

# Proclamation

The  
Occasional  
Gentle Giant  
Newsletter

3  
August 1993



Kerry Minnear special issue

## Proclamation

### - The Occasional Gentle Giant Newsletter, no. 3

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Last minute news. Letters have begun pouring in saying that the RGOF releases of the last 5 studio albums on CD have begun to be available in stores. The last thing I heard was that they would be released in September. More about the release on p. 4. For ordering instructions, see the Why Not? section.

Last last minute news. Because some people have complained about noise on some of the new CDs, RGOF has obtained the 24 tracks from Chrysalis and John and Kerry have started remastering the albums together. They will probably appear later this year with a notice that they are remastered. More in issue 4, which I now feel I have to get out quicker than this one.

## Proclamation

Trondheim, Norway, August 1993.

Welcome to a new issue of the newsletter. I'd especially like welcome all our new readers. We continue to grow both in content and number of subscribers even though I think so far we've only reached a tiny percentage of the Gentle Giant fans all over the world. Just as the group themselves were more pretentious than most others, we are also trying to evolve continually towards our sky-high ideals. Within the limits of the fanzine art form, that is. Any suggestions or contributions are always welcome.

We have had to increase subscription charges slightly. This is mostly due to the larger issues and the postage costs to send them all over the world. Sending back issues is an especially expensive task. Nevertheless we will aim to have at least some color pages in the future, as we've received many fantastic color shots of the band.

We now have a new Continental European distributor: Gerhard Zimmermann. He is a musician and music teacher in Nürnberg, Germany, and knows the band personally from their active period. He has recently conducted an interview with Gary Green for the next issue. Pete Gray will still be in charge of the British Isles while I myself monitor Scandinavia and David Armas America. See the back pages for details.

Just as the first issue was sold out before the second issue arrived, the second (200 copies) has sold out before the third was printed. I have now reprinted 200 copies of issues 1 and 2, and to save transaction money, they will be included in your sub and sent you together with this issue. In fact, nearly all of you ask to have all back issues so I don't think you will feel cheated in any way. See also back pages for ordering instructions. You will always be treated fairly although you may have to wait some time if you have sent me a question or ordered more issues or whatever.

We have been a little idealistic lately. We've made a text-only version for blind people on a floppy disc if they have a pc with braille equipment. We have also sent some used records for free to Boris in Kazakhstan (see last issue), who has no access to currency that has any value in the west. The records were donated by our readers.

This issue brings the first installment of sheet music, which I am allowed to print in the magazine. It may be a little cramped, but that is due to the fact that printing is a costly affair, and Gentle Giant material is not three-chord blues, repeat 12-bar verse three times. I am also glad that we have received a short analysis of some pieces, and hope that this will continue. However, the issue eventually became a "Kerry Minnear special issue", with an interview, a general article, a composition by him and an analysis of his musical style, and I hope it is appreciated.

The audio guide I promised you in the last newsletter has been postponed, due to the many new tapes that have poured in along with the new subscribers. We want to make the tape guide as correct and complete as possible. Along with this guide, we are also working on a complete list of gigs, or concerts, if you prefer. We are also building up a bibliography, or list of articles about the group and their activities.

To those eager to come into contact with the band members, I have to be frank. I can forward letters to them, but I can't let you have their addresses or telephone numbers. We have to respect their privacy. They have, however, responded well to the newsletter, and help us with details and give interviews, so send me your questions and I will forward them.

The goal of the newsletter is to let Gentle Giant fans have a place to communicate about Giant and other like-minded groups. If you want to write in the magazine, do it. If you want your name and address printed to come in touch with other fans, just let me know. I will make you laugh, revel, merry-dance. Throw your pennies...

## It's Not Imagination

No, now it is fact. No longer do fans have to wait for the reissues on CD of all Gentle Giant albums. Road Goes On Forever plans to release *Free Hand* (in its original mix, see below), *Interview*, *The Missing Piece*, *Giant for a Day* and *Civilian* on CD in September. All will be taken from master tapes and given the same superb treatment as *In a Glass House* and *The Power and the Glory*. The only track that has been recorded earlier but not put on an album, *Heroes*, has been located on tape, but only in demo form. It was intended as a single to be released together with *Civilian*, but nothing came of it. For us, it is just splendid to hear something new by the Giant, so we will probably all be opening the seal of *Civilian* first, on which this track is included. Booklets are included with all CDs. See ad in the back of the newsletter.

After these splendid September releases, RGOF will re-release the first four albums, probably late this year or early 1994. Hopefully, they will be able to remix at least the first album, which is somewhat muddled. Two tracks have been found that were recorded for Philips before the deal with Vertigo was achieved, see article about Kerry Minnear for details. He doubts that these can be included on a new release because of the state they are in, but let us hope for the best.

The cooperation between *Proclamation* and RGOF has already born fruit. They will release the best live concerts on CD, which will be selected from the best of our existing tapes. Plans are already in hand for issuing the Roxy Shows of 13th and 14th June, 1980, the last shows ever, and many more will follow. The a fantastic thing about this is that we will have legal CDs, not bootlegs. That means a larger print run and thus better quality for lower prices.

As if that wasn't enough, we will also see official videos soon. Some TV stations actually still have tapes of their old Gentle Giant material, and providing their charges are not too expensive, the complete concerts will be released. All these live CDs and videos are a result of the archeological research of David Armas and Bolle Gregmar.

Since the last issue, the world has seen a "new" Gentle Giant CD. In the US, people had been complaining about the poor quality of the Capitol CEMA *Free Hand*. Therefore, the record company suddenly decided that they would release a better version. Who would believe that about a multimilliondollar record company when the issue is a low-selling obscure British group from 20 years ago?

As soon as David Armas, by sheer coincidence, heard about the new version in a music store, he sent out a postcard to subscribers telling them about it. Thus we were made aware of what would otherwise have gone totally unnoticed. The record company themselves offered no publicity about the new version, and it's not even mentioned on the disc itself, which looks wholly identical to the old one.

Not only was the sound superb in comparison to the old version, but, out of sheer sloppiness from Capitol CEMA, they actually released what might be considered a new Gentle Giant album! The CD was cut off a different matrix than the original album. The old number was AM6/CDL-57338. The new number is ESK1 <010> CDL 57338. This number appears towards the center hole of the disc. You must check the disc itself, not the outer box, as this gives no information about the difference.

The main difference between the old and new CDs, besides the overall quality, is that the keyboards and drums in particular are now much clearer, and it seems to me that the percussion mix is higher overall. The different mix gives a few differences that are significant and others that are just a matter of taste. On *Just the Same*, the handclaps and sax in the middle last a few bars longer, and the synth solo is mixed

louder and thus sounds superior. *On Reflection* includes percussion from as early as "Still you stay..." and the piano doubling on the second verse is doubled by celeste (I think). Here the middle solo verse is mixed too loud. *Free Hand* contains in my opinion the biggest error, namely that Gary Green's fantastic chord playing on the interlude between the verses is removed. Derek joins Kerry on "Now that my hands are free...", just as on *Time to Kill*, where he joins Ray on "And with no questions then...". Finally, the final drum beat on *Mobile* is removed. All in all, the new mix makes you listen with fresh ears and many sections of the record come out in a completely new light. The amount of detail stands out more clearly, and gives much more justice to the incredible work they did on this album, in my opinion the best album ever made by any group in the whole history of music.

Pete Gray has sent us his version of encountering the new CD.

**Free Hand. The new US version. A review by Pete Gray.**

I first bought the *Free Hand* LP at the tender age of 15, shortly after its release date. I was already a committed Gentle Giant fanatic. I can still remember sitting down and listening to the LP for the first time and being totally spellbound. I felt that, particularly with the first track; *Just the Same*, Giant had struck such a perfect compromise between progressive integrity and commercial viability that major-league status was now very close at hand. Sadly, this wasn't to be...

For some reason, however, in latter days I've never rated *Free Hand* quite as highly as say, *In a Glass House* or *The Power and the Glory* despite my initial enthusiasm. I know most of you may disagree. I was still of course elated to find *Free Hand* released on CD; in fact I couldn't get it onto the CD player quickly enough!!! However, the sound quality was poor. I still have an original pre-recorded cassette of the LP and the CD quality was little better than this ancient cassette could still deliver. Disappointment set in and *Free Hand*, at least in my clouded judgement, remained a slightly poor relation to *Glass House* and *Power and the Glory*. But this opinion was eventually to change.

On hearing about the new, re-mastered *Free Hand* CD, I was at first sceptical. The same label was responsible for the release and after such a poor first attempt, I had my doubts that they could even achieve a satisfactory result, let alone an exceptional one. How wrong could I be! One benefit of pessimism is that you are often pleasantly surprised.

The first time I listened to this CD I was as dumb-struck as the first time I had ever heard the LP!!! The whole thing came to life in a rich, thick texture around my ears. I could literally feel the depth of the intricate layers of music and (analogue tape noise aside) could even imagine that the band were playing live in my living room (cherish the thought).

I enjoyed hearing the CD in this new light so much, that I had to listen again and again. Whilst hearing *Glass House* on CD for the first time was a revelation (and I must admit I still prefer *Glass House* over *Free Hand* as a musical work, to a marginal extent), hearing *Free Hand* done properly on CD for the first time was more rewarding. I think the overall sound quality is, by comparison, more natural and occasionally the realism reaches out and grabs you by the throat. The instrumental section of *Just the Same* swirls around you in an ethereal manner, Gary Green's solo on *His Last Voyage* cuts through you like an assassin's knife and *On Reflection* reverberates as if it's coming live from a vast medieval banquet hall. Many details become apparent within the music that I've never noticed before (despite the fact that

I'm an analytical listener - like most Giant fans I presume?). I therefore presume that some of these details are either disguised in, or missing from the original mix?

With the release of this CD, *Free Hand* is back where it belongs: on a par with the very best of Giant's LPs. If you've not got this CD yet, GET IT, and be stunned by its uncanny realism. (Remember to check the matrix number when you buy it!!)

Finally, I'd like to comment on the CD re-issue industry in general. Whilst I'm obviously grateful for the eventual (!) release of CDs of this calibre, I'm a bit bemused as to why an initial satisfactory result isn't always achieved (not only with *Free Hand* but with many other prog. re-issues too). When it isn't achieved, why is the CD still released? It would save everyone time and money, if the *best* attempt was the *only* attempt. Secondly, when quality is enhanced on a later pressing - where is the publicity to announce this fact? Without my involvement with the newsletter I'd doubtless still be listening to a poor quality CD of *Free Hand*. The final question that begs to be asked: Is even better quality still a possibility ?

John Weathers' group Man has released a new CD on the RGOF label. Although this may not be quite what Giant fans consider their vein of music, some of you may be quite impressed with it.

*The Twang Dynasty* consists of 11 songs, which in total last about one hour. They could have edited the whole thing down to 45 minutes; although it's quite OK blues-rock, or welsh-rock as they prefer to call it, it would have benefitted from a shorter format. It is also at very much the same pace throughout, and if some more lyrical and calmer pieces had been integrated, it would have improved the album no end. There are indeed some really fine songs for a 3-minute format, and all are played tightly and with humour. However, in the chosen format, the good intentions and good work goes on for too long. I must stress that I am not an expert on this kind of thing and ideally, you should have a listen yourself. Pugwash does a good job on drums, would anyone think otherwise?

Many of you are not acquainted with Man, so let us therefore take a short look at the group. The intro is written by the editor of the Man fanzine, see Why Not for details.

#### MAN - a short introduction by Michael Heatley

The Welsh group Man consists of Micky Jones and Deke Leonard on guitar, Martin Ace on Bass, and John Weathers on Drums. All four sing.

Until now, Man albums have been filed firmly in the Reissue Review columns. Now, with their first new studio album for 16 years, *The Twang Dynasty*, and a full date sheet, Swansea's psychedelic pioneers are charming another generation with their distinctive bittersweet mixture of classic songs and mouthwatering musicianship.

The slide guitar of Micky Jones, Deke Leonard's gritty vocals, the rhythmic foundation of 'Ace The Bass' and the percussion skills of the widely travelled Weathers all combine to make music whose time has certainly come. Like ZZ Top and the Grateful Dead, Man link the Sixties and Nineties with contemptuous ease and not a little style. Let your ears be the judge - but first - a brief history of the group.

Man were formed in late 1968 when Deke Leonard joined Micky Jones in the Bystanders, a harmony pop band who had a minor hit with 98.6 on Pye Records. They stayed with Pye for two albums - *Revelation* and *Two Ounces Of Plastic (With A Hole In The Middle)* - that put them in the forefront of the burgeoning progressive rock movement. Both 1969 releases have since been reissued on CD by See For Miles.

Man found greatest success in Germany and France, touring widely at home and abroad while releasing a series of nine acclaimed albums on the United Artists label. These included *Live At The Padget Rooms Penarth*, released in a limited edition of 8,000, which sold out in a week; *Back Into The Future*, a 2LP set which reached Number 23 in the British album charts and *Rhinos Winos And Lunatics*, (produced by Roy Thomas Baker of Queen fame), which reached Number 24. The final UA album was *Maximum Darkness*, a live set featuring legendary guitarist John Cipollina from Quicksilver Messenger Service, which is currently available on CD from BGO.

Two further albums followed on MCA before the band split in 1976, three full houses at London's Roundhouse witnessing the wake. By this time Man had completed four tours of America, while TV appearances included three Old Grey Whistle Tests, three German Beat Clubs, and an hour-long documentary on Harlech Television. Micky Jones, Martin Ace and Deke Leonard went on to front their own bands while drummer Terry Williams joined Dave Edmunds' Rockpile, moved to Meatloaf, and ended up with Dire Straits.

In 1983, Man reformed for a European tour with John Weathers - late of the Eyes Of Blue, the Grease Band and Gentle Giant - on drums. They took part in the 25th Anniversary of the Marquee Club, and their hour-long, televised segment was shown on British TV. A live album, *Friday The 13th*, and video, *Bananas*, followed: the album is still available on Line Records in Germany. Grass-roots demand kept them on the live circuit, again filling bigger venues in Europe than at home, as new material was roadtested and added to the set. Meanwhile, supporters like Tommy Vance and Alan Freeman were keeping Man on the airwaves courtesy of the flood of CD reissues of their classic albums.

Man entered the Nineties with a summary of their UA years, *Perfect Timing*, compiled by the band themselves and issued by EMI. In 1992, the band signed to Road Goes On Forever Records, who released their new album *The Twang Dynasty*, in November 1992. Press interest has already been extensive, and includes a major feature in the launch issue of *Rock Classics* magazine. It's time for Britain to wake up to one of Wales's premier rock exports!

Their first new studio album for 16 years, *The Twang Dynasty* is available on RGF CD/ MC 1003. For further information call Michael Heatley, 0420 489474 or John Tobler, 081 368 1722

Derek Shulman, who lost his A+R position at Atco USA nearly one year ago, has now signed a deal with the Giant Records label in USA, whereby he acts as independent A+R man, bringing new talents to the label, which is run by Irving Azoff.

Finally, we should note that Phil Shulman's son Damon finally has a recording deal, and initially he is going to put out a single. I am still waiting for details from Phil about this, he mentioned it in our last conversation on the phone. According to him, Damon is inspired by Gentle Giant, and if that is so, he and his band would be a refreshing acquaintance.

## On Reflection

This section contains questions taken from the letters I receive.

What exactly is the *Playing the Fool in Wonderland* bootleg?

The *Playing the Fool in Wonderland* bootleg is actually the same as the *Playing the Foole* bootleg, with the addition of a terrible track *March of the Trolls* which was played by a college group who was local to where the boot was made. It is definitely not played by Gentle Giant, being so insecure and sour and flat and embarrassingly made.

Will you also feature singles with picture sleeves in the Design section?

Yes, I'd really like to, but presently I have only got one sleeve, the German edition of *I'm Turning Around*. If you can send me colour photo copies of others that you may have, both record and sleeve, in colour if possible, I will reproduce them.

Will you reprint tour programs?

Yes, but the only one I have got so far is the *Interview* tour program, which I borrowed and have reproduced for use with the presentation of that album in issue 9. If you have other programs, let me know. I don't even know if any other tour programs exist, but would be glad to reprint any that do.

With regard to the article about Kerry in the Christian magazine *Buzz*, does this mean that Kerry's solo work will be simple, religious tunes? I'm certain God would appreciate some arrangements in 9/3!

I agree, of course, because I think that God wants us to create, not just repeat what others have done, which is the formulaic tendency of much Christian music today (and in any way the tendency of nearly all kinds of profane music too). So even if Kerry intends his work to be more digestable, judging from his recent promo cassettes I can definitely tell that his solo work, whatever it might be, will not be easy listening MOR. He has agreed that God would enjoy some Giant mode stuff, even though he is intrigued by the appeal of simpler songs by mainstream artists.

Could you answer why GG changed to a more commercial approach on the latter albums? I most certainly did not object but the philosophy behind the question would be interesting to know.

I for one did object! In fact I was so broken and ashamed by *Giant for a Day*, that when *Civilian* came, I heard it and shook my head and did not even buy it! Later, I came to enjoy the albums for what they were, and [lots of flattery let out here. -ed.]. Instead of answering in short, I shall in future issues reprint some interviews from the late 70s in full, where the band members give their reasons.

Has any one thought of contacting Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull to try and put together a first in progressive music, a Tull / Giant joint musical effort? I know that both groups enjoyed each other and Ian is always looking for breaking new ground. At least Kerry Minnear would be great playing keyboards with Tull.



As Gentle Giant toured with Tull at their peak in 1972 and 73 it would indeed have been fantastic to see the groups together. There are, however, a few problems which render such a thing almost impossible. Ian Anderson creates all the music for Tull, and almost never plays anything else. He also creates songs, which is a very different way of writing music from the way in which Giant composed (mostly) complex compositions. Jethro Tull is built up around his songs, to accompany him, while the instruments of Giant had their own individuality to a degree you cannot find in Tull. The bands may sound similar in many ways, but I have my doubt that with such strong personalities a cooperation would be possible. When all this is said though, I must agree that you have a very tempting idea and that the result would be amazing.

**What is actually being said in the strange whispering section of the song "Interview"?**

I can only identify a few phrases. Can't one of you natives tell us? And please include a transcription of those interview mumblings between the album tracks as well!

### Experience

Simon White sent the following interesting quotes from a book called *Seeds of Change* by Kerry Livgren and Kenneth Boa, published by Word Publishing, 2nd ed. 1991, ISBN 0-85009-248-5. Cost was £4.

The book is religious (another religious Kerry) and Kerry was part of the band Kansas. Apparently their LP *Song of America* is very adventurous and GG inspired (I've not heard it) though what I have heard by them is not up to that standard.

p. 60: "Gentle Giant was one of my favourite groups. Their albums *Three Friends* and *Octopus* had a remarkable originality, good musicianship and philosophically interesting lyrics. I also had the pleasure of seeing them in concert and appreciated the energy of their performance."

p. 207: "Over the years I have accumulated a rather large collection of recordings which covers the whole spectrum of musical styles. Lately I have found that there is rarely time to sit down and simply listen to music, but in one of those rare moments, I pulled a record off the shelf that I have not listened to for probably ten years [WHAT?! -sw]. It was an early album by a little-known British group, Gentle Giant. I happened to notice the liner notes on the album which read: [Here follows the well known quote from *Acquiring the Taste* in its entirety].

I think they fulfilled their prophecy of their own obscurity, but what a credo! They stated most succinctly the exact attitude which I think is missing from so much of today's contemporary music. There is no virtue in intentionally seeking to be unpopular, nor does commercial success automatically mean that a piece of music was conceived for that purpose. The best possible scenario is one in which the highest creative endeavours are accessible to the broadest possible audience." [To which I say 'hear, hear!', but try telling that to Radio One! -sw]

### The Missing Piece

Many people have asked about Gary Green, and why such a splendid guitarist has vanished completely from sight. Well, he has not vanished completely and in the next issue we will print some long interviews with him conducted this summer by Gerhard and David, respectively. He has also promised to dig out his personal clippings and memories from his time with the band. Like the other band members,

Gary was never anything else than a splendid musician. He was not the kind of scandalous and immoral guy the journalists would delight in, and without a proper band, virtuoso gimmickry or star personality, the best guitarist in the world may vanish. But that doesn't mean that he doesn't play. Watch out for the next issue.

In March 1983 a delightful album was completed by the talented Eddie Jobson. Whether it should be called *The Green Album* by Eddie Jobson and his group Zinc or whether it should be considered a solo effort called *Zinc*. *The Green Album* I really can't tell. It is not much of a group as the personnel, apart from Jobson, changes from track to track on the 2/3 of the album that isn't solo. What is more important to a Giant fan, however, is that Gary Green played guitar on two of the 13 tracks: *Listen to Reason* and *Through the Glass*. Gary is never given a chance to show off, but plays chords, patterns and even a short melody line quite safely, as part of the background texture. Since the overall sound is heavily synthesized I had trouble telling him apart from the synths and violin and even bass riffs at times. The album, viewed as 2nd generation progressive rock, is quite OK, and could be compared to advanced Tull from the same time, maybe with an eye (and an ear) to A (1980) where Jobson played. It has recently been released on CD.

### A Cry for Everyone

The poll has been a harder trial than I had expected. Fans find it terribly hard to decide which cuts to include. It is, of course, a tribute to the group that their pieces are difficult to choose from. In fact, nearly every cut of the 85 recorded pieces (not counting live tracks as extra ones) has been represented on at least one ten-best-cuts list. *Giant for a Day* is least represented, with just one cut, while most records lack only one cut on the list.

Some comments from those who sent in their votes: The hardest thing I've ever attempted! Drat you! / It really is incredibly difficult particularly to pick a top 10 tracks so I will not attempt to. / As it was nearly impossible to narrow this down to 10 tracks I abandoned any attempt to rate them qualitatively and have simply listed them chronologically. This list would change if I did it again next week. / I do not thank you for the poll. It has been very difficult deciding what to put where, but I leave my vote with you - I may change my mind tomorrow!

#### Best album.

*Free Hand* and *In a Glass House* have kept pace with each other closely, vying for the top position. *Octopus* is a clear third and *The Power and the Glory* just as clear on fourth. *Acquiring the Taste* and *Three Friends* have finally gained some distance from *Playing the Fool*, while the other albums are lumped together at the bottom. *Gentle Giant*, the first album, is the only one without votes.

- |   |                         |    |                   |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Free Hand               | 7  | Playing the Fool  |
| 2 | In A Glass House        | 8  | The Missing Piece |
| 3 | Octopus                 | 9  | Interview         |
| 4 | The Power and the Glory | 10 | Giant for a Day   |
| 5 | Acquiring the Taste     | 11 | Civilian          |
| 5 | Three Friends           | 12 | Gentle Giant      |

**Best track.**

The **Advent of Panurge** has taken a clear lead over the other cuts. **Experience** is very clear at 2nd, while **On Reflection**, **Free Hand** and **In a Glass House** are clearly positioned in the next places. After that, it is so tight that a new voter could easily alter the standing, but there is a little space after the 20 most popular cuts so I chose to cut off there.

Now you can finally see what a *Best of* album would constitute.

1	The Advent of Panurge	11	His Last Voyage
2	Experience	11	Pantagruel's Nativity
3	On Reflection	11	Playing the Game
4	Free Hand	14	Proclamation
5	In a Glass House	14	School Days
6	Raconteur Troubadeur	16	Knots
7	Just the Same	16	A Reunion
8	The Runaway	18	Wreck
9	The Boys in the Band	19	Aspirations
10	I Lost My Head	19	Cogs in Cogs

**Best other groups.**

For those of you who have wondered whether Gentle Giant fans are a homogenous group, this list should tell you otherwise! The first 14 voters voted for a different group in the 6th position, which none of the others voted for at all. Finally voter no. 15 voted for the first of these, but himself entered a new group at that position. I cannot print the whole list, it's simply too many names to print here! However, Jethro Tull are clearly in the lead, with King Crimson a solid 2nd and Yes a solid 3rd. The first 10 groups are quite clear on the ranking list, below that it may change radically with each new voter. One can not say, however, that the result is far from what would be expected.

1	Jethro Tull	11	Caravan
2	King Crimson	12	Bob Dylan
3	Yes	13	UK
4	Hatfield & the North	13	Fairport Convention
4	The Beatles	13	Soft Machine
6	Genesis	16	Pekka Pohjola
7	Emerson, Lake & Palmer	17	Wishbone Ash
8	Camel	17	The Strawbs
9	National Health	19	Bill Bruford
10	Focus	20	XTC

**Record Collector's Top 500 Collectable Artists 1993**

Once a year the British *Record Collector* magazine arranges a poll to see which artists are most collected by its readers. It is quite amusing reading, and one is of course interested in how popular one's own favourites are with the other collectors. Am I the only one with such a strange taste?

This year's results were presented in the May issue, and gladly, we note that Gentle Giant advanced from 232 to 140, quite a climb in one year. It may be because of the Road Goes On reissues on CD, it may be because I pleaded with readers in the last issue of the newsletter to vote. Nevertheless, 140 is quite a feat, when chart toppers like Bee Gees, Roxette, Level 42 and Phil Collins lie below.

The highest position for a progressive group is Genesis at 14, closely followed by Jethro Tull at 17. Further down we have Yes at 39, Marillion at 41 and Rush at 45. Folkly Fairport Convention is at 58, the more worldly Peter Gabriel at 94, and King Crimson at 117. Behind Gentle Giant at 140 we find Caravan at 166, The Strawbs at 180, Emerson, Lake and Palmer at 205, Soft Machine at 215, Welsh rockers Man at 272, Focus at 308, Steeleye Span at 334, The Enid at 358, Kansas at 446 and Renaissance at 487. Our local toppers Hatfield and the North, Camel, National Health, UK and Pekka Pohjola are all quite glitteringly absent.

When I saw the list I began to wonder: How much does my own vote influence the result? In other words: Does it matter that I give my vote? A certain characteristic in the list which I will keep as a secret for those without an eye for patterns, made me quite sure that my vote really counts. There is possibly over 5000 voters, but down at 140th position there cannot be many votes on each act. If I hadn't voted, Gentle Giant would have been down at 159, ELP down at 222 and Sting down from 241 to 252, for instance.

If you make the assumption that the result will follow statistical laws, then the actual result of votes will be dealt as an exponential function of the acts involved. This function can be written as  $k(\exp(-ax))$ . The minus sign implies that the best act will have the most points, and that will be almost equal to  $k$ . In other words, The Beatles got  $k$  points. Now if you sum up all the points in such a function by integration, the sum will be equal to  $k$  divided upon  $a$ . But this sum is the same as the total number of points given by all the voters in the poll. If you have 5000 voters, they will have given 15 points each and that amounts to a total of 75000 points. With a  $k$  at 500 points, a will be equal to  $1/150$ . Insert this in your calculator and you can calculate the votes of each group from their position. Now I had to make a curve out of the calculations I was sure of, and that was the curvature of the positions below the 100th position. I had to read a out of the curvature and then calculate  $k$ . I can't be sure of how many people voted on Gentle Giant because you give different points to the five groups you vote on. I am, however, quite sure that it was between 20 and 30, with a total of between 60 and 75 points.

It would have been much easier if the Record Collector people themselves had told me how many votes Gentle Giant got, but they guard the results. I think that is because smart people like me can then simply arrange a result for their favourite group. If one more fan had voted Gentle Giant as top act, the group would have reached no. 119, three more people and the group would have been in the Top 100. I know of at least that many fans / subscribers that positively didn't vote. Shame on you. Simply because the higher Gentle Giant climb, the more people will be aware of them, the more people will buy their records, the easier it will be to release CDs in more countries, the easier it will be to release live CDs, videos, obtain more information about the group to print in this newsletter, in books, and that will again make it easier to create a climate for this kind of music. And isn't that what we all want, huh?

So remember to buy next March's *Record Collector* and send in your vote!

## Thank You

I never really intended to include this section with every issue, but it seems I have to. I have actually received so much information and so many heart-warming letters since the last issue that I never regret having begun this late-night venture (unless when I sit and work through the proofreading done by that native Pete Gray).

Since I receive more than one letter a day now, and most of you include something or other which should have been mentioned, I do not have the capacity to thank all of you personally. Let me just say that all the things you send are filed for possible later use, and they are much appreciated. My intention is, eventually, to reprint everything of interest for the average reader, answer all your questions, and, when all is said and done that can be done, you will at least have made friends with like-minded people and wandered into other realms of related and fantastic music because of the newsletter. Most fan experiences end because they are connected with collecting and owning, but the Gentle Giant fan is a listener who does not confine himself to a sort of mindless activity that will end when other activities take over.

Thank you so much for your good words about the newsletter. For many years I thought I was almost the only fan still alive, and starting this newsletter was just a means of coming in contact with a few other guys whom I could share my interest with. The music meant something for me in my youth and does still, and I am glad to see that it means that much to so many other people. Thank you also for the praise of the contents and typography. I do my best to please you all and it has been very rewarding to see that you have enjoyed it. I do not agree that this may be the best fanzine ever seen, as many of you have said [blush], but I certainly try to make it pleasing to both the eye and the mind.

Many thanks for all the photocopies of articles, reviews, promotional material, band photographs etc. I have put everything in chronological order and in plastic bags in binders. I have begun to make a bibliography of articles and interviews, and had thought of printing an excerpt of it in this issue, but the arrival of huge lists of concert advertisements, dates and reviews prevented that. There are obviously a few guys who have done a lot of research on their own all these years. The newsletter will never be able to carry all the material, but I have thought of making a scrapbook later on, provided there is enough interest, that will be as complete as possible, at least with regard to the leading musical papers in the UK. An unbound stack of photocopies which you can put into a binder might be the best solution, with this method further inclusions are possible.

Thank you also for your personal memories, and the photographs from shows. The more readers, the more photographs will be reproduced. Also so many thanks for sending me yet more tapes and even CDs and videos. It is interesting to see the whole span of the group's career covered, and we will work to have it released on legal CDs.

I will try to make lists of what has been printed about the band in future issues, and then note which of these items I have. This will enable you to send me photo copies of things you know I do not have.

To all of you who have offered to write about your favourite bands, I can only say: go on! But I have limited myself to one description in each issue, simply due to the lack of space. Though what the future will bring, I cannot say. Will I finally run out of material on Gentle Giant? Everything comes to those who wait.

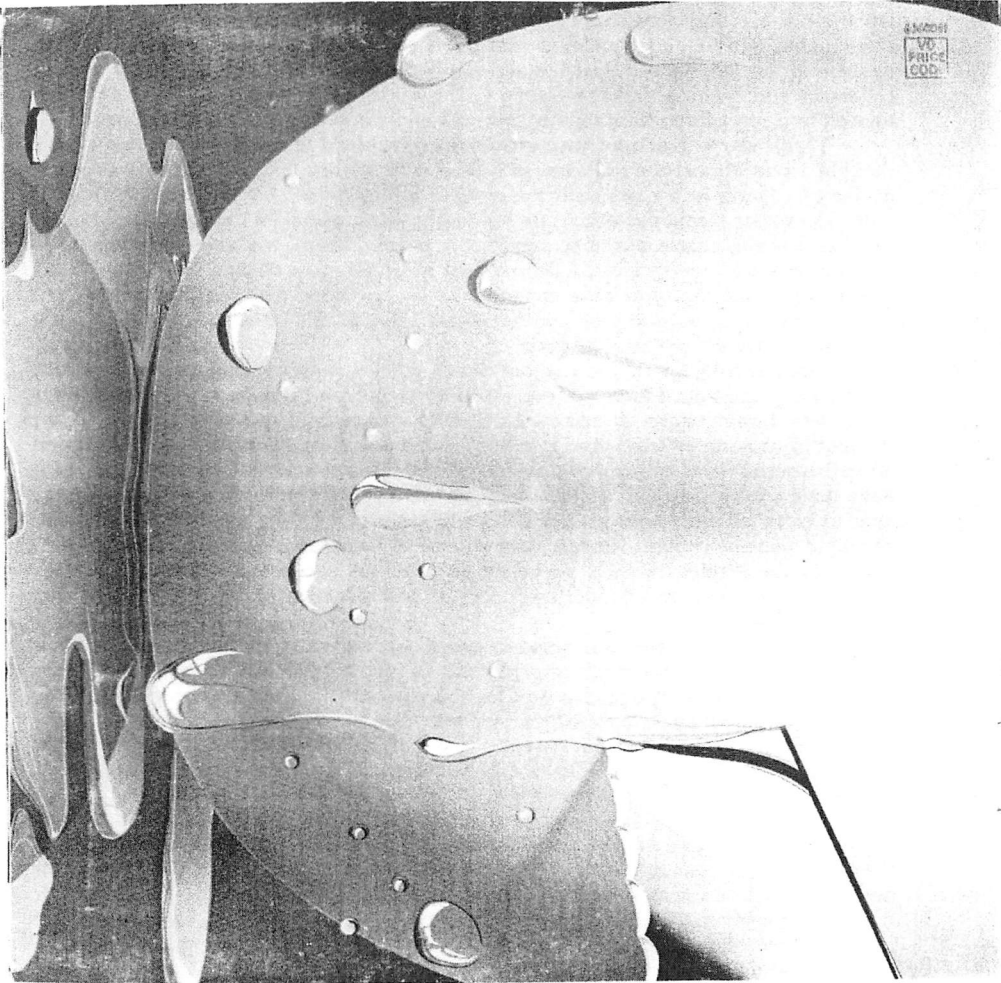
Finally big thanks to Pete Gray for his proofreading. He has, by the way, not proof-read this line, which I included while working with his correct prepositions and better metaphors.

## Design

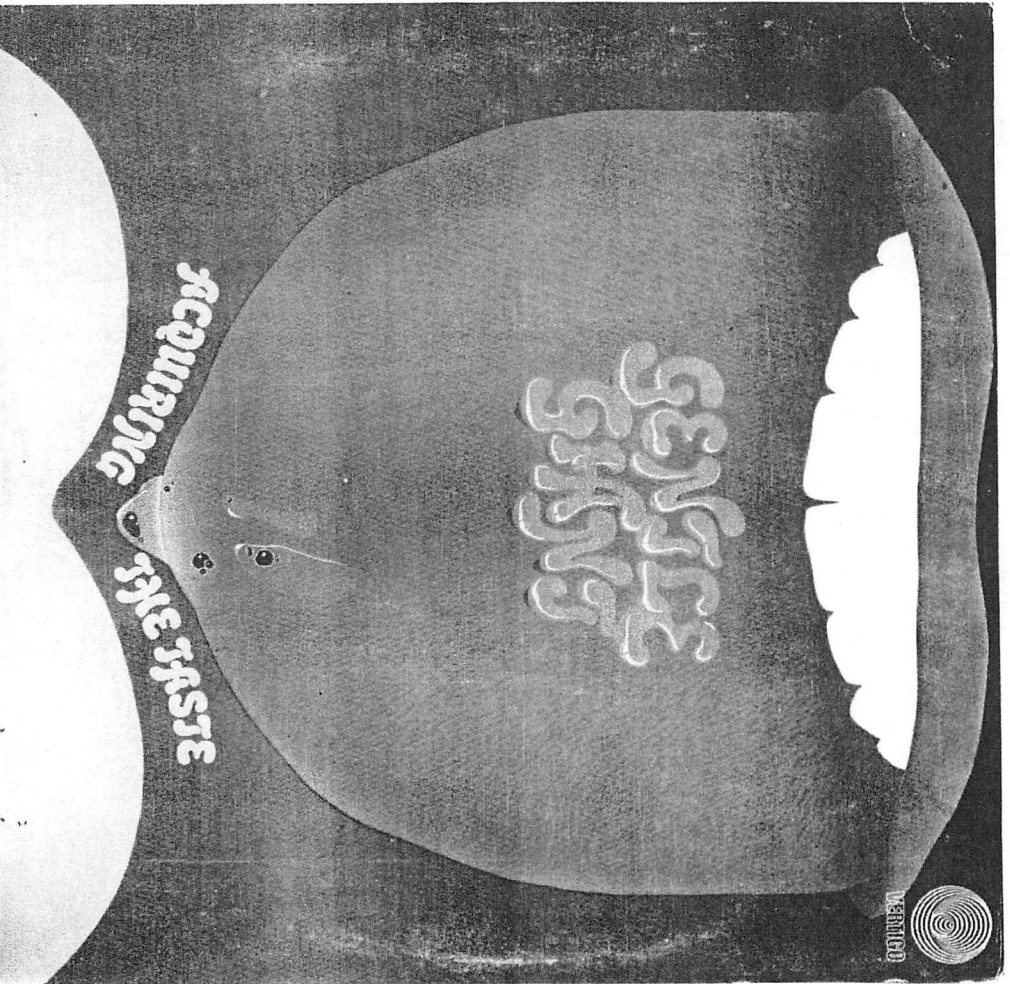
Each issue of the newsletter will carry a brief description of each Gentle Giant album, in chronological order. This is because not all readers have acquired all albums, though Giant fans are notorious for their completomania. The inner sleeves with lyrics on may be missing, particularly from CDs, and so on. In addition, the collective responsibility for the various tracks says nothing about where the idea originated and who did what with the development of the composition. This time, the second album.

**Acquiring the Taste.**

**Vertigo 6360 041.**



Issued August 1971, as the second of four albums on the Vertigo label. As with the other Vertigo albums, the first edition came with the swirling label, with a swirling design on side A and the information for both sides on side B. A later edition had a label designed by Roger Dean, just as the other albums had. All four Vertigo albums came with gatefold sleeves with the lyrics and some other information on the inner side. Just as with the first album, this gatefold was also painted sideways. I have not been able to find out who painted the cover, it was probably an artist hired by Vertigo, but the idea was the band's; as Phil Shulman said in issue #2: "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." I feel, however, that it was a little too esoteric to draw a wider audience. As Phil said in a recent conversation: "There is a saying in England that if you lick someone's arse, you will eventually acquire the taste. That may by afterthought not be the right idea to induce in people. We wanted them to listen to the album again and again until they had acquired the taste *we* wanted to give them!" The inner sleeve, printed in blue on black, carried the liner notes by Phil Shulman that should act as a credo for the band and add not just a little to their "pretentious" image. As with the other Vertigo albums, the rights belong to Phonogram. The line-up was the same as on the first album. Later that year drummer Martin Smith left and was replaced with Malcolm Mortimore. The photograph on the inner sleeve shows from

## Acquiring The Taste Gentle Giant

Acquiring the taste is the second phase of sensory pleasure. If you've gorged yourself on our first album, then relish the finer flavours (we hope) of this, our second offering.

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 the one thought that it should be unique, adventurous and fascinating. It has taken every shard of our combined musical and technical knowledge to achieve this.

From the outset we have abandoned all precociously 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.

We are deeply indebted to: Martin Rushent, Big A and Garybaldi at Addison Studios, Bill Price at A.I.R. Studios, Chris Thomas-Moog Programmer, Paul Cosh—Ace Trumpeter and Good Vibes Park—Amplifiers that don't give up.

Produced by Tony Visconti

All pieces written by (Shulman, Shulman, Shulman and Minnear (Arranged by Gentle Giant) and published by Sydney Bron Music Co Ltd

## Side One

Total running time  
20 minutes 34 seconds.

## 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  
Forewarned 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  
Pantagruel born the earth was dry and burning  
In Paradise dear Badabec prays for him.

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

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.

Running time  
6 minutes 49 seconds

Phil Shulman Tenor sax, trumpet and vocals  
Kerry Minnear Organ, mellotron, vibraphone,  
musc and lead vocals  
Martin Smith Drums and tambourine  
Ray Shulman Bass and vocals  
Derek Shulman Alto sax and vocals  
Gary Green 6 and 12 string guitars

## Edge Of Twilight

The moon is down  
Casting it's shadow over the night-haunted town  
Mystical figures under the silence of light

The trembling air  
Droplets slowly unseen over the houses there  
And echoes changing into the voices of night

On the edge of twilight whispering  
Whisper, whisper, whisper, whisper,  
On the edge of twilight whispering  
Whisper, whisper, whisper, whisper

In those time  
In limbo where in never ending time  
The edge of twilight into the darkness of day

Running time  
3 minutes 48 seconds

Percussion section written, arranged and  
played by Kerry Minnear  
Kerry Minnear Electric piano, organ,  
harp, horn, cello, tympani, xylophone,  
musc and lead vocals  
Phil Shulman Clarinet and vocals  
Martin Smith Drums, organ and side drum  
in percussion section  
Ray Shulman Bass, violin, Spanish guitar and  
vocals  
Derek Shulman Vocals  
Gary Green Drum play on this one

## The House, The Street, The Room

The room and street are known only to me and a few  
I won't tell nobody  
A place to meet where no one can tell you what to do  
I won't tell nobody  
Here,  
Awake in sleep  
Together

My time is spent in chains and confusion in my head  
I don't tell nobody  
I keep my pains and swallow the harsh tears that I shed  
I don't tell nobody  
Here,  
In reverse  
Together

I find escape in the street, in the house, in the room  
I become somebody  
I cast my die and leave all my troubles in the room  
I become somebody  
Here,  
Awake in sleep  
Together

Running time  
6 minutes 4 seconds

Gary Green Guitars and bass  
Ray Shulman Bass, violin, Spanish guitar and  
vocals  
Kerry Minnear Organ, piano, celeste,  
clavichord, xylophone, musc and vocals  
Phil Shulman Clarinet, piano, trumpet and  
vocals  
Martin Smith Drums  
Derek Shulman Lead vocals and clavichord  
Paul Cosh Trumpet, organ  
Tony Visconti Recorder

## Acquiring The Taste

Running time  
1 minute 36 seconds

Acquiring The Taste  
Arranged and played by  
Kerry Minnear and  
Moog Synthizer



left to right below: Derek, Gary, Martin, Ray, Kerry and Phil.

The album was also released in the USA with the serial number VEL 1005. It was the only Gentle Giant album Vertigo issued in the states. It came with a swirl label, and there exists a promo version also. The US version was printed on the inner sleeve in white on purple, and opened inwards. The Canadian release with the same serial number was printed in white on grey. Later editions had a black line drawn around the letters of the band's name on the front, probably because it was hard to read.

I have noticed a later Italian copy which wasn't a gatefold and consequently carried nothing from the inner sleeve.



This stereo record can be played on mono reproducers provided either a compatible or stereo cartridge wind (or mono is fitted. Repeat equipment may already be fitted with a suitable cartridge. If in doubt, contact your dealer.

**WARNING**—Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorized broadcast, copying, performance, or other use of the recording in any manner whatsoever is prohibited. Any infringement of such copyright, including the use of any recording for public performance, may be obtained from Phonogram Ltd, Performance Ltd, British House, 82 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

**Side Two**

Total running time  
18 minutes 40 seconds.

**Wreck**

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

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

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 that remains is the deep crust sea heyeheli hold on  
And wreckage of things that used to be heyeheli hold on  
No stone marks the place of that waters grave heyeheli hold on  
Together they die both the weak and the brave heyeheli hold on

The arms of the sea.....etc.

Running time  
4 minutes 37 seconds

*Derek Shulman* Lead vocals  
*Phil Shabman* Lead vocals  
*Kerry Minnear* Piano, Mellotron, harp solo, moog and vocals  
*Martin Smith* Drums  
*Gary Green* Guitars  
*Ray Shulman* Violins, bass and tambourine  
*Tony Evans* Recorder

**The Moon Is Down**

And the horse riding up through the red skies  
The moon is down  
With a gold coloured bird through the cloud flies  
The moon is down  
Look East to the Sun, Oh where do they run  
Look East to the Sun, Oh where do they run  
They live in my dreams,  
in my dreams, in my dreams

And the Moon and the Earth they were mating  
The moon is down  
And the Angels of hell they were waiting  
The moon is down  
Oh bride of the winds, Reward for their sins  
Oh bride of the winds, Reward for their sins  
They live in my dreams,  
in my dreams, in my dreams

There's a chorus of visions and voices  
And is the laugh of the dawn  
now the old moon is down.

Running time  
4 minutes 45 seconds

*Kerry Minnear* Harp solo, piano, electric piano, Mellotron and vocals  
*Martin Smith* Drums  
*Derek Shulman* Lead vocals and alto sax  
*Gary Green* Guitar  
*Phil Shabman* Tenor and alto saxes, and vocals  
*Ray Shulman* Bass, 12 string guitar, organ, bass pedals, and vocals

**Black Cat**

There's a cat prowling through the streets at night  
And she's black and her eyes are burning yellow  
fire and bright  
The lights are darkened,  
Senses sharpened,  
Wide awake

As she sets out her past of Jungle days  
When the night was her friend in many other  
different ways  
It gave protection  
Of detection  
By her paws

With a sway and swing she walks away  
And the look in her eye it never seems  
to say  
The way she's leeching  
No revealing,  
Black Cat Ways

Running time  
3 minutes 53 seconds

*String quartet written and arranged by Kerry Minnear*  
*Gary Green* 12 string Wash-Bulk guitar, doobie's washbone and vat calls  
*Ray Shulman* Bass, violins, viola and skulls  
*Kerry Minnear* Cellos, tambourine, maracas and tambourine  
*Derek Shulman* Gong bell and vocals  
*Phil Shabman* Lead vocals and clavichord  
*Martin Smith* Drums  
*Tony Evans* Bass drum and triangle

**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

Chorus:  
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 Amen

Chorus:  
Don't look for something  
Plain truth is nothing,  
nothing but the plain truth

Repeat first and second verse and chorus

Running time 7 minutes 42 seconds

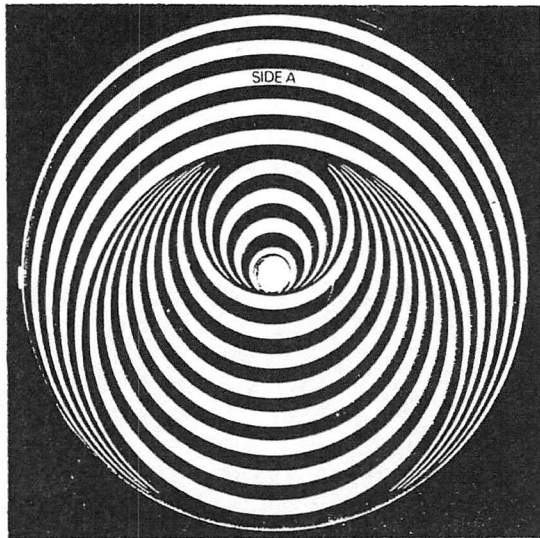
*Ray Shulman* Electric violin and bass  
*Gary Green* Guitars and voice at start of track  
*Kerry Minnear* Piano and vocals  
*Phil Shabman* Maracas and vocals  
*Derek Shulman* Vocals  
*Martin Smith* Drums

Mercury made a series of reissues of various albums called the *Motive* series. The album called just *Gentle Giant* in this series is a re-release of *Acquiring the Taste*. The front cover carries a photograph of the band from a much later stage, even with a different line-up.

Line Records, Hamburg bought the rights to reissue the first four albums on CD and all four were released in 1989. Sadly enough, *Acquiring the Taste* (LICD 900726) came without lyrics, the cover art split up and bent, and the instrumentation list of each track transferred upon the backside art. I have been told that it was taken from mint vinyl copies, it can sound like that to me. A grave engineering mistake opens the title track for some three seconds. Vertigo themselves released the album on CD in 1991, I believe (842 917-2, undated). The cover art is on the outside just as on the album, but the inside excludes the lyrics and instrumentation. This edition was taken from the master tapes and is quite OK. Road Goes On Forever will release the album in the end of 1993 or beginning of 1994, because Vertigo don't want to make new editions after having sold out.

*Acquiring the Taste* was recorded in A. I. R. and Advision studios in London over a few weeks in the Spring of '71.

The typical Vertigo swirling label and B-side, from the US promo.



The material had mostly been written during the preceding months in Portsmouth. Generally, Phil had an idea for a song, which Kerry and Ray transferred into music. They then handed over the rhythm and mood to Phil, who then wrote out the lyrics.

Derek's contribution on this album was that he sometimes helped Ray work out the themes and chords. He was much of the time in London, wheelin' and dealin' for gigs. Much of the arrangements was done in the studio, it was in fact an album which leaned heavily on the studio, and thus few of the tracks survived as concert repertoire. Track listing:

**Pantagruel's Nativity.** Running time 6.50. 'Pentagruel' on the label is a spelling mistake. Phil, who was the only one into Francois Rabelais (1495-1553) and his giants, got the idea for a piece about the birth of the band paralleled by the birth of Pantagruel, just after the name of the group was coined. The book about this giant, the son of Gargantua, was published in 1532, as the first of four books about the giants. The book about Gargantua came out two years later. The melody and chord structure was by Ray, while Kerry did the overlays. The middle part riff was again by Ray, while Kerry wrote the vocals arrangement.



The later Vertigo label, designed by Roger Dean.

**Edge of Twilight.** Running time 3.46. 'Twilight' on the label is a spelling mistake - or the other way round. Again, the melody was by Ray, the vocal harmonies by Kerry and the lyrics by Phil, who had got the idea for a mood piece of music. It was built up from a click track in the studio. The percussion part in the middle was all written by Kerry.

**The House, the Street, the Room.** Running time 6.01. Phil wanted to depict the actual place where the band members obtained drugs, and show it as a sinister place. Not that the band members ever indulged in that activity. All the music was written by Kerry. The many changing instruments at the middle and the end is in fact an experiment on manuscript of how a 2-bar phrase and a 3-bar phrase could run together.

**Acquiring the Taste.** Running time 1.37. A guitar tune by Ray, which Kerry arranged and recorded, helped by a Moog technician while the rest of the group went to the local pub. It was later rearranged for two classical guitars and included on *Playing the Fool*, a 30 seconds section of *The Boys in the Band*.

**Wreck.** Running time 4.36. As the band was situated in Portsmouth, Phil wanted a sea piece. He was inspired by a scene from *Don Juan* by Lord Byron. All the music was written by Kerry, inspired by English folk songs.

**The Moon is Down.** Running time 4.44. Phil was inspired by a series of pictures in a book of history of modern art to make a piece of mood music. Again the tune was written by Ray with vocal harmonies by Kerry. This piece was also built up from a click track. The jazz orientation was not deliberate, they were not into jazz, just drawing on their own experiences with various musical styles.

**Black Cat.** Running time 3.51. The initial part of this was by Ray, and Kerry arranged it heavily and wrote the string part in the middle. Phil wanted to depict the strong individualist, the lone people in the lyrics. The night is a metaphor for life generally.

**Plain Truth.** Running time 7.34. The most traditional of all the tracks musically, this one was all by Ray. Phil was inspired by the absurdist philosophy of Albert Camus to make the lyrics, but it was not meant to be considered too seriously.

Total running time 38.59 (+ pauses). All band members contributed by occasionally getting a hookline or a phrase, both lyrically and musically.

The record displays a fantastic musical variation and content and an instrumental variation that is even more amazing when you compare it to later productions: Who cares today, with all their synthesizer possibilities, to make such a musically diverse album? With *Acquiring the Taste* the group had made their first really stunning album. All that was promising on their first album had come fully blown on this one. Listening to it more than 20 years later, one can only say that it simply displays no weak points. The poetic and descriptive lyrical powers of Phil, the personal and situational expression of Derek, the melodic skill and experimental musical mind of Ray, the incredible compositional knowledge of Kerry, and the will, energy and momentum of them all to do their best, all shows up on this album. Nothing of it seems dated. The production is much, much better than its predecessor, and better sound would not improve it much. The tiny acoustic bits are possibly mixed too low and some intricate chords in the more jazzy sections are a little muddled, but that is peanuts. The lyrics are really dark and cynical, showing the dark philosophy and world view of Phil Shulman, but it doesn't really feel so, probably because of the humour, warmth and irony of the music. The blend of rock with folk, jazz and classical music works perfectly.

E. L. P., Genesis, Jethro Tull all made landmark albums at this time, but nothing can beat *Acquiring the Taste* as being the most progressive album of 1971. However, the management didn't like it and Bron, who signed the group up, simply said he knew not what to do with it and he signed them off. One and a half years on a good wage was over.



## Interview

### KERRY MINNEAR

### Keyboardist/Composer For 'Gentle Giant'

### By Dominic Milano

[This article appeared in the US magazine *Contemporary Keyboard* in 1976. Possibly in June, but as I have only got a photocopy, I can't say for sure.]

Kerry Minnear is the keyboardist for Gentle Giant, a British group who, since their forming in 1970, have gained recognition as one of the foremost arranged bands to come out of England in the last decade. Their success hasn't been as widespread as that of ELP or Yes, yet Gentle Giant's music, with its frighteningly tight Webern-like harmonic structures and textures coupled with English Renaissance and contemporary rock influences, continues to amaze those who have taken the time to listen.

The 28-year-old Minnear got his first taste of the rock scene after his graduation from the Royal Academy Of Music in London when he joined a German-based band called Rust. As he recalls, "It was awful. I joined purely on trust, because I was green. When I got there I found they couldn't play. And I did the first gig by ear — they just told me what key the tunes were in." He left after four months.

Upon his return to England, Minnear was quickly enlisted by vocalist Derek Shulman and his bassist/violinist brother Ray, who had just quit a singles group called Simon Dupree And The Big Sound, to form what was to become Gentle Giant. Since that forming, Minnear has co-authored all the band's material with the Shulman brothers, and has added his own unique style of keyboard playing to the Gentle Giant sound.

Today Gentle Giant consists of Derek Shulman (vocals, bass, lyrics), Ray Shulman (bass, violin, vocals), John Weathers (drums), Gary Green (guitars), and of course Kerry Minnear. It is only recently, after a total of seven album releases (*Gentle Giant* [import only], Vertigo, 6360020; *Acquiring The Taste*, Vertigo, Vel-1005; *Three Friends*, Columbia, KC-32032; *In A Glass House* [import only], WWA, 002; *Octopus*, Columbia, KC-32022; *The Power And The Glory*, Capitol, SR-11337; and *Free Hand*, Capitol, ST-11428), that Minnear and Gentle Giant are gaining the wide acceptance that they so richly deserve.

#### How did you get started in music?

When I was seven, my parents began to pay for me to have piano lessons. But I was a typical student at that age in that I showed no interest, really. I never practiced during the week, except for about an hour before my teacher came so it wouldn't sound as bad as the last week. That went on until I was about fifteen, when I needed an extra O-level, what we call Ordinary-level exam, in order to go on another two years at the same school. So I thought I'd cover myself from any failures I might have in the regular courses, science and the like, by taking music, which I found quite easy. I got very involved in it.

#### Was the piano the only instrument you were playing?

I had about a month's worth of cello lessons, but piano was my only instrument as such. However, from age sixteen to age eighteen I was playing timpani in the

orchestra at school. That was how I got introduced to most of the music I love — orchestral music. A timpanist quite often has a lot of bars to count before he comes in, and during these bars you can get a good look at orchestration just by observing the things going on around you. I suppose that was quite important to me. Anyway, I wanted to go to the Royal Academy Of Music in London and take timpani or tuned percussion as my first study. So I went to be interviewed and took some compositions along to back me up in case I flopped something because of nerves. The interviewers decided I didn't want to be a professional timpanist and that it would be a much better idea if composition was my major. So that's what I did. For three years I took harmony, counterpoint, and composition as first studies, and second studies of piano and tuned percussion. That was really a complete reverse of what I'd had in mind. They're pretty good that way. They see the potential in you, and steer you in the proper direction, rather than the one your ambition might steer you in. From talking to music students in the States I've found that the American attitude is more lax than the English when it comes to directing students. A student can pretty much take any direction they want. That can be good in some ways, but at that age, ideas aren't that clear, and very often it can be more confusing than anything else.

**Who are some of your favorite composers?**

I'm a bit stuffy, really. My main loves are Romantics and pre-Romantics, although I do like some contemporary. I suppose you name him and I'll like something by him. If you take any composer, there are going to be things by him that don't impress you as much as others. I like the English composers very much. Elgar, Vaughan-Williams — pretty conventional contemporary writers. I do like Tchaikovsky, I'm afraid, and also Bach and Händel, all kinds of folks.

**Do you listen to rock and contemporary groups?**

Groups? I don't get much of a chance to listen to them. We don't get much free time to sit at home. For instance, we had four days off after one tour, and the last thing I wanted to do was sit down and barrage my ears with music. So really, it's not fair for me to say anything except that I respect other arranged bands like Frank Zappa's band, at least some of their work; also Chick Corea, and other players who are extremely good at what they do. All the usual people that respectable musicians should like. But I don't think there's anybody I would go out of my way to buy records of. I find that there's so much classical music that I want to listen to that if I do get any spare time, it's usually dedicated to that.

**What equipment are you using now?**

Well, I've got four keyboards immediately surrounding me. There is a Wurlitzer electric piano, which will shortly be replaced by a Rhodes, and on top of that is a Hohner Clavinet. This, of course, causes problems, because there's a transformer in the Wurlitzer and the Clavinet is renowned for its ability to pick up just about anything. So there's a bit of buzz that comes from this combination. Then underneath that, I usually hire either a Hammond C-3 or B-3, and I have a Minimoog on my right.

**How do you treat the Minimoog?**

I tend to use it more as another instrument than as a Minimoog. I'm not particularly a specialist in freaky sounds. So I try to find a sound that is suitable for the passage that I want to play. That's just a general attitude I have towards synthesizers. It's just one more interesting sound that is still very useful in a musical way, as opposed to in a soloing way.

**And the Clavinet?**

Well, I have this system where if I've heard of a new instrument, I hire it for a session in the studio. Then we make a decision on whether it's worth getting one or

not. I hired a Clavinet for something on *The Power And The Glory*. I liked it because it was so clear. I didn't know how the pins were then. I mean, the Clavinet works on the principle of hammering the strings down on a pad, and the things between the keys and the strings are made of thin metal. They can bend very easily. This can cause you to get some very dull notes because the string isn't being struck right. So before each gig I have to do a complete overhaul on the instrument. It's a bit of a nuisance, but it's the clearest of all the keyboards. It can cut through the worst row on stage, which is something I've always wanted as a keyboard player. Early keyboards have suffered from mediocre tone, especially at high volume. You get swallowed up by everybody's overtones. The Clavinet will cut through that, though. I tend to use it as a harpsichord, rather than in the funky fashion. What I'm taking to lately is duplicating what I play on the piano, which is situated just under the Clavinet, to get a combination of the two. There's a tuning discrepancy that thickens things out a bit too, which I like.

#### **The Hammond?**

Up until now, I treated that a little sparsely, because I haven't had a decent organ sound on stage. I've always avoided it whenever possible. But I just discovered that with a Leslie tapped by a mike on stage I can get a pretty good monitor sound, with the Leslie sound as well.

#### **Do you use any other amps besides the Leslie?**

We're going to revise the keyboard setup, trying to simplify it and improve it at the same time. I just tried some Peavey amps and they seemed to work rather well. I might turn to them in the future. But at present, I'm using Marshall amps to monitor the organ and a British make of amp called H&H for the other keyboards. The speakers are Electro-Voice. All of it direct-feeds into the PA, but for the stage there are two 4x12 cabinets. One of the things we have to improve is our stage monitoring. I don't get to hear much of what Gary Green is doing. The only time we ever hear each other is when somebody makes a 'live' recording.

#### **Are there any plans to do a 'live' album?**

The idea of sacrificing the opportunity to release new material for something that we've been playing for several months seems a little dull and premature. We might eventually put out a double album, where half of it would be 'live' and half studio. But we treat the two things totally differently. We feel people go to see a group 'live' to be entertained, whereas on record you can get away with a lot of contrast. If you have too much contrast 'live', it can become rather weary for your audience. You have to balance the mood throughout the act so you're actually building something, or lulling, or just doing something positive.

#### **Do you have a favorite instrument?**

The grand piano is my favorite keyboard. What I'd like to do is get some bobkin, a whiz kid, to build a thing that would let me sit there on stage with a grand piano and make all the other instruments sound from the piano's keyboard. Simplicity is what I'm after. I don't want to do what Wakeman is doing, which is having a dozen or more keyboards and the kitchen sink at hand. With all those keyboards you usually get one technical problem every gig. That is something you don't want while you're on stage playing music.

#### **You used to play a Mellotron.**

Yes, but I ditched it mainly because of its poor quality workmanship. Some bands get away with using them, but I find that the tuning discrepancy and the lack of tonal equality in the upper range of the keyboard is just too much to bear. Also, 'live', we tend not to have those lulls where the Mellotron takes over and gives the rest of the band a break. You know what I mean — those big fat chords, ethereal pauses, and the

dim lighting. We haven't got any sections like that, so really, it was a very big thing being lugged around just to support the Moog. Yeah, we had ideas of having custom-built tapes and all the usual things people think about when they get Mellotrons, but we got rid of it anyway. I think they've got very poor quality heads, so you finish up with an instrument that spends most of its time in the shop being fixed. They're all right in a studio, in any static position, but when you take them out on the road it's horrible. You tune up the rest of the group with some notes and then others are out. When you try to tune at a compromise it's not good enough. The road is frustrating that way. It not only does things to your instruments, but where technique and ability are concerned, they go off on different tangents. It's limiting, really.

**What kind of practicing do you get to do while you're on the road?**

If the roadies remember, they put a dummy keyboard in the dressing room that I can limber up on. All I do then is some awkward exercises, trying to get coordination and the fingers to work in different ways. Contrary-motion scales and things like that, that I think I've forgotten. My warm-up is really based on the fact that I want to be able to play what I think, as soon as I think of it. It's the essence of jazz, although I don't actually play anything very jazzy. I think it's important that if you get an inspiration on stage, you be able to just play it, without worrying too much about transferring it from your mind to your fingers.

**Do you do more than those exercises when you're at home?**

Yes. I tend to sit for a long time with a tape recorder on, and just keep playing anything that comes into my head. Any mood that happens, I make the best of. And that's how I write. For instance, after a tour, we normally get about two months to write, rehearse, and record an album — *Free Hand* took seven weeks from the moment we knew we had to make it until it was complete. What I do is just sit at the piano for an hour and a half to two hours, never longer because the sound of the piano becomes very dull on the ear. If you try to keep bashing away for long periods you finish up with this sort of colorless noise in the background, and suddenly you realize you're making it yourself. It's time to go out for a drink or something. But playing like that is probably the best fun I have. John Evan [Jethro Tull's keyboardist] does the same thing. I think it's the most pleasure that both of us get, I mean, when we're on our own not trying to impress anybody, just relaxing and enjoying playing. You know, I find that it's expected of me as a keyboardist to be somewhat flamboyant and show off occasionally. It seems totally wrong. I get a lot of pleasure from just playing drivel sometimes.

**Much of Gentle Giant's music seems to let everyone in the band "show off" at the same time. Is that a conscious effort?**

It is, in that the original arrangement allows for that. If a song is written with a certain section, the mood is chosen first by the writer. Then he gives us the parts. If I've written it, I'll give out the guitar part to Gary Green as I hear it, the bass part to Ray, try to get the right feel on the drums from John Weathers, and the vocal we leave until last. It's normally a question of reproducing what the inspiration was. After a few plays through, they start adding their own little quirks to what I've given them, so we end up with something slightly different than I intended. But that's good because we're a group and not an orchestra. We're not there to play somebody else's music, we're all a part of it. So if I write a song, I'm quite prepared for it to finish up with a completely different feel on records than it had on my tape recorder. That's why, I suppose, it sounds to a degree like everyone is showing off. They're really playing their own part in their own way. We know it will all fit together, because it was originally constructed in quite a rigid way by one person. It gives us the freedom to move within



a certain section, a certain number of notes.

**What techniques do you use in recording?**

We normally play the tracks through as a group, and then add the overdubs later. But we use a strategy in that we haven't over-rehearsed. John as a drummer, for instance, is quite keen on the idea that he shouldn't have heard the numbers too much before he goes into the studio. This is so he doesn't start premeditating his breaks and losing the excitement of the music. It's a bit vague, but we know how many bars there are at this tempo and that. If John wants to add a cross-rhythm, Gary and I will play along on guitars and keyboards and that will go on a tracer track, which would be rubbed off at the mix-down.

**Does this approach of not over-rehearsing reflect any interest in free-form music?**

Free form is not something that I have a great deal of interest in — not free form from the word go, where something might happen or might not. When it does it's great, but it seems a waste to sit for three quarters of an hour waiting for five minutes' worth of something that really works. If you're on your own it's great fun, but to perform that kind of thing is a bit suspicious. So when we construct our music, it's got a rigid foundation. We can express our own part in our own way. I just have to accept the fact that things are going to come out different than they were originally intended. It's in the nature of the way we work.



*In the studio in the garage, 1988.*

## The Boys in the Band

### AN UPDATE ON KERRY MINNEAR.

All you eager readers have by now of course read the interview from 1975 in the last issue and this issue's interview. But what has happened with Kerry since? This is a short rendition of his life outside the band, taken from a few hour-long talks on the phone. For those wanting to indulge in the details, the long version will come at a later stage. A long, detailed interview will be much better if the general details have been taken care of beforehand.

Let us get close to the facts first. Kerry was born 2nd of January 1948, just to make sure that you get this quite clear when you read varying dates in all kinds of rock encyclopedias, articles etc. His wife Lesley was born 31 Aug. the same year, in a small town in the middle of Britain, on the outskirts of a much larger town. I could reveal it, but as the town is the one they live in today, I would rather not. Their lives are not pestered by fans apart from the occasional visits and more often phone calls from myself and a very few others, but they have to work hard to earn a living and bring up their children, and even though they are very friendly, we have to respect their privacy.

Why mention Lesley at once? Why not take The Life of Kerry first and then add the lines about this girl he must have met during those happy days with the band? Maybe because she was the first one of the two to know the Shulmans. In the lucky teenage days of Simon Dupree and his big gang, he also came to tour this small English rural town, where the gang bumped into those young girls waiting at a bus-stop. According to legend, the boys didn't reveal themselves to Lesley and her friends as they joked and all that teenage stuff, so she was quite taken by surprise when she came to the venue and discovered who she had met. On that same evening, she danced until she fell and strained her ankle, and the Big Sound took care of her and later called to ask if she was all right. This was the start of a lasting friendship, and Lesley actually went to Portsmouth in the following summers and occasionally at other times. She visited quite often by English standards I am told.

In February 1970 she met Kerry who had just been introduced to the band, and it seems they became good friends shortly after. Lesley moved to Portsmouth in April that year, and the following month she and Kerry began dating. As we Norwegians have no dating system like in the UK or US, I must stress that they were just close friends for some years before they realized how deeply they were involved with each other. In fact on the 2nd US tour in 1973, this involvement became clear during a phone call between Lesley and Ray, who revealed it to her. Lesley stayed at home with her friend Jane who at that time was married to Ray Shulman. The girls usually stayed together while Ray and Kerry were on tour. The marriage of Jane and Ray broke down at that time, a sad thing also for Lesley who was a best friend both of Jane and of Kerry and a good friend of Ray. No other girl was involved, things like that just happen. So while one marriage broke down, another was on its way.

The group was, on average, away touring half the year, and the other half was spent writing, rehearsing and recording new material. Derek was wheelin' and dealin' in London much of the time as he was in charge of the economy and gigs. Kerry usually worked hard on his own first, to get ideas or to work with Phil's ideas, and later Derek and Ray's ideas. After a week in isolation, Kerry would approach the others with what he had written. The group also met socially in the evenings because they got on well together, but Kerry stresses that they were very disciplined and did not

while away the days. Usually, the bass and drum format if nothing else was all clear before they went into the studio, sometimes it had all been written out in manuscript.

In 1975, Kerry bought a house in Portsmouth, and Lesley and Jane moved in with him. Kerry was away a lot of the time, which is not hard to understand. He was very involved with the band, which had their greatest time ever in terms of response. Kerry had, however, also begun to be involved seriously with something else, namely Christianity. The girls had begun attending a Methodist church and Kerry joined them when he was at home, but it still took some time before they, according to themselves, got things straightened out with God. There is no kind of bad feeling in this, the process of discovering oneself and one's relation to God and Christianity takes time. I will use the word Christianity because Kerry and Lesley don't feel they were especially religious, and the term "being religious" is often used in a negative sense. They had believed and in some way been interested in it all the time, but now they had come to a point where it developed more and more towards something definite and important in their own lives.

At this time, they didn't always get all things right between themselves either. Lesley used to sit at home and think about all the things that could happen to Kerry while he was away. An incident in the recording studios reveals how it could be. Once, the band members tried to persuade Kerry lose his temper, to play some part more aggressively, but it was a completely wasted effort as Kerry is an unusually kind person. They told Lesley afterwards about this, to which she asked them why they hadn't phoned her for help instead! Finally, in February 1977 Kerry proposed marriage to Lesley, and that relieved the tension. Life has been terrific ever since, they say!

The 16th of April that year they got married, almost secretly, in Sturminster Newton, the place where Kerry comes from and where his parents still live in 1993. The group members were not invited, because the pair didn't think that they would care so much about a wedding. As is usual, they discovered they were wrong. The



*Kerry, Samuel, Sally, Lesley and Susannah, July 1989*

following Monday the band members invaded their house after having learned of the event. Gary was also there with his wife from the previous year, Judy from the USA.

The family sold their house and left Portsmouth in July 1977, and lived in a late relative's house in Sturminster Newton while looking for a house in Salisbury where they both wanted to live. Then that house was sold too, and they moved in with Kerry's parents. At one time, they were travelling through Shaftesbury on their way to Salisbury and Portsmouth, and there they noticed this large house which had been for sale for a long time without a buyer in sight. Eventually the price dropped so much that they could afford it, and in November 1977 they moved in. Shortly after Lesley was pregnant, and their first child Sally was born 7th August 1978.

From May to October 1979 the group were writing and recording in Los Angeles, and Kerry brought Lesley and Sally with him. According to Lesley, wife and daughter had a splendid time, but Kerry didn't really like it. It was his hardest time with the band ever, he struggled to write the music for that album and he wasn't overkeen with the result. After that came the last Gentle Giant tour, which was also in the States. It ended in June, and the band broke up because Kerry and Derek independently had decided to quit because they wanted to do other things on their own. Kerry came home just in time to see his second child Samuel be born, 13th. August 1980.

After the split, Kerry worked on his own for some time, just writing music. Not much happened for a while, they lived in peace and quiet or at least as quiet as it can be with small children. One day they went to a campaign in Shaftesbury, held by a preacher who called himself Don Double. He held crusades in a tent which could accommodate 1500 people, usually in small towns, and he worked with traditional, Bible-believing Christians, whom can be said to practice a more common kind of lay Christianity as opposed to the more organized, theological and liturgical Christianity in the high church. A man in his team stayed with the Minnears, and he asked if Kerry would travel with their team and help them with the music. Kerry and Lesley joined the team for two crusades a year, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn, for the next six years. They also helped with summer camps. Kerry felt this was quite a different experience to playing for big crowds, and he felt this was a duty God had given him to do, which was rewarding in its own way.

In 1982 Kerry and Lesley decided it was time to move down to Cornwall, to increase contact with their team who were based there. They sold the house in December, stayed with their parents for Christmas, and then moved straight into their new house 'Tellimar', in Par in Cornwall. It was a large house where they really felt at home. Here they also had their 3rd child Susannah, at 3rd July 1985.

Whilst on the team, Kerry still managed to record some tracks now and then. He made a demo tape around 1984 and took it to Chrysalis, whom they still had a contract with to make yet another Gentle Giant album. Chrysalis turned down his offer, quite understandably really, because the time for the group's music was over, and one must admit, Kerry would have had to tour to be able to sell that album and I don't think Chrysalis viewed him as a potential star. It was in fact a collection of ideas and, though good, it would still need a lot of work to make it into a record. However, this offer freed the group from the contract.

The demotape as I have received it contains five 4-minute songs, all recorded by Kerry himself. They range from very good to brilliant, and while not being vintage Gentle Giant with counterpoint and complexities, they range no lower than the best of the 80s stuff I know. It is impossible to categorize the songs, but they are ripe with intricacies and funny lyrics and leave the one chord per bar pattern now and then to bring in some extra progressions. I'd love to own that album. Kerry shows again that

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To my good friend  
May the eyes of your heart  
always be open to God's  
truth.

Much love to you all

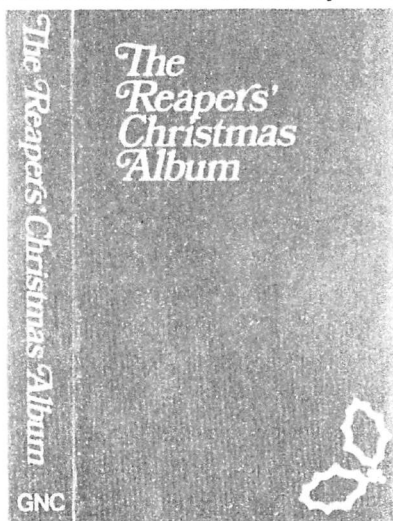
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Minnear', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Directors: K. C. Minnear, D. V. Shulman, R. Shulman.

he is not only a good craftsman, he also knows how to make good melodies. Aiming at a broader audience than with Gentle Giant, he nevertheless brings in many of his old twists. No, Kerry, you will never be a good MOR-writer! You will never make it to the charts. And thank God for that.

Kerry recorded with a Christian non-professional group called The Reapers during these years. The group only made cassettes for the limited Christian market, which is further limited because free churches tend to isolate and do not spread their internally produced music over to other communities. The situation has become a lot better in later years, I think, but it is still quite usual for such tapes, which are not professionally made (and usually very mediocre in style and content), to have a very low circulation. I think The Reapers were better than the norm, although Kerry on most cassettes was only a technician and a support musician. He played the instruments the others couldn't cope with, and he occasionally sang. He also stresses that the important thing was the word, not the music. When you communicate to common people, you do not give them Gentle Giant accompaniments. The music is functioning within a given frame, and taking it out of that frame makes it hard to understand and even enjoy. Kerry also feels that the music is dated and not really something for a Giant fan to collect. The group made five "praise" albums with simple songs of worship: *Worship the King, More Precious than Silver, Come and Praise, Make Contact and Star of the Morning*. This last one was also released on vinyl. The group also made a Christmas cassette, and this one is the only one that Kerry, to some extent, is pleased with.

This cassette; *The Reaper's Christmas Album*, was released in 1986 and is a good example of such a typically low-cost, not awfully professional production. It was recorded and mixed in the front room of Tellimar. In fact, it really sparks here and there and, although being quite traditional, in my opinion is a must for Gentle Giant fans. Some arrangements were totally Minnearian, and show what Kerry can achieve within all kinds of styles. Some of it is in fact much more equal to the good old Gentle Giant style of the mid-70s than his demo tape. **Good Christian Men Rejoice**, for



## SIDE ONE

- 1 Joy To The World
- 2 Hark The Herald Angels Sing
- 3 For Unto Us A Child Is Born
- 4 The Holly And The Ivy
- 5 O Little Town Of Bethlehem
- 6 Ding Dong Merrily On High
- 7 Christmas Awake

## SIDE TWO

- 1 Good Christian Men Rejoice
- 2 In The Bleak Mid-Winter
- 3 Silent Night, Holy Night
- 4 Christmas Isn't Christmas
- 5 Zither Carol §
- 6 O Come All Ye Faithful
- 7 We Wish You A Merry Christmas §

## Side 1

- 1 Joy To The World
- 2 Hark The Herald Angels Sing
- 3 For Unto Us A Child Is Born
- 4 The Holly And The Ivy
- 5 O Little Town Of Bethlehem
- 6 Ding Dong Merrily On High
- 7 Christmas Awake

## Side 2.

- 1 Good Christian Men Rejoice
- 2 In The Bleak Mid-Winter
- 3 Silent Night, Holy Night
- 4 Christmas Isn't Christmas
- 5 Zither Carol §
- 6 O Come All Ye Faithful
- 7 We Wish You A Merry Christmas §

All Carols, Traditional — arr. The Reapers  
except • © Lexicon Music  
and § © Traditional arr.  
Oxford University Press

## The Reapers are:

Derek Bond, Jeannie Lowe, Tony Mettrick  
and Kerry Minnear

## All Vocals: The Reapers

All Instruments: Tony Mettrick & Kerry Minnear

Produced by Tony Mettrick & Kerry Minnear

Recorded at "Tullimar", Lodge Hill,  
St. Blazey, Cornwall

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instance, should be played real loud! With its multipart harmony, *In a Glass House*—recorders, synth, jumping clavinet and electric guitar riffs, it could belong on any Giant album. For years, this is what prog people have longed for, when at Christmas we pretend that the radio and TV set have been broken because we hate the over-produced Christmas prunes they serve us. Gone are the pretentious arrangements, the creamy tenors and vibrating sopranos of the terrible muzak productions of the supermarkets. Gone is the commercialism that bleeps you sick at Christmastime. Unpretentious, simple, rich in the warmth and love of the songs themselves. The whole cassette should be issued on CD as soon as possible. It would sell well to those who would find relief in a Christmas album that has no intention of being a big seller. You can hear their joy and Kerry's style throughout.

The royalties of Gentle Giant sales had during the 80s sunk to virtually nothing, and there was not much money pouring in from the family's evangelical duties. At last they were forced to sell, not only their house, but also for example their loudspeakers, and move to a smaller house. In December 1987 they moved to Lesley's mother's house and stayed with her for four months, until they could move in to what would be their home for the next five years. Lesley's father had passed away in 1980, and her mother was quite glad that the family would be staying in her own town.

This move was rather hard felt and depressing for the family, I think. Kerry had no encouragement to keep composing, and had to take all the teaching he could get, both at a nearby school and with private lessons in piano, drums and electric guitar. Meanwhile Lesley looked after the house and the children and got occasional teaching work. It seemed like writing music would gain nothing.

At this time, this Norwegian wrote and asked if he could pay the family a visit. As Kerry and Lesley had had only one or two visits a year from fans, they thought they could afford that, and thus began a relationship that went somewhat farther than just a fan's idolizing. Quite nervous and eager not to intrude, I was actually warmly received, though the first thing I had to do was to help Kerry with the dishwashing. I brought some tapes for the kids who hadn't heard much of their father's albums, and that possibly began forcing their parents to look back on the 70s again. Kerry and Lesley had given away copies of their albums until they realized that they actually lacked their own copies of some of them, and now the stereo had also been packed away. But the kids loved the tapes, and thus began the involvement with Gentle Giant phase 2.

In 1987 a small monthly newsletter called *On Reflection* was started in the US, to report on all kinds of progressive music, including Gentle Giant. Two years later it changed its name to *Progression*. It was the first evidence that there was a growing awareness for the group. A much bigger thing, though, was the article on Gentle Giant in *Record Collector* by Barry Winton, in January 1991. This was written with my help after I had given Barry Kerry's address, so that Barry could send them a video of the 1978 BBC show and talk to them about the article. This helped Gentle Giant to their highest position in the *Record Collector's* poll ever, and it began to dawn upon Kerry and Lesley that people had not really forgotten the group. The CDs had begun to be released in 1988, although at first without any royalties. Lesley is in charge of Alucard Publishing Ltd., which takes care of the royalties, and she has had to settle many a dispute over payment. Finally money began coming in. Not much at first, but steadily increasing, as more and more CDs were released in more and more countries.

Kerry and Lesley were forced to buy loudspeakers to be able to listen to the old records again, and then they had to buy a CD player, to be able to hear the bootleg CDs that had appeared. Kerry said that he had been away from the music for a long time and when he started listening to it again, it was with a different ear. Bad feelings from

all the troublesome touring were far away and he could let it sink deep into him. And it was quite funny for me to see how their children jumped into it, especially *Giant for a Day* and *Spooky Boogie!*

Kerry made a demonstration cassette in 1989 with some tunes for different moods called *A Selection of Themes*, containing 7 one-minute pieces of different kinds. I am quite amazed at his ability to make all kinds of musical pieces, and would love to have the themes developed into real compositions. They are pure instrumentals and, like the demo tape, chord-based song-like things, intended to catch the ear of the directors of TV companies, whom, naturally enough, seldom consider Gentle Giant fugues the best accompaniment for their series. Kerry actually got some composing work for television from this, and in 1990 he was able to make a new demo tape with some tunes from his first TV series, called *Contemporary Themes*. The cassette contains 10 pieces of variable length, but most are short and comparable to the previous cassette. These also show his skill on working in different styles, and it would be good if he could expand such ideas into full-length pieces. I must add, however, that this kind of thing is done by many people today, while the Gentle Giant compositions are outstanding. I would rather have Kerry doing those things nobody else can do, even though he always brings his personal touch to whatever he makes.

In September 1991 my first article on Gentle Giant appeared in *A New Day*, the Jethro Tull fanzine, celebrating the fact that Giant had supported Tull in 72 and 73. It answered questions that many people had asked the AND editor about this group he

1. Pick - me - up
2. Sorry
3. Headline
4. Theme for life

5. Olympics '92
  6. Rain again
  7. This country
- SEE MARY FOR FULL DETAILS

1. TRAVEL MUSIC
2. ROAD MUSIC
3. TRIP MUSIC
4. BITE SHOP MUSIC
5. WORKING CANAL MUSIC

6. BLUES MUSIC
7. SHADY DEALS
8. MUSIC FOR AFRICA
9. MUSIC FOR AFRICA
10. FAMILY LIFE

■ A SELECTION OF THEMES ■

• CONTEMPORARY THEMES •





knew little or nothing about. The article was of course mostly to promote Giant, but the editor was very restrictive and so were a lot of the readers, so I had to condense the facts about the group into areas which showed their relationship with Tull. Thus began letters pouring in, leading to the newsletter and the still growing network of Gentle Giant fans – or should we say friends, because I have a feeling that the fans that write to me are very personal, friendly and not just obsessed collectors. Kerry and Lesley have followed the development of the network with amazement and disbelief.

The work load as composer is a bit up and down, but generally over the last years Kerry has made music for educational programs for children. He spent a long period from September last year until this May making mood music for such a series; Travel UK, an off-peak series of 10 programs for Central Television, going out on Thursday evenings. He actually had to make a library of mood pieces of different sorts, that the producers could pick from, so he had no control of their use. It was done in a reasonable haste, written with a specific brief, so it is not the kind of music he would put all of his soul into. For all you eager collectors out there, Kerry regards this kind of work as not really collectable, and he has not collected all the pieces on tape. He has, however, thought of buying a DAT machine to store what he makes in the future.

Now the family is on the move again, but this time just a few houses down the road. In July, they moved into a larger house with one more bedroom and larger rooms on the ground floor, and an attic where they can furnish a new studio. Until now, Kerry has worked in the garage while the car has stayed outside. The garage will have to be soundproofed, though, because Samuel plays drums, so the car will still have to stay outside.

Because of the move, Kerry wants to sell some of his equipment. The 16-track is gone, he is going for a new A'dat digital 8-track with new possibilities. He wants to sell a Hohner clavinet, a newer one than the one used on stage. It is only used in the studio. His stage cello is bound to go, also. It was not such a good instrument,



*Outside, with the car in front of the garage studio.*

according to him, but good enough for the show. The Roland JP4 that he used on *Civilian* and the last tour shall also go, but this one he regards as quite an infantile example of a technology that has exploded, so he doesn't think it is so much worth now. He is also a little reluctant to sell something through the newsletter, but I think he can be assured that the fans are generally not collectors in the vein of Beatles collectors and that sort of thing. Well, hopefully, he will manage to sell it.

As Simon Hart at Road Goes On Forever worked hard with the new CDs, Kerry worked through his 24-tracks to see if there was any material that could be included. The track *Heroes* from the *Civilian* session hasn't been found yet, other than on a common tape. Kerry found only a rather pathetic 12-bar recorded for no purpose whatsoever, obviously, that hadn't made it to an album. More interesting will be those two tracks they recorded for Philips before signing with Vertigo. The music to *Freedom's Child*, a light ballad, was written by Kerry on the piano, to the words of a friend of his, before he had met the group. Phil cleared up the lyrics a bit, changed some of the words, and therefore Kerry is a bit worried about the rights to it and so on. The other one, *Weekend Cowboy*, was a guitar thing written by the Shulmans. Whether we will see these tracks on the new version of the first album is not settled yet. Ray possibly has more bits and pieces, but that remains to be seen.

Kerry enjoys most of the work done by the group, and will not say that any particular album is his favourite. On the other hand, he is not particularly keen on the two last ones, although they have their moments. He didn't wholeheartedly agree with the new direction in their music, led by Ray and Derek, although he saw that the group needed to play this kind of music, as a kind of psychological reaction to the intricate arrangements of the previous albums. He had not heard the music for many years when he was more or less forced to listen to the tapes which his children became quite obsessed with. Then he was able to view the whole thing in a new light.

He has a lot of favourite tracks, particularly the epilogue of the *Three Friends* album, and *A Reunion*, which he is quite glad was not over-produced. The contrapuntal things he also enjoys, all in all bits and pieces everywhere. He is glad that *The Advent of Panurge* is at the top of the poll, that is one of his favourites too, he liked the simpleness and the lack of pretentiousness in the piece; it flowed quite naturally.

Kerry thinks that what appealed to listeners as a general principle was the element of "head". The compositions were intellectually pleasing, and something to listen to many times. It gave a pleasant feeling to get into the pieces and therefore they intrigued listeners. This could also be a feeling of pride, a little arrogance attached to it, that the listener is into something that is not for everyone, you belong to a "lead club". This was something he was afraid of among fans. But he also thinks that the group was able to communicate emotions, to genuinely move people.

Kerry did not listen much to other acts in the 70s. He had no affinity for bands Gentle Giant were compared with, like Genesis and Yes. He had seen King Crimson live once in their early days, and was intrigued, but he never bought any records. He simply didn't have time for that. He admired Jethro Tull a bit, especially live. He was not much into ELP and didn't think much of Rick Wakeman. In his later years, he has listened to different artists, and while not admiring the musical content, he has envied their ability to communicate with the buying public through their music.

Therefore he is afraid that if a solo album should materialize, the fans would possibly be turned off because he finds his own style has become more accessible, in order to reach more people. He would rather not speak too much about a solo effort. He still lacks time, although there is a mass of tapes around with ideas, and he finds that the distance from Phil, for instance, and the lack of an environment in which to

create hinders his writing. Lesley and I agree that he has too high a threshold when it comes to his own things, some of the taped ideas are simply incredible. So he would rather not speak about it before it materializes. I can understand that, but can't hold back that I can not be the only one who would love to find the album and who would regard it much higher than Kerry himself, who, according to legend, had to be dragged away from the studio so that the albums could be regarded as finished, because he was never content and always had more ideas to include.

Kerry and Lesley find the materializing of a newsletter and a network of Gentle Giant fans very tremendous, very lovely, and very encouraging - their words, not mine. I don't even speak English. They think the contact is a constant source of encouragement, and do not get the impression that us fans get things out of proportion, like fans often can. When the interest materializes in reissues and a back catalogue, they can see that the effort of the 70s was not in vain. I can only say that when one can help in saving such incredibly well-composed music from oblivion and even encourage new music to be written and spread, then I shall be content.



## Knots

I thought I should call this column *Betcha thought we couldn't do it*, but as I possibly will not always make the transcription 100% correct, I thought that would be too pretentious. Each issue from now on will hopefully carry sheet music. It depends on how much time I have to sit down and listen carefully to these intriguing complexities.

## "On Reflection"

by Kerry Minnear and Derek Shulman  
transcribed by Geir Hasnes

*On Reflection* is a terribly complex piece with up to 5 different voices singing together and a multilayered use of percussion. When listening to such a composition, one usually doesn't hear all the details and one usually doesn't care to either. My own experience is that I have to train the ear and brain to certain characteristics of the instrument or voice that is to be transcribed, before I can make a good transcription of such complex pieces. At many times, I have to guess what is coming next, and then listen to see if this guess was right. At other times I have to compare what I think I hear with what has been done in previous verses or bars, simply in order to correct my own perception. Perception is just as much brain as ear.

Now of course I have had different mixes of *On Reflection* to listen to. There are no real differences, just a question of more doubling of instruments, and the new mix gives more clarity to the percussion. After having done most of the job, I then received photo copies from Kerry - they had found his manuscripts from the *Free Hand* period in the attic. This helped me a lot. There was, however, some places where percussion had been noted and I quite simply could not hear it. In some other places I finally heard it after a long period of repeated listening. The same applies for the five-part voices, which in some places were shown in the manuscript but were not recognizable in the mix. Most of this had to do with duration, though. I am still uncertain within the bars 51-69, the manuscript does not always give what became the finished product.

Another problem concerned what they actually sang. Kerry's manuscript gave no indication of the lyrics. By coincidence, Bart Garratt wrote and said he was also working on a transcription of the tune. I quickly called him and asked for his manuscript and it seems he and I had misinterpreted the lyrics at different places, so that I was both corrected and assured I was right. Many thanks, Bart, for your cooperation.

A connoisseur will twist his nose at my version for not giving so many pauses in the transcription. This is because the vocals seldom give a real pause, there is mostly breathing pauses which I have not indicated. Uncertainty is also a reason.

Another cosmetic omission is that I have not given binding bows where a syllable is sung over more than one note. I have divided the syllable into sections instead, because I give two verses in the same place. For people not acquainted with notes, but willing to follow them and maybe trying to sing the song themselves, the notation used is simpler to understand.

You will have to note that male vocals are always denoted one octave higher if using the G clef. The fugue-canon at the end of the piece is denoted in C major although it is actually in C#. This is because it was played in C and then they speeded up the tape for the mix. I also found it more natural to give each part of that separately. If you want to analyse the chords, you can put the whole thing together, but if you want to play it, you can photocopy it and hand it out.

© Gentle Giant Music, Almond Music 1975

# On Reflection

Lyrics: Derek Sholman  
Music: Kerry Minnear

①

**1 (2nd + Piano)**  
 Derek: In my way, did I use you... Do you think I really abused you? On re(flection) now, it do-esn't ma-ut-bar, just an ex-pe-ri-ence,  
 Cry: My ty-pathy's with you... But I never li-ied to you... All in all, it seems it's

2,3,4 3,4, until 9

**2 (2nd + Vibes)**  
 Ray: How can you say I made you need me more than who... Ca-an you say it now - it's fi-nished, o-o-ver?  
 Placed my cards on the table and hid all ev'rything I was with... I was with the... understandings Any thing  
 a-ny thing different.

**3**  
 ver-? still... It's my ca-al-ling, my-y calling now... Dif-fer-ent ways of, dif-fer-ent ways of life - can ne-er e-e-ven  
 To-lean on, start again, for should I... On re(flection), On re(flection) just an ex-pe-ri-ence

It's my act - and my calling, explained exactly the thought: Dif-fer-ent ways of life can ne-er e-e-ven  
 Find a - no - ther... to lean on. For I should sta- not a gain - Show re- flection of the pa- rience

**4 (2nd + Melimba)**  
 Gary: It's my act, it's my calling - I explained exactly the falling - Dif-fer-ent ways of life - can ne-er e-e-ven  
 Find a - not-ice - lean on, start again, for I should have long gone. On reflection now, it's just an ex-pe-ri-ence.

**5**  
 ven... be the same. Who-en you saw me, could you take me... - says I tried to re-mem-ber  
 one... Saw the pain which have ended - I come... and I go... o, I'll try to re-mem-ber

be... Could you always take me the same way as I... re - e - member  
 and... To- get-ter never in ten-ded... and a-as I come and I go... I - re-mem-ber

**5 (2nd + Flauto/pedal)**  
 John: Be the same. When you saw me... could you always take me the same way... As I come and went - I tried to re-mem-ber  
 Saw the pain will have ended... To- get-ter never in ten-ded... As I come and went - I'll try to re-mem-ber

Be the same when you al-ways take me the same way... I tried to re-mem-ber  
 soon be - seen - exit... in ten-ded as I come and go... I'll try to re-mem-ber

Emo Notebooks 1975

# On Reflection

②

17

you < still you stay. Tied in your way. Chan-ging times. Wa-tching the signs.

you still you stay, tied in your way. Chan-ging times, watching the signs.

Kerry: Tied you'll stay. Watching signs.

22

2nd time permission only 3 bars

How < could you What you thought about all want to be? Now, < on re-

How could you what you want to be? Now, on re-

How could you see in me All you want me to be? Now, on reflection, why

29

Why should have I changed you all around, all around. All around, all around. Repeat 11 times.

flec-tion change for All around, all around. all around, all around

should changed my ways for you, all around, all around, all around, all around.  $\bar{p}$

*2nd time* *cross forte with best and cello, mandolin*

35

Kerry'll re-mem-ber the good things. How can you for-get all the years that we - e shared in - our way.

1st time recorder

2nd time they're gone After 4, 2nd dir in Minimus

Bass, Cello  
Eino Notebakk nr 7052

# On Reflection

③

43

Things were changing, my life; taking a - thing your place in my li - ve and - our time drift - ting away

+ Recorder 1st & 2nd time

After: 2nd vibraphone

51

Look back, it's not your game. Together that's in name. Organ. Vibraphone

Look back, it's not your game. Together that's in name. Marimba. Flute

Timpani

Organ

D.S.  $\text{♩}$

60

all around, all around

all around, all around

all around, all around

all around, all around

Guitar

Organ

Bass

all around, all around

D.S.  $\text{♩}$  do repeat

68

Marimba

Glockenspiel

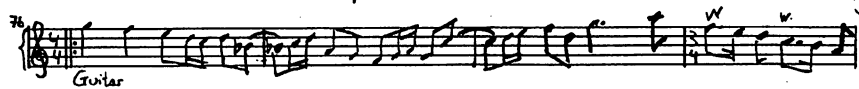
Timpani

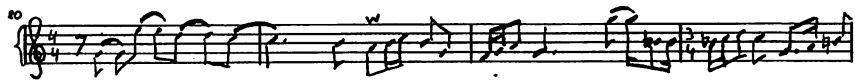
Repeat bars 66-67	Repeat bar 66	Repeat bar 67 together
placed together with bars 65-69 3 times	placed together with bar 65	with bar 69 in $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$

Guitar starts

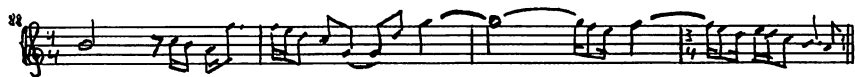
$\frac{3}{8}$  part of bar 74.

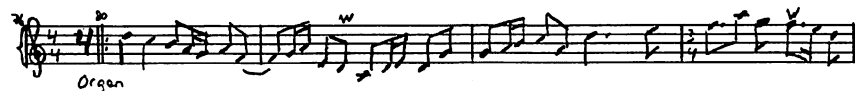
## On Reflection

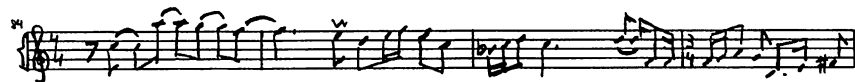
76  ④  
Guitar

80 

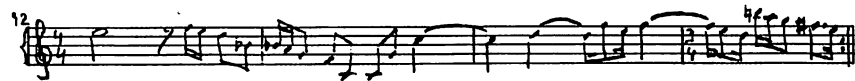
85 

90 

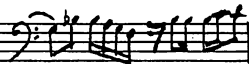
95  Organ

100 

105 

110 

Bass plays the guitar part, starts 2 bars after the guitar, no ornaments. Bar 94 of bass 3  
Electric piano plays the organ part starts 12 bars after the guitar



Transcribed by Geir Hasnes  
1993



### Peel the Paint

## A short musical analysis of some early Gentle Giant pieces by Jan-Paul van Spaendonck

[This piece is edited and translated from an article which appeared in a Dutch magazine. See note at the end of the article. -gh]

Perhaps this is the place to stop theorizing and show how it's done. So for those of you who aren't interested in musical analysis, this is the moment to stop reading. You can skip the next pages and play some Gentle Giant records instead.

A good example of a song that's remarkably classical in composition, without losing the basic feel of a good "pop song", is *Black Cat* from the second album *Aquiring the Taste*. There's a rather sophisticated opening theme in 7/4 time. The same time signature that dominates the entire song, without making it ostentatiously complex: it flows naturally.



After the theme has been given a real Minnear treatment (meaning that all sorts of irregularities have crept in), the melody comes forward. A melody to match the subject, just as the rhythm does: elegant, sneaking, slick.

BLACK CAT - 4 PART FUGUE

But then, right after the opening theme has sounded once more to finish off the first stanza, a little fugue develops, based on the slightly altered melody, and played by violin, viola and violoncello (as far as I can hear). It is a skilfully written piece of counterpoint, but very short. Yet, in this very compact format, Minnear still manages to introduce a small refined irregularity: the entry of the third part (the cello?), comes a crotchet before its time. In fact, the whole thing is over before you start taking notice, and is followed by an Antheil-like piece that turns out to be an accompaniment of the main melody in the same guise it wore in the little fugue. Eventually, after a revisitiation of the fugue, it suddenly develops into a string quartet's version of the opening theme. Whereupon the original opening theme quite logically takes over, and introduces a second stanza.

So the transitions from popsong to string ensemble interlude and back again are smoothly made. Only a trained musician can hear what skill is applied to reach this goal. The average listener just likes the blend of popular and classical technique, without realising that this isn't by all means something that comes natural. The opposite is true! Even a great band like Jethro Tull, famous for their fusion of various styles, never really succeeded in smoothing out the ruptures between their "composed" and their "rocky" fragments. Their complex music is great music, but not from a classical point of view. *Thick as a Brick* and *A Passion Play* are indeed immensely interesting, but speaking in terms of musical composition, they're mere "collages", whereas Giant's pieces are really consistent "compositions". There's no thematic unity in Tull's music. They move on to other material as if floating on intuition. Giant's songs also use the free, mosaic form, but in most cases they put additional strength into their work by safeguarding a thematical unity.

A fine example of this kind of solid songwriting is *Raconteur, Troubadour* from the fourth album *Octopus*. Here nearly everything is based on one single melody, even when the song at first seems to be built upon two or even three contrasting themes. The theme is



Let's call it A. It is sung a few times. When singer Derek Shulman suggests something new, the violin quietly continues playing A. Thereby reducing Shulmans high pitched notes to a mere counterpart.



Then there is an interlude in which the theme is hidden, played by something that sounds like low keyboards (with a slightly altered rhythm) and on the violin. And in

an expanded form: a little tail has developed. In fact this version is heralding a larger instrumental piece, that uses the same expanded form, now in slow motion. It is played with real Elgarian Nobility.



Then comes what at first seems a second theme. But on close examination it appears to be at least closely related to, but probably even derived from theme A.



So the song goes. Never a dull moment, but created with an absolute minimum of musical material.

More examples of this sort of carefully woven musical texture can be given, but of course there is more. Generally speaking the first four albums stay closer to a "classical" sound (that is, when they aren't indulging in hard rock). There's more traditional melody and harmony to be found here than on the latter albums. So the complexity is, in a way, also traditional: classical methods of analysis can be successfully applied, as I have demonstrated. But the second half of Giant's output is somewhat different. Here the well of melody seems to have run dry a bit. Or perhaps it is fairer to say, that in this period they were more keenly interested in rhythm than in melody. The last albums before their conversion to a more popular style hold many examples of awe inspiring rhythmical precision and of virtuoso timing. The songs have but little melodic charm to remember them by. They move like high tech clockwork, ticking away in unerring complexity. Melody is often restricted to groups of repetitive themes that bite their own tails:



In this period counterpoint is created that is too complex to write down without enormous effort. There are little canons in which the parts seem to almost catch up, so fiercely are they chasing one another. And everything is louder! Every single detail is played full strength. No more early seventies romanticism, no more chamber music, no more academic refinement to contrast with the rough edged rock and roll of the Shulgans: complexity has very selfconfidently stopped being a high brow addition, and has become the core of a unique musical style. A style that in spite of everything it

has in common with classical art belongs basically to popular music. For Giant's cleverly designed compositions, that on paper would seem to have more in common with Stravinsky than with, say, Led Zeppelin, still possess the "groove" of all great rock music.

The editors have translated the magazine because they hope to attract readers from other countries as well. I can recommend it for the readers of Proclamation because in 46 pages, they manage to write intelligently about complex (= so-called progressive) rock in general, and groups such as Gentle Giant, King Crimson, Jethro Tull, the Canterbury scene, and Dutch acts.

*The Once in a Millenium Magazine* nr. 4: *Complex Rock* may be ordered by sending 10 Dutch guilders, 5 US dollars or 3 British pounds in cash to J. P. van Spaendonck, Ruysdaelstraat 124, NL-1071 XJ Amsterdam, The Netherlands. No cheques please. After arrival of your money, the magazine will be sent to you as soon as possible. Don't forget to fully state your name and address.



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David Armas, our US distributor (at left), with Larry Babbitt of A and A Music at last year's Jethro Tull convention.

## Acquiring the Taste

### PEKKA POHJOLA

I became aware of Pekka Pohjola, who is from Finland, in 1980. A friend of mine played some wonderful music for me. I tried to guess its origin: Nordic folk rock bands? new Weather Report?, new Focus? Pekka Pohjola has since then been one of my favourites. The same friend had introduced me to Genesis (Selling England), Gryphon, Isao Tomita, Kayak etc, he was a huge fan of ELP and when I asked him what kind of music was hidden beneath the cover of *The Power and the Glory*, he who always talked about the various acts I did not know, just laughed wildly and said Play it! And a few seconds later I was hooked forever on Gentle Giant.

Pohjola's records are almost impossible to find, even in Norway, which is partly a neighbour to Finland. I managed to find *Visitation*, the album we listened to that unforgettable evening, soon after, and in 1983 I bought six of his records while on a trip to Finland. I have collected most of the records he has been a composer on, while having paid little attention to all his studio musician appearances.

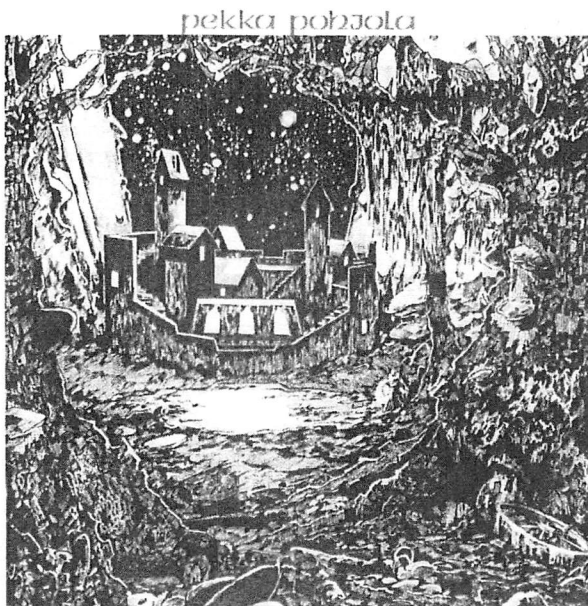
I had not even heard about *Yesterday's Games*, *Changing Waters* and *Symphony no. 1* until recently. It is very difficult to get any news about music from Finland.

The music of Pekka Pohjola is to a very large degree composed, by a guy who knows what he is doing. Born in 1952, he was trained on the violin and piano, before concentrating on bass guitar in groups and adding piano on his own solo albums. He is into a lot of styles and combines them all with skill and excitement. He often uses brass and symphony orchestra instruments to enhance the music, but seldom lyrics. The group he reminds me most of is The Dixie Dregs / Dregs. Sometimes he employs almost the same sound, excitement, mix of styles, and arrangements. As a bass player, I marvel at his playing. As a pianist, I can tell that he is not the world's best soloist, but he is skilled and innovative. Nevertheless, he knows how to compose intriguing pieces. His classical influences are obvious, although he states that he has not had any formal training in composition. He cites Beatles, Weather Report, Chick Corea and church hymns among his influences, but I will note that there is not much of any of these in his music, apart from his very apparent complex chord structures, which are almost unique in the prog world. There is no trace of free form improvisation in his music, but often an influence from jazz, and the pieces are very tight and vary with a speed few groups can match. The improvisations on the first two albums go on for too long, since at that time he had not sufficiently developed his own style and security, but don't let that scare you from buying those albums as well.

The first album he played on with Wigwam, *Tombstone Valentine* from 1970, is a bit boring, but Pekka more and more influenced the development of the group, and *Being*, his last album with the group four years later, is at times incredible musically, although being, as nearly everything else of art in Finland, dark and weird in its philosophy. He made a few solo albums which were both praised and awarded, and then went on to play first with the all-Scandinavian group Made in Sweden, and then with Mike Oldfield who was very impressed by the Finnish bassist.

After that he played with his own groups, and broadened his musical expressions further. He also played as a studio musician on various albums, but I can not always recommend these because he usually had little influence of either the songs or the arrangements. In the late 80s he wrote on a symphony for nearly four years, and now he has converged more and more towards a classical composer. It is hard to say what he will do next, because he is so versatile and unpredictable.

Pekka Pohjola is not underrated, he is simply not known. There is one drawback - his connection with Mike Oldfield. It is a pity, because I find Oldfield much less innovative and much more mainstream. His *Exposed* where Pekka plays, bored me. Mike Oldfield repeats himself and what other musicians have been playing for centuries, but Pekka is absolutely original. My progressive friends here in Norway regard him highly, and those who like Gentle Giant, ELP, Focus, Hatfield and such artists love his music.



(DISEMOTION)

*With such an album cover, the music must at least be something different!*

Below is a selected discography of Pekka Pohjola. It includes all of his solo stuff, his work with Wigwam, Made in Sweden, and the groups he led. 5 is maximum score.

<i>Tombstone Valentine</i>	1970, LRLP 19 - with Wigwam	1
<i>Fairyport</i>	1971, LRLP 44/45 - with Wigwam	?
<i>Wigwam,</i>	1972, LRLP 51 - with Wigwam	?
<i>Pihkasilmä Kaarnakorva</i>	1972, LRLP 71	3
<i>Being</i>	1973, LRLP 92 - with Wigwam	4
<i>Harakka Bialoipokku,</i>	1974, LRLP 118 - UK: <i>B the Magpie</i>	5
<i>Live Music from the Twilight Zone,</i>	1975, LXLPL 517/18 - with Wigwam	?
<i>Where Do We Begin?,</i>	1976, 2480 358 - with Made in Sweden	4
<i>Keesojen Lehto</i>	1977, LRLP 219 - Sweden: <i>Skuggornas Tjuvstart</i> , UK:	
<i>The Mathematician's Air Display,</i>	later as <i>Mike and Sally Oldfield and Pekka Pohjola,</i>	5
<i>The Group,</i>	1978, DIGLP 2 - as The Group	5
<i>Visitation,</i>	1979, DIGLP 4	5
<i>Kätkävaaran Lohikäärme,</i>	1980, DIGLP 12 - as Pekka Pohjola Group	5
<i>Urban Tango,</i>	1982, PELP 1	5
<i>Jokamies,</i>	1983, PELP 2 - UK: <i>Everyman</i>	4
<i>Space Waltz,</i>	1985, PELP 3	5
<i>Flight of the Angel,</i>	1986, PELP 4	4
<i>Yesterday's Games</i>	1986, with Espoo Big Band	?
<i>Simphonia no. 1</i>	1990, for a symphony orchestra	?
<i>Changing Waters</i>	1992, PELP 5	3

## Memories of Old Days

**Nashville, Tennessee, 25. August, 1972.**

## Introducing Gentle Giant in the States

**By Mike Walker.**

The following concert review attempt is not necessarily written for publication, but strictly for your enjoyment. My apologies for hand script, as the computer is softly tucked away in my wife's office at work. Nevertheless, we take the plunge!

It might seem odd that my memory is like that of an elephant. I am rather famous for this - recalling odd dates and incidents from my deep and shadowed past. I did send you a short quib in a letter, which has inspired me to spill the total image as I graphically remember.

Those were heady days, the early seventies. The rock concerts as we now know them, which were probably first introduced by Bill Graham at his "Fillmore East" theatre, were still in their embryonic stages in 1972. It was August 25 of that year that myself and three friends (no pun etc.) made the three hour trek to Nashville to witness the "heavies", as it were, of Black Sabbath. It wasn't unusual in these days to see two or three totally different acts billed together. Folk, rock, even country along side heavy metal. So there was always (then) anticipation of a pleasant unknown surprise likely to show up.

The twenty-thousand seat arena was sold out, filled with long hairs and freaks from all over. As the lights dimmed, the motley crowd buzzed as a lonely spot focused on an announcer. "Due to continuing throat problems suffered by Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath will not perform this evening." Boos, jeers and hisses followed, putting the pleasant crowd on mob status. The only cheer for the next ten minutes of announcements came when the M. C. announced that Jethro Tull would be in nearby Chattanooga soon performing "Thick as a Brick". He also said that the scheduled Black Oak Arkansas, the special guests, would do a double set. This eased the mob somewhat as many had come to see them anyway, judging by "Black Oak" banners. They were very big in the south in those days. So, as the "pot" smoke rose into the hazy spotlight the announcer continued. "But first we have a surprise guest." ('yeah, right, let's further calm the crowd', we thought.) First, you must understand that any unknown band in those days were likely to be introduced as being from England, even though they were not. English music was hot then so we half expected an English band introduction anyway. The M. C. continued, "Ladies and Gentlemen, with their first appearance in America, ('yeah, sure') from England! ('right') Gentle Giant!"

Unknown to us, a band had formed on stage behind the hazy spot, and even before the M. C. could get out of the way, the stage lights flashed on and a bolt of thunder from this "English band" shook the place. The crowd jumped and the M. C. ran for it. Judging by the hitting rhythm I remember, the opening song could have been Working All Day. Gary Green was marching about the stage, Ray was stationary with jaw out and legs bent, Kerry was slinging hair and Derek was laughing the lyrics. About halfway through the first song ( as the music somehow continued) they began swapping instruments! Derek took the bass, Ray picked up the violin, and Kerry picked up a guitar that had been in his lap. After several bars of God only knows, they swapped back. The song ended with a "bang!" and Derek strutted the edge of the stage

and shook his fist at the stunned helpless audience. After a moment of silence, the crowd (deep in the heart of country-western-land) applauded politely looking at themselves. One of my companions leaned over with a grin and said, "no wonder Sabbath wouldn't show their face."

From here, I distinctly remember Advent because I remember the ending lyric, "...I have come from Hell!" I don't even think it was recorded then, but could have been. Why Not was also included as I remember that phrase continually as well as a five minute wah-wah violin solo by Ray which almost ran me through! After a beautiful violin and cello duet, Giant blasted into some ten minutes plus extravaganza that was mercilessly complex. Derek was running amok with a small gong in one hand and a mallet in the other, chased by Gary Green. Finally, at what appeared to be the appropriate time, Derek held the gong to the mic, drew back the mallet, but he could not find a place in the music to play it, so he shook his head and wandered about as the crowd were laughing. This he did three times until finally, as the music stopped out of nowhere, Derek took his cue and crashed the gong. The music took flight again as Derek took a bow. The crowd, now somewhat receptive, gave Kerry a standing ovation as he displayed his mastery on vibes. One by one Giant left the stage leaving Kerry alone in the soft blue light until it too faded away with the sustained sound of the vibe. So ended *Funny Ways*, and forty-five minutes of music of mythical proportion. I can't say Black Oak didn't pour it on after that, it was their crowd, but myself, and at least three other people I know went out scurrying for records with "Gentle Giant" blazed somewhere on the cover.

They became a bit of a thing really, much talk, and the word spread. Though I, through much sweat, did manage to gather all their releases, my friends as well, I never saw them again, though hard I tried. Of all that I witnessed that fateful night the strongest image I have is of Derek with gritted teeth and fist in the air in defiance. How could such a beautiful sounding band with strings, recorders and harmonies so quickly turn into the world's most powerful band? What attitude they had. A very deep understanding of rock and theatre. Only Jethro Tull, of the hundreds of bands I have seen over the last twenty years plus, is still able to convey that contrast so masterfully as Gentle Giant once did.

So Mr. Hasnes, this is what I fondly recall. Sorry for being sloppy and misspelling the King's English. I hope you got something out of this, as much as I did remembering.

Mike Walker.

[Should be quite unnecessary to say that I got so much out of it that I had to print it. Anyone else who writes about the joy of seeing Gentle Giant live or other memories of old days, will have their contribution printed as soon as space permits. -gh]



## Funny Ways

# Gentle Giant album covers and inner sleeves in the UK and the US.

It seems that virtually all the album releases from the UK and US differed in one way or another.

The first four albums had gatefold sleeves on the first pressings with the lyrics on the inside.

- *Gentle Giant*, 1970, no US release
- *Acquiring the Taste*, 1971, the UK release had blue on black inside covers, the US had white on purple and the Canadian had white on grey.
- *Three Friends*, 1972, different covers but same inside covers. The US version used the Gentle Giant 1st album cover on the outside but the 3rd inside cover on the inside.
- *Octopus*, 1972, different covers, the UK version had a Roger Dean painting and lyrics on the inside covers. The US version had no lyrics and a jar-shaped cover with an octopus in a jar. Later US editions were not shaped.
- *In a Glass House*, 1973, printed silk screen on cover, photograph insert, lyrics on inner sleeve, no US release.
- *The Power and the Glory*, 1974, half playing-card shaped cover, lyric insert. The US version used the same cover, lyrics on inner sleeve. Later US was not shaped, probably also some releases in other countries.
- *Free Hand*, 1975, lyric insert. US cover a different photograph of the same motive, lyrics on inner sleeve.
- *Interview*, 1976, lyric insert. Later UK releases had lyrics on inner sleeve. The US version used the same cover, but I am uncertain whether it carried the lyrics. If you have a first UK edition which carried the lyrics on the inner sleeve, please tell me, because I have been told so, but my own copy has the lyric insert.
- *Playing the Fool*, 1977, first 10 000 UK copies had a book within with a history of the band but no lyrics. I do not know whether this book came with the US version as well, but I think the first US pressings probably had it.
- *The Missing Piece*, 1977, the only studio album that didn't carry the lyrics. Same cover and green inner sleeve in both UK and US. (Lyrics will be printed in issue # 11.)
- *Giant for a Day*, 1978, mask insert, lyrics on both sides of inner sleeve. The US cover was a darker blue, and the inner sleeve carried the mask on one side and the lyrics on the other.
- *Civilian*, 1980, lyrics on inner sleeve. The US used the same cover, and also had lyrics, I am told, most probably on the inner sleeve? A US promo version had different colors on the cover. The German edition carried the lyrics in German on the inner sleeve.

If you can correct me or add something to the list, send a letter.

## Words from the Wise

Dear Geir. Happy Christmas to you + yours! Thanks for the newsletter which I enjoy tremendously! It's amazing to me that there is still so much interest in Giant today! Perhaps not amazing – it was a great band after all! or is that immodest? But if I can help in any way with the newsletter – let me know...

Love, Gary Green.

I have just become a new recruit to your Gentle Giant fanzine... It is a great read and brought back some fond memories of seeing G. G. on the Liverpool Stadium back in 1975, a great gig! But reading issue 2 is like starting at chapter 2 of a good book, so I'm hoping as you state in your editorial that you will reprint issue 1 if there is enough interest (hope there is!).

I must admit that Gentle Giant are not my all time favourite band. That belongs to King Crimson. But Giant run Crimson close. My idea of Heaven would be to see Crimso and Giant both reform and tour Europe and America together...

Allan Taylor, Liverpool, UK.

Well said about the chapters – didn't think about it in that way. I think almost everyone who has written after receiving issue 2 first has asked for a reprint of issue 1. That's warming isn't it? Because of this I can almost excuse people rating other groups higher than Gentle Giant... -gh.

I just received your fantastic second issue of Proclamation [hark, hark! -gh] ... I was hesitant about mailing cash... I only wish it could come out more often! ... I subscribe to an on-line service called Prodigy. One of its features is a "Music Bulletin Board" where people can post notes and comments... Gentle Giant is often discussed, either under its own heading, under "Progressive Music" or in connection with other prog bands such as Gryphon, Yes, King Crimson, Renaissance, Genesis, PFM, ELP and Strawbs. Recently it was reported that Gary Green is playing in a band called Mother Tongue, and would be playing live doing a lot of XTC songs (I think there is a similarity between Gentle Giant and XTC, if nothing more than sheer inventiveness)... May I suggest a future topic on different cover art for the same albums?... What involvement in or control over cover art did the band have?

Lake Hearne, Shreveport, LA.

It seems all cash sent arrives safely. The reason for wanting cash is in case of having to change money. Cheques are OK if they can be received in the bank of the receiver without him having to pay for it. Obviously there are some bulletin boards up and working, and I myself have an e-mail address <Geir.Hasnes@delab.sintef.no> so anyone who wishes can try to reach me there. A report on Gary and his band will be featured in the next issue, in fact the interview has arrived already together with a report where Gary and his band attended the XTC convention, but they didn't play because of various reasons. I couldn't include the interview with this issue because it is so large, so next issue may be a Gary Green special issue. The various covers and their origin will be featured with the presentation of the albums in the section Design, one in each issue. To tell about forthcoming events is the only way I can persuade people to renew their sub, isn't it? -gh.

*Proclamation* ... is absolutely great. Teach your ugly *tocayo* David Rees from *A New*

*Day*, how to make a real and excellent fanzine. The Banco International, here in Mexico City, told me that you can change this cheque (for my enthusiastic subscription to *Proclamation*) in any Citibank office ...

José Hernández Prado, México City, México.

I am of course glad for all enthusiastic words, but look at different fanzines as different bands. We differ in style, some like this and some like that. I wish I could write like David Rees, his ravings are always enjoyable.

It's great that the various ex-members have been in touch – what if they reform? Even for one tour would be great so that those of us who didn't find out about them till too late (about 1982 in my case) could see them in action.

Simon White, Uxbridge, UK.

Even if I found out in 1974, I had no money to travel to any concerts until 1977, and then Giant had been to Norway for the last time. If the band members don't read this, I think I can safely say that nearly all of them would be interested in reforming provided it pays well, since they have discovered that the band is still that popular. -gh.

I will try and send you a transcription of my one and only Giant concert experience. Before the concert I got to meet and talk to them during sound check at a very small venue here in my town. This was 1980 and the *Civilian* tour. Afterwards I got all their autographs on the back-side of the Giant mask I captured from the front row after Derek tossed it. I still have it framed between two sheets of glass.

Ted Thomas, Norman, OK.

It seems there are a few more of us about than I assessed a few months ago!... The name GG and even the artwork conjures up, in Jungian terms, an Archetype of "The Wise Old Man". The music matches it...

Rick Cassada, Memphis, TN.

...I've also been into The Plastic Factory and bought three CDs which have been played to death by the children. They sound surprisingly good to us too.

Lesley Minnear.

## Why Not?

All Gentle Giant items bought, sold, traded. If selling, state condition and your price or ask for my offer. For my list send SAE or IRC. [Pete has, according to his lists, all the different Gentle Giant records in one condition or another in stock permanently.-gh]

Pete Gray, 2 Coniston Close, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6UD, England.

Records, tapes, CDs for sale or exchange. Most Gentle Giant items in stock most of the time. SAE and IRC for further details.

Colin Hayes, 55 South Street, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 4LD, England.

**Buying and selling.**

- Wanted: Any Simon Dupree material, any other Giant related material.
- Wanted: Laser discs of The British Invasion 1-4, Frontiers of Progressive Rock.
- I sell or trade T-shirt iron-ons of the Giant head. [Recommended!!! -gh]
- I will accept tape copies as trade for other boots and on Simon Dupree material.
- Orange vinyl Words from the Wise 45rpm vg++ and 12" dj copy of same m- for sale.
- If you need help in locating Gentle Giant CDs or vinyl albums, I may be of assistance.

David Armas, 3730 Stockbridge Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90032, USA

Videos on Jethro Tull, Gentle Giant [those mentioned in #1 -gh], etc. for sale. Send SAE and IRC to *Wazza Kanazza Studios*, Aldo Pancotti, via Napoli, 54, I-00045 Genzano (Roma), Italy.

**Gentle Giant items wanted.** Anything to sell or trade? I have live CDs and some rare live videos. Enrico Ponzoni, Via Giovanni da Milano 17, I-20122 Milano, Italy.

**Wanted!** In the name of Panurge! I buy or trade videos and tapes, especially from the last tours with Phil Shulman. Also interested in videos with other progressive groups.

Dan Andersson, Lagmannsgt. 6B, S-416 53 Göteborg, Sverige.

**The chief US distributor for the UK import copies of Gentle Giant CDs.**

*In a Glass House* CD for \$15 and \$3 postage and handling. *The Power and the Glory* now sold out, sorry. New CDs awaited. Wholesale orders are welcome. Renaissance Records, 621 A Hanover St., Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA

**CDs and other collector's items available for Gentle Giant collectors.**

Plastic Factory, 189 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6RG, England.

**Rarities for Gentle Giant collectors.**

Neil K. Stocker, 355 East 86th St. Apt. 3c, New York, NY 10028, USA.

**CDs, audio and video tapes, rarities.**

A and A Music, Larry Babbin, P. O. Box 369, Keansburg, NJ 07734-0369, USA.

**Catalogue on Progressive Music.**

Aeon Music, P. O. Box 6185, Torrance, CA 90504, USA. [The best catalogue I have ever seen, although the prices were somewhat higher than I could swallow sometimes. -gh]

**Catalogue on collectable music.**

Panorama, P. O. Box 96, N-1350 Nesoddtangen, Norway. Catalogues contains both used records and used and new CDs that are hard to find elsewhere.



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### Music Papers / Magazines 1952-1993.

Lists available on many artists. Please state interests and send SAE and IRC to Backnumbers, 51 Cecil Rd, London SW19 1JR.

*The Welsh Connection*, the bi-monthly Man fanzine is an excellent one, professionally made, which also keeps us updated on John Weathers' current and old activities. The next issue will feature a history of his early band Eyes of Blue. Sub of 6 issues £12 (UK), £15 (Europe), £ 16 (elsewhere). Write to *Northdown Publishing, Ronald House, 1-3 Chalet Hill, Bordon, Hants GU35 0TQ, England.*

*Progression*, the bi-monthly magazine for progressive music fans, includes a lot of good info about relevant groups. Sub of 6 issues \$18 (USA), \$23 (elsewhere). Write to *Progression, P. O. Box 7164, Lowell, MA 01852, USA.*

*A New Day*, the Jethro Tull fanzine, can be most highly recommended. A highly interesting magazine, heavily illustrated, now also in color. Now 39 full-packed issues in the last 6 years, at subscription prices £6 for 5 issues (UK), £10 for 7 issues (Europe), or £10 for 6 issues (USA and Canada), to *A New Day, David Rees, 75 Wren Way, Farnborough, Hants GU14 8TA, England.*

*Facelift. The Canterbury Scene and Beyond.* A highly recommended fanzine for all Canterbury lovers, and I know a lot of Gentle Giant fans are. 10 thick and rich issues up to now. For a sub of 3 issues, send £4.50 (UK), £5.40 (Europe), or £6.50 (elsewhere) to *Facelift, Phil Howitt, 39 Nicolas Rd, Manchester M21 1LG, England.*

If you are in Gosport, don't forget to visit "Rainbow's End" the gift shop of Phil Shulman and wife, at 13 Stoke Rd.

### Mr. Class and Quality

For all of you who have joined us since the last issue, a little information about me and this venture. I am a 36 years old research scientist in the field of composing ('designing' is not all) large computer systems, especially inside telecommunications. This newsletter is done in my sparetime, and therefore the newsletter has to wait sometimes for me to finish all the other chores. With five children, who actually don't protest much but rather enjoy intriguing music, I don't always have the possibility to settle down with piles of fan letters and articles in front of my Macintosh. Therefore so many thanks to all of you for your patience, your kind letters and your support.

The reason why I make this newsletter is simply that noone else does. I am not a native Englishman and the language may here and there sound strange. I have it proofread, but it will still slip occasionally. Although Gentle Giant is my favourite group, the newsletter is not limited to Gentle Giant alone, because you fans are usually broadminded enough to enjoy other acts and other kinds of music. My hope is that we shall see more serious articles and analyses besides the fan stuff of facts and collecting. I will use this section in future issues to comment on progressive rock in general, but this issue has grown so big that I have to leave it out now.

## So Sincere

*The Occasional Gentle Giant Newsletter* was edited by Geir Hasnes and published by Classica Forlag AS, Trondheim, Norway, August 1993. 300 copies were printed.

The newsletter is issued as often as I manage to get it out, usually twice a year. It all depends on the number of letters with interesting material in them. Cost will be used to cover production and postage. The more readers, the more pages.

I will take subscriptions for four issues at a time. Subscription prices have been raised due to those irritating banks who take so much money to change foreign currency, and the high postage costs:

If living in Scandinavia send NKR 100.- to *Classica Forlag AS, Ragnhilds gt. 10, N-7030 Trondheim, Norway*. The best way is to send the money in Norwegian cash, but it can also be sent on postal giro account 0824 01 97538.

If living in the British Isles, send £10 to our UK distributor and Gentle Giant fan Pete Gray, 2 Coniston Close, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6UD. The best thing is to send cash, but personal cheques or IMO are also accepted.

If living in Continental Europe, send 25 German DM to our distributor and Gentle Giant fan Gerhard Zimmermann, Otmarstr. 26, D-90439 Nürnberg, Germany. The best thing is to send cash, but personal cheques, or IMO (at 27 DM) are also accepted. They must be in German currency. Earlier we took cash in other currencies, but it costs so much to change it that we've dropped this, unless you pay an equivalent to \$2 extra. Sorry, guys and gals, I didn't invent banking policies.

If living in the USA or Canada, send US \$15 directly to our distributor and Gentle Giant fan David Armas, 3730 Stockbridge Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90032. The best thing is to send cash, but personal cheques, or IMO (at US\$16), are also accepted.

If living elsewhere, send US\$20 to the US distributor.

The distributors make the financial transactions with me here in Norway after their costs have been covered.

I don't sell or trade anything as I haven't got the time. See the Why Not? section for those things. Issues #1 and #2 of the newsletter have been reprinted and are available. It is easier for you and me have it included with your current subscription than have extra money sent. Otherwise each issue will cost 1/2 of subscription price.

The newsletter is written in **Microsoft Word** on a **Macintosh**. I would prefer submitted material to be delivered on a floppydisc. I can take almost all PC formats. I can also scan all typewritten or photoset material, so don't bother too much with a floppy disc if you can send me a nice printout. All correspondence and material should be sent to my private adress: Geir Hasnes, Eidsvoll's gt. 16, N-7016 Trondheim, Norway. I can also be reached on e-mail address <Geir.Hasnes@delab.sintef.no>.



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# GENTLE GIANT

Derek Shulman

Gary Green

Kerry Minnear

John Weathers

Ray Shulman

