

On Reflection

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The APEX

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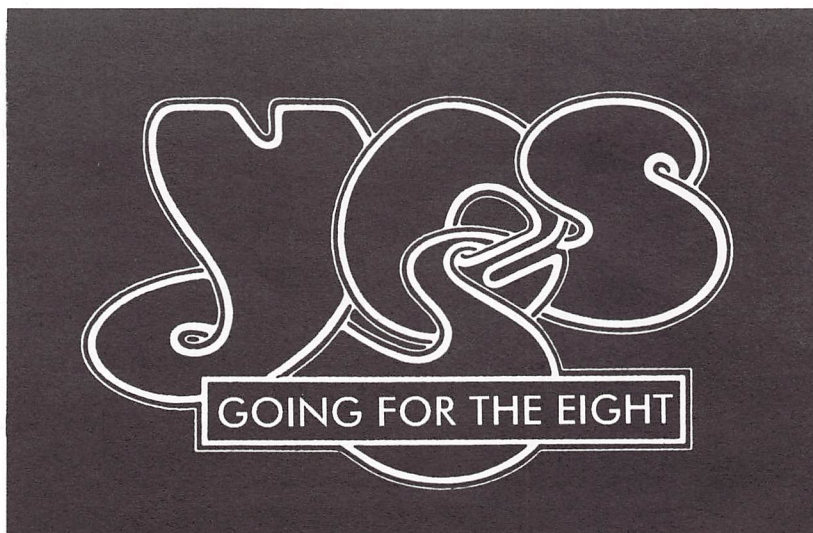
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*"It's the beginning of a
new love in sight/Could be
an ever opening flower/No
explanation, need to work
it out/You know we've got
the power/Parallel our sights/
And we will find that
we...need to be where we
belong/Parallel our heights/
Display our rights and
wrongs, and always keep
it strong."*

—Christopher Squire

Yesshows '91 tour schedule on p. 7

A "Fragile" alliance or do "We have heaven?"



The very first issue of *On Reflection*, back in February 1989, had surprise news that no one could have expected—Jon Anderson, Bill Bruford, Steve Howe, and Rick Wakeman were reuniting to go where the latter-day Yes had failed to go; mainly, to the creative edge. Now, however, the most unusual twist yet in this ongoing tale of parallel universes is soon to unfold.

Yes is back and bigger than ever. On a worldwide tour this spring and summer is an eight-man Yes composed of Anderson, Bruford, Howe, Wakeman, *and* Chris Squire, Alan White, Trevor Rabin, and Tony Kaye. That's right, two drummers, two guitarists, two keyboardists, and the two men who have worn the banner of Yes longer than any other, Anderson and Squire (although it is regretful that Tony Levin was left out of this major project).

The tour is coinciding with the equally unexpected news of an April 9th release date for *Union*, an album credited to Yes and featuring all eight musicians. A single, "Lift Me Up," will be released in March. Of course, after the celebrating is over, one has to wonder what the real story behind all of this is. Obviously, Bruford cares nothing of reunions or history and would probably not have stayed around after another ABWH

continued p. 7

Relayer

"JULIA DREAM" ACADEMY

Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour is the producer of the new album by the Dream Academy. He also plays guitar and bass on some tracks. I haven't heard the album but the Academy is one of the better new bands of recent years. I wouldn't expect any epic performances but for Floyd completists it's guaranteed to be a lot more listenable than Roger Waters' albums.

QUEEN KNOWS HOWE

Queen's new album, *Innuendo*, is their best since *Jazz*. That may not say all that much but for a band that was close to being progressive superstars only to get waylaid by their own peculiarities and unfortunate sojourns into science fiction and rockabilly, the album could signal a return to more interesting music. Helping out in their transition back to respectability is Steve Howe, who contributes classical guitar to the title track.

In a recent interview, Queen guitarist Brian May indicated that although he personally would like to tour, the band probably would not because Freddy Mercury has become somewhat of a recluse following constant attacks in the British rock press. May also stated that he would consider going out on a solo tour, which would be interesting as he at one time was one of the most distinctive-sounding guitarists in rock.

HILLAGE/GONG ON CD

Blue Plate, a division of Caroline Records, which has its own good reputation for distributing quality progressive works on CD, has been importing the Steve Hillage and Gong catalogs from Virgin Records to release domestically on CD.

The Hillage catalog is complete, while Gong starts with 1973's *Angel's Egg* (the second of the planet Gong trilogy) and goes up to 1978's *Expresso II*, which is one of three that

features Allan Holdsworth. Why they have not released *Flying Teapot - Radio Gnome Invisible Part I* is not known but I strongly hope that they get around to it as it was a very important album for me when I was first getting into progressive music.

While the packaging generally sucks, the digital transfers are good. I was particularly impressed with how they handled Hillage's *Live Herald*. The original 2-record set had three live sides and one studio side of all new material. Given the well-documented reluctance of many record companies to issue 2-CD sets, which often results in having tracks omitted from the disc that never resurface, Virgin (with Hillage apparently overseeing the process), took the studio tracks and paired them with 1978's *Open*. This leaves the *Live Herald* CD a completely live affair, and makes the unfairly-disparaged *Open* album a better value. The *Open* CD also includes a great cover of the Beatles "Getting Better," produced by Hillage and Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason, which had previously only been available as a single in the UK.

Also available in this series is Dævid Allen's *Good Morning*. If you can't find these CDs, contact Blue Plate/Caroline Records, 114 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001.

CRAFTY UPDATES

Robert Fripp and the League of Crafty Guitarists are touring Europe as you read this. Crafty guitarist Steve Ball, interviewed in *OR* a few issues back, is also working on a side project that will involve another Crafty guitarist, LCG vocalist Patricia Leavitt, and a percussionist. This outfit has performed in Boston and New York and will continue to evolve after the European tour. Ball's new project will also feature some electric guitar for those who are ready to hear these guys plug in for a change.

FREE HAND BEING RELEASED

I am forever indebted to APEX member Dok Webb for informing me that an outfit named One Way Records is going to be releasing Gentle Giant's mega-classic 1975 album *Free Hand* on CD.

Unfortunately, I have no idea who One Way are, where they are based, and when the CD is going to be released. If anyone has further information, please let me know. Until then, my hands are tied!

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Gold Nuggets: Forever Einstein by Scottt Gold

Recent years have seen a slight resurgence in the genre of progressive rock as we APEX members know it.

Although albums by groups such as ABWH, Pink Floyd and the like are few and far between, at least they are being made (a difficult feat for any prog band since the wrong end of the '70s caused the downfall of most good bands). And now there is even a Yes reunion concert. All of this might give us the idea that progressive rock is in better shape than it was a decade ago.

But is it? Where are the new progressive bands? They do exist, but not on the major labels. And we should share in the blame for that. Here's why: Ten years ago, at a now-defunct bar in Boston called Maverick's, I had the pleasure of seeing a band known as The Living Gloves. From the first note of their set, it was obvious that the band members, along with being very accomplished musicians, were avid Gentle Giant fans. They were one of the best local bands I had ever seen. But as I revelled in the intricate rhythms and harmonies, I noticed that the room was nearly empty.

Two years later, I saw in the local arts paper that The Living Gloves were scheduled to play in a bar not far from my home. With great anticipation I made my way to the club, preparing myself for more of what I had heard from them earlier.

Upon entering I found the place full. "This is more like it," I thought to myself as I sat down with my drink and prepared for an evening of musical rapture. Then the band began playing. To my horror, I did not hear the wondrous sounds of progressive rock. The band had become a typical dance-rock act. I stayed to see if there was any glimmer of the band I had seen at Maverick's, only to be further disappointed.

After the show, I asked a member of the band why they had

changed their style in such a drastic way. "We wanted to make money," was the reply.

I can imagine all of you progressive rock fans nodding in recognition of the above scene. Whether it was a local band that switched to a more commercial style or established musicians joining together to form promising but ultimately disappointing groups (like Asia and GTR), the financial considerations were probably the main catalyst for the artistic compromise.

The plain truth is, musicians have to eat. Progressive musicians are faced with the dilemma of having a drive to create music that can truly be called art, while others with considerably less talent are prospering by churning out derivative forms of simple music. Most progressive musicians will come to the point where they will either decide to conform or give up performing altogether.

As members of the APEX, it is our responsibility to keep this tragedy from recurring. We must seek out new progressive bands and continue to give them our support by attending their performances, buying their albums, and spreading the word of their existence in this and other progressive rock publications.

If you see a new progressive rock band, let them know that there are fans of their music out there. Tell them of *On Reflection* and the APEX. And write to OR yourself to let us know who is out there, where we can see them, and how to obtain their recordings.

To this end, I have promised Jason a series of reviews of some of the bands I have seen or heard lately. If you would like your band (or a band you've heard) reviewed in this column, send a tape and band description to: Scottt Gold, c/o O-Zone Productions, P.O. Box 79163, Waverly, MA 02179.

* * * * *

FOREVER EINSTEIN, *Artificial Horizon*
Cuneiform-Rune 25

Forever Einstein is a trio consisting of C.W. Vrtacek on amplified acoustic guitar and keyboards, Marc Sichel on bass, and John Roulat on drums and percussion. Their music is most reminiscent of *Discipline*-era King Crimson. Vrtacek's compositions are full of whirling interplay between guitar and bass, with the kind of rhythmic twists and turns that could put a smile on the face of any prog-rock fan.

The band draws on an expansive list of influences on this album: you can hear strains of surf, psychedelic, and even polka music. And while Forever Einstein are serious about their music, they are not without a sense of humor. Song titles like "The Iron Boot of Stupidity Will March Across Your Face" and "Hate Me Again Like You Did Last Summer" are the norm here. There is even a rather playful but inspired rendition of the Jimi Hendrix classic "Manic Depression" amid the tunes.

The musicianship on this album is superb. Vrtacek makes the most of his acoustic guitar and small array of effects, recalling some of the works of Fripp and Henry Kaiser. Roulat and Sichel make up an excellent rhythm section, keeping up with Vrtacek's complicated song structures seemingly with ease.

I highly recommend this album, as well as Vrtacek's hard-to-find solo albums (his parody of The Residents' *Now Available* is priceless). You can also hear Forever Einstein on the second *Live at the Knitting Factory* compilation.

[Available from Wayside Music, P.O. Box 6517, Wheaton, MD 20906-0517.] **OR**

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Dave Stewart: progressive good guy

Dave Stewart, former keyboard megal-talent with Egg, Khan, Hatfield & the North, National Health, Bruford, and countless others, and vocalist Barbara Gaskin are hard at work on the follow-up to 1990's *The Big Idea*. Similar to that album, the new work will combine cover tunes with Stewart originals. If their month-long eastern U.S. tour last fall is an indication, we should expect that one of the covers will be Joni Mitchell's "Amelia," originally from her excellent album, *Hejira*.

The Big Idea, released in the U.S. by Rykodisc and by Stewart's Broken Records label elsewhere, is a 63-minute journey into their unique musical world. Why, you may ask, would an extraordinary composer like Stewart bother with doing covers? The answer is, so he can completely rewrite them! And he does to mainly great effect, with new versions of Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," Dave Berry's "The Crying Game," British folk-rocker Billy Bragg's "Levi Stubb's Tears," and the Blue Niles' "Heat-wave."

The highlight of the album is "New Jerusalem," which Stewart describes thusly: "New Jerusalem" starts quietly with a mysterious sound collage whose fragments of voices and music pull you down into the depths of the English psyche. 9-1/2 minutes

later, the song, whose mighty choruses are augmented by a 25-piece Welsh choir and the thunderous drums of Gavin Harrison, reaches a shrieking conclusion with a demented keyboard feedback solo." The opus also features Jakko Jakszyk on guitars and a church pipe organ.

The other songs include a ballad, a couple of rockers, an ode to the theremin (that old movie house instrument used in "Good Vibrations") and an ode to psychedelia.

One of the wonderful things about Dave Stewart, besides his talent, is the fact that he is a truly nice guy with a great sense of humor. If you write to him, he will write back. I mean, he will pick up a pen and write you a letter in his own hand (he has very nice penmanship).


APEX member Vic Stanley was kind enough to share with me a letter he received from Stewart. In response to Vic's statement that Stewart probably wouldn't have minded receiving a few more royalty checks from his previous bands, the keyboardist wrote: "Vic, you have grasped my essential position re: royalty cheques with uncanny intuition. I would have added one small postscript: Not only should there have been more royalty cheques, but the figures printed on them should have

been MUCH BIGGER. But I'm glad we see eye to eye over this...do you, perhaps, have any you could send me?"

And this reminiscence of the late Alan Gowen, with whom Vic once had a brief conversation while the former was making good use of a urinal in the men's room of a club in Chicago: "One final thought on the subjects of Alan Gowen and urination: I have a delightful memory of Alan, drunk after a gig at Brighton Art College, peeing all over a grand piano at the college. He even opened the lid, climbed up inside it, and carried on spraying. What a performer."

For my part, Stewart was nice enough to promise to share info on OR with progressive fans who write to him. Though success is often weighed by money, it is a subjective condition. In sharing his talents and his unpretentious, warm humanity with fans who will never leave him for the "next big thing," Dave Stewart is indeed a success. Make his current and future albums a success, too.

You can write him at Broken Records, 18 Yeoman Way, Hainault, Illford, Essex, IG6 2RN, England. **OR**

All the best,
Dave Stewart 

Dævid Allen to perform in the U.S.

Thanks to the efforts of some faithful American progressive fans, former Soft Machinist and Gongmeister Dævid Allen is doing a March tour of the U.S. The show, titled "Dævid Allen's Twelve Selves," is a performance piece that features scripted material, audience interaction, costumes, and plenty of whatnot.

Allen's show is largely made possible due to the efforts of Rick Chafen of Kansas City, MO. Rick has been offering the show to any city that expresses interest and it has been progressive fans that have taken the initiative in putting up the money and finding venues in their home towns. Because of the tour's low budget, many of these fans are even hosting Allen in their homes between shows.

The confirmed dates are as follows. For venue information, contact Rick Chafen at 816-561-0723. *Note:* There will also be a show in Boston sometime between March 24 and 27. For more information, contact Bill Robertson at 617-661-1397. **OR**

- 3/1 Denver, CO
- 3/2 Los Angeles, CA
- 3/5 San Francisco, CA
- 3/7 Houston, TX (show)
- 3/8, 9 Houston, TX (workshop)
- 3/11 Kansas City, MO (poetry reading)
- 3/12 Kansas City, MO (show)
- 3/14 Kent, OH
- 3/15 Chicago, IL
- 3/20 New York City
- 3/21 Washington, DC
- 3/22 Baltimore (tentative)
- 3/23 Philadelphia, PA

Bringing Dark to light

Think of a progressive band whose music could be described as "dark" and the first group that comes into your mind is probably King Crimson or Van der Graaf Generator. The things that can make music seem dark are minor chords, dissonance, distortion, and freeform group improvisation. A band you may not know that does a number of these things quite well is aptly named Dark.

Dark consists of drummer Mark Nauseef, who has performed with the likes of ex-Focus guitarist Jan Akkerman, Jack Bruce, Indian percussionist Trilok Gurtu, Thin Lizzy's Philip Lynott, and German keyboard whiz Joachim Kuhn; percussionist Leonice Shinneman, who makes a number of the traditional African and Indian instruments that are included in his "percussion drumset;" Mark London Sims on bass; and, on their first album, vocalist Catherine Guard.

Their eponymous debut was released in 1986 on CMP (Creative Music Productions) Records in Germany. It is not nearly as good as their second album, which I will get to later, but it demonstrates the format of their music and the feelings it emits. Throughout the album, keyboards that often sound like distorted guitars are played by Nauseef, Shinneman, and Sims, but with no great effectiveness. They are more for creating a ponderous paranoid feeling than for any musical value.

One would hope that a woman's vocals would offset the keyboards but Guard's wordless verbalisms are as uncomfortable to hear, though at least they are naturally occurring sounds. It is left to the pure, primal feel of the percussion to provide the thrills and expressiveness that these very talented musicians are capable of.

The first track, "Du Reptile," opens typically with Nauseef and Shinneman laying down a complex rhythm that is broken up by the afore-

disdained keyboards. After a false ending, the pace picks up and the percussion leads again. "Even Darker" features Guard's unguarded vocals and some speedy yet precise percussives by Shinneman. On the whole, it is similar in sound and feel to the avant-improv of Keith Tippett's post-Crimson band, Ovary Lodge.

"Happy Days/Hate/Tatum" is the most rewarding track on the album. Here we have some great bass playing by Sims, some good keyboard work for a change, and the usual excellent drumming and percussion. "Him and Her" has Guard sounding like a warped Ofra Haza record. Shinneman takes a very inventive percussion solo, which is eventually buoyed by Sims and Nauseef's great rhythm backing.

Other tracks feature more of the same. Two others include the word "dark" in the title, "King Krad" and "Republic of Darkness." In doing so, they seem to be admitting that they know what they want to do but they haven't yet figured out the best way to do it and sustain it while being musically creative at the same time. The last song, "The Spectator," actually has real words. Real strange words. About missing a bus. Still, the track has great bass.

Dark's second album came two years later, in 1988. Gone are the grotesque vocals (grovals, for short) and the ruminating keyboards (ruminboards?) and in their place is guitarist Miroslav Tadic. Also appearing are guitarist David Torn and violinist L. Shankar. With their help, the second album, *Tamma Voda*, becomes a garden of delights for any Crimson fan.

The album opens with "Trilok," Nauseef's tribute to percussionist Gurtu. With great guitar work by Tadic, Shankar's violin, and the percussive interplay of Nauseef and Shinneman, this track could easily fit on *Larks' Tongues in Aspice*. "Sacred

Heart" is a slow starter with only brief explosions of music over a light, billowy background. But when the flood gates open, all hell breaks loose. Tadic and Torn (who does the second solo) both emulate Fripp's electric sound, though their techniques are very different, both from Fripp and from each other.

The Jimi Hendrix tune "Drifting" gets a very emotional reading from arranger Tadic on acoustic guitar, with violin and percussion backing. The title track starts out acoustic, with Tadic bending the strings so that it sounds like a sitar. After a moody organ by Sims, Tadic goes electric as Nauseef contributes a jazz rhythm worthy of an Art Blakey or a Max Roach.

Sims really shines on bass on his composition "Ready to Order." Torn and Shinneman also contribute great solos. Torn's best work on the album is on "Merciful," which also features excellent percussion and acoustic guitar. Throughout *Tamma Voda*, there is a sense of purpose and confidence that is noticeably lacking in Dark's first album. The music smokes and has the dark feel they are looking for but also the technique that allows their musical abilities to shine through.

I am unaware of a third album but one may exist. I hope there is because Dark is a band that is uniquely satisfying. It's easy to find major chord-positive-Yeslike progressive rock (especially now); it's much harder to find the darker, more mysterious stuff that is done well and doesn't stoop to teen-Metal tendencies (sex, Satan, abuse, and violence).

For information on Dark and other fine artists on the CMP label (the likes of Philip Catherine, Joachim Kuhn, Glen Velez, Ed Mann, Ralph Towner, Jonas Hellborg, and Jan Akkerman have appeared on the label's recordings), write to: CMP Records, P.O. Box 1129, 5166 Kreuzau, Germany. **OR**

8-man Yes, *cont.*

album and tour. Said album was supposed to have been recorded last summer. Is *Union* it, at least in part? The album is being released on Arista, which is ABWH's label, making this the first Yes album not released in the U.S. on Atlantic/Atco. Yes themselves had been silent for two years save for reports of hiring the singer from World Trade, a move that Rabin was supposedly very much against.

When ABWH first surfaced, there was talk of a fight for the use of the name Yes. Reports were that Squire, et al had the rights to use the name. Actually, the rights to the name belonged to Atlantic/Atco Records via the band's contract with the label. Said contract expired last year, with no word as to the state of Yes' existence.

This reunion, therefore, could be a way to revive the concept of Yes on a new label while providing an out for those who want off the ride. In other words, this fusion of originals and their replacements may be a way to pass the baton on to a more concise and dedicated group of past members who are willing and able to carry on the tradition of the band. At the same time, ABWH merges into the more marketable concept of Yes.

In the meantime, though, this is going to be a blast.

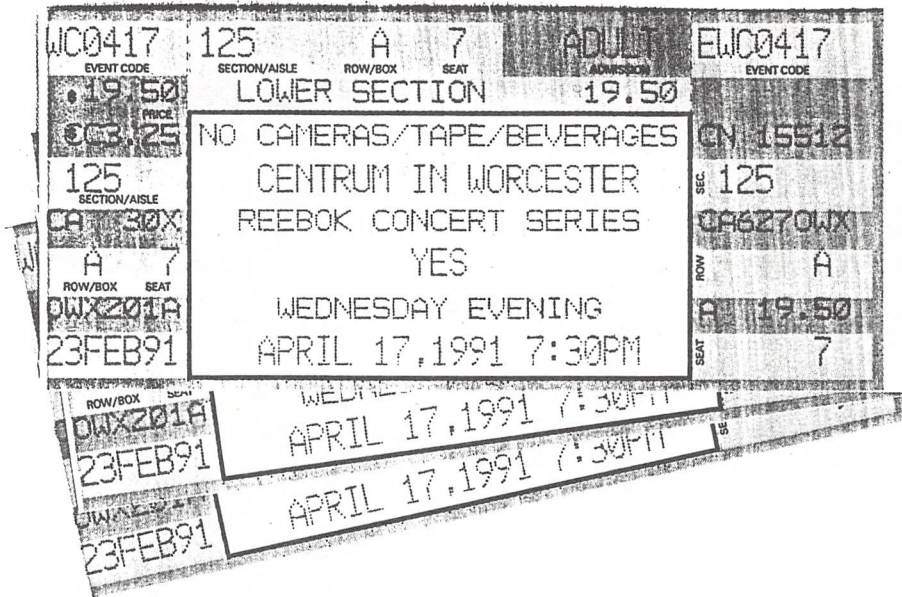
The tour, dubbed *Yesshows '91*, will kick off on April 12, in Fairfax, VA, and continue into Canada. Then, in June, the band will tour Europe. There is no word on any return legs; in fact, the promoter is quick to say that this is a one-time-only event. In all, Yes will play 80 dates. The first leg of the tour will be performed "in the round" using a hydraulic stage set with special effects that are supposed to be far more worthy of the hype that the ABWH set-up received but failed to live up to.

The band will perform as a complete unit, as soloists, and in smaller groupings. The tour itinerary, which is not yet complete (as of February 25), is as follows:

* *Yesshows '91* *

April 12	Fairfax, VA	Patriot Center
April 13	Atlantic City, NJ	Taj Mahal (SOLD OUT)
April 14	E. Rutherford, NJ	The Meadowlands
April 16	Philadelphia, PA	The Spectrum (SOLD OUT)
April 17	Worcester, MA	The Centrum
April 18	Hartford, CT	Civic Center
April 20	Uniondale, NJ	Nassau Coliseum
April 22	Quebec City, Canada	Colisee
April 23	Toronto	Skydome
April 24	Montreal	Forum
April 25	Ottawa	Civic Center
April 26	Buffalo, NY	Memorial Auditorium
April 27	Auburn Hills, MI	Palace
April 29	Cleveland, OH	Richfield Coliseum
April 30	Chicago, IL	Rosemont Horizon
May 1	St. Paul, MN	Civic Center
May 3	Kalamazoo, MI	Wing Stadium
May 4	Dayton, OH	Ervin Nutter Center
May 5	Champaign, IL	University of Illinois
May 9	Denver, CO	McNichols Arena
May 11	Phoenix, AZ	Desert Sky
May 12	Las Vegas, NV	Thomas & Mack
May 14	San Diego, CA	Sports Arena
May 15	Los Angeles, CA	Forum
May 16	Sacramento, CA	Arco Arena
May 17	Oakland, CA	Oakland Coliseum
May 19	Portland, OR	Coliseum
May 20	Vancouver, B.C.	PNE
May 21	Seattle, WA	Coliseum
May 29	Frankfurt, Germany	Festhalle
May 30	Munchen	Olympiahalle
May 31	Stuttgart	Schleyerhalle
June 1	Oldenberg	Weser Ems Halle
June 2	Koln	Sporthalle
June 3, 4	Paris, France	Zenith
June 6	Lyon	Halle Tony Garnier
June 7	Marseilles	Palais des Sports
June 8	Toulouse	Palais des Sports
June 12	Milan, Italy	Palatrussardi
June 14	Cava dei Terrini	Stadium
June 16	Athens, Greece	Sports Palace
June 18	Belgrade, Yugoslavia	Sajam
June 19	Zagreb	Zemun Stadium
June 20	Budapest, Hungary	Nep Stadium
June 22	Brussels, Belgium	Forest National
June 23	Rotterdam, Holland	Ahoy
June 25, 26	Birmingham, England	Nec
June 28-30	London	Wembley Arena

See you there!



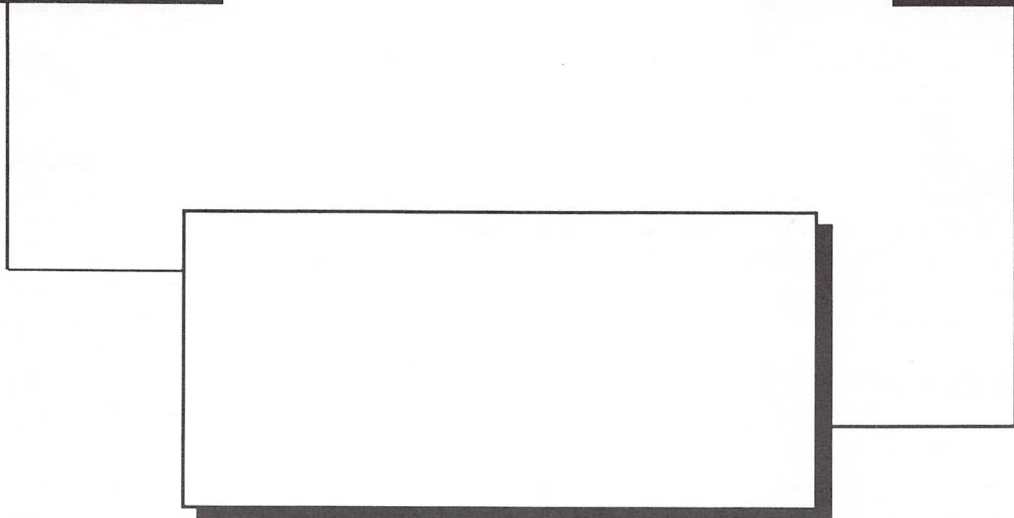
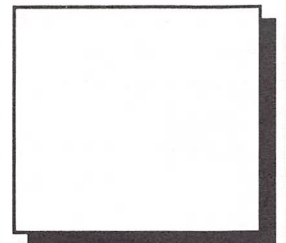
**There's a time
and the time is
now and it's
right for me!**

It's time to break out the old tour t-shirts and take our place among the Yes fans of the world.

This is a great opportunity to spread the word about *On Reflection*. If you would be willing to distribute flyers at Yes shows that you attend, please let me know soon.

Each OR flyer hander-outer will get a free classified ad in an upcoming issue of OR, valued at \$5.

The APEX
P.O. Box 1037
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On Reflection

EXTRA

(After this issue went to press, further information on the release of Gentle Giant's *Free Hand* on CD came in. This On Reflection EXTRA supersedes the brief notice on p. 2.)

According to Terry Wachsmuth, buyer for One Way Records, Gentle Giant's 1975 classic, *Free Hand*, is one of 16 new CD releases due in stores "in a couple of weeks." Among the others are albums by Captain Beefheart, Johnny Winter, the Zephyrs (Tommy Bolin's old band), the James Gang, Love, the Electric Flag, and Michael Bloomfield.

One Way Records is a distributor that buys the rights to recordings from major labels that would otherwise not be inclined to release them. Typically, they are sold at cut-out prices. In deciding on which releases they would choose to pursue, Wachsmuth said that they look for "groups that have a following but don't generate enough sales to make the major labels want to deal with releasing their material on CD."

In the case of *Free Hand*, Capitol must not have received sufficient response from their release last year of that album's immediate predecessor, *The Power and the Glory* (this is a damn shame since the CD was listed at \$9.99 and was a well-mastered disc). Therefore, they were in no hurry to release *Free Hand* or other Giant titles in their catalog. A small company like One Way, on the other hand, can accept fewer sales and still have it be worth their while.

Wachsmuth went on to say that if *Free Hand* sells well (and he didn't say how many sales would make it "well"), he would definitely release more, if not the rest, of Capitol's Giant titles (which includes *Interview*; *Playing the Fool*, which is available as an import; *The Missing Piece*; and *Giant for a Day*).

So here's your assignment, if you choose to accept it (and I hope you do): **BUY THE CD!** It will set you back a sawbuck but will advance the cause of proving that there is a market for excellent-though-obscure progressive music on CD.

If the record store near you doesn't have the CD, you have two options, and you should do *both* of them. First, tell your favorite retailer that s/he can order the CD from One Way Records by calling them at 1-800-833-3553. Then, if you can't wait, there is a store in Albany, NY called The Music Shack that stocks all of One Way's releases and does mail-order. To order from The Music Shack, call 518-436-4581.

It is important that you try to get record stores to stock the CD, even if you purchase direct from The Music Shack. Remember, "On Reflection" is the name of one of the songs on *Free Hand* so it behooves you to get a sense of what inspired the birth of this newsletter. Sorry for the hard sell but if I thought you'd be disappointed, I'd just hoard them all myself. **OR**