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INCREDIBLE
SONGWRITER

Tobergraphic

Whether or not you dig Yes and their music, you could never accuse them of being copyists. Right from the start they've carved out a sound and a reputation all their own.

Jon Anderson's poetic lyrics, the stunning, classically-inspired guitar work of Steve Howe, that inimitable sound that Chris Squire wrings out of his Rickenbacker bass, Rick Wakeman's galaxy of sound via a battery of keyboard instruments and, more recently, Alan White's oh-so-solid drum work – all this and more has combined to make Yes one of the most distinctive bands in the world.

They've conceded practically nothing, in musical terms, to the public that buy their albums, and yet they continue to make both music and money at a staggering rate.



Their continuing success probably lies in the fact that from the *Yes Album* onwards – through *Fragile*, *Close To The Edge*, etc. – they've managed to carry their audiences along, educating them at every stage as to Yes' musical development.

And they've done most of this 'educational work' during a period of rock history in which simple, straightforward rock and roll, a la Marc Bolan and Slade, has been very much in vogue.

At present they're mixing a new album at Morgan Studios where, as always, Eddie Offord is engineering and producing.

The album, called *Tales From The Tobergraphic Ocean*, represents two changes as far as the band and their listening public are concerned.

The first is a purely tech-

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nical change of studio location (Yes have made their previous albums at Advision.) The second is a musical change. *Tales* . . . takes Yes one step nearer a true rock symphony in that it consists of two albums containing four extended pieces of music.

We asked Jon Anderson, lyricist, singer and leader of the band to tell us the stories behind these four monster tracks.

'The first track is called The Revealing Science Of God and it deals with the dawn of light, power and love,' he said. 'I've had to deal with it on a broad basis, however, because I don't honestly feel that I know everything there is to know about the subject.

'In the second movement we try to recall our own lives and in so doing get the listener to recall his. It's best described as "a calm sea of music" and the whole band got involved in playing like the sea – rhythms, eddies, swells and undercurrents – while we were doing it.



'The third movement is called Giants Under The Sun and it's all about the ancients; civilisations like the Incas, the Mayas and Atlantis. This one is more of an instrumental track but there is a song at the end which,

hopefully, says that however beautiful a civilisation may have been, it has always been wiped out by a power that claimed it was an instrument of God. We tried to interpret the feeling of ancient music throughout the piece and there are times when it really works.

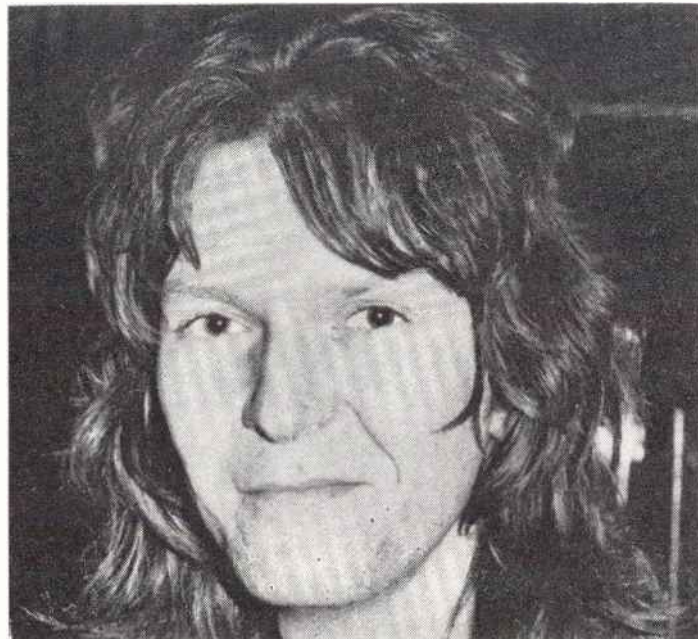
'We called the fourth movement The Ritual Of Life and it's different in that each member of the band plays a percussion instrument of some sort. There are no vocals or guitars, we all just act like one big drum, which is symbolic of the unity we feel between us. We feel that unity when we play normally, but for us all

to do it on one instrument strengthens the whole feeling.

'At the end of the fourth movement there's a song relating to Dr. Bronowski and his television programme The Ascent Of Man.

'Apparently the earth is on an ever-decreasing orbit towards the sun and has to go through certain changes in order to become a star.

'I realise that I haven't got all the knowledge to put it into words properly, so the reason for calling the album Tales From The Tobergraphic Ocean is to relieve any possible heaviness. After all, I'm stating what I regard as facts when I don't really



▲ Chris Squire

Ocean

know. I guess I just get on with it.'

Somebody once wrote that if you're going to follow Yes and their music beware, because they don't know where they're going themselves. Commented Jon: 'I agree with that up to a point, but I honestly feel that our music clarifies it all.'

And there are thousands of Yes fans who will agree with him!



Whether or not you can follow Yes through their *Tales Of The Tobergaphic Ocean*, whether or not you consider such a project to be a bit weird and 'far-out', rest assured that the same high standard of thought and execution has gone into this latest Yes album as all the previous ones.

Jon thought about the album for six months before he took a working holiday in Morocco to actually write the words.

I watched and listened for two hours while Steve Howe

went over and over a short piece of guitar overdub in order to get it just right.

No, Yes' standards haven't changed, but it may be that they've become even more complex. According to Jon, however, they're not losing any fans in the process – far from it.

'Some of the people I talk to seem to understand what we are supposedly doing even better than I do,' he said.

'People have come to see me after concerts just to tell me that *Close To The Edge* got them through the winter,' he added. 'I get really high thinking that we helped out in a situation and yet again I can imagine somebody getting so fed-up with their friend playing *Close To The Edge* over and over again that he battered them to death!'

He laughed at the idea and his heavy spell of talking about the music was broken.

'When it comes down to it,' he concluded, 'the one thing that I really hope for is that the public finds our music listenable.'



▲ Jon Anderson



▲ Steve Howe



▲ Alan White