

# **Gentle Giant**

## **The Missing Piece in Rock's Academia**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA Music

School of Music, University of Leeds, March 2016.

## Abstract

Gentle Giant developed alongside bands such as Yes, Genesis, King Crimson, Jethro Tull and Emerson, Lake and Palmer, but never achieved the same level of commercial success. This is reflected in a lack of academic attention paid to them, despite being recognised as surpassing these other bands in musical complexity.

The reasons for their lack of success are the both the challenging nature of their music, namely the abundance of eclecticism, virtuosity and complexity, and the poor management decisions and bad luck which plagued their career. This included tour cancellations, inadequate promotion and support, concert mismatches and their fifth album being withheld from release in America. They never cultivated a decent following in England, as the initial bad reaction from those who remembered them as the pop group Simon Dupree and the Big Sound resulted in the bands management prioritising European and American audiences.

Two areas of the music are analysed – the first including concepts, themes, lyrics and imagery and the second being their eclecticism. The themes of social critique and literature are explored, as well as the concept album *Three Friends*, revealing a sophisticated interaction between music and lyrics to forward the concept. The study of their eclecticism reveals what may be considered a medieval style to instead be a fascination with general early music, which is mixed with classical, folk, jazz and blues and rock music. The perfect illustrations of this eclecticism are *Acquiring the Taste* and ‘In a Glass House’, which both show a fluid mastery of numerous styles.

This study shows that Gentle Giant are worthy of serious academic attention and that there is still more work to do. They were one of the most innovative acts in a time of great musical innovation and to understand how progressive rock impacted music, we must understand the mechanisms of their music.

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**List of definitions/abbreviations:**

Derek = Derek Shulman, band member 1970-1980. Vocals, saxophones

Green = Gary Green, band member 1970-1980. Vocals, guitars.

Minnear = Kerry Minnear, band member 1970-1980. Vocals, keyboards, cello, tuned percussion.

Mortimore = Malcolm Mortimore, band member 1971 - 1972. Drums and percussion

Phil = Phil Shulman, band member 1970 - 1973. Vocals, woodwind.

Ray = Ray Shluman, band member 1970-1980. Vocals, bass guitar, violin.

Smith = Martin Smith, band member 1970 – 1971. Drums and percussion.

Weathers = John Weathers, band member 1970-1980. Vocals, drums and percussion.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to those who have contributed to the Blazemonger sheet music library and who have, as a result, saved me from many hours of difficulty trying to transcribe all the musical examples.

I would like to thank Daniel Barrett for kindly providing a platform on which to share this study and for his perspective on a couple of matters.

I would also like to give special thanks to my dissertation tutor, Michael Allis, for generously giving his time to provide valuable insight, suggestions, feedback and encouragement. Without his suggestion to study Gentle Giant and his guidance along the way, I would not have enjoyed (nor worked on) researching and writing my dissertation nearly as much.

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Context

### 1.1: The Issue

The 1970s progressive rock movement produced commercially successful bands such as Yes, Genesis, Jethro Tull, King Crimson, Emerson, Lake and Palmer (ELP) and many more, lesser-known bands. Gentle Giant, 'one of progressive rock's best-kept secrets' only achieved a cult following, despite Bill Martin's classification of them as one of the 'most consistently innovative contributors to the genre'.<sup>1</sup> As well as commercial, they have received scarce academic attention. Paul Stump's biographical *Gentle Giant: Acquiring the Taste* is the largest contribution<sup>2</sup> and Geir Hasnes published the magazine, *Proclamation*, (1992 – 1997) which contains articles and analysis, amongst other things.<sup>3</sup> A handful of people contribute to the official Gentle Giant website, *Blazemonger*.<sup>4</sup> References in books and articles are in passing and the real giant, Genesis, dwarfs them in the index. Stump laments that words associated with them in literature are 'boring', 'academic' and 'pretentious' and that they have been 'dumped on by the selective amnesia of rock historians'.<sup>5</sup>

Despite academic marginalisation, they are 'one of the most complex groups of any age'<sup>6</sup> and there is a great deal of substance to their music.<sup>7</sup> This dissertation aims to observe their music analytically and begin to determine their contribution to progressive rock. The genre is not just a forgotten part of history, as is indicated by the neo-progressive movement of the 80s,<sup>8</sup> the continuation of first wave bands like King Crimson and Genesis and the success of newer progressive acts such as Dream Theater, Porcupine Tree and Spock's Beard.

Two key areas of analysis will be addressed. The first, made up of concepts, lyrics, themes and imagery is an area central to progressive rock. The second, their eclecticism, is relatively more central to Gentle Giant than to other bands as it is a key feature of their music.

### 1.2: Progressive Rock Summarised

The term progressive rock encapsulates a large output of music from the late 60s and 70s. Though

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock 1968-1978* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1998), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant: Acquiring the Taste* (London: saf publishing, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Geir Hasnes, *Proclamation* issues 1-4 (1992-1994) and David Armas, *Proclamation* issue 6 (2000), available from <[www.blazemonger.com/GG/Proclamation\\_\(magazine\)>](http://www.blazemonger.com/GG/Proclamation_(magazine)>) [3 March 2016].

<sup>4</sup> Dan Barrett, 'Dan Barret', *Blazemonger* <[www.blazemonger.com/GG/User:Dan](http://www.blazemonger.com/GG/User:Dan)> [3 March 2016].

<sup>5</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Jerry Lucky, *Progressive Rock Files* (Burlington, Ont.: Collectors Guide Publishing, 2000), p. 234.

<sup>7</sup> A full discography can be found at <[www.blazemonger.com/GG/Gentle\\_Giant\\_Discography](http://www.blazemonger.com/GG/Gentle_Giant_Discography)> and in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, pp. 184–188.

<sup>8</sup> See Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before: Progressive Rock Since the 1960s* (New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 181.



many bands since the 80s are labelled 'progressive', the focus here is on the first wave. Some published definitions (Table 1) establish the key features and display how development, reform and innovation were applied to rock. Firstly, there are physical features of the music – the mixing of styles and an increased compositional complexity and instrumental skill requirement. Moore notes a fascination with concept, narrative, fantasy, mythology and literature. The notion of development within songs is not explicitly stated, but references to art music and the classical style elude to it. Lucky's definition should be read carefully. 'Progressive Rock is music that incorporates' should read 'could incorporate'. A song does not need a mellotron or an extended length to qualify as progressive rock.

Secondly, there is the philosophical approach. Moore notes that 'many were touched by a not-unrelated drive towards the self-conscious attempt to validate rock as art, thereby apparently raising the status of the product'.<sup>9</sup> That you can achieve a sophisticated form of art through borrowings from high art such as literature, poetry and classical music is central to progressive rock. The liner notes of Gentle Giant's *Acquiring the Taste*<sup>10</sup> illustrate their attitude, though they did afterwards distance themselves from the arguably pompous remark. *Prog Archives* has a more comprehensive definition.<sup>11</sup>

Table 1: Published Progressive Rock Definitions.

Alan F. Moore	<p>'It was predicated on an achieved maturity of UK rock, divorced from American precursors, an ideology of free expression and a complementary striving for legitimation often founded on the appropriation of classical referents. Features include the escape from the format of the three-minute pop single... references and allusions to, and borrowings from, art music... and the integration of free jazz techniques... Lyrics often display a pretentious quasi-mystical quality... and frequently eschew narrative.'<sup>12</sup></p> <p>'Progressive rock takes the stylistic norms of beat/r&amp;b and extends some of them to new boundaries, by incorporating elements of 'folk', 'jazz', 'blues' and other musics. The domains thus explored are normally metre, form (it shows itself above all in formal complexity, expansion and looseness) and to a limited extent harmony, but not texture or instrumental roles.'<sup>13</sup></p>
Patricia Rowanowski et al.	<p>'Generally, progressive denotes a form of rock music in which electric instruments and rock band formats are integrated with European classical motifs and orchestrations, typically forming extended, intricate, multi-sectional suites... accenting a daunting instrumental virtuosity and grandiosity over earthly directness...'<sup>14</sup></p>
Bill Martin	<p>'As a style of music progressive rock has five specific traits: 1) it is visionary and experimental; 2) it is played, at least in significant part, on instruments typically associated with rock music, by musicians who have a background in rock music, and with the history of rock music itself as background; 3) it is played, in significant, by musicians who have consummate instrumental and compositional skills; 4) it</p>

<sup>9</sup> Allan Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* second ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> See table 1.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., 'Prog Rock Guides/What is Progressive Rock', *Prog Archives* <[www.progarchives.com/Progressive-rock.asp](http://www.progarchives.com/Progressive-rock.asp)> [29 February 2016].

<sup>12</sup> Allan F. Moore, 'Progressive Rock', *Grove Music Online*, <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)> [19 November 2015].

<sup>13</sup> Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* second ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Romanowski, Patricia, Holly George-Warren and Jon Pareles, *The New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock And Roll* (California: Fireside, 1995), quoted in Jerry Lucky, *Progressive Rock Files*, p. 130.

	is a phenomenon, in its 'core', of English culture; 5) relatedly, in significant part, it is expressive of romantic and prophetic aspects of that culture. <sup>15</sup>
Jerry Lucky	'Progressive Rock is music that incorporates: Complex arrangements usually featuring intricate keyboard and guitar playing. Songs predominantly on the longish side, but structured, rarely improvised. A mixture of loud passages, soft passages, and musical crescendos to add to the dynamics of the arrangements. The use of a Mellotron or string synth to simulate an orchestra backing. The possible inclusion of live symphony orchestra backing. Extended instrumental solos, perhaps involving some improvisation. The inclusion of musical styles from other than a rock format. A blending of acoustic, electric and electronic instruments where each plays a vital role in translating the emotion of compositions which typically contain more than one mood.' <sup>16</sup>
Chris Atton	'At the heart of progressive rock was an imperative to create a rock-based music that drew on what its musicians conceived as sophisticated, 'artistic' modes of musical expression - themes, arrangements, harmonies and forms that drew on classical models, specifically those of the Romantic composers of the nineteenth century and the 'nationalist' composers such as Bartok, Delius, Copland and Dvorak. Virtuosity - in an uncomplicated sense that drew on conservatoire notions of ability, agility and imperturbability, rather than blues-based individualism or relativism prized. The song format was extended. The album, from the outset the unit of production for progressive rock groups, developed from a collection of lengthy songs to suites of songs and instrumentals, to multi-movement suites.' <sup>17</sup>
Kinesis	'Progressive does not simply mean new or different... It is a fashion that concerns itself with ever-changing superficialities, often going nowhere but in circles. Progressive was coined to represent a philosophical approach to rock. That philosophy embraces a nobler goal, the goal of any art form, to be able to express a greater range of emotions and ideas, with grater shades and nuances.' <sup>18</sup>
Gentle Giant	'It is our goal to expand the frontiers of contemporary popular music at the risk of being very unpopular. We have recorded each composition with one thought – that it should be unique, adventurous and fascinating. It has taken every shred of our combined musical and technical knowledge to achieve this. From the outset we have abandoned all preconceived thoughts on blatant commercialism. Instead we hope to give you something far more substantial and fulfilling. All you need to do is sit back and acquire the taste'. <sup>19</sup>

### 1.3: Commercial (Un)success

The reasons for the commercial neglect fall into two brackets: the challenging nature of the music and the circumstances surrounding the bands career. As Heatley notes, 'their complex, uncompromising music consistently polarised the Seventies rock audience. You either loved them or hated them'.<sup>20</sup> This is illustrated in a blog post, daring viewers to watch a live version of 'So Sincere',<sup>21</sup> attracting comments such as 'horrible', 'disjointed', 'ridiculous', and 'smug'.

Eclecticism, a core of progressive rock, was abundant in Gentle Giant (as discussed in chapter 3). Cynically labelled 'an unfocused mishmash of just about every prog influence imaginable',<sup>22</sup> their catalogue borrows from styles common to progressive rock but expressionism, sea shanty, hoe-down and reggae also feature. The extent of their eclecticism made the music challenging to listen

<sup>15</sup> Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. 121.

<sup>16</sup> Jerry Lucky, *Progressive Rock Files*, p. 132.

<sup>17</sup> Chris Atton, 'Living in the Past?: Value Discourses in Progressive Rock Fanzines', *Popular Music*, 20.1 (2001), p.30.

<sup>18</sup> *Kinesis* <www.kinesiscd.com>, in Jerry Lucky, *Progressive Rock Files*, p. 132.

<sup>19</sup> Found on the sleeve note of Gentle Giant's second album, *Acquiring the Taste*.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Heatly, 'In A Glass House: Liner Notes', *Blazemonger* [23 November 2015].

<sup>21</sup> cherguevarra, 'I Dare You to Watch This Gentle Giant Performance of "So Sincere" in its Entirety', *Rock Town Hall*, <www.rocktownhall.com/blogs/i-dare-you-gentle-giant/> [25 November 2015].

<sup>22</sup> Jason Heller, 'A guide to the best (and a bit of the worst) of prog rock', *A.V Club* (2012), <www.avclub.com/article/a-guide-to-the-best-and-a-bit-of-the-worst-of-prog-79776> [28 November 2015].

to and though some relished this challenge,<sup>23</sup> others did not. A degree of familiarity with these styles is helpful but a tolerance is necessary. This did not only cause problems for the listener - when *Acquiring the Taste* was released,<sup>24</sup> their 'management simply did not know how to promote such a diffuse LP'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, one only needs to listen to the vocal layers of 'Knots' or 'Design' to hear that complexity permeated the music as a whole, not just the individual parts. The adventurous approach to harmony in 'Edge of Twilight' and 'So Sincere' alienated those who looked more towards the rock side of the genre and though the intricacy of the music was well received by many, for others it was not. Sampling Liszt's *Liebestraum No. 3 in A Flat Major* over a drum solo in 'Nothing At All' could either 'highlight poignantly the specific nature of the lyric, whilst also catering to a specific group of listeners able to appreciate the reference',<sup>26</sup> or be dismissed as pretentiousness by less open-minded listeners.

Virtuosity is made up of a range of factors including speed, dexterity, tone control and stamina. In short, 'a virtuoso is a musician for whom difficulty is not an issue'.<sup>27</sup> Moore identifies that 'for some critics, conservatoire-type training went hand in hand with a perceived lack of 'emotional involvement'. Thus, the concentration on technical craft was discredited, for it filtered 'natural expression'.<sup>28</sup> Though it may sometimes be the case that when someone is a virtuoso and emotional quality is replaced by technical ability, the presence of musical proficiency does not inherently signal a lack of feeling.

The mixture of musical complexity and the blatant technical skill of the band would perhaps have given people a first impression of pretentiousness, but the truth is that Gentle Giant did not take themselves seriously.<sup>29</sup> One only has to watch their live performances to see how light hearted and full of energy they were, as they engaged in stage antics, bounced joyfully to the music, transformed into a recorder ensemble, excitedly played xylophones and beat the life out of various percussion instruments, all whilst wearing ridiculous clothing.<sup>30</sup> Thus it was a shame that their music was tarred by potential fans and unaccustomed listeners with the pretentious brush, for though it was unforgiving and complex it was not, and they were not, pretentious.

Paradoxically, they were also perhaps not viewed as pretentious enough. Lundberg pins part of the

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<sup>23</sup> Phil Sutcliffe praises the 'jolting, contrary challenge of most of their work'. Phil Sutcliffe, 'Gentle Giant: Giant For A Day', *Sounds* (1978), n.p.

<sup>24</sup> 'The album was a very hard album, musically, to get in to'. Derek Shulman in interview <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X1NcFcUdas](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X1NcFcUdas)>.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Allis, dissertation feedback.

<sup>27</sup> Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. 101.

<sup>28</sup> Allan Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* second ed., p. 90.

<sup>29</sup> Ray says 'we never ever took ourselves very seriously at all'. Carl Wiser, 'Interview with Gentle Giant', *Songfacts* <[www.songfacts.com/blog/interviews/gentle\\_giant/](http://www.songfacts.com/blog/interviews/gentle_giant/)> [20 January 2016]. Band members are on record multiple times stating a similar sentiment.

<sup>30</sup> Gentle Giant, 'So Sincere', ZDF (1974) <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpvbRdSiXUY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpvbRdSiXUY)> [25 November 2015].

blame on their preferred shorter song format, citing Yes' extended movements in their *Close to the Edge* era as part of the reason for their success. Lyrically, Gentle Giant were also quite modest. Lundberg points that they 'didn't try to achieve the majestic sweep fuelled by sincere, pretentious (here, as always, in a positive sense of the word) lyrics... G.G.'s rock 'n roll approach to the actual musicianship must have spoiled the whole thing for many a prog fan.'<sup>31</sup>

Both a plague of poor management decisions and the history of the Shulman brothers made them struggle to cultivate a decent following in England. Previously, they were the psychedelic pop band Simon Dupree and the Big Sound, achieving mainstream success with their single 'Kites'. Their 'fatal engagement with the foppish end of chart pop stardom in 1967 and its subsequent tang of commercialism, dilettantism and frivolity, tarred them as pretenders'.<sup>32</sup> When they became Gentle Giant, they received a cool reception, remembered for the less than graceful decline of Simon Dupree.<sup>33</sup> In American and Europe where their history was less known, they were taken seriously as a progressive rock band and their material was judged on its own merits.

They never recovered from the bad start in England. Perhaps with the introduction of drummer Weathers in 1972, whose energy turned them into a convincing rock band,<sup>34</sup> they could have made an assault on the home audience but his first album, *Octopus*, had no home tour to support sales. At least the US and Canada tours significantly boosted demand, despite the promoters 'hardly pushing the boat out'<sup>35</sup> and the US release replacing Roger Dean's exemplary artwork of the Vertigo version. Dean's work with Yes, Steve Howe and Uriah Heep was 'one of the visual signatures of the era' and 'US sales of *Octopus* might have been immensely greater had his design been retained'.<sup>36</sup> By this point, both Gentle Giant and progressive rock were approaching their prime and time was running out for them to win over England, as the latter half of the century would see public interest shift away from progressive rock.<sup>37</sup> The cancellation of the English tour for *The Power and the Glory* 'effectively finished Gentle Giant as a potential commercial force in the UK'.<sup>38</sup>

In 1975, the follow up for their highest charting album, *Free Hand*, was dismal. Gentle Giant were commercially at their peak and an accessible sound backed by high quality production had the potential to spell success in England, had it been capitalised on by an immediate tour. But it was not

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<sup>31</sup> Mattias Lundberg, 'reader comments section', *Only Solitaire* <starling.rinet.ru/music/gentlec.htm#intro>, [27 January 2016].

<sup>32</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 41.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> 'John provided the unbelievable solid backbone of the band which we needed given the complexity of the arrangements that Kerry and Ray would come up with'. Derek in interview with Roch Parisien's Rocon Communications. <www.facebook.com/notes/roch-parisiens-rocon-communications/transcript-facebook-interview-12-derek-shulman-and-kerry-minnear-of-gentle-giant/10150174322815434> [20 January 2016].

<sup>35</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, pp. 163 – 171.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 111.

till late September that they would play a single English gig. An English tour did happen three months after the albums UK release (August) but out of thirteen English shows, there were none in London, under the bizarre assumption that the single gig in September satisfied demand. Instead, in 'perhaps one of the saddest indictments of the band's management – or indeed of any band's management'<sup>39</sup> they supported the Strawbs in the US, who had passed their prime five years earlier when Rick Wakeman left to join Yes. The next album, *Interview*, sold less and the following UK tour was littered with cancellations and re-scheduling. Save for a one-off BBC concert in 1978, the final date of this tour was the last show they would play in England.

Supporting the Strawbs for their *Free Hand* US tour was not the only instance of concert mismatches. On occasion, they would find themselves facing an unreceptive audience who had come with vastly different expectations and they would even be forced off stage. In a demonstration of 'the US record industry's relative inability to come to terms with launching and nurturing an act remotely wide of the mainstream',<sup>40</sup> Gentle Giant shared a stage with Black Sabbath and hard rockers Iron Butterfly in 1972. For the organisers to suppose, even for a minute that the denim-clad audience would appreciate the string work of 'Funny Ways' is inexcusable. Heckled and egged on, Phil's outburst of anger at the audience made sure that their set was cut short. The concert mismatches continued through the years. They would play alongside hard rockers like Uriah Heep and Mott the Hoople and fireworks were thrown when they supported the J. Geils band in early 1975. In 1977, their US tour was supported by then pop/R&B band Dr Feelgood who were not welcomed by Giant fans. The band was 'shocked at how badly US audiences received them'.<sup>41 42</sup>

Perfectly illustrating the band's uphill struggle was Columbia Record's refusal to release the fifth album, *In a Glass House*, in the US, deeming it too uncommercial. It would go on to become a highly sought after import, becoming the band's best-selling LP at that point, reaching 150,000 sales and charting at #78 when Columbia finally decided to release it.<sup>43</sup> Had the album been released properly and then supported with a tour, the chart listing would have been far higher and the stage would have been set for *The Power and the Glory* and *Free Hand* to elevate Gentle Giant to the level of fame they sought.

In an era where Gentle Giant, for all their effort, bravery and musical merit should have commercially excelled, they instead found themselves in an uphill battle against bad luck and bad management. The nature of their music was uncommercial and unforgiving but this was a time when bands were exploring music like never before and Gentle Giant were at the forefront of this

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>42</sup> For further information on tours, see <[ggconcerts.on-reflection.org](http://ggconcerts.on-reflection.org)> which documents Gentle Giants tour history.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, 74.

exploration. Had their music been supported by successful promotion and tours, and committed to winning over the English fan base, it is likely that they would have been able to bring their music to a much larger audience and build themselves a following comparable those considered the giants of progressive rock. Perhaps then they would not now be in a state of academic neglect and would be a more palpable target for academia.

## Chapter 2: Concepts, Themes, Lyrics and Imagery

### 2.1 Themes and Imagery

Progressive rock is commonly associated with fantasy. In truth, this fascination was only fleeting as ‘bands distanced themselves from the “progressive 1960s” from which they had emerged, particularly in terms of lyrics’ due to them being seen as ‘losing touch with the real roots of rock’.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, fantasy surrounds many iconic albums. The artwork and imagery of Roger Dean is indicative of the themes of the music, creating an otherworldly feeling. These themes were often dark and contained cultural references (section 2.1.1) or social critique (section 2.1.2).

The themes in Gentle Giant were often more concerned with reality, though some fantasy is apparent, such as their narration of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (section 2.1.1), mirrored in the giant imagery of *Gentle Giant*, *Giant for a Day* (see Appendix A) and the art of the U.S release of *Three Friends*. Whilst other bands invoked alternate worlds with mystical creatures in order to deliver a social critique, Gentle Giant used fiction, referenced literature or bluntly delivered a more realistic message.

#### 2.1.1 Literature and High Culture

In progressive rock’s aspiring to increase the cultural value of rock, bands borrowed not only from classical music but also from other areas of high culture. Yes’ *Tales from Topographic Oceans* is an ‘interpretation of four Shastric scriptures from a footnote in *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramanhansa Yogananda’,<sup>45</sup> and the inspiration for ‘Gates of Derilium’ is *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy.<sup>46</sup> The ‘Mass’ movement of ELP’s ‘Tarkus’ is filled with religious references.

The musical medieval reverberations of Gentle Giant are covered in section 3.1 but the band also used old English imagery. The die-cut playing-card artwork of *The Power and the Glory* (see Appendix A) ‘managed to hard-pedal the medievalism’.<sup>47</sup> The aforementioned giant imagery is one of many literary references, here to the work of François Rabelais, a French renaissance writer who interested Phil.<sup>48</sup> His satirical books on the giants *Gargantua and Pantagruel* inspired ‘Pantagruel’s Nativity’ and ‘The Advent of Panurge’. ‘Pantagruel’s Nativity’ narrates Gargantua’s confliction between grief and joy as his wife dies in the birth of his son, Pantagruel. In ‘The Advent of Panurge’, Pantagruel meets the travelling Panurge who asks him for a drink in every language

<sup>44</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, p. 139.

<sup>45</sup> Anon., ‘Tales from Topographic Oceans’, *Yes World* <yesworld.com/discography/tales-topographic-oceans/> [10 March 2016].

<sup>46</sup> Charles Snider, *The Strawberry Bricks Guide to Progressive Rock*, p. 188.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 80.

<sup>48</sup> Geir Hasnes, Proclamation issue 3 (1993), p. 19.

except the one Pantagruel knows and the two form a life-long bond.

Ronnie D Laing's *Knots*,<sup>49</sup> a series of thought-provoking dialogues akin to poems that illustrate 'the knots of loyalty and affection, the double and triple binds of guilt and betrayal which tie all relationships together for better or worse',<sup>50</sup> provided inspiration for Gentle Giant's 'Knots' (lyrics Appendix H), 'one of the most vivid pieces of musical inspiration in all Progressive Rock'.<sup>51</sup> The convoluted intricacies of human relationships are shown through complex vocal arrangements, hocketing, a rapid xylophone solo, sudden dynamic contrasts and adventurous harmonic language.

George Gordon Lord Byron's *Don Juan* is the basis for 'Wreck' (lyrics Appendix I). In canto two, a storm damages a ship's sails, leaving it drifting aimlessly. The song narrates the coming of a second storm in which crew perish - 'near two hundred souls had left their bodies'.<sup>52</sup> The lyrics 'The ship's rising from the sea to the sky', 'the sea yawns around like a boiling hell' and 'together they die both the weak and the brave' are references to the original text. Byron's poem 'When We Two Parted' is referenced in 'Think of Me with Kindness' (lyrics Appendix I) in 'when we two parted in tears and silence'.<sup>53</sup>

Albert Camus' absurdist philosophy influences 'Plain Truth' (lyrics Appendix J). 'Why do you question, when there's no answer told?' reflects the 'absurd' human condition, characterised by conflict between man's desire for purpose and the cold, un-answering universe, for we 'inhabit a world that is indifferent to our sufferings and deaf to our protests'.<sup>54</sup> His solution, that one should embrace this absurd condition and create one's own purpose, also features in the chorus, which encourages man to stop looking for an answer and accept the 'plain truth'. Camus' *The Plague* provides the theme for 'A Cry for Everyone' (lyrics Appendix J). The first verse deals with both this acceptance of the absurd and the decision of a character in the book to remain in the plagued and quarantined city, despite being able to escape - 'Run, why should I run away when at the end the only truth certain, one day everyone dies'. The final verse is retrospective of the protagonist's ignored warnings that the epidemic would occur - 'no one hears, so I've cried, crying vain tears. Always too late'.

'Memories of Old Days' (lyrics Appendix K) deals with the nostalgia of George Orwell's *Coming up for Air*. The song quotes the title - 'he should come up for air' and the narrative mirrors the novel, in which a man returns to the village where he grew up to find that it has drastically changed

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<sup>49</sup> Ronnie Laing, *Knots* (New York: Vintage Press, 1972).

<sup>50</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 63.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Stump, *The Music's all that Matters*, p. 149.

<sup>52</sup> George Gordon Byron, *Don Juan*. Produced by David Wiger (The Project Gutenberg Ebook). <[www.gutenberg.org/files/21700/21700-h/21700-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/21700/21700-h/21700-h.htm)> [5 January 2016].

<sup>53</sup> 'Tears' and 'silence' are switched in the poem.

<sup>54</sup> David Simpson, 'Albert Camus', *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* <[www.iep.utm.edu/camus/#SSH5ci](http://www.iep.utm.edu/camus/#SSH5ci)> [12 March 2016].



and ‘the city lights flickered where lake waters gleamed’. The novel is largely concerned with the negative sides of the urbanisation of rural areas and the song shares its pessimistic tone.

### 2.1.2 Social Critique

Progressive rock bands often included social commentary in their music. Though Jethro Tull’s *Thick as a Brick* was ultimately satire,<sup>55</sup> it nevertheless expresses the importance and loss of free thought. Genesis’ *Selling England by the Pound* is an attack on the British class system. The Pretty Things’ *SF Sorrow* ‘focuses on social nihilism and a cruel society that cares nothing for individuals’.<sup>56</sup> King Crimson’s *In the Court of the Crimson King* presents a dystopian world, brought about by a figure in power and ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Schizoid Man’ references the Vietnam war, indicating that the dystopian world is in fact our own.<sup>57</sup> Organised religion was scrutinised in ELP’s ‘The Only Way (Hymn)’, King Crimson’s ‘The Great Deceiver’ and Jethro Tull’s *Aqualung*. Henry Cow’s Marxist learnings were evident in their lyrics.<sup>58</sup> Gentle Giant used social critique as the theme of some albums. This may manifest as a concept album (*The Power and the Glory*) or more simply a theme for an album (*Free Hand* and *Civilian*).

The provocative artwork of *Acquiring the Taste* (Appendix A) has a tongue licking an anal cleft, facetiously disguised as a peach, which did them no favours in the critical or public eye.<sup>59</sup> Phil stated ‘the album cover was originally intended to be a tongue literally licking the arse of the pop/rock music industry, which requires consumer products at all times and has no room for taste or esoteric difference... if you lick someone’s arse, you will eventually acquire the taste’.<sup>60</sup> The inner sleeve notes included ‘from the outset we have abandoned all preconceived thoughts on blatant commercialism. Instead we hope to give you something far more substantial and fulfilling’. The lyrics of the album are unrelated to this but the music itself is so uncommercial that it can be considered a swing at the music industry.

*Free Hand*’s dark visual imagery of rope-bound hands and the lyrics of some of the songs, imply that the theme is their extradition from the management of Vertigo and Columbia. ‘Just the Same’ deals with artistic freedom – ‘make me someone else, put me up on a stand. Something that I don’t really want on my hands... Don’t you see that I’m just doing what I want to do’ and ‘change it, what you think, what you thought, what you say, look for something more than you sought

<sup>55</sup> Scott Allen Nollen, *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2001), p 83.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, p. 69.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>58</sup> Chris Culter in interview with Benjamin Piekut ‘The Multiple Politics of Henry Cow’ in Robert Adlington, *Red Strains: Music and Communism Outside the Communist Bloc* (Oxford, Oxford University Press/British Academy, 2013) and Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, pp. 155 – 156.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Phil, quoted in *ibid.*

yesterday'. 'Free Hand' describes their freedom, how their 'hands are free from the ties' and how they 'look forward to the future where it lies'. 'Mobile' illustrates the mundanity and pressure of touring. The phrases which lead into each verse, 'up, up time to fly', 'no, no don't ask why', 'time, time, say goodbye' outline the routine of touring, with the final verse beginning with the first phrase to show that it was simply a cyclical process.

*Interview* represents their interactions with the music press and 'the plasticity of the rock media'.<sup>61</sup> The interviewer is unsure of the band's name and does not know who the band members are, or that Derek and Ray are brothers. The liner notes state 'The title track is a sideswipe at the lack of imagination shown by most journalists interviewing the band'.<sup>62</sup> Stump notes that 'precious little satire or comment of any lasting worth emerges in the lyrics' and that the potential assault on the music industry 'was more whimper than bang',<sup>63</sup> but some critical ideas are still present. The self-pitying 'Give it Back' laments on the financial instability of being a musician – 'Isn't it strange, oh it's funny. Working for years, have no money'. 'Another Show', similarly to 'Mobile', plainly outlines the boredom of playing back to back shows. 'Design' begins with the chant 'As years drift by and future dies' and deals with the disappointment of unrealised ambitions from the perspective of an old man.

Gentle Giant also criticised society more generally. *Civilian* is 'scathing about the consumerist culture industry'.<sup>64</sup> Starostin sees it as 'an extremely pessimistic album... some kind of ironic... mocking farewell to the soulless public and equally soulless music industry' and a concept album, dealing with 'grey pedestrian everyday life, the problems of the small common man, the mechanization and dehumanization of society'.<sup>65</sup> The themes are present on the album artwork (Appendix A), a dull coloured picture of faceless men in business-wear. The lyrics of 'Convenience' describe the laziness of modern society, in which 'everything is clean and easy' and 'I can't read but then I watch T.V'. 'All Through the Night' attests to the monotony and dull repetition of life, where 'every day is just the same' and 'the people I see wear the same face as me'. 'I am a Camera' is concerned with issues of privacy and surveillance. Cameras are 'watching every move and all you do' and there is 'nowhere you can hide you're still in view'. Though it is not generally seen as a concept album as there is no narrative and not every song lyrically connects with the theme, the relative simplicity of the music supports an attack on consumerist culture, in a similar sense to uncommercial music supporting the theme of *Acquiring the Taste*. Furthermore, the theme of *Civilian* seems more pervasive and integrated than the concept of *Interview*, commonly accepted as

<sup>61</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 119.

<sup>62</sup> Alan Kinsman, 'Interview: Liner Notes', *Blazemonger* [10 March 2016].

<sup>63</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, pp. 119 – 120.

<sup>64</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, p. 139.

<sup>65</sup> George Starostin, 'Gentle Giant' *Only Solitaire*.

a concept album.

The subject of *In a Glass House* is the aphorism ‘those who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones’. The lyrics are pessimistic of society, with alienation being a central idea.<sup>66</sup> ‘The Runaway’ describes an escaped convict who no longer belongs anywhere and ends up ‘caught in his own net’ as hiding seems just as isolating as being locked up. ‘Way of Life’ speaks to the listener about the loneliness of having your own way of life separate from others. ‘Experience’ narrates a man becoming self-aware and reflecting on his sins. ‘An Inmates Lullaby’ paints a haunting image from the perspective of a man in a mental institution, who is constantly monitored and observed, thus in a glass house. The title track asks what happens if the glass house was made of mirrors and instead of the person inside being on display, they were forced to reflect on themselves – ‘and only then I see, that the glass house is just for me’.

The narrative of *The Power and the Glory* describes ‘the absolutely corrupting effects of absolute power’<sup>67</sup> and the cyclical nature of corruption. ‘No God’s a Man’ deals with the latter - ‘apologise, conditions turn, then it happens all again’, ‘after all the things are said, no God’s a man, must happen all again’, as does the rewinding of a tape player to end the final track, ‘Valedictory’. ‘Aspirations’ describes the meekness of the people as they recognise their faith in the leader is ‘maybe aimless blind’ but nevertheless ask him to ‘be our guide, our light and our way of life’.

The concept of *Three Friends* is not all-out social commentary, but it does show a cynicism of the loss of childhood dreams and the dissatisfaction of adult life. Corporate greed features in ‘Working All Day’ and is personified, along with pride, in the protagonist of ‘Mister Class and Quality?’. Elsewhere, ‘Design’ also deals with how childhood dreams turn into nothing - ‘His dreams as a boy were of hope and intention... where did they go, how could he know how time goes’. Section 2.2.1 features an in depth look at how the concept of *Three Friends* is supported by the music.

## 2.2 The Concept Album

There is not enough scope here to debate the birth and features of the concept album. Early uses of concept include Duke Ellington’s *Black, Brown and Beige* in 1943,<sup>68</sup> and Frank Sinatra’s *Come Fly With Me* in 1958. Arguments can be made for each of the following being the first true concept album: The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, The Moody Blues’ *Days of Future Passed*,<sup>69</sup> The Pretty Things’ *SF Sorrow*,<sup>70</sup> and Pink Floyd’s *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Michael Allis, dissertation feedback.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> Jerry Lucky, *The Progressive Rock Files*, p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, *Beyond and Before*, p. 67.

<sup>71</sup> James E. Perone, *Music of The Counterculture Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 24 and Philip Norman, *John Lennon: The Life* (New York: Ecco, 2009), p. 498.

This disagreement stems from the vague extent to which a concept needs to permeate the music for it to become a concept album. An awareness of these questions helps to define it; does a running narrative need to be present? Is the concept or narrative aided by musical methods like recurring themes? How interconnected are the songs on the album? How do you label the album if the concept is abandoned during the creation process? These queries illustrate that the music of a concept album deliberately portrays its concept.

The concept album derives from the classical medium of programme music, in which the music narrates an idea, atmosphere or narrative.<sup>72</sup> As a result, the progressive rock discography is littered with concept albums. The most iconic include The Moody Blues' *Days of Future Passed*, King Crimson's *In the Court of the Crimson King*, Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Tarkus*, Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* and a *Passion Play*, Yes' *Tales from Topographic Oceans* and Genesis' *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*.

Gentle Giant wrote four commonly accepted concept albums; *The Power and the Glory*, *Interview*, *In a Glass House* and *Three Friends*. What follows will be a study of the four middle tracks of *Three Friends*, examining how the lyrics and music interact to promote the concept.

### 2.2.1 Case Study: *Three Friends*

Gentle Giant's third album, *Three Friends*, is also their first and most convincing concept album. The liner notes state:

The idea of this album came about simply from normal conversations within the group. You know how people often reminisce about old school friends and wonder whatever became of them; or the people who surprise us with their successes or failures. Anyway, the theme in this album is based on three people - friends at school but inevitably separated by chance, skill and fate.<sup>73</sup>

As the story goes, the three friends grow up and become a road digger, an artist, and a businessman, 'who can no longer understand each other's lifestyles'.<sup>74</sup> On the artwork, the three boys are facing inwards on the front and outwards on the back, where their hair is white and their bodies three different colours. The bird in the middle of the circle has flown away, symbolising the departure of their common ground, childhood dreams and friendship. Table 2 provides a lyrical overview.

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<sup>72</sup> Examples being Harold Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, on an artist who turns to opium because of hopeless love, and Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 from the New World, which describes the composer's impressions of America, drawing influence from the poem *The Song of Hiawatha* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

<sup>73</sup> Anon., 'Three Friends', *Blazemonger* [10 March 2016].

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Table 2: *Three Friends* lyrical overview.

Song	Lyrical Overview
Prologue	Introduces the album by summarising the story and sets up each man to tell his story ('three boys are men their ways have drawn apart, they tell their tales to justify').
Schooldays	The three men as a collective reminisce about the 'happy days' they spent in school, 'going nowhere' with 'no care'. They become immersed in memories of the beach yet question if they even happened and remember the darker sides of childhood such as getting in trouble for not doing homework.
Working All Day	From the point of view of the road digger. Illustrates a hardened perspective on life. He has 'no regrets' but realises that 'life is tough' and 'life ain't just'. Childhood dreams are dismissed as 'illusions'.
Peel the Paint	The apparently pure and peacefully secluded life of the artist ('free from the worries and the ways of everyone') is revealed, when you 'peel the paint', to be not so pure. The song turns into a confession of the artist's darker side ('carnal grave', 'the same old savage beast', 'the evil face of sin').
Mister Class and Quality?	The white collar worker seems happy with his life ('house and car and pretty wife') and is not literally depicted to be as troubled as the other two men. Nevertheless, that he is portrayed in his arrogance and lack of personality makes the story just as bleak for him as for the others ('choose my friends for my own ends', 'never understood the artist of the lazy workers, the world needs steady men like me to give and take the orders').
Three Friends	A summary. The three men have gone from being 'full of gladness' in their youth to 'sweet in sadness' in adulthood and separate from each other.

The mellow opening passage of 'Schooldays', vibraphone and electric guitar in unison, creates feelings of innocence and unity. Innocence is further achieved through soft timbres - the vibraphone, the guitar tone, electric piano and the gentle vocals of Phil, Minnear and Ray's young son, Calvin.

The sense of unity is largely accomplished through canon-like vocal interactions. The first vocal entry (0:42) features vocal lines in a mesmerising melodic canon. Each three syllable phrase is split, the middle syllable shared. Here the simplicity set by the basic and bare melodic movement (root and fifth), the short phrases and the simple subject matter describes children finishing their day together at school and on reprise (1:58, ex. 1), flying kites and racing. Towards the end of this reprise, the mood and subject change to their broken promise to stay friends. The musical activity and ostinato falter and the final word, 'friends', is chillingly without accompaniment.

Ex. 1: 'Schooldays' canonic vocal interaction (1:58).<sup>75</sup>

The musical score for Ex. 1 shows a canonic vocal interaction between two voices. The lyrics are: "Did kites, and I, and you, to run, or come, you know, kites fly, I spy, you cry, run fast, come last, know we made, they're gone, we made, we broke, no more, how, made vows, gone now, made friends, broke friends, more friends." The instrumental accompaniment consists of Electric Guitar, Keyboard, and Vibraphone.

The perspective switches to the present and the men sing in canon 'How long is ever isn't it strange? Schooldays together why do they change?' (1:28, 2:34, seen in ex. 3)<sup>76</sup>. The following instrumental passage (1:35, ex. 2) is a quote of the children's rhyme 'Ring a Ring o' Roses', characterised by a juxtaposition of G and Eb.<sup>77</sup> The tone is dreamy but the minor inflections of the B (enharmonically Cb) against the Eb in the bass give a gloomy impression, as the narrators sadly consider the questions they have just asked.

Ex. 2: 'Schooldays' minor instrumental passage (1:35).<sup>78</sup>

The musical score for Ex. 2 shows a minor instrumental passage. The instruments are Electric Guitar, Vibraphone, and Bass Guitar. The bass guitar part features triplets of eighth notes.

The second half of the song is reflective in character but has ominous undertones, first heard

<sup>75</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

<sup>76</sup> In its first instance at 1:28, the canon has the metre 6/4 so there is no overlap between the two singers.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Allis, dissertation feedback.

<sup>78</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

under the reprise of the canon, (2:34, ex. 3) as the piano alternations between octave Gs and As (G being the tonic here) turn into alternations of Adim5 and Eb7. The bass note alternates between A and Eb at a slower pace. What is indicated here is the sadness attached to memories of better days, paving the way for a more negative dynamic.

Ex. 3: 'Schooldays' ominous piano (left hand simplified) and vocals (2:34).<sup>79</sup>

Ex. 3: 'Schooldays' ominous piano (left hand simplified) and vocals (2:34).<sup>79</sup>

Voice: How long is ev - ever? Is - n't it strange? School days to - ge - ther, why do they

Piano: fade in

Voice: How long is ev - er? Is - n't it strange? voices continue in canon and fade out repeat x2

Piano: repeat x2

As the men 'remember when we together went to the sea' (3:41, ex. 4), the simple texture invokes a sense of calm but the dissonance of the chords is foreboding. The dramatic swell of harmonic intensity and volume under 'together, went to the sea?' leaves the music unresolved on A minor with a D in the bass. Remembering a pleasant memory should be a moment of happiness (i.e. resolved harmony), but the indication here is that something is wrong with this memory.

Ex. 4: 'Schooldays' reflective passage with simplified piano left hand (3:41).<sup>80</sup>

Ex. 4: 'Schooldays' reflective passage with simplified piano left hand (3:41).<sup>80</sup>

Voice: Re - mem - ber? Re - mem - ber

Piano: Re - mem - ber?

Voice: when we to - ge - ther went to the sea?

Piano: when we to - ge - ther went to the sea?

<sup>79</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Key signature changed and some enharmonics used.

<sup>80</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith.

What is wrong is revealed in Calvin Shulman's haunting vocals, questioning 'was it real or did we dream?' (4:24, ex. 5), which contrast with Minnear's, as he continues daydreaming. The former set of lyrics reflect the music, side-lining the pleasant description of events, as chord alternations of E and D minor grate against the pedal F of the bass. The contrast reveals a pained confusion as the men question their memories.

Ex. 5: 'Schooldays' haunting vocals (4:24).<sup>81</sup>

Ex. 5: 'Schooldays' haunting vocals (4:24).<sup>81</sup>

Voice

Sea-gulls scream and pink ice cream and the deep blue sky and the waves so high and gol-den sand and the town brass band plays on.

Voice

Was it real or did we dream? The days of chil - dren gone.

Piano

The rocky blues of 'Working All Day' is a direct juxtaposition to 'Schooldays'. Intended to 'depict the hopelessness of the worker who never could aspire to anything higher in life',<sup>82</sup> the lyrics are blunt about hard work and the tough reality of life. The masculinity and roughness of the job reflects in the raucous timbre of the baritone saxophone and Derek's layered vocals. When combined with another line (0:16, ex. 6), both dorian, the impression of an industrial folk song is strong.

Ex. 6: 'Working All Day' main theme (0:16).<sup>83</sup>

Ex. 6: 'Working All Day' main theme (0:16).<sup>83</sup>

Voice

Work-ing all day, I'm dig-ging up the roads, just work-ing all day, yeah.

Electric Guitar + Organ (+ 8vb)

Bass + Baritone Sax.

The song is framed with a canonic guitar passage (0:00, 4:55, ex. 7), interjected with instrumental interludes (0:38, 1:28, 4:35, ex. 8) and features a lengthy organ solo (begins 2:01, ex. 9). Starostin

<sup>81</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Key signature omitted, F#s in piano right hand changed to F naturals.

<sup>82</sup> Geir Hasnes, *Proclamation* issue 4 (1994), p. 24.

<sup>83</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.



comments on the album; ‘the concept gives all of the songs [on the album] a sense... it’s the concept that really organizes them and breathes real life and content into what would otherwise be a passable set of self-indulgent improvisations’.<sup>84</sup> Even instrumental sections have extra-musical meaning, here depicting the unrelenting difficulties of manual labour.

Ex. 7: Working All Day canonic guitar passage (0:00).<sup>85</sup>

Electric Guitar

Electric Guitar

Electric Guitar

on repeat gradual rit & pitch drop of a tri-tone (via tape effect)

E. Gtr.

E. Gtr.

E. Gtr.

Ex. 8: ‘Working All Day’ instrumental interlude (0:38, 4:35).<sup>86</sup>

Organ

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar + Baritone Saxophone

Org.

E. Gtr.

Bass

without saxophone

<sup>84</sup> George Starostin, ‘Gentle Giant’, *Only Solitaire* <starling.rinet.ru/music/gentle.htm#Friends> [3 March 2016].

<sup>85</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

<sup>86</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

The backing for the organ solo (2:01, ex. 9) includes four baritone and two tenor saxophones. The weight of the saxophones and the steady tempo give the impression of a man encumbered by his work. The change of time signature compresses the riff as the organ solo becomes more frantic - here the worker becomes increasingly frustrated and dissatisfied at his situation. The ramping up of the solo parallels the progression of the lyrics, which are somewhat content in the first verse, but by the last verse (after the organ solo), the worker ‘eats the dust’, ‘life ain’t just’ and he’s ‘never getting nowhere’.

Ex. 9: ‘Working all Day’ backing for the organ solo (2:01).<sup>87</sup>

The musical score for Ex. 9 is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Electric Guitar, and Bass Guitar. The second system includes Bari. Sax., E. Gtr., and Bass. The third system includes Bari. Sax., E. Gtr., and Bass. The key signature is E major (one sharp). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4. The score features various musical notations including eighth notes, quarter notes, and chords. There are repeat signs with 'repeat x3' and 'repeat x2' markings. The score is transcribed by Phil Smith.

The artist’s song, ‘Peel the Paint’, begins timidly with gentle vocals and pizzicato strings (0:00, ex. 10). We find the artist in his own idyllic world and loneliness is portrayed, but one that he enjoys as he is ‘finding the pleasure and the pain in his art’. Following the words ‘colour the brush’, the key changes from E dorian to Eb major and the strings switch to bows in a graceful flourish as the artist paints (0:30, ex. 11), made all the more brilliant by an escape from the diminished fifth pedal of the pizzicato strings. The key changes again as the passage is further uplifted, repeating in Ab major before winding down and reverting to the first section

<sup>87</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

Ex. 10: 'Peel the Paint' pizzicato string section (0.00, 1:01).<sup>88</sup>

Ex. 10: 'Peel the Paint' pizzicato string section (0.00, 1:01).<sup>88</sup>

Score for Ex. 10: 'Peel the Paint' pizzicato string section. The score is in 6/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes a Voice part with lyrics 'Free from the start, Left to de - part,' and a 'pizz.' marking. The Violin part plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Organ and Bass Guitar part plays a similar rhythmic pattern. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics 'Find - ing the pleas - ure and the pain in his art,' and the instrumental parts continue their respective patterns.

Ex. 11: 'Peel the Paint' bowed string section (0:30, 1:32).<sup>89</sup>

Ex. 11: 'Peel the Paint' bowed string section (0:30, 1:32).<sup>89</sup>

Score for Ex. 11: 'Peel the Paint' bowed string section. The score is in 6/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes a Violin part with a 'repeat x2' marking. The Organ and Bass Guitar part plays a rhythmic pattern. The second system continues the instrumental parts, with the Violin part playing a more complex, arpeggiated pattern.

The transition sees the pizzicato return (2:02, ex. 12) but it is only accompanying the organ and bass guitar, which repeat a phrase evocative of the original vocal line. The tempo slows as the repeated phrase is morphed into a four note phrase. So far, the song has shown the pure, quiet life that the artist enjoys, but the second section is a depiction of the darker sides of the artist's psychology.

<sup>88</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

<sup>89</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. String part simplified – repeats are not identical.

Ex. 12: 'Peel the Paint' transition section (2:02).<sup>90</sup>

Violin *pizz.*

Organ

Bass Guitar

Org. *ritard.* *a tempo* + Tenor Saxophone 15vea

Bass *ritard.* + Electric Guitar 15vea

Org. + Electric Guitar 8vea

Bass

In 'Working All Day' the use of an almost monophonic riff was used to illustrate brute force, and the same technique is used here, as the four note phrase is extended (2:23, ex. 13). Derek's vocals are fierce, like a 'savage beast', as he sings about the artist's psychological toils, which are not explicitly stated, but the lyrics 'carnal grave is crawling smooth, the open flesh and you must let him in' indicate their sexual nature. The real portrayal of the 'evil face of sin' is the guitar solo (4:11). Green embraces a Black Sabbath-esque heavy guitar style, playing rapid licks with a distorted tone and drummer Mortimore displays a frantic energy not yet heard on the album.

Ex. 13: 'Peel the Paint' beginning of second section (2:23). In unison with tenor saxophone, organ, electric and bass guitars.<sup>91</sup>

Voice

You peel the paint, look un - der-neath, You'll see the same, the same old sav - age

The counterpoint at the beginning of 'Mister Class and Quality?' (ex. 14) creates a feeling of sophistication, separating it from the grittiness of 'Working All Day' and the latter half of 'Peel the

<sup>90</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

<sup>91</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

Paint'. Even when the song takes on a rock character for the first verse (0:36, ex. 15), the drums are tight and the arrangement is cleanly in unison, as the listener is subjected to the final protagonist boasting about his life and his achievements.

Ex. 14: 'Mister Class and Quality?' counterpoint (0:00).

Electric Guitar

Organ

Electric Bass

E. Gtr.

Org.

E. Bass

faster

E. Gtr.

Org.

E. Bass

Ex. 15: 'Mister Class and Quality?' verse one (0:36).<sup>92</sup>

Voice

Look a - round my rooms and see the pri-

Electric Bass  
+ Violin  
+ Bass Guitar 15vb

Voice

- zes I have show - ing.

E. Bass

- Violin  
+ Organ 15vb

<sup>92</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

The following instrumental section leaks into the next verse (1:42, ex. 16) as violin reverts back to the main theme. The texture is complicated as the keyboard and bass guitar part intrude on the counterpoint between violin and vocals. Both keyboard and vocal parts are in compound time, but that the emphasis is now on the last third of each beat creates a metric complexity that is only held together by the steady drum beat. With the vocals now layered, as if the businessman's voice is raised and the texture more disorganised, the sophistication of the first verse is undermined as he gets increasingly indulgent in his boasting.

Ex. 16: 'Mister Class and Quality?' verse two (1:42).<sup>93</sup>

The musical score for 'Mister Class and Quality?' verse two (1:42) is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for Voice, Violin, Organ, and Bass Guitar. The Voice staff has the lyrics 'Pap - er work, white col - lared shirts, where would'. The second system includes staves for Voice, Violin (labeled 'Vln.'), Organ (labeled 'Org.'), and Bass. The Voice staff has the lyrics 'we be with - out them?'. The music is in 12/8 time and features a complex texture with multiple layers of sound.

The extra-musical meaning of the guitar solo (3:55) is strengthened by the previous solo in 'Peel the Paint'. Green uses a similar aggressive tone and character and so despite the businessman lyrically separating himself from the artist that he 'never understood', a parallel is drawn. The narrative of the song, that he becomes increasingly carried away with his boasting culminates in the final verse (5:01, ex. 17). The texture is the same as the first verse, save a periodic sustained electric guitar note. The difference is in the vocals, which emphasise the last quaver of many beats and are layered further so that they dominate the music, indicating that he is shouting, his pride completely undisguised. At the end of the song, the meaning of the question mark in the title is apparent. The

<sup>93</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

protagonist considers himself a man of class and quality but this is revealed to be far from the truth.

Ex. 17: 'Mister Class and Quality?' verse three (5:01).<sup>94</sup>

The musical score is written for three systems. The first system consists of three staves: Voice, Electric Guitar, and Electric Guitar + Bass Guitar 15vb. The second system consists of three staves: Voice, E. Gtr., and E. Gtr. The lyrics are: 'Pap - er work, white col - lared shirts, where would we be with - out them?'. The music is in 12/8 time and D major.

It is clear that the *Three Friends* concept permeates the music to the extent that even instrumental passages advance the story. The mood of these four songs is carefully constructed and progressed through musical and lyrical means in a constantly shifting dynamic. The scope here is not large enough to examine the other concept albums, *The Power and the Glory*, *Interview* and *In a Glass House*, but a similar case applies, to varying extents, to each.

<sup>94</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Added sustained guitar note.

## Chapter 3: Eclecticism

*Prog Archives*, classifying Gentle Giant as 'Eclectic Prog', says that they 'went as far as no one ever did into unexplored grounds in the progressive music, navigating over dissonant 20<sup>th</sup> century classical chamber music, medieval vocal music, jazz and rock'.<sup>95</sup> Minnear even stated that progressive rock was 'too constrained a category to define what Gentle Giant were going for'.<sup>96</sup> Their fusing of rock with early, classical, folk, jazz and blues music contributed to an inaccessibility that hindered their commercial success. The focus of this chapter is to determine how these styles were core to shaping the music.

An issue with stylistic discussion is the trend of describing their music as madrigals. Macan describes 'On Reflection' as 'madrigal-like'<sup>97</sup> and Lucky associates Gentle Giant more broadly with medieval madrigals.<sup>98</sup> Elsewhere, 'Pantagruel's Nativity' (probably 2:30), 'The Advent of Panurge' (probably 0:15), 'No God's a Man' (probably 1:01), 'Design' and 'Knots'<sup>99</sup> are labelled as madrigals. Here the concern is with the medieval trecento madrigal, not the latter madrigal.<sup>100</sup> It has a specific poetic structure, including syllable and rhyming schemes and was largely homophonic with a slow moving lower voice(s) supporting an ornamented upper voice.<sup>101</sup> Gentle Giant's music does not fit into this category and the cause for confusion is polyphonic vocal passages. This mislabelling highlights the need for a larger scale analysis and a proper stylistic identification of the music.

### 3.1: Early Music

Only a handful of bands referred to the medieval era, among the most prolific being Jethro Tull, Gryphon and of course Gentle Giant. Jethro Tull's *Minstrel in the Gallery* is medieval through its lyrical themes, singing tone, flute and folk-infused guitar playing. *Gryphon* highlights a fascination of medieval and Renaissance folk music through the use of the krumhorn, recorders and folk melodies.

Some bands used counterpoint, though perhaps none to the same extent as Gentle Giant. 'Karn Evil 9' by ELP was conceived to be contrapuntal<sup>102</sup> and though the idea was dropped, it remains

<sup>95</sup> Anon, 'Gentle Giant', *Prog Archives* <[www.progarchives.com/artist.asp?id=118](http://www.progarchives.com/artist.asp?id=118)> [20 February 2016].

<sup>96</sup> Anthony Garone, 'Interview: Kerry Minnear of Gentle Giant, *Make Weird Music* <[www.makeweirdmusic.com/interview/kerry-minnear](http://www.makeweirdmusic.com/interview/kerry-minnear)> [15 January 2017].

<sup>97</sup> Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, p. 135.

<sup>98</sup> Jerry Lucky, *Progressive Rock Files*, p. 234.

<sup>99</sup> Conor Fynes more accurately describes 'Knots' as having a pseudo-madrigal atmosphere. Conor Fynes, 'Octopus', *Progarchives* <[www.progarchives.com/album.asp?id=616](http://www.progarchives.com/album.asp?id=616)> [10 February 2016]

<sup>100</sup> Two different types of song. Since mentions of the madrigal are often in support of a medieval sound, it is assumed that such mentions are also referring to the medieval madrigal.

<sup>101</sup> Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 497.

<sup>102</sup> Paul Stump, *The Music's all that Matters*, p. 154.



can be heard in the first movement, 'First Impression'.<sup>103</sup> Yes' 'To Be Over' features a contrapuntal keyboard solo (6:41). Counterpoint appears to varying degrees and through different means in many genres but in progressive rock, it was a deliberate attempt to incorporate early influences, evidenced by blatant allusions such as Egg's adaption of Bach's 'Fugue in D minor' and Focus' 'Carnival Fugue'. Therefore, the counterpoint used in Gentle Giant's music deliberately to reference early music is considered separately from the counterpoint present in much popular music.<sup>104</sup>

Many progressive rock musicians received classical training, including Yes' Rick Wakeman, ELP's Carl Palmer and Keith Emerson, Renaissance's Annie Haslam, Gryphon's Richard Harvey and Brian Gulland. In Gentle Giant, composers Minnear and Ray were classically trained so it is of no surprise that classical techniques are present in the music.<sup>105</sup>

The medieval character that pervades much of Gentle Giant's music is largely due to early instrumentation, which is not a novelty, but sounds like a legitimate part of the music. Martin comments: 'the synthesis is much more complete... when we hear the presence and juxtaposition of harpsichord and sitar or some such in a piece by Genesis or Gentle Giant... this sounds much more like something that has been part of the music all along. We may say “wow” at the music, but no longer at the instruments that the music is played on'.<sup>106</sup> Hasnes finds himself 'taken back to the middle ages' by the trumpet, flute and 'mellow lyric tenor' of 'The Advent of Panurge'.<sup>107</sup> Table 3 shows the songs in which early music instrumentation appears.

When these instruments feature together, the early character is most prevalent. Of the post 1972 line-up, four of the five band members played the recorder. During their live performances of 'The Advent of Panurge' they became a recorder quartet accompanied by a soft beater and tom-tom. The regal, a type of organ invented in the medieval era,<sup>108</sup> accompanies the main string theme in 'Dog's Life' (0:06, 0:55, 2:20, 2:50) and plays a jaunty backing to the vocals (1:22). A pastoral sound features in 'The Runaway' (3:41, 3:59), where Minnear's soft countertenor is backed by a duo of recorders and 'Way of Life' (2:49) where he is accompanied by organ, violin and recorder.

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<sup>103</sup> Will Romano, *Prog Rock FAQ: All That's Left to Know About Rock's Most Progressive Music* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2014).

<sup>104</sup> Michael Allis, in dissertation feedback, stresses the importance of making this distinction.

<sup>105</sup> Referring to Minnear's degree in composition at the Royal Academy of Music, having learned under a contemporary of John Cage, Cornelius Cardew and Ray being primed for the National Youth Orchestra before forming Simon Dupree. Carl Wiser, 'Interview with Gentle Giant', *Songfacts* <[www.songfacts.com/blog/interviews/gentle\\_giant](http://www.songfacts.com/blog/interviews/gentle_giant)> [20 January 2016].

<sup>106</sup> Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. 100.

<sup>107</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 170.

<sup>108</sup> Hugh Mountney, 'The Regal', *The Galpin Society Journal*, 22 (1969), 3-22.

Table 3: Early Music instrumentation.

Instrument	Song
Harpsichord	Edge of Twilight, Wreck, The Moon is Down, Schooldays, Knots, On Reflection, Talybont
Recorder (descant, treble or tenor)	Why Not?, The House, the Street, the Room, Wreck, The Advent of Panurge (live arrangement), The Runaway, Way of Life, On Reflection, Talybont
Regal Organ	Dog's Life

Though in places the music may *sound* medieval, that does not mean that it actually *is* medieval.<sup>109</sup> Often these claims are in passing or as part of a review and lacking real musical basis. Lundberg claims they are 'musically very far from anything mediaeval or renaissance' although they 'reflect a character that coincides with our view of 'olden times''. He instead points to their 'cultivating elements of... modern classical music', and suggests that the theme to the fugal exposition of 'On Reflection' (ex. 24) could have been written by Britten.<sup>110</sup> Hasnes states that 'they only seem to be [a medieval and renaissance styled group] because of the sound of the instruments, some melodic lines and the use of counterpoint'.<sup>111</sup> The recorder quartet used in live versions of 'The Advent of Panurge', only sounds medieval because it is on recorders and has early twentieth century 'tone language and rhythm'. 'Raconteur Troubadour',<sup>112</sup> despite thematically being a 'conscious evocation of a medieval past',<sup>113</sup> is in the early twentieth century English romantic style.<sup>114</sup>

However, to many, the pastiche is convincing. A reasonable conclusion is that Gentle Giant were not specifically medieval but were generally influenced by early music, which may manifest as early composition language using modern instruments or modern language on early instruments. This compromise takes into account both a close reading of the music and what it suggests to the listener. The following will be the former; a determination of general early music features.

The second theme of 'Talybont' (0:31) is a recorder melody, harmonised with two others on reprise (1:11, 1:41, ex. 18). Ornaments, prominent in both the recorder part and the keyboard part that plays the first theme (0:00), were 'added by performers at will within a more or less unwritten set of customs and properties' in medieval music.<sup>115</sup> This passage sounds like a pavane or galliard, a pair of Renaissance homophonic court dances. The pavane was in duple time<sup>116</sup> and the galliard in

<sup>109</sup> In some places the music *is* medieval. See below.

<sup>110</sup> Mattias Lundberg, 'reader comments section', *Only Solitaire*. Lundberg admits two areas of 'early music traits' – 'the cadence formulae of the repeated section' of 'Talybont' and the 'real Tudor modality' of 'As Old as you're Young'.

<sup>111</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 176 (aprox).

<sup>112</sup> A medieval French musical poet who dealt with themes of love and chivalry.

<sup>113</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 80.

<sup>114</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 176.

<sup>115</sup> Kenneth Kreitner, et al, 'Ornaments: Middle Ages and Renaissance', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [15 January 2016].

<sup>116</sup> Alan Brown, 'Pavan', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [23 February 2016].

triple time<sup>117</sup> and this passage could be in either. The cadence formula here is an also 'early music trait',<sup>118</sup> with an imperfect cadence in D minor in the second bar and a stepwise perfect cadence in the dominant major in bar four. Also of note, 'Talybont' is also the only track on *Free Hand* without a drum kit, instead featuring percussion.

Ex. 18: 'Talybont' reprised recorder melody (1:11).<sup>119</sup>

Descant Recorder

Treble Recorder

Tenor Recorder

Harpsichord

Dm: i    vi    V                      A: VI    V    I

In hocketing, 'the medieval term for a contrapuntal technique of manipulating silence as a precise mensural value',<sup>120</sup> the melody is split between instruments, so that the full melody is only heard when they all play. This features in 'Knots'<sup>121</sup> (0:20, 1:02, ex. 19) and the verses of 'Just The Same' (0:20, 1:16, 4:15, 5:01, ex. 20). In 'Proclamation', a hocket is established by the gradual addition of notes (4:34, ex. 21).

Ex. 19: 'Knots' hocket (1:02).<sup>122</sup>

Xylophone Violin                      Xylophone Violin Xylophone

Saxophone                      Vibraphone                      Saxophone                      Vibraphone

<sup>117</sup> Alan Brown, 'Galliard' *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [23 February 2016].

<sup>118</sup> Mattias Lundberg, 'reader comments section', *Only Solitaire*.

<sup>119</sup> Transcription by Peter Crighton. All transcriptions used available from <www.blazemonger.com/GG/Sheet\_music>, unless otherwise stated. Unreferenced transcriptions are original.

<sup>120</sup> Ernest H. Sanders, 'Hocket', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [14 January 2016].

<sup>121</sup> Appropriately labelled in the liner notes a 'musical jigsaw'.

<sup>122</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Added first xylophone quaver bar 2 and 4.

Ex. 20: 'Just The Same' hocket (0:20, 1:16, 4:15, 5:01).<sup>123</sup>

Ex. 21: 'Proclamation' hocket (4:34). Each musical fragment is labelled with the number of bars after the beginning of the accumulative process that it is added.<sup>124</sup>

The linear, polyphonic style of writing coined counterpoint in the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>125</sup> is a signature technique of Gentle Giant,<sup>126</sup> who even used canon (then called 'fuga').<sup>127</sup> Traditionally it is melody lines that are used, but ostinatos or riffs can be used to the same effect provided they are melodic and for Gentle Giant, bass riffs were often central to polyphony.<sup>128</sup> 'Mister Class and Quality?' (0:00, ex. 14) is just one of many examples that demonstrates their 'expert contrapuntalism'.<sup>129</sup> Canon can be found in 'Old as you're Young' (1:52, ex. 22), where a second voice beings a measure later and 'Design' (2:46, ex. 23) where three of the four voices repeat the same phrase in canon.

<sup>123</sup> Based on elements of transcriptions by Paul van de Hart and Phil Smith.

<sup>124</sup> Based on transcription by Peter van Leeuwen. Arrangement condensed.

<sup>125</sup> Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, 'Counterpoint', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [16 January 2016].

<sup>126</sup> 'Ray: I don't think there's too many times we started off with a chord... No there were always some musical phrases. We never did a kind of chord sequence, like a traditional songwriter would do'. Carl Wiser, 'Interview with Gentle Giant', *Songfacts* <www.songfacts.com/blog/interviews/gentle\_giant/> [20 January 2016].

<sup>127</sup> Alfred Mann, et al, 'Canon', *Grove Music Online*, <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [15 January 2016].

<sup>128</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 167.

<sup>129</sup> John Covach, 'Gentle Giant', *Progression*, Spring 1996, quoted in Paul Stump, *The Music's All That Matters* (Chelmsford: Harbour Books Ltd., 1997), p. 149.



The fugue has numerous historical contexts.<sup>132</sup> Covach notes that the fugal exposition of 'On Reflection' (ex. 24) is 'contrapuntal in a very conventional manner; the structuring of the voices here is squarely in the contrapuntal tradition that extends from Josquin Desprez [Renaissance] to J. S. Bach [Baroque]'.<sup>133</sup> In the key of C, a subject is stated beginning on G and a second voice provides a real answer<sup>134</sup> beginning on D. The third and fourth voice repeat the process. This is not in strict canon; the melodic shape in the fourth bar of the answer is different. Untraditionally, the lyrics of the additive vocal parts join with the lyrics of the first vocal part, instead of starting at the beginning. In addition, the subject is modal. 'Unlike Bach, 3rds and 6ths tend to be lightly touched upon, which lends an austere, almost mediaeval flavour to the whole piece, denying either major or minor key dominance'.<sup>135</sup> A miniature fugue, appears in 'Black Cat' (1:30, ex. 25).<sup>136</sup>

Ex. 24: 'On Reflection' fugal exposition (0:00).<sup>137</sup>

The musical score for 'On Reflection' fugal exposition is presented in four systems, each with four staves. The voices are labeled on the left: Derek (soprano), Ray (alto), John (tenor), and Gary (bass). The music is in 4/4 time and key of C major. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words underlined to indicate phrasing. The score shows a fugal exposition with four voices entering in sequence. The lyrics are: 'In my way did I use you? Do you really think I abused you? On reflection now, it doesn't matter, How can you say I made you need me more than who. Can you say it now it's over? It's my calling, my calling now. Different ways of, different ways of life can never even. Be the same when you saw me, could you take me? Always I tried to remember you. Could you always take me the same way as I came and went to try remember you. Be the same when you saw me, could you always take me the same way? As I came and went, I tried to remember you. Be the same when you saw me, could you always take me the same way. I tried to remember you.'

<sup>132</sup> Paul M. Walker, 'Fugue', *Grove Music Online* <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)> [12 February 2016].

<sup>133</sup> John Covach, 'Free Hand: The Gentle Art of Counterpoint', *Progression Magazine*, Spring 1996 <[www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/gentlegiant.htm](http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/gentlegiant.htm)> [21 January 2016].

<sup>134</sup> In a real answer the intervals are identical to those in the subject. If they are not the answer is tonal.

<sup>135</sup> (Username) Certified, 'Free Hand', *Prog Archives* <[www.progarchives.com](http://www.progarchives.com)> [21 January 2016].

<sup>136</sup> Spaendonck, Jan-Paul van, 'A Short Musical Analysis of some Early Gentle Giant Pieces', *The Once in a Millenium Magazine* nr. 4: *Complex Rock* translated in Geir Hasnes, *Proclamation* issue 3 (1993), pp. 41-42.

<sup>137</sup> Based on transcription by Geir Hasnes. Fourth bar of each phrase changed from 3/4 to 6/8.

Ex. 25: 'Black Cat' fugue (1:30).<sup>138</sup>

### 3.2 Classical

In a 'self-conscious attempt to validate rock as art, thereby raising the status of the product',<sup>139</sup> progressive rock's 'striving for legitimation' was 'often founded on the appropriation of classical referents'.<sup>140</sup> Instruments from the classical tradition featured and were emulated by substitute instruments, like the mellotron, which provided a dense string backing and playing techniques such as Robert Fripp's swift cross picking.<sup>141</sup> Songs were commonly extended in length and many bands employed multi-movement suites or song cycles to aid a concept or allow greater scope for development. Gentle Giant preferred song lengths between three and seven minutes, their longest being 'Nothing at All' at 9:08. Direct references to classical music were common, such as Minnear quoting Liszt's *Liebestraum No. 3* in the drum solo of 'Nothing at All' (5:47).

Table 4 shows the use of classical instrumentation. Many songs include the violin and cello and they were used to varying effects. 'Funny Ways' achieves a mellow, reflective tone whilst Stump describes 'Isn't it Quiet and Cold?' as 'whimsically English',<sup>142</sup> referring to its strange Beatles-like tone and the erratic plucking of the violin. A stately sound is achieved in 'Raconteur, Troubadour' (2:01) and 'Peel the Paint' (0:30) and the violin on 'Mobile' and 'I Lost my Head' is used in a folk manner. Minnear's fascination with tuned percussion is evident and in live shows, instead of a drum solo (deemed 'boring' by Weathers<sup>143</sup>) the band would become a percussion ensemble.

Table 4: Classical Instrumentation.

Instrument	Song(s)
Celesta	An Inmate's Lullaby, On Reflection
Cello	Funny Ways, Edge of Twilight, The House, the Street, the Room, Black Cat, Raconteur, Troubadour, Dog's Life, A Reunion, So Sincere, On Reflection

<sup>138</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Note values doubled.

<sup>139</sup> Allan Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* second ed., p. 91.

<sup>140</sup> Allan Moore, 'Progressive Rock', *Grove Music Online*, <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [19 November 2015].

<sup>141</sup> Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, p. 47.

<sup>142</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 175.

<sup>143</sup> Weathers: 'I find them boring, and I'm sure the audience does as well'. From Johnathan Mover, 'John Weathers On Reflection', *Drumhead* (2011), pp. 40–49.



Clarinet	Edge of Twilight, The House, the Street, the Room
Clavichord	The House, The Street, The Room, Experience, Give It Back, I Lost My Head
Glockenspiel	The Runaway, An Inmate's Lullaby, Experience, On Reflection
Harp	On Reflection
Marimba	The Runaway, An Inmate's Lullaby, Playing the Game, On Reflection, Give it Back
Piano	Extensively.
Tenor Horn	Giant
Timpani	Giant, Alucard, Edge of Twilight, An Inmate's Lullaby, On Reflection
Trumpet	Giant, Funny Ways, Alucard, Why Not?, The Queen, Pantagruel's Nativity, The House, the Street, the Room, The Advent of Panurge, Raconteur, Troubadour, Think of Me with Kindness (Mellophone)
Violin/viola	Funny Ways, Isn't it Quiet and Cold?, Edge of Twilight, The House, the Street, the Room, Wreck, Black Cat, Plain Truth, Peel the Paint, Mister Class and Quality?, Raconteur, Troubadour, Knots, The Boys in the Band, Dog's Life, River, Way of Life, Experience, A Reunion, In a Glass House, So Sincere, Playing the Game, The Face, On Reflection, Mobile, Empty City, Timing, I Lost My Head
Xylophone	Isn't it Quiet and Cold?, Edge of Twilight, The House, the Street, the Room, Knots, Dog's Life, Spooky Boogie

Hasnes claims 'like no other progressive rock artist, Gentle Giant consciously used the classical composition technique of stating themes',<sup>144</sup> citing 'Giant' as an example. The theme is stated on the organ (0:03), returns in counterpoint to a bass riff (3:18, ex. 26), is transferred to strings (3:46) and then developed by the choir (4:33). 'Valedictory' is a gloomy variation of 'Proclamation' and the connection is both lyrical and musical. The titles hint at the thematic link<sup>145</sup> and they share a frantic instrumental section (ex. 27) and discordant vocal theme (ex. 28).

Ex. 26: 'Giant' simplified theme in counterpoint with bass (3:18).

<sup>144</sup> Geir Hasnes, 'The Music of Gentle Giant', in Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 179.

<sup>145</sup> A proclamation can announce an arrival and a valedictory is a farewell.



Ex. 27: 'Proclamation' (3:20) and 'Valedictory' (2:02) 'Hail to power and to glories name'.<sup>146</sup>

Ex. 27 shows a musical score for 'Proclamation' (3:20) and 'Valedictory' (2:02). The top staff is for Voice, with the lyrics 'Hail to po - wer and to glo - ries name,'. The bottom staff is for Organ, featuring a complex accompaniment with chords and a bass line.

Ex. 28: 'Proclamation' (2:47) and 'Valedictory' frantic instrumental section(1:33).<sup>147</sup>

Ex. 28 shows a musical score for 'Proclamation' (2:47) and 'Valedictory' (1:33). The score is highly complex, featuring multiple staves for Keyboard, Keyboard/Guitar, Bass Guitar, and two Keyboard (Kbd.) parts. The music is characterized by many triplets and repeated patterns, creating a frantic instrumental section.

Similarly, Jan-Paul van Spaendonck credits 'thematical unity' for their smooth blending of classical and rock styles, comparing their 'consistent "compositions"' to Jethro Tull's 'collages'.<sup>148</sup> He uses the example of 'Raconteur Troubadour', which is built on a single melodic phrase (0:00 ex. 29). The theme is moved to violin and the vocal changes so that the two are in counterpoint (0:16, ex. 30). Returning in half time, the theme is extended with 'real Elgarian Nobility' (0:54, ex. 31).<sup>149</sup> Next the trumpet plays what appears to be a reworked version of the theme (2:43, ex. 32) – the intervals of the first five notes are the same and the third to fifth notes of the original them have the

<sup>146</sup> Transcribed by Peter van Leeuwen.

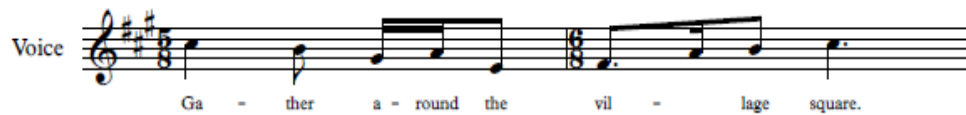
<sup>147</sup> Based on transcription by Peter van Leeuwen. Arrangement condensed. First bass guitar semiquaver of each bar added.

<sup>148</sup> Spaendonck, Jan-Paul van, 'A Short Musical Analysis of some Early Gentle Giant Pieces', translated in Geir Hasnes, *Proclamation* issue 3, pp. 42-43.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

same intervals as the fifth to seventh of the reworked theme. Spaendonck adds that their compositions 'have more in common with Stravinsky than, say, Led Zeppelin' but 'still possess the "groove" of all great rock music'.<sup>150</sup>

Ex. 29: 'Raconteur Troubadour' theme (0:00).<sup>151</sup>



Ex. 30: 'Raconteur Troubadour' theme in counterpoint (0:16).

Ex. 31: 'Raconteur Troubadour' theme half time and extended (0:54).



Ex. 32: 'Raconteur Troubadour' theme reworked (2:43).



'Edge of Twilight' is influenced by expressionism. Theodore Adorno comments that both 'the depiction of fear' and the unconscious are central to expressionist music, describing it as dissonant so that 'harmonious, affirmative element of art is banished'.<sup>152</sup> The otherworldly sustained discords and eerie unresolved suspensions on selected timbres support Minnear's gentle vocals (0:00, ex. 33). Notably strange are the vocals at 1:05 and echoes of 'whisper' (1:16). To Stump, the 'mahogany-brown tone colours... hint at prewar Berlin or Vienna'.<sup>153</sup> A violent percussion passage (2:16) breaks the foreboding, dreamy state.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>151</sup> This and the following three transcriptions by Jan-Paul van Spaendonck in 'A Short Musical Analysis of some Early Gentle Giant Pieces', translated in Geir Hasnes, *Proclamation*, Issue 3, pp. 42-43.

<sup>152</sup> Theodore Adorno, *Night Music: Essays on Music 1928-1962*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Wieland Hoban (London: Seagull Books, 2009), pp. 275-276.

<sup>153</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 44.

Ex. 33: 'The Edge of Twilight' harmonic outline (0:00). Possible chord names labelled.<sup>154</sup>

The musical score for 'The Edge of Twilight' (0:00) features three staves: Voice, Violin/Organ/Clarinet, and Cello. The Voice staff has lyrics: 'The moon is down, cast- ing its sha- dow o- ver the night haunt- ed town. Mys- tic- al fig- ures un- der the si- lence of light.' The Violin/Organ/Clarinet staff shows a harmonic outline with various chords. The Cello staff shows a harmonic outline with various chords. The chord names are: Bm7, sus2, Am7 sus5/G, D sus2/F#, C#m7 sus4, G#m7 sus4, E/F#, Eb/F, and F#dim/G.

### 3.3 Jazz and Blues

Jazz and blues are heard chiefly through guitarist Green but there are examples where the blues dominates the whole band. 'Working All Day' and 'Bringing Me Down'<sup>155</sup> are hard to hear as anything but rocky blues, featuring extended Hammond organ solos (2:20 'Working All Day'), over a walking bass and jazz drums in 'Bringing Me Down' (2:51). Green's blues background shines in his soloing in 'River' (3:27) and 'His Last Voyage' (3:45) and the solo in 'Why Not', is over a 12 bar blues structure (2:10).

Rock instrumentation is largely shared with jazz and blues and they made use of the trumpet, saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor and baritone) and vibraphones. In 'The Moon Is Down', all three are found in addition to jazz style drumming,<sup>156</sup> also evident in 'Bringing Me Down' and much of their first album. Table 5 summarises Jazz instrumentation.

Table 5: Jazz Instrumentation.

Instrument	Song(s)
Saxophone(s)	Giant, Funny Ways, Alucard, Why Not?, Pantagruel's Nativity, The Moon is Down, Prologue, Working All Day, Peel the Paint, Knots, The Boys in the Band, In a Glass House, So Sincere, Just the Same, Empty City, Timing
Trumpet	Giant, Funny Ways, Alucard, Why Not?, The Queen, Pantagruel's Nativity, The House, the Street, the Room, The Advent of Panurge, Raconteur, Troubadour, Think of Me with Kindness (Mellophone)
Vibraphone	Alucard, Pantagruel's Nativity, Black Cat, Schooldays, Knots, River, An Inmate's Lullaby, No God's a Man, Just the Same, On Reflection, His Last Voyage

### 3.4 Folk

In places, a folk influence is evident. Ray's violin playing takes on a folk character in the intros of 'The Face', 'Mobile' and 'I Lost My Head'. Green's mandolin on 'Schooldays' and use of acoustic guitar invokes a folk character. During live shows, Green and Ray would play an arrangement of

<sup>154</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Harmony condensed into two staves.

<sup>155</sup> Written before the first album and abandoned. It appears on *Under Construction*.

<sup>156</sup> Smith, who drummed on the first two albums, was specialised in jazz and blues.

features from *Octopus*<sup>157</sup> ('a more concentrated take on folk music'<sup>158</sup>) on acoustic guitars. It is when the rustic timbres of violin and guitar are mixed that the style is most pertinent, such as the introductions to 'Mobile' and 'I Lost My Head' (ex. 34 and 35).

Linked to classical and folk music is the pastoral, which 'depicts the characters and scenes of rural life or is expressive of its atmosphere'<sup>159</sup> and is present through 'lyrics, acoustic guitars or a range of keyboards'.<sup>160</sup> In 'Nothing At All', 'a girl is introduced sitting by a river over picked notes on acoustic guitar, but the location becomes a melancholy site allowing reflection on a departed lover rather than filling the listener with cloying emotion'.<sup>161</sup> Pastoralism does not always depict pleasantness and 'the idealized surroundings may only heighten the sense of loss'.<sup>162</sup> The lyrics of 'A Reunion' are bittersweet as Minnear melancholically sings of reuniting with someone from whom he regrets growing apart over a gentle acoustic guitar and string accompaniment.

Ex. 34: 'Mobile' folk violin and guitar lines (0:00).<sup>163</sup>



Ex. 35: 'I Lost my Head' folk violin and guitar lines (0:00).<sup>164</sup>



The nautical inspiration of the sea shanty 'Wreck' is covered in section 2.1.1. A shanty is a work

<sup>157</sup> Gentle Giant, 'Features from Octopus' (1974), ZDF <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpvbRdSiXUY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpvbRdSiXUY)> [19 March 2016].

<sup>158</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, p. 63.

<sup>159</sup> Geoffrey Chew and Owen Jander, Pastoral, *Grove Music Online* <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)> [4 February 2016].

<sup>160</sup> Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, p. 63.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

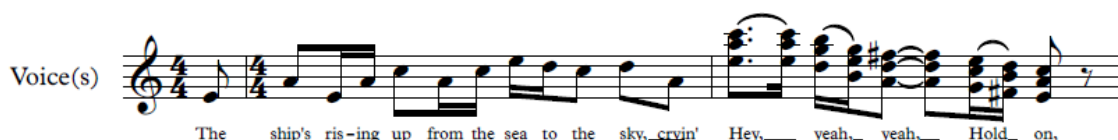
<sup>162</sup> Geoffrey Chew and Owen Jander, Pastoral, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>163</sup> Transcription by Phil Smith.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

song, sung by workers on ships before the use of steam power.<sup>165</sup> The bold main theme (0:06) is played on electric guitar, bass guitar and synth, emulating the power required to power a ship. The counter theme in three part harmony (0:27, ex. 36) is similarly masculine and reminiscent of the response to the call in the traditional sea shanty 'Blow the Man Down'. Stump notes the likeness of the counter theme to the music of Benjamin Britten and Ralph Vaughan Williams, both known in part for their sea music.<sup>166</sup>

Ex. 36: 'Wreck' main theme and counter theme (0:24).<sup>167</sup>



The wah-wah infused electric violin introduction to 'Plain Truth' gives the song a Southern American character, making it sound like a country-rocker. Combined with the recurring chants-like vocal lines, it is best classified as a hoe-down. The building up middle section represents the 'essential... element of competition', as 'a succession of dancers tries to outshine the previous dancer with a virtuoso display of footwork'.<sup>168</sup>

### 3.5 Reggae

'Give it Back' contains 'choppy guitar, wheezy organ, matchbox drums and 'Montego Bay' marimba arpeggios'<sup>169</sup> in Gentle Giant's venture into reggae. To Stump it demonstrates that they were 'incapable of engaging with the style',<sup>170</sup> but some see this as 'a perfect blending of progressive rock and reggae'.<sup>171</sup> It is likely a light-hearted nod to the genre - if they were trying to write a serious reggae song they would not structure the phrases in alternating bars of seven and five and dislocate the beat with unsymmetrical combinations of bar lengths.

### 3.6 Rock

Gentle Giant were, especially on arrival of drummer Weathers, a rock band. Minnear admitted that Weather's drumming was somewhat of an epiphany which 'brought me round to the fact that we

<sup>165</sup> Roy Palmer, 'Shanty', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [6 February 2016].

<sup>166</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 45.

<sup>167</sup> Transcription by Phil Smith.

<sup>168</sup> Claude Conyers, 'Hoedown', *Grove Music Online*, <www.oxfordmuisconline.com> [6 February 2016].

<sup>169</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 121.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> (Username) NetsNJFan, 'Interview', *Prog Archives* <www.progarchives.com/album.asp?id=1151> [6 February 2016].

really are a rock band and can rock as much as an out-and-out rock'n'roll band'.<sup>172</sup> Weathers' drumming comes alive on 'A Cry for Everyone', 'The Boys in the Band' and 'River'. The drum part would often ground the music with a beat in four, giving the rest of the band rhythmic freedom. In 'So Sincere' (0:53, ex. 37) the simple time of the kit is pitched against the compound time of the rest of the band and in 'The Advent of Panurge' (0:56, ex. 41), bass guitar and drums underpin syncopated piano and experimental guitar work.

Green would sometimes apply copious amounts of distortion to his tone to solo such as in 'Peel the Paint' (4:11), 'Pantagruel's Nativity' (4:06) and 'The House, the Street the Room' (2:36). He exhibits shredding in 'Peel the Paint' and harmonics, a wah-wah effect, string bending and exaggerated vibrato in 'His Last Voyage' (3:46). Though many of Gentle Giant's themes used unorthodox harmonies and rhythmic groupings, there are also simple guitar riffs, more indicative of the rock style. Notable examples are 'Nothing at All' (2:37, ex. 38), 'A Cry for Everyone' (0:02, ex. 39) and 'Time to Kill' (0:22, ex. 410). On *Civilian*, they had gravitated towards an accessible rock sound, particularly evident through the riffing on 'All Through the Night', 'Number One', 'Underground' and 'It's Not Imagination'.

Ex. 37: 'So Sincere' simple against compound time (0:53).<sup>173</sup>

The musical score for 'So Sincere' is presented in a five-staff format. The top staff is for the Voice, with lyrics: 'Lies, he on-ly tells the truth, for he means it'. The subsequent staves are for Electric Guitar, Piano, Bass Guitar, and Drum Set. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including many triplets and syncopated rhythms, which create a compound time feel against the 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings.

Ex. 38: 'Nothing at All' guitar riff (2:37).

The musical score for the 'Nothing at All' guitar riff is shown in a single staff for Electric Guitar. The time signature is 4/4. The riff consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notation is simple and clear, focusing on the rhythmic and melodic elements of the riff.

<sup>172</sup> Paul Stump, *Gentle Giant*, p. 62.

<sup>173</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Drum part added.

Ex. 39: 'A Cry for Everyone' guitar riff (0:02).<sup>174</sup>

Electric Guitar

E. Gtr.

Ex. 40: 'Time to Kill' guitar riff (0:22).

Electric Guitar

Ex. 41: 'The Advent of Panurge' (0:56).<sup>175</sup>

Electric Guitar

Keyboard

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

E. Gtr.

K.B.

Bass

Dr.

E. Gtr.

K.B.

Bass

Dr.

<sup>174</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.<sup>175</sup> Based on transcription by Bob Finger. Skeleton drum part added.

### 3.7 Case Study: ‘In a Glass House’

The eclecticism has been highlighted, but not the fluidity with which they moved between these styles. *Acquiring the Taste* showcases this, shifting from the driven rock of ‘The Advent of Panurge’, to the expressionism of ‘Edge of Twilight’, to the hard hitting ‘The House, The Street, The Room’, to the dissonance of the title track, to the sea shanty ‘Wreck’, to the jazz reverberations of ‘The Moon is Down’, to the classically infused and string dominated ‘Black Cat’ and finally to ‘Plain Truth’, with its blues tints and Southern American style, emulated through the electric violin. However, it is on a single song, ‘In a Glass House’, where folk, jazz, swing, rock and an early music style are juxtaposed so naturally, that the fluidity is best demonstrated. Table 6 summarises the styles used.

Table 6: ‘In a Glass House’ structure and styles. Mix = mixolydian.

Structure		Time	Key	Style
A	A		A mix	Folky jig
	B	00:36	D dorian	Mediaeval jig
	C	01:02	C mix	Swing
	D	01:16	A mix → Em	Folk/Swing
A'	A	01:56	A mix	Folky jig
	E	02:20	F# mix	Jazz/rock
	B	02:53	D dorian	Mediaeval jig
	C	03:02	C mix	Swing
	D	03:35	A mix → Em	Folk/swing
B	F	04:14	F#m	Rock
	G	05:02	D mix → F#m	Folk
	F	05:26	F#m	Rock
	G	05:50	D mix → F#m	Folk
	solo	06:07	D mix	American Southern
	F	06:33	F#m	Rock

Section A is a jig, an erratic folk dance in compound time. A twelve string guitar picks a lively riff in octaves, leaping around a large tessitura (a compound fifth). The violin and bass counter melodies similarly erratic and rapid. The result is a three-part counterpoint of folky mixolydian<sup>176</sup> melodic lines (0:15, ex. 42). The end of each three bar phrase is homophonic with a non-harmonic passing note (C# in final bar, ex. 42), a melodic tendency used in folk music. Here, 'harmonic usage... would dictate' a B instead of C# but the folk musician 'would choose the note nearest to the one he is singing [or playing]'.<sup>177</sup> Compound time, the rustic timbres of guitar and violin, modality,

<sup>176</sup> Cecil Sharp and Lucy E. Broadwood, 'Some Characteristics of English Folk-Music', *Folklore*, 19.2 (1908), p. 141.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.



the folk character of the melodies and the non-harmonic passing note make this a convincing folk passage.

Ex. 42: 'In a Glass House' section A (0:00). Three folk melodies in counterpoint.<sup>178</sup>

The synthesised organ melody that follows (0:36, ex. 43) retains the jig characteristics of the previous melodies and the first three quavers have the same intervals, but now there are early music inflections. The treble heavy electric guitar chords, mimicking a harpsichord, the lack of percussion and the mordant at the end of the phrase gives the organ an early character. The pastiche is enhanced by the dorian modality, one of the medieval 'church modes'.<sup>179</sup>

Ex. 43: 'In a Glass House' section B (0:36). Mordant is circled.<sup>180</sup>

A slow swing pervades (1:02, ex. 44). Though the first three notes are not an exact two-to-one division, they still swing and every other bar has true swung rhythms. The kit has a laid back pace and emphasises the backbeat.<sup>181</sup> Weathers also allows the 'noisier timbres of the cymbals to articulate the pulse'.<sup>182</sup> The exclusion of keyboards points to a swing rhythm section, traditionally guitar and pizzicato double bass. This passage is also in the commonly used in jazz mixolydian mode.

<sup>178</sup> Transcription by Phil Smith.

<sup>179</sup> Gary Ayton, 'History of Medieval Era of Music', *Ayton* <[www.ayton.id.au/gary/History/Music/H\\_MusMed1.htm](http://www.ayton.id.au/gary/History/Music/H_MusMed1.htm)> [13 February 2016].

<sup>180</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

<sup>181</sup> 'At the level of the meter, the traditionally weak beats are stressed' Howard Spring, 'Swing.' *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)> [14 December 2015].

<sup>182</sup> Howard Spring, 'Swing.' *Grove Music Online*.

Ex. 44: 'In a Glass House' section C (1:02).<sup>183</sup>

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Drum Kit

E. Gtr.

Bass

Dr.

Folk and swing are mixed in section D (1:16, ex. 45). Mandolin and guitar play a swung mixolydian melody and syncopated keyboard chords and swing style drums join for the counter melody. The folk swing fusion continues with a swung call and response between the guitar and soprano saxophones (1:46, ex. 46).

Ex. 45: 'In a Glass House' section D (1:16).<sup>184</sup>

Acoustic Guitar

Mandolin

Keyboard

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

<sup>183</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Drum part added.

<sup>184</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Second guitar renamed mandolin. Drum transcription by Stefan Kac.

Ex. 46: 'In a Glass House' section D secondly melody (1:46).<sup>185</sup>

A reprise of the music so far is interrupted by rocky jazz (2:20, ex. 47). A tenor saxophone and gritty organ riff over a rocky drum beat in triple time. The chromaticism of D natural in the organ and the D# in the saxophone, and the shifting of the keyboard melody between minor and major creates a tonal ambiguity.

Ex. 47: 'In a Glass House' section E (2:20).<sup>186</sup>

Section F (4:14, ex. 48) begins the second half of the song. Gutsy vocals, a guitar riff and a simple rock replace jazz and swing. This is juxtaposed with section G (5:02, ex. 49) which recalls the folk character and mixolydian tonality. A three-part counterpoint, reminiscent of the earlier folk passages, is heard under a Minnear's vocals. The short guitar solo (6:07) is in an American Southern style as the harmonically simple acoustic and bass guitar arrangement of section G provides a backing for a slide acoustic guitar solo.

<sup>185</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Acoustic guitar and mandolin brought down an octave.

<sup>186</sup> Based on transcription by Phil Smith. Keyboard first two bars brought up an octave. Drum transcription by Stefan Kac.

Ex. 48: 'In a Glass House' section F (4:14).<sup>187</sup>

Ex. 48: 'In a Glass House' section F (4:14).<sup>187</sup>

Score for Ex. 48, 'In a Glass House' section F (4:14). The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features four staves: Voice, Electric Guitar + Bass Guitar 8vb, Drum Kit, and a second Voice staff. The lyrics are: 'Sha-dow fills the light, un-til the glass\_ house be- comes the night. The dark is gleam-ing\_ or am I dream-ing? fill'.

Ex. 49: 'In a Glass House' section G (5:02).<sup>188</sup>

Ex. 49: 'In a Glass House' section G (5:02).<sup>188</sup>

Score for Ex. 49, 'In a Glass House' section G (5:02). The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features five staves: Voice, Keyboard, Acoustic Guitar, Acoustic Guitar + Bass Guitar 8vb, and two Acoustic Guitar staves. The lyrics are: 'Na-row the field, aim in a - ny di - rec-tion. Do what I feel just to see my re-flec-tion.'

<sup>187</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith. Added drum part.<sup>188</sup> Transcribed by Phil Smith.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

In chapter 1 I outlined an issue. Gentle Giant, one of the most exciting and innovative bands of an era filled with creativity and artistic freedom, has not been given the academic attention that it deserves. A shame though it is, there must be reasons for it. One factor is that they never achieved the same level of fame as acts like King Crimson, Genesis, Yes or Jethro Tull. Their musical complexity, surpassing those famous bands, was both their genius and a hindrance. Such uncompromising and challenging music surely would have required competent commercial support – chiefly in the areas of marketing and touring. This was not provided as their management did not know how to promote such an original and eclectic act so bands tours were badly organised, mistimed and did not target England, the home of progressive rock. As the Shulman brothers were known in England due to their history as Simon Dupree and the Big Sound, more effort was needed to prove to the English crowd that they were a serious progressive rock band. Perhaps, had the circumstances surrounding the band been more favourable, their music would have won over many millions, and they would now be counted among the progressive rock giants, commercially and academically.

The intention of the two chapters of analysis is to begin to address the academic neglect. Chapter 2 begins to highlight some of the key themes used. Like many progressive rock bands, Gentle Giant were fascinated with high culture, basing ‘Pantagruel’s Nativity’ and ‘The Advent of Panurge’, and their imagery (see appendix A) on the giants conceived by the renaissance writer François Rabelais. Other high culture figures referenced include Ronnie D Laing in ‘Knots’, George Gordon Lord Byron in ‘Wreck’ and ‘Think of me with Kindness’, Albert Camus in ‘Plain Truth’ and ‘A Cry for Everyone’ and George Orwell in ‘Memories of Old Days’. These references were not only thematic, but musical, as is shown in sections 3.1 and 3.2. Gentle Giant’s music was characterised by allusions to early and classical music through quotes, instrumentation, genre (‘Talybont’ is a pavane or galliard and ‘Edge of Twilight’ is expressionist), harmony, and compositional techniques such as hocketing, thematical unity, polyphony and fugue.

Another common theme is social critique, in abundance and with a much more blunt delivery than was typical of other progressive rock acts, who preferred the use of metaphor and narrative. This critique was aimed at the music industry (*Acquiring the Taste*, *Freehand* and *Interview*) as well as society (*Civilian*, *In a Glass House*, *Three Friends*) and politics (*The Power and the Glory*).

Gentle Giant also embraced the concept album (*The Power and the Glory*, *Interview*, *In a Glass House* and *Three Friends*). A close examination of how the concept of *Three Friends* manifests in the music reveals such a strong link between the albums theme and its musical features, (such as tone, harmony, tonality and texture) that even the instrumental passages contribute to the albums

story. This analysis also proves that though they did not write long, epic songs, they knew how to make large scale musical connections.

The focus of chapter 3 is one of the most compelling things about Gentle Giant: their eclecticism. The ways in which they incorporated early and classical music is outlined above, but they also fused jazz and blues, folk, reggae and rock. For jazz and blues they used saxophones, trumpets, a vibraphone, structural features such as guitar solos and Hammond organ solos, and 12 bar blues. Folk influences are clear with folk-like violin and guitar playing, frequent use of dorian and mixolydian modes, pastoral themes, the sea shanty 'Wreck' and the Southern American 'Plain Truth'. Reggae can be seen in 'Give it Back'. Especially after the addition of drummer Weathers in 1972, the influence of rock is consistently evident. This is both through the bands default instrumental setup (drums, bass, guitar, keys, vocals) and them being a progressive rock band, thus often using rock as a foundation with which to add other styles. In places rock takes the foreground more than in others, through riffs, a rock rhythm section and distorted guitar (and other rock effects and techniques). Towards the tail end of their career they certainly allowed rock to dominate their style, which is perfectly evident by *Civilian*.

All these influences are illustrated in an analysis of 'In a Glass House', one of progressive rock's greatest demonstrations of stylistic fluidity. In this song, they combined and moved seamlessly between folk, early music, swing, jazz and rock. Their mastery over styles proved that they were 'ready to move into the first ranks of progressive rock' and cemented them as the most unique, innovative and eclectic bands of the era.<sup>189</sup>

Unfortunately, neither chapter has been able to fully cover its topic. Chapter 2 is openly partial, only examining a single concept album and though the themes of social critique and literature are covered, other topics such as autobiography, retrospective and introspective and the pastoral are also present. Chapter 3 begins to determine the extent of the bands eclecticism but a more detailed look at the styles and compositional techniques in the entire discography would be of benefit. Additionally, there are many musical areas not covered here that, when the focus of a thorough study, would yield interesting findings. These include structure, texture, rhythm and meter and harmony and tonality.

This analysis one of the most fascinating and worthy of study bands in existence, has been personally and academically rewarding. Further than helping us to understand the music of Gentle Giant, it helps us to contextualise progressive rock as a whole, by learning how it took form at its peak. By studying the music of Gentle Giant we inform our own approach, learning ways of analysing and connecting other the music of the past, and how to make the music of the future.

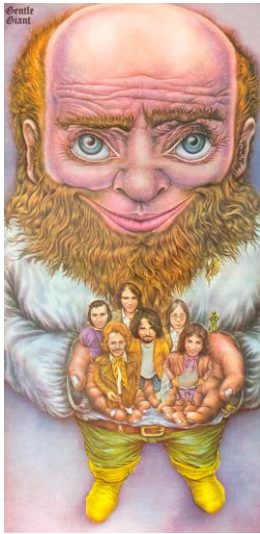
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<sup>189</sup> Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. 197.

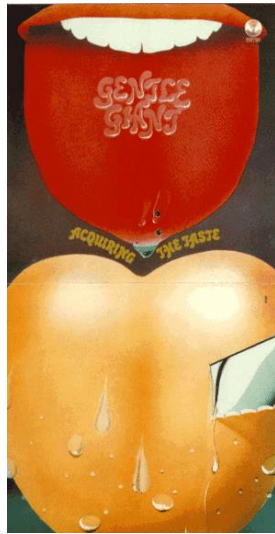


## Appendices

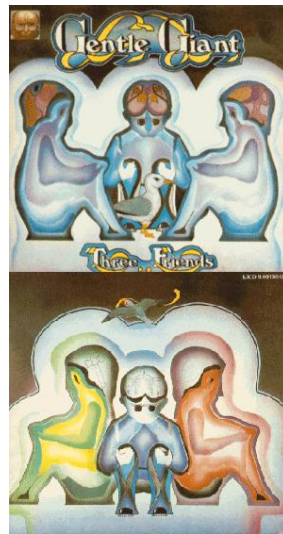
### Appendix A: Gentle Giant discography.



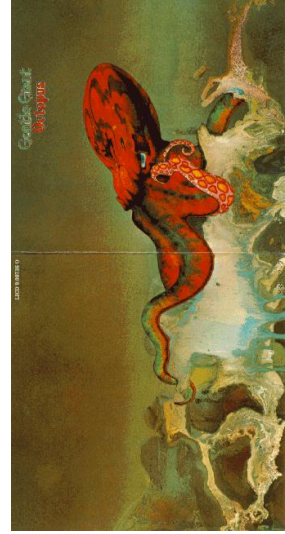
*Giant* (1970)  
Vertigo



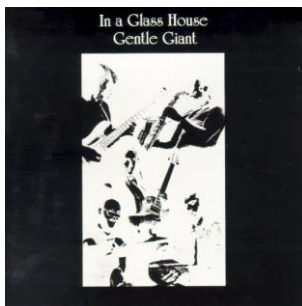
*Acquiring the Taste*  
(1971)  
Vertigo



*Three Friends* (1972)  
Vertigo, Columbia  
#197 US  
Martin Smith replaced by  
Malcolm Mortimore



*Octopus* (1972)  
Vertigo, Columbia  
#170 US  
Malcolm Mortimore replaced  
with John Weathers



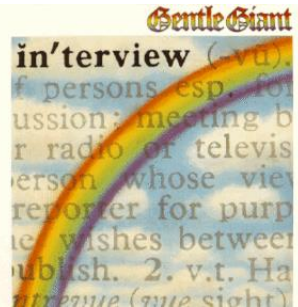
*In a Glass House* (1973)  
Vertigo, WWA, Columbia  
#78 US  
Last album with Phil  
Shulman



*The Power and the  
Glory* (1974)  
Vertigo, WWA, Capitol  
#78 US



*Free Hand* (1975)  
Chrysalis, Capitol  
#48 US



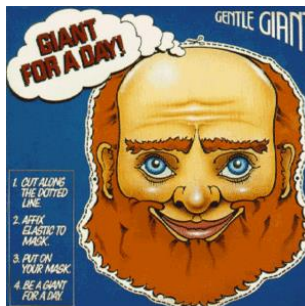
*Interview* (1976)  
Chrysalis, Capitol  
#137 US



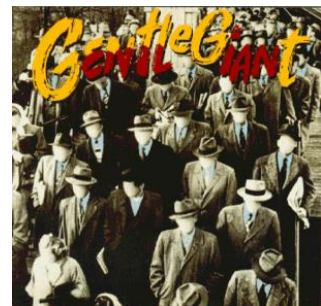
*Playing the Fool* (1977)  
Chrysalis, Capitol  
#89 US  
Live compilation



*The Missing Piece*  
(1977)  
Chrysalis, Capitol  
#81 US



*Giant for a Day* (1978)  
Chrysalis, Capitol



*Civilian* (1980)  
Chrysalis, Columbia

Appendix B: *Three Friends* lyrics.**Prologue**

Three friends are made, three lives are laughs and tears,  
 Through years of school and play they share,  
 As time stands still the days change into years,  
 And future comes without a care.

But fate and skill and chances play their part,  
 The wind of change leaves no goodbye.  
 Three boys are men their ways have drawn apart,  
 They tell their tales to justify.

**Schooldays**

The bell rings, and all things, are calling, the days past, the play's cast.  
 Remember, September, when we were, together, together, together.

Schooldays the happy days when we were going nowhere,  
 Schooldays the happy time when we were feeling no care,  
 Schooldays when three said that we'd be better friends forever.

How long is ever isn't it strange,  
 Schooldays together why do they change.

Did kites fly, and I spy, and you cry, to run fast, or come last.  
 You know how, we made vows, they're gone now.  
 We made friends, we broke friends, no more friends.

Remember, remember when we,  
 Together, went to the sea.

Was it real or did we dream. The days of children gone.  
 Seagull's scream and pink ice cream and the deep blue sky,  
 And the waves seem high and golden sand and the town brass band play on.

Wait for me, wait for us always,  
 Wait for me, wait for us to come.

Homework's dull, it's worth the pain to go out when I want.  
 Mister Watson wants to see you in the master's room.  
 It's about the work you should have done I think you must go now.

**Working All Day**

Working all day, I'm digging up the roads, just working all day.  
 Dig for my pay and spent it where I like, I've nothing to say.  
 Drown in my sweat but money buys escape, I've got no regrets.

Working all day,

When I was young I used to have illusions, dreams ain't enough.  
 Papa was rough, he didn't care for learning, hell life is tough.  
 Easy to say that everybody's equal, then look around and see it ain't true.

Working all day.

I eat the dust, the boss gets all the money, life ain't just.  
 I'm still the same as all the other people, who can I trust?  
 Working all day and never getting nowhere, what can I say, working all day.

Working all Day.



**Peel the Paint**

Free from the start, left to depart,  
 Finding the pleasure and the pain in his art.  
 Lost in the hush, no need to rush,  
 Time waits for him, him who creates with the brush.  
 Colour the brush.

High in the air, His dreams are there,  
 Searching for answers he will look everywhere.  
 Thinks he has won, a place in the sun,  
 Free from the worries and the ways of everyone.

Peel the paint, look underneath,  
 You'll see the same, the same old savage beast.  
 Strip the coats, the coats of time,  
 And find mad eyes and see those sharpened teeth.

Nothing's been learned, no nothing at all.  
 Don't be fooled, get up before you fall.

Carnal grave, crawling smooth,  
 Open flesh and you must let him in.  
 Glass reflect, what you are,  
 It shows the face, the evil face of sin.

**Mister Class and Quality?**

Look around my rooms and see the prizes I have showing,  
 Working hard to build my life and plan the way I'm going,  
 House and car and pretty wife, they've all been won by knowing.

Paperwork, white collared shirts, where would we be without them.  
 Man of class and quality, I never shout about them,  
 Choose my friends for my own ends, you can't succeed without them.

Middleman sees straight ahead and never crosses borders,  
 Never understood the artist or the lazy workers,  
 The world needs steady men like me to give and take the orders.

**Three Friends**

Once three friends, sweet in sadness, now part of their past.  
 In the end, full of gladness, went from class to class.

## Appendix C: 'No God's a Man' and 'Aspirations' lyrics.

**No God's a Man**

Now the words and the claims are seen as always the way they'll always be.  
Truth is halfway true, the man is only a man who fails to know,  
The power shouting for him have turn now, telling him to go.

Power that have place, esteemed positions telling him to cry,  
Soon after song is sung, in turn for existing blame and then,  
Apologise, conditions turn, then it happens all again.

After all the things are said, no God's a man.  
And yet after all the things are said, no God's a man,  
Must happen all again.  
(And then again.)

**Aspirations**

As the dust settles, see our dreams, all coming true, it depends on you,  
If our times, they are troubled times, show us the way, tell us what to do.

As our faith, maybe aimless blind, hope our ideals and our thoughts are yours,  
And believing the promises, please make your claims really so sincere.

Be our guide, our light and our way of life,  
And let the world see the way we lead our way.  
Hopes, dreams, hopes dreaming that all our sorrows gone.  
(Hopes, dreams, dreaming that all our sorrows gone forever.)

In your hands, holding everyone's future and fate, it is all in you.  
Make us strong, build our unity, all men as one, it is all in you.

## Appendix D: 'Convenience', 'All Through the Night' and 'I Am a Camera' lyrics.

**Convenience**

Plastic, plastic, take the modern way.  
 Simulation for my instant day.  
 Why should I care, if you say that it's no good?  
 It's for me, can't you see?

Convenience, everything is clean and easy.

I can't read, but then I watch T.V.  
 Simulation, they can do it for me.  
 How can you say, what is right and what is wrong?  
 It's for you, for me too.

Convenience, everything is clean and easy.

Just believe me, it runs like a big machine.  
 It's just for me, can't you see?

Convenience, everything is clean and easy.

**All Through the Night**

Every day they clock me, every day is just the same.  
 And the people I see, wear the same face as me.  
 As I turn the handle, time goes slowly by.  
 Is that all there is until the day that I die?

All through the night, through the night.  
 All through the night, I can't believe I'm free till morning.

If I wipe the dirt and sweat, then I find that more's still there.  
 If the summer don't get you, then the winter always will.  
 Try not to think, it never gets nowhere.  
 But at least every day ends, and the night's always there.

**I Am a Camera**

My eyes are ready, they're focusing on you.  
 I'm watching every move and all you do.  
 I see you everywhere, I'm here and now I'm there.  
 Nowhere you can hide, you're still in view.

And when the shutter's open, Images on my screen,  
 Sent to the people waiting, people you've never seen,  
 'cause,

I am a camera, looking at pictures of you.  
 I am a camera, smile.  
 Now you see me, no you don't.

I'm always working, at night and in the day.  
 I'm your security, that's what they say.  
 And if you think you're free, then turn your back on me.  
 I'll catch you as you look the other way.

## Appendix E: 'Just the Same', 'Free Hand' and 'Mobile' lyrics.

**Just the Same**

See me, what I am, what I was, what I'll be,  
 Hear me, understand that I'm not what you see.  
 Take this, take the man, middle term, common me.

Don't you see that I'm just doing what I want to do?  
 Nothing more and nothing less than you.  
 Read no thoughts I didn't think myself,  
 Just the same as anybody else.

Make me someone else, put me up on a stand,  
 Something that I don't really want on my hands.  
 Use me, idolise all you can understand.

Change it, what you think, what you thought, what you say,  
 Look for something more than you sought yesterday.  
 I don't want to be part of your life today.

**Free Hand**

Who would believe me now that my hands are free, that my hands are free?  
 I never thought it would ever come to me, ever come to me.  
 Now that my life's my own, I leave you behind, leaving you behind.  
 What ever made you think that I'd change my mind, that I'd change me mind.

It wasn't hard to run, break away from you, break away from you.  
 After all you'd done, what was I to do, what was I to do?  
 Who's gonna take my place in the games you play, in the games you play.  
 Nobody's listening now to the things you say, all the things you say.

Now my hands are free from the ties, from the ties.  
 Now I look forward to the future, where it lies.  
 And with you feeling low, looking back,  
 Here now my head is clear, why should I look back?

When it over did you have regrets, did you have regrets?  
 OR did you really think it was over yet, it was over yet?  
 Now that my life's my own I leave you behind, leaving you behind.  
 What ever made you think that I'd change my mind, change my mind?  
 Change my mind. Change my mind.

**Mobile**

Up, up, time to fly.  
 Moving all around, going where from town to town.  
 All looking the same, changing only in name.  
 Days turn into nights, time is nothing only if it's right.  
 From where you came, don't you think it's a game.

No, no, don't ask why.  
 Do it as you're told, you're the packet, do it as you're sold.  
 To all your friends, none for you at the end.  
 Give them all you can, finish stronger than when you first began.  
 You never pretend, all for you at the end.

Time, time say goodbye.  
 To another place, hope that you're seeing what you chase.  
 All things as they should, always thought that they would.  
 So you're racing ahead, home is just your shelter and your bed.  
 You do all you could, yesterday not as good.

There are no hours, there are no seasons,  
Only the present, choice is the reason.

Moving all around, going where from town to town.  
All looking the same, changing only in name.  
Days turn into nights, time is nothing only if it's right.  
From where you came, it's you who's taking the blame.  
Give them all you can, finish stronger than when you first began.  
You take the acclaim, don't you think it's a game.

## Appendix F: 'Give it Back' and 'Design' lyrics.

**Give it Back**

Isn't it strange, oh it's funny,  
Working for years have no money.  
Suddenly luck can smile on you,  
And your life seems worthwhile to you.

Just how much can you spend, give it back in the end,  
And the time of your season, was no use, had no reason.

And you move, you go away,  
And you can't come home, not today.  
Spreading it out over the bad years,  
Not for those men, they can't hear.

Haven't had much in a long time,  
Hoping that change is going to be mine.  
Don't want to go, I want to stay here,  
Spreading it out over the bad years.

**Design**

As years drift by and future dies.

He sits and thinks about all he's done in life,  
I'm not an old man, what have I been in life?  
What did I do? Had no end to aspire to.

His dreams as a boy were of hope and intention,  
Of making his mark with his plans and invention.  
Where did they go, how could he know how time goes?

In my day had to have certain future,  
But now you can do as you like,  
All that I might have wanted,  
Seeking what you're after, but not for me.

Everything comes to those who wait,  
I thought everything may come to me,  
Made my way only as I was able.

He knows there's no more he can do, no romances now bitten today,  
For they have all his chances, all too late, no one waits,  
how time goes by.

Seeking what you're after, but not for me.  
Have as my years drift by, never for me.

## Appendix G: 'Pantagruel's Nativity' and 'The Advent of Panurge' lyrics.

**Pantagruel's Nativity**

How can I laugh or cry, when my mind is sorely torn?  
 Badabec had to die, fair Pantagruel is born.  
 Shall I weep, yes, for why? Then laugh and show my scorn.

Born with a strength untold, foreseen to have great age.  
 Set in gargantuan mould, joyful laugh yet quick to rage.  
 Princely wisdom, habits bold; power, glory, lauded sage.

Pantagruel born, the earth was dry and burning.  
 In paradise dear Badabec prays for him.

**The Advent of Panurge**

There, coming over Charaton Bridge.  
 Look, do you see the man who is poor but rich?  
 What do you wish, and where do you go?  
 Who are you, where are you from, will you tell me your name?  
 Rest a while, call me your friend,  
 Please stay with me I'd like to help.

Then he said,  
 How can I speak when I'm dry and my throat is burning,  
 So bring me aid and I'll answer your doubts.  
 Friend in need I'd like your help,  
 Please take me home and I'll stay with you.

Then he said fair Pantagruel,  
 My name is Panurge and I have come from hell.

Look at my friend, look all around you.  
 Look at my friend, take all you round.

Hey, friend  
 (improvised foreign words)

So brotherhood was made as their bond,  
 Carried him home and provide for his needs and his shelter,  
 This day was done as no other the like.  
 Faithfully their vow was made, and from that day they were as one.

## Appendix H: 'Knots' lyrics.

**Knots**

All in all each man in all men,  
 All men in each man.  
 He can see she can't,  
 She can see she can, see whatever, whatever,  
 You may know what I don't know,  
 But not that I don't know it and I can't tell you so you will.

To tell me all man in all men, all men in each man.  
 He can see she can't,  
 She can see she can, see what ever, what ever.  
 You may know what I don't know,  
 But not that I don't know it and I can't tell you so you will,  
 Have to tell me all.

It hurts him to think that  
 She is hurting her by  
 Him being hurt to think  
 That she thinks he is hurt  
 By making her feel guilty  
 At hurting him by her  
 Being hurt to think that  
 She thinks he is hurt by  
 Making her feel guilty  
 At hurting him by her  
 Thinking she wants him to  
 Want her her wants her to  
 Want him to get him to  
 Want him to get him to  
 Want her she pretends.

He tries to make her afraid by not being afraid.

You may know what I don't know,  
 But not that I don't know it and I can't tell you so you will  
 Have to tell me all.

I get what I deserve  
 I deserve what I get  
 I have it so I deserve  
 It I deserve it  
 For I have it I get  
 What I deserve what I  
 Deserve what I get I  
 Have it so I deserve.

He tries to make her afraid by not being afraid.



## Appendix I: 'Wreck' and 'Think of Me with Kindness' lyrics.

**Wreck**

The ship's rising up from the sea to the sky,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 Just one sorry scream and a desperate cry,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 Their lives pass before them before they die.  
 Hey,

The sea yawns around like a boiling hell,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 And souls disappear with the toll of that bell,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 The arms of the sea they are dragging them down,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 And sorrows and sins they are lost as they drown.  
 Hey,

How strange when you think that the sea was their way,  
 And a meaningless death is the price they pay.  
 For their living was made from the deep,  
 To their people in comfort and keep.  
 Keep all their people and places there,  
 Never to be seen again never to be loved and their last embrace/  
 And the kiss has a salt bitter taste.

Now all the remains is the deep cruel sea,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 And the wreckage of things that used to be,  
 Hey, hold on.  
 No stone marks the place of that watery grave  
 Hey, hold on.  
 Together they die both the weak and the brave,  
 Hey, hold on.

**Think of Me with Kindness**

Why am I, using words, no more to say without you,  
 Close the door, put out the lights and go.  
 Late the night, in the night your shadow falls between us.  
 Never more, never know.  
 There, memories are sorrow,  
 When there's no tomorrow.

Sleep while the sweet sorrow wakes my daydream.  
 Sleep while you,  
 Think of me with kindness, please remember former days.  
 Sweet the song that once we sang the silent parting ways.  
 And you know, and you know,

And you know, long ago when we first made our promise,  
 Empty words, I wonder did you know?

The laugh that love could not forgive,  
 Is gone and tells me no more to live.  
 And we who looking beauties love,  
 Must now through all look back on before.  
 The tears that first I cried no more,  
 Your love has come and gone no more.  
 And we who look in beauties love,  
 must now through all think back on before.

And you know, when we two parted in tears and silence,  
Past the days, the parting ways.  
Fare thee well, fare thee well, you that was once dear to me,  
Think of me with kindness,  
Think of me.

## Appendix J: 'Plain Truth' and 'A Cry for Everyone' lyrics.

**Plain Truth**

Why do you question, when there's no answer told?  
Plain truth is nothing, you can't buy it when it's sold.

Save all your money, and they won't reason why,  
Why all the worry? They'll spend it when you die.

Don't look for something, plain truth is nothing,  
Nothing but the plain truth.

You stand and wonder, just let it warm your skin.  
Take all the living, live life and let it win.

Plain truth means nothing, cry, laugh and cry again,  
You question answers, born, live and die again.

**A Cry for Everyone**

Run, why should I run away?  
When at the end, the only truth certain one day,  
everyone dies if only to justify life.

Live, I've lived a thousand lives,  
And anyone is the right the just life,  
If I could cry, I'd cry for everyone.

Doubts, no doubt is all I know,  
There is no fate, there's no luck, what does that show|  
Show is proof, but proving is nothing but fear.

Hope, I've hoped two thousand years,  
But no one hears, so I've cried, crying vain tears.  
Always too late, too late to cry, cry for everyone.

## Appendix K: 'Memories of Old Days' lyrics.

**Memories of Old Days**

Now the wings fell to ground as the miles they were crossed,  
All the years seemed like days as the time it as lost,  
For without his solutions and reasons for why,  
He should come up for air to the town once his by.

So soon on his way,  
Shadows from the pathways,  
Memories of old days.

That the journal was long many thoughts filled his mind,  
As he neared the stop always a dream he would find,  
But the road that he knew cold no longer be seen,  
And the city lights flickered where lake waters gleamed.

With sadness today,  
Hopes of joy yesterday,  
Memories of old days.

Sky and the trees of his youthful time spent,  
Only smoke, only paper. No colour or scent.

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