



PROG Standard



With nearly 40 years of music to choose from it's hard to know what to leave out of your set and harder still to know what to include on a live DVD! Michael Heatley meets the Yes bass master

The year 2003 was a big one for Yes, playing festival dates from Sweden Rock to Glastonbury and, finally, the prestigious Montreux Jazz where their new DVD release was filmed. If the band look at home on a Swiss stage, then that's hardly surprising: their first Continental gigs in the late '60s were in Switzerland, while they lived there in late '76/early '77 when recording *Going For The One*. 'So we were quite familiar with the backroads of Montreux,' bassist Chris Squire chuckles.

The band was first filmed live when they released *Yessongs* in 1973, since when there have been highlights like the 9012Live video shot in the 80s that finally made it to DVD a year or so ago. But Squire still thrives on the pressure.

'When it's live there's more pressure on you to get everything right – the moment's gone if you fuck up, so you obviously try not to do that. The studio is where you develop things and then you take it further when you go out live. Personally I enjoy interacting with the audience, and when the band is playing well together it's a very enjoyable concept. Montreux was a good show, the band played very well that night, and as Yes had been touring pretty consistently since about 1997 we were pretty well oiled as an act by that point. The band, the crew and everyone knew what they were doing, it was a good time to make it.'

With nearly 40 years of music to choose from, new numbers have to earn their place in the Yes set. 'One

thing I've always been in favour of is to tour material from our latest collaboration so we can see if we can get more out of it in a live environment.' Of the handful of songs from 2001's *Magnification* originally in the set, two – *In The Presence Of* and *Magnification* itself – survived to make *Montreux*.

Squire believes 'it's good to try and challenge oneself and the fans by

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presenting some of the newer works.' But this means rotating the classics and he admits one of his favourite ever Yes songs, *Heart Of The Sunrise* from *Fragile*, is absent. How many songs are unleaveoutable? 'There are probably half a dozen... but then we have done shows when we've left *Roundabout* out of the set.' Don't worry folks, it's here!

The new numbers don't so much change as develop on stage, he explains. 'Maybe the feel becomes better because one tends to put things together in a more segmented fashion in the studio; not everything is played at the same time. So when you're doing it live there is that opportunity for everything to gel within the feel and emotion of the way the music is projected.'

The typical Yes show has solo spots featuring individual members. 'Chris's

is of course *The Fish* – but wouldn't he prefer to keep the momentum going by playing a continuous five-man show? 'We've done both. I personally don't mind the little interactions within the show when you get a little break and you're on again. I've never been a great fan of the interval. I'd rather do it this way – a whole show with short breaks when people have little feature moments.'

Squire 'didn't really notice' the cameraman's love affair with Steve Howe that gives the guitarist considerably more screen time than himself. 'I think cameras love lead guitar players,' he laughs, 'they always have done. Remember the cameramen are working for the festival and they kind of think here's the singer singing the song and here's the guitar solo. They're probably not all that aware of the nuances of a band like Yes, that it's important to get a shot of the drummer at that particular moment cos he's doing something tasty; you'd have to be pretty clued-in to a band to know that kind of thing. And, let's face it, it was live; you have to go for the overall perspective.'

While he played the majority of the set on his trusty 1965 Rickenbacker, the three-necked 'Roger Newell' bass made its appearance for one track only. The interesting thing about that is that that isn't actually the original instrument. (Newell was Rick Wakeman's bass player in the 70s, and his boss had the bass

Catalogue

YES: LIVE AT MONTREUX 2003

Regarded as both fans and band alike as being one of the finest Yes gigs ever. Whew!



YES: TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS

This 1973 LP is everything progressive-rock should be: majestic, ambitious – and long



ULTIMATE YES: 35TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Lock the doors, disconnect the phone and let Squire, Wakeman and the chaps take you on a journey



Gear

GUITARS

1965 Rickenbacker 4001 Kizz triple-neck 'Roger Newell'

AMPS

100-watt Marshall amp through 4x12 cabinet
Ampeg SVT-4 amp through two 8x10 cabs

EFFECTS

Gibson Maestro fuzz, TC Electronics chorus and a custom-built tremolo unit



'The purpose of that Syn revival was because of the untimely death of keyboard player Andrew Jackman'

custom-made by Wal.) 'The original is hanging in the Hard Rock Café in New York,' Chris explains, 'and that is actually a Japanese copy made by a guy who loved the first one so much he had to copy it. The original went into the Hard Rock café auction at a point when I felt we might not be doing that song (*Awaken*) any more; it was probably the 80s when the band had changed.'

Awaken, which originally and fittingly appeared on the Swiss-recorded *Going For The One*, was unique in having a section for fretless bass, one for fretted bass and third played on 8-string bass. And while this may have seemed a good idea in the studio, it presented major problems in live performance. 'To change guitars during the song would have been almost impossible because there was no time, it just goes from one thing to another. With this guitar I can play the

sections just by flicking a switch. I couldn't play *Awaken* live without it, or something like it, so Rick solved the problem and I thank him for giving it to me.'

Yes will celebrate their 40th anniversary next year with a tour and a new studio album, Chris is not only completing a new solo album – his first since 1975's *Fish Out Of Water* – but is reissuing that classic on his own record label, Stone Ghost records. 'The first release is going to be a version of the original together with a DVD interview with me about the album. I'm also doing a commentary track as one of a few bonus things in the package... that's a very exciting development.'

The original promotional video of the album's first two songs will also be on the DVD thanks to some smart detective work by Squire. 'I managed to rescue the videos from the British Film Institute who had them in storage – I have no idea how it got there or why, but I managed to locate it.' He's also recently managed to locate the 2-inch audio masters, 'So there will eventually be a 5.1 mix of *Fish Out Of Water* done. But it won't be in the first package because that is complete and ready to go.'

Chris was last in these pages a couple of years ago when he revived his 60s group, the Syn, during a period of Yes inactivity. Rumours that this ended in tears are, he claims, an exaggeration. 'The purpose of that Syn revival was because of the untimely death of keyboard player Andrew Jackman. That's why I got re-involved as a tribute to him. Then we went on and had a couple of ideas which resulted in *Symdestructable*, which I thought was a pretty good album. But it was never really intended to go much further. So it's not that there was any long-term future planned for the Syn as a project, it ran its natural course.'

If you're debating as to whether or not to invest in Yes's Montreux DVD, Chris is happy to point out that other, cheaper alternatives are available. 'Go to Youtube,' he laughs, 'and you'll see hundreds of Yes clips that aren't sanctioned by us but have been put up there by the occasional guy with a telephone at a show!' But given the first web review of the DVD insists that 'Squire's bass doesn't only anchor the sound, it defines it!', he's more than happy to endorse the product and commend the reviewer. 'That's nice – I shall send him a Christmas card!' 📧

AND ANOTHER THING

Chris's first group the Syn at one point included another future Yes-man, Pete Banks

He once pasted floral wallpaper to his Bass for a psychedelic effect

His Ricky was the fourth to arrive in the UK after those for John Entwistle, Pete Quaife and Donovan

Chris has been the only ever-present Yes member over the past four decades