

Only 3 People in the World.....

"It doesn't get any better than this"

Contributed by: Dave White / www.uriah-heep.com

It had been a whirlwind day at the offices of Classic Rock Legends in Stratford Upon Avon, and now it was maybe 8:30 PM...we had just finished take out Chinese Dinner and a few Guinness's....This day, Pip Williams brought in the only 2 travelling CD's of the remasters, and we listened to some of the stories of how he did what he did with them.

By now you will have learned about how these CD's were performed and mixed, so I won't go into that. The meeting with Pip was typical I suppose..he spoke in fond terms of the members of the band, and how easy they are to work with, and how talented each is. He mentioned that the remasters are actually more than that, and that he could have mixed them any number of ways, because there were such possibilities as the music is THAT good. I could tell he felt they really did come out the way he wanted them to..but I guess with Pip Williams, nothing gets released UNTIL it's exactly the way he wants it. Well worth the wait as they say !

So here we were, Dave Owen, Bob Carruthers and myself at Bob's house, having finished a (I thought FRANTIC) day of various meetings concerning Classic Rock Legends things, Uriah Heep things, Mostly Autumn Things, Bob things, Dave things and all kinds of things :-))) It was 100 miles an hour, and I was suffering from Jet Lag ! Regardless, the dinner had been lovely, and the surroundings at the Carruthers household were exactly what the Jet-Lag doctor ordered. I had set up a computer and had installed some software for Bob's daughter and now was staring at The Magician's Birthday Painting from Roger Dean on Bob's wall...unbelievable how good it looks ...Computers-Heepness-good friends..just a great day all around. We had been listening to music while we were eating...Old Heep, New Heep, and now Bob came around the corner with what is destined to become CLASSIC HEEP !!!! Candles were lit, the lights were dimmed, new drinks were poured, and it was the 19th of October 2001. There were only 3 people in the entire world who were listening to the just acquired **"Remasters The Official Anthology"** !

The next 90 minutes or so were filled with the best sounding CD I could have ever hoped for from the boys ! These weren't simply remastered tracks...there was new stuff in there...lots of new stuff on songs I had heard over and over in the last few years and it was GREAT !! The feeling in the house was magic to no end...Bob had his eyes closed more then part of the time, immersed in the music blast from the stereo, Dave was drumming on the table to the songs, and we just kept shaking our heads in utter astonishment...the music was fantastic...it was pretty loud on a good quality CD player in the living room. Excellent sound on it's own...but with these from Heep..Ahhh !

About 45 minutes into it Bob said "It just doesn't get any better then this does it?" Dave and I smiled....no, it could not be any better...only if the band were there could it have been...but they WERE there if you understand. As I type this, I am listening to the CD's again, and the magic is back.

Sometime during the evening, I made a call to Mick to tell him how much we were enjoying the CD's...left a message on his machine, and went outside for a cigarette. When I came back in, Dave was still drumming quietly on the table, Bob was standing staring out a window listening deeply, and starting "differently" was "Time Of Revelation"...it was too good...I had been up for almost 40 hours now and was drifting in and out of real life and this magical moment..I'll pick the moment ANYTIME.

As Heepsters, we all have the "moments" that define our involvement with the music. We have told each other many of these, and here is one for my record books...I mean after all...how many times will I be one of the 3 people in the entire world listening to a new Heep release? And with THESE people? It was just about the ultimate Heep experience.

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Lawton-Dunning And Friends - The Kensington Hilton Gig

Contributed by: Ed Halliburton, Jr.

Here I sit, almost exactly one month since the Magician's Birthday Party events in London and I still believe that it all must have been a dream. It was certainly a magical time for any Heepster who attended. One of those magical events hasn't been examined in like manner to the other major concerts and activities that occurred that week. I hope that the following report will help to remedy this situation.



John Lawton with his back up singers during Lady In Black, (from left to right) Merrick Crittenden, Mick Taylor and Bob Winward. Photo contibuted by: Barry Hoffman

It started the previous evening when I spoke with John Lawton about the next day's event at the London Kensington Hilton, Heep Central, or Mecca -- whatever name you feel appropriate for the occasion. It had been previously announced that Mr. Lawton and Steve Dunning would be performing an acoustic set for all of us Heep-hungry fans who can't seem to get enough from our favorite past and present members of the world's greatest band. This set was organized particularly for those of us who had arrived later in the week and could not attend the John Lawton concert at the Borderline. I spoke with John about the possibility of shooting the Hilton gig since I had brought along my camcorder for recording the sights and sounds of London. How could I miss this opportunity? John was very gracious (as always) and gave me an enthusiastic 'okay' to go ahead. So on December 8, 2001, at high noon, I was ready.

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The next night I would end up at Trevor Bolder's House on the way to a Mostly Autumn Gig, and THAT was something to behold in and of itself...Chinese food again! A visit with Trevor's Family and his studio, and followed by a great concert with the "Mostlies"....perhaps in a different letter.

But this night was 100% Heep..All Heep is good Heep as we say, but this was simply phenomenal...

It really doesn't get any better...

I mention the fact that I shot a video of this concert because I could only write this after viewing the videotape. While I was shooting, I was concentrating on the shoot itself, rather than being able to fully appreciate the event unfolding before me. It was only after I returned to the States that I was able to fully appreciate what I had seen only through my camera's viewfinder. So begins a concert appreciated by all who were lucky enough to be there. Some were apparently still sleeping off the effects of the previous night's festivities. Too bad.

After an introduction by Bob Carruthers, John and Steve take the stage. Actually, some of the intro. was necessary since John and Steve were still running around trying to get their gear ready. John opens by telling us that this set will be in the "workshop" style that he cut his teeth on in the early years. He invites questions from the audience and states that he is more nervous playing before us in this venue than he was the previous night at the Shepherd's Bush Empire. With those comments aside he launches into his first number, "Paying My Dues to the Blues" which he said he still is doing even after all these years. Highlight here is John's harp work. I didn't realize until that day that he had such a good grasp of the blues harmonica style. *Continued on page 13*

Continued from page 12 **Lawton's Acoustic Set**

Before the next song started, John was asked about the MBP concert the previous evening. He said it was "out of this world." He joked about he and Bernie Shaw had fought over who would be taking the high notes on their duet. Everyone laughed when he said Bernie won. He then acknowledged the crowd and mentioned that he seemed to know everyone on a first-name basis. He picked out many of us who had come across the Pond and thanked us for coming. He then introduced his next song by saying that he would attempt to do justice to the version that Stella Hensley had sung before him and launched into the song "Tonight." This song seemed perfect for a duet presentation, with nice guitar work by Steve. It was an interesting rendition when compared to the female-voiced version from the previous concert.

Before the next song, John mentioned that he had honed his skills in the working men's clubs where it was typical not to listen to music but to get drunk and watch the girls dance. He said that once the stripper took off her clothes, no one wanted to hear any music. At that point, someone in the audience yelled, "Take it off!" An obviously embarrassed John tried to forge ahead with more comments about his early career. He said he started when he was about 14 and sang in these clubs from about 7 in the evening until 4 am, with only ten minute breaks in between sets. He said that he had already paid his dues, but 'Young John here had not had these experiences -- but I'm teaching him.' With that he began a song from his Lucifer's Friend days, "Burning Ships." The highlight was when John hit one of the high notes that he says he can't sing. (Right.)

The interlude before his next song brought a question from a fan who wanted to know how he has kept his voice in shape over all these years. Without hesitation he said, "Jack Daniels, fags." After the laughter subsided, he offered an explanation about "fags" being cigarettes then gave up saying, "I shouldn't have mentioned that." More laughter.

He dedicated the next song to Bobbie of Lannis and Bobbie fame -- one of the North Carolina contingent present. The song was Elvis Presley's "All Shook Up." The audience participated whenever the time came to say, "HUH! -- I'm all shook up." Really fun.

The fifth song in the set was a fine version of "Rain" with a trio on stage this time consisting of John, Graham Hume on guitar and Steve doing bass. It was really a beautiful rendition, with John adding a bluesy ending.

The next song in the set was introduced as being the first song that he sang with Uriah Heep. This song was "Wise Man" from the Firefly album and was done in a very restrained, almost delicate manner, with John sitting on his stool for the whole number.

The seventh song in the set was another blues number, "Been Lovin' That Lady." I'm not sure if this appears on any of John's albums, or not. Any experts out there who have any knowledge of this, please let us know. John pulled out the mouth organ again for this number and it was another crowdpleaser.

Before the next song began, John was asked by someone in the audience what his worst concert experience had been. John thought for awhile but it was Steve Dunning who suggested that, as John would explain, it was the time in Germany where the keyboard player had fallen just after finishing a set, had smashed his elbow and then had to performer the next night with his arm in a cast -- with his arm held out at a 90 degree angle from his side. John then pointed and said, "And he's right here in the audience." Applause. What followed was a sort of medley of two songs, or a combination of songs, effectively used to more powerfully convey the theme. They were "Firefly" and "Come Back to Me." Very nice indeed.

The next song was a request by Bob Carruthers -- "Feelings." This was a particularly beautiful version as the duet brought out the more emotional aspects of the song than I think can be accomplished by the full band version. Steve was apparently not used to playing this song and he seemed happy that he had gotten through it without any mistakes. *Continued on page 14*

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The last song of the set was the full, and I mean FULL audience participation version of "Lady in Black." John asked for volunteers to help with the choir and individual verses and it seemed the whole audience wanted to get into the act. In fact, John commented that maybe he had better stay off the stage and let the audience take over. The song was the highlight of the show, not just because of John and Steve's talents but the individual audience performances of note. There was Merrick's participation of note and who can forget Tina Usva's Janis-Joplin-like chorus of "Ah, ah, aaahh, ah,ah ,ah ahahah." To which John exclaimed, "Wow." We also got a real kick out of John singing a verse in Scottish brogue. I could not hold my camera steady during that point, I was laughing so hard.

I suppose it was John singing with the Scottish accent that gave Tapio M. the great idea to offer to sing LiB in Finnish. But he did -- two full verses. Then, after realizing what he had just done, waved his hand in embarrassment before the cheering crowd and left the room. The song was finished and the crowd wanted more, more, more. But John thanked the crowd for coming. It was over too soon. I'm thankful to have it all on tape to view anytime I think that it was only a dream and I had not actually been there. Definitely a joyous celebration and a concert to remember.

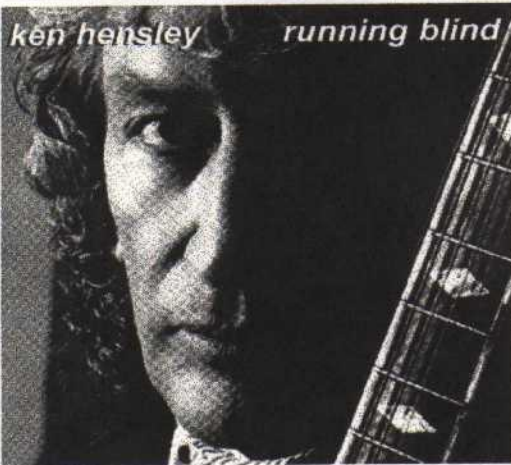


← **John Lawton and Steve Dunning**
Photo credit to: Esa Ahola

John Lawton with the Heepsters. "Lady In Black"
Photo credit to: Esa Ahola →



← **John Lawton, Graham Hulme and Steve Dunning....."Rain"**
Photo credit to: Mike Taylor



First Impressions on Running Blind

Contributed by: Mac Steagall / www.travellers-in-time.com

This CD starts out perfectly. For those of you at the Hensley - Wetton concert in London, the instrumental which opened the gig is actually two tracks...."La Tristeza Secreta De Un Corazon Gitano" and "Prelude:A Minor Life". These work great together, a soft, moving piano piece followed by a building, full band instrumental with plenty of hammond. Very Heepy sound...

"Out of My Control" follows nicely. A good melody, Ken's harmonies on the chorus, some strong guitars, lots of hammond and the bit of a twist at the break make this an excellent Rock track.

"You've Got It (The American Dream)" follows as another good Rock track. Not quite as good as OOMC but still solid. The first verse lyrics are a bit like a nursery rhyme but the track rebounds nicely from there. The drums are pretty simplistic. Is it a drum machine?

"The Final Solution" is next and it's another great Rocker! It starts softly and turns into a very powerful number. It's got some modern guitar sounds at points in the song but it's included well. Also there's a cool sounding guitar orchestra at the break followed by cool acapello vocals before cranking the volume back up to the end.

Then "It's Up to You" fits in perfectly. Another rocker with great harmonies. One of my favorites from AGOG. "Finney's Tale" is next. Unusual is the best way I can describe it. It's the only song on the album that I don't like. That Bobby Goldboro's orchestra bit at the first is off-putting.

Now for two acoustic tracks. "I Close My Eyes" that most of you will remember from "The Return" CD. It's much more emotional here and has some nice strings. "A Little Piece of Me (Julia's Song)" is a nice simple song. Pleasant enough tune. I wonder why the 3 softest tracks are positioned back to back to back however.

"Free Spirit" from FTTT and "Movin' In" from AGOG follows, getting the CD back up tempo. Both are nice Rockers but I really like Movin' In. The muted strings followed by the flat out Rocking is a nice contrast. IMO they included the best two AGOG tracks on this album.

"Let Me Be Me" is another up tempo song with a nice melody. The song cranks into another gear of heaviness at the end and then ends suddenly with an acapello echo. Very nice!

"I Don't Want To Wait" is my favorite song on the CD. What a great melody and harmonies! I've just got to sing along. The Spanish(?) sounding guitar solo is very unique sounding. I love this song!

The CD ends with "Tell Me", another of my favorites on the CD. Reminds me a lot of Tush by ZZ Top except with Ken on vocals. :-> The slow tempo break reminds me of the Beatles for some reason. Very high energy. All right, now everybody sing along! Woo-ooo! But the CDs not over yet. I don't know what to make of the twenty second hidden track. "Someone's else's socks are in my drawer"? :->

This is a great album. Not as good as Proud Words but IMO equaling PWOADS is an nearly impossible task. However, this CD is in the same league... Perhaps Ken's 2nd best solo release ever. Much more consistent than AGOG and a lot heavier overall. RB is much more typical of what we'd expect from Ken Hensley. If you haven't ordered it, I'd suggest that you do so. You won't be disappointed.