

COSMIC

YES, says JON ANDERSON, But ROBIN SMITH is merely content hearing such wonderful stories



ONCE UPON a time in a distant land there was a wood. It was a beautiful place, full of sunshine after the thin, silvery mist had cleared in the morning. Deep in a glade there was a singing flower, keeping everybody happy, from the tall oaks to the poor peasants who lived under their towering branches.

But one day the flower's song stopped because nobody in the wood noticed her any more. Without the song the wood began to crumble, people became dissatisfied and pestilence spread.

For more you'll have to wait until Jon Anderson completes a book written with the help of his daughter.

Yes have been together for nearly 10 years. In all that time they've maintained an almost scandal-free, faceless identity. Family men who go to bed early.

"It's true," says Anderson. "I relax on the road by writing songs or reading."

"I love my family. Sometimes I take them with me but if I don't I phone frequently and my little boy always wants to know when I'm coming back. We do a lot of things together. There's no greater feeling than having them with you and everyone enjoying themselves."

"I hope my children will follow a musical career but I don't want to force them into it. Often I'll get them to help me when I'm playing. I don't think it's necessary to be able to read music but I can appreciate and study the form it takes."

"Kids are far more aware these days. I'm sure their knowledge is far greater than mine when I was 14. The maturing process seems to happen in a seven-year cycle. The first seven are very important, putting down the basic ideas."

"I did a television show hosted by children and I was very pleased at the way they did the interview. I'm often nervous about talking, that's why I'm smoking now. I don't think education has changed that much but children are exposed far more to the media these days. They can think out their own ideas and develop things for themselves."

Violence

"I don't think violence is a bad thing to show children on television, provided it isn't glamourised. If a child sees a violent scene in Belfast he learns how to cope with it in later life."

Jon adds: "I wrote a song called 'Yours Is No Disgrace' which helps to explain a situation where people are called up for war. Obviously it's a bad thing to kill your fellow man but at the same time you shouldn't feel disgraced because it's all part of a pattern. We're all pawns in a game."

"The universe is so vast and complex and everybody has potential. You should never get bored, you have the capacity within yourself to create musical or other ideas to communicate with other people."

"I don't think we're alone in space. We used to get heavily involved in a discussion about whether early man was influenced by spacemen. There's a lot of evidence to say we were helped. There are signs on plains in Peru. One is a giant arrow pointing inland which can be viewed only from the air so it could have led the way for a spaceship."

A mystical quality runs throughout Yes' music.

"We try to do something that involves intricate themes which won't be forgotten. We have a pattern but at the same time we like to surprise people by developing and expanding on logics."

"We haven't compromised with record companies, we haven't let them dictate to us, we haven't lost many of our original ethics. The only compromise we did was to release 'Yesterdays', a retrospective look at what we'd been doing. We've never wanted to produce three-minute dance tunes."

"In my songs I've always tried to use ideas that affect people."



'We're all pawns in a game'

Listening to Yes I hope people will be able to discover things about themselves. I hope they'll be as inspired as I am when I listen to classical music. You can think deeply and realise the music is bringing out your own thoughts."

"We use Stravinsky's 'Firebird Suite' to introduce us on stage because it's so uplifting and gives you a real high. One of our last appearances in Britain was at Reading a few years ago and I remember we were on stage very late. But the people had stood in the pouring rain and when the suite was played it seemed to lift everyone together."

'Wonderous Stories' was inspired by a day's skiing.

"It was a beautiful day in Switzerland," says Jon. "It was one of those days you want to remember for years afterwards. The words 'Wonderous Stories' came into my head. It's an exuberant song and that's really the whole theme for our album 'Going For The One'."

"The tracks have lots of potential energy but some of them fade into the relaxation of triumph you must feel after a marathon event. The album reflects achievement like the Olympics or skiing. There's a guy who's skid down a mountain in Japan. Imagine how that must feel."

Reunion

"The album has a happy feeling as well because it's a reunion with Rick. Before we recorded 'Going For The One' I suggested we should have him back and he came down one afternoon and we jammed together for hours."

"I think Patrick Moraz felt his experience with Yes was extremely valuable and worthwhile. He did very well but there was a certain amount of drifting apart. Yet we all parted friends."

"On one part of the album Rick

played a church organ and we recorded it over the phone to the recording studio, the Swiss telephone system is that good. It certainly saved having to lumber a mobile recording studio there. Rick and I played a lot together in a church which was very relaxing and it gave the music an ethereal quality. I'd really like to play in a cathedral one day."

So Yes are back with Rick again and happy. But hasn't there ever been any talk of a Yes split?

"Never. At the time of our solo albums we just had excess energy that couldn't be contained within the band. We've always been a democratic band, it's like throwing ideas into a big melting pot. Around the time of 'Topographic Oceans' I was beginning to feel it would be great to do something on my own and the result was 'Olias Of Sunhillow'."

"I could have used an orchestra or choir on the album but I thought 'will I be able to control them or inspire them in the same way that I was inspired?' I thought I would be better off doing it on my own."

Labour

The album took months of labour in a small recording studio. Jon even had to teach himself some instruments.

"I wanted to tell a story in a musical way. Sunhillow is a place where the sun can rest. Obviously it doesn't get a lot of time to settle down."

"One day I'd like to be able to make an album of harp music. The notes a harp can produce strike the emotional deep with me. It's a pity the instrument seems to have been neglected. Keyboards have made great strides and it seems to be a field many people are concentrating on."

The next Yes album will be recorded in February.

"I've been working out some ideas already. This time I don't think it's going to follow so much of a theme. The ideas will be separated more."

"Our tour of the States was great and this time we've got a simpler stage show. We don't use Roger or Martin Dean but in future I hope they can do things for us again. The Natural History Museum wants to use some of the stage effects from 'Topographic Oceans' for a display in a few weeks, but I'm not sure exactly what."

"It used to be expensive carting the stuff around but seriously money has never been that much of a concern. We're like Walt Disney who



'We haven't let the record companies dictate to us'

NONSENSE?

for 'Snow White' hocked everything he had because he knew people would eventually accept his ideas. We've always been optimists and a bit mad," jokes Jon.

"You shouldn't let money bog you down. It can lead to such a load of squabbles. We hold business meetings but they're more like social affairs. I'm not saying I don't like the things that money brings. I think the Press has often got the wrong idea about me.

"No, I don't mind if people call me a boring old hippie, you can't please all the people all the time. But even if you don't like Yes' music I think you can appreciate the complexity and the ingenuity employed in presenting it.

"Even in our early days we appreciated the value of a good stage show. In a small hall somewhere we'd cover up the lights with strips of celluloid coloured paper. With the stage show now I'd like to get into light refraction effects where you put a laser beam through a prism. I think it's unoriginal just to have them shining out over the audience. A stage show should be like a magic show, it should keep some mysticism in it.

"On our album covers we also helped Roger Dean's career to a great extent but we want to break other new artists as well. I hear 'Rolling Stone' has banned the 'Going For The One' cover in an ad because it shows a naked man's bottom and on a sign in Los Angeles they've painted trousers over the offensive parts.

"Had it been a rear view of a naked woman it would have been



'I don't think we're alone in space'

different. Amazing how people can be conditioned to accept certain things and not others."

Jon was born in Accrington. His father did the odd army show during the war and his mother did ballroom dancing. Jon played in local bands and his initial heroes were the Beatles.

"I can appreciate new wave because when I was younger I used to go out and smash bottles and windows. I wouldn't go out and buy the records but I can enjoy some of it.

"The trouble today is all the

record companies are just signing up new wave bands. I know there's such a lot of other talent in London and elsewhere going to waste because they can't get deals.

"I think 10 years ago record companies should have set up studios all over the country to draw on talent. You still have to come to London but that's not such a bad thing because the capital generates such a large amount of energy even after all these years.

"I've enjoyed having a hit single. We were on Top Of The Pops many years ago when 'Yours Is No Disgrace' was released. But it was a horrible experience. It was like being on a production line. You were shunted into a small dressing room and then put on a stage. Producing a video film for a show is much better from our point of view."

Yes have been together for a long time. How long can it last?

"I'd say indefinitely. I want still to be up there when I'm 70. Our ideas are still here and our friendship

"Chris Squire is a Piscean and when I'm drifting around making plans for five years ahead he brings me down to earth by saying we've got to plan only three months ahead.

"Astrologically our signs fit in very well. Maybe that's got something to do with our success."

At the end of the interview Jon remarks: "I've been giving out some more of my cosmic nonsense."

Oh I don't know. After nearly 10 years and numerous accolades you've got to admit his views and attitudes have stood him in good stead and will last for many years to come.



At last, the producer of David Bowie, T. Rex and Thin Lizzy is using his talents on an exciting new performer. **Himself.**



Visconti

INVENTORY

Tony Visconti's first solo album includes his outrageous new single 'Mopeitty Mope Stamp'



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Single 6007150 Album 9102602