



Pete Townshend: a man a band and an ego

by Bob Guccione Jr.

Although it's been several years now since the Who finally finished their last farewell tour, the indefatigable ego of Pete Townshend has kept him in the public eye as a rock star, author of the book "Horse's Ass" and as an editor at a well known London publishing firm. In this, his first public interview since some time last week, Pete condescended to give us his opinions on everything from the 'Oo to music in general to the 'Oo.

Getaway: You've been quite busy lately, Pete, with balancing several different career roles as well as raising a family. How do you do it all and remain sane?

PT: Well, Bob, as you know I've been totally deaf for the last six years because of hearing damage I sustained over the years of being rock's loudest guitarist. So the only reason I can hear your questions is because I've got my hearing aid turned way up. The same thing with my careers — if things get particularly hectic, I just turn off my hearing aid, and presto, total peace with the world and with myself.

Getaway: That brings up my next question. How has your spiritual leader, Meher Baba influenced your lifestyle?

PT: Well, Bob, as you know I've been a devout follower of his for many years now and I think I can safely say that he's really influenced me a lot.

Getaway: Would you care to be more specific?

PT: Well, Bob, as you know, the totality of the universe, that is, that which we doubt, or confirm or deny, or whatever, you know, and he really brings out that kind of spiritual emancipation in whatever and the cosmos, you know.

Getaway: That's very interesting. Now, this is kind of a touchy area with some people, but lately there have been a lot of comparisons between the Who's live performances and those of Bruce Springsteen. It's even been suggested to me that Springsteen might be the better performer, but not by much, of course.

PT: Well, Bob, you know that I'm the greatest guitar player that the world has ever known and even though I've been completely tone deaf for the last ten years and I haven't made a really good album since 1973, I'm still the greatest, and I don't care what young upstart comes along even if he has been at it for 20 years. I mean, it takes Springsteen, what, four hours to do his show. The guy is obviously too slow.

Getaway: I couldn't agree with you more, Pete. Then what about "Live at Leeds"? It's been cited as the album that's shaped the course of hard rock in general over the last 15 years and, in particular, influenced Led Zeppelin in their embryonic stages.

PT: Well, Bob, you know that's right. Even though Led Zeppelin already had two albums out when "Live at Leeds" was released, Jimmy Page came up to me a few years later and said that he had time travelled forward to the release of "Live at Leeds" so he'd know just what to do when it came time to record the first Led Zeppelin album. And of course, it influenced every popular musician since, even people like Debby Boone, although in her case perhaps in a negative context. Not bad at all for an album we just put out because we were having trouble thinking up songs for our next studio album.

Getaway: How did the death of Keith Moon affect the Who?

PT: Well, Bob, you know we thought about packing it in there for a few hours after he died, but then I finally got inspired and said, hell guys, we already sold out years ago, why don't we just get a new drummer and carry on, sort of like Spinal Tap. Of course Kenny Jones never did blow up.

Getaway: Speaking of blowing up, do you think rock and roll has any lasting significance, or is it all just a big promo con job?

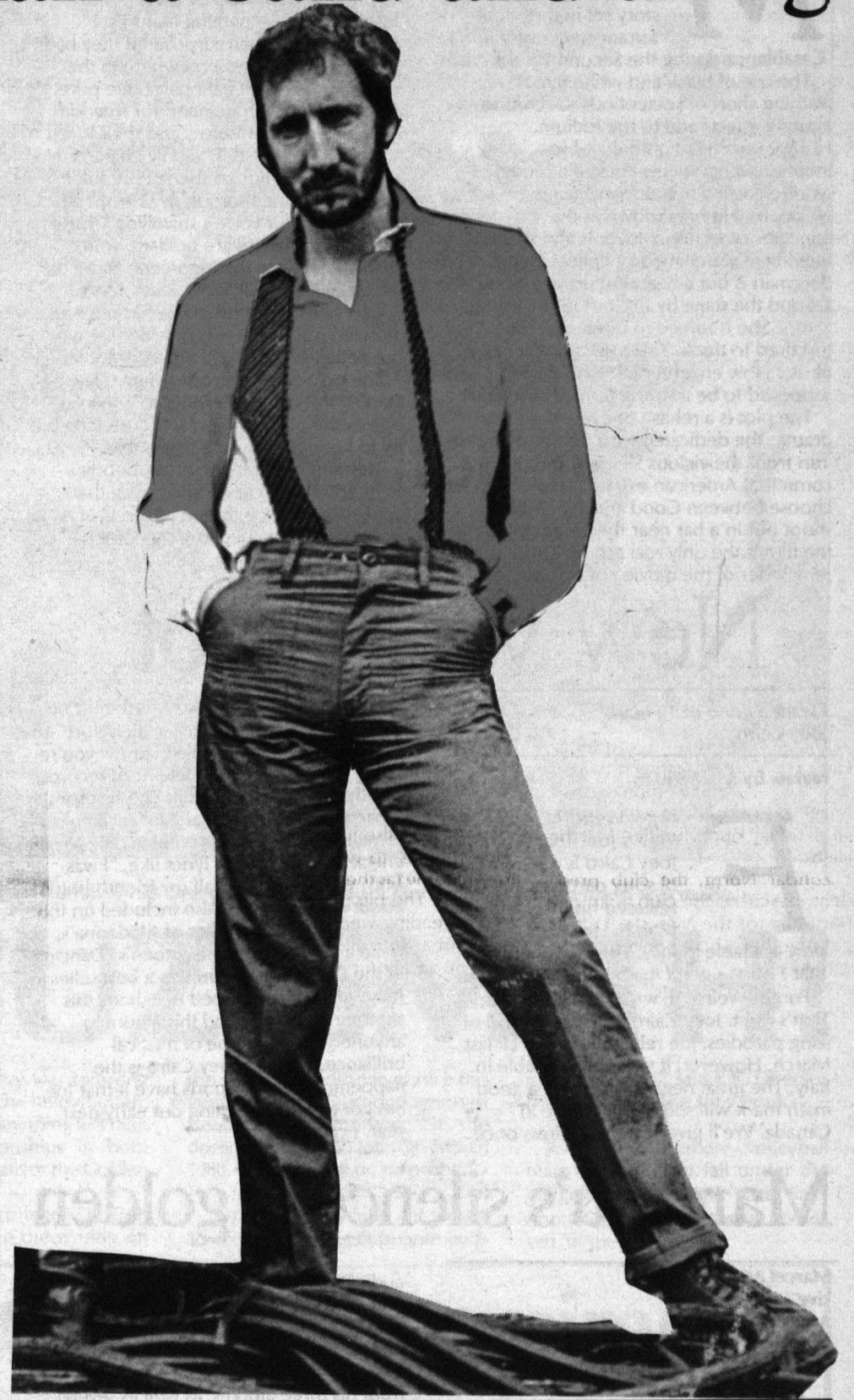
PT: Well, Bob, you know that I've always felt that my work is so great that it will be remembered forever. Forget about Beethoven, Mozart and those kind of flash in the pan composers. "Squeeze Box" is simply the greatest piece of music ever written, so of course it has lasting significance.

Getaway: Have you got any more farewell tours planned to capitalize on this lasting significance, considering the smashing success of the last three?

PT: Well, Bob, you know farewell tours can be a lot of fun, and a good little moneymaker besides. You see, every time we threatened to quit, it ensured that every one of our fans wanted to come out and pay those big bucks to see us. I could see doing another one, since rock concert ticket prices have risen so much in the last few years.

Getaway: One last question, Pete, and thanks a lot for your valuable time. I'm sure our readers will appreciate your fascinating insights, as always. Do you think that people who think the Who were a '70's band should be allowed to have shows on university radio stations?

PT: Well, Bob, you know we released five studio albums of new material, including one of outtakes, and seventeen compilation albums in the '70's, so it would be easy to get the impression that we were a '70's band, even though our biggest hits were mostly in the '60's. So I guess you could forgive someone for having that impression. But the decade doesn't really matter, because I'm still the greatest.



I've stopped being afraid of parodying myself, becoming a caricature — this rich cliché I invented five years ago (1973).

Deathtongue is taking a public licking

As fan's outrage grows, the public outcry over Deathtongue, the blatant new heavy-uranium group, is mounting.

Club dates scheduled for early January in Dinwoodie Lounge have been cancelled because of pressure from various concern groups around town. When asked why, Dinwoodie Management replied, "It's just too controversial! If we let the date go as scheduled, the bad publicity would have really hurt."

The fight against this outspoken group has been spearheaded by MAAMAPAC (Mothers Against Animal Music And Penguins And Cats). Leader and founder of MAAMAPAC, Joan Buzzibode has this to say about Deathtongue:

"It is this very sort of Satan spewed evil that our group was formed to rid of. This sort of group influences our kids in the worst way. Just last week I tried to get my Johnny to sit and watch something educational and Canadian, like the Beachcombers. He said it was boring and wanted to listen to that... that... ooohh..." (At this point Mrs. Buzzibode started foaming at the mouth.)

Indeed, it seems that the unwelcome media attention focused on Deathtongue seems to be taking its toll. An informal survey of local record stores showed that none of them stock Deathtongue. Even their classic "Let's roll over Lionel Ritchie with a Tank", was nowhere to be found.

This media avoidance has even extended to radio. Both FM and AM stations have not played anything by Deathtongue in the

last two weeks.

Band members were not very perturbed by all this. When 'Wild' Bill Catt, the lead singer for Deathtongue was interviewed he said, "Ack!" And Opus Crockus, the Rhythm Tuba player said, "I don't know, do you think the flaming skeleton being crushed by the bulldozer was too violent?"

Band Manager/Songwriter Steve Dallas has high hopes for further tour dates. "I think that after we do the guest shot on Romper Room the whole Canadian Tour thing will work out."

Commercially, the outcry against the 'satanic animals' has not daunted their economic viability. Deathtongue recently signed a movie deal with Golam-Globus productions to do a nostalgia film "Abbot and Costello meet Deathtongue" in which, Don Johnson will star as guest lead vocalist,



and super director Elmer Finklestein (*Friday the 13th Part LXXIV*) will direct. As well, stuffed Deathtongue dolls will hit the shelves of toystores just in time for Christmas.

Indeed, the only other bad news for fans, besides the Edmonton cancellation, is that contrary to some rumors, the Osmonds will NOT be opening for them on this leg of their tour.