, with its driving energy and active pulse, seems impossible to stall.

I'll go through the music first and then return to the packaging, which warrants further discussion. The album opens with the four tracks from the 1981 EP and they are really the best tracks on the disc. The lineup at this time was Spada on guitars, Mark Tannenbaum (replacing original keyboardist Ken Archer just prior to the recording) on keyboards and synths, Jerry Lalancette on bass and Taurus bass pedals, and Scientologist Robert Hutchinson on drums and percussion.

"Another Point of View" (7:45) begins with gentle, spacious keyboards, recalling Kit Watkins' work with Happy the Man and on his solo albums. Then Spada's guitar enters and truly gives "another point of view" with screaming, menacing leads undercut by sharp synth chords. A short, Giantish interlude is the only break from the polished, fluid, and linear musical flow. This track also gives evidence of the superb rhythm section of Hutchinson and Lalancette.

"Honor Before Glory" (7:39) has a wistful, distant, melancholy feel to it, highlighted by Spada's mournful, echoed guitar lines. Tannenbaum gives forth a lyrical synth solo that successfully imparts the feeling of a hard-earned pride to the song's concept.

"Jigsaw Dream" (5:34) features a more complex structure, with odd time signatures and dozens of tight changes. Co-written by Hutchinson, his control and precision throughout the piece is notable. "Out of the Tunnels" (7:45) is a monster.

All four musicians shine on this piece, which recalls the power and instrumental dexterity of '73-'75 Crimson. Put on your seatbelts for this one.

"From the Clouds" (1:34) follows. This is a duet recorded in 1985-86 by new keyboardist Steve Kozikowski and new vocalist Jeff Brewer, who plays bass pedals. Like "White Car" from Yes' *Drama*, this tune has the shadow of an interesting idea but ends before realizing its potential.

The next two tracks are also duets, recorded in 1990, that feature Spada and new bassist Tony Castellano on bass, drum programming, and keyboards. "Majestic" (3:29) shows Spada moving more towards a Holdsworth style, with long, complex lines that traverse the fretboard and his imagination. The song is good, not great, and the drum programming is a poor replacement for Hutchinson's talents. "Iraqiroll" (3:12) sounds like a power-metal tune done for airplay. Bad timing with the title and compared with the rest of the album, a waste of a recording session.

"Was it You" (4:58) is a vocal tune with Brewer, Spada, Kozikowski, and Lalancette. Recorded at the time of "From the Clouds," this song is a ballad that offers little more to write about than Brewer's voice, which to my ears lacks expression. It's nice to hear Spada on acoustic, and he colors the song with searing electric guitar, but the bottom line is that this group doesn't seem well-suited to ballads.

"Mercenary" (4:13) is another vocal number, this one recorded in 1983 with the EP lineup and featuring Spada on vocals. Lyrically and musically, the piece recalls UK's "Danger Money," especially with Spada's Wettonian vocal. This track was released as a single with an edited version of "Honor Before Glory" on the B-side. Not a bad track but Holding Pattern should probably stick to instrumentals.

"Tunnels" (6:07) is a nifty tune recorded in 1981 with original keyboardist Ken Archer and guest violinist Gordon Swift. Spada and Archer get the most out of their equipment as they take the groundwork laid by Hutchinson and Lalancette and propel the music upwards and outwards. Swift adds nice colors with his violin.

The last four tracks are live, three from 1981 and one from 1985, all

featuring the EP lineup. In concert, their sound is as tight and precise as in the studio. "Arrival" (4:13) is very Happy the Mannish but doesn't go very much beyond that. "Around the Square" (5:14) is a good prog rocker with the customary guitar/keyboards battle. "Ten Passed Midnight" (9:42) begins with a simple theme on keyboards that runs into a Crimsonish angular guitar ostinato by Spada, supported by a solid rhythm from Hutchinson and Lalancette. They stop on a false ending and fade back into the theme, which is restated more assertively.

The album ends with "Ground Zero" (5:07), another fine prog rocker that is otherwise unexceptional. Throughout most of the album, the sound quality is good but as the material comes from different sources, the sound quality varies. The current lineup, at work on a new album, is Spada, Kozikowski, Brewer, Castellano, and Kirk McKenna on drums. Spada is also working on a solo album that will be released on Art Sublime.

Now that I've come back to Art Sublime, let's discuss further the packaging. The practical side is this: jewel boxes are fragile, they break easily. But they are strong enough to bend, fold, and mutilate the booklets that are tricky to insert and remove. Art Sublime President David Overstreet's LP-sized packaging protects the disc and makes it very easy to remove and replace. From a practical use point of view, this new scheme is a success.

Aesthetically, CD booklets are small and the text, which needs to be printed small or else is just photographically reduced, is often very difficult to read. Many progressive albums have wonderful artwork that is bastardized by being reduced to the size of bathroom tile. Overstreet's LP-sized package retains the original size of album artwork and provides plenty of room for lyrics, information, or photos. Again, a success.

Now, comes storage. This package is not stored with your CDs, obviously, it is stored with your records. Question: when you want to listen to music, and don't have anything specific in mind, do you look first to your records or your CDs? If you're one of those stubborn holdouts who cling to their vinyl and still can't believe that movies cost over \$6, this question is not applicable. For the rest of us, the answer is obvious: we look to our

Tim Blake in concert

CDs first. Why? Because they're easier to see from the side, easier to deal with, and in most (but certainly not all) cases, offer the best sound quality.

Now you may own Holding Pattern, love it, and maybe never hear it because it's tucked away in your records. Holding Pattern doesn't click in the mind the way Yes or Crimson or Giant does. Someday, you'll find it when you're pulling out a Holdsworth album you don't have on CD yet and say, "Oh wow, I forgot I had this thing!" This, of course, if hypothetical but if you fear it happening to you, you could always buy a replacement jewel box for the disc itself and keep it with your CDs while the packaging stays with your records. But that brings you back to where you were before this new packaging. So for storage, the jury is still out.

(By the way, if you did buy a jewel box for the disc, you could use the insert holder of the new packaging as a display case for an attractive-looking CD like Yes' *Union* that should be seen and not heard.)

Environmentally, a lot of paper and plastic is being used but none of it is being thrown away. And instead of being shrinkwrapped, it comes in a reusable plastic sleeve to protect the cover. So environmentally, it's politically correct.

All in all, Overstreet's new packaging is creative, effective, and a great conversation piece. It's not going to make the physical mass of my music collection go down but for someone like me who likes to devour the artwork, liner notes, and lyrics of an album while listening, it's a great solution. And especially in this case, the music inside is a delight; the music and packaging deserve each other. Inside and out, Holding Pattern's *Majestic* is the independent progressive release of the year.

For more information, contact David Overstreet, Art Sublime, P.O. Box 473, Gardena, CA 90248. Tel: 213-329-7254; fax: 213-515-0840. ☺



Tim Blake, on a month-long trek to selected U.S. cities, performed in Waltham, Massachusetts on May 9, demonstrating his trademark space-synth sound and unique talents to but a couple of dozen progressive fans.

Blake's tour, the second in a series of fan-booked, fan-promoted, and fan-paid-for events that started in March with his former Gong-mate David Allen, is the quintessential progressive rock experience: a small amount of people, many of whom know each other from past shared experiences including, but not limited to, reading *On Reflection*, enjoying music that most people will never hear, and perhaps taking the time to feel sorry for those uninformed slaves to popular culture.

That so few people took part in such an enjoyable musical experience is disappointing. That so few care is tragic but as progressive music fans, we know we have to accept that and just try not to act smug in front of people who don't share our tastes. In spite of the low turnout—which can be somewhat explained by very short advance notice and the fact that the Boston Bruins were playing a playoff game that night—or perhaps, because of it, the evening was truly magic (or *Magick*, as his new album is titled).

A local space band named Architectural Metaphor (Arcmet, for short) opened the show. Heavily influenced by Hawkwind (for whom they once opened in Boston), Tangerine Dream, and early Pink Floyd—recall that the Floyd were once called the Architectural Abdabs—Arcmet is a quintet featuring a keyboard/synth player, two guitarists, and two percussionists. Their music doesn't do anything for me personally but a number of people I spoke to there have seen them before and think they're pretty good.

Most of the numbers are undistinguishable from the others. They all start out with rambling space sounds, which continue for ten minutes or so and then end. Rarely is there any sense of melody or even a rhythm. They did an unlistenable cover of a Hawkwind tune whose name I didn't catch and ended with a cover of Tangerine Dream's "Ricochet," which I liked, although it went on too long. An original that I liked was called "We Have Come For Your Children," which rocked out and had some interesting textures.

Then it was time for Tim. With a Yamaha KX5 strapped over his shoulder and an Atari computer that held his pre-recorded backing tracks, he was on, performing solo live for the first time in 10 years. And yet he performed with the style, grace, poise, and confidence of someone who has never been off the road.

Most of the compositions were from his forthcoming album, *Magick*, which seems a more personal work than his previous outings, *Crystal Machine* (1977) and *Blake's New Jerusalem* (1978). About half the tunes were instrumentals and half vocal numbers. His voice, a boyish, typically-Canterbury timbre, gave an emotional lift to his plaintive, often bittersweet lyrics of love lost and love sought.

In the opening number, "The Magick Circle," he brought forth swirling, dancing leads from his strapped-on synth. Then on "Lighthouse," from *Blake's New Jerusalem*, he did a lengthy and spirited solo that brought the tune to a whole new dimension from the studio version. He followed that with the reggae-laced "I Want to Love You," that seemed to mix his sound and style with those of Eric Clapton and Peter Tosh.

In the instrumental numbers, whether they were uptempo prog-rockers or more serene meditations, Blake showed a wonderful fusion of technical ability and passionate phrasing that so often in his recorded work has been overshadowed by his technological tinkering and spacious sonic creations. His expertly recorded backing tracks, which featured wonderful percussion arrangements, brought a richness to the songs that was a hidden indication of his composing talents.

After "With You," a hot number that could get airplay if anybody in radio finds out about the new album when it is released, he went off to as thundering an ovation as about 48 hands could give. On his return for an encore, he said, "For not a lot of people, you make a lot of noise, and it's appreciated." To which Bill Robertson, the man who put the Waltham show together, responded, "Likewise."

For his encore, he played his *magnum opus*, "New Jerusalem," that went on for about 12 short minutes. An ode to the new age, recorded when many of today's new age artists were still playing "Chopsticks," Blake invoked the spirits of

continued next page

Tim Blake, *continued*

justice and illumination in creating a better world based on love and peace. With lush backing and his purposeful leads, he created a truly magick moment.

I can't say enough about this fan-based network that is bringing such wonderful though obscure talents to the U.S. The record companies won't support this music; neither will the radio stations, the clubs, or the promoters. And the general public is too starstruck by Madonna's metallic breasts to care about something that requires brain usage. So who else to satisfy our musical needs than our own kind?

To get involved, call:
Rick Chafen at 816-561-0723; or
Bill Robertson at 617-661-1397. ♡

DÆVID ALLEN TOUR DATES

Dævid Allen is bringing his *12 Selves* show back to North America in August. This schedule is as of July 26. Call Rick or Bill for more complete information.

Aug. 2	Rumours	San Francisco, CA
Aug. 8	Australia N.Z. Club	Vancouver, B.C.
Aug. 9	TBA	Saltspring Island, B.C.
Aug. 12	The Grand Emporium	Kansas City, MO
Aug. 14	Rockefellers	Houston, TX
Aug. 16-18	TBA (workshop)	Houston/Austin, TX
Aug. 20	Babylon-a-Go-Go	Cleveland, OH
Aug. 21	Wetlands	New York, NY
Aug. 22	TBA	Providence, RI
Aug. 23	TBA	Northampton, MA
Aug. 24	Middle East Cafe	Cambridge, MA
Aug. 25	St. John Cathedral	Baltimore, MD

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