Vol. I, Issue 7 August 1989

On Reflection

The Newsletter of the APEX

Annie Haslam: An Appreciation

In a male-dominated genre, one voice rises above all others: that of diminutive diva Annie Haslam of Renaissance. Though she stands just around five feet tall, her fiveoctave voice scales unequalled heights of sound and feeling.

How clearly I recall my first taste of her exquisite larynx. I always listen to music as I sleep, and often delay my bedtime by 30 minutes while trying to choose the album that will carry me off to dreamland. As a local college radio station often played Progressive music late night on a show called "No Commercial Potential," I decided one night to leave the driving to them.

Following Daevid Allen's "Poet for Sale" (from Now is the Happiest Time of



Your Life) came a stirring composition that was identified upon its conclusion as "Trip to the Fair" by Renaissance from the album Scheherazade and other Stories. All I knew at the time I was listening to it, though, was that I was truly moved and mesmerized by the astoundingly beautiful vocals. This was not the music that would send me to sleep for I sat up and listened closely as if it was a private recital for my ears only.

The next day I rushed to tell a friend about my latest discovery

and found out that he, too, had listened to the show and he, too, was affected by the voice of Annie Haslam. Renaissance albums soon entered my collection and were played again and again. As happens whenever I get very interested in something, I sought the story behind the music, the group and the voice.

Renaissance is a concept that has called upon two different groups of musicians to give it life. The first group was formed by ex-Yardbirds Jim McCarty and Keith Relf, and featured the lovely voice of Relf's sister, Jane. After their eponymous first album in 1971, a number of personnel changes occurred, leaving a completely new lineup to continue as Renaissance. The first album by the second

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"All shades of opinion feed an open mind." - Peter Gabriel

Syn-Phonic issues third Prog release

Syn-Phonic, a record label and distributor of Progressive music, has released its third album, the first on its own label. You may recall in issue 2 that I promised a review of the first two releases for the next issue. Having blatantly failed to do that, I am now able to remark on the Syn-Phonic trilogy.

The latest album, *Sacred Baboon* by Yezda Urfa, is the best of the bunch, although the post office must have been playing rugby with it because the box came with a corner at a 90-degree angle and the record was likewise bent and warped. Because of that, there are only two songs that I can play. I do not blame Syn-Phonic for this, it was adequately packaged (but Greg, I wouldn't mind another copy; I'll send back the old one).

Even having heard only two songs, I liked this one best because it's *original*. The accompanying letter suggested that, as a fan of Gentle Giant, I would appreciate it. Indeed, there is much here that a Giant fan would like. The assortment of tempos, time signatures and instrumentation within a single song recalls the eclecticism of Giant. Yezda Urfa, though (at least in the tracks I heard), appear to get out of hand. In short, they tend to do too much in each song and the result is disjointed.

Another problem I have is the lyrics. Unless you're Lewis Carroll, lines such as "sillbum are you punctuating



In an effort to get in more news per page, "Relayer" will now become a page of bite-sized news items. This is the kind of thing where the more eyes and ears that contribute, the better. Many of you have written me with great scoops and I hope that continues. When I just can't resist mounting a soapbox, though, "Relayer" may revert back to an essay format but I hope that there will be enough actual news bits to fill this page. And so here we go:

A/B/W/H ON PAY-PER-VIEW

Check the availability of Pay-Per-View in your area because on September 9, an Anderson/Bruford/Wakeman/Howe concert will be broadcast live from Sacramento. Pay-Per-View is a cable TV service which charges on a perevent basis for its programming. Regardless of what you feel about the album, keep in mind that about half the show will be Yes tunes and the stage set was designed by Roger Dean. Get those VCRs ready!

MCLACHLAN LIKES GABRIEL

In a recent article on Sarah McLachlan, whose debut album, *Touch*, was recently released on Arista, the singer and 12-string guitarist openly admitted her appreciation of Peter Gabriel. Here is an excerpt: "McLachlan is only 20 years old, but she has spent 12 of those years playing classical guitar and piano. She attended the Nova Scotia Royal Conservatory of Music but didn't restrict herself to the classical genre.

'I also used to listen to a lot of Joan Baez, Cat Stevens and Simon and Garfunkel. They were my mother's influence...[a]nd when I was 16, I started to listen to progressive music and new wave by the Cocteau Twins and Kate Bush. Then I discovered Peter Gabriel, who is a god to me. He just opened up a whole new meaning of music. He's so articulate, he writes great lyrics and has explored so many different kinds of music. He makes me want to achieve more and more with my own music."

A friend of mine saw McLachlan at the Nightstage in Cambridge and reported that she did a cover of "Solsbury Hill."

MARILLION REVIEW

Brett Milano, a Progressive-minded writer whose article on Derek Shulman from The Boston Globe was reprinted in the first issue of OR, recently reviewed Marillion's *Thieving Magpie* in the paper's weekly arts magazine. I hope he doesn't mind my reprinting it here:

"Initially dismissed as a Genesis ripoff, Marillion is one of the few bands left playing '70s-style progressive rock. While it's refreshing to hear that sound again, it's taken the band a few years to find its own voice. The breakthrough came on the last two albums, Misplaced Childhood and Clutching at Straws, when singer Fish, since departed, stopped writing on cosmic themes and started dealing with his own experiences. This live set is drawn mainly from those albums. There are still some ponderous stretches, but there are also some striking melodies on 'Jigsaw' and 'Lavendar' and proudly grandiose instrumentals. Diehard fans, however, won't need this album: the live recording is so clean that the new versions are almost carbon copies of the originals."

HTM RETRO DUE ON CD

In the latest Kit Watkins release on East Side Digital, *Azure*, there is a notice to the effect that a comprehensive retrospective of Happy the Man will be released on CD by the label in the fall of 1989. Titled *Retrospective*, the set will include 15 tracks taken from their three albums. **NEW TULL DUE IN AUGUST** *Rock Island*, the tentatively-titled next album from Grammy-winning Heavy Metal group Jethro Tull, is due out in late August. You can only hope success hasn't gotten to their heads.

HOWE TO KEEP BUSY

While Arista is keeping Steve Howe in the spotlight as the A/B/W/H caboose, IRS' GuitarSpeak line has three releases featuring the #2 all-time Progressive guitarist, as voted last month by APEXes. The original Guitar-Speak sampler has a great but rather short (3:25) track by Howe entitled "Sharp on Attack." He also guests on ex-Ultravox guitarist Billy Currie's release and can be found on a live release of a series of concerts given by IRS featuring some of the musicians that are on the sampler. Howe does two songs, including "Wurm." ©

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Iconoclasta:

Progressive from South of the Border

The sound barrier has been broken again. Not by Yeager, but by a Mexican Progressive band *se llama* Iconoclasta. Based in Mexico City, Iconoclasta has been playing together since 1980. Just released on Art Sublime, a new Progressive label, is a compilation of their first two albums on a single CD that clocks in at an extraordinary 80:21.

Iconoclasta consists of (on this release anyway) Ricardo Moreno, guitars, synthesizers; Rosa Flora Moreno, keyboards; Nohemi d'Rubin, bass, acoustic guitar; Ricardo Ortegon, guitars; and Victor Baldo-

vinos, drums. Aside from the two albums represented on this disk, *Iconoclasta* (1983) and *Reminiscencias* (1986), the group other releases are an EP entitled *Suite Mexicana* (1987), and two other

albums: Soliloquio (1987), and Adolescencia (1988).

The music, which I'll get to soon enough, is quite excellent. Very full sounding but musical and original as well. The CD booklet, though somewhat confusing, is interesting and informative. According to the notes by Art Sublime President David Overstreet, "the artistic concept (of the group) was to create a style of music that would go beyond the conventional, and to achieve this, they blended elements of classical, electronic and jazz, combined with the strength and ideological expression of rock."

Getting back to the music, the largely instrumental body of work

represented on this CD is very tightly arranged and performed by excellent musicians. It has very jazzy overtones, recalling Mahavishnu Orchestra. The guitar/keyboards leads don't battle each other as much as dance. On the whole, some of the most interesting and original '80s Progressive music I've heard.

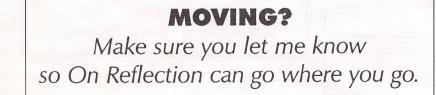
Iconoclasta plan to release two more albums in Mexico during 1989. It seems unlikely that this band will be able to undertake a tour far across the border, so this and future releases on Art Sublime appear to be the best and only chance to

> get in touch with their music. Shame, but worth it. About this

Art Sublime, according to the press release, "Art Sublime's objective is to offer the finest in Progressive music--music from

groups whose albums would otherwise probably never see the light of day." The label also strives to give "the fullest program of music possible, along with a high-quality, well-thought-out package that reflects [the label's] respect for both the artists involved and for the consumer." Art Sublime plans to release Iconoclasta's third and fourth albums this year.

To order *Iconoclasta/Reminiscencias*, send \$17.00 plus \$1.75 (for postage and insurance in the U.S.) to Art Sublime, P.O. Box 473, Gardena, CA, 90248. Make your check payable to David Overstreet. Art Sublime can also be reached at (213) 329-7254. &



Annie cont.

phase, *Prologue*, came out in 1972. Infused with the unbelievably sweet yet assured voice of Annie Haslam, the album made a big impact.

The rest of the group featured excellent musicians such as guitarist and composer Michael Dunford, bassist Jon Camp (one of the true greats of the lead bass; check out his Squire-like solo on "Ashes are Burning" from *Live at Carnegie Hall*), keyboardist John Tout and drummer Terry Sullivan. Annie (who was given voice lessons by the same person who taught Shirley Bassey) sang lyrics often written by English poetess Betty Thatcher, and her haunting timbres more than did justice to the elegant imagery of the words.

In concert, it has always been a wonder that so much gentle power comes from such a small instrument. The title track from Renaissance's second album, *Ashes are Burning*, always the encore, is about the most masterful vocal performance available to non-operatic audiences. Her voice is like the scalpel of a brilliant surgeon, cutting neatly right to the vertebrae, tingling all the nerves, bringing forth waves of joy and pleasure. It's like having your inner ears stroked with the soft warm tongue of her voice.

Whew. It affects me just writing about it (actually I'm cheating, I happen to be listening to the song right now). But the performance on *Live at Carnegie Hall* doesn't even come close to the intensity of her '80s performances. There exists a video clip of a performance from Chicago, I think, that was originally aired on cable TV's USA Network. This clip captures a truly mind-disintegrating rendition of the work. See it. Hear it. Feel it.

Annie released a solo album in 1977 called Annie in Wonderland, featuring her friend Roy Wood (ex-early ELO and Wizzard), Jon Camp and some other fine musicians. It is pleasant enough but many of the songs don't giver her the opportunity to really show what she can do. There is, however, a nice vocalise and *continued p.5*

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MARKET VALUE

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Live recordings/tapes Buy or trade Send lists

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Also, especially interested in video from Focus and Gentle Giant (Don Kirschner and In Concert broadcasts).

Send info to:

ERIK SCHMEIDLER 27 CLAUDETTE CIRCLE FRAMINGHAM, MA 01701

WANTED:

Two specific items: "The YES Biography" by Dan Hedges; and a 45, "Whatever You Believe" by Jon Anderson on CBS Records. This was a charity event recorded in London and it's only available through import. This was recent.

Send replies to:

KATHY GRIMM 5621 NAVE ST. SW CANTON, OH 44706

WANTED:

Audio and video tapes of ELP, Pink Floyd, Genesis, Yes, Jethro Tull, Renaissance. Will pay fair price or trade for blanks. Please send your list along with price info to:

JERRY KUNNY JAM MUSIC P.O. BOX 226 POMPANO BEACH, FL 33061-0226

Especially interested in vinyl and does anyone have a copy of any Pink Floyd's The Wall concert on video?

SET SALE/AUCTION

I did a bit of house cleaning and decided to bid a few items of interest a fond farewell (I need the money, too).

FOR SALE (first come, first served): *Mainhorse (w/Moraz) - M-/M- - \$5 *T. Dream, Rubycon - M/M - \$5 *Shawn Philips, Bright White (exc. gtr, 1973) - M-/M- - \$3 *David Bedford, Star's End (w/ Oldfield) - VG/VG - \$3 *Yes, 12" (3 versions of "Leave It") - M/M - \$2

AUCTION (only winners notified): *Robert Fripp, Exposure [autographed and dated] - VG/VG - MB: \$30 *PM, 1 PM [1979 w/Carl Palmer; new-wavey] - M-/M- - MB: \$10

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Childhood's End: A Marillion "Obituary"

I guess I'm finally going to have to face it. Fish really has left Marillion.

No, no, I don't need a tissue. Life goes on and so, I understand, does Marillion. <u>Kerrang</u> identifies their new frontman as Brian Hogarth; of his origins, I am uncertain. Also uncertain is whether he will be primary lyricist and melodicist as has apparently been Fish's position within the band.

It has been my understanding that, as went the songwriting process within Marillion, Fish wrote his own vocal melodies and lyrics. Now I know that before Fish there was a Marillion; take away the melodies and the lyrics and you will still have a sparkling tight Progressive quarter somewhat reminiscent of Gabriel-era Genesis, somewhat reminiscent of various periods of Tull's 20-year reign, and somewhat reminiscent of Rush, for whom Marillion opened during that trio's "Grace Under Pressure" tour in the Midwest.

But what will Marillion be without its "abominable showman?" Without its oratorical, multi-colored Gypsy strongman, bandanna cinched tightly over his balding pate, its intellectual mercenary, rapid-firing his entire magazine of words into the audience, words so intense that their intensity sometimes escapes even those who want to hear?

Reeling through an entire twoside concept from any given album; terrifyingly, awesomely live; gesticulating like an overexcited philosophy professor to convey (or to impregnate us with) a social conscience...he sometimes seems willing to die to get that across to us. Grinning harmlessly away at the camera while you know that he must be that big to contain all of that angst.

I suppose those of us who have listened to Marillion will find out the answer soon enough. There is yet to be any news available to me on the future of Fish's career, but I think I know. Surely the man will bounce back, or on, to better things. Surely he will go farther than he was able to go while still with Marillion.

And with luck, perhaps the same will be true of Marillion itself with a new vocalist. While it couldn't possibly be the same without Fish, maybe even in today's world the sum of the parts can be greater than the whole. \mathfrak{G}

byMelinda Adams Annie cont.

some other highlights. I have been fortunate enough to procure a promotional poster of the album with a gorgeous photo of her sitting in a field of flowers.

These days, from what I hear, Annie is touring by herself (or has in the last year or so), singing mainly show tunes. It is hoped that she will be granted the vehicle needed to return to the recording studios and concert halls. Her gift is most unique and it must be shared to all who appreciate beauty and brilliance.

Other Renaissance albums not previously mentioned that demonstrate her talent well include A Turn of the Cards, Song for all Seasons, Novella and Azure d'Or.

All hail Annie Haslam, the First Lady of Progressive music. &



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

The Progressive Dream Band: TOP 3 BASSISTS

The second installment. Once again, votes were placed for the top three Progressive bassists. First place votes received five points, second place votes received three points, and third place votes received one point. So the numbers shown reflect total number of points, not votes. I should also note that three or four people specifically stated that Chris Squire would have gotten their votes years ago but that in the '80s he's been lazy.

Chris Squire - 30

Born: England. March 4, 1948. Quirks or Quotes: "The bass is just as much a sole and melodic instrument as the guitar or even organ. Il just depends how you want to play It." Grouppology: Syn. Mabal Greet's Toy Shop, Yes, solo career. Influences: Paul: RickenbaserFander/Guild basses; Sunn Coliseum Lead ampillers; Rotasound strings. Choise Cutas: "Houndbourd" (*Fragile*); "Twe Seen All Good People" (*The Tex Album*).

Tony Levin - 29

(photo by Tony Levin)



John Wetton - 14

Others who placed: Greg Lake - 13 Geddy Lee - 13 Jon Camp (Renaissance) - 9 Ray Shulman (Gentle Giant) - 8 Percy Jones (Brand X) - 6 Stanley Clarke - 5 Stefan Fredin (Trettioariga Kriget) - 5 Dave Pegg - 5 Mo Moore (Nektar) - 5 Mick Karn (Japan) - 5 Roger Waters - 3 Andy West (Dregs) - 3 Fernando Saunders (leff Beck, Ponty) - 3 lack Bruce - 3 Phil Lesh (Grateful Dead) - 3 Klaus-Peter Matziol (Eloy) - 3 Lemmy (Hawkwind) - 1 Peter Trewavas (Marillion) - 1 Dennis Dunnaway - 1 Joe Macre (Crack the Sky) - 1 Fabio Pignatelli (Goblin) - 1

Voters:

Eddie Lee, Bruce Hatfield, Kenneth Stuart, Kathy Grimm, Scott Gold, Larry Crasnick, Jason M. Rubin, Marc Rains, Bolle Gregmar, Susan Dillard, Clark Faville, G. Sichner, Mitchell Ragone, Michael Dawson, Jerry Kunny, Ted Thomas, Erik Schmeidler, Anastasia, Tom Hontos. &

Next month (get psyched): Pick your 3 favorite **KEYBOARDISTS**

AW, SHUCKS!

The thing that excites me most about The APEX is that now I know there are others out there with the same addiction! I am not alone! This is comforting. You are eloquent in your descriptions of why Progressive music is so engaging, and "On Reflection" is an attractive, professionallooking paper. I congratulate you and admire you for putting it all together. I can't believe you are only 26. I thought I was young to be into early '70s Progressive music and I'm soon to be 30.

> Ted Thomas Norman, OK

GET MODERN!

The focus of "On Reflection" for the most part has been on many of the bands of the '70s. I'm glad to see this, particularly for the many fans out there who missed it the first time around. Much of it still has a timeless quality that puts it head and shoulders above much of the current stuff. But I would also suggest more coverage devoted to underground and small-scale Progressive bands that are now operating (such as my band French TV, hint, hint). The '70s bands don't particularly need any coverage, as they are either rich or their bands have broken up. Current underground Progressive bands are living hand to mouth with very little in the way of positive reinforcement in these Madonna days.

Mike Sary Louisville, KY

ANDERSON//WAKEMAN//

I couldn't agree with you more about the relatively subdued roles played by Steve Howe and Bill Bruford on the ABWH LP. "The Broof" especially is almost missing in action; if I'm not mistaken, over a quarter of the album is taken up by songs on which he doesn't even play! It seems to be very much Jon and Rick's show. I think "Themes" is as brilliant as classic Yes. As for a "connection" of the mentions of old Yes songs in "She Gives Me Love," check out the backing vocals. They're saying things like "signed promise...soon oh soon the light ... in and around the lake." I think it would be a better album if "Quartet" and "Teakbois" were dropped altogether and replaced by "Vultures" (the single B-side).

> Michael P. Dawson San Mateo, CA

Syn-Phonic cont.

Meatgut properly?/I think Stewlick has to meet three pinleech goofing up" can only annoy someone who looks for meaning in his or her music. Still, the melodies are such that it doesn't matter what the words are (you can't make them out just by listening) and the vocal arrangements are in the Giant vein.

I should point out that this album was originally recorded in 1976 and hung around collecting dust until Syn-Phonic stepped in. In doing so, the label has justified itself; there is a need for this kind of forgotten and ignored music to resurface. The other two albums, however, do not offer as much.

Triskelion, by North Star, is a 1984 recording that reeks of Genesis through and through. Likewise, *Time Tales*, by Vail (1983), is an unabashed ELP carbon copy. These albums bring up the question "Is a Progressive clone band Progressive?" The headache I got dealing with this issue delayed the review of these albums.

To be fair, these musicians are very good. I mean, they've got chops; they would *need* to to be able to reproduce the styles and sounds of Genesis and ELP. And they have taken a decided professional risk by pursuing music of this nature, knowing it will attract only a cult audience at best. Syn-Phonic definitely makes the most of these albums by providing excellent packaging: futuristic cover art, lyrics and other inserts. And in the Progressive tradition, these cats are *ugly*.

But when it gets right down to it, this music is not original. The lyrics are cosmic fairy tales which, I guess, some Prog-heads get into. I don't. Not in 1989, anyway. That stuff's been driven into the ground at this point. And they don't sound like they were given much attention anyway (*North Star:* "Time Traveller/Extension will come to be/The clock and room are relative/Like mellow harmony;" *Vail:* "Caught in the expanses of star time/My love is my star guide/

continued p.8

Syn-Phonic continued

Seeking the unsought is quite a ride/ Love that the cosmos shines"). To be truly Progressive, you have to have an original, daring lyrical and/or musical viewpoint that represents a new angle. Bill Bruford once remarked that the beauty of the Progressive movement of the '70s was that each band had to be different, and he lamented that in the '80s bands all try to sound alike.

Now this is just my opinion and it obviously won't be shared by everyone. And I don't want to be a hurdle to Syn-Phonic or the other independent labels who are committed to releasing music that provides an alternative to FM radio conventions. So let this be a call to action to those little-known Progressive bands of the '80s: loosen your hold on

The APEX 132 Sherman Street, #11 Cambridge, MA 02140 your influences, let your own soul come through in the music, and look around at the issues facing the minds and hearts of the world's inhabitants and try to help us make order and beauty from it.

To order albums from Syn-Phonic, send \$12.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling to Syn-Phonic, P.O. Box 2034, La Habra, CA 90631. Regardless of my opinions, Syn-Phonic President Greg Walker is committed to bringing these obscure American artists to light and merits our support. \mathfrak{O}

BIRTHDAYS

Aug. 8 Jerry Garcia b. 1942 Aug. 10 Ian Anderson b. 1947 Aug. 19 Ginger Baker b. 1940 Aug. 20 Robert Plant b. 1947 Aug. 23 Keith Moon b. 1947 Aug. 24 John Cipollina b. 1943 Jim Capaldi b. 1944 Aug. 27 Phil Shulman b. 1937 Aug. 31 Van Morrison b. 1945



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