

THE OFFICIAL

URIAH LEEP

APPRECIATION SOCIETY

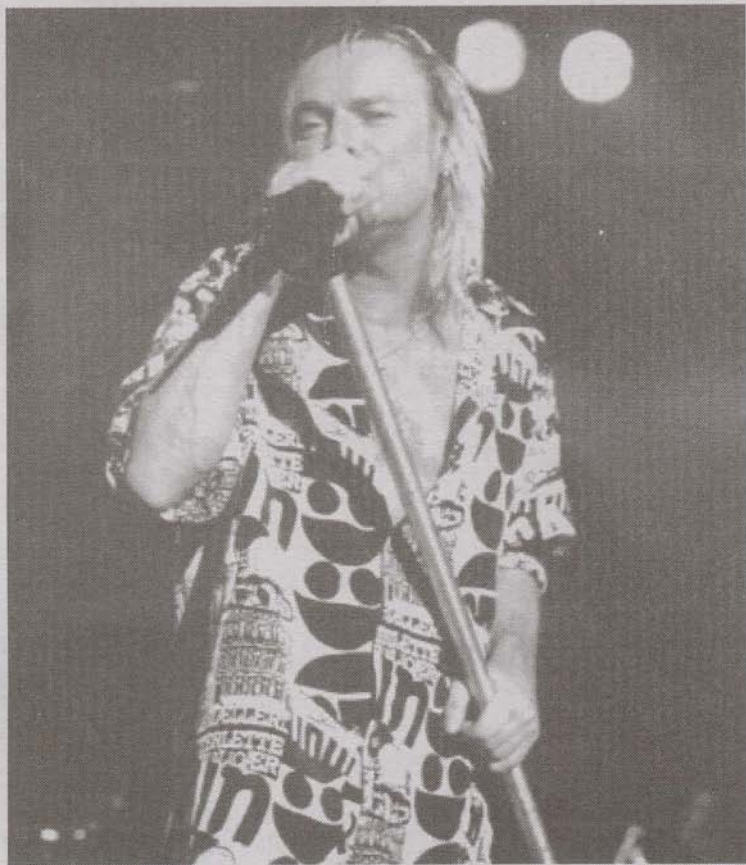


Photo by Isabella Seefriedt

ISSUE 28

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



Hi again and welcome to issue 28

The main news for this issue is the recording of the new studio album which we reported to be underway in the last issue. The recording sessions took place between 3/3/98 to 28/4/98, and 12/5/98 to 18/5/98 at Chipping Norton Studios UK. Mick tells us that the extra week was required to do some final mixes because the band were not prepared to rush anything and they wanted the best possible results. The music side of things was completed with the mastering work on 20/5/98. As you'll already know from the last issue Pip Williams was the producer and Mick would like to thank the band's agent Neil Warnock for suggesting Pip and making the phone call to secure his services. The band say that both Pip and the engineer Norman Goodman have been a joy to work with, it's been a good team all round and a fun album to make. In all 14 songs have been recorded but at the time of going to print the band are not sure if all 14 will be on the album as a couple may be held back for single releases etc. The title and artwork are still being worked on and although there are a number of ideas being discussed it is "Sonic Oragami" that is looking the favourite, however, nothing has yet been fully decided. The band are also talking with the record company about a release date and although a clear date has not yet been set, they are all unanimous that it will be a world wide release on the same day. It's possible that the release will not be until the end of August or September and although that seems a long way off, it will give everybody enough time to start putting together a good marketing and touring plan. The band are very happy and excited with the results of the recording sessions and a full review of the material is in this issue.

Amidst the excitement of all that's happening at the moment, I feel we must mention that Mick's wife Vavara has been taken ill and Mick has returned to Australia to be with her. We all wish her the very best for a full recovery and our thoughts are with them both and their family.

Mick informed us in the last issue that the band were looking for management in North America. Although they haven't yet signed off on the deal, they hope that they have secured management there with "Alliance Artists Limited USA" who flew over to visit the studio during the recording. Again the band wish to thank Neil Warnock of "The Agency Group UK" for this as his introduction made it happen. Now the band have an agent in North America - "The Agency Group USA" and the new management, they hope that the new album will once again make North America a viable market. Together with "Eagle Rock", the new management are looking for the right USA/Canadian label for the new album's release. They have firm ideas about where the band should be and are deep in discussion over this on a daily basis. "Alliance Artists USA" also manage "Lynnard Skynnard" and "Styx" amongst others and their touring company handles dates for "Fleetwood Mac", "Janet Jackson" and even "David Copperfield" the magician.

On the live front, the band did a couple of festivals between recording and mixing. They were:-

1/5/98 City Festival, Bonn, Germany 7/5/98 Bikers Festival, Venice, Italy

None of the new material was played at these shows.

there are a few dates coming up but some are not yet confirmed so please check local press for details:-

26/6/98 Frauenhain, Nr Leipzig, Germany 27/6/97 Juterborg, Nr Berlin, Germany 18/7/98 Zurich, Switzerland 24/7/98 Verona, Italy 25/7/98 Tula, Croatia 10/9/98 Czech Republic 11/9/98 Czech Republic 12/9/98 Czech Republic 13/9/98 Czech Republic

If you want further details as the dates are confirmed and as new dates come in, please send us a SAE (UK members) or a self addressed envelope and a international reply coupon (overseas members) and mark on the envelope which country you want the date for and we will do our best to get the information to you.

It's that time of year when I usually mention the football but something strange has happened, Manchester United have won nothing! However, well done to Chelsea for their great victory in the Cup winners cup and as much as it pains me to say it, well done to Arsenal on their double. Good luck to the Countries of all our members who are in the World Cup but you'd better watch out as the English have made it this time.

Our thanks once again go out to the following people for their help and support, Mick, Bernie, Trev, Phil and Lee. John Lawton, Tina Hartley, Ytaka Nakajima, Alister Blockley, David Amendolara, Antonio Bratos and Isabella Seefriedt.

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

Alan & David

June 1998

SONIC ORAGAMI

THE NEW ALBUM - REVIEWED

Track listing. Between two worlds, I hear voices, Perfect little heart, Heartless land, Only the young, In the moment, Question, Change, Feels like, Across the miles, Sweet pretender, Shelter from the rain, Everything in life, Golden palace.

Has it really been 3 years since "Sea Of Light"? Yes it has and although it was probably their best album since the classic era of "Demons And Wizards", it's release seems to have done little or nothing to advance the band's record sales. It had the quality to go all the way yet for one reason or another - seemingly the same old reasons - it didn't. What a shame that was but despite the album being something of a missed opportunity for the wider record buying public to sample Heep at their best, "Sea Of Light" is very special to the Heep faith full and as such the band had a big act to follow. It's obvious to all that "Sea Of Light" struck a huge chord with the Heep fans taking us right back to the classic Heep sound and it was with a little unease that I listened to Mick when I interviewed him in the last issue talking about not setting out to use the same formula this time, and wanting a commercial edge within the album. I know from what some of you have said that this approach set a few nerves tingling and stomachs churning. Come on though, Mick did

reassure us that it would be unmistakably Heep!

Although the re masters have been great with their bonus tracks giving us something old, yet new, it is new material that's the most important aspect of Uriah Heep in the 90's and beyond so this is really what we've all been waiting for since 1995. Fourteen tracks have been recorded and all are reviewed here, however, it's likely that not all fourteen will end up on the actual album but those one or two that don't may possibly turn up as part of a single release. The running order listed here is the order that was adopted at the mastering stage, this may also be subject to change, as indeed may some of the titles. The writing is again split between Mick and Phil working together and Trevor, with one track written from outside the band. The material is a mixture of Heep style rock, with some acoustic based tracks and ballads, a bluesy number and several pop/rock songs.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 6.28 mins*). From it's quiet introduction which features the Hammond, this develops in to a very powerful rock track which gets the album off to a very positive start that will blow your ears wide open. The band are in full flight with power chords over the Hammond all backed up with a thudding bass line and powerful drumming. Bernie's performance is outstanding and as the track moves into a haunting and melodic section, just listen to him carry the song back to full power with an incredibly high note! This track is spot on for me, the backing vocals are great and there's some incredible soloing from Mick. If you liked the way "Against the odds" kicked off "Sea of Light" you'll love this one too, it's even better, right from it's first note to it's powerful ending. I think it's set to be a classic!

I HEAR VOICES. (*T Bolder, 3.55 mins*). You've hardly got time to gather your thoughts after "Between two worlds" and we're straight in to the next track. It's quite a powerful track in a catchy sort of way. It's got a beat that get's your feet moving from the start and the chunky riff type guitar on the verse is followed by powerful chords over the Hammond on the middle section and in to the chorus. There's an unusual vocal effect used on parts of the track which Bernie tells us more about in his interview in this issue. Some screaming guitar work and a great drum sound really compliment each other and there's a another high impact ending. An instantly likable song.

PERFECT LITTLE HEART. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 5.17*). A modern vocal intro and an almost "John Cougar" sounding rhythm gets this mid tempo song off to an impressive start and it all works very well with the keyboard parts. This is a commercial sounding song with some nice backing vocals much in evidence well as plenty of oohs and aahs. The drumming really drives the track along and the fresh arrangement works in such a way with the vocals that would make a live audience get right out of their seats and join in with the lads.

HEARTLESS LAND. (*M Box/P Lanzon/M Lanzon, 4.44 mins*). An acoustic guitar and voice intro with Bernie also on the tambourine. As the drums, bass and Hammond come in the track develops a very full sound and it's very easy to imagine this on the radio or on TV with a video, in which I for some reason see the band in a open top car, driving through the desert with the wind in their hair, singing away. Perhaps I'm thinking that if Jon "Bon Jovi" did this track that's how it may be done, and it would definitely be a big hit. The multi part vocals are interspersed with Heep style oohs and aahs and it all works well together as a fine acoustic rock ballad. The track was actually around at the time of "Sea of Light" and Phil's son Matt is the other person involved in the writing. It's a great track and I'm pleased it's made it on this album.

ONLY THE YOUNG. (*T Bolder, 4.43 mins*). This track sees another outstanding vocal performance from Bernie. It has a pulsating rhythm on the verse which gives way to a heavier chorus with a great Hammond sound. It's a pop/rock track that has an instant hook

and a Heepy feel. There's some good interplay between guitar and Hammond before the track fades. An excellent track that gets better the more you hear it.

IN THE MOMENT. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 6.23 mins*). A straight forward mid tempo rock song that is largely guitar driven and has something of an anthem feel to the chorus. Mick's climbing guitar break again features some great interplay with the Hammond. The number has a crisp and direct sound and there's a terrific wah wah guitar solo at the end.

QUESTION. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 5.26 mins*). Excellent acoustic guitar work starts this track off and it's joined by Bernie's wonderful and expressive voice. This beautiful song has no drums but the strings and occasional piano - along with the bass - make it very emotive in a "Dream on" sort of a way. The multi voice sound on the chorus adds to the intensity and there's a refrain from the keyboard that comes in after the chorus and also forms the backing for the end section. A modern Heep style ballad that's up there with the best of them. As the track fades out the start of the next track comes in over the top linking the two together.

CHANGE. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 6.03 mins*). This one moves fast from the start and although it's not hard and heavy, it is lush and full in sound. The backing vocals work very well behind Bernie and these are particularly evident, and are well used as an alternative to an instrument solo during the break in the song where you might expect a guitar or keyboard to come to the fore. The end section features the reoccurring keyboard refrain from "Question" and multi voices follow the same melody that forms the end section of the last track but with different lyrics this time round.

FEELS LIKE. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 4.35 mins*). A slow drum beat and wailing guitar notes give way to a riff that's overlaid by some screaming wah wah guitar work. It's another straight forward mid tempo rock track that has something of a commercial feel. It's uncomplicated and fairly short and although it's commercial sound may make it suitable for radio, I don't feel it's the strongest track that falls into that category from the album.

ACROSS THE MILES. (*J Petrick/F Sullivan, 5.13 mins*). This is written by two songwriters from Nashville and Bernie tells us how it came to be used in his interview in this issue. There's no doubt that it's a very radio friendly track and you can easily imagine that after it had been a world wide hit, a super group on a tour of packed stadiums would belt it out night after night to an audience holding aloft thousands of candles. It's a rock ballad with a very smooth and sophisticated sound and I don't think there's any doubt that with the right backing, it could be a world wide hit. It's not typical Heep to me, in fact, if I heard it on the radio and I didn't know who it was, I'd guess at "Mike and the Mechanics".

SWEET PRETENDER. (*T Bolder, 4.43 mins*). The quiet keyboard intro develops into a real Heepy track that bounces along and has an easy to sing with chorus. It's powerful through out and catchy, and although there's a definite Heep sound to it, there's also a little bit of a "Rainbow" feel in the way it swings along. There's masses of Wah wah, swirling Hammond and solid drums and bass to back it all up. Another track that will work very well live.

SHELTER FROM THE RAIN. (*T Bolder, 6.07 mins*). With it's emotive guitar intro over picked bass notes, this classy, polished sounding blues number washes over you like a warm breeze and swirls around you senses as it unfolds. Just listen to Mick's guitar playing on Pip's 1958 Fender. The whole track has a rich feel to it and "Gary Moore" would be proud to call it one of his. This really shows Trevor's ability to come up with a wide range of material and the band's talent in developing the basic ideas. I'm not a big fan of bluesy type stuff but this does show another side to the 90's Heep.

EVERYTHING IN LIFE. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 3.17 mins*). This is a re vamped version of the song which is the last of the 5 tracks recorded in 1992 to see a release. It also featured in the band's live set for a while in 1993 so some of you may know it already. It's up beat shuffle rhythm is Heep to a tee and all the well loved elements of the band are in there from the drum roll intro to the "Seven stars" like rhythm with it's pounding bass line and swirling Hammond, the whole band play a blinder. It's as traditional Heep in it's sound as any on the album and I'm sure it will become a live favourite once again.

GOLDEN PALACE. (*M Box/P Lanzon, 8.34 mins*). Orchestral strings open the track in a very Russian and almost foreboding way, the acoustic guitar is supported by electric guitar chords who's sound is brought in with the wah wah or volume pedal - I think. It's a slow but epic track inspired by the band's visit to Russia last year. Bernie puts in another expressive and emotive vocal performance and there's some excellent backing vocals from the rest band. The song develops and builds with a nice mix of instrumental backing and breaks. It's a rich and emotional song, without drums in parts, but with some great orchestral sections. It's conclusion features the same string arrangement as the opening bars.

Over all, "Sonic Origami" has a slightly lighter and more commercial feel to it than "Sea of Light", but Mick did indicate this would be the case in the last issue. On first listen through Bernie's sound system of Marantz CD deck, Cambridge audio amp and Ruark speakers the quality of the playing was really evident and the sound was fresh, bright and clear, and very well produced. The album grows on you the more you listen to it, there is different direction here and it does seem to be more towards radio friendly tracks, but that said, "Between two worlds" is as heavy as anything that's gone before, and "Question", "Change" and "Everything in life" are typical of the classic Heep sound. Whilst some of the other tracks are commercial sounding, many are done in a Heepy way and there's nothing that goes down the "Free me" route. I can't imagine anybody listening to this album without tapping their feet to the music. There should be enough of a mixture of material and styles to please both the die hard Heep fans and the potential new fans that the band hope to reach with "Sonic Origami". It's an excellent album and shows Heep to be progressing in the late 90's and heading towards the millenium with a positive attitude and high quality music that will hopefully reach out to a wider audience than "Sea of Light" may possibly have appealed to.

Alan Hartley.

QUIZ TIME

Win a copy of "SONIC ORIGAMI" signed by all the band. All you have to do is answer the following questions:-

- 1) Where was the album recorded?
- 2) Who produced the album?
- 3) Which track from the album featured in the band's live set 5 years ago?

Please enclose a 1st class stamp (UK members) or international reply coupon (overseas members) with your entry. The prize will be sent to the winner as soon as it is available but as the release is expected to be around September, this may not be before the next issue. Good luck.

BERNIE SHAW - SONIC ORIGAMI

An exclusive interview

UHAS: The first thing to ask is how you feel "Sonic Origami" stands up as a follow up to "Sea of Light"?

Bernie: The more I listen to it, the more I think it's stronger than "Sea of Light". I think we've progressed song writing wise, I think we've definitely progressed production wise - "Sea of Light" is a great album, it's recorded well, it's mixed well, there is a certain style of block harmony that is very typical of Heep that we used - but we've progressed a little bit beyond that so instead of just three and four part harmonies blocked up, we've doubled lines and put a lot more oohs and ahhs in. There's more finesse to the vocals, we've used combinations of twos and threes, not just all five singing in a block as we did last time, it was a very strong trade mark but I think this has got a little bit more atmosphere and mood.

UHAS: It seems to me that the album has a more smooth and sophisticated sound to it than "Sea of Light", would you agree?

Bernie: Yeah, I think that's down to Pip Williams, Pip is a world class producer and for all the 12 years I've been in the band we've never used anybody quite like Pip before. We touched on it with Richard Dodd when we did "Raging Silence". Ashley Howe was also involved at first with "Raging Silence" but it ended up being just Richard. Richard has gone on to be one of the top producers around the UK now, if you open up studio magazines there's photos of Richard next to tape machines saying: "I'm Richard Dodd and I use this sort of tape", the boy is hot stuff now. Pip has done work with everybody from "The Spice Girls", to "Kiki Dee", "The Moody Blues", "Status Quo", "Barbara Dickson", unbelievable amounts of different people, he's a true producer, he doesn't just focus on one style of music. He's an arranger, he does string arrangements, he's got perfect pitch so he knows exactly what's in and what's not in key. Especially with me, I'd be saying: "It sounds good to me Pip", but he'd bring me in the control room to listen to the take and he'd be right, what I'd be hearing in my mix in the head phones would not be quite the same as what's going on the tape. That guy has so much expertise and his pedigree is as long as you arm and it really shows up in the music.

UHAS: Was it a very different way of working from a production point of view than when you did "Sea of Light" with Kalle Trapp?

Bernie: He had more of a hands on approach, Kalle was doing a lot of the engineering as well as being in the producer's seat. This time we had Norman Goodman turning all the knobs and Pip was just next to him, listening and saying: "That's alright, that's in tune, that's the way I want to go". We used a recording system called "Radar", it's a computer and you're not using up lots of tape, it's information on a chip so he could take five really good takes, listen to them all and take bits from each. There's only a few studios in the country that have this system but it's definitely the way to go, it saves so much time, there's no waiting for tapes to re wind, you get direct access to the part of the track you want to go to and you save hours of time just on tape rewinding.

UHAS: Is that one of the reasons you choose this particular studio?

Bernie: That was one of the main reasons and it's got one of the best control rooms in the UK. Pip had used it a lot before and wanted to use it again with this particular engineer that was there. Unfortunately the engineer ended up not working there so we brought

Norman in who I used to work with in the "Praying Mantis" days, and they were a very good working team.

UHAS: So it was Pip who steered you towards that studio rather than the band wanting to go there?

Bernie: It was definitely Pip's idea but we wanted to record in the UK if possible.

UHAS: What was the working relationship like between the band, Pip Williams and Norman Goodman?

Bernie: Great! Within a very short time of working together we were all thinking. They were both part of the family and within days we all were thinking: How can we not work together again? There was a serious bonding between us all. It's not just that we wanted him to fit in with us, we wanted to fit in with him, it was a very good partnership and I think that we will, if at all possible, work together again. It was hard work, it's probably one of the hardest albums I've done, but Pip comes up with phrases and jokes about everything and he said "If it was easy, everybody would be doing it". He also had sayings or phrases to identify parts of songs such as certain drum fills, for example, the last drum fill on "Only the young" he described as: "F*****g about on the drums, f*****g about on the drum kit". And that's exactly how the fill runs. Another was: "All of a sudden a f*****g great oven". One of the guitar lines he identified by saying: "Always be kind to a kitten". Or such as the shuffle rhythm on "Everything in life", he called that: "Donkey diddley". The songs were never referred to by their title, it was always something from within the track, wether its a bass line or a vocal line or whatever, he'd have a name for it and when he said the phrase it was spot on. I guess you had to be there to really appreciate how it was but it kept a good working atmosphere all the time. For the hours we were putting in you needed that light heartedness.

UHAS: You didn't write any of the songs, what role if any did you have in developing or shaping them into what is actually on the album?

Bernie: I didn't write any of them but when it comes to arrangements we all have ideas on how the construction of the song should be and looking for any waffle that can be taken out, I can be quite brutal when it comes to cutting out fluff and I think my forte is my contribution to getting a nice clean arrangement rather than coming up with original ideas. Also the vocal approach and voice sounds, I think this album more than any other - even "Sea of Light" - sounds like me, in the past I've take on characteristics which have not necessarily been my idea. I like to be me, I don't like to impersonate people, I did enough of that in Canada when I sang in the covers bands. One of the best compliments I've had was when some friends of mine who heard the album the other day said: "From the first second we knew it was you it sounds like you". I went: "Thank you". That's what I wanted this album to sound like. The mix that Pip has gone for is very much up front vocals which aren't swamped. Even the backing vocals are up front. "Sea of Light" was pretty good on that front, "Raging Silence" lacked a little bit, the vocals could have been a little more pronounced and "Different World" wasn't my cup of tea mix wise at the end of the day. We had more of a hands on role in the mixing, Pip and Norman would do it but then we could make our comments and they'd take them on board. We didn't just concentrate on our own parts, I made more comments about guitar sounds that I did vocals which I think is a more objective way to look at it. With "Sea of Light" we all listened for our own bits and it was a little counter productive. I think it was Mick's idea that we all listened to each others parts to get more constrictive opinions. I was very happy with the final mixes, they took their time to achieve but they are quite complex, each song is an average of five or six minutes and you can't put that many vocals and sounds on a six minute song and make it all sound

right in two hours.

UHAS: Were you there from the start of the recording or did you go in once some basic tracks had been put down?

Bernie: I was there from the very first to the very last minute, Mick and I were the only two that didn't have a break, everybody else managed a day or weekend off but Mick and I were there for the entire time.

UHAS: How would a track be recorded, what's the process you go through?

Bernie: We had a very short time for recording the album, I don't know anybody else who could record 14 tracks and mix them in two and a half months. The most important thing and the most time saving thing was that we booked three weeks in the rehearsal studio before we started recording. The ideas were in the form of guitar, drum machine and keyboard demo and a vocal line that I'd already learnt. In the rehearsal studio we developed everything up and got Pip in during the last week to get his influence on it all. So a lot of the work that would normally be done in the recording studio was already done and it saved us a lot of time. WE went right into the studio and the first day we spent setting up, then we started recording on the second day. The first thing was to get a good basic rhythm track down of bass, drums, guitar and Hammond. That way we had less overdubs but it was harder to do as there were more instruments playing at once. There's more margin for error that way but that didn't happen because we'd spent the three weeks rehearsing. Within about 14 days I think we'd done all the basic bed tracks with a rough guide vocal then we had to put all the other parts on, the solos, the lead vocals etc.

UHAS: Some of the songs are quite complex in that they contain a number of different instrument sounds, there seems to be more of a wide or full sound to it that "Sea of Light", how did that develop?

Bernie: We didn't intend it to be that way at first but Phil and Pip both had a lot of ideas to put different strings sounds on, then there were even harps and penny whistles and we spent hours going through banks of real sounds on disc that can be played through the keyboard. We weren't able to do that in the rehearsals because the songs hadn't been developed that far then. But it got to the point of when to say enough because it all started sounding so good, but we didn't want to overkill it.

UHAS: How difficult do you think it will be to reproduce live?

Bernie: Very difficult, I think we've set ourselves a very high standard but Phil will be able to reproduce what we've recorded so it should be a very good live representation. There are a lot of different guitar sounds but not necessarily a lot of guitars so Mick won't have too much of a problem. The only thing you always loose is when there's no rhythm guitar behind the lead solo, but everyone has that problem live unless there are two guitar players.

UHAS: As we've just discussed, the album's got quite a big, full, even polished sound, do you think that's representative of what Uriah Heep are all about?

Bernie: Oh yeah, even back in the old days they were still putting a lot down and we've just evolved that. For their day back in the early 70's they it was inventive but it's 1989 now and things change. But we've got five people who are trying to keep that ideal of good melodic rock happening, and that's what I think we've achieved, good melodic rock. Not a lot of bands are playing stuff like that, it's either gone completely sparse or to the other extreme with over the top "Asia", "Yes" and "Pink Floyd" type of arrangements. We're not into that category but we're on the melodic side of it and still with lots of harmonies and

really nicely constructed backing vocals. When Phil would pick out on the piano our individual harmony parts, we were thinking : what's that!, but when they were all combined together they sounded great, one part on it's own sounded very odd but the combination of all the parts really worked. Phil has a very good ear for constructing harmonies and even Pip would question him about wether it would work, but sure enough Phil would be right. Pip could sit there with music manuscript paper and script the songs out as we played them, that's how good his ear is, but Phil had him wondering about some of the harmonies. It is more complex than the last album and I thought that was good for it's time, it still is, I still like to listen to it but this new one just blows me away. WE all agree that if the record company works half as hard and half as diligently as we have, then we'll have a good product.

UHAS: What has been the record companies reaction to the album?

Bernie: They're absolutely knocked out. They had a meeting with Mick, Pip and the guy who's looking after us in America, during the first week of mixing and they heard the four tracks that Trevor had written. Half way through the first song the record company guy stopped the tape machine and got the whole of the A & R department in to his office to listen to it. They couldn't believe we had 14 tracks of this standard in two months. Even Terry Shand who is the chairman of "Eagle Records" came in had he was just knocked out by what he was hearing, they can't wait to get hold of it. If they had their way it would be out in July, we're holding the rains on them because we feel that's too early, we don't want to be lost in the shuffle of all the big bands who are doing their big tours during the big summer rush. We're hoping for a September release so if we stick to our guns and let them have plenty of time to get everything right, artwork wise and promotion wise, there's more of a chance that it will all be done properly. Unlike "Sea of Light" which never got to breath. The Germany company was a new company and the guy had never done it before. "Eagle Rock" is new but the guy's come in right from "Castle Communications" where he was the managing director. He knows what he's doing and not only are they a record company, they're also a video company and they've got some heavy weight names, "The Stones", Michael Bolton, Tina Turner, hopefully the record company will be as strong.

UHAS: The band seem very happy with the new record company and their initial good intentions for the band. But that has been the case in the past where the story has been: The last record company let us down but the new one will do the business. For one reason or another things didn't happen as we may have all liked, how confident are you that everything will work the way you hope this time?

Bernie: You can't be too pessimistic about it, what you say is true about the past but you've got to have faith in the people or there's no point in carrying on. Everybody will promise you the world but there's so many different factors that can go wrong. Even from the off, you could sign for a million pound but if they sign you as just a tax write off they're not going to work your product. You've got to make sure that you're signing with a company that wants you and wants to sell records. Rainer Hansel started "CBH Records" because he wanted to expand from the live promotion side of the industry. I think he bit off a little bit more than he could chew. I know that there's only a couple of bands on his label now and they want to get off. He's not doing anything, he doesn't know what it means to be a record company. He's a great promoter and we thought that would carry through into his record company but it didn't. "Eagle Rock" is a record company, Terry Shand ran "Castle Communications", he knew from their books who was selling and who wasn't from their back catalogues and Heep were their biggest selling band. When he formed the new company he wanted us, "Castle" sell millions of records and now Terry wants a part of that for the future, he knows we can sell old records but he also knows that we can sell new

records. He has a great track record in the industry and all the people who are in the company are all old school people. John Knowles who's in charge of the A and R department is very well known in the industry from as far back as the 70's. All the names that you come across in the entire set up are all proven names within the business. They all have the right pedigree and there's no reason why this horse shouldn't run but at the end of the day it's all up in the air and there's no guarantee but they are all very excited about "Sonic Origami" which is great.

UHAS: "Sonic Origami" is quite a striking title for the album, where did that come from?

Bernie: Yeah, it's a neat title, I think I was the one that pushed for it most because it was just so over the top but it just rolls off the tongue and it's very modern. As we were recording we had a big sheet of paper stuck on the wall and if anybody had a saying or word or a line out of a song that they liked, we'd write it down. We had about 40 working titles but a lot of this title came from Pip. When he had a bunch of good takes of a track and he wanted to put parts of each together to see how it worked, he'd say: "We've got all the takes, now let me do a little bit of sonic architecture". That was his phrase for taking an intro from one take and putting it with a verse of another and maybe a chorus of another. We thought the phrase was kind of neat and I'm not sure how origami got thrown into it but someone said it, it got written down on the board and the more we looked at it the more we liked it. As you know origami is the folding of paper into shapes but as a band we fold sound into songs, we're making shapes from music rather than shapes from paper so it just fell together. It's a little bit away from the norm for Uriah Heep but it's bang up to date, I could see that one of these bands on "Top of the pops" would have an album called "Sonic Origami", so why can't we? Visually it should influence someone with a good imagination to come up with a great album cover.

UHAS: How is the artwork coming along for the cover?

Bernie: Outside the record company art department who are dealing with all the text and the booklet, we've got 4 independent artists working on ideas for the actual cover artwork. We've got a little bit of time which is nice because you can't rush an artist, it takes as long as it takes but we do need a strong visual impact with the album.

UHAS: On one of the tracks, "I hear voices", there's an unusual sound to the vocals, how did you achieve that?

Bernie: We recorded it normally but when it came to the mix they wanted to give the vocals a particular effect, but not necessarily a mechanical one. It was either Pip or Norman who came up with the idea to re feed the vocal back through a little speaker to get a transistor radio type of effect. I think it suits the song and it's very novel.

UHAS: "Across the miles" isn't written from within the band, how did you come to use that song?

Bernie: We've always looked around for songs just to see if there are any songs out there that we could do a good version of. For example, we did a good version of "Hold your head up" and "When the war is over" on "Raging Silence". We weren't purposely looking for an outside song to do, but if there was a good one out there why not do it. It was just a case of putting some feelers out through publishing companies, agents and managers. Mick even approached Russ Ballard because of the work he'd done on "Abominog". He sent us some songs, we had some from Switzerland, Germany, everywhere. Pip and Mick waded through the stuff and came up with a short list that would suit the band. We were looking for a good radio friendly single and out of the 250 or so songs that were submitted, I think three were what we were looking for and from those, "Across the miles" was the one that

everybody went for. We changed the key and we changed the arrangement pretty drastically but I think the writers will be happy with it.

UHAS: Mick mentioned in the last issue that the band were looking for a commercial side to a portion of the album to give the band some radio friendly songs, which other songs do you feel are in that category besides "Across the miles"?

Bernie: I think "Perfect little heart" is a good radio song, it touches "J Giles band" nerves in me, "Only the young" has a very strong chorus and it's not that long. "Feels like" is a very strong song and very commercial in it's way. I like "Shelter from the rain" but I'm not sure if it's radio friendly but it may have a chance. "Heartless land" in it's openness and it's acoustic approach is very radio friendly, I can hear that on German radio and "In the moment" I can hear on German radio. I think there's a good cross section of songs that would be radio friendly in the UK, over in Europe and in America. The only thing we've done consciously is when we've done the mix we've made sure that the vocals can be heard, that's the number one priority in America, they want to hear the lyrics. That's not always the case in the UK and Europe where it almost give me a good beat first and push the hook. Out of the 14 tracks there are at least six that are radio friendly.

UHAS: What made you decide to resurrect "Everything in life" after six years since you first recorded it as a demo?

Bernie: It never really had a chance before and I'm glad we didn't loose it, it's a good "Donkey diddley donkey diddley" song and the new recording is even better than the original, it's a very up song and it's now got a bit more life and a bit more bop to it. I'd completely forgot about the song and it was only the last couple of days in the rehearsal studio when Mick said: "What about this"? It took us ten minutes to throw it together again and Pip really liked it. It gives the album that extra up tempo track because the album's tempo is almost medium to slow where "Sea of Light" had a few more short sharp tracks to it.

UHAS: Will some of the "Sonic Oragami" material make up part of the live set before the album is released?

Bernie: We haven't discussed that, personally I hope not, I would like to come out with a whole new show on it's release because it's a strong album and I don't think we should little snippets before hand. It was fun doing "Words in the distance" for quite a while before it was released, but I'd like to come out and just hit everybody with the new stuff. The next tour will be a promotional tour, not just another tour for the hell of it, it will have a definite purpose and that will be to promote "Sonic Origami". In the past we've been known to play four or five tracks from a new album and the rest of the set is old hits, that's one of the stigmas of having the history that Heep have and it's going to be very difficult to put a new live set together, but as Pip says: "If it was easy, everybody would be doing it"!

Interview by Alan Hartley and David Owen.



SET SALE OF HEEP CD's

Over 40 Heep CD's are for sale in one lot (they will not be split and sold individually). There is most of the albums and compilations from around the world. For the full list please send a SAE (Uk members) or international reply coupon (overseas members) to the UHAS address.

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 SAE (UK members) or an International Reply Coupon available from any post office (overseas Members). Hope we hear from you soon.

Dear UHAS. I really enjoy receiving the mag, the last 2 years or so have been a real bonus catching up with the band and their music. It's been interesting reading all the different views that you've presented in the pages of the mag. Like you I have to admit that I feel some people are being a bit hard on Phil and Bernie. After a 15 year absence from listening to Heep music it was a real thrill to hear in 1996 that they were still going and making music. My family will tell you that since I bought "Sea of Light" it's hardly been out of the CD player or the cassette machine.

I saw the band often between 1970 - 75 and they were the best thing going at the time and very underestimated in the press. I have to say that the present line up is still the best thing going at the moment, the quality of the composing and musicianship is second to none. It was great to see the band in London last year, the best value for money night me and Pete Monks (also a UHAS member) have had in years. David Byron was a great front man and a real character, no doubt about it, and so is Bernie. The first thing that caught my attention when I bought "Sea of Light" was Bernie's voice. What a tool and what a craftsman!

Ken wrote and still writes tremendous songs, and so does Phil, and I have to say that continual comparisons between past and present members misses out on the privilege that we as Heep fans have had down the years with our band. Lots of people have come and gone, where as we not only have memories but a present and one hopes a great future of gigs and music to look forward to thanks to Mick and the lads past and present.

One final point. During the 70's getting access to the band was nigh on impossible. I know because me and my mates used to wait at the back of concert halls for hours. The same cannot be said of the present line up. As I've already said, I had a break from the band for about 15 years but when me and Pete met up with the band before the London gig it was like meeting old friends. I wish you could have seen my 18 year old son's face after meeting Trevor - he's a "Spiders" fan - and hear him comment about how good it was to see Bernie mixing with the fans in the venue before the gig. He can't get within a mile of his heroes. So let's be thankful for what we have and enjoy it while we can. **Paul Inglis, England.**

UHAS reply:- *Some good points raised here which echo my feelings. Heep are alive and kicking in the present day with a great new album under their belts and new deals round the world. It gives us all great optimism for the future, they are a band of today with new products and aims for the future, they're not standing still and living on past glories like so many of their contemporaries from the 70's era who seem content to churn out the same old thing with nothing new to offer.*

As for the members, you all know that I think Bernie and Phil are exactly right for the band but still we do get people going on about the past and how it was this or that and wishing it could all come back. I look at it this way. Manchester United were great in the past and at the time I never thought there would be anyone to replace the like of George Best, Denis Law and Bobby Charlton, but over the last 30 years they've been replaced and I believe that Eric Cantona, Mark Hughes and Ryan Giggs have been just as good and are just as deserving of their place in United's history, as have all the players in between. Heep have

also had many players in between time and all have played their part and deserved their glory. That said, I'm more than happy for Heep to see their days out with the present line up because lets be honest, what more could any of us possibly want from the band?

Dear UHAS. I write this letter in the hope that some other Heep fans can help me out. My story starts about 13 years ago when I met a Heep fan called Mark. After a short time we decided to live together, on sorting through our belongings I came across a bag of Mark's Heep tour shirts, most of them were well worn and faded. I'm afraid I thought he didn't want them so I, er .. threw some away, and .. even worst, used some as dusters! Mark spent months looking for his life time collection of tops, you can imagine his face when he came across a ripped duster baring the words "Abominog 81". He has never forgiven me for my sin even though we've been married for years. I must admit I do still feel awful about this so if there are any Heep fans out there with any spare Heep tour shirts please contact me. Here's hoping! **Angela Smith Engalnd.**

UHAS reply:- *If you can help out the address is:- 13, Coleridge Drive, Sherbourne Park, Stakeford, Northumberland, NE22 5HD, England.*

Dear UHAS. Is there any chance of starting a pic sleeve single trade list from Heep fans around the world to arrive with the mag? **Stuart Bentley, England.**

UHAS reply:- *Pic sleeve singles want's and sales can be advertised in any issue by any member who wants to be involved. In fact all aspects of wants, sales, trades and penfriends etc can be placed in the classified ad's section free of charge.*

Dear UHAS. I just can't understand some people's way of thinking when it comes to Uriah Heep. I am talking about Antonio Ruiz Gosalvez. I can understand he doesn't like "Raging Silence", neither do I, but it is a far better album than "Equator". But that's not my point, here's what I'm getting at. Int the 70's, when Byron was sacked and replaced by John Lawton, Heep's popularity sunk drastically, not so much because of John Lawton, but because of albums like "Innocent Victim" and "Fallen Angel". Both were great albums but had absolutely nothing to do with what Uriah Heep was all about, and because they were so different, Uriah Heep lost a lot of fans. So please explain this to me Senor Gosalvez, how will bringing John Lawton back change things for Uriah Heep. He's a good and powerful singer, but so is Bernie Shaw. I know that everybody has their own favourite singer and I really like Bernie. I think the only (living) singer who could replace him at this point would be Dougie White, and do you know why I think that? Because I really liked his vocal input on the 1995 "Rainbow" album "Stranger in us all", and no other reason. Favouritism, that's what it's all about.

And as for Bernie not being a powerful singer? Come on men, have you no ears? His vocal input on songs like "July Morning" is more than powerful enough, and does it really count for nothing that he's been in the band for 11 years? Don't you think that Mick Box and the others know what they're doing when they auditioning for a new singer? Sure, they picked Steff Fontaine" over Bernie, but that's probably because Steff sounded more like Pete Goalby than Bernie does.

A Uriah Heep tribute album sounds like a good idea but I believe it's a record companies choice to do one rather than a fan club's. Here's the 12 songs I'd like to have on the album and the artist I this should perform them.

Pantera - Free n easy. Dream Theatre - Universal wheels. Guano Apes - Blind eye. Bruce Dickenson - Think it over. Gunhill or Lucifer's Friend - The dance. Pantera - Suicidal man. Dougie White - Against the odds. Gamma Ray - So tired. Dream Theater - Pilgrim. The Corrs - The park. Dream Theater - Logical progression. Guano Apes - The park.

"Guano Apes" are popular in Germany at the moment, "Dream Theater" all over Europe so that's the reason for these groups to be put on, another is that their style fits the songs, but overall they're my favourite bands apart from Heep. **David Amendolara, Belgium.**

UHAS reply:- I agree, as you knew I would, that Bernie is the right singer for Heep, I'd go further than that and say that he is the best singer and front man for the band over any other, living or dead! Given the choice of any at all, I'd stick with Bernie. Reading how each members opinion's differ is interesting, however Dougie White?? You may not know but there's already a connection between Heep and old Dougie. When Heep played in the UK promoting "Raging Silence" (and when they played the London Astoria when the "Raging through the silence" video was recorded), they were supported by a band called "Midnight Blue" who were fronted by Dougie White. He was a good singer and frontman and I thought "Midnight Blue" were ok, however I think he became Blackmore's puppet and I personally couldn't imagine him in Heep.

Although I didn't agree with Antonio's points raised in his letter in the last issue, I did think his comments about a tribute album were good and as such I asked for suggestions from the members as to what songs should be included and who should perform them - just for a bit of fun really. I'm sorry to say that this is the only one we've had in although this hypothetical project is mentioned in another letter later on. One the same point, Mark Simnett also made a suggestion in the last issue that members could contribute towards a theme section of the mag, and suggested a "tribute to David Byron" as the first theme. Well, I'm sorry to say that we also had not one single response on that!

Dear UHAS. Well, I've been a member of UHAS for a year now and I think it's been a good one, at least musically. The re masters have been a pleasure to listen to and the sleeves a pleasure to read. I've read the magazine pretty intently each time it's arrived and I'm stunned at how diverse a change of personnel can be, even after ten years! Being in the Deep Purple Appreciation Society, I guess it's something I'm used to hearing. My first Heep experience was hearing a friend's tape of "Innocent Victim". It blew me away then, and still blows me away now. For all of us there's one record that always takes you back to a particular moment in your life, and that's mine. I can understand all the opinions that float around, but I can honestly say, there isn't a single Uriah Heep album that I don't like. Each of them in some way does exactly what music is supposed to do; bring you up, pull you down, remember and regret, and make you feel good. Heep have never failed to do this. I love Bernie's voice, it's quite remarkable, and he's backed up by something so rare nowadays; absolute tallant. **Christopher Bradbury, England.**

UHAS reply:- Sounds like we both agree that the Heep of today are the business, but I can't honestly go along with your comments about "Innocent Victim" as it didn't blow me away.

Dear UHAS. Hi from Paris, I'd like to give you some opinions about the interview with Mick and Trevor in the last issue. I have absolutely no doubt in the band's ability in writing good quality commercial songs. After all, "Abominog" was a pure collection of potential hit singles, "Head First" and "Equator" were in the same mould with songs like "Lonely nights", "Poor little rich girl", "Rockerama" etc. As for the current line up, I should mention "Blood red roses", "When the war is over" and "Dream on". So I think the problem is elsewhere, it certainly lays in the lack of promotion, PR, money, etc, that a record company must put behind a band like Heep. The best example for me is "Dream on", what a waste of tallant! If this song had been recorded by "Def Leppard" or "Bryan Adams" it would have been a world wide hit - even without the drums! Those artists all have a record company who know how to promote a good song and doesn't hesitate to spend money in the right place. It has never been the case with Heep, with the exception

of the Bron organisation many years ago. I perfectly understand the bands disappointment (a special thought for Trevor because they did nothing for your song) but writing excellent songs has never been a key to success. Sad but true.

The question of the tribute album must be considered in the same terms. If such a project could surface, it would give opportunity to all those big names who claim their respect for Heep to prove their faith. - Ozzy, Purple, Scorpions, Bryan Adams, Joe Elliot of Def Leppard, Van Halen, Glen Hughes, John Wetton etc). This project would only be successful from a commercial point of view if a well established and well respected artist could coordinate it. The perfect man for this would be Roger Glover, he's a good musician and producer and would perfectly understand the meaning of the project - and I guess he knows everybody in the rock music business. **Bertrand Athouel, France.**

***UHAS reply:-** It quite true what you say about the record company side of things and I think a lot of people have forgot how much media hype Bron created for Heep when they started out - it must have cost a good few quid! I still think the subject of a tribute album (although one isn't on the cards) is a good point for people to express an opinion on so we would like to see your list of 12 Heep songs and the artist's you would like to perform them.*

Dear UHAS. Thanks for issue 27, it's good to know that our heros are making out all right and that the future looks brighter Since I joined UHAS I have bought 20 remastered CD and I still haven't found a reason to regret anything I said in a earlier letter to you. The band just rocks and I especially love "Different World", it's a straight forward rock and roller full of great tunes. To those who think this band would be better off with some line up changes I'd like to say: nonsense! Heep are in fine and fit form to conquer the world again. Whatever problems there were in the past (ie marketing and distribution) seem to be overcome with the new recording deal. I am a marketing professional myself. As much of the band's success is tied to the tunes, individual players and stage presence it's not enough. People must be aware of the band's existence, the band's records must be available, gigs must be arranged and so on. The list is almost endless. Today there are many times more new bands trying to catch some fame and fortune as there used to be in the past. At least marketing is manifold heavier than it was in the 70's. In those days there were between 5 and 10 musical categories to choose from - heavy rock being one of them. Now bands are not even supposed to live long, countless styles have come and gone over the years, everything happens faster and faster, you can't keep a good band down but it's a hell of a job to get it up the charts today. That's why I hope the decisions made will prove successful because it's an absolute loss if such good music is made but nowhere to be found. Heep really are as good as any international rock band today and they deserve equal status - don't they?

The ordinary music listeners (those who know Heep) probably think they are a band from the past that have nothing to offer today, they stopped listening to their music after "Sweet Freedom". If the media had kept Heep a positive household name things could be different. Today no serious music listener admits first he listens to Heep, when I tell them openly that I have so and so many records of Heep's music and the band are still in great shape and worth listening to, attitudes start melting. That is great. Heep needs to get through to all the ex-fans and younger people who love good rock music. **Markku Kempainen, Finland.**

***UHAS reply:-** We can all only hope that "Sonic Origami" won't be lost as "Sea of Light" was.*

Dear UHAS. I've just picked up the re mastered "Live in Moscow", "Raging Silence",

"Still Eavy Still Proud" and "Different World" and once again Rob Corich has collected together some previously unreleased takes and some first time on CD tracks. But that's not all. The sleeve notes are marvellous. Certain ingrates have griped about these re-mastered versions but as a fan also of "Black Sabbath" and "Moterhead" I've also been buying the "Essential" remasters of these two bands. Heep win hands down. I know we try to keep the mag Heep but to make my point let allow me to shift focus slightly. "Sabbath" offered one bonus track (Yes-one), ignoring the radio edits, live B-sides and different mixes that we have on vinyl. In contrast to Heep, the whole reissue was shoddily done. For example, on the double live album "Live Evil" they cut the stage chat, so as to get it onto a single disc: thanks, but I'll stick to my 2CD US import which still has a bit of atmosphere left. The booklets had good photos but they were often from the wrong era. True, they added lyrics not issued on the original vinyl but hey! the lyrics were wrong. Embarrassingly so, just look at "Paranoid" and "Sabotage" in particular. "Moterhead" fared better, but still did not have the attention to detail we have had with Heep. For example, we did get bonus tracks but these were often left unsources and some radio edits were missing.

With the Heep set I do feel Rob has put his all into them and it must be him who has made the difference, as the "Sabbath" and "Moterhead" sets come from the same parent company. Let's also remember the contributions he got from Mick and Ken - either "Sabbath" weren't contacted or weren't bothered. Ditto "Moterhead". True, even the Heep CD's aren't perfect, viz the odd running order on "Fallen Angel", but they were a labour of love and I for one feel indebted to Rob for his efforts on music which has been part of many of our lives for a long while. I have faith that Rob will secure a CD release for "Equator", or hurt himself in the process. **Alister Blockley, England.**

UHAS reply:- This is the only reaction we've had to the last batch of CD remasters so we're indebted to Alister for his views. Please keep the letters coming in.

CLASSIC CONCERT

I don't think my Father realised the effect that Uriah Heep would have on me when he bought me my first 2 Heep albums about 4 years ago. At first the music didn't do much for me but for some reason I just kept playing the 2 CD's (they were:- Ironstrike - compilation and the famous Live album). So I started buying more albums and getting to know more about this band who had replaccd "Queen", "Guns n Roses" and "Brian Adams" as my favourite bands/artists. I soon found that Heep had had several singers and when I joined UHAS I had albums for every singer except Bernie. Shortly after I bought "Sea Of Light", in my opinion the best thing they've done since "Conquest" which is still my favourite album. One day my dad picked my up after school and the first thing he said was: "You know David, Heep are playing in Solingen, that's not too much of a drive". After a few phone calls we were on our way to get the tickets. A few weeks later, on the 15th May - 5 days before my 15th birthday - we were off to Solingen again, with a tape of "Sea Of Light" blasting out of the car speakers.

When we arrived at the Eissporthalle we walked right in. Only a few moments later the doors were locked. As we weren't band or crew members, and we didn't have a press pass we weren't supposed to be there, but after checking to see if we had tickets we were allowed to stay. My dad went to the bar for a drink and I went to see the sound check. Too bad for me, it was the "Bay City Rollers" and "The Sweet" who were sound checking.

Being so early we managed to stand in the front row, about 1 meter from the stage. I can remember the "Rollers" being an easy listening, fun type, poppy group, and "The Sweet"

being, ...well, just loud. Then, after "The Sweet" had left the stage, and some of the equipment had been replaced, the lights went down, and I saw Trev, Phil and Lee take the stage and start playing the intro to "Universal wheels". Since every musician had entered the stage from the right, everybody was looking that way to see Mick Box - one of rock's best and most underestimated guitar players - make his appearance, but the good man came on stage from the left smiling at the audience. Then Bernie came in and the song really started to rock. I was so excited because this was the first ever live show I'd seen or heard - apart from the Live album - and I couldn't thank my dad enough for having me experience that night.

I know some people don't like Bernie, but after that night there was no doubt in my mind that this guy could sing and entertain! It really was a night to remember, and although my dad had forgotten to take his camera, I did go home with a souvenir, a genuine Mick Box plectrum. My dad literally had to kick some ass to get it because some German fan who also wanted it was standing on my dad's hand. Another one was given by a Dutch fan who seems to travel with the band as we met up with them in Cologne 5 months later. I still don't know their names, I'll have to ask next time around. To conclude, this was a spectacular night with Uriah Heep at their best, I'm looking forward to the next time.

David Amendolara

Please send in a review of a concert from any era of the band telling us why it was a classic for you, and we'll print it in a future issue.

PHOTO ALBUM



This shot of David Byron and Mick was taken during one of the band's USA tours in the early 70's and is from Mick's private album.

FIRST TOUCH - HOW I BECAME A HEEP FAN

Over my 16 years as a Heep fan more than one person has said to me that had Heep had a different name, into which I read 'better' or 'cooler', they would probably have enjoyed more success. Well, maybe so, maybe not, but I have the name and a "Kerrang" picture of Mick Box to thank for my initial interest. I was already collecting "Black Sabbath" and "Rainbow" but Mick looked so affably mad and the name was so plain daft that I just had to hear this Uriah Heep. My brother, 6 years my senior, was into rock but had no Heep so he put my request out to his friends and I was loaned 2 tapes, a pirate copy of "Wonderworld" (counterfeit flatters it since the song titles were written in biro on the reverse of a good reproduction of the sleeve) and an original "Live 1973".

I love both albums as much now as I did then. Had it been a loan of "High and Mighty" which I still don't like, or "Conquest", which took several years to be accepted by myself, I may never have become a Heep fan. (Oi! Now don't get upset and write in praising "High and Mighty" because (A) I'm having my say and (B) I still won't like it.

For many years, not having access to magazine retrospectives, original sleeves or the UHAS, I did not know what half the past band members looked like. In my mind, when listening to "Live 1973" David Byron looked like Pete Goalby, even though I knew the photo of Pete was Pete. Come to think of it, when I met up with a friend at the Sheffield Octagon in 1988 he was in a similar position. When some bloke came up and asked the way to the Octagon my friend calmly explained whilst I got all excited at meeting Trevor Bolder! My friend hadn't recognised Trev simply because his copies of "Firefly" and "Fallen Angel" weren't the original gate fold sleeves. Goes to prove that ultimately it's the music which is important.

I first saw Heep in March 1985 at the Dolphin Centre, Darlington, this was a local gig, only 30 minutes on the bus - all future trips would involve at least the journey to Newcastle, one hour and ten minutes away. My first Heep and my first heavy rock concert to boot. I only had a few albums and not yet "Equator" so a lot of the material was unfamiliar but I loved the gig. And whilst "Glasgow" were playing I spied Mick and Pete watching from the side, not of the stage but the hall itself. I thought about going over but I thought they might be annoyed at being interrupted (I told you I was new to Heep) so I stayed put. I have still yet to meet Pete. I also regret not buying a T-shirt or programme but I thought the prices were extortionate, not knowing the going rate. It really was all new to me then.

That first touch was, I'm pleased to say, a lasting one.

Alister Blockley.

JOHN LAWTON

THE GUNHILL SWISS TOUR AND THE FUTURE

An exclusive interview

Alan: How did the tour go?

John: It went very well, in some parts the promotion was a bit lacking, but the rest of it was great. We had Roger with us playing keyboards and we did some Heep stuff which

didn't really infringe on anything Heep are doing because we did the stuff that they don't play, apart from "Lady in black" and we don't do that the same as they do anyway. So yeah, it was great, it really added to it.

Alan: You said before you went out there that you wanted to put the Heep stuff in because you felt it was expected when you were playing over there.

John: Not so much expected, more or less asked for. The last time we went over and we did stuff from "Nighthead" and the other bit and pieces that we do, it was said to us: "If you're going to do whitesnake songs and the other covers, why don't you do some stuff from your time with Heep"? To be quite honest I was dead against it because we always said from the beginning we would never be a Uriah Heep covers band, that was not the point, but there are songs that people expect you to do and one of them is "Free me". So I asked people to give me suggestions of what they would like to hear, not only in Germany, I did ask Dave Owen and a couple of other guys over here, and everybody came up with a list that had some common songs, "Keep on ridin" was one, "Sympathy" was another, and there were several others that cropped up. I thought, ok, that's fair enough, I don't mind doing that and if people would like to hear them then that's what we'll do. We've done a version of "Sympathy" which is nothing like the original at all but it goes down quite well, a couple of people have said it's better than the original so you can't argue with that.

Alan: Presumably it differs in the arrangement?

John: Yes it differs in the arrangement only, the melody stays the same, We've also done "Firefly" because that comes up on ever list, everybody wanted to hear it and Heep don't play it any more. They don't play "Free me" any more and also "Cheat n lie".

Alan: Did you do "Wise man"?

John: We were going to do "Wise man" but by the time we put the program together we had three or so slowish songs in the set including "You touch me with your heart" from "Sumo Grip", "Firefly" is slowish, we did it just like the original, you just can't change that one around, and we have "Ain't no sunshine" in the set which we really can't leave out. So with those three in the set, it's enough when you're playing an hour and a half. "We did rehearse "Wise man" as an acoustic number but it didn't get into the set. Apart from the Heep stuff we also did some other "Lucifer's Friend" tracks, "Ride the sky" for instance.

Alan: Was the tour set up with the purpose of achieving something in the way of advancing the band's career, or was it just a case of going out to play a few dates and have a bit of fun?

John: We definitely forwarded the profile of the band, we did a couple of gigs for Volvo - the car firm, the first was on the Swiss/German border and the guy really wanted us to play. He cleared the showroom, he took about 10 Volvos out and put them in the car lot, there was 4 guys came up from Italy and they really loved it, they bought all then merchandise we had and we all had a really good night. The last Volvo gig we did, which was the second to the last gig of the tour, was for the head Volvo man in Switzerland. He was having a once every 5 years get together with all his staff and once again it was great, they had the best cold buffet you've ever tasted.

Alan: Did you get any coverage in the music press at all?

John: No, we got some coverage in the local papers and stuff like that, but it was good fun. You know your self, we're on the road to build up our name and if we can do that, great, and what ever comes of that is fine.

Alan: How is the "Nighthead" album selling now that "Red Steel" have taken over the distribution?

John: Great, the original pressing have just about all gone, we sold about 400 while we were in Switzerland for 10 days. The guy from Volvo bought 150 himself.

Alan: You didn't offer him a trade for a car?

John: We did try, Neil is the Volvo driver in the band and he was looking at them, but I have to say that the prices of cars over there is about half what they are in the UK. If we could have done a deal there would have been a few deals done!

Alan: What will happen now, will you press some more up yourselves or will "Red Steel" take over that side?

John: I'm not sure, "Red Steel" want to do some and include some tracks from our "One over the eight" cassette as bonus tracks. But we'll need some more because we're going out to Norway in August, we're back in Germany in September and October. So we'll have to have some more pressed up.

Alan: Are you back to doing the rounds in England now?

John: To be quite honest with you, with regards to doing the rounds in England, we're only doing the gigs that we want to do, I think that we're going to concentrate more on stuff overseas in the long run. The plain truth is that "Gunhill" is much more appreciated over there than it is over here.

Alan: The same old story?

John: Well it is, it's really true, people actually sit and listen when we play over there, they don't sit and drink and talk through the set. Instead of playing two 45 minute sets with a break like we do in the UK, we've been playing a 90 minute set and some times it works out a lot longer than that, we've even played a two hour set.

Alan: So that's where the future lies?

John: Well I think so, there's a lot going on at the moment, Brian and I are going to spend some time together in June and try to write some original stuff, there's a few ideas floating around at the moment. The other thing is that I'm in the process of doing a John Lawton album at the moment, we've done 4 tracks but the producer's on holiday so at some point I'll be going back in the studio, I've got some stuff to write before then but hopefully, by the end of the summer, I'll have completed that as well.

Alan: So that won't involve "Gunhill" at all?

John: No, it has nothing to do with "Gunhill", the reason it's come about is off the back of the re recording of the 4 versions of the old "Les Humphries" hit "Mamma Loo". The guy who set that up had about 3 or 4 other songs that he was looking for a vehicle for and I sang them and it worked out well. That gave us the idea of doing an album.

Alan: Will you put it out in a similar way to how you put "Nighthead" out?

John: No, the idea behind it is to actually try and get a record company deal with it, but there again, it's not that easy these days to get the kind of deals that you want. I know for a fact that "Mamma Loo" has been played in a lot of discos and people like it, but the deals that we've been offered amount to them wanting to buy it for nothing. The idea of doing an album is to get a deal but you don't really know until you finish it off and offer it

round.

Alan: One last thing that everyone in the UK will want to know, are you doing any of the Heep stuff in the dates you're playing in England.

John: Yeah, we're doing "Sympathy", "Keep on riding", "Been hurt", "One more night" and they go down quite well even though people don't really know them. It's something new from us and if you play the same places quite a lot, as we do, they expect you to come up with something new, but then again, if you don't play some of the old stuff they start saying, "Why didn't you play Elonor Rigby tonight"? It's a thin line between playing what you think you should be playing and playing what people want to hear.

Interview by Alan Hartley.

BOOTLEG CD REVIEW

BBC SESSION AND LIVE (GYPSY EYE 064)

Track listing. Dreammare, Gypsy, (BBC session 1971). Look at yourself, What should be done, (BBC session 1972). Bird of prey, Easy livin, July morning, Tears in my eyes, Improvisation, The wizard, Look at yourself.

The live tracks on this CD (Bird of prey onwards) are from the Munster gig of 1972 which is already available on the "Byrons Lost Poem" bootleg CD which includes the full set with the exception of "Love machine". Here the set is shortened and although the people behind this bootleg have already used 2 other tracks from the set - Lady in black and Gypsy - on their "Time Was Gypsy Eyes" bootleg, I would have rather they included the missing "Love machine", "Rainbow demon" or "I wanna be free" in place of the "Improvisation" track. This is just a jam session which includes guitar, bass and drum solos. I always thought such things

were exercises in self indulgence no matter who the band, I never liked them live and I like them less for home listening. Include more songs in the set I say! The sound quality of the live recording is poor and although the same has to be said for "Byron's Lost Poem", it is slightly better than this one. The same crude edits I complained about in the "Byron's Lost Poem" review are also on this CD so I have to conclude as I did then, if you've got a tape of the gig, stick with that.



The first 4 tracks are the BBC session tracks which are in wide circulation on tape. These copies are from the re run of the sessions, you can hear Alan Freeman saying so after the last track before he's faded out mid sentence. It's unfortunate that both "Dreammare" and "What should be done" fade in shortly after the start of the track, apart from that complaint they are of better sound quality than any tapes I've heard. I'm not sure if there was any multi tracking during the recording sessions but the songs have a live feel about them and the performance is very fresh sounding with a raw edge to it. I'm disappointed that none of the other BBC session tracks have been included, ie. "Come away Melinda", "Salisbury", "Bird of prey", "I wanna be free", "Love machine", "Shadows of grief" and "July morning". There are rumours that some of the old BBC tapes have been destroyed or lost so if anyone out there has copies of any of these tracks we'd like to know please. Expect to pay about £15 for this CD and once again my thanks go to Yutaka Nakajima for the help and information that made this review possible.

Alan Hartley

W.A.S.P. THE HEADLESS CHILDREN

(Remaster SMMCD 509)

As we all know Ken Hensley played keyboards on this album, his playing was very powerful on such tracks as "The headless children" and "Forever free", a track that sounds like "The Wizard" during the intro, and on other tracks where he's restricted to adding keyboard/synthesizer effects. This year the album was re released and in addition to the ten original album tracks which are digitally re mastered from the original master tapes, there are another six bonus tracks. Unfortunately, for the real fan, there's nothing new, I guess, as they're all single B-sides. The first is a cover of "Jethro Tull's" "Locomotive breath", a really rockin version that starts of with a drum intro instead of the piano intro of the original, making it almost 2 minutes shorter. "For whom the bell tolls" is written by Blackie Lawless (the band's singer, songwriter and guitar player). This is a mid tempo rocker that starts heavy, then seems to become a ballad like song with acoustic finger picking. It's not as strong as the rest of the material on the album. "Lake of fools", again written by Blackie Lawless starts off with an intro comparable to "The outlaws" - "You are the show", or Heep's "It ain't easy". Blackie's singing is rather pain full, he has an authentic voice but it doesn't fit the more tranquil songs. Unfortunately, most of the time when he's singing, it's in the quiet parts. Luckily there's some really good guitar solos on this one to carry the song. "War cry" is a typical 80's heavy metal type song with lots of drum rolls, heavy guitars, a fast pace and some keyboards here and there. It's a great track. The last 2 bonus tracks are live versions of "L.O.V.E. machine" and "Blind in Texas" and were recorded at Hammersmith in 1989. Why "Blind in Texas" was put o I can't understand. Most of the time the audience is doing the singing, and although that's a good deal of fun when you're actual there, it's incredibly boring to hear it on a CD. "L.O.V.E. machine" on the contrary is a nice song. The intro reminds me of Heep's "Love machine" for a few seconds, but there's no comparison. In addition to these extra tracks, there are some liner notes by Dante Bonutto, the original liner notes by Blackie Lawless and the lyrics to the original album tracks. For the true W.A.S.P. fan who buys all the singles there's nothing new to be gained by buying this, which is a shame if you ask me. For those Heep collectors that want anything related to the band, this CD is well worth buying.

David Amendolara.



Photo by Antonio Bratos