

THE OFFICIAL

URIAH LEEPS

APPRECIATION SOCIETY



PHOTO BY ISABELLA SEEFRIEDT

ISSUE 21

THE OFFICIAL
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URIAH HEEP'S OFFICIAL WORLD WIDE FAN CLUB ADMINISTERED BY DAVID OWEN & ALAN HARTLEY



Hi again and welcome to issue 21,

The band returned from a very successful tour in Russia to a summer full of festivals in Europe. They hope to end the year with a lengthy tour throughout Europe and Scandinavia during October, November and the early part of December. Mick tells us that he hopes to be able to include more new material in the set providing there is time to work on it prior to the start of the tour. At the time of going to print the full details of dates and venues are not yet confirmed but this is how it looks at the moment:-

- 10th Oct, Madrid, Spain
- 11th Oct, Vitoria, Spain
- 12th Oct, Barcelona, Spain
- 15th Oct, Vienna, Austria
- 16th Oct, Munchen, Germany
- 18th Oct, Nurenberg, Germany
- 19th Oct, Sarrbruken, Germany
- 20th Oct, Stuttgart, Germany
- 21st Oct, Essheffenberg, Germany
- 23rd Oct, Manhiem, Germany
- 24th Oct, Bielefeld, Germany
- 25th Oct, Hamburg, Germany
- 26th Oct, Gemunden, Germany
- 27th Oct, Koln, Germany
- 29th Oct, Berlin, Germany
- 30th Oct, Kiel, Germany
- 31st Oct, Esbjerg, Denmark
- 1st Nov, Gothenberg, Sweden
- 2nd Nov, Olufstroum, Sewden
- 3rd Nov, Copenhargen, Denmark
- 6th Nov, Tharlin, Estonia
- 7th Nov, Lappenranta, Finland
- 8th Nov, Helsinki, Finland
- 9th Nov, Rauma, Finland

Following on from these dates it's hoped that the band will be playing in Sweden, Holland, Belgium, the north of Germany and possibly even the UK with the live work for the year coming to an end on the 7th December. None of this is 100% confirmed but if we do get further details before the mag is mailed out we will include them on a loose information sheet. Please send in your reviews of the gigs for the next issue.

A new Heep release to look out for, if you can find it, is a live bootleg CD called "Look At Far East". As an official fan club we don't endorse bootlegs but we do appreciate that many of our members are very interested in such items so there's a review of the CD in this issue. The long awaited release of Ken Hensley's CD single and video is still not with us, Ken has been working with a band he's put together called "Visible Faith" earlier this year and has even played a few gigs in and around St Louis. One would speculate that this could have made him re think the release and as soon as he lets us know what's happening, we'll tell you. Mick, Bernie and Trev, together with the road crew recently bumped into Ken at a music trade show in London, photos were taken and we believe that a Russian TV crew also shot some footage. John Lawton and "Gunhill" returned from foru very well recieved gigs in Germany and are now concentrating on the recording of their new CD. We hope to bering you more details of this next time.

We are looking for help from our members with contributions to the magazine. There are 2 new features - "First Touch" and "Classic Concert" - starting in this issue, we hope that many of you will contribute to these, but we would also like you to contribute articles about Heep or related bands. We started off very well in the early days with some excellent articles from members such as "Conquest - The Forgotten Album", (issue2) "The Lawton Years - A Musical Focus", (issue 3) and "Heeps Of Memories", (issue 9) but this source of material has since dried up. So come on, don't just leave it to us, after all this is your society. Thanks to Geert from Belgium for the article in this issue. We would like to ask everybody to include their membership numbers on the slips when re joining and also include their numbers on any merchandise orders.

Once again our thanks go to the following people for their help and support, Phil, Mick Lee Bernie and Trev, John Lawton, Greg Dechert, Tina Hartley, Nicola Owen, Yutaka Nakajima, Kevin Julie, Geert Ryszen, Olav Hammeren and Alexander Bukharin.

Enjoy the mag,
Keep on rockin'
and we'll see you in about 3 months.

Alan & David

September 1996.

LOOK AT FAR EAST URIAH HEEP LIVE IN JAPAN

(Bootleg CD - Element Of Crime - 007. Japan)

Track listing:- Introduction, Sunrise, Sweet Lorraine, Traveller in time/Easy livin', July morning, Gypsy, Look at yourself, Love machine, Rock & roll medley.

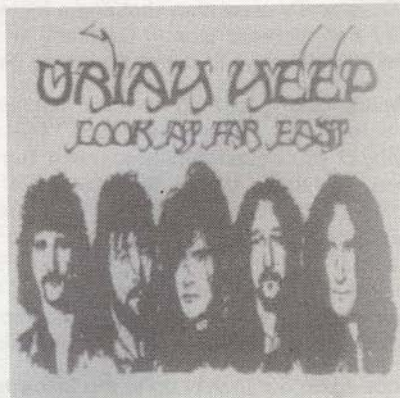
It's 18 months since the last Heep bootlegs came to our attention (see reviews in issue 15) and the latest offering is another set from the band's first tour of Japan in 1973. Just like the last Jap bootleg, they've got the date wrong. The full title given to this release is "Uriah Heep/Look At Far East : Japan 1972", as most of us will know, the band actually toured Japan in 1973 and this recording is from their gig at the Budokan on 16th March 1973 (although this information is not given on the release itself). And yes, just like the "Kill The King David" bootleg it is the same set as the "Live 73" official release without the Magician's birthday segment, but unlike the afore mentioned bootleg it's only a single CD. This means that the full set is not featured, the tracks given the chop are Tears in my eyes and my fave, Circle of hands, we're off to a bad start there! The Rock & roll medley also

fades out before the end, something that I find really annoying. I would far rather the keyboard and drum solos had been edited out, the lengthy introduction left off and even the Rock & roll medley given to boot (pardon the pun) altogether to make way for Circle of hands, but that's just my opinion and the bootleggers would never spend time on a little careful editing, after all time is money and they wouldn't like to see their ill gotten profits going down in the name of a better product. The insert is a single sheet with a blank rear side and the back of the CD case features a shot which from memory comes from the "Live 73" album. The CD itself does feature a blue and red block version of "The Magician's Birthday" sleeve, minus the figures.

Listening to the CD it's actually not that bad. Compared to "Kill the King David" the sound quality of the recording is a marked improvement and whilst it's nothing like the standard of the "Live 73" official album, it is listenable and it does go some way towards getting across the power and excitement of a Heep gig. The band do turn in a good performance but the recent debate in the mag concerning the validity of live releases, re "Spellbinder" being an old set, begs the question, do we really need another live 73 release? Personally I'm always happy to see live material available but bootlegs don't do anything to directly sustain the Uriah Heep of today and I can honestly say that if I wanted to listen to the 73 set, it would be the official release that went on the deck every time. That

said, I don't think I'd be alone in saying that I wouldn't buy a Heep bootleg from any era of the band. If I were faced with only being able to afford "Look at Far East" at £20 or more, or "Spellbinder" at standard price, then it would have to be "Spellbinder", it's a far better product all round, but given the chance I think we'd all like to have "Look at Far East" in our collections. My thanks go to Yutaka Nakajima for all the help and information that made the review of this release possible.

Alan Hartley.



RE MASTERS, BOX SET, SPELLBINDER.

MEMBERS REVIEWS.

I would like to say that with regard to the Box Set, that it is a pretty good cross section of Heep's career. The unreleased stuff featuring David Byron although interesting sound like out takes or tracks that didn't make it onto the albums. The ones with John Lawton are great, especially "The River", "Let It Ride", and a "Far Better Way". "Still Calls His Name" is brilliant. The organ makes it sound like the Heep of old. All in all it's a great collection, even including the spelling mistakes and errors. The Box Set cheered me up from my depression when England beat Scotland recently in Euro 96, and as a consequence I think it would be a "Far Better Way" if Heep recorded "Flower Of Scotland" instead of "Glory Glory Sorry Man Utd." (Only joking Alan). Yes Gazza's goal against us was only an "Illusion" and we were the "Innocent Victims". Ian Maclaren

On the live album "Spellbinder" I think that Shaw's voice is very good because from the first to end of the concert he sounds great, for me Bernie Shaw is very important for the group. I like very much "Devils Daughter", "Rainbow Demon", "Circle Of Hands" and "Lady In Black". I think that this CD is very good and I'm only sorry that there are not many more available. I hope that other Live CD's will be released! I love very much the "Time Of Revelation" box set because of the good booklet with the story of Uriah Heep and the songs with the voice of Byron and Lawton which give me a big sensation in my blood, because the Uriah Heep sound is very great!!! I love "Feelings" with J.Lawton.

Carlo Mantelli

"Spellbinder" is a much better album than "Live In Moscow" and it's great to hear the Hammond organ so much in front. All in the band did a great job but I'll think that Bernie's voice is better on the "Sea Of Light" album. The best live-versions on the album is "Rainbow Demon", "Words In The Distance", "Circle Of Hands" and "Gypsy".

Terje Larson

I stand by everything that i have said and written to U.H.A.S. over the past few months. The long awaited Box Set is the best release that has come out on general release since Live In 79! The overall layout of the cover, the artwork, the booklet, and the music from Uriah Heep's archives make this release the most significant item that I have added to my CD collection since Live In 79... The musical content, the powerful vocal input from John Lawton from track 8 on CD3 through to track 3 on CD4 is totally amazing! My favourite song on this compilation has got to be Let It Ride. I'm willing to lay odds that the band had a whale of a time recording that song, the song gives me that impression... It's also nice once again to hear some more new and different releases from the greatest Heep vocalist of all time David Byron. Why did they bother to include Spit Image. I can think of one pretty good Goalby fronted track that wasn't released on CD yet that would have been a better choice, Back Stage Girl.. Come on Uriah Heep, let's have Equator released in full on CD... I look forward to that!! Nice to hear Holy Roller and She Still Calls His Name included on the Box Set from the current line up of Uriah Heep.

Bill Smith.

I'm writing to express my views and emotions regarding the latest live release from my favourite rock group of all time, entitled, "Spellbinder." It is stupendous, overwhelmingly GREAT, 11 out of 10; I'm lost for words to even express the whole of my joy and enjoyment of this CD! It's certainly in my TOP 10 album/CD list of all times, and that's saying a lot! Been playing it heavily for a couple of weeks now, and all I can say is, "GOOD JOB, GUYS!!!" Excellent. This is not the same band I heard back in 1989 or thereabouts, which was the first time I heard Bernie's vocals. They have changed a lot, and "Spellbinder" is certainly light years better than "Live In Moscow". But then, surmising from the Chris Tetley's interviews, published in your latest issue, I understand that the latter served many other purposes and being a milestone wasn't one of them. Well, "Spellbinder" certainly is a milestone for the band and for the fans alike - I think Mick and Co. should be immensely proud! First and foremost, I must point out the welcome return of the spellbinding Hammond organ, to which the late-80's styled synths have almost given way (with the exception of "Bad Bad Man," but it's that kind of song!) Thanks to Phil Lanzon - after being spoiled by Hensley and the legacy he has left, I didn't even realise Phil could play so good and sound so authentic! Examples are a plenty:- "Circle Of Hands", "Devils Daughter", "Rainbow Demon", etc. Has Bernie totally changed his voice? He sounds a million times better than on any other album featuring him that I've ever heard (except Sea Of Light)! He sounds a bit like David, yet he has his own, mesmerizing

vocal style! He sounds very energetic and definitely on top form. The only regret I have is that I've been unable to catch the lads live here in the US - I keep missing their arrivals every time! The harmony vocals on "Gypsy" take me straight back to the 70's glory days, coupled with Hensley styled Hammond riffs and Bernie's lead vocals, this is the Heep I've been craving to hear for a long, long, long time! The middle (improvisational) organ part in this song is also out of this world! Same can be said for Mick's delayed guitar solo interplay with Phil's synths. Bernie's voice at the end of this song is so powerful, it nearly broke all of the glass in all of my windows! "Look At Yourself" and "Easy Livin'" are full of energy, enthusiasm, and damnit, blindfold me, and ask me when this stuff was recorded - I might just answer, 1973!!! Love it! "Lady In Black" has the same power and the same narrative feel as the original - it's true spirit having been well preserved! The acoustic guitar and the backup vocals and especially Bernie's lead sound very authentic, extremely good! And, boy, can he work the crowd or what? It's either Bernie's charisma and skills as a live performer have finally unfolded to their fullest potential, or both "Live In Moscow" and "Live Legends" videos simply don't do justice to them. "Devil's Daughter", "Circle Of Hands" and "Rainbow Demon" make a surprising appearance, yet newer tracks like "Bad Bad Man" and "Words In A Distance" keep the balance and maintain the modern feel of the CD, so this is by far not a fossil, this is today's Heep - just the way I like it! What this also isn't is a reworking of "Live 1973". The album has a totally different feel to it, and the two simply can't be compared! You're right in suggesting that those who intend to ignore "Spellbinder" are missing a lot. They are indeed. It is my personal feeling that those Heep fans who prefer albums such as "Raging Silence", "Different World" and "Sea Of Light" to their classic stuff from the 70's may not appreciate "Spellbinder" as much as us, vintage Heep fans, but then, I may be entirely wrong.

Alex Gitlin

"Spellbinder". I can't see why they picked this name, but I guess it sounds good and also provided a cool cover. On to the songs, I was excited to hear "Devils Daughter" played live, and I think Bernie puts in a good performance, the same goes for "Stealin'". As for "Bad Bad Man", I don't own Raging Silence yet, but if all the songs are as good as this one, it's time to look harder! And "Rainbow Demon"? Excellent, Bernie sings the song great, with feeling, I love it. Following song, "Words", is one of my all time favourites, along with the two next songs, "The Wizard" and "Circle Of Hands", so I just loved hearing them, although in "Words" it can be heard that they've only played it a few times. Then comes a little disappointment to my, "Gypsy". I love the song but it needs to be sung not screamed. Honestly, I don't understand why Bernie doesn't/didn't sing it like he did on the "Live In Moscow" album, with feeling, with a bit of melody in his voice. Too bad, it's a great song and I know he can do it better. The next song, "Look At Yourself" seems to be played slightly faster but it's nice to listen to. "Lady In Black", one of my favourites and performed very well. Good job, Bernie. The last concert song is my second disappointment. It's not the vocals this time. Bernie sings good (It's becoming a bit of a habit with him, GOOD!), no it's the speed. WHY must it be played so fast? The bonus track, "Sail The Rivers", a beautiful song with clever lyrics and some beautiful instrumental pieces. It can't replace any of the "S.O.L." tracks, but I think if it would have been placed, it would have been received well. Overall, "Spellbinder" is a good album, and I like listening to it, except for the afore mentioned songs. But because I don't like 'em, doesn't mean you won't like 'em either, after all "Everyone's a critic", right.

David Amendolara

I got a copy of "Time Of Revelation" for my birthday, what can I say (Actually it was the second copy I received, the first had to go back only 2 CD's and the book was upside

down! Talk about a collectors item!! But me Mrs. said "No way" to a second copy so I had to exchange it!) The lay out is totally brilliant I was genuinely surprised and pleased, to say the least. The inclusion of the unreleased stuff was very good especially round the "Firefly" era some really good tracks that seem to be wasting away, how can bands and record companies sit on such good stuff-makes you wonder what is still lying around - Proud words on dusty shelves. As for the remastering I'm not so sure, sometimes it seems to work well, but others, especially the earlier stuff, I'm not so sure at all. Two tracks that come to mind are Dreammare and July Morning. It seems high pitched vocals do get lost somewhere which in Heep's case is nothing short of disastrous. I have also noticed on CD's in general high notes on guitars seem to disappear whether the recordings are new or old, still that's a personal observation - oh and yes "The Wizard" the one thing about "Demons And Wizards" is the very "lush" production for it's time and I was really looking forward to the much vaunted CD reproduction of the classics sound. For some reason it sounds very cymbal dominated that isn't there on the LP. Perhaps my old ears ain't attuned for these modern times eh?

Peter May

Spellbinder - Live In Moscow re-visited? I don't think so! There is really no comparison. I mean, there are only three numbers that appear on both albums after all. The sound quality on Spellbinder is far ahead of Moscow, it's so much sharper and clear. It was good to hear Devil's Daughter and Circle Of Hands performed by this line up, but the one track that really grabs me is Rainbow Demon, for me it was like hearing the song for the very first time! There isn't really a lot more to add. I think Alan said it all in his review. Worth having.

Tina Smith

Spellbinder:- I find it kinda silly really that the band chose to release a Live album, so soon after Sea Of Light instead of following it up with another brilliant studio album, and getting out to promote S.O.L.! It's even stranger that considering how much Mick and the boys have claimed to be Uriah Heep without Ken Hensley, that they should still rely so heavily on his songs, with most of the tracks on this album being Ken's! It's a shame today's Uriah Heep doesn't show a bit more confidence in their newer material! For all the gripes and departures over the song writing issue in the 70's (IE: Lee), this just leads us to believe that certain members really had no right to complain! Where are all the great songs Lee, Trev, and Mick were writing then? Not here! Oh well, sorry guys, don't mean to sound bitter, but it is bewildering. Apart from all that, Spellbinder is a definite improvement on Live In Moscow, especially as far as Lee's drums go, much more powerful! And Bernie does a great job on one of my old Heep faves - "Circle Of Hands". The bonus track ain't that bad, it's a nice add on too! As for the Box Set.... Well first of all, I don't understand Mick's way of marketing thought when he said (I believe he did) in a recent past issue that the Box Set was to aim at potentially new fans as well, and that was the reason for including so many classics that are readily available on any number of compilations plus the 20th anniversary Box Set. I don't think this is reality. Do you really think that many more people are gonna buy this Box Set because it's got all the old and some newer classics? If someone who doesn't know much about Heep, I think they'd be less tempted to buy this Box Set than the previous one. After all, why would they (a new fan who's not too familiar with the band) want so many songs that they aren't familiar with? I recall Ken Hensley stating many issues back that "there has to be a better reason for releasing something than it hasn't already been released". Actually Ken, I disagree! I think that because it's never been released is the best reason to release it. I don't think that I'm alone in claiming that I'd gladly buy any non-released Heep material any day, over a

compilation set or a Live set. I'm sure most UHAS members would jump at the chance to get a 4 CD Box including all the 5 mile recordings, the unreleased Sloman album, the unreleased Abominog recordings, and the numerous other out takes and demos that are still in the vaults! As fans we see and hear things differently. What Ken and/or Mick thought isn't worth releasing may be totally heard differently from our perspective. If tracks like "Your Love" and "Let It Ride" are any indication as to what may still be on tape somewhere - let's have it! As for the rest of the unreleased material here, I'm quite pleased with tracks like "The River", "A Right To Live", and "Showdown" (alternate version). I don't care for a few tracks like "Split Image", and the live version of "Who Needs Me" (There's a better reason this song was left off of the CD version of Live In Europe - it just sucks!) I would have liked to have a few more tracks from the Sloman era (IE:Non-album), and if this was gonna include Non-Heep tracks (IE:Spice), why not throw on a few non- Album Hensley or Byron solo tracks? And we all know there are numerous tracks not here from the current line-up. Perhaps we (and the UHAS) can list all the non-released material still out there to see what's still potentially releasable!?

Kevin Julie

I found the cover design of "Spellbinder" particularly crap:-do they really need this kind of "sword and sorcery" obsolete design? That's the kind of predictable cover you would find in the 80' for the million second-rate heavy metal bands who were around. The "Sea Of Light" cover was great, the 4 CD's Box set design is particularly arty and well crafted, so why this ridiculous cover for "Spellbinder"? The music now:- for me "Spellbinder" is an interesting but minion album. It's always good to hear live music from Heep, but current versions of old numbers like Easy Livin', the Wizard etc... don't bring anything new when you've heard these songs on the "Live In Moscow" on the video's. And for me, these versions really don't match previous versions by the classic line up -even by the Lawton line up. Give a new ear to the "Live In Europe '73" album, the never quoted album features the best Easy Livin' cover I've heard:- the playing, the sound, and the vocals are superior to the Spellbinder recording. "Circle Of Hands" is a good surprise, but to me, it doesn't compare with the classic line up version:- Bernie is obviously a great singer but his singing misses the melodic side which was David's trademark. This song has lost 5% of it's wealth. However there are some excellent changes in the arrangement. The "Time Of Revelation" box set is a superb release, but (for me) displays the clean superiority of the Byron (or Lawton sometimes) line up. "Blood On a Stone", "Holy Roller", "Still Calls His Name" on disc 4 are non-distinctive songs and really can't match anything performed on disc 2 or disc 3. Listen to David's voice on "Easy Road", "Wonderworld" or "Why Did You Go" (on this last number his voice sounds incredible) and you'll understand what feel. Don't think that I'm too critical:- the current line up is excellent, "Sea Of Light" was brilliant. But the classic line up was more excellent, it was pure magic. The chemistry between David and Ken was really something else, remember the "Easy Road" or "Rain". Maybe I'm a little to nostalgic, I know that it's a controversial opinion, but does any reader share my opinion?

Bertrand Athouel

The box set was well worth the wait, every second of it! Packaged with originality and quality that puts other band's efforts to shame, the box set shows an indepth appreciation for the band and it's achievements. With superb sound quality from the sixties to the present day it reveals the development of each significant line up, particularly noticeable is the achievement of the current line up showing what being together ten years can achieve. A personal perhaps minor criticism for me is the omission of the lesser known single version of "Think it over" with a missed opportunity possibly for a taster from the material

the Sloman/Dechert line up recorded for a never released album. If it's not too repetitive heaping praise upon praise, congratulations are in order for the remasters of "Wonderworld" and "Return to Fantasy". Again an appreciable sound improvement, particularly on "Wonderworld" but more so for the additional tracks. It was a wonderful feeling hearing different versions of Dreams and Beautiful dream after 20 years of listening to the original releases. These two are my favourite tracks in the vast Uriah Heep itinary. As with most of the new tracks, or versions, possibly rightly not making it on to the original album release, but often showing a pleasurable different perspective.

David Laurie

Return to fantasy re master:- This one was the first Heep album I ever bought and the first remaster CD too. What a package, the artwork and booklet are incredible, informative and are an exceptional addition to my collection. As far as the music goes, I love the edge that the remastering brings out in this classic milestone recording - especially on Devil's daughter. The B sides are anything but standard and in my opinion are equal to the rest of the album. Beautiful dream, the demo lets us hear what the band originally created, very strongly leaning towards Hensley, and what progressed into the masterpiece that landed on the album. Is the guitar solo split on the demo? Ken's slide approach on the first part and Mick's speed picking dominating the latter part. Give it another listen and you'll see what I mean. I much prefer Mick's solo on the finished product, and Byron's high vocals for that matter. Wonderworld re master:- Although I've heard many comments on the sub standard production of Wonderworld, I never really felt it. I mean, listen to The shadows and the wind, even on an old scratched LP, and you can't deny the genius of the band in the studio. Suicidal man, Something or nothing, nothing short of classic Uriah Heep. The artwork that comes with this release is equipped with rare articles and photos and once again is very informative. The USA album release never had an inner sleeve that you were fortunate enough to have in other countries so it's nice to have it restored in full. Dreams, the demo, is the real deal, Mick, Lee, Ken, why wasn't this version on the original album.

Barry Lombardo

I've just received the box set so I thought I'd give you my first impressions. I am really impressed by how good some of the out takes and demos are, some of them were obviously omitted because their style didn't fit on the album. The best of the new songs are:- Valley of kings, A far better way, Stones throw, Still calls his name and Holly roller. I'm surprised that these weren't included on previous albums, Valley of kings is the most intriguing, obviously no lyrics were finished and Goalby repeats the same 3 or 4 lines. However the music is excellent, heavy and with a nice atmosphere to it. It gives me a visual image of ancient Egypt, the band should sit down and write the lyrics to this song and put it on their next album. Although I'm not really a big fan of the Lawton era I did like some of the tracks, A far better way is one of the best Lawton songs I've heard. Unlike a lot of the songs released during this period it has some edge to it. Stones throw is a very good acoustic track with Byron on lead vocals and I can't figure out how this didn't make it onto Wonderworld. I can see why Still calls his name and Holly roller didn't make it onto Sea of Light. Both are superior to almost everything on Different World but not quite as good as the Sea of Light material. Other new music.. Proud words is good but not quite as good as Hensley's version. Love hate and fear is nothing like Heep, sounds like late 70's top 40. The river, with Lawton on vocals is similar to many of the Innocent Victim songs. Pretty good but pretty mellow. A right to live is a decent song with a good performance from John, however the song doesn't have much of a hook. Let it ride starts with a riff similar to ZZ Top's Tush and features some very good rock guitar, but Alan is right, the lyrics from the chorus are very annoying and they ruin it for me. The Spice songs are

interesting from a historical perspective but they remind me of something from the late 60's by Tommy Roe. You can however see the beginnings of the Heep sound in Born in a trunk. The words don't make much sense to me though. I only have a few complaints about the other songs included, I understand that there were time constraints that possibly eliminated Salisbury, however, Simon the bullet freak, High priestess, I wanna be free, Tears in my eyes and Love machine were all instrumental in the bands development. I believe the biggest oversight from this period is What should be done, the song is a masterpiece. I think the Rock & roll medley should have been dropped to make room for some of these classics. I also think the Goalby years could have been represented by a better selection of songs. Rockarama and Split image, geez! what about That's the way that it is and Hot Persuasion? Finally the Shaw years should have weighed heavily towards Sea of Light. Against the odds, Universal wheels, Dream on, Words in the distance ... you name it. It's some of the best stuff Heep have done. The packaging is very well done, the book is a good idea even though there are some errors and misspellings, but the photos, graphics and stories in the booklet are exceptional.

Mac Steagall

The box set is as good as I expected. Mostly I agree with the track selection although I'm disappointed that there's only one track from each of the last 3 albums, and also very surprised as Raging Silence and Sea of Light have plenty to be proud of and represent the current band and the last 10 years. Perhaps also surprised that a rockier track wasn't chosen from Conquest. Still, everyone will have different track choices. How much more unreleased stuff is there? They seem to be able to rival Jethro Tull on this front. Many of these are good and would have been better than some of those on the original albums, especially the Lawton tracks. What does disappoint me, and surprise me, is the number of mistakes in the booklet, David Byron apparently died in 1985 and 1989. Still, it's a great set and very well presented, I just hope it gets noticed.

David Walters.

STAY ON TOP

The German fanclub "Stay On Top" was formed in 1984 by seven Uriah Heep fans and penfriends from Germany and Austria. The club now has about 70 members and publishes its fanzine "Times" 2 or 3 times a year. The "Times" is written in the German language, it consists of 50 or more pages in A4 format and features record and concert reviews, interviews with current and former Heep members, information about rarities, all the bands of the UH family tree and sometimes other rock bands whose origins are in the 70's.

Once a year "Stay On Top" holds a members convention at various places in Germany where members can get into personal contact with each other and buy, sell or exchange various Heep items. The members personal contact with each other is a very important point that shows the philosophy behind the "Stay On Top" club.

The membership fee is 35DM (Germany) or 45DM (other countries) and covers 3 issues of the "Times". A sample issue can be ordered for 12DM (Germany) or 15DM (other countries) in German stamps or IRC's. An additional listing of all 25 issues is available free of charge. For further information please send 2DM in German stamps or 2 IRC's to: Bernd Pleis, Stoeberlstr 94, D-80686 Muenchen, Germany.

CLASSIC CONCERT

FIREFLY TOUR, MARCH 4th, 1977, MANCHESTER FREE TRADE HALL.

Classic concert will hopefully be a regular feature in the mag from now on but it will be up to you, the members, to keep it going. A concert can be deemed a classic for many reasons so I'll start the ball rolling by telling you why this one was a classic for me. Having been a Heep fan for six years through out what is called the "Classic" era of the band, I approached this gig with an apprehension that I had never before felt going to any other gig. We were in our teens in the early 70's and a gang of us used to spend all our spare cash on buying records and seeing concerts, boy did we see some great shows in those days, and many for less than £1. "Thin Lizzy" were always special as Phil Lynott was a big Manchester United fan and there was always a bit of football chat from the stage. Personnel changes had taken place in many of the bands we followed, none more so than in Heep, my favourite band of all. It never really bothered me that much, even when a lead singer was replaced, until now. For me Byron was the face of Uriah Heep - though not necessarily my fave member - and I found it hard to imagine my fave band without him. I do have to admit that I did prefer "Firefly" - which I had already heard prior to the gig - to Heep's last offering "High And Mighty". To me "Firefly" sounded more Heepy and tracks like "The hanging tree", "Sympathy", "Firefly" and "Wise man" were typical of the band at their best. I found that I judged the album tracks by whether or not I could imagine Byron singing them and "Do you know" also fell into this category. Overall "Firefly" presented me with the Heep of old and a shift away from the style of "High and Mighty" and although this new guy sounded pretty good on record, how would they be live?

I'd never heard of John Lawton prior to him joining Heep, Trevor Bolder was a familiar name to me from his work with Bowie, I had no doubts about the quality of his contribution to the post Byron Heep. I friend who was to go with me that night had broken his leg a week or so before and was in hospital, what bad luck, he'd asked me to sell his ticket which wasn't a hard thing to do, but I'd had my eye on a girl who's name I'd got to know through a sister of another friend. What an ideal opportunity, she surely wouldn't be able to resist such a night out, I never did pluck up the courage to ask her, even though I hung onto the ticket until the day before the gig, oh well, I had no problem getting rid of it to another friend and now here we were. The support band had been and gone and we eagerly awaited our first glimpse of the new Heep as they were billed. The years do fade the memory a little but I seem to recall that "Do you know" was the first song, and it fair thundered out of the sound system. The backdrop of the album sleeve looked nothing short of spectacular and this guy in the centre of the stage, with the ear rings and make up demonstrated the reason he was in the band. The older material in the set were delivered in a different style to that of Byron but in one with just as much impact. I'd half expected to see a band, albeit with some familiar faces, playing Heep songs, but this was still Uriah Heep, they left me in no doubt of that, and it was good to hear "The Wizard" and "Lady in Black" which to my recollection hadn't been in the set for some time. The gig was a classic for me, not because it was better than any Heep gig that had gone before, it wasn't, but because it convinced me that the band I loved were still alive and well and looking good for the future. The live performances of the late 70's remained solid throughout the Lawton era even though the albums became somewhat lightweight for my liking.

Please send in your story and/or review of a concert from any era of the band that you consider to be a classic.

Alan Hartley

MEMBERS' LETTERS

If you have any questions you need answers to, any comments or opinions about the band, the magazine or the service of the UHAS, we want to hear them. If you want a personal reply please include a SEA (UK members) or an International Reply Coupon available from any post office (overseas members). We hope to hear from you soon.

Dear UHAS, It all begun on December 26th 1972 when I brought Demons And Wizards LP. Naturally I bought all other recordings during the next year. **HEEP RULES!** The European Tour started from Helsinki, Finland on the 15th of May 1974. This was the first time I saw Uriah Heep play live. Their live sound was as good as their studio sound. The Heep sound got softer in High And Mighty and Byron was sacked. That was the end of the first Heep era. Lawton came and Firefly had still softer sound than it's predecessor. Innocent Victim and Fallen Angel were just a bunch of songs. In August 1978 I saw Uriah Heep play in the Ruisrock Festival. As a live performer the group still had the touch and could still be described as **HEAVY**. Following on was Conquest, another LP with block letters. I rate Sloman as the third best lead singer. I think that Hensley had been burning a candle from both ends; he took too much responsibility in song writing. The captain left the ship before crew. This was curtains for the second Heep era. The Heep LP in 1982 was a question riser. For the first time in many years the sounds were real ass-kickers but something was still missing. All and all the songs were empty.. I checked out the Heeps again in Helsinki in October 1983. They just played loud. When Goalby was vocalist I was having anti-Heep feelings. In June 1985 I met Uriah Heep in person for the very first time. They brought their act to Finnish country-side. I showed them my scrapbook and they made fun of times gone by. That was maybe not the worst time if you think about sales figures, but I think Heep was just a 9pm till 5am job for some members of the band. That was the third and in my opinion the worst era.

Then Live In Moscow with three new songs released. Finally after a long time they "had soul" and new Uriah Heep music. Phil is the Heep man from head to toe and he knows the Heep style. After Live In Moscow the expectations with their next studio recording were high. Well, it was a small disappointment at first but again time has had a healing effect. I saw this crew in October 1989. Again a long wait, sorry Trev, but Different World was (again) a minor disappointment because it's sounds were really lame. I was running out of hope. Had I been rockin' with the wrong group for the past twelve years? All this only in the name of Uriah Heep? Then the record markets were stormed by Sea of Light. It restored my belief in Uriah Heep. Truly a masterpiece. It was just like the Heep guys were born again. Packed with fast action and dangerous situations. The group has to stay on this path, because it's the only way to the top. I try to get people to know Sea Of Light better here in Finland. I met Roy Landgren and he told me about UHAS. It was great to know I'm not the only fan. I joined to UHAS in April 1996 and have read all the first issues of the fan mag and it's great to know that there are nearly 550 fans all over the world. The magazines have just been great and enjoyable to read. I still had to assure myself about Heep's condition so I went to see them in Stockholm on the 1st of June 1996, I was relieved to know that they are still the same. Ken Hensley said that he has written lots of songs. It would be nice if he'd give some to Uriah Heep for their next album. Ken is one of the best song writers in the world. Uriah Heep can arrange songs which on the other hand is not Ken's best skill. Everybody can enjoy the result. Lee came back, Trev came back so would it be possible to get some Hensley songs back? **Jari-Pekka Martikainen, Finland.**

***UHAS reply:-** It's nice to read that you view the present day band in the same way as you have always viewed Heep. As for the band using any of Ken's songs, this is what Mick had*

to say on the subject:- "I had a meeting with Ken before the Sea of Light recording and I said, "how's your song writing going?" and he said "I've got lots of songs", I said "well send some over" but he never did. To me a good song is a good song, I don't care where it comes from. So I did ask Ken, I also told him that we had a bunch of great songs already there but I'm willing to listen to any song from anywhere".

Dear UHAS, Great job. I love getting the news letters and info on what band members and other fans are up to. I live in Eastern Virginia and that seems to be the last place on earth to get Uriah Heep info or music. I have struggled over the years to find Heep albums and am very pleased to find UHAS. I was doing my usual fishing through the important sections when I stumbled on the best thing I've heard in years, Sea Of Light. Wow what a classic to be. Why is it not on the shelves. I am proud to say most of the regular music stores still have Uriah Heep sections. You can find Demons And Wizards or Live or even Landsdowne but no Sea Of Light. You have many fans over here Mick and we never get to see you. I've seen the band only once over here back in the late 70's I believe with Jethro Tull. I had tickets to an Atlanta show a few years ago that was cancelled. We have some great places to play here for any size show. Blue Oyster Cult is doing a free show here outside in August. The Scorpions are playing at the new amphitheatre. Where are you, your new stuff is so much better than anything that were doing. **Bob Woodward, USA.**

UHAS reply:- Again, it's nice to read that the stuff Heep are doing now is held in such high regard. The band do hope to return to North America at some point and we will let you know if and when that happens.

Dear UHAS, Please could you tell me who sings Fear of Falling and how may I get a backstage pass to meet the band after concerts. **David Amendolara, Belgium.**

UHAS reply:- Trevor sings Fear Of Falling and it's his voice that you hear although Bernie is also contributing. You can get to meet the band after most shows by waiting around after the gig, talking to one of the crew members or even waiting for them to arrive for a sound check. They are usually happy to see UHAS members and if it's the type of gig that requires a backstage pass, all you have to do is ask one of the crew.

Dear UHAS, "your never to old to learn" and that's a fact. I know of the first two albums American counter parts covers and all, but I never, ever (oh the embarrassment) knew of "Bird Of Prey" being on the first, "Prey" tell me how different is it. The two albums are so different in production - the first raw and so debut sounding and the second "Progressively Sophisticated" - is the arrangement different? - Can I still get a hold of a copy of the album. I'm not one for buying two of the same albums just for one track. I never did that with Sabbath's first album for "Wicked World" but that could be got on the B side of Evil Woman anyway but this is different altogether!! Now, what a brill letter from Carolyn Calderbank, lucky Joe, that's a birthday present to cherish! She also made some good points in the argument about old and new stuff - yes we all wish to hear newer stuff, we all have tracks that aren't played and would like to hear them. We all have bands that we grew up with, me Heep, Sabbath, Wishbone Ash, Rory Gallagher (god bless him) and (first 4 albums) Mott the Hoople - each album, each track, each gig not only has fond memories attached but helps make up that jig-saw that's your soul, or whatever. Not to hear these tracks when you go to see a band live today means a little bit of us poor old buggers is lost somewhere - especially as we don't get to see these bands like we used to - ask Mick - Heep couldn't tour without playing Sheffield. Does he remember playing Buxton on top of that bloody hill? I was there all day and all night (3 below just a bird and a sleeping bag) Heep used to jam then in mid-set beautiful. That's why when these people play after all these years you still get off your arses and go. Not because on the continent you still see

'em regular or it's 5-10 years ago you turned onto 'em. Uriah Heep is part of you no matter who plays in the band as long as the Heep magic is still present. Mick helped start the band and over the years he was/is Uriah Heep like Iommi is Sabbath - members come and go but over the years you can't deny these two guys are representational of their bands, without them the bands would die.

Off the old hobby horse. Final question (thank god you say) I thought "Still Heavy Still Proud" was first another compilation but the book says it's a cut down versions of the Live Legends soundtrack can you elaborate on it a little for me? I'll have live Heep anytime any period. **Peter May, England.**

***UHAS reply:-** Spot on there Peter with your observations on Mick. To answer your questions, Bird of Prey is really only slightly different on the first North American Heep album which was simply called "Uriah Heep". The track replaces Lucy blues, otherwise it's the same album as "Very Eavy" but in a different sleeve. Likewise with the North American version of "Salisbury", a different sleeve and Simon the bullet freak replaces Bird of Prey. Both are quite easy to find in UK specialist and second hand shops and CD versions of both have also been released. "Still eavy Still Proud" does feature several live tracks from the "Live Legends" video together with tracks from previous albums.*

Dear UHAS, I am a new member of this fine society. I am very pleased to be so! However, I must say that I stopped following the band through the 80's and beyond. The last I brought was Innocent Victim and even then my interest in and appreciation for the band had begun to wane. Basically, after David Byron had left, so did I. Even through the years following, the first 10 LP's got played even less with the advent of the CD. My ever changing, growing taste in musical styles. Actually, John Wetton joining the band turned me heavily towards the early Roxy Music. King Crimson of "That Era". So it was in fact the release of the early Heep catalogue on re-mastered CD that got me back heavily into Heep and excited about the band once again! It was there that I was also first introduced to the one and only U.H.A.S.! So the real crux of my initially writing this letter is to find out what did "happen" to David Byron??? This may be like "old news" for a lot of you more dedicated, learned Uriah Heep fans, but I need to know the circumstances surrounding Byrons' death. You see unfortunately and inexplicably, Uriah Heep were never given much publicity in the 70's when I was like a hound trying to lap-up anything on the band that I could find. All during the 80's there was even less press than before, and besides, I really wasn't looking. It was in the roadracer release of Wonderworld where I first learned of this in it's terribly matter-of-fact writing. So this has been bugging me for years now, what happened? Since I've already taken to writing in regard to this matter, there are two other points of great interest I'd like to address..... Was there "something" between David Byron and John Wetton? I saw Uriah Heep with Wetton 4 times and it seemed obvious to me anyway there was great tension and bad blood somehow between them. I was able to bear witness to at least an indication of this..... It was at the capitol theatre in New Jersey in 1975 during the return to fantasy tour..... John Wetton had a partial cast on his leg and it seemed as though Byron was goading him through the whole show and possibly felt like he "had him" at a slight dis-advantage, this "happened" until the very last note of the last song of the final encore when Wetton literally hurled his bass 10 feet in the air across the stage and then stormed (limped) off-stage to miss the bows at curtain-call. I speculate Byron was possibly jealous, maybe felt threatened by Wetton, I don't know.... still, any recollections anyone? The last thing is -where can I get Ken Hensley's proud words on a dusty shelf and eager to please CD's? Are they available through UHAS? or can you put them in touch with another distributor who carries them. **William Kreisler, USA.**

***UHAS reply:-** As you may know, David Byron died in 28th February, 1985 and his death*

was attributable to his life style. As far as I know David and John Wetton were good friends and stayed friends after they had both moved on from Heep. Ken's CD's are German releases and although we did offer them for sale when they were first released we no longer have any stock of them. You could try Track records, 15, High Ousegate, York, YO1 2RZ, England. Tel 01904 629022. Fax 01904 610637.

Dear UHAS, Re "Spellbinder", I would like to congratulate you and everyone else involved in getting it released. Whilst not being the best Live show Heep have ever played it is still a very worthwhile release and definitely worth having. I, like many fans would like to have seen a more recent release but as that seems unlikely this release at least bridges the gap until either the next studio album. I cannot understand the criticism that has been cast onto this release as it has been a long time since the last live release and surely it is good to have an official release from pre Sea Of Light gigs. As you rightly state in the mag if the bootleggers had gotten hold of the tapes and brought out the gig as a bootleg people would probably be raving over it despite having to pay a ridiculous price for it. Thanks also for the Sea Of Light bonus track, it was much appreciated. **Phil Sokolsks, Wales.**

UHAS reply:- Spot on Phil, that letter could have been written by me, any live release is good as far as I'm concerned and I'd far rather have an official one than a bootleg one.

Dear UHAS, In Issue 20 there's an article on "Toe Fat" and I was glad to read it. Well, I have the CD "Toe Fat 1" and I like the tracks "The Wherefore And The Whys", "Just Like Me", "Working Nights", and "Just Like All The Rest". In the CD booklet I read the following words:- "Armed with a batch of Hensley penned songs the band secured on American deal..." and I'd just like to ask you or Ken, in what albums can we find them? In the past I loved Uriah Heep and today I still love them with the same love, but Ken Hensley is in my mind, and I love him as a musician, a songwriter and I especially love his great voice. **Marie Antonietta Piras, Italy.**

UHAS reply:- The Hensley penned songs that are referred to in the booklet of the "Toe Fat 1" CD are the songs that are featured on that CD. The deal referred to is the recording deal with the "Rare Earth" label in America who were the first to release the "Toe Fat 1" album.

Dear UHAS, I've got some problems with trying to find the album "Equator" which the only Uriah Heep studio album I still lack. A few days ago I dropped in on one of the biggest record stores in Germany ("World Of Music", Essen) to order it. They looked in every music catalogue they had, but could not find it and haven't even heard anything about the album yet. In the booklet of "Rarities From The Bronze Age", I read that it was released in the UK by CBS subsidiary Portrait. So here's my question:-Has "Equator" only been released in the UK and not in Germany, and if yes, how can I get it here (I'm really adamant on having it, otherwise my CD collection wouldn't be complete). I'd also like to know how to get "Best Of Uriah Heep" (the version that was release only in the UK). By the way, is the cover of this version different from the version released in the rest of Europe? **Boris Hartig, Germany.**

UHAS reply:- Equator was released in Germany but it has never been released on CD anywhere. Vinyl copies of the album are quite easily obtained at second hand shops and record fairs, or if that fails you can place an ad in the mag and I'm sure you be inundated with offers of a copy. "The best of Uriah Heep" released in the UK in the 70's is the same as the German release except it does not include Lady in black. The sleeve is the same but the UK version does not include the few song titles breaking up the diagonal line.

Dear UHAS, I would like to reply to Antonio Ruiz letter in issue 20. Atheists are in

abundance, and I agree it's hard these days to believe any god that is not a material one, but your tone almost appears to be that of anti-christ! If some people are trying to promote something that is good, rather than evil, more power to them! To blame god for trouble in the world i.e. Bosnia is understandable, but a naive cop-out. Man causes these problems, not god. People must choose what is right not to be forced. Besides, wanting to try to live like Christ is difficult these days and it should not be criticised by those who don't understand. **David Walters, England.**

***UHAS reply:-** Well, as we've said before we're happy to print everybody's opinions, but we are really talking about music. I think the rights and wrongs of religion have had a fair run now and I only see it featuring in future issues when Ken refers to it as a source of inspiration for writing. Agreed?*

Dear UHAS, I really loved the letter sections as always... I must say I agree with Bill Smith's and Paul Newton's comments about the band not playing in the UK for so long. And Billy's comments about the Live Set. The band's live set has changed very little since Goalby left, apart from the opening track and the odd new song - (or revitalised classic) the rest of it is very predictable. Sorry I disagree with Mick's reply to Paul Newton's letter about playing smaller venues, and such. I do agree that classic rock deserves more radio play and attention there, but how long does Mick expect to wait for some promoter and radio excess to step forward and say "I know you haven't played here in 5 or 6 years, and don't do anything else to promote your last album here - but here, we'll book you into these big theatres and play your music now!" Really, let's be serious! Why would they step forth and offer such deals when the Heep has done so little to help the effort in return? As for you Alan saying that Heep's toured North America twice in the past 3 years isn't totally true. It ain't much of a tour when the band go out and play the same set of oldies (+1 New Song) for 45 minutes, and the second time around they bi-pass so many major areas (IE: Southern Ontario, Buffalo, Montreal etc.) (Although I know this isn't the bands fault). I'd like to see a proper tour here, where the band plays a full 90 minutes + set with new songs as well! I see so many bands form Heep's era around here so regularly that it bugs me. Why not Heep? Again, sorry for sounding bitter Mick, but you must also understand the frustration of waiting that those outside-of Germany, who so rarely get to see you must feel! **Kevin Julie, Canada.**

***UHAS reply:-** Opinions is what the letters page is all about but what I said last time about Heep touring North America twice since they last toured the UK is correct. Okay, so you may rightly state it wasn't much of a tour but I'd bet that any UK Heep fan would be happy with 45 minutes of the same set of oldies + 1 new song in the UK right now, even if they did bi pass many major areas. It's been a long time since 1991 for us lot over here.*

Dear UHAS, Uriah Heep have pissed me off by there absence. It's high time that they came back to the U.K. to give their fans the kind of support that their fans have offered to them over the past 25 years or so. The sad truth is that when and if they come back to us, they are going to find a whole new situation waiting for them in the U.K. in the form of a grossly diminished audience. Heaven knows it was small enough in 1991, but it's gonna be worse this time! They have German organizers and a German label, the support and the push that the German label gave to Sea Of Light was nothing short of pathetic. Did you know that the best position this reasonably good album made was to No 12 in the Indie chart. Uriah Heep must be the oldest Indie Rockers of all time. Alan my good friend, (I hope) don't take this to personally, "But in all the people that I write to, there are not many who have to much to say that is good about Bernie Shaw!! You are one of the few! Phil Lanzon is good on the Keys, but there is a massive void left that he is unable to fill, phil? yeah fill, due to his inability to come forward on stage with that all important 3rd guitar, he

can't play guitar. I miss that! Only Hensley can phil, "er" fill that void. Phil has single handedly destroyed the once great Gypsy. The bands interpretation of this brilliant old song is bloody awful and incomplete. I could go on for ever about my gripes, but I'll spare you any more, don't wan to bore you!! Now! you quoted me as saying that Sea Of Light is the best thing from Heep in many a long year! (Issue 16 I think) "True" "But" my version of (many a long year) at this point in time would be 1986. 10 years ago! Live In 79 was a fantastic find for me, while I was flipping through L.P.'s in a record shop in Falkirk. I came across Anthology and Live 79, at that time I knew nothing of their existence, a fantastic find!! I have to say that I still prefer Live In 79 to anything that this current line up of Heep have come out with. In the same column you will read that I say, "I find it impossible to compare it with any of the old albums"...That is still the case! There is, "No Comparison"... I can still only compare Sea Of Light to, Live In Moscow, Raging Silence, and Different World, Sea Of Light is the best of these four albums. I have never claimed anything else!
Bill Smith, Scotland.

***UHAS reply:-** You're right Bill, I do think Bernie is the best thing that's happened to Heep in ages, he a great singer and a great focal point for the band on stage, I'm sure I'm not the only one who thinks so. I think you're being a little harsh on Phil to say the least, to me he's philled "er" filled Ken's shoes more than adequately, he's demonstrated a wide and varied range of songwriting skills, many of them are to me classic Heep and I feel he's moved the band back towards the Hammond sound and away from the more synth dominated sound of the 80's. To say Phil has single handedly destroyed Gypsy is totally unfair, Heep had stopped playing it in it's entirety many years before Phil joined, listen to the version on "Live in Europe 79" and you'll see what I mean.*

Dear UHAS, I think it's total bullshit that people have been writing negative letters about members of Heep (past and present) and cutting on certain Heep albums. This is the Appreciation Society and I appreciate Heep. I dig it all. People are overlooking the fact that Heep are still a band, still recording, still touring and still have a damn good reason to be proud. Has it ever occurred to you that the band, present and past read what you write, but I'm sure the Heep members are intelligent enough to know that these negative letters are only a small percentage of us, who are spoiled. If you feel like cutting up on any Heep material when writing to the fan club, just listen to 4 or 5 of your favourite Heep albums and steer your thoughts towards optimism. I've always heard optimism from Mick Box and you are his fans. Did it ever occur to you that by criticising an album you may discourage a fan who doesn't own it from buying it. Isn't that defeating the purpose of being a member of an appreciation society. I appreciate every album and this abundance of unreleased material that's coming onto the market, the unity of the fans has certainly encouraged this in the 90's. **Barry Lombardo, U.S.A.**

***UHAS reply:-** Good letter, I think there is a difference between constructive, inoffensive criticism, which is healthy and stimulates exchange of opinion, and out right slagging off. We've tried not to print the latter but one persons opinion may offend and upset, even though that's not the intention. We all have our own ideas, and I've stated mine in the past, a letters page full of how wonderful Heep are would be boring and pointless even though some people may choose to make their point in a more forceful manner than others. Please keep the letters coming.*

THE LATE 70's PROMOTIONAL INTERVIEWS

FIREFLY - KEN HENSLEY, JOHN LAWTON AND TREVOR BOLDER INTERVIEWED BY ALAN FREEMAN, BBC RADIO 1, 4/12/76

Alan: The new Uriah Heep have a new album coming out in 1977 called "Firefly". Ken, what sort of problems did you have changing the personnel of the band?

Ken: The main problem was that the first couple of people that we thought we were going to have as replacements really weren't as good as we expected them to be, so we realised all of a sudden that it was going to be a long, hard grind. It's been 5 months of very hard and sometimes very frustrating work. The beauty of it is though is that that hard work has now climaxed and culminated in the formation of a much tighter, more professional and much more enjoyable band than we've ever had before.

Alan: In your search did you predominantly worry about having 2 new personnel in the group and changing the sound of Uriah Heep or were you worried about retaining what had been before?

Ken: Obviously the most important thing is that after 7 years, 7 quite successful years, the group has established what I have chosen to term, an identity, very strongly around the world. We've had to be committed to retaining that identity to some degree musically, but at the same time we're also committed and obliged to try to go forward all the time. So what we had to look for were people that would fit into the framework of Uriah Heep as it was known, but also help us to establish a new identity for Uriah Heep which would be as acceptable to our old fans as it was going to be to hopefully the new fans that we'll get

Alan: The new singer is John Lawton who's been working extensively in Germany. John, how did you feel to be approached by Uriah Heep?

John: Very excited, I didn't go over board about it because when I got the first message I thought it was just some friend of mine taking the mickey or something. When Ken actually did phone the second time I took it very seriously and it snowballed from then. I felt very comfortable about it, I wasn't so nervous that I couldn't do anything.

Alan: John, how easy was it to fit in with their style?

John: I felt very comfortable with it because a lot of the bands I've worked with in Germany are in the style of Uriah Heep, it's been that way inclined. It's been like coming from a style I've been doing over a number of years in to a class version of it.

Alan: Trevor, You've had an association with "David Bowie" and "The Spiders From Mars", have you made a great change in musical policy yourself in joining Uriah Heep?

Trevor: I think it's a different style of music than what it was with Bowie, Bowie was more laid back sort of music, more theatre where as Uriah Heep are more the heavy band writing very melodic songs. I haven't played that sort of music for a long time so coming in to Uriah Heep was a total change for me, I'm re learning what I used to play like some time ago.

Alan: During the "David Bowie/Spiders From Mars" era did you ever envisage yourself in time to come joining a band like Uriah Heep playing bass guitar?

Trevor: We tried to form a band like Uriah Heep around "The Spiders From Mars", it was

a similar type of thing musically because that's what I actually prefer to play, I like playing the heavy rock and I enjoy that sort of music.

Alan: Trevor, having completed the album and having heard the playbacks of the tracks on which you're participating, how do you feel about your own work?

Trevor: Great, I really enjoyed it, for me it was one of the quickest albums I've ever done. We just went in and did it and listening to the playbacks I was really pleased because everything went down in 2 or 3 takes and there was a lot of feel there. Rather than what I'd been used to with Bowie where we'd go in and play it for 2 hours and then put it down, by the time you'd done that you were slightly losing the feel. With Heep they aim for the feel more than anything which is great.

Alan: Ken, with the new line up how do you feel about the future of Uriah Heep?

Ken: Well I'm looking forward to everything more now because I've got my pride back in what's going on. Pride has a lot to do with it with me. Going on the road is very hard work, in fact being in the rock and roll business is very hard work and it's not worth doing unless you do it properly and unless you actually enjoy it. All the enjoyment and pleasure had gone out of it completely over the last couple of years and it wasn't until we put this together that I realised how bad it had become. Now there's so much pleasure in it and it's so enjoyable that I'm really looking forward to everything that we're going to do in the next few weeks.

Next issue it's the "Innocent Victim" promotional interview from Radio 1. If you have recordings of complete promotional interviews from any era of the band, please send us a copy for inclusion in future issues, thanks in advance.

FIRST TOUCH - HOW I BECAME A HEEP FAN

This new feature in the magazine, which we hope will be a regular one, was first suggested to us in a letter way back in October 1993 by Sigmund Ruud. (See, you may think your ideas are just thrown in the bin but we do hope to get round to using the good ones at some point). Anyway, Sigmund wrote:- "Why not make a regular column where members can tell each other how and when they got in touch with the music of Heep for the first time, it could be called 'my first Heep album' or 'my first introduction to the Heep world' or something like that". Three years later, here it is and we've decided to call it "First Touch - How I Became A Heep Fan". Please let us know how it happened for you, but for this issue it's Sigmund's story.

Thank God I wasn't absent from school that day! It's Autumn 1973, and my best friend is 15, two years older than me. And you all know how very umble one can be having an older, and of course wiser friend. I was no exception. At that time I was already a little into Deep Purple, which I liked very much. Lucky me, because my friend liked them too. I also wanted to check out a band called Uriah Heep, I didn't even know how to pronounce the name then! "You shouldn't listen to that crap" my friend said, "They're awful, it's just a lot of noise, you won't like them". And thinking he was right I thought I probably wouldn't like them. It would probably have stayed that way if it hadn't been for the particular day at school that I'm going to tell you about. As part of a music lesson anyone in the class could bring a record from home. On this occasion the teacher had asked a school friend of mine to bring with him this special record. Special? Of course it was special, the band were playing the "Happy Birthday" song. Sure enough, out of the bag came "The Magician's Birthday". This was my first opportunity to hear Heep, I simply had to borrow that record,

which I did. Back home my brother almost flipped and ran out to the record shop to buy it. I think my taste in music changed forever on that day. Today I have all Heep's albums and videos and I hope there are plenty more to come.

Sigmund Ruud, Norway.

LIVE REPORTS
"TWELVE HOURS OF THE SEVENTIES"
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, JUNE 1, 1996.

Ever since the Heep gig at Rockefeller, Oslo, last year (the best gig in Norway ever?) I've been waiting for the band to come back to Norway or at least Scandinavia. When I saw on the Internet that the boys were going to a festival in Stockholm, I just couldn't stay at home, even if it is about 7 hours to get here on the train. And I can't say I was disappointed, even if the band had only 45 minutes available. The whole band seemed to enjoy themselves just as much as the audience from the first chord of "Universal Wheels" to the end of the set. Mick played the solos that the people wanted to hear. (the solo in Gypsy seemed to be a bit longer than expected as Lee suddenly disappeared from the stage for some minutes, queue at the loo?, but no one seemed to take any notice except Mick.) Bernie's voice sounds better and better each time I hear him, Trev's bass playing speaks



for itself, Lee's drumming is steady as always and Phil's doing a good job behind the keyboards. I suppose it was only me and two or three guys around me that missed the old Hammond, and I'd also like to ask Mick what was special about the guitar he was using (or what's wrong with his Gibson and Fender). Just as much as I enjoyed the concert, I was also honoured to shake hands with Mick after the show, something I wouldn't have even dreamed of 20 years ago. Also, the whole band, except Phil, signed my "Time Of Revelation" Box Set and that alone was worth the trip. I am beginning to think it's easier to get Elvis Presley's autograph than Mr Lanzon's. Anyway: Heep was the first band to play that day. They should have got the opportunity to change places on the bill with Nazareth or Kinks who played late in the evening. All these bands, as well as Heep, can look back on the seventies with pride. Still, from my point of view, Heep is the only band among all the good old bands who entered the stage that day, who can look forward at the nineties with the same pride. Come back to Norway as soon as possible.

Report and photo by Olav Hammeren.

HEEP'S COMEBACK - A VIEW FROM THE PIT (The Rossia Concert Hall. Moscow. 6th June)

"Uriah Heep In Russia!" - on 20th May the music TV programme "Jam" started with the announcement of Heep's Russian tour with two Moscow dates (5th and 6th June). It was hard to believe that eight and a half years had already passed since their first Moscow concerts in December 1987. I got my ticket three days later, on the first or second day that the tickets were actually available. The Rossia Hall situated near Red Square was to be the venue for Heep so I wasn't too much surprised by the prices ranging from 80.000 roubles (£11 approx) (balcony) to 500.000 roubles (£68 approx) (stalls). But of course it was disappointing to know that such prices would be a large problem for many Heep fans. My choice was Heep's farewell show on 6th June: I decided to see only one gig but from the best possible position I could afford because I thought it would be easier then to get backstage after the concert to meet the band. The tour recieved a relatively good promotion from our TV: Heep appeared in the regular 15-minute night programme "Music For All Generations" which featured three songs (Stealin', Cry Freedom, Bad Bad Man) shot in 1993 and an interview with Mick and Bernie; there were also short promo's here and there. In addition to that it was nice to see the band posters in the streets. On the memorable evening I arrived to the Rossia Hall about 40 minutes before the beginning, I looked in at the Hall's box office - the tickets were still available but the prices were different: - 150.000 - 800.000 roubles (£20 - £108)!! Nearly a 60% increase! I stopped there for a minute or two to find out that the tickets were still selling. To my taste the pompous Rossia Hall isn't the best venue for rock concerts. The organizers, however, created a good background for the shows: in the foyer I found a wide choice of Heep merchandise, including the latest CD releases, Igor Kotelnikov's book, T-shirts, stickers and leaflets with the bands brief story. First I got some stickers and a copy of the "Spellbinder" CD with a promo leaflet. One of the guy's selling the CD's said they had had a chat with Mick the day before. Mick said he was surprised to find this CD here, while it's, not yet available in Europe. After that I got a pair of leaflets and a nice black T-shirt dedicated to Heep's Russian tour. And finally, my ticket itself, with a small band photo, was a good collectors item too. At 7.00pm the doors were opened and soon I found my seat in the pit right near the central passage with a good view if the stage. There was an half an hour delay and then... "Thunder!" -this is the best word I can find to describe my very first impression. Heep were back at their best! It was, without going too deep into technical details, a superbly professional performance: a perfect co-ordination, harmony of beautiful melodies and power, classic solo's, no fine shade of felling getting lost... The set list included

Universal Wheels, Time Of Revelation, Stealin', Rainbow Demon, Words In The Distance, The Wizard, Dream On, Gypsy (with a fine organ solo), That's The Way It Is, July Morning, Look At Yourself, Lady In Black (1st encore) and Easy Livin' (2nd encore) (I didn't take any notes during the concert so I hope I haven't confused anything). Of course I can imagine somebody saying "a greatest hits concerts," but please don't forget that it was the first Russian tour in more than 7 years, I agree however that the band can feel free to play more latest material. My only disappointment was a weak reaction of the owners of 500.000 - 800.000 rouble tickets in the stalls. Most of them, obviously, were complete strangers to rock music. I saw two or three people leaving the hall in the middle of the set, maybe just because the five guys on the stage were too loud for them. (Some days later the same specific public made David Bowie burst into tears (literally) after his show at the luxurious Kremlin Palace.) But of course Heep got a storming support from the greater part of the audience. By the end of the concert many fans from the back rows (me included) moved forward and filled the passages in front of the stage, rocking and singing together with the band. After the end of the show I made an attempt to get backstage but there were lots of those stone-faced young men in black jackets with the stereotype phrase "the exit is over there", so it was not a success. Even my society card couldn't help. The only thing to do was go out and wait for the band at the back door and so that is what I did. There were several fans already standing there. I got into conversation with some of them and we started discussing the show, our favourite albums and so on. Heep didn't make us wait too long and at about 10.00pm an hour after the end of the concert, we saw them coming out. They saluted us warmly and started to sign our tickets and booklets. I was so excited that at first even forgot about my Society card hidden in my back pocket and when I took it out and showed it to Mick (a deep breath) he gave me a hug!! Then he said to the rest of the band: "Hey guys, here's a member of our Society!", and there were cheers and handshakes. Mick also added "To Alex, Keep on rockin'" onto my booklet and gave me a pick with his facsimile and the band logo... I think that night I was the happiest rock fan in the world. To meet your favourite band after the concert and find them so warm and friendly- isn't a fairy tale? They've promised us to come back again and again... They shouldn't hesitate to, because in this country Uriah Heep have always been and remain one of the most respected and followed British bands. It is, nevertheless, evident that our tour organizers pricing policy needs a serious rethink. I do realise that Moscow is now a very expensive city and that Russia is unfortunately getting more divided into "the stalls", "the gallery" and people who just have to stay at home. But I also know that Heep deserve packed halls worldwide and in Moscow too.... And not that feeble applause they recieved from our nouveaux riches.

Alexander Bukharin

QUIZ TIME

Congratulations to Barry Lombardo from the USA who sent in many entries with the correct answer of "Tony Plat" to win the DAT and cassette tapes supplied to Red Steel for the inclusion of the "Equator" tracks on the box set. The prize for this issue is a wrist band worn on stage many times by Phil Lanzon. To win it just name 3 bands that Phil has played in other than Heep. Remember that you also get a Red Steel releases of your choice on CD as a bonus if you win. Multitpal entries are allowed but each entry must include a first class stamp (UK members) or an IRC (overseas members).

LUCIFER'S FRIEND WITH JOHN LAWTON. THE LP STORY.

German group Lucifers Friend has it's roots in one German and one English band. Peter Hecht (keyboards), Dieter Horns (bass and backing vocals), Peter Hesslein (guitar and backing vocals) and Joachim Reitenbach (drums) played until early 1970 together in a band called "German Bonds". In November 1970, the four of them started recording, it was after the recording of the backing tracks that John Lawton came in. He played with his own group "Stonewall" in the Top Ten Club in Hamburg. He recorded the lead vocals and in January 1971 they released their first album. John had previously released an album in 1970 on the German Decca label called Asterix with the members of German Bonds. It is also a fact that the members of "Lucifers Friend" recorded two other albums under the name of "Pink Mice" on the German budget label Europa. The band play classical themes on these albums in the style of the Dutch band "Ekseption". John Lawton was on these albums but was limited to backing vocals. It is also common knowledge that Hesslein and Hecht also worked for years with "The James Last Orchestra" and that John Lawton sang with "The Les Humphries Singers" when he was not recording with Lucifers Friend.

"LUCIFER'S FRIEND" (1971-German Phillips. Reissued on CD by Repertoire)

The first album is filled with typical early seventies hardrock, heavy, melodic and stuffed with riffs all over, for us, fans of Uriah Heep, this album is the one to get in the first place. The original German issue has a fold open cover with embossed sleeve. John Lawton sings wonderfully on it. The music fits in with bands like pre-Gillan Deep Purple, early Heep and Atomic Rooster. The arrangements are full of the great organ sounds that we already know from Lord, Hensley and Crane (if Crane wasn't already in heaven wouldn't that make a great trio?). From this album there were also two singles released, the first being "Ride the sky", backed with a non-LP song "Horla". The second single "In the time of job when mammon was a hippie", backed with the album title track "Lucifers Friend", didn't add any new material.

"WHERE GROUPIES KILLED THE BLUES" (1972 Vertigo)

By 1972 the group had decided to become a studio band. Disappointment with live-situations and touring had brought them to that decision. It also gave the musicians the opportunity to work on other projects. Their second offering went in a more progressive direction. John's writing input is again limited to two songs, the single "Hobo" (this could be on any Heep album!) and the opening track "Burning Ships". I think this album musically and production-wise ahead of its time. Due the great potential of the musicians involved we get a very sophisticated album which displays the rich musical background of the band. Peter Hecht had also broadened his battery of keyboard with Piano, Moog and Mellotron. A track like the seven minute long "Mother" is a tour de force with a King Crimson like opening and then developing into an almost classical piece but always coming back to what Rock is all about, power and emotional expression, carried by Lawton's powerful voice. Think of Heep's "Salisbury!". Side two holds another three tracks in this style "Rose to the vine" is the most experimental track of the three. It has the King Crimson like middle passage, but then breaks into a theatrical melody. This album was also picked up in the U.S.A. by the Passport/Billingsgate label. Interesting to know is that the American version was mastered by Bob Ludwig which is a guarantee for a great sound. It was released there in 1975 and was a cult-hit. No non-album material released here.

Very different but a four star rating!

"I'M JUST A ROCK'N ROLL SINGER" (1973 German Vertigo or US Billingsgate)

The third album states John Lawton as a writing partner for all of the eight tracks. It is also a return to a more hardrock sound although the sophisticated arrangements remain. The song-material may be a bit less impressive on this one, but the vocal arrangements are the cream of the crop! The introduction of horns and a choir are also new to the band. Extra percussion is added by their soon to be new drummer Herbert Bornhold. John's vocals on this album are much like to what we can hear him do later with Heep. The best songs are "Closed Curtains" with the interaction between Lawton and the choir being great and "Blind Freedom" with a jazzy Fender rhodes which is very prominent and the introduction of brass, arranged by Hecht. "Song for Louie" is a seven minute epic which comes the closest to the songs on the previous record. The single "Rock'n Roll Singer" has more brass to it and sounds like a big band with a rock section. The flipside features a non-lp song called "Satyr's Dance". This album arises again some interest in the States and became an important bestseller. Three stars.

"BANQUET" (1974 German Vertigo or US Billingsgate. Reissued on CD by Repertoire)

For their fourth album James Last's Herbert Bornhold had taken over the drummer seat from Joachim Rietenbach and a big orchestra was used including brass, woodwind and string instruments along a small choir. Peter Hecht arranged everything, which was quite rare for a rock band. Hesslein and Bornhold had also played together in pop-band "The Rattles" who had a big hit in Europe with "The Witch". 1974 sees also the release of a non-lp track as a single: "Our World is a Rock'n Roll Band" backed with the also non-album "Alpenrosen". "Banquet" has only five tracks of which two are over ten minutes. The album opens with "Spanish Galleon" (a Hesslein/Lawton composition) and has a Santana-like introduction with guitar and fender rhodes. When the orchestra sets in and John begins to sing, it becomes clear that this album is the logical follow-up to "When the Groupies Killed the Blues." The mellotron has been replaced by the orchestra. Jazzrock passages are mixed with classical sounding orchestral arrangements, very strange and experimental indeed, but it shows what can be done with rock if the musical skill is there! "Thus spoke oberon" is another ambitious piece of music written by outsiders although co-writer J.O'Brian Docker is also prominent on the second album as a writer. The piece goes to a climax with the band and the orchestra melting together in a brilliant way. This is dazzling stuff! Side two opens with a Lawton co-written powerful rocker called "High Flying Lady-Goodbye". Again the interaction between band and orchestra is amazing. "Sorrow" is the second ten minutes-plus piece with a Chicago-like introduction followed by a quiet passage with a "Chick Corea" like feel and develops into bigband supported powersinging by John. Again Heep's Salisbury is not far away, it's just jazzier. The final track "Dirty old Town" (also co-written by John) is a ballad that wouldn't be out of place on a Heep record. The album was received much critical acclaim in Germany and is by far their most ambitious work. Five stars.

"MIND EXPLODING" (1976 German Vertigo or US Janus)

It took the band almost two years before their fifth album got released. Herbert Bornhold

was again restricted to the role of percussionist and was replaced on the album by top German drummer Curt Cress. The album sleeve also credits Karl Hermann Luer as a sixth member on saxophone, flute, clarinet and violin. No big orchestra this time. The experience accomplished on the "Banquet" album and compressed into shorter songs results in a most enjoyable record. Overall it's heavier than it's predecessor. Lawton is involved in the writing of all the songs and it becomes clear that his style was a sure influence on Heep in the second half of the seventies. Musicianship is again of a high standard and John's singing is on par with the rest. The album ends with a great show case song for John's voice. It's called "Yesterday's Ideals" and it is a very representative closing of the first part of John's career with Lucifer's Friend. I don't know if there were any singles released from this album, but a problem with their record company in Germany makes me quite sure that there were none. Any information on this matter is welcome once more. By the way: "Mind Exploding" is another five star album! Collector's note: It's not the easiest one to find.

After this album the group wanted to tour again but they have one serious problem: John Lawton is no longer in the band. He's replaced by Scotsman Ian Cussick who later made a lot of solo records for the German market. His stay was brief and he was later replaced by another Scotsman Mike Starrs who made a great album with Colloseum II. Bornhold was behind the drumkit again and in 1978 they released the album "Good Time Warrior" on Elektra. Two years later they released another album on Elektra, "Sneak Me In" and had added a second keyboard player with Adrian Askew. Both albums are nice mainstream melodic rock albums. The band had left their progressive experiments for sure.

"MEAN MACHINE" (1981 Elektra)

By the end of the seventies John had left Heep and made a solo record called "Heartbeat". He was backed on it by Lucifer's Friend musicians and drummer Curt Cress. It was released on RCA and contains material that is a bit too poppy for me. Shortly after he worked again with Lucifer's Friend for their next album. "Mean Machine" is a straight forward hardcore record. With the keyboard moving to the background, this is a more guitar oriented album. The band is back to a Five piece with Askew out. The songs are all credited to the whole band but John's contribution is obvious. A song like "Hey Driver" could have been on any three albums he made with Heep, the production is less open than with Heep and the sound is sharper and misses clarity. A CD re-issue would be welcomed, certainly remastered and hopefully remixed. A much different Lucifer's Friend album but not one to miss by Lawton-era Heep fans! I wish this material had been played by Heep. There and a half stars.

After this album the band did a last German tour with Dieter Horns replaced by Andreas Dicke after which they called it a day. Lawton moved on to "Rebel" (one album on Ohr in 1983) which later became Zar (again one album on Hurricane in 1990). But surprise, surprise: Lucifer's Friend is back in 1994 with a new CD and the nucleus of Lawton and Hesselin back in charge with a little help from Andreas Dicke, Curt Cress, Jogi Wichmann and Udo Damen. You should all of heard "**Sumogrip**" by now and made your own judgement. I like it for sure and I hope it's not a one-off project. John, you were and you always will be my favourite Heep vocalist, it's nice to have you back on scene!

Geert Ryssen

PHOTO ALBUM



This photo of Gary Thain was taken by Mick Box in a hotel room during a tour, probably of the USA in 1972. Mick and Gary often shared the same room on tour.

GREG DECHERT

An interview by Kevin Julie

Greg probably had one of the hardest jobs of any new Heep member as he replaced one of the biggest figures in the band, Ken Hensley. Our Canadian Heepoholic Kevin Julie managed to track Greg down some time ago and has in the past reported on his present day activities. Our thanks go to Kevin for not only putting Greg through a set of our questions but also for typing it all on to computer disk, what a star! well done.

Kevin: What were your earliest musical influences ??

Greg: (That's a hard question) I would say my mom and her friends. A lot of them played

instruments and they'd have house parties. At these parties, my sisters and I would sit around and my mom would play the piano and sing. That had a lot to do with it because when you're around people who enjoy it so much, music means a lot! As far as other people....I took classical piano lessons, and one of my favourite composers was Chopin! I loved his writing style and everything he wrote! I would play his stuff when I had to learn my lessons. Then a lot of jazz players, like McCoy Tiner - a piano player, Cecil Taylor -another jazz player...I listened to a lot of jazz and stuff like that way before rock'n'roll. From a technical standpoint I was playing a lot more jazz stylings than rock'n'roll. When I started listening to rock'n'roll more, and taking it serious, (I mean it's less of a technical music to play - there's not as much technique involved!). It was kinda like "this sucks" after listening to complicated music, and having really good technique, and them having to kinda discard a lot of your technique playing rock'n'roll. So I finally decided "hey this rock'n'roll stuff's pretty cool", and I started getting into that. I liked Rick Wakeman - obviously! Keith Emerson I loved...coming from a piano players standpoint. And I liked Jon Lord from Deep Purple! But just about everything I've heard influences me; from a bird tweeting, I love the noises animals make! I think a lot of jazz musicians have sort of tried to emulate animals. There's something pure and refined about a bird's whistle, they don't say much, but what they do is so beautiful! People say a lot, and a lot of it's a bunch of hogwash! ha ha ha!

Kevin: What drew you towards the keyboards? Do you play any other instruments?

Greg: To answer the second question first, I play guitar, I'm not a great player, but I'm getting better all the time! I like to write on it. Obviously, when you pick up a guitar, there's a certain amount of rock'n'roll that comes out. I play drums, I'm not a bad drummer at all! I play saxophone. I haven't played one in years and I don't own one anymore, I did play quite a bit of it at one time! What drew me to the keyboards was again, my mom! she started me on lessons and we always had the piano at home. I remember crawling up on it at the age of 2 and just hammering on it, and feeling really good about it. I remember that clearly way back. I think I have a better memory of that than if someone asks me "what did you do an hour ago?" I didn't know the notes and scales and stuff, of course, but I'd pound with my fists, pound out rhythms, and it felt really good! I think when my mom started me playing, she'd teach me stuff at home, and then decided to send me to lessons. There was times when I didn't want to go and she had to force me!

Kevin: What was your history prior to Uriah Heep? Any bands, albums, singles? Any success achieved?

Greg: Hardly anything in the recording field! I recorded 2 albums with an experimental jazz band from London, that's London Ontario, called "The London Experimental Jazz Quartet". We released 2 albums over a 4 year period. The first was called "Invisible Roots" and the second was called "Fruits From Another Garden". Fruits Of Another Garden was picked up and played a lot by the CBC which is National station similar to BBC in Montreal. We weren't with any record company, we were distributed privately. It was all experimental music. It was all improvised in the studio at the time. They were basically done for free. We recorded them at Fanshaw College when they first started a recording program, it was one of the first in the country! They wanted people to come in and check out the studio, so we were kind of an experiment too! Then there was "The Greg Dechert Band", a bar band playing classic hits and some originals, none of which ever made it onto vinyl! "Sweet Blindness" was another band I played in. They were from Toronto and had albums out, but I never did any recording with them. The drummer I played with then was Randall Coreil, and he went on to play with Alannah Myles, Tom Cochrane, and some other people. But there was just so many bands that came and went Kevin, I'm not even

sure!

Kevin: You were in "Pulsar" with John Sloman. That was the first time you worked with John. How is it that a Canadian came to work with this young Welsh man?

Greg: Actually, I think Lone Star was still in existence, and a fellow named Paul Watson travelled to England from Kitchener, Ontario. Paul was Canadian and had a friend, I believe, who was the keyboard player in Lone Star! He went to England and met the rest of the crew, and I think, at that time, things were real hard for everybody and it wasn't going that great! Paul had a bit of money and said "why don't you come back to Canada and I'll manage you? I'll throw in a few bucks, we'll rent a house, and you guys can write some music". So that's what happened! Then I got a call one day from a friend of mine called David Cooper who played with Ian Thomas, Klaatu, and with me in Nasty Habits. So these guys from England, Pino Palladino, Dixie Lee, and John Sloman had found David Cooper to play guitar, and now they were looking for a keyboard player so Dave called me up and that's how I got together with those guys!

Kevin: I understand John recommended you for Heep after Ken Hensley left?

Greg: That's exactly how it was! John said "I know a guy in Canada". I flew over and jammed, everyone liked me and I liked them, and that's how it worked out!

Kevin: How did you feel about replacing Ken Hensley, who was one of the main figures in the band? Did you, in any way feel haunted by his standing with the fans?

Greg: No, I felt great! (ha ha). I thought, "I'm in a band, I'm in Uriah Heep". Actually, somewhere in my past, I'd really liked the band, so I felt great. I didn't feel haunted at all, I thought "this is fantastic! Another challenge! I thought I'll get to write some songs and play some big gigs. I think a few fans came up and asked questions. Fans always seem to be offended or put-off, or upset, when people come and go from bands. I can understand why. Some people get so close to something and they can't let go. But obviously, you have to! But changes happen and you can't do anything about it, so you either go with it or don't listen to it anymore. There were similar questions at the time like "how do you feel about replacing the great Ken Hensley?" Or whatever! And I'd just say, "The Great Greg Dechert" is here (ha ha) to take over, and if you don't like - fuck you." Right? (ha ha) Basically, that's the way it goes; isn't it? I don't think the direction Heep was taking was appreciated by too many people at that point. I don't think it was a very typical Uriah Heep direction. Some bands grow and they could grow into strange directions. They don't stay exactly with the same style of music and other bands do stay the same throughout the years, and I think some people get really confused when a band starts going in a different direction - even if it is still good music! I think, with Heep, John was a strong director and he had ideas to go in a direction that was not the typical Uriah Heep direction. And I thought that was great! I don't think anybody was terribly unhappy about it, maybe it wasn't the direction Mick wanted. There is a Uriah Heep sound and direction and I just don't think it was going that way as much.

Kevin: Do you feel your style of playing was suited to Heep's music? Did you have to alter your style in any way?

Greg: I've played all kinds of music. I think if you're a great musician - you can alter your style - you should be able to play anything! (ha ha). Heavy rock (or "Heavy Metal") isn't necessarily a very technical thing.

Kevin: So you didn't have any problems adjusting to the Uriah Heep sound at all?

Greg: No, I didn't have any problems at all. I think the biggest problem was the fact that there was no Hammond organ available. I think Mick would have preferred that!

Kevin: What were the circumstances that you didn't use the Hammond?

Greg: It was partly because I wanted to experiment with an instrument called the CS-80. No one really objected to it at the time. And I don't think that there was access to a Hammond at the time. I couldn't afford to have one, and nobody said "here - we'll supply you with one!" It might have also been the cost of getting one and getting it repaired and ready to go. Had there been one, I probably would have played one, because it's such a big part of their sound! And it was that era too! There was a lot of experimentation going on in the 80s. I think Mick would have been happier with a Hammond. He even mentioned it, but everyone else was happy! I also, simply think that at that time there was a lot of deterioration going on - other than just the band itself!

Kevin: What was the attitude in the band when you joined? Were they looking forward to the future, or was it falling apart at the time?

Greg: I didn't think it was falling apart at the time. I think the deterioration had a lot to do with Bronze Records and the attitude of Gerry towards the people in the band in general. I think, maybe there was some problems in Gerry's life that lead to disinterest for him in the whole business. So, it was a struggle for the people working for him and with him to get anywhere with the business of the band.

Kevin: How was the mood amongst the guys?

Greg: When I first joined - the mood was great! We went on tour, and everybody was happy! But I don't know....There was a lot of boozin' goin' on, a lot of drugs going on. I think that there was so many personnel changes, and once a band has something really great - like they had in the early days - when you start changing people I think it can get to you. Like Mick had been there a longtime, and then John came in and he was a very strong influence in his writing and his style which was very different to than the original Uriah Heep style - which I think was more simple, musically. It was, the original style, a lot of simple chord changes, very simplistic guitar - and nothing against that, there's brilliance in every kind of music! I just think John's stuff was different. I can relate to everyone's style. I've always been very versatile, and played in a lot of different bands - from country bands to jazz bands to whatever, and I don't think those guys had! I think that for Mick - that was his style, he lived and breathed that style! I think to inject different people, that are really versatile, into something like that they're going to bring their styles into it. Maybe it was just too much of a change from the old style, but, it was deteriorating. Chris Slade wasn't happy with the business of it, he felt it was moving too slow and not right.

Kevin: What was your view on the way Heep were managed?

Greg: Gerry was distant from the band. He made everybody feel distant. Very impersonal! There seemed to have been deterioration even before I arrived on the scene. I was very green so I don't think I had a lot to do with it. Mick didn't seem to want to play a lot either. I stayed at his place and I was always trying to get him to write stuff and he always had something else to do. I think he was distracted, or maybe he just wasn't happy with the band the way it was and didn't see it going anywhere, so he didn't put out any energy. And maybe all that dicipated years before!

Kevin: Was the songwriting issue ever a 'thing' when you joined?

Greg: What do you mean?

Kevin: Where it had turned out so many members before you, who'd complained over the way Gerry Bron and Ken Hensley worked together, and the way some of the other guys felt that they'd written songs that were being ignored.

Greg: I don't really know that much about that, so I can't say much about it. I do know that John Sloman wasn't happy with Ken and Ken wasn't happy with John. Maybe Ken was getting tired to? Who knows? So when John came in with a ton of great musical ideas....well Ken and him obviously didn't get along! Maybe the band should have just died or quit when David Byron left. Some bands just keep on going, like "Yes". They just accept new people in and out. But when you accept new people in - you've got to accept that they're different people too, and you can't go in the same direction; you've got to compromise! I think Mick was quite open, and everyone worked together. It wasn't together long enough to develop; it takes time to develop things, and getting peoples' personalities to go together. And the business end of it was so bad! I think they had spent a lot of money and the money wasn't there either anymore !

Kevin: You only did the 1 tour with Heep. How were the shows received from your point of view?

Greg: I thought very well.

Kevin: How were the turn-outs?

Greg: They were always packed!

Kevin: Was the CS-80 something you wore around the neck ?

Greg: No, that was an old mini-moog. I cut the keyboard off of it. I actually got the idea from Gary Wright - The Dreamweaver guy, over 20 years ago !

Kevin: On the David Gilmour live video (Hammersmith) - you did that solo with it there?

Greg: That was a different thing; that was a Roland SH 101.

Kevin: While in Heep - you guys did a whole album's worth of material which has never been heard. How would you describe the music to fans?

Greg: I'd describe it as being pretty soul-full. Heavy rock, but with a little more 'musicality' to it than old Uriah Heep stuff, that's not a good word! It might be a little lighter, a little swingier, and a little bit funkier. It wasn't just the simple, straight ahead heavy rock style that Uriah Heep had. Coming from John's point of view -there's more soul to it. It was played well, because everybody's professional and did a great job, but it could have used more development.

Kevin: Who was writing the songs at this time? Were you in on the writing?

Greg: I think Trevor and John had written a lot. I wrote 1 tune completely.

Kevin: What was it called ?

Greg: "I Never Want To Live Without Your love". It got recorded too.

Kevin: Would you like to see the stuff released in the future? Would it be possible?

Greg: I doubt very much they'll ever release it if Mick has anything to do with it. I wondered sometimes if Mick thought it was great stuff. It also was never even mixed; it's just sitting there in rough mixes, so there wasn't much thought put into it. Some of it's pretty neat, but again I don't think it'll ever be released if Mick and Trev have anything to

do with it at all, because I don't think truly believed in it!

Kevin: Can you run us through the circumstances and reasons as to how Heep fell apart?

Greg: I guess I'll never know why it fell apart. Again, I think there was a lot of things going on that I didn't know about! It didn't get a deal, and I don't think everyone believed in it. There was unrest and unhappiness from everybody in the band.

Kevin: Musically or personally ??

Greg: A little bit of everything. Musically, personally, and financially - plus Bronze records! There was enough wrong in every department that it just couldn't stay together!

Kevin: Did you expect Heep to be a long-term commitment? And were you disappointed when it ended so quickly?

Greg: I was disappointed in the sense that it was one of my first big projects to be involved in, and I thought "gee, is every project going to be like this?" (ha ha). But a part of me was glad it was over because of all the unrest from everybody.

Kevin: Were there sides to it at all? Like you and John, or Mick and Trev, or whomever ?

Greg: I don't really think so. John and I were very close. I enjoyed his company, and they all treated me with a lot of respect. I got along with Mick and Trevor; I lived with them all for a while.

Kevin: What are your best and worst memories of Heep?

Greg: The best is just playing with all those guys. Great musicians. A lot of laughs and good jokes! I don't really have any bad memories. My only bad memory is that it ended so quickly, and being confused - not being told everything. It just seemed like everyone was tired of it, and there wasn't really anything to say!

Kevin: What have you done since Uriah Heep? What major projects?

Greg: I had my band 'C-4, I also had another version of the Greg Dechert Band. I've been teaching and writing. I did some soundtracks for movies.

Kevin: Anything that's been released?

Greg: Yes, something called "Black Pearls" - a movie. I also work with 'Cajun Moon', and currently I'm working with a country artist called Sam Crosby.

Kevin: What did you do in the 80's?

Greg: I did a tour with David Gilmour - that also included Chris Slade. I also did a Bad Company album and tour ("Fame and Fortune"), and I toured with David Knopfler!

Interview by Kevin J. Julie.

NOTES:Greg shared a good number of stories with me (most of which he'd prefer not to be printed, for Mick's sake!). Anybody visiting the Southern Ontario region who'd like to see Greg, please give me a shout - he's usually playing somewhere on the weekends! If anyone out there has any mail or further questions for Greg - please send them to me and I will pass them to him. Re: Greg and Chris can be seen on the David Gilmour videos from "About Face" album (although Greg didn't play on it.), and you may want to check out the excellent "Live At Hammersmith" video. If anyone has any audios (or articles & photos) of Greg with Bad Co. and/or David Knopfler -please let me know, see my ad on page 32 for my address. KJJ.

CLASSIFIED AD'S

**You can place an ad free of charge,
just send it in and we'll do the rest.**

FOR SALE. 40 LP's and 35 singles by Heep and related bands. Please send SAE or IRC for list to:- Mark Owens, 8 Dryden Street, Bootle 20, Liverpool, L20 4RU, England.

ATTENTION. Egil Bokn, we met at Jelling festival, I'm interested in buying your photos, please contact me. I also want to buy the Dream on single. Henrik Kjellerup, Annavej 63, 7000 frefericia, Denmark.

FOR TRADE. Many Heep videos and Wishbone Ash with Trevor Bolder. Chiappa Giovanni, Via-Umbertoi No 23, 22070 Capiago, Como, Italy.

WANTED. Vinyl pressing of Sea Of Light (HTD LP 33) and CD single Dream on/Mr Majestic/Other side of midnight (HTD CD 104). Michael O'Connor, 7529N Maplewood Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60645 - 1520, USA.

WANTED. The silver disc of Wonderworld given as a prize in issue 4. If you won it and want to sell it please contact me. I also have for sale a Heep songbook from 1976. Alister Creevy, 25 Alston Gardens, Bearsden, Glasgow, G61 4R2, Scotland.

WANTED. The three songs offered by Mr Capurro in the last issue, please get in touch with me. David Amendolara, De Wijngaard 59, 3945 Ham, Limburg, Belgium.

WANTED. Anything conected with David Byron, eg. photos, videos, programmes, Byron band stuff. Also any Heep photos, videos, programmes magazine articles old and new. Please send lists with costs to Raymond T Trosley, 1813 E Rockhill Road, East Alton, Illinois 62024, USA.

WANTED. Uriah Heep LP "Downunda" (only released in New Zealand and Australia). National Head Band (feat L Kerslake) "Albert One". CD "Weed" (feat K Hensley). Terje Larsen, Bertestien 15, 2312 Ottestad, Nørway.

WANTED. Any Uriah Heep video, I'm also looking for related bands music. Also any UHAS members in the USA to write. Bob Woodward, 765 B Youngs Mill LA, Newport News, Virginia 23602, USA.

WANTED. National Head Band LP "Albert One" in good condition. Christopher Hoeglmuller, Anton Hackel Str 23, D-85221 Dachau, Germany.

ECHOES IN THE DARK. Free newsletter for Heep traders, collectors and fans. Please send 2 IRC's to:- Jesse Lowe, 5203 S. Harvard Apt G, Tulsa, OK 74135, USA.

FROM TIME TO TIME. Classic 70's rock fanzine with many Heep and Hensley features, please send IRC for details to:- Kevin Julie, 12 Sherbourne Street, St Catharines, Ontario, L2M 5P7, Canada.

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