

"60 UP THE MOTORWAY AND STILL IN SECOND" - Phil Collins

Do you remember your first gig with Genesis?

I joined the band on 8th August 1970, then we rehearsed for several weeks at the Maltings, and at Tony Stratton-Smith's place at Crowborough. According to the diary, my first gig was Chatham Technical College on 2nd October, then Farnborough Tech the following day.

Did you produce new material as well as rehearse the old set at the Maltings?

We got songs together like 'The Musical Box', 'The Fountain Of Salamacis', 'Return Of The Giant Hogweed' and 'Happy The Man'. We took 'Twilight Alehouse' and knocked it around a bit to make it interesting. They were into Family at the time, and Mike used to thrash away at the 12-string, and those chords for 'The Musical Box' appeared.

Transport was a bit scary in those days...

Mike had a Mini Traveller which would take the five of us and the gear — three of us in the back sitting on the PA. Then Pete had a Hillman Imp, and because he was a bit absent-minded, he would often forget to change gear and he would be doing 60 up the

motorway and still be in second, with the engine screaming. I remember we smashed the windscreen coming back from some bloody awful gig in Scotland, and we were all freezing to death.

There were a few shows after Ant left and before Mick Barnard joined.

I liked the four-piece, but I know Tony didn't; he wasn't ready for all the split hand stuff yet. It was a bit trial by fire. Then (ex-Farm guitarist) Mick Barnard came in and played some shows, and my mate Ronnie Caryl from Flaming Youth played one gig with us at Princes Risborough. I remember Steve's first gig at University College London. I got drunk on Newcastle Brown and with the strobe and everything, I kept missing the drums during 'The Knife'.

Did you find the other band members rather intense?

We did a gig at Watford Tech in '72, and when we came off stage Tony and Mike were having this fight. Tony was throwing chairs at him and calling him all sorts of names. Then we went back on for the encore with Mike trying to trip Tony up, but they played it as if nothing had happened.

'Supper's Ready' was always a live favourite.

It was great fun to play. I remember when we recorded it, the 'Apocalypse 9/8' section was done in one take. We wrote some of it as a group with no room for vocals, but when Pete came in with the lyrics it did sound great. I had never really been in a band that composed the way we did. I had never been in a band that composed.

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway meant a fixed set list, for over 100 shows.

The first show was in Chicago, and we went out and did four sides of music that nobody knew. There was a loud scratching of heads. It was great fun to play, but the whole show with the slides and everything only really worked about five times.

By the time it reached Europe, there were some great performances.

I remember in Oslo, the famous exploding show, the roadie in charge of the pyro put far too much bang in. There was splintered wood flying everywhere, amazing no one was killed. He stuck his head round the curtain and said 'sorry'. I said 'you're fired'.



Janet Macoska

AFTER THE ORDEAL

Tony Banks, Mike Rutherford and Anthony Phillips reminisce

Your first professional gig was at Brunel University, in November 1969, wasn't it?

Banks: At Acton, not at Uxbridge. The main university is at Uxbridge but we played at a smaller part of it.

Phillips: It wasn't our proper set. That emerged a few months later.

There must have been some strange gigs at the beginning.

Banks: There was a teacher's training college we did somewhere in Birmingham, and we got paid £50, I think. And they did not want us at all. Our music used to stop and start, and they just wanted something relaxing to dance to.

Did you play much from the Revelations album?

Phillips: We were doing 'In The Wilderness' for a little while.

Banks: And we had quite a heavy version of 'In Limbo'. We also had some acoustic songs like 'Stranger', which was one of Ant's, and 'Little Leaf', which Mike and I used to sing on stage. We used to do this harmony, which sounded beautiful, like Simon & Garfunkel.

Was there much thought about structuring the set?

Banks: We used to start with the acoustic numbers and for the first three or four songs I would play guitar. The first electric number was 'Stagnation'. Then the keyboard got bigger and bigger, until we did 'The Knife'.

Phillips: As I recall, a lot of those acoustic numbers had to go, as we kept stopping and swapping guitars over, and if we were playing a Tech on a Friday night, you had to play the loud ones just to be heard. 'Grandma' was another of the acoustic ones that went.

Banks: Then things like 'Going Out To Get You' and 'The Knife' were stretching out to about 20 minutes; we just kept going on and on. 'Digby' was another one. I used that later on in something else.

The lengthy tuning breaks obviously spurred Peter into action with his stories.

Phillips: At first, he was so nervous that Richard MacPhail was going to do the announcements. As Peter Gabriel, he was very unsure of himself, but once he assumed this persona it was fine.

Banks: Because Pete's not a natural on stage, it was his way of getting through the time. In the end it became such a feature that we would end up waiting for him to finish.

The flute and the tambourine were things to hide behind, plus this bass drum which was quite funny, because once Phil joined the band we had to put more and more padding into this bass drum. Pete was so out of time it bore no relation to anything we were playing, he would be thrashing away at the end of 'The Knife', with his tongue hanging out.



Rutherford, Phillips and Banks — The Farm, Winter 2002.

Which leads us to Mike and the cello.

Phillips: Mike did very well with it. He was very good at picking up instruments and making a good sound. But he couldn't cope without the frets, so if the frets came off or the torch didn't work, you'd hear the roadie pull him out of the PA.

Banks: We played at Blaise's, and set up in a kind of phalanx, with Mike at the front. And I think we were playing 'Little Leaf' when he bowed up somebody's skirt because they were so close.

Phillips: Blaise's was always full of smooching couples and arms dealers.

There were some interesting support slots.

Phillips: We did actually play with Nick Drake, and one of the sad things for me is that we never really listened to him and neither did the audience. He was painfully shy and you just couldn't hear him. I remember him coming up to me and saying that he thought our song 'Let Us Now Make Love' was dangerous.

Rutherford: Deep Purple at Chatham Town Hall, I remember that, and Caravan — we liked them.

Phillips: The Deep Purple gig was the first time that we'd seen so many speakers. They were so loud, and so organised. All these women surrounding them, all the strutting poses. We were very naive.

Were there many 'one man and a dog'-sized audiences?

Banks: We used to do this thing when they had a progressive night, usually a Monday night, so they wouldn't have to do it again. And we went to a club in Bermondsey, South London. There were three girls who had come, and they sat right at the back hoping to meet some blokes. And what they got was us lot on stage playing this weird stuff, with Pete saying, 'come to the front, my name's Peter, what's yours?'

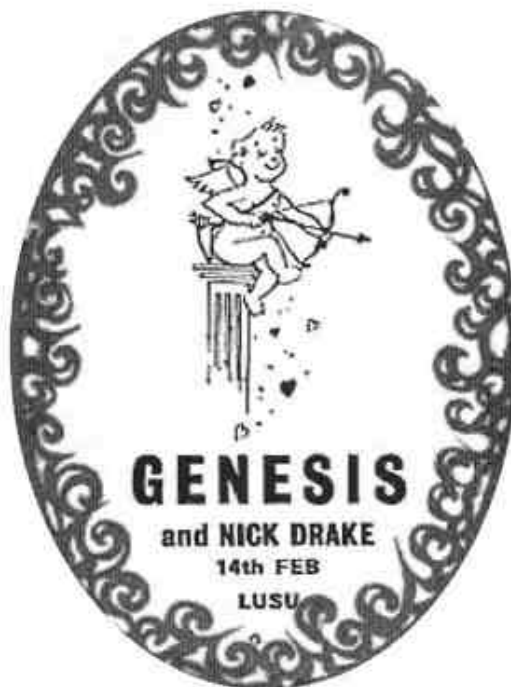
The long-distance gigs must have been interesting.

Banks: We did a gig at Worley Social Club and we were just about to go, when Pete showed up with his mattress and threw it into the van — he insisted on taking it.

Rutherford: And we stayed in a changing room that had under-floor heating which came on in the middle of the night. And we all woke up and the floor was burning hot.

Banks: We broke down once after a gig, and we spent the night with Caravan's roadie. He went to sleep with a joint in his mouth, woke up the next morning and lit it.

What did your drummer, John Mayhew, make of all this?



"Nick Drake thought our song 'Let Us Now Make Love' was dangerous."

Banks: It was quite difficult for him, we all took ourselves very seriously. And he never really got what we were trying to do with the music.

Phillips: He was married with his wife living in London; we were all toffs and he was not.

Rutherford: We were so odd.

Banks: John actually made this Leslie speaker I had, as he was a carpenter. And the thing was, I only liked the slow Leslie sound, so we had to have a resistor in it. We originally tried it with a light bulb, which was fine, then a variable resistor which was all very exciting in those days. Sometimes it would slow down and stop, so I had to keep getting up and whacking it to get it going again.

You played the Roundhouse with David Bowie in 1970, didn't you?

Banks: I was a Bowie fan then, but I thought his show was very disappointing, I preferred his Anthony Newley period.

Rutherford: I think we only played a couple of songs. Someone was trying to sell the film recently — wanted a fortune for it.

Phillips: It's the only visual proof that I was actually in the band. It could have all been invented!

The Le Ferme gig from March 1971 features that rarest of things, an unreleased track 'The Light'.

Banks: When Phil joined, we obviously asked him if he had anything we could use, and he had written 'The Light', a simple song with a slightly embarrassing lyric about Joe and Mary. It had a nice melody so we constructed a big song around it.

The first Rainbow gig was very important to the band, wasn't it?

Rutherford: A turning point for us. We had the gauze sails to cover up the speakers, but the whole look changed when we used UV light on them, a totally different atmosphere.

Banks: Peter had all the costumes and make-up which also responded to the UV light, terribly simple effects but we hadn't seen anything like it before.

The Selling England By The Pound tour introduced the vocal talents of Phil Collins.

Rutherford: When Phil and I did 'More Fool Me' at the front of the stage, there was always a strong feeling towards him; the audience seemed to warm to him. That helped make it easier when Pete left.

Banks: Phil used to look like a painter, wearing dungarees with no shirt underneath.

I always thought playing the entire Lamb album live was a brave move.

Rutherford: I found it was one of the most difficult tours to do. We had to play a lot of songs that were not great live songs, lots of bits that were not meant to be played live. I found it a bit of an effort.

Banks: It was ambitious, and it didn't really work. Technically, we were trying to be to adventurous. Half the time most of the slides didn't work, and that used to depress you, and we knew Pete was leaving.

Rutherford: I'm sure somebody must have enjoyed it.

Banks: It was my least enjoyable period in the group, I think.

SOUL IGNITION

The albums on which Genesis' legacy rests by Daryl Easlea

TRESPASS

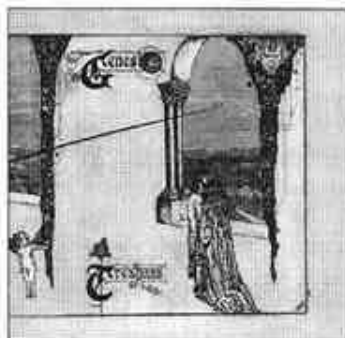
Charisma CAS 1020, original pink scroll label, gatefold sleeve with lyric sheet, October 1970, £20.

CD: Virgin CASCDX 1020
Highlights: 'The Knife' — one of the few examples of funk morris-dancing tunes on record.

Characters Introduced: Not yet, it's a bit early.

Is It Any Good?: Not bad, in a pastoral sort of way.

21st Century Cringe Factor: Surprisingly few given its vintage, although Gabriel's warble when he gets agitated in 'The Knife' is a little, er, peculiar.



NURSERY CRIME

Charisma CAS 1052, original pink scroll label, gatefold sleeve, November 1971, £20.

CD: Virgin CASCDX 1052
Highlights: 'Harlequin', 'Seven Stones', 'The Musical Box'.

Characters Introduced: The old man for 'The Musical Box'.

Is It Any Good?: A gem to rediscover — the acoustic interludes; the CSNY-influenced 'Harlequin'; Banks' piano on 'Hogweed'.

21st Century Cringe Factor: 'Harold The Barrel' was a hoot. In 1971.



FOXTROT

Charisma CAS 1058, original pink scroll label, gatefold sleeve, October 1972, No. 12, £8.

CD: Virgin CASCDX 1058
Highlights: 'Supper's Ready', 'Watcher Of The Skies'.

Characters Introduced: Narcissus; the Sky-Watcher.

Is It Any Good?: Yes. With a few reservations, namely the twaddle of 'Can-Utility And The Coastliners', 'Supper's Ready' is 99% classic, a true benchmark of their talent.

21st Century Cringe Factor:

"Feel your body melt; Mum to mud to mad to dad, Dad diddley office, Dad diddley office, You're all full of ball". The remaining percentage of 'Supper's Ready'."



GENESIS LIVE

Charisma CLASS 1, August 1973, No. 9, £8.

CD: Virgin CLACDX 1
Highlights: 'Watcher Of The Skies', 'The Knife'.

Characters Introduced: They all came out to play.

Is It Any Good?: It's not too bad. The swagger of 'The Knife' stands up very well.

21st Century Cringe Factor: It is such a shame we never got to hear the unaccompanied bass pedal solo by Mike Rutherford.



SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND

Charisma CAS 1074, lyric sheet, September 1973, No. 3, £10.

CD: Virgin CASCDX 1074
Highlights: 'I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)', 'The Battle Of Epping Forest', 'Firth Of Fifth', 'Dancing With The Moonlit Knight'.

Characters Introduced: Britannia, the various thugs of 'Epping Forest'.

Is It Any Good?: As a whole, it's probably the greatest example of typical Gabriel-Genesis on record.

21st Century Cringe Factor: You'll either love or hate the high-camp caricatures of 'The Battle Of Epping Forest'.



THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

Charisma CGS 1, 2-LP, gatefold sleeve, November 1974, No. 10, £10.

CD: Virgin CGSCDX 1
Highlights: 'Fly On A Windshield', 'In The Cage', 'Back In NYC', 'Carpet Crawlers', 'The Chamber Of 32 Doors', 'Anyway'.

Characters Introduced: Rael, the Slippemen.

Is It Any Good?: Yes, it's a classic.

21st Century Cringe Factor: The basic concept. What does it all mean. I mean *really* mean? 'The Grand Parade Of Lifeless Packaging' — no matter how much 'Enossification' Brian Eno brought to the track, boy, does it clunk.



GENESIS ARCHIVE 1967-1975

Virgin CDBOX 6, 4-CD box set, July 1998, £25

Highlights: The complete *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* recorded at the Shrine, Los Angeles, 'Happy The Man' and the semi-legendary 'Twilight Alehouse' plus the first official release of a live Gabriel-led 'Supper's Ready'.

Characters Introduced: They are here for one final, glorious time.

Is It Any Good?: It's a fantastic representation of this fabled era.

21st Century Cringe Factor:

The semi-legendary 'Twilight Alehouse'; semi-listenable would be more appropriate. Some of the early demos and mixes are a quite charming, listen once-only experience.

Thanks to Carol at Hit & Run, Dale at the Farm, Matt Harrop at Virgin Crewe. Live reviews taken from Genesis In Concert 69-75 by Paul Russell (out 2003)

