

GENESIS

Crymes and Misdemeanors

DRAWN TOGETHER BY THEIR SHARED EXPERIENCE

at Charterhouse (one of the most prestigious boarding schools in England, located in Godalming, Surrey), vocalist Peter Gabriel, East Hoathly keyboardist/pianist Anthony Banks, West London guitarist Anthony Phillips, and Guildford guitarist/bassist Michael Rutherford created their own environment: a virtual music scene, isolated from the rest of the country and most other musicians.

Two competing school bands, the Anon and the Garden Wall, joined forces and become one group that combined the talents of future Genesis members Rutherford, Phillips, Gabriel, and Banks, along with those of drummer Chris Stewart (who later became a successful travel writer). The quintet's combined efforts produced a demo, "She Is Beautiful" (sometimes referred to as "She's So Beautiful") that caught the attention of producer and Charterhouse alumnus

MOUNTAINS COME OUT OF THE SKY

Jonathan King, who'd recently had a Top 5 British hit with "Everybody's Gone to the Moon," in 1965.

King heard the demo and was immediately attracted to Gabriel's voice, in which he heard a rare soul, passion, and "smokiness," as he describes it. He agreed to work with the band, dubbing them Genesis.

"I thought they had great talent but were too self-indulgent," says King, who'd invited a fledgling Genesis to record more demos. "When I discovered them, they were not as good musically as they thought they were. So I used to trim and cut them down . . . and pointed them in a certain direction—more acoustic than pop, giving them Bee Gees albums to listen to and, something they don't mention all the time, all the Crosby, Stills and Nash early stuff."

Genesis recorded "The Silent Sun" and "A Winter's Tale" while formulating plans for an LP, which would become the band's 1969 debut, *From Genesis to Revelation* (a concept album based on stories and characters from the Bible).

Despite King's best effort and Genesis's enthusiasm, *From Genesis to Revelation* didn't do much of anything to excite the public. Undeterred, the band continued to write new material, having been spurred on by the adventurous sounds coming from the Moody Blues and King Crimson in the late 1960s. Genesis saw the way forward: ambitious music that rocked.

When their business relationship with King had run its course, the band began to look seriously at finding a new label. They soon came to the attention of the Famous Charisma label. "We were the first band signed by Tony Stratton-Smith—everybody called him Strat—to his Charisma label," says Mark Ashton, drummer for Rare Bird. "It was Graham Field, the organist who formed Rare Bird, and the band's producer, John Anthony, who really introduced Genesis to Strat, who had been managing the Nice. Genesis became one

of the first bands signed to Charisma, and the rest, as they say . . ."

With yet another new drummer, John Mayhew, Genesis recorded 1970's *Trespass*, featuring the band's patented organ and dual twelve-string guitar sonic tapestry (harkening back to the sound of Crosby, Stills and Nash) on material the band had been working on the previous year, including the menacing nine-minute track "The Knife," the band's first major feat as songwriters.

Trespass lives up to its title. The explosive seven-minute multidimensional opener "Looking for Someone" is followed by "White Mountain," "Visions of Heaven," and "Stagnation" (a song that developed from an earlier piece called "Movement"), the last of which features the band's signature hypnotic twelve-string acoustic picking, Gabriel's sweet flute playing, and a Banks warbling organ solo.

These were incredibly mature songs for young musicians, and Genesis were demonstrating that they could inhabit a progressive rock territory similar to that of Procol Harum, the Nice, Traffic, and even Yes and King Crimson—resting somewhere between English nineteenth-century renaissance, European folk music, American gospel, twentieth-century art music, and some as-yet-unnamed rock subgenre.

Keyboardist Banks admits that the closer (and future live favorite) "The Knife" was written with the Nice in mind.

The song also inspired LP cover illustrator Paul Whitehead, whose pen-and-ink drawings Gabriel had seen in a gallery, to complete one of his most memorable works. "When I did that cover, they had written four of the songs already," says Whitehead. "They were all very romantic. So we came up with the idea of doing a cover with a king and queen looking out at their kingdom, and Cupid peeking at them from behind the curtain. I started working on it, I got

halfway through it, and I got a call from Peter [Gabriel], who said, 'We're going to have to scrap that idea.' They had decided to use a song called 'The Knife' on the record and said that the cover I'd done didn't go with the song, you know? I was like, 'No way. I've done all of this work and they are just going to scrap it.' I said, 'Can't we find some alternatives?' Peter said, 'If you can think of something that works with what you've done, fine.' I had all kinds of ideas, such as spilling a bottle of ink over it, burning it, and doing different things to it that would corrupt the image."

Nothing was really working for Whitehead. But a visit to an art exhibition in London triggered an idea. "There was an Italian artist showing his work," says Whitehead. "His thing was slashing the canvas with a razor blade. 'Bingo.' I said to the band, 'Why don't we get a knife, the knife you're talking about, and slash the canvas and take a photograph of that.' They said, 'You wouldn't slash the canvas.' I said, 'You're damn right I would.' For me, it was the solution, because I didn't want to do the work again."

Completed by the appropriate visual, *Trespass* is one of the band's strongest packages. However, the world saw it a bit differently. *Trespass* didn't connect with a mass audience in Britain, where it failed to chart, and it wasn't even on the radar in the U.S. It soon sank without much notice.

This could have been a crushing blow for young musicians, but Genesis, along with labelmates Van der Graaf Generator, were Tony Stratton-Smith's favorite bands, his pet projects, one might say. Regardless of the shifting winds of pop music, he was going to see to it that they did not fail, even if it pooling all his resources.

"I think our band financed Charisma, basically," says Ashton, whose Rare Bird had scored a Top 30 hit in the U.K. with "Sympathy." "It was a small concern for a couple of years. Strat branched out, Genesis start-

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Genesis, 1977. Left to right: Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, Chester Thompson, Mike Rutherford, and Phil Collins. (Photo courtesy of Atco)

ed to do better, although it took Genesis a few albums to get on their feet.”

“I think Strat felt strongly about the serious nature of rock as an art form,” says Chris Adams, front man/guitarist/vocalist of the Scottish band String Driven Thing, also signed to Charisma. “Back then, the U.K. was like the R&D department for rock, and labels like Charisma had one aim: to break a band in the States. Apart from credibility, this meant huge financial rewards. And after Van der Graaf Generator split up [in 1972, for the first time], Genesis were definitely protected. They were the ones who could deliver that payload.”

It seems Stat was unshakably loyal in his devotion to Genesis. Charisma backed the band through thick and thin, and even as Genesis made personnel changes. Sensing their rhythm section wasn’t strong enough, the band had to make a hard decision.

Mayhew went quietly.

Enter Chiswick, London, native Phil Collins, a child drummer prodigy, who began playing when he was five years old and had played a bit

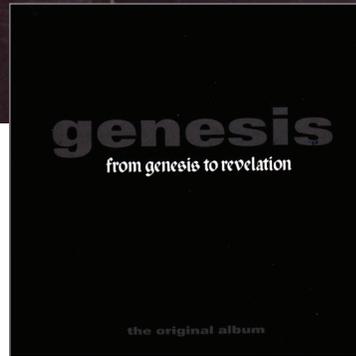
part in *A Hard Day’s Night*.

Collins was a member of the pop rock band Flaming Youth and was certainly more aggressive and versatile than Mayhew. And Collins had confidence. Having arrived early at Gabriel’s parents’ house, he was asked to wait outside, have a swim in the pool. As he did, Collins listened to all the mistakes the other drummers were making and used them to his advantage. He aced the audition.

The second personnel change was completely shocking to the band. Largely due to his dislike of touring and general stage fright, guitarist Phillips wanted to bow out. No one saw it coming. “Ant” was so strong a musical personality and here he was, unable to continue because of an irrational phobia.

Ant was more than a guitar player—he was a friend from school. How would they replace him?

Gabriel and the band, leafing through the *Melody Maker*, came upon an ad placed by a musician that read, in part, “determined to strive beyond existing stagnant music



From Genesis to Revelation (1969)

forms.” The wording resonated with Genesis, and they soon called the the twenty-one-year-old London-based guitarist for an audition.

That guitarist, Steve Hackett, dazzled them not only with his technical playing but, more than anything else, with his ability to manipulate sound. Through the use of Hackett’s guitar effects, Genesis heard the future, and asked him to join.

Without wasting time, the band were on the road and began to work on material for their next record, *Nursery Cryme*, which pushed Genesis into escapism and the world of British absurdity/fantasy.

The impact Hackett and Collins had on the band is felt immediately on *Nursery Cryme*: Collins demonstrates a basher’s verve and a jazzier’s dexterity, and even makes his lead singing debut

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Nursery Cryme
(1971): Phil
Collins's and
Steve Hackett's
Genesis debut.

on “For Absent Friends.”

Hackett is at once a monster and an ensemble player. The magic in Hackett’s playing has always been his natural resources: He had the chops to cut anyone’s head off if the song called for it, but his real contribution to the music was his ability to use sonic textures—Hackett would become known for his use of the Rose Morris MXR Phase 90 pedal—to converse with Banks’s organ lines and Gabriel’s melodic vocals, to help direct the band into virtually unexplored musical areas.

As such, the band recorded a tune they had been kicking around for some time, called “The Musical Box” (containing a reference to “Old King Cole,” a traditional Celtic nursery rhyme), which was shaped by the

unusual way Rutherford tuned his twelve-string acoustic, with high and low strings harmonizing, lending the song its air of “carousel.”

“Seven Stones”; “Harold the Barrel” (based on an inane sequence of events leading up to the main character willfully and literally going out on a ledge); the comedic sci-fi drama about photosynthetic serial killers, “The Return of the Giant Hogweed” (the fuzzed-out guitar riffing is something akin to heavy-metal baroque, courtesy of Hackett’s string pull-offs and hammering, years before Eddie Van Halen had thought of doing something similar); and “The Fountain of Salmacis” (based on the myth of Hermaphroditus, who was transformed into a hermaphrodite) are stirring and groundbreaking.

These were some of Genesis’s most dynamic songs, not only compositionally but sonically, thanks to producer John Anthony. Whether owing to a cymbal wash that’s utterly consumed by monolithic Mellotron tones, generating aural visions of spraying waterfalls; or voices tucked into neat little corners in the mix, cropping up in unusual places, the music has depth, giving perspective to and underscoring Gabriel’s mythological lyrics.

Paul Whitehead remembers the band’s creative process for *Nursery Cryme*. “The record company had a house down in the country in Crowborough where the band used to go and rehearse and write and so on,” says Whitehead. “I got invited down a couple of times in the middle of the creative process. You know, ‘Come on

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down and stay for a couple of days and you can figure out what's going on.' Well, what would happen is you'd get up in morning and Peter Gabriel had written lyrics. 'What do you think of these?' Everybody would look at it and would write the music from that. Or vice versa: They had the music written and Peter would write the lyrics. Being a part of the process, I gave the band the titles for *Trespass*, *Nursery Cryme*, and *Foxtrot*. They were stuck for titles."

One of the things Genesis understood, as did King Crimson and Yes, was the power of their LP covers' imagery to help complete an artistic package. Gazing at Victorian illustrations and fairy-tale books with Gabriel to stir up ideas for *Nursery Cryme*, Whitehead came up with a concept that would represent the music and Gabriel's unique and strange take on folk tales. "The cover was obviously *Alice in Wonderland*-inspired, an old English Victorian story, set on a croquet field," says Whitehead. "But instead of croquet balls, we'd use rolling heads."

Nursery Cryme was a powerful work from a band that included two new members, but greater work lay ahead. This is obvious from the opening bars of the band's next record, 1972's *Foxtrot*: We are transported to a different place and time as soon as we hear the phantasmagoric Mellotron strings of "Watcher of the Skies," streaming at us like the vivid colors of a Dario Argento horror film, capturing the "sights" and sounds of the song's sci-fi lyrical theme.

When the Mellotron cloud lifts, giving way to a 6/4 rhythm, the song builds slowly in volume and intensity, coaxing Collins, Rutherford, and Hackett to pound away at the unusual staccato pattern.

This jiggery-pokery rhythm is made even more unusual by the fact that it distorts and shifts at different points throughout the song. Hackett once told the author that he couldn't remember a time that Genesis—or anyone else—played it correctly all

the way through onstage.

Gaining confidence as a unit, the band began to branch out. It's interesting to note that, like some of their peers, Genesis were starting to spotlight individual members of the band, as Yes had done in 1972 with *Fragile*. With *Foxtrot*, Hackett matched Steve Howe's "Mood for a Day" with the nylon-stringed classical work "Horizons."

Other tunes, such as "Get 'Em Out by Friday" and "Can-Utility and the Coastliners" are but warm-ups for the main event: the twenty-three-minute epic "Supper's Ready."

"Supper's Ready" has long been a subject of debate for fans who seek to interpret its meaning. Essentially, the song is a retelling of the entire Bible, from Eden to the birth of the Antichrist. Perhaps more importantly, it also describes a vision of the rapturous end of the world and the second coming of Christ, resting thematically somewhere between the earlier *From Genesis to the Revelation* and the band's then-upcoming record *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*.

Yet the imagery is so disjointed, if not idiosyncratic, it's difficult to tie together all of the references, which point to innocent, world-weary characters. Perhaps it's a search for love, a search for God, a search for God's love and a new spiritual center? A new Jerusalem, as the song tells us?

Ultimately, the song is absurdist humor, operating as a kind of lobotomy—surgically peeling back layers of the twentieth-century English psyche. Still, whatever the true intent and meaning of the song, "Supper's Ready" was to Genesis what "Tarkus" was to Emerson Lake and Palmer: an expansive musical journey through the chicanery of madness and personal expression.

To bring the music alive onstage, Gabriel began dressing in outrageous costumes. Genesis shows were replete with Kabuki-inspired garb, giant sunflowers, elements of show-puppet theater and mime, bat wings, Day-Glo

makeup burning brightly in a dark hall with the help of UV/infrared rays, dry-ice fog, an old-man mask (donned during "The Musical Box," representing the aging reptile Henry Hamilton-Smythe, whose disembodied spirit is given to flesh in the song), and a fox head and a red dress, à la Paul Whitehead's iconic character from the LP cover artwork for *Foxtrot*, which shocked not only audience members but the band the first time it was worn.

"You have to bear in mind that prog rock is very much a musical form that came out of the U.K. alongside surreal British humor like *Monty Python*," says Ian Anderson, whose band Jethro Tull had been known for its own theatrics. "It's impossible for Peter Gabriel to be onstage with Genesis, dressed as a giant sunflower, without having some kind of sense of humor."

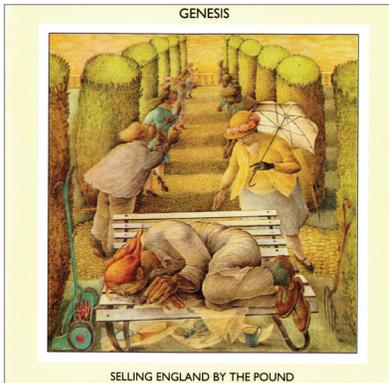
Appropriately, the band released a live record, titled *Genesis Live*, in 1973, capturing the energy and majesty of their stage show. Despite the many boxed sets and live CDs the band has released since then, *Live* remains a standard, featuring powerful renditions of "Watcher of the Skies," "Get 'Em Out By Friday," "The Musical Box," "The Return of the Giant Hogweed," and "The Knife," recorded in Leicester and Manchester.

"Genesis had an incredible work ethic in terms of writing and collaborating and rehearsing and jamming," says Gregg Bendian, drummer for the Musical Box, a Genesis-licensed tribute band that performs note for note and rebuilds bit by bit the stage presentation of the band's classic 1970s performances. "They lived it. You don't get that music by showing up and making forty-five minutes of music to fulfill a contract."

SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND

Instead of compromising and Americanizing their music, Genesis looked inward to develop a more absurd, England-centric prog rock.

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Selling England by the Pound (1973)

Their next studio record, 1973's *Selling England by the Pound*, was something akin to a string of subdued and subliminal *Monty Python* skits—very English, right down to the manicured landscape featured in Betty Swanwick's cover artwork. (Gabriel's voice even mutates into different British accents in "The Battle for Epping Forest," a metaphor for the struggle between the forces of light and darkness, and a mixture of styles, from synth prog rock to R&B, church hymn, Caribbean, and African.)

Despite tackling weighty subjects (e.g., war, bemoaning the loss of England's onetime glory), *Selling England by the Pound* never lets the listener take the music too seriously (a by-product of the absurdity and extravagance of the humor, perhaps?).

Opening the record, Gabriel sings a capella in "Dancing with the Moonlit Knight"—a twitchy, twinkling tune mourning the passing of England's great nation and speaking to the erosion of modern culture (as far as the writer can decipher), alluding to the mythical Grail and Arthurian legends, in which wood and wire mesh in some form of music that's neither baroque folk-classical nor rock.

As the song progresses, acoustic and electric guitars are chased by piano, organ, Gabriel's vocal baaing and baying, and Collins's military march rhythms until the floor and the sky open, like all heaven and hell broke loose.

Pound delivered the band's first

British hit, "I Know What I Like (in Your Wardrobe)," which narrowly missed the Top 20, as well as "More Fool Me" (on which Collins makes another appearance as a lead singer) and "The Cinema Show" (a track, along with "Firth of Fifth," that has been kept in Genesis's live repertoire for decades). The latter is remarkable both because the synthesizer instrumental section of the song was written in 7/8, and also because Banks plays a minimal amount of notes to achieve his point. Genesis were getting better at what they do, formulating a genuine style that had been established on *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot*.

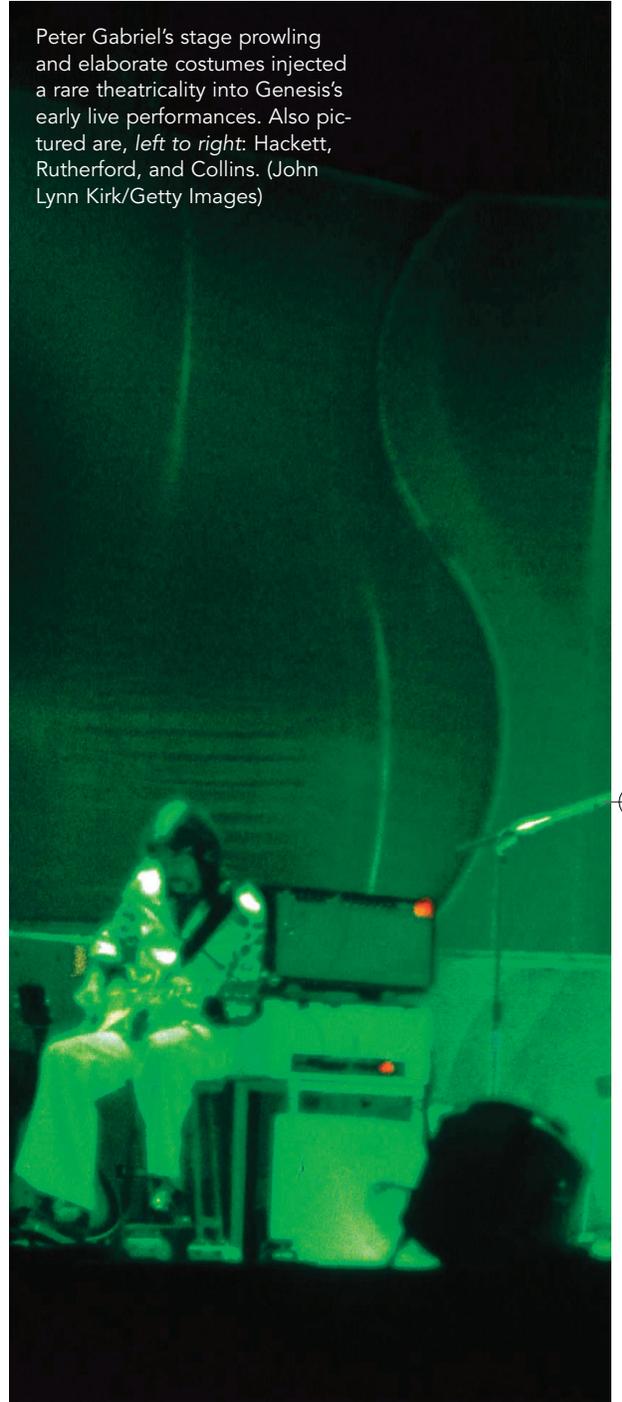
"Peter Gabriel was wearing these bizarre uniforms, and they didn't make radio-friendly records, and I would get kicked out of radio stations trying to promote the records," says Phillip Rauls, an Atlantic Records radio promotion man. "They were like, 'Are you crazy? We can't play these guys. This music is like opera with a drumbeat.'"

"I was born in 1960, and I didn't see Emerson Lake and Palmer, Yes, Crimson, but I did listen to them," says onetime King Crimson bassist/Warr guitarist Trey Gunn. "But not Genesis, for some reason. I think where I was geographically located, which was in Texas, for some reason, Genesis never really was big there."

"Exactly," says Rauls. "It was very homophobic times, too. If you liked that band, you were a fag because of Peter Gabriel's stage getups. Once you got beyond that, a lot of disc jockeys didn't say the name of the artist for fear that their radio station would be associated with this phobia that long-haired, dope-smoking communist subversives were taking over."

There really wasn't anything subversive about Genesis, aside from the fact that their music and career lay outside the mainstream. However, that would change with 1974's concept double album, a milestone in Genesis's recording history, titled *The Lamb Lies*

Peter Gabriel's stage prowling and elaborate costumes injected a rare theatricality into Genesis's early live performances. Also pictured are, left to right: Hackett, Rutherford, and Collins. (John Lynn Kirk/Getty Images)



Down on Broadway, which alternately confused and inspired listeners with its dreamlike tale of schizophrenia.

THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

Some consider *The Lamb* to be the absolute pinnacle of Genesis's progres-

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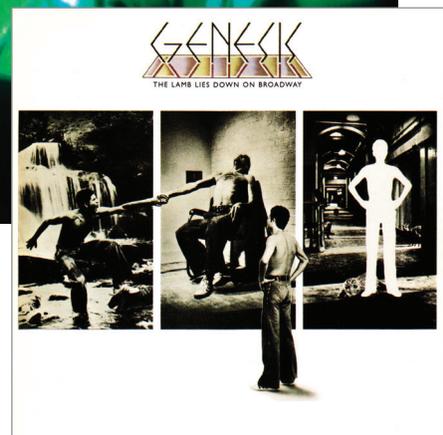


sive rock period and the entire British progressive movement, due to its impressionistic characteristics. Brian Eno contributes his ambient touches—Enossification—to the band’s expansive sound with a VCS-3 synthesizer to manipulate Gabriel’s voice.

Yet, the importance (or lack

thereof) and relevance of the musical and conceptual elements of the double record have been the cause of a continuous, raging debate.

Arguably, no other rock band, progressive or otherwise, had sounded like Genesis, particularly on the last few records, as was certainly the case



The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway (1974)

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with *The Lamb*. The music simply occupied its own space and time.

“What you *don't* mean by ‘having its own time,’ presumably,” said Hackett, “is it had its own time, because it was 1975 or something.”

Correct, Mr. Hackett. The sounds we heard on *The Lamb* are simply devoid of many (if any) sonic markers that would keep it in one era.

Gabriel explained the basic premise of the plot to an audience at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles in 1975: “It tells of how a large black cloud descends into Times Square, straddles out across Forty-second Street, turns into wool, and sucks in Manhattan island. Our hero, named Rael, crawls out of the subways of New York and is sucked into the wool to regain consciousness underground. This is the story of Rael.”

Are we experiencing a dream sequence? Is Broadway a euphemism for a new Jerusalem? Is it a metaphor for the loss of innocence? Or was Gabriel making a political commentary on the affairs of the dual nature of the religious-secular state of Israel?

When Genesis toured *The Lamb* initially, they confused audiences who were expecting to hear the band's old “hits” and instead got a recital of new material complete with stage costumes (so elaborate it became difficult at certain points in the show for Gabriel to even sing in front of a microphone), pyrotechnics, and slide shows. It was a multimedia event, with moving parts that never quite worked correctly. But perhaps this didn't matter.

“I saw a band live in Italy and they did a version of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*,” Hackett said. “I [was thinking] how good the music sounded. Being able to sit out front instead of [being] onstage—when you're onstage you're not getting the full balance. You're getting this compromise, which comes down to [an] observation that Dik Fraser made. Dik was one of the guys who worked with Genesis many years ago. He was saying to me,

‘A band onstage never knows when it's really *doing* it.’ ‘How was it for you, darling?’ You know . . .”

“When I met Phil Collins I know he was a Weather Report fan and I a Genesis fan,” says former Weather Report bassist Alphonso Johnson, who was pivotal in stabilizing the band's live lineup, and who had appeared on Collins's solo debut, *Face Value*. “I told him that I saw the band perform *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* in Philadelphia and I was maybe one of fifteen African-American people in the crowd. That concert, along with Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, changed the way I perceived music and how it can affect an audience.”

Toward the end of the American tour for *The Lamb* in the late fall of 1974, as if it were a shock to anyone, Gabriel announced he was leaving the band. “It's difficult to respond to intuition and impulse and yet work within the long-term planning of the band's career,” Gabriel said of his exit in a statement to the press.

It was assumed, because Gabriel was such a lightning rod for attention, that the singer was the creative force behind the band. The press, as did so many others, virtually wrote Genesis off.

“At the time we were running around with Greenslade, Genesis was just bubbling over and their management put a huge amount effort and money to getting into the States and launching them,” says drummer Andrew McCulloch (Greenslade, King Crimson, Manfred Mann), who did rehearsal sessions with Gabriel after the singer left Genesis. “Greenslade liked what they were doing. But when Peter Gabriel left, we all thought, ‘Well, they're in trouble now,’ because Peter had incredible charisma. We thought they were finished.”

Determined to prove to the world (and themselves) otherwise, a Gabriel-less band thrust full speed ahead.

The first order of business? Finding a new singer . . .

PHIL COLLINS, FRONT AND CENTER

“I witnessed the auditions for the new singer for Genesis,” says Stephen W. Tayler, an engineer at Trident Studios in London, where Genesis's post-Gabriel studio record, *A Trick of the Tail*, was cut. “It just so happened that I was . . . assisting in the engineering process, helping out the engineers at a couple of sessions for what would become *A Trick of the Tail*. They were in the studio for quite some time recording the backing tracks. They had no idea who was going to be the vocalist. I got the feeling that Phil was kind of going, ‘Please, can I have a go.’”

“The band brought in a number of singers, and the only one I remember specifically by name was Bernie Frost, who had been a session guy and would appear often in the studio doing backing vocals for people. I believe he was a very important component to Status Quo's vocal studio sound,” continues Tayler. “I remember some other singers just being awful. They sang, I believe, to the backing track of a song called ‘Squonk.’ Then, I remember the moment the band actually [let] Phil have a go . . .”

“Phil really half nominated himself,” adds producer David Hentschel, laughing. “I think he felt he could do it, but there needed to be a push to convince the other guys.”

The band was reticent to bring Collins from behind the kit to handle the lead vocal duties, despite the fact that the drummer had sung minimal lead and frequent backing vocals for the band on tour and studio efforts.

“Phil's voice, particularly in the upper ranges, was not dissimilar [to] Peter's, and so not a lot of people realized that he sang,” says Hentschel. “The timbre of the voice, if you like, was similar.”

“We were hanging around together playing in Brand X [Collins's jazz-rock side project with Robin Lumley,

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John Goodsall, and Percy Jones],” said Bill Bruford, whom Collins had admired from his Yes days. “We were playing some dates together—I was playing percussion to his drum set. Phil was just talking about the problem he had with Genesis. That they were auditioning singers and he, Phil, thought that they were all hopeless and he thought he could do a better job, anyway. But if he went up front, he’d be worried—like any drummer would be—that the music would fall apart. I said, ‘Why don’t you go out front and I’ll play the drums on tour or something.’ He knew my style and he knew I could play the music. So he’d be comfortable that the music wouldn’t fall apart behind.”

Suddenly it became a real possibility. And once the band had heard Collins sing, they knew they had what they were looking for, right in their midst.

Genesis may have had dramatic musical interactions in the past, but nothing approached this “British prog on steroids” feel before. *A Trick of the Tail* reached number three on the U.K. charts. *Melody Maker* readers even voted it their favorite album of 1976, beating out Led Zep’s *Presence*, Steely Dan’s *Royal Scam*, Queen’s *A Night at the Opera*, Dylan’s *Desire*, Jon Anderson’s solo record *Olias of Sunhallow*, Floyd’s *Wish You Were Here*, and Peter Frampton’s enduring live record, *Frampton Comes Alive*.

“People had always behaved toward the group as if Peter was Genesis,” Collins remembered. “We made one album without him and suddenly it wasn’t a problem.”

With Bruford backing them, the band embarked on an international tour to support *A Trick of the Tail* in 1976. The tour, the first without Gabriel, unveiled the new band to the world just as it presented two English drumming powerhouses.

Collins soon grew into his own man as a Genesis singer (and studio drummer), having dispensed with Gabriel’s “mysterious traveler” per-

sona in favor of his own, as he put it, “bloke next door” stage presence, which carries him through to today.

Collins and Genesis were changing rapidly. Even the decision to bring in Bruford, whom the band perceived as a kind of star, proved to be perhaps, in the end, musically a bit of a challenge.

Bruford came from a different world. On one side of the stage was the stoic Tony Banks, whose studied and dexterous approach to keyboards were perhaps the antithesis of what Bruford wished to be as a musician. There were moments one felt that Bruford (with Hackett) might tear it up, even for a few brief measures, to derail the music and release it from the strict confines of song structure. Occasionally, it happened, most notably with “The Cinema Show” and in the nightly Collins-Bruford drumming duet. This uncommon tension is what made the band an exciting, if somewhat frustrating, live band, both for the fans and for some of the musicians.

“We did that for about nine months or something and at the end, I said, ‘Job done,’” said Bruford. “I didn’t have any emotional input; I was just like a hired studio gun, except I was touring with the band. So I wanted to move on. But I think it got the band over a tricky moment.”

WIND & WUTHERING

For its next studio album, the band again tapped producer David Hentschel.

Unlike *A Trick of the Tail*, *Wind & Wuthering* wasn’t created in mass confusion and disarray. In fact, it was the opposite of such, becoming (arguably), what some fans consider Genesis’s most focused album.

Genesis came totally prepared to record, and it shows. Melodic ideas and variation on those melodic ideas are developed, stated, repeated, and restated in changed form, throughout the course of *Wind & Wuthering*, lending the record a sense of cohesive-

ness from one song to the next.

Wind & Wuthering is not a concept album, but musically, it’s the tightest Genesis had ever been in the studio. “That may have to do with the way it was recorded,” says Hentschel. “It was the first album we recorded where we went abroad. We went over to Holland in this little studio [Relight Studios] in the middle of nowhere. The idea being that we would be completely isolated from telephones, people dropping in, and distractions, basically. That was quite a novel idea in those days. We just stayed in a little hotel down the road from the studio and basically were totally immersed in the music. The whole thing was recorded in about two weeks. Then we came back to London and finished off some vocal overdubs and a few little bits and pieces, probably for a week. Then spent two weeks mixing it. So the whole thing was very focused, really.”

The proof is in the pudding. “Eleventh Earl of Mar” captures the same wispy musical atmosphere of “The Fountain of Salmacis” while presenting a luminescence all its own, complete with bass synth tones that percolate under the high-register melodic lead line.

When a wash of Collins’s hi-hat and Banks’s Mellotron scrubs the sonic foreground, we enter into a completely different world, one of concrete rock grooves and Hammond organ. We’re later swept away by a chorus of acoustic guitars (of different string qualities) and the gentle flicking of a kalimba, which send us through a musical and mystical fog as dense as the mist shrouding the field in the cover artwork (by Hipgnosis). It’s hard to think of a more gentle and “open” Genesis passage that’s as musically layered.

“I think the density of the track is something that comes from having multiple writers on a majority of the tunes,” says Hentschel. “Even when it came to the overdub stage, one person

MOUNTAINS COME OUT OF THE SKY

is adding his take to the song. That adds to the complexity or depth of the track. Everyone's a contributor, basically. It makes for a very interesting end result."

The second song, the ten-minute Banks-penned "One for the Vine," is an epic meditation on entitlement, the ruling classes, and their "divine right" to lead—and how this illusion is shattered.

"One for the Vine" is a great example of why Genesis is a "progressive" band: Aside from the fact that not much else in the rock universe sounds like it (try assigning a genre to the yo-yo-ing sonic interplay between Banks's piano and Hackett's whiny guitar tone), the track develops from one musical idea to the next without a hitch. (Banks's keyboard lines also become more complicated as the tune progresses, as if he were storing his energy for the later stanzas of the song.) The song is really seven rolled up into one, and yet it's as smooth as a three-minute pop tune.

"*Wind & Wuthering* is generally perceived as their finest hour," says Hentschel. "It might be the purest representation of what Genesis was about as a band. There are longer tracks, generally, and the tracks develop. The whole album has a very distinct atmosphere that sets it apart from many of the other records they recorded."

Despite this accomplishment, Hackett was dissatisfied with the song choice: He's even cited the song "Pigeons" and his own "Please Don't Touch" (which wound up on one of his solo records of the same title) as better candidates than the music that was chosen for the final track listing.

It's no surprise that Hackett, increasingly frustrated, and who'd tasted solo success with his 1975 record *Voyage of the Acolyte* (a Top 30 British hit), decided to leave Genesis during the mix stages of the 1977 live double record, *Seconds Out*.

Hackett would continue following his own experimental-muso path, pushing his personal limits with such releases as the hard-won acoustic album *Bay of Pigs, Please Don't Touch!* (featuring Kansas's Steve Walsh and Phil Ehart), the stylistically diverse *Spectral Mornings* (containing bits of reggae/Caribbean, classical, and old-timey Americana à la U.K.'s 1970s dance hall/jazz big band, the popular Pasadena Roof Orchestra), *Cured* (prominently featuring keyboardist Nick Magnus and Hackett's brother John, as well as keyboard technology and an ever-present LinnDrum rhythm machine), *Highly Strung* (containing the U.K. hit "Cell 151"), *Till We Have Faces* (a veritable smorgasbord of musical styles, from classical—as in the burst of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto felt in "Myopia"—to Latin/Brazilian double and Japanese pattern drumming), and *Defector*.

Hackett was one of the few progressive rock guitarists who could be inspired by C. S. Lewis and speak of wizards and goblins while maintaining an audience willing to overlook these transgressions because of the music's beautiful melodic core.

"Steve gets away with it for two reasons," says former Hackett keyboardist Nick Magnus. "Firstly, the lyrics are more sophisticated than [on] average, being more like poetry than prose. A certain amount of interpre-

tation and imagination is required on the part of the listener. With tasteful use of metaphors, euphemisms and ambiguity, the hobbits and virgins aren't rubbed directly in your face. Though some may be disappointed about that. Secondly, the music has that unique Hackett personality. Many contemporary prog bands that do the 'fantasy' thing tend to follow the same old formulae, and consequently sound not only cheesy, but the same as each other."

Hackett later formed the dual-guitar supergroup GTR with Yes's Steve Howe, tapping guitar synthesizer technology (something Hackett had begun experimenting with in his solo material), and released its self-titled debut record in 1986.

"When you listen to Hackett's solo material, you really hear what an important part of the band's sound he was," says Laser's Edge record label founder Ken Golden. "Of course, Genesis moved on and wrote different material when he left. So, if I had to guess, if Hackett was still in the band, I think it would have carried on in the style of *Wind & Wuthering* and maybe had a few more radio-friendly songs like 'Your Own Special Way.' But I think they would have hung onto that basic sound, for a while at least."

Now a trio (augmented in live situations by Zappa alumnus drum Chester Thompson, and studio and jazz-rock ace guitarist/bassist Daryl Stuermer, both of whom made contact with the band through bassist Alphonso Johnson), Genesis were trimming away the musical fat, as it were.

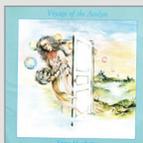
Collins emerged as *the* singer of the



Trespass
(1970)



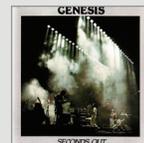
Live
(1973)



Voyage of the Acolyte
(1975)



A Trick of the Tail
(1976)



Seconds Out
(1977)



Duke
(1980)

GENESIS



Foxtrot
(1972)

1980s, and Rutherford slowly got over his trepidation about having to “replace” Hackett and mastered the art of being a lead guitarist, while Banks went with the flow, cutting down his epics to bite-size pieces. As a collective unit, the band also warmed up to elements of R&B and soul—some of Collins’s favorite styles of music—introducing them into the Genesis lexicon.

Nineteen seventy-eight’s appropriately titled . . . *And Then There Were Three* was the beginning of the band’s evolution away from progressive rock. Though songs such as “Down and Out” and Banks’s “Burning Rope” hark back to Genesis’s early 1970s material, the old days were gone.

“A lot of people say . . . *And Then*

There Were Three was when the band were starting to go commercial or trying to write three-minute songs,” says Hentschel. “It *was* a conscious decision to do that. The record company said, ‘Let’s have a few shorter songs.’ I think it worked very well, actually.”

The record spawned the romantic single “Follow You, Follow Me,” a Top 30 U.K. hit (Top 30 in the U.S.), which reached a new demographic of fan.

Subsequent studio albums such as *Duke*, *Abacab*, *Genesis*, and *Invisible Touch* brought even bigger changes and would simultaneously expand and rip apart the Genesis fan base in ways that no one could have foreseen. Genesis would become one of the hottest pop bands of the 1980s, selling millions of records. Suddenly,

women were interested in this band called Genesis; they were no longer the exclusively cultural property of hairy, outcast male college students.



Genesis: *Nursery Cryme* (1971)