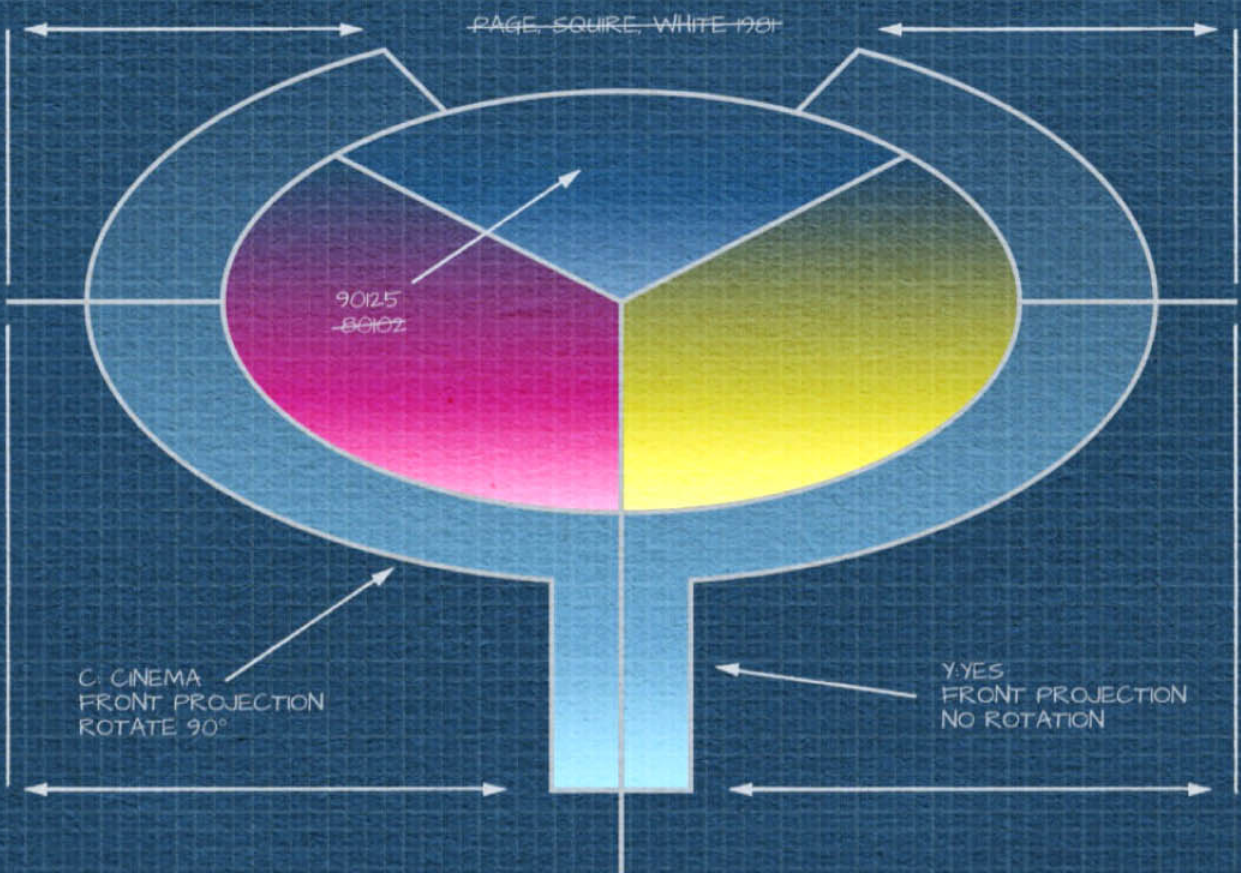




# PROG

# YES



## 90125: THE BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW PROG ERA

### FISH

"I was a broken person. 13th Star is about trying to find my way"

### EDGAR BROUGHTON

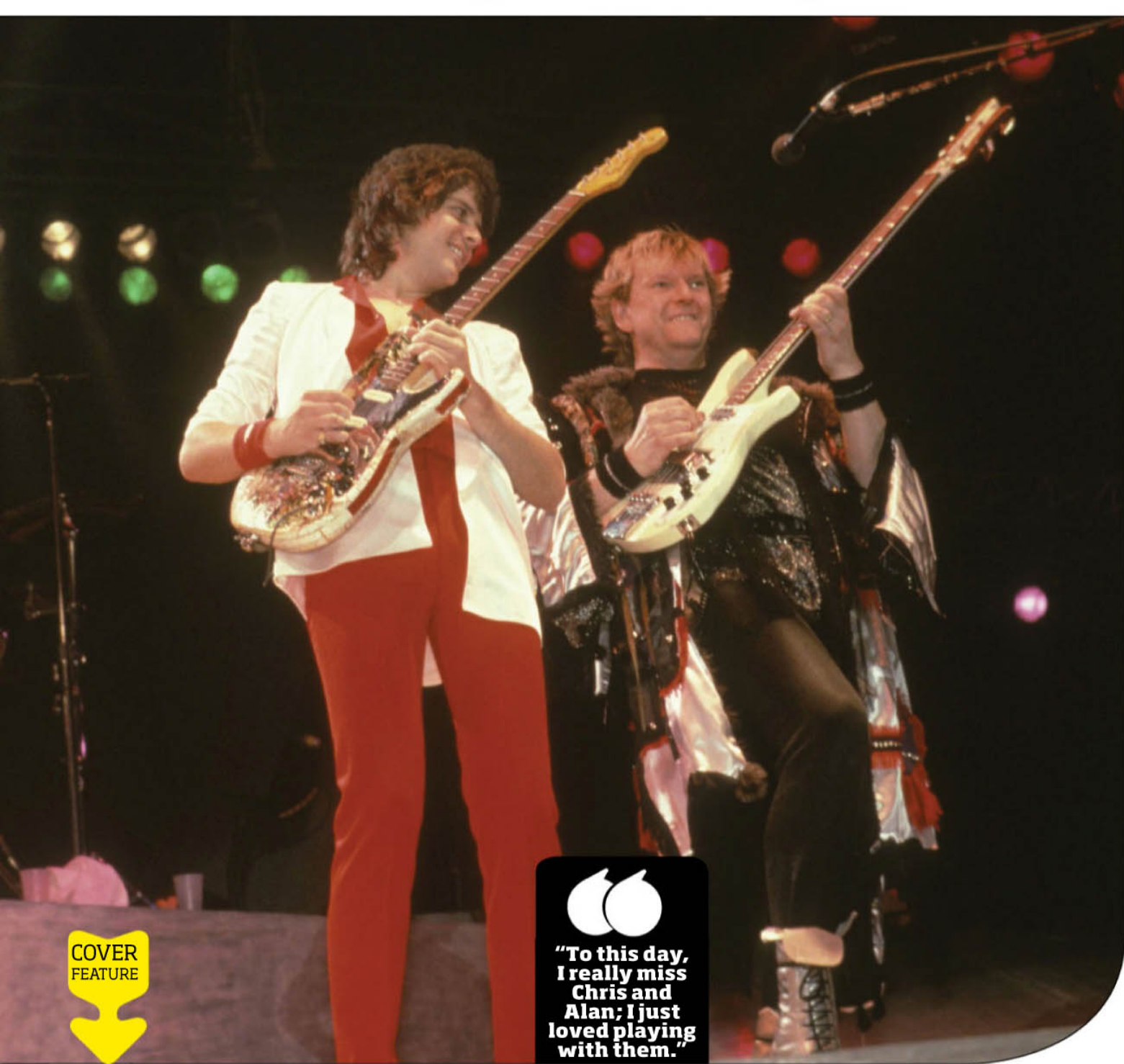
The prog legend returns with his first new album in over a decade

### GONG

"We've got the confidence to do things the way we feel they should be done"



YES	90125
PROG	145



EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

COVER  
FEATURE

  
"To this day,  
I really miss  
Chris and  
Alan; I just  
loved playing  
with them."

# Yes p28

How *90125* ushered in a new era for both Yes and progressive rock...

They were Yes before  
and they were Yes after.  
But what on earth  
happened in between?

The short-lived *Drama* era in 1980 was almost the death of **Yes**. Yet three years later, the heroes of British progressive rock had been completely reinvented with massive worldwide success. In *90125* they had their biggest-selling album and a worldwide hit single. On the record's 40th anniversary, we look back on how a new band without a deal became an 80s success story.

**Words:** Stephen Lambe  
**Main image:** Ebet Roberts/  
Redferns/Getty images

In January 1981, Yes met at Steve Howe's house in Hampstead. The previous year had been a fraught one for the band: following the departure of Jon Anderson and Rick Wakeman, the three remaining members – Chris Squire, Alan White and Howe – had recruited Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes from the new-wavers The Buggles. The resulting album, *Drama*, remains a fan favourite, but was created under extreme pressure with a US tour only months away. During the shows that followed, Horn frequently struggled to fill Anderson's shoes. All was not well.

"I told Chris that it sounded a bit like Yes. To which Chris said, 'That's why you're here.'"

**Jon Anderson**

# MOVING THROUGH SOME **Changes** – How *90125* Saved Yes

Horn was effectively fired after the tour, and Squire and White announced a plan to form a new project with Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin. This left Howe and Downes holding the baby, with no appetite to continue as Yes. Within months, the remaining duo joined forces with John Wetton and Carl Palmer to form Asia, while Horn made the second Buggles album and started a production career. Then-manager Brian Lane was horrified: he'd lost Yes and the band went on to lose their record contract with Atlantic.

The few months that White and Squire spent rehearsing with Page as part of XYZ are the stuff of legend. Page, himself reeling from the death of John Bonham just months before, was initially enthusiastic and the trio pooled material, producing several demos. It didn't take long, however, before the relationship began to fall apart, scuppered by both musical and managerial disagreements. At a loose end once more, the pair teamed up with lyricist Peter Sinfield and recorded a Christmas single, *Run With The Fox*, which was released towards the end of 1981. It's since become

something of an unsung classic in the Yuletide sing-along genre.

Although XYZ never recorded an album, it's clear that the two former Yes men had music in mind that was a little more contemporary in tone, even compared to the energetic prog of *Drama*. Some pieces from those rehearsals would wind up on later Yes albums: the Squire song *Telephone Secrets*, which never found a home with Yes, shows a band combining musical chops with commercial aspirations. This would become the template for their new band, Cinema.

Meanwhile, South African guitarist Trevor Rabin was also at something of a crossroads. Following fame in his homeland as part of Rabbitt, he had moved to the UK and released three solo albums on the Chrysalis label before a songwriting development deal with the new Geffen label led to him suddenly moving to California. However, things started to turn sour, and after a period rehearsing, ironically, with Howe and Downes' Asia in London, he was unceremoniously dropped by Geffen. However, Rabin wasn't short on interest.



A bootleg copy of the XYZ/Cinema sessions.



The band, then known as Cinema, share a laugh between rehearsals at John Henrys.



August 1980 line-up, l-r: Alan White, Geoff Downes, Chris Squire, Trevor Horn, Steve Howe.

"I started sending out demo tapes," he remembers. "The irony is that I sent out all this material that was going to end up on *Owner Of A Lonely Heart* and *Changes*, and they were rejected. I've still got the letter from Clive Davis at Arista saying, 'While we feel your voice has Top 40 appeal, we feel your song [Owner...] is too left-field for the marketplace today.'"

Other offers came in. "There was talk of a band with Keith Emerson, Cozy Powell and Jack Bruce, but that idea didn't move forward," Rabin remembers. "Then Ron Fair, a fantastic A&R guy at RCA, offered me a solo deal, so it was that: the band with Keith and Jack or the possibility of a band with Chris Squire and Alan White via Phil Carson at Atlantic, who had also heard the demos. In the end, Phil — who's a pretty persuasive guy — called me up and said, 'Come on, stop fucking around.' So the next thing I knew, I was in a sushi restaurant in Shepherd's Bush [west London] getting to know Chris and Alan."

At the end of the evening, the trio went back to Squire's house in Virginia Water in Surrey and had what Squire referred to as "the worst jam in history". Rabin agrees: "It didn't sound great, but it felt so right."

Squire, Rabin and White found themselves in another development deal financed by Phil Carson personally, with the freedom to work on material at their own pace at John Henrys rehearsal studio in Islington, north London. Carson already had a long history with Yes. As an executive at Atlantic, it was he who had convinced the label to re-sign Yes after their second album, *Time And A Word*, flopped in the US. He'd also introduced Yes to long-time engineer Eddie Offord and had stayed in close touch with the band, especially Chris Squire, throughout their success in the 1970s.

But the group needed a keyboard player, and both Carson and Squire saw the logic of bringing in Tony Kaye, Yes' original keys man. Carson confirms that even at this early stage, it was in

his mind that Yes should be revived while the band rehearsed.

"Part of my job is being a marketing guy. A new band is difficult to sell. An established one is much easier," he acknowledges. So, having Kaye in the

**"The next thing I knew, I was in a sushi restaurant in Shepherd's Bush getting to know Chris and Alan."**

### Trevor Rabin

band would take the line-up closer to being Yes from day one. As a bonus, Kaye had a certain charisma, and the way he played would also suit the new band. Squire, however, had the job of selling the idea to Rabin.

"Chris suggested Tony," says Rabin. "I didn't know him, but Chris said that he was a 'meat and potato' keyboard player, a real Hammond guy. He said to

me: 'I think he'll be right for the band because you're a little fancy!'"

They called themselves Cinema and started to rehearse material that both Rabin and Squire had originated. As rehearsals went on, Kaye also began to contribute. "We rehearsed some of my songs," Rabin remembers, "and there was also a song called *Open Your Doors*, which Chris had written, that had Alan on electronic drums. We also played the song that we used as the intro to *Owner...* live, called *Make It Easy*."

Despite the four-piece's chemistry, there was talk of a fifth member.

"During the rehearsal process, Chris mentioned bringing in a singer and suggested Trevor Horn," Rabin recalls. "I was confused. Chris had told me that, during the shows, he started at the front of the stage, and by the third song, he was standing beside the drums. I said, 'What for?' Chris said, 'He could sing, you could sing, I could sing. It might be good.' But I just knew him as a pop producer. He turned up to rehearsals with a guitar. I said,



**Cinema rehearsals at John Henrys Studios, London, 1982. Inset: A very happy Chris Squire sits by the mixing desk.**

Canadian Bob Ezrin, best known for his work with Alice Cooper and with Pink Floyd on *The Wall*, was the favourite for some time, with Queen producer Roy Thomas Baker and Rabin's old mentor, Mutt Lange, also in the frame. Rabin remembers a long, boozy dinner with all of them. The three legendary producers got along famously, but nothing was decided and so the search continued.

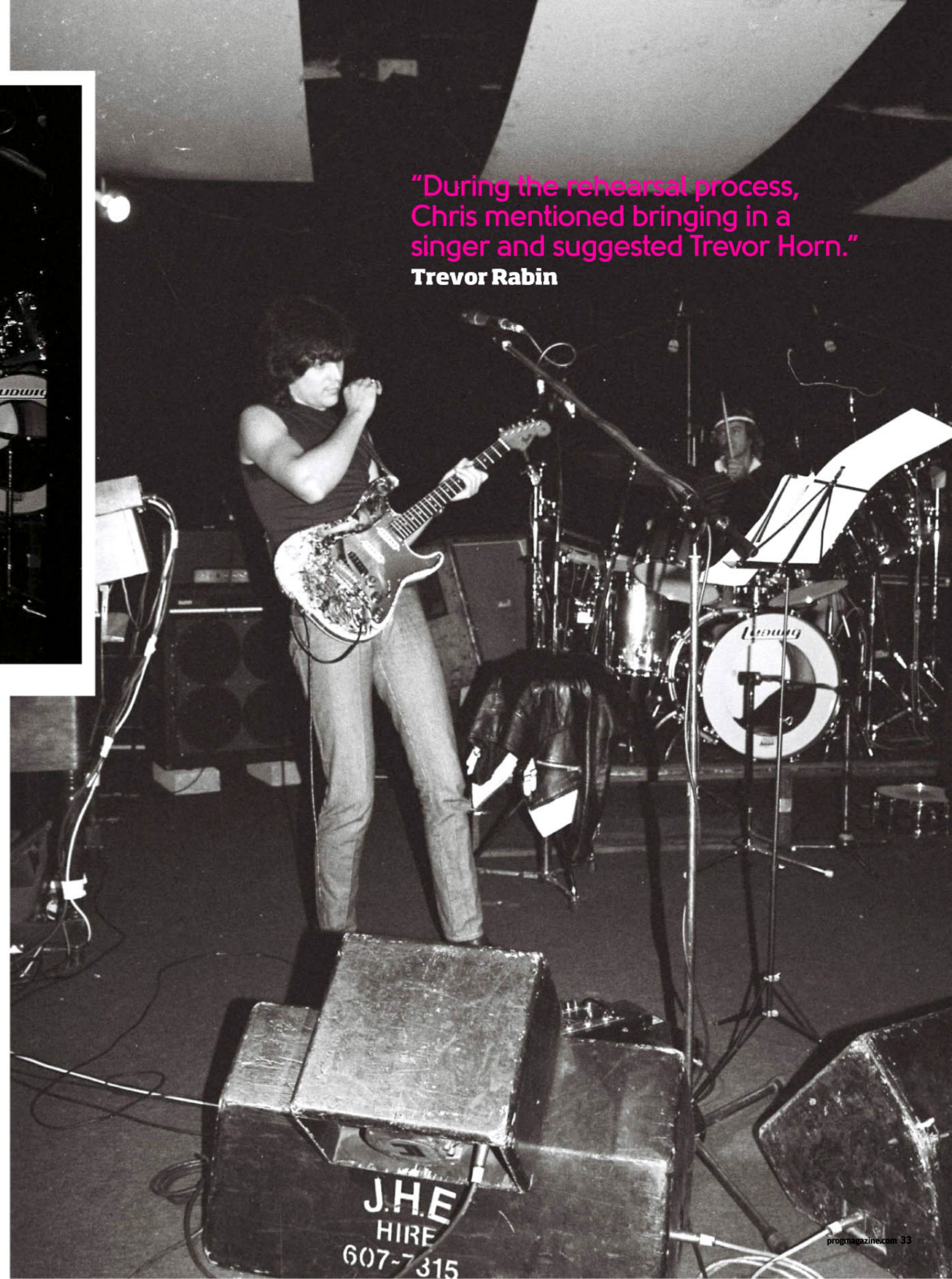
In the end, Squire decided to ask Trevor Horn to take the recording on. Horn was by no means convinced. After all, he had been ousted by the

band the year before, and while he bore no grudge, his wife and manager Jill Sinclair did. Furthermore, by now, he was an up-and-coming pop producer, acclaimed for his work with pop duo Dollar and on ABC's award-winning debut, *The Lexicon Of Love*. Why would he get involved with a bunch of old rock stars who didn't even have a record deal? Luckily, Horn remained a Yes fan and Squire's charm was legendary. That charm was also needed to convince Rabin.

"Chris said, 'I know you and Trevor Horn won't ever play onstage

**"During the rehearsal process, Chris mentioned bringing in a singer and suggested Trevor Horn."**

**Trevor Rabin**



"Is that a prop, or are you going to use it?" We just didn't hit it off at that point at all. Within 24 hours, I told Chris that it wasn't working for me. I loved working with Chris, Alan and Tony, but I was ready to pack it in and come home. Then, suddenly, Trevor wasn't there, so we carried on with everything going smoothly."

Rabin also remembers the music becoming more complex. "We were having such fun playing together, and we were introducing some interesting time signatures and some exciting chordal left-turns into the music."

Eventually, the band invited others to hear what they were doing. Yes fans Jon Dee and David Watkinson, both involved in the fanzine scene, were the only members of the public invited to watch the rehearsals at John Henrys in 1982. By that time, the group had worked up some live tracks that appeared complete, yet none of these songs would appear on *90125*. They played three pieces: *Carry On*, *Make It Easy* (which was then called *Take It Easy*) and Squire's *Open Your Doors*. Between each, Kaye also rehearsed the keyboard introduction to what would become *Hearts*.

With the rehearsal period drawing to a close, the next question was: who was going to produce the Cinema album?

together, but how do you feel about him producing us?' I said, 'Who? The Dollar guy?' I was really apprehensive, and Tony Kaye wasn't into the idea at all. In the end, I just decided to get my head down to make the album work."

It turned out to be the right decision, and Rabin and Horn would later form a strong bond in the studio.

With discussions continuing and with Rabin briefly back at home in Los Angeles, Horn paid him a visit to hear his songs. The producer maintains that while Rabin was in the bathroom, he heard a demo of *Owner Of A Lonely*

DAVID WATKINSON



Fanzine *Yes Music* sent their editor, Jon Dee, and photographer David Watkinson to the rehearsals for *Cinema*; those photos are included here.

Perfecting their sound at John Henrys, London.

Recording began in London with Gary Langan as chief engineer, but Horn struggled initially. Having already dealt with new technology and relatively pliable artists, he now had to deal with experienced musicians with opinions of their own. Horn began to feel that this project was a ship beset by high seas.

Although their relationship was certainly improving, Horn and Rabin locked horns over the approach to recording Alan White's drums. Robert 'Mutt' Lange, Rabin's colleague from South Africa, was best known for producing AC/DC and Def Leppard

Rabin's song; he wrote the chorus and the main verse melody, although a conventional middle eight was dropped. Anderson and Squire also made contributions. Horn, however, has always claimed to have rewritten parts of the verses, saying that Jon Anderson sang the song as soon as he appeared in the studio, and was then surprised to be asked to re-record it after Horn had changed it. However, Rabin insists that Horn had no part in the writing process and that he never should have agreed to adding his name to the credits. Rabin was understandably careful about giving up his share of the publishing, so when Jon Anderson later made some changes to the song, Phil Carson had to persuade Rabin to give up a portion of the publishing to Anderson.



*Heart* at the end of the tape and realised it had the potential to be a massive hit.

"One inaccurate thing that keeps coming up is that *Owner...* was lost in some sort of bad cataloguing on my part," says Rabin. "It's not the case. Back when RCA wanted to sign me as a solo artist the year before, that was the song they were really hot on, and I knew that it would be a flagship track. Trevor Horn says he had to talk us into doing it, but that's not quite true."

While the band hadn't rehearsed it as *Cinema*, Rabin always had it in mind, choosing to tackle the songs with more complex arrangements first. Horn, however, maintains that recording that potential chart-topper was the thing that convinced him to produce the album in the first place.

**"Chris called me and wanted me to hear some of the music he'd been making. We sat in Chris' Bentley and he played me some of the songs."**

**Jon Anderson**

with a drum style that Horn felt was wrong for such an expressive player as White. Rabin was given an opportunity to record the drums in Mutt's style, which didn't work, and the South African accepted defeat.

There is genuine contradiction over the ownership of *Owner Of A Lonely Heart*, particularly considering its massive, ongoing success. It's mainly

Carson remembers, "I sat down with Trevor Rabin and his lovely wife Shelley, who is very astute. She asked if Trevor would make more money if we did this. I said he would. So she allowed me to give Jon the credit."

What Horn is responsible for is the originality of the final arrangement. First, he got the band to play the song straight without any



# YES

## The Yes Album: Super Deluxe Edition RHINO

Prog icons' third album gets a belated 50th-anniversary celebration.



Even without the whistles and bells that come with this expanded box set, *The Yes Album* occupies a special place in the band's venerated canon. It's a snapshot of the growing maturity of both the nascent prog scene and Yes themselves, as evocative of the era as an army greatcoat.

Originally released in 1971, it was Yes' third album. The band's first two records had been respected but not loved and that changed here. *The Yes Album* is one of those rare records

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**Each member marvels at their bandmates' virtuosity.**

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where the listener can feel the wind in the performers' hair, each member marvelling at his bandmates' abilities and virtuosity. Conventions and track lengths were challenged, yet there was an economy in their excess, with everything kept on point and pretty much flab-free. It's a world away from the over-reach of *Tales From Topographic Oceans*, released just two and a half years later.

Where its two predecessors, *Yes* and *Time And A Word*, were the sound of a band seeking a sound, this was truly the start of Yes' great adventure. New boy Steve Howe may have replaced original guitarist Peter Banks, but he slotted in perfectly with new bandmates Jon Anderson, Chris Squire, Bill Bruford and Tony Kaye. All five had earned their spurs sweating and toiling away on the London club scene: the music they made together was the imagined sound of America's west coast filtered through Soho and, in the case of Anderson, Accrington.

This belated 50th-anniversary edition bulks out the original release with Steven Wilson's latest Atmos mixes, as well as his impressive, and fascinating, instrumental mixes. There's also a disc of rarities – including edited, extended and mono versions of existing tracks. But it's the disc of unreleased live material that truly captures the excitement of this line-up of Yes in full flight, not least the half-dozen tracks recorded at the Yale Bowl in New Haven, Connecticut in July 1971, where Yes were apparently opening for Grand Funk Railroad. The musicianship here is off the chart, testament to the connection these five travellers had. "It's nice to play in front of so many people, I'll tell ya that," says Jon Anderson, in that inimitable Lancashire accent. "Have a good time with Grand Funk," adds Steve Howe, the model of English politeness.

Crowds that size would soon become commonplace for Yes, as *Fragile* and *Close To The Edge* propelled them to stardom in the US and back home. But while *The Yes Album* remains the gateway to something far more intricate and detailed, it stands as a celebration of the directness and magic of the band that made it at that precise point in time.

**DARYL EASLEA**





Tony Kaye and Trevor Rabin in the spotlight at the Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, Illinois, March 8, 1984.

**The Songs That Didn't Make It**  
 Eighteen months passed between the first Cinema rehearsals and the end of recording *90125*. Although many songs were rehearsed, and even recorded, not all of them made the final album.

**TIME**

This long track is one of the most famous 'lost' Yes pieces. Rabin explains: "It's on a Reevox somewhere; I think Alan had it. *Time* was kind of successful, but we never put it on the album. It would have included *Cinema*." Very few copies of the demo exist, although those who have heard it suggest that it may not be the lost classic its reputation implies.

**MAKE IT EASY**

This is the best-known of the outtakes, as it first appeared on the *Yesyears* box set in 1991. An excellent Trevor Rabin song, very much in the style of his solo material, its intro is well known, having been played live many times by Rabin incarnations of the band as the opening to *Owner Of A Lonely Heart*. Despite many attempts to place the song, including as part of *Time*, it never found a resting place on *90125*.

**IT'S OVER**

A Rabin song with a Zeppelin-esque riff and a neo-classical section that hints at prog without fully embracing it, this is another track in the mould of solo Rabin. It's good, though doesn't feel suitable for Jon Anderson's voice, which might explain its exclusion from the finished album.

**RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT**

While the band were in Air Studios in London, this song was recorded but not considered good enough for the album. It did live on, however, as Alan White's drum part was looped by engineer Gary Langan for the hit Art Of Noise track, *Beatbox*.

**CARRY ON**

An up-tempo Rabin-sung track that was rehearsed by Cinema. It was one of the three songs played to Yes fans and record executives when they came down to see the band play at John Henrys rehearsal studio in London, in 1982.

**OPEN YOUR DOORS**

Whereas much of what didn't make the final cut originally came from Rabin, this unusual piece was sung by Chris Squire. It's very much in the style of early 1980s pop, with electronic drums and an insistent, funky guitar line. It sounds nothing like Yes. **SL**

embellishments, which according to Horn wasn't easy and produced a small, if brief, mutiny. Then there was the drum sound. Yes had never recorded over a click track or a drum machine. However, Horn insisted on programming the drums so that White could play over them. To his credit, White did, with the snare tuned high in the style of Stuart Copeland of The Police, whose drum sound Horn loved. White remembered Horn gradually taking away more of his kit so that all he was left with was a hi-hat, snare and bass drum. This didn't please everyone, with Nu Nu Whiting, White's roadie, commenting that his drums sounded like "a pee on a barrel".

Rabin's guitar solo, played in fifths for a slightly off-kilter tone, was improvised in the studio, while the famous horn stabs, often misheard as orchestral, were taken from a cassette that had been transferred onto the

**"Part of my job is being a marketing guy. A new band is difficult to sell. An established one is much easier."**

**Phil Carson**

Fairlight sampler. They had originally been used on the Malcolm McLaren album *Duck Rock*, which Horn had just produced. The random musical effects that make the record so unusual were played on the Fairlight by Alan White.

Recording progressed at the two Sarm studios in London, with a further session at George Martin's Air Studios. It was there that the Grammy-winning instrumental *Cinema* was recorded. It was originally intended to open a long track called *Time*, which was never recorded in full. Due to how expensive the studio was, Horn begged Squire, famed for his terrible timekeeping, to arrive on time. In true style, he was five hours late.

At this point, the band remained unsigned. Phil Carson was still financing the entire venture himself, and both Kaye and Rabin, who had homes in California, were living with him in London.

"Nobody at Atlantic in the USA gave a shit," Carson remembers of his mentorship of Cinema. "They didn't stop me doing it, but they were totally against it."

But there was more turbulence to come. Horn was growing gradually more dissatisfied with Kaye's performance in the studio, and after a lengthy session trying to record the Hammond solo for *Hearts*, Horn snapped. Recording was paused while

arguments raged, but in the end, the producer got his way, and Kaye returned to the USA. Rabin, who remained loyal to Kaye — but who had also shown his considerable prowess when he suggested a part for *Changes* to Horn — was then enlisted to play most of the keyboards on the album. Horn insisted that he wasn't trying to fire Kaye from the band, only the *90125* sessions, but understandably, Kaye took it hard and quit.

Recording continued nonetheless and the album was completed. However, with Carson still financing everything, the idea of getting Jon Anderson back into the band began to gain traction. Horn and Carson were in

favour, while Squire and White were resistant, although Carson insisted that the band were a much better commercial prospect with Anderson on board. Feelers went out and an approach was formulated. Carson, who had always had a good relationship with Anderson, was the first to make contact but didn't have a current number for the vocalist.

"I got hold of Jon's roadie, who said that Anderson was in a call box on the King's Road in Chelsea waiting for a call from him right there and then. He gave me the number and I called Jon instead. Even though there had been a lot of bad blood, Jon expressed interest but demanded that Chris call him." Squire took some persuading but eventually agreed.

"Chris called me and wanted me to hear some of the music he'd been making," recalls Anderson, who

## The Video Age

Yes and promotional clips were always uneasy bedfellows. But in 1983, with MTV all-important, the band had no choice but to embrace the video revolution, with varying results...

**Y**es filmed four videos to promote the singles from *90125*. For *Owner Of A Lonely Heart*, Storm Thorgerson of Hipgnosis was selected to direct. Teasing us with a live performance of the first verse and chorus, we are then plunged into an expansive dystopian thriller featuring British character actor Danny Webb. The band, including a guest appearance from Eddie Jobson, are involved, transforming into animals. It's wildly expensive and pretentious as hell, but even so, it's been viewed 47 million times on YouTube. With Kaye back, a second video for the song was filmed on the cheap; this time the band performed in a studio desert set. With the budget stretching only to four stuffed parrots, this version seems to have been disowned by everyone, with good reason.

With the third single *It Can Happen* given a more conventional 80s performance approach, the middle release *Leave It* saw Yes move to a single-day studio shoot with award-winning video pioneers Lol Creme and Kevin Godley. In a mixture of bold creativity and tongue-in-cheek performance art, the directors shot the band standing side-by-side in grey suits while they lip-synced to the song 18 times in one day. But there were bizarrely subtle variations to each take, so while version 11 is the mix



Anderson chats to MTV's JJ Jackson during an interview at MTV Studios, New York, in August 1982.

GARY GERSHOFF/GETTY IMAGES

generally available, another has Tony Kaye wearing a pink tie rather than a grey one, while yet another features Anderson alone. Godley and Creme gave each version a bizarre, Pythonesque name, such as *Tribute To Jeremy* (version three); *Endless Infatuations* (version four); *Surgeon's Dilemma* (version eight); and *Lords Of The Galaxy* (version 10).

"The basis of this video is one shot," said Creme at the time, "with the band intentionally made to look as bland and undemonstrative as possible. Your perception of the video will be altered because it will be upside down." He's not wrong. The directors initially wanted to

hang the band themselves upside down, but much to their relief, the idea was scuppered by Rabin's ongoing recovery from the spleen operation, which had already delayed the *90125* tour.

MTV showed the variations one per day, leading up to a broadcast of 15 back-to-back on April 1, 1984. One take, shot late in the day, has the band miming to the entire song with their backs to the camera, during which the directors quietly usher the crew out. When the band turn around, the studio is empty save for a cameraman. They take the joke in their stride; Anderson can be heard giving a single-word response: "Beautiful." **SL**

was in London visiting family at the time. "We sat in Chris' Bentley and he played me some of the songs. It was clear that Trevor Rabin could play, and I was impressed that Trevor Horn was on board as I'd liked *Duck Rock*. Chris played me *Owner...* and asked me if I'd like to come in the day after to sing it and work on the verses, as they hadn't got them together at that point."

Anderson obliged and went to the studio to track the vocals. "I told Chris that it sounded a bit like Yes. To which Chris said, 'That's why you're here.'"

After a difficult meeting with Horn, who had replaced him on *Drama*, Anderson agreed to come on board.

"I spent two or three weeks working on the album, adding bits here and there, especially on *Hearts*, which I really like," he remembers.

Despite Cinema's updated line-up, Rabin still has a strong vocal presence on the album, particularly on *Owner...*, *Changes* and *Leave It*. Squire is showcased on the song he originated, *It Can Happen*, and also *Changes*, where his harmony vocals with Anderson are

enough to melt any old Yes fan's heart. Anderson says that Rabin's vocal role "was mainly diplomatic" since Rabin had written so much of the material, but Rabin was initially shocked to have Anderson involved.

Rabin remembers telling them: "To rephrase what you're saying, you want to fire me as the singer?' I meant it semi-tongue-in-cheek. I've never been too proud or jealous about being the singer."

Ever the pragmatist, he saw the sense in handing the vocals over to

**"Eddie was a great player, but he was not a big enough name. We needed to get Tony back."**

**Phil Carson**



DAVID WATKINSON

**A news item in *Sounds* announcing Jobson's sudden departure.**

Anderson. Now that Anderson was in the band and *Owner...* was in the can, Carson was desperate to get Atlantic on board too and was ready to play the track to label boss Ahmet Ertegun, but it wasn't as easy as he hoped.

"Fortunately, Ahmet was visiting Paris," Carson recalls. "I grabbed a cassette of the track and sent it to the Paris office. I told Ahmet I was going to be on the next plane. So I got to his hotel and all we had to play it on was this tiny cassette player. It wasn't even a boom box; it was a mono player. To make matters worse, the battery was pretty flat so the tape kept skipping."

In the end, Ertegun liked what he heard, to Carson's immense relief.

"He believed what I was saying about the band's potential, agreed to sign them and I got all the money I'd invested back, much to the displeasure of the hierarchy at Atlantic USA."

The final mixes for the album were completed without Tony Kaye. Cinema needed a keyboard player, and quickly, so Eddie Jobson, a virtuoso player with an excellent pedigree having been in Roxy Music, UK and, most recently, Jethro Tull, was approached. Although he remained in the band very briefly, he appears in many of the promotional photographs at the time and is discussed in glowing terms by former Yes members, especially Anderson.

Now that the album and the line-up had been finalised, there came the issue of artwork. A traditional Roger Dean cover was never considered; instead artist Garry Mouat, who had already worked with Trevor Horn and specialised in computer-generated art, was asked to produce a contemporary new cover design. Such a bold image was considered appropriate, as his style fitted in with the modern production techniques the band were using sonically. When he created the first image, the band were still called Cinema, so the grey Y that is wrapped around the middle ellipse was originally missing its tail and was on its side, creating the C of Cinema.

Initially, the album was to have a traditional title, but in keeping with the radical, minimalist tone, the record was simply named after its catalogue number, that being *80102*. However, when Carson realised that the number was not available across all territories, *90125* became the title.

With the name Cinema starting to gain traction, several other bands smelled big bucks and tried to sue, although, as Rabin noted, they never tried to sue each other. For a short while, the band were also to be called Ice, but ultimately reverting to Yes was a far simpler option.

*Owner Of A Lonely Heart* was the obvious lead single for the new-look Yes. The Storm Thorgerson-directed



video was filmed in London with Jobson included in the shoot. Once the initial promotion had finished, Jobson returned to his home in the USA to prepare for the tour. But Carson, who hadn't been involved in the decision to fire Kaye from the recording sessions, wasn't happy with the situation. He'd played no role in bringing in Jobson and was concerned whether the keyboard player was suitable for the band.

"Eddie was a great player, but he wasn't a big enough name. We needed to get Tony back," Carsons says.

Kaye was approached and agreed to return. According to Jobson, he was told that not only would there now be two keyboard players but that his rig had already been designed without consulting him. He decided to move on.

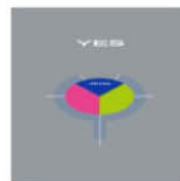
*Owner Of A Lonely Heart* was released in late October 1983 and started a slow rise up the US charts, finally reaching the No.1 spot for two weeks in January 1984. While it only hit the top spot in the USA, the single did well in most other territories, although in the UK and Ireland it was a relatively small hit, reaching No.28 and No.30 respectively. With a rather unpleasant "maggot" scene removed and Jobson now out of the band, all his scenes were cut from Thorgerson's video, except for a couple of glimpses.

The single's release was followed by *90125* itself, which was a huge success. It reached No.5 in the US Billboard 200 and No.16 in the UK album chart, good for a territory in which the band were still considered to be unfashionable rock dinosaurs. Two further singles were released: *Leave It*, a hit in the USA, with a video by Godley and Creme, and *It Can Happen*, with a more conventional (if very 80s) performance video. Bold dance remixes were also created for *Owner...* and *Leave It* to appear on the 12-inch versions.

Although released on CD later in 1984, *90125* is a masterwork of sequencing for vinyl. It hits the listener hard with the big single and follows it up with the bombast of *Hold On*, created from a combination of sections from two Rabin demos. Despite the 80s hard-rock vibe, there are plenty of Yesisms in this track, particularly in the complex à capella vocal passage before the final chorus. Squire's *It Can Happen*, which stems from the Cinema rehearsal period, is one song that took on a new life when Anderson became involved. The Cinema version was released on the *Yesyears* box set in 1991, and the contrast is remarkable with Squire's conventional verse replaced by something a lot more surreal, building tension which is released by the

**Yes with gold records at Ahoy, Rotterdam on July 1, 1984. L-R: Alan White, Jon Anderson, Hans Tonino (of WEA/Warner Records), Tony Kaye, Trevor Rabin, Chris Squire.**

**The album's cover, designed by computer whiz Garry Muat.**



Squire-sung chorus. This combination of Anderson's lyrics and Horn's production gives the song an extra boost that was missing from the Cinema version. Side one ends in epic fashion with the show-stopping *Changes*. Rabin's demo contains the basic verse and chorus, while the song's proggy mallet percussion opening section was written by White and embellished by the band, the song further enhanced by Anderson's pensive middle eight. Outside *Owner...*, *Changes* remains the best-loved track on *90125* and with good reason.

Side two opens with the instrumental *Cinema*, recorded live with Kaye still on board, before the second single, *Leave It*. This was the last song to be written for the album, mainly by Squire and Rabin, and is the only piece without live drums. Anderson has no writing credit, but his percussive lead vocal in the second verse contrasts beautifully with Rabin's smoother tones in the first. *Our Song*, also much rehearsed by Cinema, is made glorious by Anderson's lead vocal over the band's mobile arrangement. Rabin's *City Of Love*, written about his accidental trip to the wrong address in Harlem in New York, is the heaviest Yes ever got, but features a powerful vocal melody and performance

ROBB VERHORST/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

from Anderson. The album closes with another epic in *Hearts*, which developed from a keyboard idea by Kaye but features the starkest contrast between Rabin's hard-rock style and Anderson's free-form lyrics. It really shouldn't work, but it does.

Anderson's contributions are fairly easy to spot, not just via his distinctive vocals but also in his melodies and lyrics. Of the nine tracks, he manages seven writing credits, which isn't too bad for three weeks of work. But Horn must take huge credit for balancing all these elements into something that worked across the entire album. As an exercise in banging square pegs into round holes, it's remarkable.

It was inevitable that the band would tour in support of the album and this involved visiting the sort of venues that Yes had traditionally played in the 1970s – big arenas in the USA, with a similar schedule in Europe planned for the summer of 1984. The audio system was designed by Clair Brothers, the US-based audio company that had worked with the band in the 1970s. Cash was thrown at the visuals, too. Yes were truly back in the big time.

But there were a couple more stings in the tail. The early dates of the tour, planned for late January 1984, were postponed when Rabin suffered an unfortunate injury.

"My wife and I went to Florida just before the tour, and I had an accident in a swimming pool," he remembers. "A woman came down a slide and hit me, which led to my spleen being removed. We'd decided to celebrate as we'd just heard that *Owner...* had gone to No.1 and that the album was Top 5. So the tour was delayed."

Rabin took a few weeks to recuperate, which also meant time off from practice. "In the meantime, I'd barely played the guitar, and I certainly hadn't played any of the older Yes stuff," he says. "I had never wanted to call the band Yes in the first place, so now I was stuck with playing some of the old Yes tunes in what I considered to be a new band. Chris reassured me, 'You choose what you want to play.' On the plane to rehearse in Philadelphia, I came up with some ideas. I was concerned that my guitar style was totally different from Steve Howe's, so Chris also said, 'You do it your way. It'll make the band sound like its own thing.' That made me feel warmer, and it made the tour much easier."

With Yes rehearsing and the setlist chosen, another problem arose. The songs were too memory-hungry for one keyboardist, so enter Casey Young: an award-winning synthesiser-player with a growing portfolio of clients and a reputation for creative rig creation. He had been brought in to design

Kaye's keyboard set-up so that they could play the songs from *90125* accurately. However, not only had Kaye's presets become overloaded, but he could only play so much with the two hands at his disposal. Squire, ever the opportunist, suggested a surprised Young. After further persuasion from Anderson, Young agreed to "run away with the circus" and join the band on tour, his rig set up underneath the stage. Young's position below decks came about more for practical reasons

than for egotistical ones, since the stage set, stark and sleek in the 1980s style, had already been designed by this point. Later in the tour, when the band played open-air shows on other people's stages, Young played on the same level as the band, if somewhat apart.

What Young actually played developed over time. Initially, he was mainly triggering vocal enhancements, such as on *Changes*, but when Anderson suggested he acquire a vocoder, he had parts thrown at him constantly.



**"I had never really wanted to call the band Yes in the first place, so now I was stuck with playing some of the old Yes tunes in what I considered to be a new band."**

**Trevor Rabin**

The band appearing on a German show in 1984. Bet they got sand in their shoes.

Anderson sometimes asked him to play new parts with a minute's notice and he often had to double Rabin's guitar lines, which took some concentration. Young was grateful not to have to "perform" as the other musicians were required to. Indeed, while for most of the band playing these shows was in their DNA, for Rabin it was something of a culture shock that saw him overcompensating early on in the tour.

"After the first gig, I remember Nu Nu Whiting saying that I should have a satchel [as in AC/DC's Angus Young style] as I'd been jumping around so much," he says. "So I calmed down a bit after that."

The setlist for the *90125* tour remained fairly static, but songs moved around and the terrific *Our Song* wandered in and out. But the rest of the album was featured in a well-balanced show. Proceedings began with *Cinema* segueing into *Leave It* (with White

playing electronic drums), followed by the more bombastic *Hold On*. Initially played towards the end of the set, *Hearts* was later switched to the first half, with the show-stopping *Changes* played mid-way through. *Owner...* and *It Can Happen* were performed late on, with an extended *City Of Love* often closing the main set. *Starship Trooper* was sometimes played before the inevitable encore of *Roundabout*. The older material was mainly taken from 1971's *The Yes Album*. This made sense since they were the pieces that Kaye had last played on with Yes, but were also the songs that best suited Rabin, who has always professed a love for *Perpetual Change* in particular. Only *And You And I* and the encore represented other areas of the band beyond Anderson and Squire's solo sections. Squire and White's *Whitefish* would include *The Fish* (as usual) but also segments of *Tempus Fugit* from *Drama* and *Sound Chaser* from *Relayer*, while Anderson would sing *Soon*.

The initial leg of the tour took in North America from February to May 1984, and after a few weeks' break, the band reconvened in Europe for the summer, arriving in the UK in July. A further two-month jaunt around the USA and Canada up to October was followed by the first Rock In Rio at the purpose-built Citade Do Rock in Rio de Janeiro early in 1985. Almost 1.4 million people attended this 10-day festival, which saw Yes, Queen, George Benson, Rod Stewart and AC/DC each headline two nights. After further dates in Uruguay and Argentina, the tour officially came to an end in February, a year after it had started.

The shows were documented in a somewhat strange fashion; the VHS *90125Live* was released later in 1985. Directed by Steven Soderbergh, who would go on to fame later in the decade as a movie director, the video captured a well-shot, if shortened, version of the shows from Edmonton, Canada in September 1984 and combined the live performance with video effects and vintage movie footage in a way that has dated badly. This footage, and that from another show from Dortmund earlier on the tour, gives a good example of the scale and excitement of these performances. Anderson, Squire and White's stage personae are well represented, despite their bold attire, with Squire in particularly fine form. Kaye also oozes charisma. "On stage, he was perfect for the band," says Rabin.

However, it's the guitarist who steals the show, his youthful persona very different from Steve Howe's more studious stage character. On *City Of Love* he's particularly effective, and it's obvious that playing Howe's parts in his own style on the older songs offered him no particular difficulties.

An accompanying live LP, *90125Live: The Solos* features good live versions of *Hold On* and *Changes*, and then all the solo spots from the five musicians. This was an odd choice, to put it mildly, perhaps designed as a companion piece to the VHS rather than a standalone live album in its own right. Better might have been an album that featured the songs that didn't make it onto the video, such as *Yours Is No Disgrace*, *Hearts* or *Roundabout*. Or even better, a traditional double live album documenting most of the set.

Did *90125* save Yes? The answer seems clear. Rabin has always felt the album would have still done well had it been released as Cinema and without Anderson, and Carson believes *Owner...* was good enough to be a hit without the Yes vocalist. However a record deal was far from certain until the very last minute. Although Anderson's solo career at that point had hardly set the charts alight, his work with Vangelis had produced two hit albums and two big hit singles in *I Hear You Now* and *I'll Find My Way Home*. Anderson was a commercial bet, not just because he was the previous lead vocalist of Yes but because he was still in the public eye. Nonetheless, there's little doubt that the fairy dust he sprinkled over the album enhanced it creatively as well as commercially, even though Carson is surely the unsung hero of *90125*, personally bankrolling Cinema for many months.

Without *90125* it's possible that Yes might well have reformed eventually, like so many bands from the 1970s. However, it's also very likely that the album's success and the additional fans it generated, many of whom went back and discovered earlier material, gave the group a shot in the arm that remains in their immune system today.

Despite the very 1980s production techniques and a certain antipathy, even snobbery, among some fans of the 1970s era towards the 1980s version of Yes in general, the album has aged remarkably well. Like all the best music from that colourful decade, it's the material that ensures its longevity. There isn't one poor track on the album, and the way it's sequenced makes it a wonderful one-sitting listen.

For Rabin, this period in his life remains one he remembers fondly: "To this day, I really miss Chris and Alan; the three-piece juggernaut, as I used to call us. I just loved playing with them."

*90125* was a product of its time, but its success is the result of a unique combination of creativity, commercial savvy and good fortune. Happy 40th anniversary! 🎉

*Yessingles* is out now via Rhino. *The Classic Tales Of Yes Tour* resumes in 2024. See [www.yesworld.com](http://www.yesworld.com) for dates.