

+ YES | THE GO-GO's | LITTLE RIVER BAND | VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR

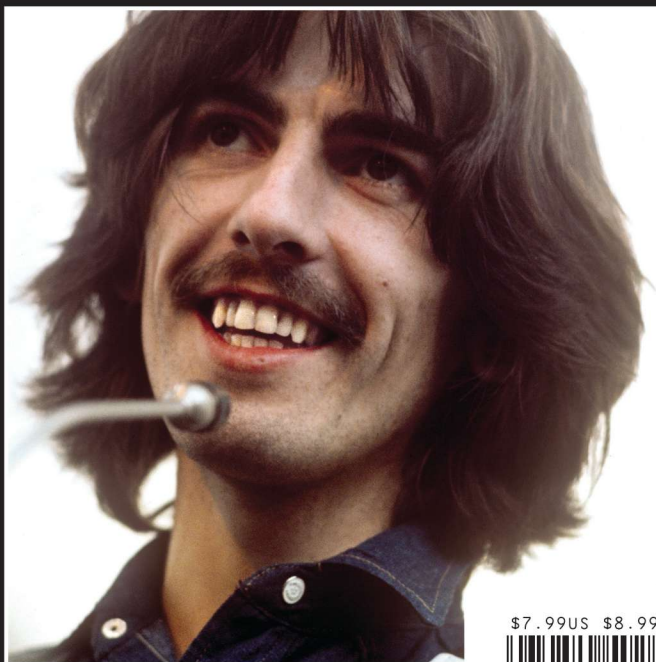
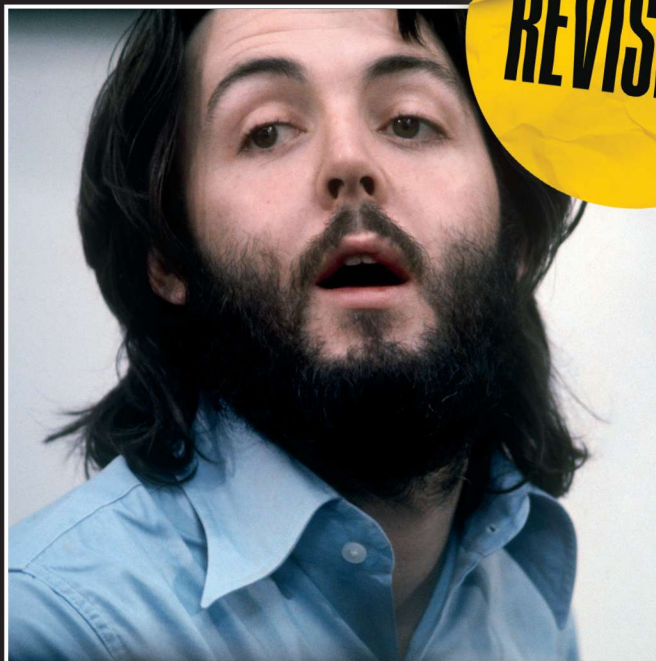
# GOLDMINE

THE MUSIC COLLECTOR'S MAGAZINE

GOLDMINEMAG.COM NOVEMBER 2021

## LET IT BE

REVISITED



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— ALAN WHITE, YES DRUMMER



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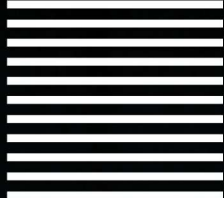
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PERPETUAL CHANGE:  
THE BAND **YES**  
FORGES ON WITH A  
NEW 'QUEST'

BY HOWARD WHITMAN

**F**or a band that have always sung about positivity, Yes have certainly stirred up their share of negativity.

Check out virtually any Yes-oriented social media page, and odds are you'll find posts about how the current official lineup of the pioneering progressive rock band are an illegitimate "tribute band" that should just hang it up.

Much of this ire comes from the absence of two members of what's come to be recognized as the "classic" lineup of Yes: keyboardist Rick Wakeman and, especially, founding vocalist Jon Anderson.

It's no surprise that the new album by the current lineup, *The Quest*, which features vocalist Jon Davison and keyboardist Geoff Downes along with Steve Howe (guitar), Alan White (drums) and Billy Sherwood (bass), is creating some controversy.

#### YES VS. YES

Yes have certainly experienced drama (pun intended) in recent years. Anderson and Wakeman teamed up with former Yes guitarist Trevor Rabin for Anderson/Rabin/Wakeman (ARW), a band that morphed into Yes Featuring ARW halfway through their short lifetime (the band toured from 2016 through 2018). As a result, for a time there were two bands called Yes on the road. It was confusing for promoters (who often ran promos with photos of the wrong version) and casual fans, and divisive for diehard Yes fans, some of whom felt they had to choose one "side" over the other.

The situation was equally confusing from a legal standpoint. Howe and White reportedly owned majority shares of the name, but Anderson reportedly owned a portion as well. Rather than fight it out in court (which happened when Anderson, Wakeman and Howe teamed with original drummer Bill Bruford for ABWH,

# YES QUEST



Singer Jon Davison performs onstage with Yes during their 50th Anniversary tour at Ford Theatre on June 19, 2018, in Hollywood, California.

and the then-current Yes sued them for trading on the Yes legacy), Yes “official” refrained from warring with the ARW version.

As Steve Howe stated in my 2018 *Goldmine* interview about the situation, “We don’t talk about it. We don’t talk them up or talk them down. They can do this, and they can mess with the names and all that stuff. There’s things they can’t (do), but we don’t really comment a whole bunch and let them get them on with it.”

The confusion ended when the ARW version folded in 2018 following successful tours and one live album. There was one Yes still standing: the iteration led by Howe following the 2015 death of founding bassist and figurehead Chris Squire.

One of the major sticking points that online pundits have with the current lineup (and they have *many*) is that it does not include any original members. Of the founders, Squire and guitarist Peter Banks are deceased, Bruford has retired, keyboardist Tony Kaye has retired from touring (although he occasionally appears live with Yes, records with Sherwood in the band CIRCA, and recently released a long-in-the-works solo album, *End of Innocence*), and only Anderson is still active as a solo artist.

Anderson left (or was removed, depending on whom you ask) Yes in 2008 and was quickly replaced by Yes tribute band singer Benoit David, who was replaced by Davison in 2012.

So it’s true that this version has no original members. But with their long tenures in the band, Howe and White certainly give this lineup legacy and legitimacy. Think of it this way: Howe was not on the first two Yes albums, but can anyone else be called the definitive Yes guitarist?

## ONWARD

Since Squire’s passing, Yes have consisted of Howe (guitarist on-and-off since 1970), White (who joined the band in 1972), Downes (who originally joined in 1980 for the short-lived *Drama* lineup and rejoined in 2011), Squire’s hand-picked replacement Sherwood (who has worked with Yes since 1994) on bass, and Davison. Drummer Jay Schellen also tours with the band, trading off with White, who plays partial shows since having back surgery.

This version of Yes have toured regularly — that is, until the global pandemic

shut down the live music business in 2020. As for many artists, the lockdown provided the opportunity for Yes to create new music, resulting in *The Quest*.

## THE QUEST

Produced by Steve Howe, the new album finds Davison front and center in the vocalist role, Sherwood effectively channeling the style of his bass mentor, and Downes, Howe and White bringing their unique instrumental styles to an album that is very much in the Yes tradition while also sounding fresh and new. The band also revisits orchestral accompaniment, previously explored on *Time and a Word* (1970) and *Magnification* (2001). And it’s all wrapped up in a beautiful new cover by iconic Yes cover artist Roger Dean.

Of course, “haters gonna hate,” so some consumers will dislike the new album, and they will be in a hurry to loudly express that on the internet. Some fans will love it. Yes fans will continue to pack arenas and amphitheaters to see the band. So it goes.

If nothing else, the members of Yes are survivors. And no one is more fitting of that description than Alan White, who joined the band three years after its 1969 formation, replacing Bruford following the recording of what many consider to be the ultimate Yes album, *Close to the Edge*.

“It was just about time,” White said about the new album in a recent interview with *Goldmine*. “(*The Quest*) is a culmination of different material from different people in the band that we just wanted to get out. And still being Yes, it’s a perfect vehicle for that. You build up material in your system and you have to find an outlet.”

The pandemic situation certainly created challenges for the band in recording the new songs. “It was difficult,” White recalled, “especially for myself and Billy, because we’re in America. The rest were in England. We did this album differently — more virtual.

“Jon and Steve have been writing a lot of music together over the past couple of years, and they just hooked up together again. And of course, Geoff is in England and so he contributed to the whole thing. A lot of the concepts of the songs came from over there.”

While Howe, Davison and Downes wrote and recorded their parts in England, White and Sherwood cut bass and

drum tracks in Los Angeles, adding, White said, “input to a few different suggestions on the material.” Sherwood also contributed to the writing. And while it was rumored that Schellen played drums on the album, it has been confirmed that White played all of its drum tracks. Schellen is credited with “additional percussion.”

While *The Quest* is the first album of new material from the band since 2014’s not-so-well-received *Heaven & Earth* release, it also represents another significant milestone: it’s the first Yes studio album made without Chris Squire, and the first to feature Sherwood as bassist.

That was a powerful factor for White, who was Squire’s rhythm-section partner in all Yes lineups for 43 years.

“There will never be anybody like Chris, really,” White said. “He was a magnificent bass player and a trendsetter in many styles in that department within the band. So, yeah, (our partnership) was great. But Chris was Billy’s mentor, so Billy Sherwood is a great replacement for Chris.

I’ve played with Billy for over 15 years so I know his playing pretty well. And we know each other real well. He lives down in L.A., I live up here (in the Seattle area). We’re both on the west coast.

“We worked together in a studio in Los Angeles to put the drums and the bass on. I think Billy did the bass over a period of time, because he’s got his own studio. But then we went into a place called Uncle Studios in L.A. and we cut the bass and drums in about 10 days.”

White added that he and Sherwood recorded most of their bass and drum parts separately, but occasionally played together on the tracks. And although the band members recorded their parts at different times (and on different continents), the album sounds organic and unified, as if the musicians were playing together in one studio.

Reflecting on how the band achieved that “live” feel, White said, “We’ve been doing it for so long that you use the things that you learned from being a seasoned musician. It’s pretty professional, and you learn how to work in the studio like that and make it sound like we’re all in the same room.”

With such a long history as a Yes member, White is very protective of the band’s legacy and admits he gave the new songs serious scrutiny before moving forward



Yes' 'Quest' lineup (L-R): Guitarist Steve Howe, vocalist Jon Davison, bassist Billy Sherwood, drummer Alan White and keyboardist Geoff Downes.

except Jim Keltner played on one track and I played vibraphone in the bathroom. For *All Things Must Pass* I got to meet George, we got on well, and he invited me to all of the album sessions. I played on two-thirds of that as well.”

When asked about the new *All Things Must Pass* set, White said, “I’ve listened to it. I’ve got the box set, which is absolutely, really great. It’s a well-done package. They did a great job of repackaging the whole thing. I’m just proud to be a part of it. It’s a joy to listen to, especially today. Modern technology definitely helps.”

### THE TOPOGRAPHIC DEEP END

White recalled his early days with Yes, when he was recruited in 1972 to replace Bruford, who had just left to join King Crimson. White’s induction into the band showed how strong — and adaptable — a musician he is.

“I had only three days to prepare for my first gig,” he recalled. “They said, ‘You’re going to join the band or else we’re going to throw you out that window. And by the way, you’ve got a gig on Monday.’ And I said, ‘Thanks a lot!’”

White recounted how he mastered such challenging music in so short a time. “A lot of listening, 24 hours a day, I think, I was listening, thinking the music, trying to prepare myself. But we never really did any rehearsals. We just got into it and I played the show. Everybody was sweating buckets, of course, including me. And we finished the whole show that night and we looked at each other. ‘Well, I guess he did it!’ I said, ‘I’ll try the band out for three months and you can try me for three months.’ Now it’s almost 50 years later.”

His first recording with the band soon followed — a triple-LP live set. “I did perform on *Yessongs*, and I’d only been in the band three months! So I was just getting used to playing that kind of material and adjusting my style.”

Then he embarked on his debut studio album as a Yes member — the complex *Topographic Oceans* double album. “It was my first studio album (with them), and quite an experience. It’s called jumping in the deep end.”

*Topographic* was controversial when it was released in 1973. Critics were not necessarily kind. Its songs were too long to gain much radio airplay; each one took up an album side. It was long and involved

with recording the album. “I was skeptical of the material at first,” he recalled, “and then I started to go over it more and get more into it. I really love the album now. It’s really great. It turned out incredible.”

White also gave high praise to Dean’s contribution to *The Quest*: “The cover is spectacular. Roger always does a great job. And he’s really like the sixth member of the band.”

### PERPETUAL CHANGE

White realized that this album may defy the expectations of Yes fans, but felt that’s the norm with new work from the band. “How many times have you put a Yes album on and been surprised that it’s in another direction yet again?” he asked. “Every Yes album has sounded different in a certain way, going from one to the other. I don’t think this is any different. But I do enjoy the vibe of the material. It’s got a good sense about it, the whole thing.”

It’s true that Yes are a band that strives to avoid repeating creativity. It’s hard to think that the same band made, say, the sprawling, spiritual *Tales from Topographic Oceans* in 1973 and the streamlined, commercially oriented *90125*, 10 years later, but both albums are credited to Yes. That’s partially a result of multiple personnel shifts, but “perpetual change” is the nature of this band.

“We all grow and we learn, and the good thing about Yes is it’s always that feeling in the band of trying to produce

something different,” White said. “It’s always been a band that tries to see over the horizon instead of look at it to see what they want to do in the future.”

### MYSTERY TOUR

Yes actually looks to the past for one track on the new album, “Mystery Tour.” As the title implies, it’s an homage to The Beatles, complete with lyrical references to the Fab Four’s catalog and personnel.

White certainly brings authenticity to any Beatles references in Yes-land, as he played a major part in John Lennon’s post-Beatles output, playing in the Plastic Ono Band (in a lineup that included Eric Clapton) at the legendary 1969 Live Peace in Toronto concert, and on such classics as “Imagine” and “Instant Karma!” White was also one of three drummers who played on *All Things Must Pass*, the George Harrison masterpiece that recently received a major remix and re-release for its 50th anniversary.

To White, all of the current Beatles activity and interest makes perfect sense. “I think there is a retro-type movement going on within the music industry, and I really can understand why, because it keeps happening through the history of music,” he said. “Everybody dives into the past a little bit to get farther forward. I think maybe sometimes it’s because there’s a lack of new material to keep people happy.”

White spoke with fondness of his work with the ex-Beatles, recalling how “I did *Imagine*, pretty much the whole album —

and way ahead of its time. Even Rick Wakeman criticized it when he left the band (for the first of many times) in 1974.

But White agrees with many Yes fans that *Topographic* has gained luster over time. “Absolutely. It just shows for me how good, adventurous music stands the test of time, really. And *Topographic* was a great album at the time, but it got a lot of criticism because nobody had ever done a double album with four songs on it.”

## YESSHOWS

While Yes has a long history of studio albums (*The Quest* is No. 22), they are also a legendary live band. Yes plans to resume touring (COVID permitting) in 2022. Resuming their tradition of focusing on a particular Yes album (or two) per tour, the plan for the next round of concerts is to revisit another challenging LP, *Relayer* (1974).

“On the new tour, we plan to perform some of the material from *Relayer*, which is not an easy album to play by any means,” White said. “When I look back at those days when we made that, I keep thinking to myself, ‘We were crazy for doing this music. Who thought that we’d be doing it this far into the future?’”

*Relayer* was the only Yes album to feature keyboardist Patrick Moraz, who

replaced Wakeman from 1974 to 1976. It has only three songs, and found Yes exploring the fusion styles that were gaining popularity in the mid-1970s. “There was a slight element of jazz (on *Relayer*), because Patrick did have that influence,” White said.

The band also plans to play some of the *Quest* material in the upcoming tour as well. “I’m pretty sure we will be,” White said. “Some of it is well worthy of playing onstage.”

Another possibility is that the band could do another package tour along the lines of the 2019 Royal Affair Tour, which also featured Asia, John Lodge of The Moody Blues, and Carl Palmer’s ELP Legacy with Arthur Brown.

“There’s a possibility that could happen again,” White speculated. “We keep our minds open to new experience all the time, and enjoy working with different people, too. Yes has always been like that since day one for me, working with other people and just taking inspiration from a lot of musicians.”

## JUST SAY YES

According to White, the band is undaunted by online trolls and their questioning of the authenticity and quality of

the current Yes lineup.

“I’ve said this for a few years: I joined a band in 1972 and I never left and I never came back and I’m still in the same band. I’m just carrying on the message for Yes, to just keep it going,” he said.

“That’s what the name of the band is all about,” he continued. “It’s the most positive word in the English language. That’s why Yes came about in the first place. There’s always a sense of that being in the band. It’s an uplifting positive sense. ‘Yes’ is a lot better than ‘Maybe’ or ‘No.’”

That positivity is reflected in White’s outlook for the band and its plans for the future. “I know that we’ve still got a positive frame of mind to move forward,” he said. “You really don’t know. Of course, age comes into it, because Steve and myself are getting up there (Howe is 74, and White recently turned 72). But at the same time, we still keep moving forward. So it’s a question of that, really.”

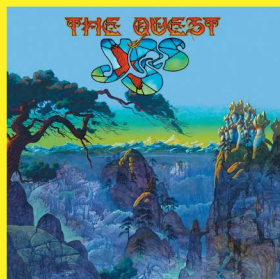
Squire wanted Yes to continue, and White feels he and his bandmates are carrying out his wishes.

“I think he would like the direction we’re moving in,” White said. “One of the last things he said to me was, ‘Alan, whatever happens to me, please keep this going.’ And so we are.” ●

## YES THE QUEST

InsideOut/Sony Music  
(2-CD, Blu-ray, 2-LP)

★★★★



For their first release of new music since 2014’s *Heaven & Earth*, Yes have forged a new sound that hearkens to the band’s classic style while forging new paths.

One significant change: this is the first Yes studio

album to not include bassist Chris Squire, replaced here by Billy Sherwood. Vocalist Jon Davison, who made his debut on *Heaven & Earth*, returns on *The Quest* and played an integral part in the songwriting. The band is rounded out by drummer Alan White, keyboardist Geoff Downes and guitarist Steve Howe.

As its producer, Howe is clearly in the driving seat on this album. His guitar dominates throughout, and he shares lead vocals with Davison on some tracks. In fact, *The Quest* often recalls Howe’s 2020 solo album, *Love Is*.

The album kicks off promisingly with “The Ice Bridge,” which starts with

a keyboard lick that evokes ELP’s version of Aaron Copland’s “Fanfare For The Common Man,” but quickly diverges. Davison gets creative with the vocal melody, and sometimes it works well, but some parts feel awkward. Overall, it’s a strong start.

Other highlights include “Leave Well Alone,” which veers from a funky opening to an acoustic section and then picks up the pace. Davison evokes predecessor Jon Anderson’s cosmic leanings in “The Western Edge,” which also features strong vocals by Sherwood.

Throughout *The Quest*, the band sound together and solid. Howe’s playing is as feisty and adventur-

ous as ever. Sherwood’s bass lines perfectly recall Squire’s signature sound and style. White’s drumming is rock-solid. Downes is not a flamboyant soloist and usually takes a backseat to Howe as he did on their work together with Asia. But his organ and synths nicely fill out the arrangements.

On *The Quest*, Yes play with more energy than they did on *Heaven & Earth*, which was criticized for its slow pacing and bland songwriting. That’s a welcome change. The orchestral arrangements add a fullness to these songs, too. The mix is top-notch.

*The Quest* is a better album than its predecessor.

The bonus tracks on disc 2 of the 2-CD version are somewhat weak, however; especially “Mystery Tour,” which is a bit too on-the-nose with its lyrical homages to The Beatles.

But there’s a lot to like here. *The Quest* is not cutting-edge Yes, and it doesn’t top the band’s 1970s classics. It’s a different Yes, centered on Howe, but a likeable version in its own way. This album is not aggressive and forceful; it’s pleasant and harmonious. Those displeased with its Anderson-less lineup will most likely not be convinced by this release, but listeners with open minds — and ears — will enjoy it.

— Howard Whitman

that The Vapors were a solid band and much more than just a one-hit wonder.

Of the two albums, *New Clear Days* is the better one. In addition to “Turning Japanese,” standout tracks on the album include the spiky rocker “Spring Collection,” the guitar-heavy rocker “America,” the excellent “News at Ten” with its terrific vocal by Dave Fenton, the upbeat “Waiting For the Weekend” and the poignant “Letter From Hiro.” The inclusion of bonus tracks is appreciated because two of the non-album tracks, the power-pop “Prisoners” and the New Wave-style “Move,” are so good that they should have replaced two of the lesser tracks on *New Clear Days*.

“Jimmie Jones” is the best track on *Magnets*. Its power-pop sound stands in stark contrast to its subject matter, the infamous cult leader Jim Jones. The quirky and bouncy “Civic Hall” and the rocker “Johnny’s In Love (Again)” are also standout songs from *Magnets*. Of the bonus tracks, the jaunty “Galleries For Guns” is quite good and should have been on the original release. The *Magnets* disc also includes an interesting, low-key interview with Fenton from 1980 in which he discussed the founding of the band, the band being pegged as Mods and their connection to The Jam.

The third disc is comprised of alternative versions of the songs from *New Clear Days* and its bonus tracks. Some of the versions are similar to the originals while others are considerably different.

Disc four is split between alternative versions of several songs from *Magnets* and its bonus tracks and the live tracks from The Rainbow. The live material is terrific, possibly the highlight of the set, as the live versions are

almost all more powerful and direct than their studio counterparts. Outstanding live versions of the rocking “Caroline,” the off-kilter “Somehow,” the intense “Bunkers,” the power-pop “Waiting For the Weekend,” the guitar-driven “Turning Japanese” and the frenetic “America” are included.

The set comes with a 24-page booklet.

— John Curley

## STEVE HACKETT SURRENDER OF SILENCE

Inside Out Music (CD, 2-LP, CD + Blu-ray  
Mediabook, 2-LP + CD)

★★★★★

Like Hackett’s previous album, *Under A Mediterranean Sky*, this was recorded under lockdown using the contributions of musicians from around the world. However, while *Under A Mediterranean Sky* is a gentle acoustic album, this one has a more heavy-duty sound. Of this album, Hackett said, “Lockdown cobwebs are blown away in one fell-swoop here.”

Not surprisingly, Hackett’s stellar guitar work shines throughout the album. And despite the musicians recording their parts in different locations, it all comes together quite well.

Lead track “The Obliterati” makes terrific use of Hackett’s intense guitar combined with foreboding synths. “Natalia” features an impressive chorale of backing vocalists and very effective use of strings. “Relaxation Music For Sharks (Featuring Feeding Frenzy)” goes from soft to full-on intense very quickly. “The Devil’s Cathedral” features some wonderfully frenetic playing by Hackett.

Like several songs on the album, “Shanghai to Samarkand” has quite a few disparate bits that, when joined together, work quite well. “Fox’s Tango” goes from Black Sabbath-style heavy rock, with some outstanding work by Hackett, to a more prog-rock sound. The vocal performances on “Day of the Dead” are terrific, as is Hackett’s playing in the song’s midsection. “Scorched Earth”

is highlighted by Hackett’s fretwork during the instrumental breaks. The closing track, the beautiful “Esperanza,” downshifts from the intensity of some of the other tracks to spotlight Hackett on Spanish guitar.

Most of the tracks on the album should work quite well in a concert setting. Hackett, who consistently produces excellent material, has another winner here.

— John Curley

## RONNIE JAMES DIO WITH MICK WALL AND WENDY DIO RAINBOW IN THE DARK: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Permuted Press (Hardcover)

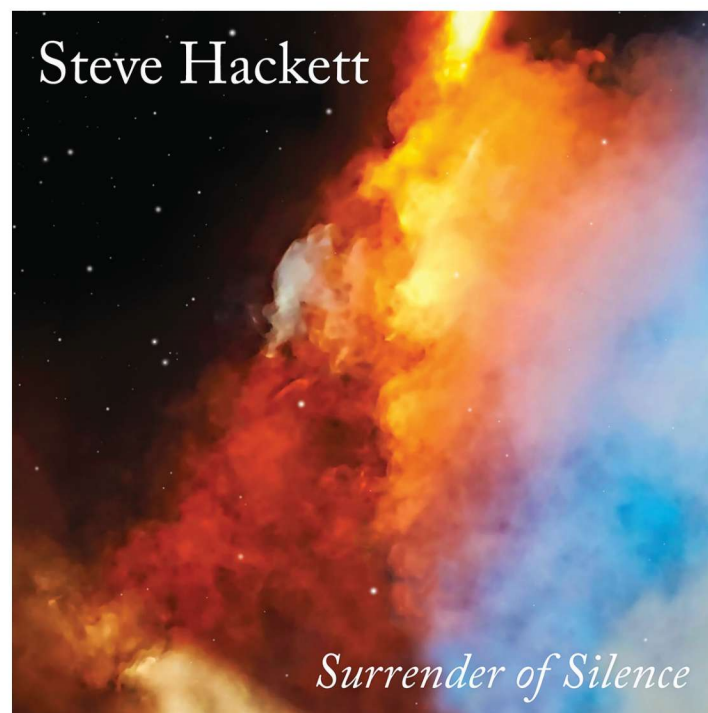
★★★★★

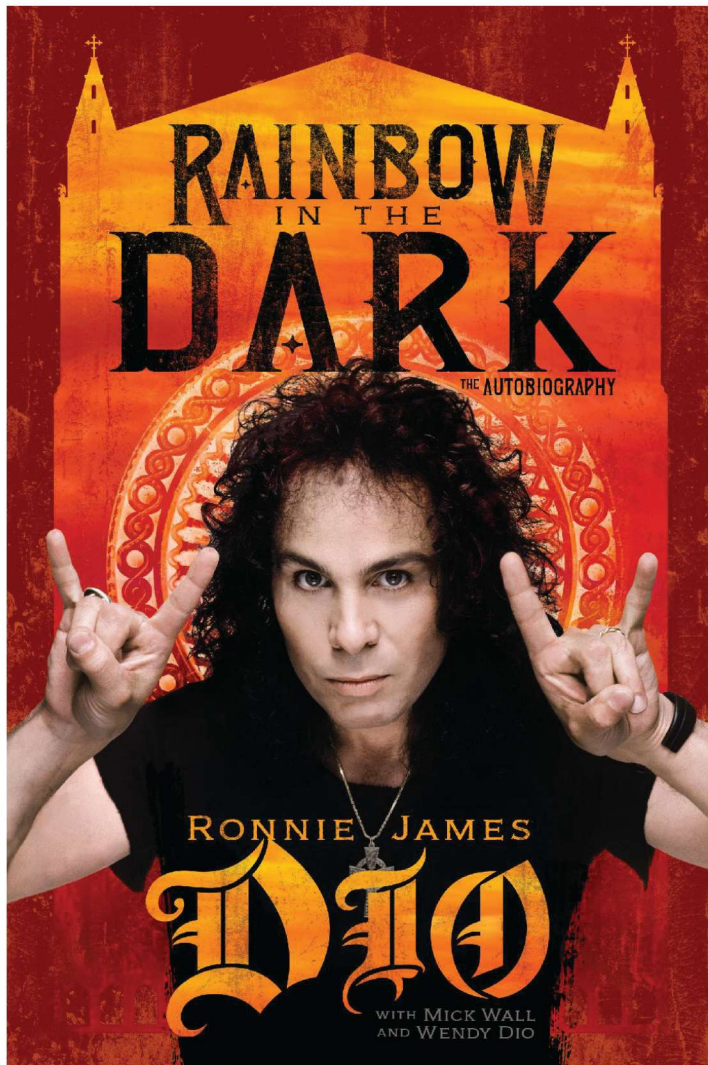
Ronnie James Dio was arguably one of the premier vocalists of heavy metal’s golden age. First finding fame fronting Ritchie Blackmore’s Rainbow, he found further success replacing Ozzy Osbourne in Black Sabbath, ultimately leading his own band, Dio, to the top of the charts.

When Dio died in 2010 at age 67, he left behind a substantial catalog of music — but no autobiography — that is, until now. He’d roughed out about half a book (through the Rainbow years) when he passed, so rock writer Mick Wall, along with Dio’s widow, Wendy, completed the book using interview material and Dio’s notes.

The end result is pretty seamless. Wendy chimes in, usefully, with her perspective on some of the events, but otherwise it’s a first-person narrative that takes Dio up to the peak of his success with his namesake band.

Along the way, Dio (born Ronald Padavona) recounts his journey from a trumpet-playing New York boy to bar





band musician to his first label-signed band, Elf, which was poached (minus the guitarist) by the temperamental Blackmore for his post-Deep Purple project. After Rainbow fizzled out, Dio joined Sabbath for the classic *Heaven and Hell* LP (1980).

Dio's career was filled with ups and downs (including a lot of bad luck with cars), and even though he was well-established when he left Sabbath to front his own group, he did so at great risk, mortgaging his home to finance the band. Time and time again, he bet on his talent, and his earthshaking voice never let him down. As the book indicates, Dio never lacked confidence about his abilities.

In the text Dio is very frank and honest at times, but strangely private in some ways. For example, he doesn't go into much detail on choosing his stage name (Italian for "God") — yet he details the development of his famous "devil's horns" hand gesture (it's from his grandmother and was meant to convey good luck rather than anything satanic).

My biggest issue with this book? It ends too soon, with the recounting of the Dio band's 1986 debut at Madison Square Garden, a lifelong dream of his. There is more story to tell. Hopefully we'll get a second volume of this legendary life.

— Howard Whitman

## JAY JAY FRENCH AND STEVE FARBER TWISTED BUSINESS: LESSONS FROM MY LIFE IN ROCK 'N' ROLL

Rosetta Books (Hardcover)

★★★★

If cats have nine lives, Jay Jay French has had 20. The founding guitarist of Twisted Sister (and regular *Goldmine* contributor) has gone from young radical to teen drug dealer to rock star to motivational speaker. This extraordinary life (lives?) is recounted in his new book, *Twisted Business*, which successfully combines rock-star autobiography with self-help business manifesto.

Like any good autobiography, *Twisted Business* starts at childhood, with French recounting his New York upbringing as John Segall, the son of politically active parents who inspired his

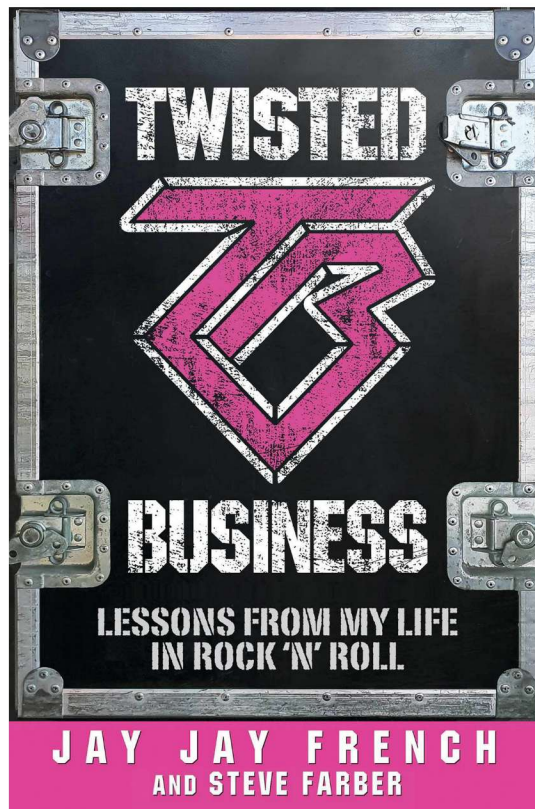
activism in high school. Then, like many of his generation, he caught the rock and roll bug when he saw The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964.

To pay for guitars and records, he dealt (and used) drugs — and French doesn't pull punches in describing this life's dark side. His matter-of-fact writing style makes this just as compelling as any other element here, and when he wises up and leaves that trajectory behind, it's easy to cheer on the triumphs to come.

Of course, no one goes straight from rags to riches. French entertainingly recalls the early days of Twisted Sister (with a totally different lineup), and how the 11th version of the band achieved fame with anthems such as "We're Not Gonna Take It" and "I Wanna Rock." Again, French is frank about the band's highs and lows. Sex/drugs/egos — Twisted Sister

had all of the successes, and lived all of the excesses, typical of this era. His honesty and humor in recounting these tales is one of the strong appeals of this book.

*Twisted Business*, as the title implies, also focuses on French's business life. "TWISTED" is actually an acronym (tenacity/wisdom/inspiration/stability/trust/





excellence/discipline) he uses in his speaking engagements. French skillfully weaves his rock stories around each theme, passing on the lessons learned from these experiences. For example, he recounts how he kept ownership of the Twisted Sister name in a court case by arguing that it had no value at the time — a good move, as the band's songs have since been heavily licensed for film and TV.

These days, French focuses on business and writing, having retired from music following Twisted Sister's final show in 2016. But he still has plenty of rock and roll mojo, and he brings that energy to every page of this very entertaining — and very educational (in a good way) — book.

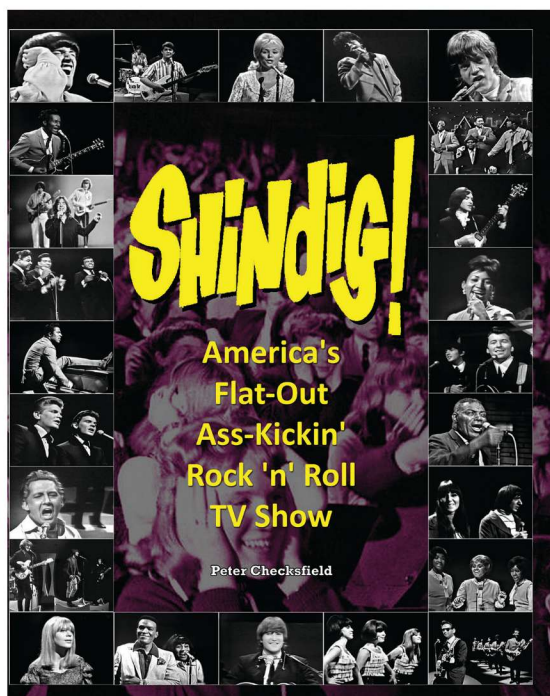
— Howard Whitman

## PETER CHECKSFIELD SHINDIG! AMERICA'S FLAT-OUT ASS-KICK- IN' ROCK'N'ROLL TV SHOW

Self-Published (Paperback)

★★★★★

Over 300 acts played (mostly



live) in the two seasons — 9/64 to 1/66 — of an ABC-TV show called *Shindig!*

Although it was easily the greatest rock and roll show in the history of television, the blues got its biggest boost when on May 26, 1965, after a British blues band called The Rolling Stones performed “Down the Road Apiece” (a 1940 boogie-woogie by Don Raye) and “Little Red Rooster,” the 1961 Howlin’ Wolf hit by Wille Dixon, lead guitarist Brian Jones introduced Wolf himself, all six feet, six inches of scary guitar ferocity, something that no one had ever seen on what was basically a teen pop show. He performed but one song, “How Many More Years,” an angry 1951 original to an ex-lover.

I was watching.

At 14, I didn’t exactly know what it was, but it was riveting, like seeing Elvis or The Beatles on TV for the first time. That one appearance led me to a lifetime of loving the blues.

My generation learned about music from this one show, seeing Jerry Lee Lewis, The Who, The Kinks, The

Beatles (mere months after their *Ed Sullivan* appearance), The Hollies, Yardbirds, The Zombies, The Byrds, The Beach Boys, The Turtles, Lovin’ Spoonful, James Brown, Ike & Tina Turner, Marvin Gaye, Jackie Wilson, Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, Temptations, The Supremes, Roy Orbison, Donovan,

Johnny Cash, Chuck Berry and others. I’ll never forget freaking out at what Bo Diddley’s guitar looked like, running into my mom’s room and forcing her to come to the TV.

Now it’s all within the covers of one book!

Peter Checksfield has done a magnificent job documenting every single artist, every single song, on every single show. With pictures. You don’t read this

book like a story. You use it as an indispensable source.

How could one show be so influential in the lives of my generation? From Willie Nelson singing “Hound Dog” and Billy Preston covering Stevie Wonder’s “Uptight” to the Dave Clark Five “Having a Wild Weekend” and The McCoys (with Rick Derringer looking like he’s 12 years old) doing their hit “Hang On Sloopy,” the songs, the artists, even the house band called The Shindogs (with James Burton and Delaney Bramlett in their ranks) were revolutionary for the times.

The only question is why this book wasn’t written decades earlier.

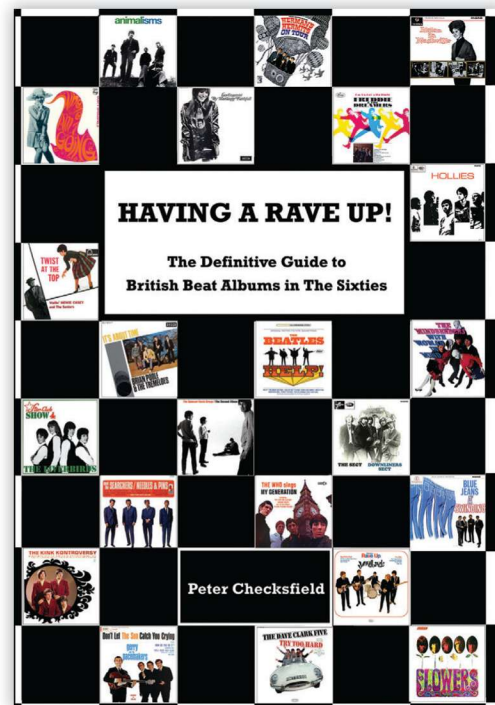
— Mike Greenblatt

## PETER CHECKSFIELD HAVING A RAVE UP! THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO BRITISH BEAT ALBUMS IN THE SIXTIES

Self-released (Paperback)

★★★★★

Author Peter Checksfield leaves no stone unturned in



his scrupulously researched Brit-Rock album excavation. It’s a ’60s thing, man. Every song. Every album. Every act. Complete with reviews, recording data, covers, labels, writing credits and catalog numbers. Although one could quibble why ’63 to ’66 is so voluminously covered and ’67 to ’69 post-beat or psychedelic bands like Cream, The Move, Pink Floyd and The Bee Gees are virtually ignored in favor of lesser lights like Adam Faith, Cliff Richard, Johnny Kidd & The Pirates and Helen Shapiro, there is no doubting the veracity of his innate fandom. Plus, between these covers, is a litany of reminders to go back and reconsider The Searchers, Gerry and The Pacemakers, Herman’s Hermits, Billy J. Kramer and The Dakotas, Freddie and The Dreamers, Wayne Fontana and The Mindbenders, Cilla Black and a wealth of others that might’ve stirred our young American souls for five minutes or so back in the day.

— Mike Greenblatt