

Tull Rides Crest Of Popularity

BY DONALD E. WILCOCK

TROY, N.Y. Ian Anderson used to get so depressed after a bad night on stage with Jethro Tull that he'd feel almost suicidal. "It was one of the worst feelings in the world to do a bad show," says the 19-year rock veteran. "I'd just want to go back to the hotel and cry. It was just terrible."

That was three years ago. On Jethro Tull's current North American tour Anderson is far more relaxed. Following a lengthy hiatus, the band recently hit the road in support of its new Chrysalis album, "Crest Of A Knave," which is faring a good deal better than its predecessor, "Under Wraps."

Prior to recording the new album, Anderson had spent much of his time developing his salmon farms, a profitable business that has given him the freedom to treat music as relaxing and fun, not as a necessary means of earning a living.

"When you're out there making a lot of money and it becomes a big business, you forget some of those basic needs for playing music in the first place," says Anderson. "A couple of years off have been quite useful to me for getting a perspective about music and being able to come back to it with what I think are more essential motivations, and not a business orientation where it's your sole livelihood."

Not that Anderson doesn't consider the business angles. "I decided to con Chrysalis into some prerelease involvement and to involve the album rock radio stations in something that felt good to be doing," Anderson says he arranged to have more than 800 listeners of 12 major album rock radio stations in the U.S. review the new album and offer critical comments.

"I took a chance their answers would be very strongly complimentary," he says. "Because then I could thrust that under the nose of

our record company and say, 'Look, you guys, if you get behind this one, you have a chance to do well.'"

Anderson says about 80% of the listeners polled found "Crest Of A Knave" to be "significantly more enjoyable than the last few Jethro Tull albums," while 78% found the style of music a direction they'd like the band to continue to follow.

Jethro Tull was the catalyst that brought Chris Wright and Terry Ellis together 20 years ago to form Chrysalis Records in the first place. Ellis managed the young Tull at the time, and Wright was a booking agent. Two years ago, Wright bought out Ellis to become sole owner of the company. It was just the latest of many changes that Anderson has seen at the company in 20 years.

"There have been at least three times more Chrysalis Records presidents than there have been bass players for Jethro Tull—and you can quote me on that," says Anderson. "There have been quite a lot of disruptions at Chrysalis. Only Huey Lewis & the News have managed to sustain their career through the Chrysalis ups and downs. But happily to say, Chrysalis now is in very good shape."

So is Jethro Tull. "Crest Of A Knave" returns to the "third-generation blues" roots of earlier group efforts. Written and produced by Anderson, the new album is a showcase not only for Anderson but longtime Tull guitarist Martin Barre. According to Anderson, "The songs were constructed to allow the guitar playing to come through and to create the best possible framework to let Martin do his best."

After kicking off its North American tour at the RPI Field House in Troy, N.Y., on Nov. 10, Tull will be playing some 30 shows here through mid-December. The two-hour show mixes old standards like "Aqualung" and "Thick As A

Brick" with new songs like "Steel Monkey" and "Farm On The Freeway."

Staging is very simple, with a black backdrop that displays the album's crest and no major props—this from a band that was known for its dramatic staging in the '70s.

"The problem with Jethro Tull is that back when we were known as a production-oriented or theatrical rock group, you could have a telephone ring on stage, put a couple of seats on stage, have someone come on dressed as a rabbit, and that was really theatrical," says Anderson. "In the '80s, to achieve the same kind of performance as far as the audience is concerned, you've got to spend at least \$1 million on staging alone. There is no point with us trying to compete with Pink Floyd."



Dude, Looks Like A Trio. Following Aerosmith's Nov. 13 sellout concert at New Jersey's Meadowlands Arena, lead singer Steven Tyler, right, takes time out with Cher and Jon Bon Jovi. (Photo: Todd Kaplan)

Sting Launches Tour, Wows 'Em In N.Y.; Busy Billy Idol Awaits His Bundle Of Joy

READY TO GO: Sting launched his second solo tour with two dates (Nov. 15-16) at New York's Ritz club. The Beat was on hand for the first show and enjoyed a terrific set—definitely one of the best concerts of the year—that featured most of the songs from his smash A&M album "Nothing Like The Sun." Standouts included "Be Still My Beating Heart," "We'll Be Together," "Englishman In New York," and "Little Wing."

In addition to the new material, Sting delved into the past and played a couple of songs from "The Dream Of The Blue Turtles"—"Fortress Around Your Heart" and "Consider Me Gone." He also delivered a selection of revamped Police tunes like "Bring On The Night," "When The World Is Running Down," "Spirits In The Material World," and "Don't Stand So Close To Me."

Accompanying Sting at the Ritz was his latest touring band, a high-energy unit that comprises Tracy Wormworth (bass), Steve Coleman (saxophone), Kenny Kirkland and Delmar Brown (keyboards), Jeff Campbell (guitar), Mino Cinelu (percussion), and Smitty Smith (drums). Branford Marsalis made a brief appearance at the second Ritz show, but previous outside commitments are preventing him from joining the Sting tour on a permanent basis.

The day after the second Ritz date, The Beat connected with Sting at a Manhattan studio, where he was recording Latin vocal versions of several "Nothing Like The Sun" tunes, to be featured on an EP for the South American market. Look for an in-depth Sting interview in next week's Billboard.

RACING AHEAD: When Billy Idol completed a tour to promote his "Whiplash Smile" album a couple of months ago, it looked like things would be quieting down for the rebel yeller for a while. Demand from the fans precipitated the U.S. release of "Vital Idol"—an album of remixes that had been available on import for some time—but basically Idol planned to lay low as he started writing songs for his next studio album.

However, now that he's scored a No. 1 hit with the live version of "Mony Mony," young Billy's back in the fast lane—in more ways than one. While continuing to write a few new tunes, Idol is gearing up for the rerelease of the single "Hot In The City," for which he filmed a brand new videoclip Nov. 18 in the streets of New York.

Additionally, the same week that "Mony Mony" hit the top spot, Idol got the word that his girlfriend, Perri Lister, is expecting their first baby in May. The delighted rocker immediately went out and celebrated by buying a Harley Davidson motorbike, which he named Rude Dude.

SHORT TAKES I: Daryl Hall & John Oates's first album for Arista should hit the stores in February... Foreigner held a listening party for its new Atlantic album, "Inside Information," Nov. 18 at New York's Right Track studios... Tears For Fears' long-awaited follow-up to 1985's "Songs From The Big Chair" should be out in the spring, according to manager Paul King... U2 fans may be interested to learn that a new book, "Unforgettable Fire: The Story Of U2" by Eamon

Dunphy, has just been published by Viking in the U.K.... Congrats to Starship vocalist Mickey Thomas and his wife, Sara, on the Nov. 4 birth of a baby girl, Taylor Noel... Stiff Little Fingers is re-forming for a nostalgia tour of the U.K. and Ireland. The tour begins Dec. 14 in

Newcastle, U.K.

SCREEN SWITCH: Now that Sting has returned to the road, he won't be able to appear in Martin Scorsese's next movie, "The Passion," originally titled "The Last Temptation Of Christ." Sting's role as Pontius Pilate has now gone to David Bowie. Filming starts in December in Morocco, and the timing is just perfect for Bowie since he winds up his marathon Glass Spider tour Saturday (28) in New Zealand.

SHORT TAKES II: Be sure to check out Virgin's soundtrack for the Bernardo Bertolucci movie "The Last Emperor." The album, featuring some fine music from Ryuichi Sakamoto and David Byrne, is due out Dec. 1... Following the success of its dance hit "Catch Me (I'm Falling)," Philadelphia-based act Pretty Poison is set to begin recording its debut Virgin album. Kae Williams Jr. is producing... Says Peter Gabriel, on the rerelease of his song "Biko" (see Inside Track, page 94): "Sir Richard Attenborough has made a very moving film about Stephen Biko and his relationship with Donald Woods, 'Cry Freedom.' This record is being rereleased to help the film make his name better known and to draw attention to what is still going on in the name of apartheid"... Among the famous faces who showed up at Tower Of Power's Nov. 12-15 stint at Manhattan's Bottom Line were Steve Stevens, Sheena Easton, Ray Davies, Mick Taylor, Buster Poindexter, Keith Hernandez, and Paul Shaffer... Paul Simon is playing a benefit concert at New York's Madison Square Garden Dec 13. All proceeds from the show, organized in association with the New York Hospital/Cornell Medical Center, will go toward buying a medical mobile unit to aid homeless youngsters in New York.

DOKKEN POISED FOR 'ATTACK'

(Continued from page 32)

across-the-board promotional attack. The label recently issued its first-ever promotional CD single, for "Burning Like A Flame"—the leadoff track from the Dokken album—to top 40 and album rock radio.

"This time it really looks like top 40 radio will be with us," says Hamlin.

"Right now we're attacking with both barrels. Album rock radio is already on the record, so we're trying to build that base. And now we're working top 40."

Touring, however, will continue to be the major factor in Dokken's development. The group is currently on the road opening North American dates for Aerosmith, with shows booked through February. After that the group hopes to graduate to headliner status.

"That will give us enough time to see what the demand is," says Burnstein. "It's obvious that it's hard to sell tickets as a headliner, so we better be big before we take the step. Dokken is a platinum act now, but that's not big enough. We'll wait and see what kind of momentum this record has."

Says Pilson, "The Aerosmith tour is going really well. We're playing a lot of sellout dates, and the response has been great. We came up with an album we're really happy with. Now we have to get out and play kick-ass shows every night."

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