

On Reflection

The Newsletter of the APEX

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"One good thing about music: when it hits you feel no pain."
- Bob Marley

Can Progressive music survive in the '90s?

As we stand "close to the edge" of the 1990s, looking forward at the oncoming decade, one question comes peering out from behind the safety of the Rather Not Think About It compartment in the backs of our minds: can Progressive music, as we know it, make the journey into the 1990s with us?

1970s vs. 1980s

A number of factors come into play when pondering this question. Progressive music *as we know it* is long gone. The Progressive music that kept us going in the 1980s was quite different from that which fulfilled its promise in the 1970s. In the *Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock 'n' Roll*, an entry on Progressive music observed that "...Progressive rock is definitely a '70s genre...."

In this decade, we have had our foremost Progressive musicians, among them Allan Holdsworth and Bill Bruford, turn to fusion and jazz for their continued expansion, expression and progress. From our other Progressive artists? We have had to deal with the pop-crossover appeal and success of Genesis and its alumni, Yes and its splinter groups, and the compromising efforts of ELP spin-offs and video-age "supergroups" like Asia and GTR. In the year 2000, and again in 2010, 2020 and 2030, when there is an opportunity to look back at this decade with more objectivity, such variances from the original visions may not seem so significant.

But right now, thinking about and listening to it, the '80s changed the face of Progressive music. The industry became much more homogenized and the records that were produced by the system for the rock 'n' roll audience had to have the same sound. Dense layers of studio-sculpted music, the drums overmiked and underplayed, the dynamics more consistent within each composition. This kind of sound was introduced by the arena-rock pop groups of the late '70s like Journey, Foreigner and REO Speed-

wagon. This kind of sound eliminates the subtleties that made the original era of Progressive bands so special.

Case studies

The two most significant Progressive events/albums of the 1980s were probably the very welcome return of King Crimson with *Discipline* in 1981 and the *Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe* album, tour, live broadcast and controversy this year. The former benefitted from having been the unintended outgrowth of something completely different. This was to be the first project on Robert Fripp's "drive to 1984," a band that would try to accomplish something new in a context that openly challenged the recording/distribution/broadcast Goliath that comprised the music industry.

Given that mission, the quality of the players involved, and the bias of Headmaster Fripp, the project begged, and was granted, the name King Crimson. As Fripp stated at the time: "Simply adopting the name, or even trying to form King Crimson, would have been impossible: King Crimson is a way of doing things." Said Bill Bruford in 1983: "King Crimson exists to change things."

I remember my first listening to *Discipline*. I recall thinking that it was unlike any previous Crimson and yet very much like what I expect of Crimson. The new music was a new direction, a new method of instrumental role-playing. The drums and stick seem to be playing melodies while the two guitars provide the rhythm. And who could have foreseen Crimson with *two* guitars? The 1981-84 Crimson lineup expanded the definition of what King Crimson, as "a way of doing things," was capable of doing.

The next release, *Beat*, continued this direction. It is an overlooked and underrated album; many of the songs are the equal to anything on *Discipline*. But by the third release, *Three of a Perfect Pair* (1984), there was

continued p.7

1960s
1970s
1980s
1990s

R E L A Y E R

HOWE HELPS ON LOGIC

Steve Howe plays on two cuts on the new Animal Logic album. Animal Logic features Stanley Clarke on bass and strings, Stewart Copeland on drums and Deborah Holland on keyboards and vocals. Frankly, the album is terrible and Howe's contributions went unnoticed by me on a casual listening. The album is on IRS' No Speak label, for which Howe has recorded some solo tracks.

THE ULTIMATE DEAN

Roger Dean/Hipgnosis et al have just put out *The Ultimate Album Cover Album*, a compilation of covers from each of their three previous collections. There is also a section of recent covers. If you have any of his previous books, this one is far from necessary. Still, it's in print, which is more than can be said for his other books.

ABWH HOME VIDEO

Anderson Bruford Wakeman Howe, *A Special Home Video Collection*, will be released on December 5, 1989. The collection, distributed by 6 West Home Video (SW-5706), contains videos of "Brother of Mine," "Order of the Universe" and "Quartet," plus a live version of "Heart of the Sunrise" from the recent tour. Also included is "rare, never before seen behind-the-scenes footage of the making of their debut...album." The list price is \$14.98.

REPRISE RELEASES ROXY

Bryan Ferry has licensed the original masters to several of the early Roxy Music albums to Reprise, which has just released a slew of new CDs. These include the first album, *Country Life*, *Siren*, *Stranded*, *For Your Pleasure*, *Viva* and *Manifesto*. Judging from *Country Life*, the packages are faithful and the mastering is very well done.

GABRIEL'S WORLD RECORDS

Peter Gabriel has been using the money he made from *So* to build a giant recording studio and launch a new music label, Real World, for the purpose of recording musicians from a variety of countries. In on the project are friends from WOMAD (World of Music and Dance), which Gabriel co-founded several years ago to foster greater awareness of non-Western performing arts.

There are presently four albums out on the new label, including one called *Passion Sources*, which features music that inspired and influenced Gabriel's *Passion*, the soundtrack to *The Last Temptation of Christ*. He also plans to work on a new solo album in the spring, and will most likely use some of the musicians he has been recording.

CLAPTON CONCERTO

As if Eric Clapton really has more worlds to conquer in his brilliant career, he is beginning his next UK tour with 18 shows at London's Royal Albert Hall, three of which will feature a guitar concerto he will perform with the London Symphony Orchestra.

HOLIDAY WISHES

As I write this, Thanksgiving is coming up and boy, do I have a lot to be thankful for! I am thankful that I have been able to not only be touched and inspired by an art form as rewarding and enriching as Progressive music, but that I have been able to give something back by fostering support and awareness of the ever-overlooked genre.

I am especially thankful for all the new friends I have made as a result of the birth of The APEX. I haven't met all of you (yet) but I know that as long as we have this shared interest and this vehicle for reaching each other, we are family.

As the holidays approach, I wish you all the joy and beauty that this music has to offer, and all the best wishes for a healthy, happy and peaceful Chanukah, Christmas and New Year. ☺

On Reflection makes a perfect gift for your Progressive friends. Buy a subscription at the regular rate and include a card or a message. Yule be glad you did!

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Frank Jarvis, where ya been?

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David Cross comes back strong

David Cross, who played violin, viola and keyboards with King Crimson on such classic albums as *Larks' Tongues in Aspic* (1973), *Starless and Bible Black* (1974), *Red* (1974) and *USA* (1975), has come out from the shadows of obscurity with an impressive instrumental effort called *Memos from Purgatory* (Red Hot Records CDR 103). The title is taken from the Harlan Ellison novel.

To my knowledge, the only other recording he's done since Crimson was in 1975, two albums (*Clearlight Symphony* and *Forever Blowing Bubbles*) with Clearlight, an assemblage of ex-Gong musicians and some of their Canterbury-area cronies, among them Steve Hillage, Tim Blake, Didier Malherbe, Didier Lockwood, Cyrille Verdeaux and Christian Boule.

For his own album, Cross has put together a talented albeit unknown lineup. Pete McPhail plays saxes and

WIDI (an electronic wind instrument), Sheila Maloney plays keyboards and piano, Simon Murrell plays bass, and Dan Maurer plays drums. Cross plays only violin on the album.

The disc opens with "Poppies," a nice track that belies the New Age-ish beginning. The next track, "Meantime," is more indicative of the pulse of the recording. A fusion of elegant playing with Crimsonish manic jazz instincts (thanks to McPhail's excellent sax work), the piece alternates hard and soft for nearly ten minutes.

Throughout the next two tracks, "The First Policeman" and "Animal," one can almost pick out traces of Crimson tunes like "Talking Drum" and "Larks' Tongues in Aspic Part II." But that is unfair, for this is not an attempt to cash in on familiar territory. David Cross' playing in King Crimson is a far cry from the rich and expressive compositions and

stringwork done here.

"New Dawn" was originally commissioned by a dance company. It is light and airy but also fun and tasteful. Not as meaty as the other cuts but proof that Cross can play a soothing violin. "PostScript" starts off like a New Age cut but ends up more like a pumping Oldfield tune, with unintelligible voices scattered throughout. "Bizarre Bazaar" has a touch of the East in it, and a very twisted East at that. This has the most blatantly impressive speedy violin work of the album.

Memos closes with "Basking in the Blue," a solo acoustic piano piece that is reminiscent of Mannheim Steamroller keyboardist Jackson Berkey's "Interludes" but without the nature sounds. The track could have used them. Still, the album as a whole is strong, Progressive and very enjoyable. Welcome back, David, we hardly knew ye. ☺

Line head denies Giant error

It looks as if the horrendous error made in the mastering of the first Gentle Giant album CD may go unfixed. Uwe Tessnow, President of Line Records in Germany, is standing by his claim that the original master tapes feature the three-second gap between the fifth and sixth tracks, "Nothing at All" and "Why Not?"

The matter was first raised by an *On Reflection* reader named Hadley (sorry, I never got your last name) to ICE (International CD Exchange). The concerned folks at ICE contacted Tessnow, who said that the problem would be fixed. Now, however, he is saying that there is no problem to fix.

If you don't own the album or the CD (shame on you!), the scenario is this: "Nothing at All" end with a single,

extended organ note ("dooooooooo"). "Why Not?" opens with that same organ, now going "doo doo doo-doo-doo-doo doo..." On the album, there is the slightest pause between the two songs; this works really well with the solo organ.

On the CD, however, "Nothing at All" ends and then the first "doo" of "Why Not?" begins. Then, the track (Track 5) ends and there is a three-second pause until the beginning of Track 6, in which the song picks up where it left off before the break. **The song actually begins and then suffers a pause before continuing.**

Clearly, Tessnow must be lying. Perhaps it will cost too much money to fix or maybe they tossed the original tapes. The fact is, Line Records has

delivered a lemon of a disk and will not admit it and make amends.

Hadley has sent off a clear, concise and concerned letter, along with a cassette of the way the songs are supposed to be linked, to Tessnow and I urge you all to do the same (and Derek, if you're reading this, I hope there's something you can and will do). Whether you like Giant or not, or have any intention of getting this CD or not, anytime a record company takes such a stubborn and ignorant stand against an obvious quality control issue, it affects all lovers and collectors of music.

The address to write is Uwe Tessnow, Line Records, P.O. Box 605220, D-2000 Hamburg 60, West Germany. ☺

MARKET VALUE

LIVE YES WANTED:

I am looking for any live Yes tapes from 1971-79 that have "Starship Trooper" on them (excluding L.A. Forum 1978 and Yessongs). Videos that include Trooper from the above era would be great as well.

Also, photographs of Steve Howe from '71-'79 would be nice; the bigger the better (remember that fabulous red, black and white costume with the arrows on it?).

Please contact:

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Genesis: 1982 reunion show w/Gabriel

AUDIO - The Who: the entire Miami 7/30/89 show

VINYL - Genesis: a good copy of *Six of the Best*, the 1982 3lp reunion show that includes "The Knife"

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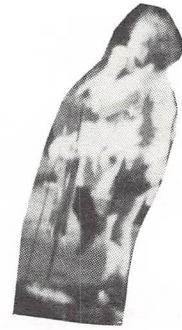
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Echoes... Echoes... Echoes... Echoes... Echoes...

PROGRESSIVE DREAM BAND: Miscellaneous instruments

The response to this installment of the PDB was hardly sufficient to earn a mandate to three top winners, so here instead is the full list of Progressive musicians who scored points in the survey.



- Ian Anderson - flute (Jethro Tull) - 17
- Mel Collins - sax (King Crimson, et al) - 11
- Eddie Jobson - violin (UK, Roxy, Zappa) - 9
- Jan Hammer - mini moog - 5
- Simon House - violin (Third Ear Band, Hawkwind) - 5
- Kerry Minnear - moog/vibraphone/cello (Gentle Giant) - 5
- Jamie Muir - percussion (King Crimson) - 5
- Mauro Pagani - woodwinds/violin (PFM) - 5
- David Cross - violin (King Crimson) - 4
- Tony Levin - stick (Crimson, Gabriel, ABWH) - 4
- Lindsay Cooper - bassoon (Henry Cow) - 3
- Thjis Van Leer - flute/yodelling (Focus) - 3
- Geoffrey Richardson - viola and flute (Caravan) - 3
- Andy Latimer - flute (Camel) - 1
- Fred Muhlbock - flute (Novalis) - 1
- Nik Turner - sax (Hawkwind) - 1

Voters:

Andy Kel Loch, Mitchell Ragone, Mark Doomkey, Pat Valencia, Michael P. Dawson, Jason M. Rubin, Larry Crasnick, Marc Rains.

PDB - 1st, 2nd & 3rd strings

1.

- Jon Anderson - vocals
- Robert Fripp - guitar
- Keith Emerson - keyboards
- Chris Squire - bass
- Bill Bruford - drums

2.

- Greg Lake - vocals
- Steve Howe - guitar
- Rick Wakeman - keyboards
- Tony Levin - bass
- Carl Palmer - drums

3.

- Annie Haslam - vocals
- Steve Hackett - guitar
- Eddie Jobson - keyboards
- John Wetton - bass
- Neil Peart - drums

Progressive music in the '90s continued

nothing new they could say. In fact, the most striking piece on the album is "Larks' Tongues in Aspic Part III," and Parts I and II came out 11 years earlier. That suggests that the band was unable to go forward, and Fripp is one of few people left who understand that "progressive" means going forward and not backwards or sideways. It is therefore better that it ended rather than be greeted with a fourth album that was a true disappointment. The King Crimson catalog has no dogs in it because Fripp always turns off the tap when the water starts getting rusty. Given time to explore other areas, it can be hoped that a King Crimson may yet rise again.

ABWH, Yes' version of *Back to the Future*, provides an interesting contrast. The '80s King Crimson had the name but not all the original musicians. ABWH had the original musicians but not the name. This recording clearly belongs to the '80s. Technology is not used so much as a tool but as an environment, a sampled and synthesized foundation on which to stack sonic layers. While the work clearly bears more of the classic Progressive values than "real" Yes releases like *90125* (1984) and *Big Generator* (1987), I find it lacks in comparison to *Drama* (1980), a surprisingly rewarding blend of Yes players with one of the quintessential techno-pop video groups, the Buggles.

Interestingly, the '80s King Crimson tours emphasized the new material almost exclusively and only two mid-'70s songs, "Larks' Tongues in Aspic Part II" and "Red," were updated and played live. ABWH, on the other hand, relied on the old songs for more than half of the shows' content. While these are different bands with different philosophies and histories (and commercial success and awareness), the extent that the decade inhibited new directions and expressions is apparent.

And yet, the fact that ABWH could happen and become such a hot topic in the media may be a sign that the

nostalgia that every decade's ending musters could now be rekindling the glowing embers of Progressive music.

Jethro Tull, now on a hot tour supporting a strong album, is one veteran band that does not apologize for being Progressive. In the recent Tull tour program, Ian Anderson says "...having begun our careers as one of the leaders in...progressive rock music...it's a strange irony that we are still actually doing this today. We are probably almost alone...in still perpetuating that idea - of taking the basis of rock and blues with the occasional elements of folk music, jazz and classical music and combining those into something which might still be most correctly and simply termed progressive rock music."

There is no doubt, however, that such an admission, so common in the '70s, has now become the exception rather than the rule. To be fair, how could Progressive music be expected to hold up in the same decade that colorization of old movies became profitable and in which the President of the United States declared ketchup a vegetable? It all adds up: the '80s have diluted, homogenized and all but quashed beauty and truth in, among other things, Progressive music.

Looking around

Gentle Giant was formed in 1970 and broke up in 1980. In 1990, there will be as large a gap of time without a Giant as there was with one. And while reunion tours are all the rage, don't expect this one. Derek Shulman is "working all day" as President of Atco Records, Ray Shulman is a successful producer, Kerry Minnear got religion and is now giving music lessons, Gary Green is living in relative obscurity in the Chicago area, and John Weathers pops in and out of view with the Wales-based Man.

Gentle Giant is an example of the distance of time. They are gone and they are not coming back. Crimson came back. And left again. ABWH came back, but

Bruford is unlikely to remain in such a situation for very long. E, L, and P, in various phases, came back but without lasting interest. The other bands are either long gone or plugging away on a more conventional level, going after the consistent exposure that groups like Rush, who have managed to straddle the fence and still be clever, have long enjoyed.

The '80s Progressive groups like Marillion and IQ are facing key personnel changes, and Twelfth Night, Pallas and Gowan have yet to be noticed on any meaningful scale. It Bites and Marillion have new albums out but are any other bands in a productive cycle? Progressive music is at the crossroads and it needs new blood. The old guard is waning, the principles of the '70s are being dubbed archaic, and the standards by which progress in rock music is defined have eroded over time.

I do not know what music will be like ten years from now. In 1969, who could have predicted *Brain Salad Surgery* (ELP), *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (Genesis), *Going For the One* (Yes) or *U.K.?* And in 1979, who could have predicted that some of the same musicians who created those works would come up with stuff like *Abacab* (Genesis), *Alpha* (Asia), *GTR* or *3 to the Power of Three* (3)? It is the end of 1989 and I don't know if there are artists waiting to be discovered who are truly gifted and dedicated to advancing the art of rock music. I do not know if the music industry will loosen its hold on the formulaic conventions that place price ahead of value. I do not know if video cameras will continue to cause musicians to become more attuned to their image than to their music.

All I can do is hope that the cycle will come around again and the need for new, original musical expression will be answered. The '80s has been a selfish, mindless and quick-please decade. Let's hope that works of substance, pieces of music that challenge the listener, that

1990s continued

force the listener to become an active part of the musical experience (from a mental, emotional and spiritual angle, and not just physical) can be what defines the course of music in the 1990s.

I do not want the APEX to become an antiquarian society; as music must progress, so must the APEX foster awareness and appreciation of that progress. Progressive music must not be confined to and defined by any one decade or era. But at the same time, the standards and ideals that framed the classic Progressive works must never be compromised. As we keep alive the works of the originators, let us seek out and support the next generation of Progressive artists. Performers and audiences alike must never be ashamed or afraid of espousing quality and individuality. ☺

Season's

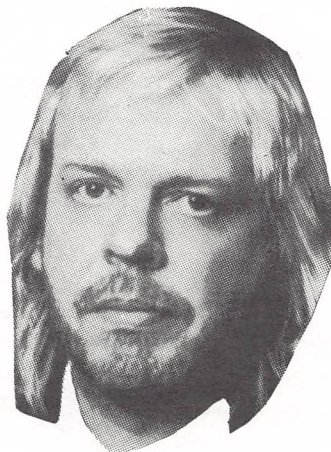
BIRTHDAYS

<i>Dec. 21</i>	Frank Zappa	<i>b. 1940</i>
<i>Dec. 24</i>	Jan Akkerman	<i>b. 1946</i>
<i>Dec. 26</i>	Phil Spector	<i>b. 1939</i>
<i>Dec. 27</i>	Michael Pinder	<i>b. 1941</i>
<i>Dec. 29</i>	Ray Thomas	<i>b. 1941</i>
<i>Dec. 30</i>	Jeff Lynne	<i>b. 1947</i>

Greetings

The APEX

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