

SKRATCH

Anderson,
Brueford,
Wayman,
Howe

Yes? No, not officially, anyway. After what I was told was a court battle to rival Pink Floyd's, the rights to use the name Yes were snatched from these four lads, primarily Jon Anderson, a member form day one, by Chris Squire (another original member) and his fellows. This group is not one of your regular "we've banded together because we're washed up and we want to cash in on nostalgic yuppies" bands...

When some fans of progressive-rock bands such as Yes, Rush, or Pink Floyd talk about their fave group, quite often the phrase "I like their old stuff alot more" comes up. This album more resembles the older style of Yes, especially in the area of song structure; four out of nine songs have more than one part. Multiple-part songs are infinitely tricky to weave together, and even these guys, widely regarded as musical geniuses, have a smidgen of trouble doing so.

The first thing that grabs your ears is the bassline, performed on a stick (no, not a piece of wood, it's a combination bass and lead guitar on what appears to be only a fretboard) by Tony Levin, guest musician. After alot of really cool lyrics comes a great keyboard solo, followed by a short guitar solo. Then the song jumps into something totally different, with very thumpy drums, and a syncopated guitar line. Definitely not your average song here, the title, "Themes" seems quite appropriate.

The next song, "Fist of Fire" has a very ominous feel to it. The bass-stick takes over the beat of the song, and the drummer plays percussion lines instead. But the most noticeable thing here is, again, Wakeman's mind-numbing keyboard solos. The vocal lines appear and disappear like magic, and are very powerfully performed by Anderson, and do not leave a "hole" in the song when they disappear.

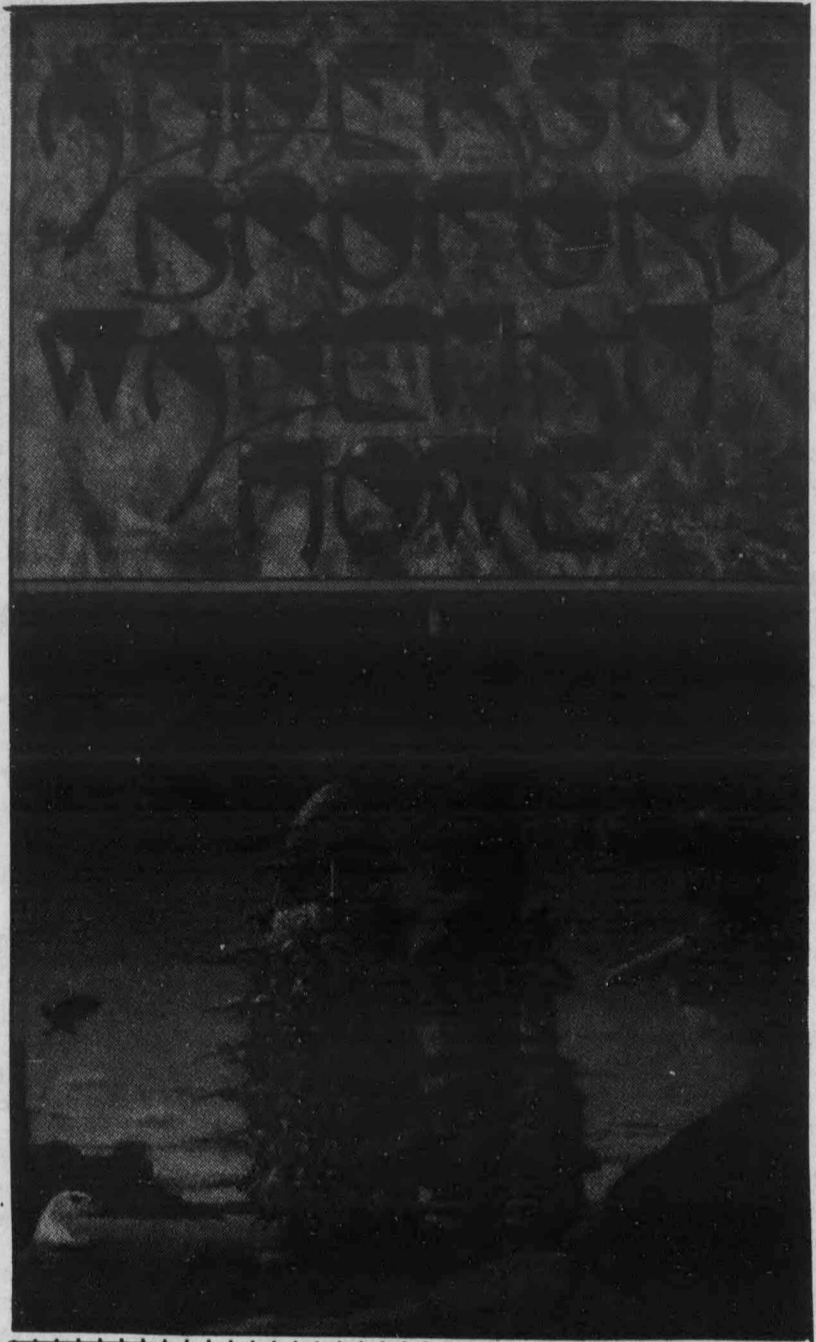
By far the best song on this album is "Brother of Mine" which received little airplay here, but reached number one on the British charts. It clocks in at over ten minutes and yet again, here the guitar is placed too far back, shame. The "nothing can come between us" line, as well as the main chord pattern hold this together incredibly, and it flows marvelously, you almost don't realize how (very) long the thing is.

Even more ominous than "Fist of Fire" is "Birthright" which starts nicely with many acoustic guitars, and the keyboards taking a very in-the-back feeling. The song slowly builds with growing drum lines, but then gets swathed in synths and mandolins. The drums reappear, followed by the most UNBELIEVABLY complex keyboard solo. The lyrics, by the way, are evidently about the Aborigines of Australia and the political problems they face.

The most disappointing thing about this album is that they stuck all the good songs on side 1, which leaves us with cassettes with alot of rewinding to do. On side 2, "Quartet" is passable, with its most noticeable attribute being the mentioning of three of the older Yes songs, "Long Distance Runaround", "The Gates of Delirium", and "Roundabout", worked carefully into the lyrics. The next song "Teakbois" is unbearably bouncy and happy, and has senseless lyrics. Bleah.

Most of these songs are very well written but for the average listener would run far too long. Also the lyrics are sometimes too grandiose, and may not make any immediate sense at all. These guys are a good example that you don't need a catchy name and good looks to make good music. Incidentally, after the new Yes fell flat on its proverbial touche with the release of "Big Generator" it's a good thing that they didn't keep the name. Remember, before you buy, listen!

victor



College Hill



Last Class

APRIL 12th

A BALLROOM EVENT

members and
guests

The Grunians

UNB

This Frida Szabo's Mephi (two and a half

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