EXCLUSIVE INTRODUCTION BY PETE TOWNSHEND

THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

THE WHO

148-PAGE WHO SPECIAL

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

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FROM THE MAKERS OF UNCUT

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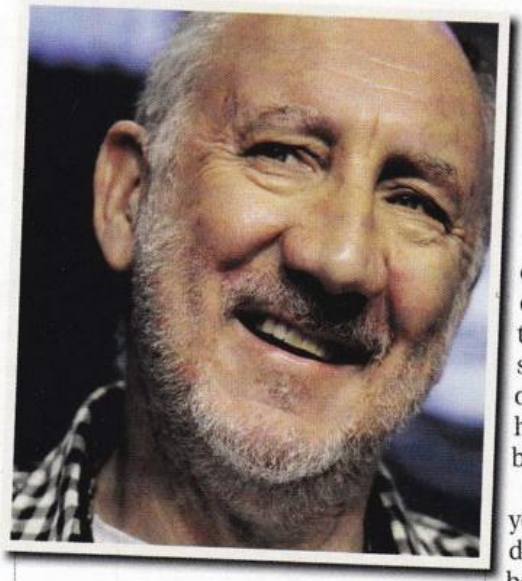
'What would I have done differently?
I would never have joined a band...'



THE WHO HAVEN'T made many albums considering the number of years we've been on the planet. We've been around as a recording band, with one very long sabbatical from the studio from 1982 to 2006, since 1964. The standout albums are very few.

The same could be said for a number of other artists, of course. But there is a continuum between *A Quick One* (1966) and *Endless Wire* (2006) – it is the reliance on a kind of misty narrative that casts the collected songs in a dramatic atmosphere into which we expect the listener to *insert* themselves. If it isn't always 'rock-opera' there is almost always a story of some kind behind every Who album. If it isn't actually spelt out, it's inferred.

I think our greatest accomplishment was to create the arena anthem. That is a song that on its own serves almost as a short show in itself. This caters for the shallow attention span demonstrated by the audience in busy and chaotic arenas or stadiums. This kind of song also breaks away from the tradition in pure pop to serve up a series of shorter songs that need to be framed in a kind of choreographed framework of a show, fielded today by the likes of Lady Gaga and Prince.

Three or four of the best anthemic Who songs strung together generate a blistering 25-minute musical event. This was something we stumbled onto by accident rather than by design. Now that stadium events are seen to be so overcooked, it may be an accomplishment that should be reassessed and downgraded, but "Baba O'Riley" and "Won't Get Fooled Again" are extremely hard to beat as a way of rallying a massive audience. I've written about 650 songs. Only a few of them could be described as 'anthems', but those will probably be the songs that prevail.

What would I have done differently? I would never have joined a band. Even though I am quite a good gang member and a good trooper on the road, I am bad at creative collaboration. I would have made a much more effective solo performer and producer working the way Brian Eno has worked. I would be less physically damaged today. My knees, ears, right wrist and shoulder would work more efficiently. In all other respects at 65 years old I am in extremely good shape. Everything that hurts today hurts because of something crazy I did while showing off onstage with The Who. Roger's voice has probably suffered in the same way, but he has fewer regrets, I think.

How will The Who be viewed in 50 years? We've been very well documented, so have a good chance of being accurately assessed. There are several good documentaries about us, some of them commissioned by us. There are a number of good books (again one or two commissioned by me as a publisher), and hundreds of interviews (some of which are gathered in this issue of *Uncut*). What we call 'classic' rock today is really music that in the early 1960s started a wave of performing and writing that was different to everything that had gone before. It will always be of interest, but hopefully it is already an anachronism. Music today serves a different need, it's a different world.

Pete Townshend
FEBRUARY 2011

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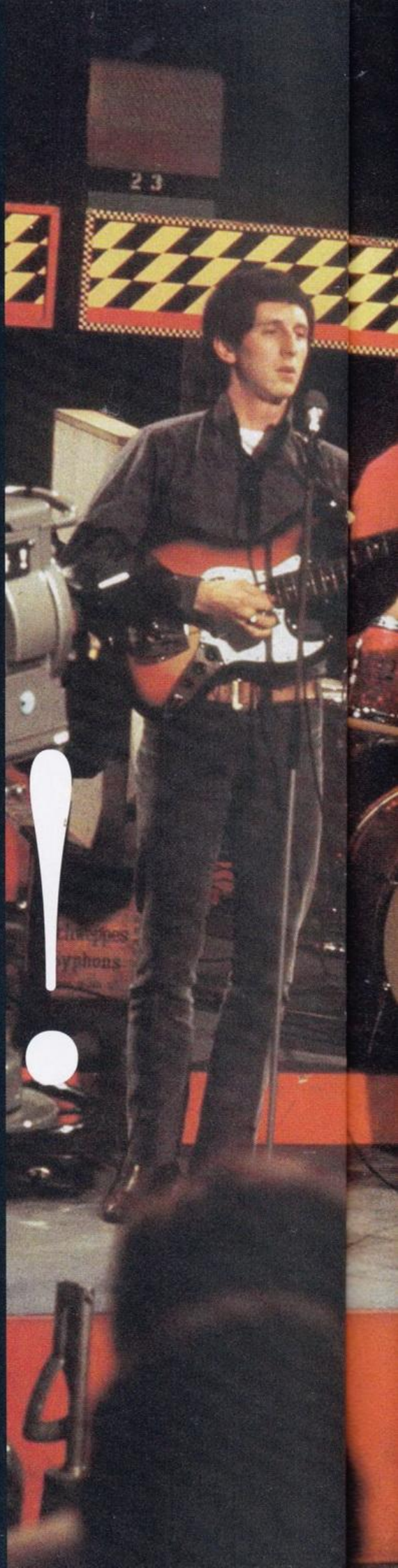
THE WHO | ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

WEMBLEY, LONDON, AUGUST 1965

READY STEADY GO!

The weekend starts here! Between January 1965 and December 1966, The Who appeared on classic British TV pop show *Ready Steady Go!* a staggering 18 times – key performances in their inexorable rise to fame. The following shots are taken from the band's camera rehearsals at Wembley Studio One, August 6, 1965, for a live slot on the show aired later that day...

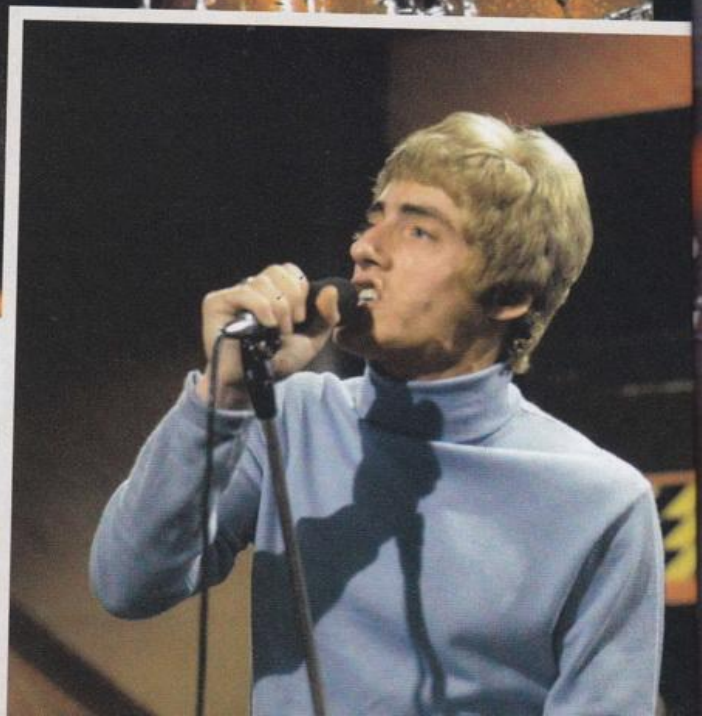


REX FEATURES


PARK

▲ Rehearsals for the live early evening slot on *RSG!*, which would also feature The Tremeloes, The Byrds and Sonny & Cher

▼ The kid's not alright! The Who played August 6's *RSG!* as a trio, without Daltrey, who was sent home by the show's doctor with suspected glandular fever...



«...but Daltrey would be well enough to appear later that evening at 'Ready, Steady, Richmond', the first night of the National Jazz & Blues Festival held in the Richmond Athletic Association Grounds, Surrey, along with The Yardbirds and The Moody Blues

THE WHO SINGLES JULY 1964 | I'M THE FACE/ZOOT SUIT | UK ONLY, DID NOT CHART | RELEASED AS THE HIGH NUMBERS | JANUARY 1965 | I CAN'T EXPLAIN/BALD HEADED WOMAN | UK#8, US#93 | >>>>>

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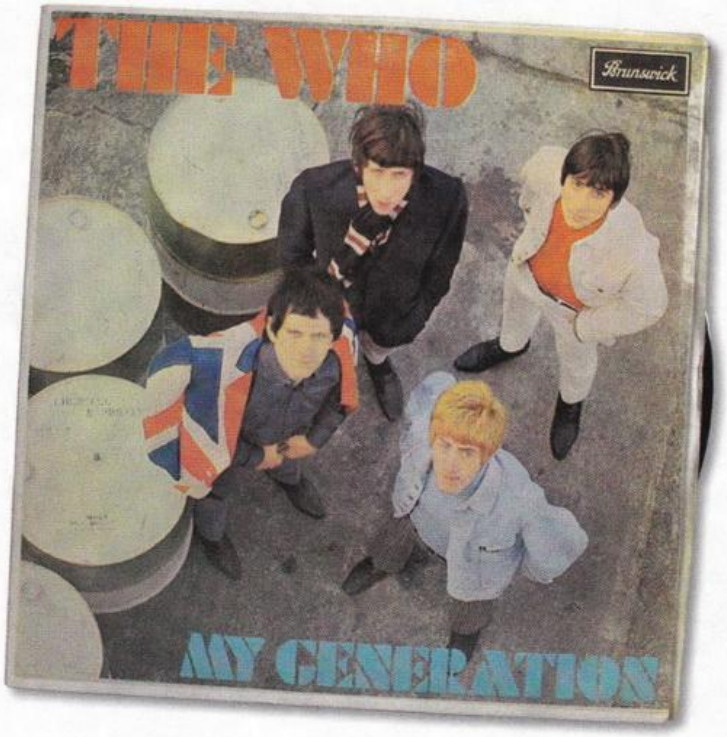


RELEASE >> DATE 03 | DECEMBER | 1965

My Generation

The chaos begins. But how long will The Who last, when making their debut nearly causes them to self-destruct? *By Garry Mulholland*

AS SHARED FANTASIES go, being a member of a hit rock'n'roll band in 1965 must be a pretty popular one. Fame, glory and cash. Drugs, booze and women. Complete avoidance of adult responsibility and the growing realisation that you'll never waste your best years in a factory like Dad – who, incidentally, you'll never have to live with again. More women. And all at the one time in human history when playing music made you seem more important than generals and captains of industry, popes and presidents. Man, it must have been fun… Unless, of course, you were in The Who.

John Entwistle had turned 21 just four days before he, Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey and Keith Moon entered IBC Studios in London's Portland Place on October 13, 1965. It wasn't much of a celebration. Relations between his bandmates were so dire that *Melody Maker* would report that The Who had split just three weeks before *My Generation* was released.

While Townshend wanted the band to become the Pop Art project that we came to know and love, Daltrey feared that The Who were ripping off The Kinks. He pushed for the band to remain the same soul and blues-covering, mod exploitation band they had been when guided by early manager Pete Meaden and called The High Numbers. Daltrey also disapproved of Moon's incessant pill-popping and was just over a month away from beating the drummer unconscious at a show in Denmark. The fact that Daltrey had temporarily separated from his wife and was living in the band's van probably didn't help.

Meanwhile the current management team, Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, were bitterly regretting the deal they had signed with producer Shel Talmy. It had got The Who a deal with Decca in America, but they had relinquished too much control in return. A court case would eventually see Talmy get points on The Who package CONTINUES OVER »

GETTY

US#93 | >>>> | MAY 1965 | ANYWAY, ANYHOW, ANYWHERE/DADDY ROLLING STONE (UK)/ ANYTIME YOU WANT ME (US) | UK#10, US DID NOT CHART |

TRACKMARKS

1 **Out In The Street** ★★
2 **I Don't Mind** ★★★
3 **The Good's Gone** ★★★★
4 **La-La-La-Lies** ★★★
5 **Much Too Much** ★★★★
6 **My Generation** ★★★★★
7 **The Kids Are Alright** ★★★★★
8 **Please, Please, Please** ★★★
9 **It's Not True** ★★★
10 **I'm A Man** ★★
11 **A Legal Matter** ★★★
12 **The Ox** ★★★★

RELEASED: December 3, 1965 (UK), April 1966 (USA) as *The Who Sings My Generation* with different tracklisting.
LABEL: Brunswick (Decca in US)
PRODUCED BY: Shel Talmy
RECORDED: IBC Studios, London
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead vocals); Pete Townshend (guitar, backing vocals); John Entwistle (bass, bk vocals); Keith Moon (drums, percussion, bk vocals); Nicky Hopkins (keyboards)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 5; US N/A

The Who, 1965: snappily attired purveyors of "mutual hostility"

REX FEATURES

until 1970 and retain ownership of the *My Generation* sessions to this day. But Lambert, who was desperate to produce The Who himself, dealt with the problem at the time by turning up at IBC and continually berating Talmy. Engineer Glyn Johns intervened on Talmy's side, and the control room became an all-out war zone.

The cherry on top of all this was the pressure on these four young men, and Townshend in particular, to deliver. The Who were effectively recording their second album; the first, recorded at IBC over two days in April, had been hastily dumped when a critic from *Beat Instrumental* had been allowed access to a promo and criticised its dependence on R'n'B covers. Townshend, who was still a songwriting beginner, had spent the summer furiously writing a new record while Lambert and Stamp cracked the whip. And now The Who had to compete in December with the impending glory of *Rubber Soul*... with a grand total of five days of studio time staggered over seven confused months.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Earthy R'n'B sounds emerge as Roger Daltrey wails over his messages... there may be disagreement within the group, but when they get together they put on a united performance."
ALLEN EVANS, *NME*, DECEMBER 17, 1965

"Townshend's control of feedback on his instrumental, 'The Ox', is so expert it's hardly noticeable. A very big seller."
MELODY MAKER, DECEMBER 4, 1965

Townshend later described the experience as "just miserable. There was no fun at all."

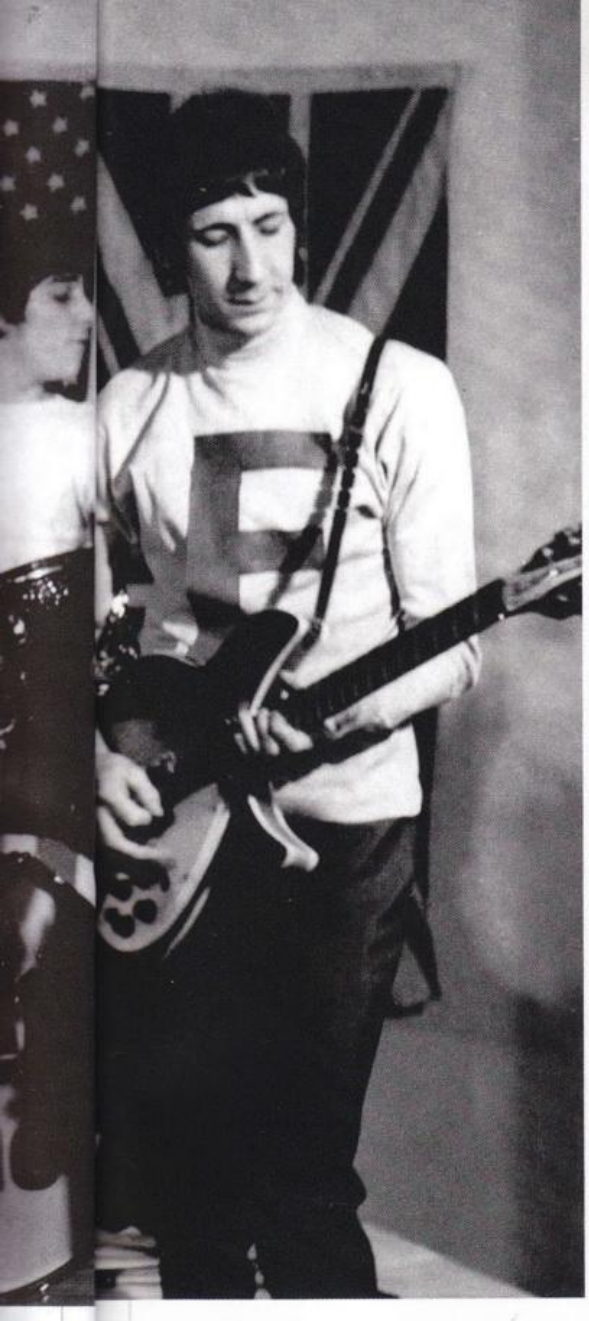
At this point you might simply conclude it's a miracle that *My Generation* even exists. But The Who had stumbled upon the truth that would carry them to greatness. *My Generation* isn't a great record, but the mutual hostility that swirled around these four profoundly different young men, and the personal and creative differences between them, caused the tensions that exploded onstage and on record to make the band unique.

The chaotic birth of *My Generation* has led to an equally troubled adulthood. Typically, the US version differed from the UK one, with Townshend's "Instant Party" aka "Circles" replacing the cover of Bo Diddley's "I'm A Man". Talmy's refusal to waive his rights meant that the UK version of the debut album by one of rock's greatest bands was completely unavailable throughout the late '60s and '70s. The bootleggers had a ball with that. A vinyl version finally emerged in 1980 on, of all labels, Virgin, with a muddy mono mix that did its reputation no favours.

The US version was issued on CD in the early 1980s, but the tinny mastering job was universally panned. This review is based on the 2002 Deluxe Edition, a remastered and largely excellent Talmy mix containing 18 bonus tracks, including mono mixes, selections from the scrapped original album and alternative versions of the early singles. But even this one features curious anomalies: Townshend's lead guitar disappears from "A Legal Matter" and the title track, along with the backing vocal chant that gave order to the latter's closing crashings and burnings; the double-tracked vocals are also absent from the versions of "The Kids Are Alright", "La-La-La-Lies", "Much Too Much" and "The Good's Gone". All reappear in the 2008 mono version included in a Japanese boxset. Perhaps the biggest compliment you can pay to *My Generation* is that years of shabby treatment have failed to dim its majesty.

The heart of *My Generation* beats within tracks three to seven; five Townshend originals that define what The Who were in 1965, but also contain vivid elements of the force they

THE WHO SINGLES | OCTOBER 1965 | MY GENERATION/SHOUT AND SHIMMY (UK)/OUT IN THE STREET (US) | UK#2, US#74 | MARCH 1966 | SUBSTITUTE/WALTZ FOR A PIG | UK#5, US DID NOT CHART | >>>>>>>



would become over the next decade. The run begins with the best of the non-single tracks, "The Good's Gone", a key mix of teen lover angst and glowering two-chord punk thunder. Entwistle's emphatic bassline and Townshend's jangling arpeggios both bolster and undercut Daltrey's sneer, and much of what The Who would become – powerpop pioneers, neighbourhood threat, cynical rejecters of romantic cliché, inventors of hard rock as theatrical artform – is nascent within this malevolent, insouciant growl of a song.

The crucial part guest keyboardist and future Beatles and Stones sideman Nicky Hopkins plays is highlighted on "La-La-La-Lies", as his jazzy, good-natured piano enables Daltrey to find his first easy-going, storytelling voice. He taunts an old squeeze with his new hot girlfriend while ironically pretending that he's far too over her to bother. It's a typical Townshend twist on machismo… his insistence that male cool means lying so convincingly about your perceived invulnerability that you believe it yourself.

"*Your love is hard and fast,*" Daltrey declares with a fitting hint of sexual terror on "Much Too Much", a Dylan pastiche with a refrain that points towards the choirboy hooks of Townshend's future rock operas.

On vinyl, the album's two inarguable classics, "My Generation" and "The Kids Are Alright", end Side One and kick off Side Two respectively. You can still hear the world collapse and rebuild if you listen to the pair in quick succession. Is the key plot twist in The Who's story – Hell, maybe the story of the entire 1960s – the moment when some bright spark suggested that Pete's slow, Mose Allison and John Lee Hooker-inspired talking blues about the frustrations of youth should become a brutal two-chord thrash? The one good thing about the missing lead guitar on the current stereo mix is that you can hear even more of Entwistle's bass solo, as it finds some inexplicable line between laidback virtuosity and controlled bloodshed.

"The Kids Are Alright" remains one of the most sad and beautiful songs ever made by nasty bastards on speed. The post-mod adoption of the term 'The Kids', as both naïve and ironic celebration of rebel youth, obscures Townshend's gushing Byrdsian guitars and the imagery of a young man's wistful leaving behind of everything he knows to head out "*in the light*" and find a life. The moment when one chooses adventure and loneliness over home, friends and comfort. Leaving your girlfriend to the tender mercies of predatory mates, consoling yourself that you "*know them all pretty well*" – and it's that "*pretty*" that kills – is such a perfect metaphor for making your way in the world while counting the cost, and Daltrey becomes a great singer in order to carry one of his guitarist's most elegant works.

The remaining *My Generation* tracks fascinate while also reminding that The Who were a couple of years behind their main competitors. "Legal Matter" still strikes as one of the weirdest moments in The Who's recording career; a middle-aged bloke's misogynist fantasy adrift in this brave new youth world. In a strangely old, high voice, Townshend gets pleasure out of ditching his old lady, indulging in a midlife crisis he's surely too young to understand. Equally precocious-cum-jaded is "It's Not True", a barbed Townshend comment on media exaggeration. "*I haven't got 11 kids/I don't come from Baghdad/I'm not half-Chinese either and I didn't kill my Dad*" Roger deadpans, little knowing he'd be playing such eccentric Townshend characters for the 40-odd years. A fun trifle, made more jolly by Hopkins' rinky-dink piano.

The three cover versions that did make the cut are largely responsible for *My Generation*'s relatively low status among must-own Who albums. And it's hard to understand why, apart from our cultural obsession with writing one's own songs. Sure, "I'm A Man" is a slightly ridiculous Muddy Waters impression, but the covers of James Brown's "Please, Please, Please" and "I Don't Mind" are pretty, loving and heartfelt, again lent some vital soul-jazz flourishes by Hopkins, and sung with some style by a kid who patently got off on having a chance to sing what he felt was the greatest music in the world. It is Townshend's own "Out In The Street" that most disappoints. Partly because it's a waste of the ideal street-punk title. But mostly because The Who chose to open their first album with such a lightweight slice of beat pop. Townshend, who later revealed that Kit Lambert had rewritten the song against his instincts, gives away his lack of faith by lending it the intro from second single "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere". It doesn't help.

That just leaves *My Generation*'s closer and wild card instrumental. "The Ox" may nab its title from Entwistle's nickname, but the four minutes of anarchic noise indulged Keith Moon's love of surf music and Townshend's worship of Link Wray, and gives you the strongest idea of what it might have been like to see and feel The Who at The Marquee in 1965.

Despite betraying its confused origins, *My Generation* was a British hit and established much of the fanbase that has stuck with The Who to this day. It worked as both mod rabble-rouser and the first bonafide Pop Art/art-pop long-player, the product of a time when no-one could be sure that rock would last for long. There remains, too, a sense that the kids involved can't quite believe what is happening to them: not just that they're being allowed to make music as a day job, but that, suddenly, they can take their ideas to the world. ⊙

THE BIGGEST COMPLIMENT TO MY GENERATION IS THAT YEARS OF SHABBY TREATMENT HAVE FAILED TO DIM ITS MAJESTY

CHART | MARCH 1966 | A LEGAL MATTER/INSTANT PARTY | UK#32 | AUGUST 1966 | THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT/THE OX (UK)/A LEGAL MATTER (US) | UK#41, US#106 | AUGUST 1966 | LA-LA-LA-LIES/THE GOOD'S GONE | UK DID NOT CHART


THE WHO
DULUX

'MOD IS DYING, AND WE DON'T PLAN TO GO DOWN WITH IT. WE'VE BECOME *INDIVIDUALISTS...'*

Introducing a new rock'n'roll phenomenon: four 'sadistic' Londoners with a neat Pop Art manifesto and a penchant for smashing their gear. And welcome their provocative leader, Pete Townshend, already armed with opinions and theories for every occasion. "Our personalities clash," he says. "There's a lot of friction."

MELODY MAKER
05/06/1965

A NEW NAME IS being hurled around in hip circles – The Who. They are four mods from Shepherd's Bush, London. And their popularity is gathering strength in exactly the same way The Animals experienced two years ago.

Like The Animals and The Yardbirds, The Who are the products of the club scene. Today, with one hit gone and another on the way, they are reckoned by the "In Crowd" to be on the crest of a success wave that could make them the new rave – on a nationwide scale.

The Who are Roger Daltrey (aged 20, singer); Pete Townshend (aged 19, lead guitar); John Entwistle (aged 19, bass guitar) and drummer Keith Moon, who is 17. Moon is the most popular with fans. They mob him. Already.

Their music is defiant, and so is their attitude. Their sound is vicious. This is no note-perfect "showbiz" group, singing in harmony and playing clean guitar runs. The Who lay down a heavy beat, putting great emphasis on the on and off beats. Moon thunders round the drums. Townshend swings full circles with his right arm. He bangs out Morse Code by switching the guitar pickups on and off. Notes bend and whine. He turns suddenly and rams the end of his guitar into the speaker. A chord shudders on the impact. The speaker rocks. Townshend strikes again on the rebound. He rips the canvas cover, tears into the speaker cone, and the distorted solo splutters from a demolished speaker. The crowds watch this violent display spellbound.

The Who started a year ago, changing their name from The High Numbers. They began regularly at the Goldhawk in Shepherd's Bush, but graduated to the plushier Marquee in London's West End. They were billed in small print and played to audiences of 200 every Tuesday. But word spread. The name intrigued. Tuesday audiences grew. They became favourites of the mods. "Have you heard The Who yet?" That was the start.

Mods identified themselves with The Who because The Who identified themselves with them. Pop music is often allied to social trends and fashions. This was how it was in The Who's early days. Pete Townshend wore a suede jacket, Roger Daltrey hipster trousers. Mods playing mod music.

It's an exhausting act to watch, and highly original, full of tremendous pace. What makes The Who click onstage?

Townshend: "There is no suppression within the group. You are what you are and nobody cares. We say what we want when we want. If we don't like something someone is doing, we say so. Our personalities clash, but we argue and get it all out of our system. There's a lot of friction, and offstage we're not particularly matey. But it doesn't matter.

"If we were not like this it would destroy CONTINUES OVER »

DAVID MAGNUS/ REX FEATURES

our stage performance. We play how we feel."

The Who are linking their image with what they call Pop Art.

They describe their current chart success, "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" as "the first Pop Art single," and they have started designing their own "Pop Art" clothes.

"Pop Art is something society accepts, but we re-present it in a different form. Like Union Jacks. They're supposed to be flown. John wears one as a jacket. We think the mod thing is dying. We don't plan to go down with it, which is why we've become individualists."

Anti-Who people condemn their music as a messy noise. The Who like this, "Best publicity we could have." Their idea of a messy noise is the music of Freddie And The Dreamers, Val Doonican and Ronnie Hilton. "It's just dozy."

Cathy McGowan and *Ready Steady Goes Live!* assistant editor Vicki Wickham are devout Who followers. The Who are modern, short-haired rebels with a cause. There's sadism in their characters and in their music. But at least what they're doing is something NEW to the pop world. They are undoubtedly the most emergent young group on the scene. And with legions of fans shouting them on, they could well be tomorrow's big stars.

MELODY MAKER
03/07/1965

WHAT IS POP ART? For weeks the hit-parading London group, The Who, have been at the centre of a big storm. Some say it's bunk. Others defend Pop Art as the most exciting musical development since the electric guitar boom started.

Who guitarist Pete Townshend defined Pop Art for the *MM* this week: "It is re-presenting something the public is familiar with, in a different form. Like clothes. Union Jacks are supposed to be flown. We have a jacket made of one. Keith Moon our drummer has a jersey with the RAF insignia on it. I have a white jacket, covered in medals.

"We stand for Pop Art clothes, Pop Art music and Pop Art behaviour. This is what people forget – we don't change offstage. We live Pop Art."

Trowel-nosed Townshend, aged 20, was sitting in a high-class restaurant wearing a loud check jacket and open-necked shirt. The Who are frequently ridiculed for smashing pounds worth of equipment. Why do they do it? Pop Art?

Pete, the culprit wrecker, answered. "I bang my guitar on my speaker because of the visual effect. It is very artistic. One gets a tremendous sound, and the effect is great. What annoys me is the person who comes up after a show and says: 'Why didn't you smash your guitar tonight?' In fact it's split right down the middle of the neck, but the audience don't realise. If guitars exploded and went up in a puff of smoke, I'd be happy. The visual effect would be complete.

"Roger Daltrey, our singer, smashes his microphone on Keith's cymbal. He does this every night, as it's a sound. I use feedback every night. That's a sound. But if the audience isn't right, I don't smash guitars. They wouldn't appreciate the full visual effect."

What is Pop Art about The Who's music? "Well, our next single is really Pop Art. I wrote it with that intention. Not only is the number Pop Art, the lyrics are 'young and rebellious'. It's anti middle-age, anti boss-class and anti young marrieds! I've nothing against these people, really – just making a positive statement. The big social revolution that has taken place in the last five years is that youth, and not age, has become important. Their message is: 'I'm important now I'm young, but I won't be when I'm over 21.'

"Even London's streets are making a massive anti-establishment statement, every Saturday night. This is what we are trying to do in our music, protest against 'showbiz' stuff, clear the hit-parade of stodge!

"We play," continued Townshend, "Pop Art with standard group equipment. I get jet-plane sounds, Morse Code signals, howling wind effects. Mind you, near Pop Art discs have been produced before. The Shangri-Las, with seagulls and motorbikes, and Twinkle's 'Terry'. Hey! We should have done 'Trains And Boats And Planes'." *Nick Jones*

WHO KNEW

"I Can't Explain" hit No 8 in the UK charts in April 1965, sold 104,000 copies, and grossed £35,000 in revenue. According to Who biographer Dave Marsh, the band were on a 2.5% royalty deal, so, after deducting tax, Decca's £16,000 fee and £400 paid to their managers, The Who's members pocketed just £150 each.

Life-lines of THE WHO


KEITH MOON


ROGER DALTREY


PETER TOWNSHEND


JOHN BROWNE

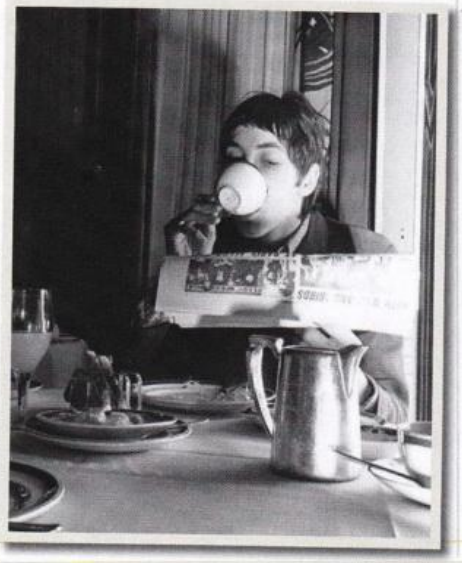
	KEITH MOON	ROGER DALTREY	PETER TOWNSHEND	JOHN BROWNE
Real name:	Keith Moon	Roger Daltrey	Peter Dennis Blandford Townshend	John Alec Entwistle
Birthdate: Birthplace:	August 23, 1947 Wembley	March 1, 1945 Hammersmith, London	May 19, 1945 Central Middlesex Hospital Annexe, Chiswick	October 9, 1945 Chiswick
Personal points:	5ft. 9ins.; 10st. 7lb.; brown eyes; black hair	5ft. 7ins.; 9st.; blue eyes; assorted hair	6ft.; 10st.; blue eyes; brown/black hair	5ft. 11¼ins.; 11st. 7lb.; sparkling blue eyes; green to black hair
Parents' names:	Mum and Dad	Irene and Harry	Betty and Clifford	Queenie Maud and Herbert
Brothers and sisters: Present home:	Linda and Leslie Wembley	Jill and Carol Shepherd's Bush, London	Paul and Simon Belgravia, London	— Shepherd's Bush
Instruments played:	Drums	Guitar and harp	12-string guitar	Bass guitar, trumpet, French horn, piano
Where educated:	Harrow	Victoria Primary and Acton County Grammar	Acton County Grammar School; Ealing Art School	Southfield Road School; Acton Cty. Grammar School
Musical education:	None	None	Interesting talks with father. Listening to music	Piano from age of 9-12, studied French horn and trumpet at school
Age entered show business:	16	6 months	14	—
First public appearance:	Carroll Levis Junior Discoveries	Hammersmith Hospital, March 1, 1945	Goodness knows!	Hendon Town Hall, second trumpet at 11
Biggest break in career:	3,000 pairs of sticks	Crashing group van on bridge	Meeting Kit Lambert	My little toe, rushing to answer phone
Compositions:	—	—	"I Can't Explain," "Anyway," etc.	—
Biggest influence on career:	Jim Marshall	Whisky	Time, it's always behind, pushing	Lack of money, Duane Eddy, Beatles
Former occupations:	Trainee manager	Con. man	Butcher's boy, milkman, bouncer	Tax officer in Acton, Ealing and Slough
Hobbies:	—	Fishing	Scalextric car racing, painting, making pop art montages	Buying and selling bass guitars
Favourite colour:	Blue	Dark black	Any that shouts!	Any dark shades: blue and green
Favourite singers:	Cyrano, Sammy Payne	Elvis Presley, Nina Simone, Buddy Guy	Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, Bobby Bland, Baez, Dylan	Buddy Guy, Beach Boys (Brian Wilson), Everlys
Favourite actors/actresses:	Terence Stamp, Sybil Burton and Sandie Shaw	Mitch	Keith Moon (straight up!)	Vincent Price, Steve McQueen, Jess Conrad
Favourite food:	French blues	Chinese	Bircher Muesli (slushy Swiss cereal)	Chinese, fried scampi, chicken
Favourite drink:	Bacardi, coke, Elderberry wine	—	Good wine or brandy	Scotch and coke, tomato juice, and milk
Favourite clothes:	White	Anything that fits me	New or very old	I change my mind all the time
Favourite composers:	Pete Townshend, Lennon / McCartney, Brian Wilson	—	Beatles, Stockhausen, Prokofiev, Bach	Lennon / McCartney, Peter Townshend
Favourite groups:	Beach Boys, Donovan	The Who	Vagabonds, Stones, Beatles	Beatles, Cliff Bennett and Rebel Rousers, Beach Boys
Miscellaneous likes:	Birds	See Keith Moon	Composing, recording, being with hip people, going home	Peace and quiet, playing to big audiences, easy-going people
Miscellaneous dislikes:	Shiny paper	Filling in forms	Hangovers, subtlety, King's Road, having to justify friendship	My equipment when it goes wrong; taxis in rush-hour
Most thrilling experience:	Big dipper at Belle Vue	See Keith Moon	Big dipper at Belle Vue	Falling from top of Blackpool Tower
Tastes in music:	All rubbish	Varied	Anything currently recognised as being liked	Anything except light orchestral, any kind of jazz and poor pop music
Personal ambition:	To stay young for ever	To live well	Just not to let what happens to me get me down	To make a lot of money
Professional ambition:	To smash 100 drum kits	To have group of harpists	To be a recognised composer / arranger. Die young	To make a lot of money; be best bass guitarist in country (next week as well)

Just a few of The Who's favourite things: taken from the *New Musical Express*, July 23, 1965

'THE SOUND OF MUSIC WOULD BE THE LAST PLACE I'D STEP INTO...'

Pete Townshend speaks his mind for the *Melody Maker*'s Think-In feature

VIETNAM: It's funny how Vietnam has turned into a household word. I've got some American mates who were deported from this country for all sorts of things, and one of them, who was a criminal, was called up and killed in Vietnam. His mother got about £3 10s from the US government. The Vietnam situation needs something big to happen to stop the war, either from the people of Vietnam or America. There will always be teenagers ready to throw themselves under tanks. I wonder what I'd do if we were in the same position. I always stand by Young Communist principles. If I was in Russia and in some harsh Five Year Plan – if it was for the good of the country – I wouldn't mind. But for a youngster to face foreign troops blasting away about something they don't even understand. Well really, they all ought to get out.



"KEITH MOON USED TO BE A LOT OF FUN. UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S TURNING INTO A LITTLE OLD MAN..."

SUNDAY COLOUR SUPPLEMENTS: That's fairly topical. Our one took a fantastic amount of work by the group, photographer and writer. It surprised us the amount of work that went in. They came out with us for a month, and the photographer took some of our best pictures – sinister and glamorous! It's funny how pop is getting into these things. It's become another form – not an art form, a form that is suddenly becoming accepted. Deidre Fitzsmythe has probably got a Beatles LP and a modern art painting on her wall.

THE THEATRE: I've been dying to go but there's nothing on. There's only *Oblomov*, which I haven't seen, but everyone I know has seen it twice. I'd like to see that Libby Morris thing. She tears me up. The theatre is fantastically dated. Opera and ballet benefit from better lighting, musicianship, scenery and material. But what is the theatre benefiting from? In pantomime even, you still get the devil coming up through the floor and musicals are so dated. *The Sound Of Music* would be the last place I'd step into. I hate all the songs, so obviously written "for the whole family".

WIMPY BARS: I like all-night ones. I like cheeseburgers – that's a plug. I've seen all sorts of famous people in all-nighter Wimpy Bars. Me and the rest of the group. They are places you go into and get out of as quickly as possibly. John [Entwistle] is the Wimpy Bar man. The food is atrocious and the chefs are carefully trained – in the art of self-defence. When some bloke wouldn't pay, they threw palette knives at him, sauce bottles, and squirted ice cream all over him – the whole works. It's a special procedure. If I was in one and found I hadn't any money, I'd die in fear.

POP ART: It's still my favourite form of art. My favourite artists are Barry Fantoni and Peter Blake. What I like most of all is it's English. Foreign Pop Art I hate. I don't think you can enjoy it unless it's relevant to your own country. It has no relevance to The Who except we used its ideas, although the way The Who used to talk about Pop Art was Pop Art: "Are you Pop Art? Yes we are Pop Art."

We did a lot for it in this country. If we hadn't done it, it might have taken another year to catch on. The number of journalists I had to explain it to. Pop Art encompasses "happenings", and auto-destructive performances, including smashing guitars. Kit Lambert and I are on the same wavelength. The rest of the group tend to underestimate his ideas. I used to talk to Kit about Pop Art a lot and suddenly he came out with this idea: "Keith is going to have a bullseye on his T-shirt, Pete is going to wear badges" – all his ideas. At the beginning it took a lot of guts to wear them.

VANDALISM: It came to me like being hit in the stomach. I was once in a desperate hurry to get to a show and tried 34 phone boxes in Marylebone. Every one was smashed in. How much money can you get out of a phone box – five bob? Supposing there was a car accident and a bloke was on his last legs. You run down the road and find the phone with its guts ripped out – great.

THE 1966 GENERAL ELECTION: Comedy must come to Pop Think-In in the end, and it just has. It's a horrid general election and the Tories will win, as so many people hate [*Labour leader Harold*] Wilson. I still reckon English Communism would work, at least stronger trade unions would. I've always been told by local Communists to vote Labour if I can't find a Communist candidate. The British Communist Party is so badly run – sort of making tea in dustbins like the Civil Defence.

JAMES BROWN: I saw his TV performance and as I like James Brown I won't say too much. I don't like the way coloured artists are presented in this country. Why should James Brown have the whole show? Why didn't they give him support acts? The sound was atrocious. It showed a great misunderstanding of sound. They should wake up, because they'll destroy pop. It's a shame, it's probably damaged his reputation. As usual the *Ready Steady Go!* audience performed like a load of twits.

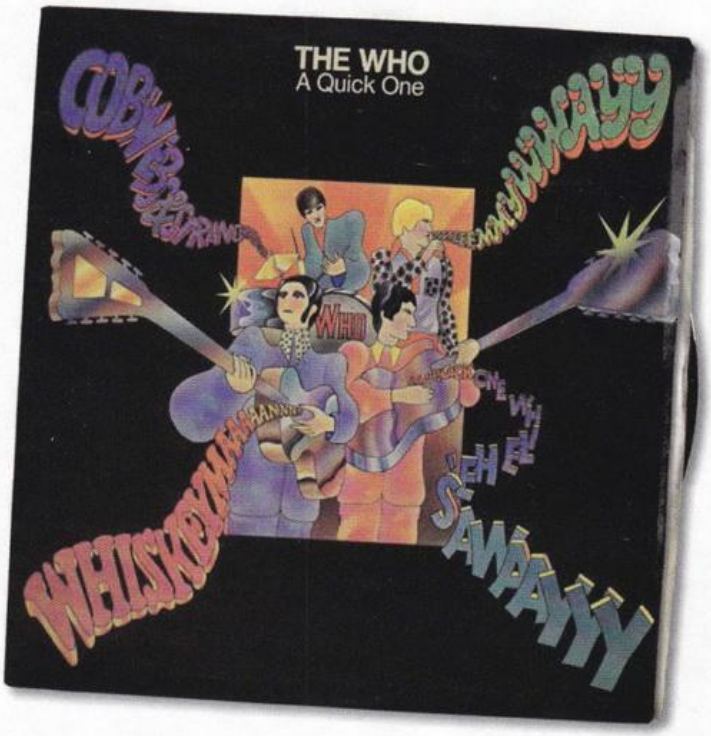
DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION: The Kinks record is fantastic and I like Ray Davies, because he's married and he's still hip. Him and Barry Fantoni are a good team. It's bringing a bit of colour into pop music. I think DFOFs are great – good luck to 'em. I used to be one myself. They are bank clerks who earn fair wages who have got nothing better to do than dress well. Down the East End they've all got new suits. They sell them back down the Lane each week, and actually make a profit.

KEITH MOON: I've got all sorts of things I want to say about Keith Moon. He used to be a lot of fun. Unfortunately, he's turning into a little old man. It's a shame. He used to be young and unaffected by pop, but now he is obsessed with money. I still like him, and I don't really care what he thinks of me. He's the only drummer in England I really want to play with. He won't ever be a jazz drummer because he's more interested in looking good and being screamed at. Keith's aged so much. Once – if I felt ageing, I could look at Keith and steal some of his youth.

THE CHINESE: I only know Chinese Jamaicans and I like 'em very much. China is the only thing that threatens my life. The Bomb doesn't. Never be afraid of being run over by a car – *que sera sera*. But the Chinese are people, like a stampede of people and ideas. They are being taught to hate. But they are being led by a great person who can control them. ⊙

HUGH VANES/REX FEATURES


METROPOLITAIN
MOULIN ROUGE



RELEASE >>DATE 09 | DECEMBER | 1966

A Quick One

A brief flirtation with democracy. Intimations of great creepiness to come. And, most portentously, a "mini-opera", of all things... *By Graeme Thomson*

WHAT A STRANGE old world The Who lived in. In the year that passed between *My Generation* and *A Quick One*, a warped, off-kilter view of reality seeped into their music, to remain there ever after. Released in December 1966, the band's second album is a catalogue of collective neuroses dressed up for laughs, full of spooky spiders, psychotic delirium tremens, superstition, underage sex and randy engine drivers. Its default setting is humorous, throwaway even, but underneath it all are dark flashes of vulnerability, hurt and emotional complexity that would come to characterise future Who releases. It is an album where the jokes seem blacker the older they become.

A Quick One is both embryonic and pivotal, an uneven ménage à trois between art, commerce and eccentricity. The album isn't so much an arena for mod's sense of sharpness, vaudeville's risqué whimsy and the expansiveness of emergent psychedelia to meet and fuse, more the place where all three styles bang haphazardly into one another.

At this point in The Who's career, their best songs still tended to find their way onto a-sides. Unique among the albums recorded during their '60s and '70s pomp, there are no hit singles on *A Quick One*, which was made between August and November 1966, mostly at IBC Studios in London but also at Pye. Nominally produced by manager Kit Lambert, most of the technical heavy lifting was done by engineer Glyn Johns.

The band recorded "Happy Jack" at the same sessions, which was released as a UK single to coincide with the album's release in the first week of December. The US release of the album, incidentally, was held back until May 1967 and was retitled *Happy Jack*, partly because the single had been a minor US hit, and partly because the American record company felt distinctly queasy over the (very English) double entendre in the title. To make CONTINUES OVER »

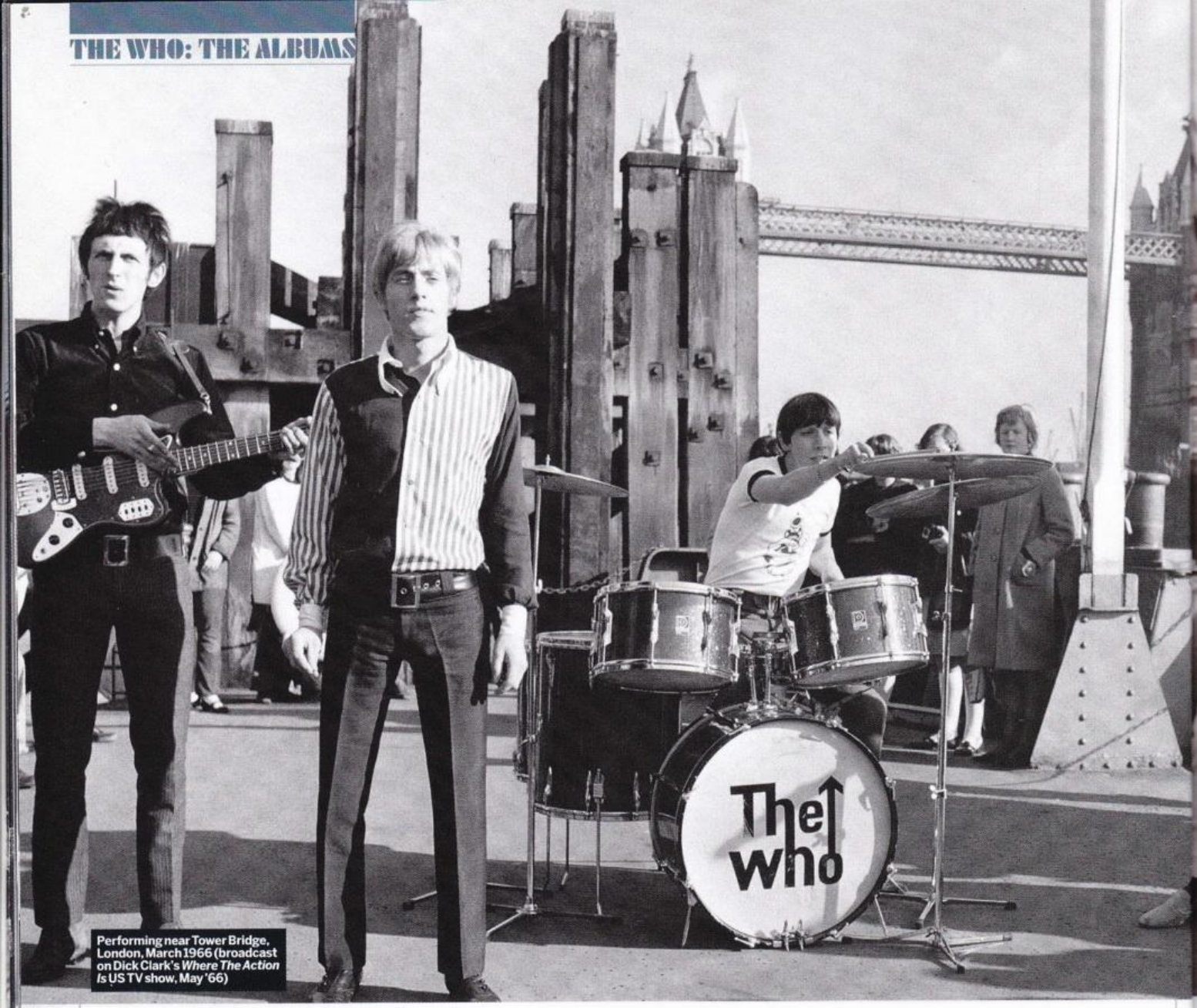
TRACKMARKS

1 **Run, Run, Run** ★★★★
2 **Boris The Spider** ★★★
3 **I Need You** ★★
4 **Whiskey Man** ★★★
5 **Heatwave** ★★★★
6 **Cobwebs And Strange** ★★★
7 **Don't Look Away** ★★★★
8 **See My Way** ★★
9 **So Sad About Us** ★★★★★
10 **A Quick One, While He's Away** ★★★★

RELEASED: December 9, 1966 (UK), May 1967 (US) as *Happy Jack*
LABEL: Reaction (Decca in US)
PRODUCED BY: Kit Lambert
RECORDED: IBC Studios, Pye Studios, London
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (vocals, trombone and bass drum on "Cobwebs And Strange"); John Entwistle (bass guitar, keyboards, horns, vocals); Pete Townshend (guitar, vocals, penny-whistle, keyboards); Keith Moon (drums, percussion, vocals, tuba).
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 4; US 67

KET T/ >>>> BARBARA ANN | DECEMBER 1966 | HAPPY JACK/I'VE BEEN AWAY (UK)/WHISKEY MAN (US) | UK#3, US#24 (MARCH 1967) >>>>

JACQUES HAILLOT/APIS/SYGMA/CORBIS



Performing near Tower Bridge, London, March 1966 (broadcast on Dick Clark's *Where The Action Is* US TV show, May '66)

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/CORBIS

room for "Happy Jack", the US version of the album jettisoned "Heatwave".

Were you to place *A Quick One* next to what The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Kinks were doing in 1966 (*Revolver*, *Aftermath* and *Face To Face* respectively) it might seem slight and disjointed. That it wasn't an enormous commercial success isn't especially surprising. This is an odd, self-contained musical world which makes few attempts at ingratiating itself with a wider audience.

Alan Aldridge's vibrant Pop Art cover hints at the explosion of ideas and styles after the direct, thrilling attack of *My Generation*, but the album's sense of experimentation was primarily governed by economic expediency. Except for the three R'n'B covers and the joint band composition "The Ox", Townshend had written all of the songs for *My Generation*. On *A Quick One* he shares the workload with the rest of the band, who between them contribute five songs (two each from Moon and Entwistle, one by Daltrey).

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The major track takes up about a quarter of the playing time, in which The Who seem to be doing what comes into their heads, including a 'Smile For An Old Engine Driver', and a jogging cowboy song. The LP produces plenty of noise and novelty. In 'Boris The Spider' the speed of recording is slowed and quickened (please don't adjust your player, it's okay!). All songs are group-written."

NME, DECEMBER 17, 1966

This egalitarian distribution of songwriting duties never happened again, which goes a long way to accounting for *A Quick One*'s strange nature.

The decision was dictated by the temptation of earning a quick buck rather than an overwhelming desire for democracy. Before the band began recording in August 1966 their co-manager, Chris Stamp, negotiated a publishing deal providing each member with an advance of £500 on condition they all contributed songs to the album. In 1966, this sum was a large enough inducement for a still-developing band to override any grand artistic statement.

Daltrey splurged his cut on the elegant new Volvo Sports model driven by The Saint, which seems a decent return for "See My Way", which borrows the rhythm of Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue", if not its magnetism. Even with its appealingly supercharged bass and phased vocals, it barely struggles to 100 seconds before running out of steam.

Only one song on the album's first side (in old money) is written by Townshend, and it shows. There isn't much evidence on *A Quick One* to suggest that Townshend was ever going to have to worry about his role as the band's centrifugal creative force and visionary lightning rod. Nor is there even anything to suggest that another George Harrison lurked in their midst, but the division of duties makes for an engagingly diverse selection of songs.

Three of the four tracks written by the rhythm section provide ample fodder for any armchair psychiatrist. Given the premature demises of both Moon and Entwistle, and what we now know of their manifold demons, time has lent these young men's doodles a darker outline. The one exception is Keith Moon's "I Need You", where the drummer crowbars an accurate John Lennon impersonation into an otherwise featherlight piece of psych-pop whimsy, all rushing harmonies and throwaway lyrics.

His instrumental, "Cobwebs And Strange", is another case entirely: it sounds like a pre-school Syd Barrett let loose in the musical toy box. "Cobwebs And Strange" starts with Townshend's perky pennywhistle, as though the band are gearing up for a march, then seems to imitate a Salvation Army band playing oompah, punctuated sporadically by

THE WHO SINGLES | APRIL 1967 | PICTURES OF LILY/DOCTOR, DOCTOR | UK 4, US 51 | JUNE 1967 | THE LAST TIME/UNDER MY THUMB | UK 44, US NOT RELEASED

what sounds like a drumkit falling down the stairs. It's a two-and-a-half minute tour around the inside of Moon's mind, with all the bang, clatter and unceasing confusion that suggests. It is, of course, brilliant.

Entwistle's two tracks are scarcely less odd. "Boris The Spider" is a wonderful slice of slightly sinister, very Whovian silliness, the stop-start melody clinging tight to the contours of his chugging bassline. With its Hammer Horror chorus line and cry of "*creepy, crawly*", it became a firm live favourite. The bass player's other contribution, "Whiskey Man", is a suitably lurching, blackly comic fable about a man who gets carted off to the loony bin for having an imaginary friend who lives in a bottle of Scotch; the repetition is softened by a lovely horn break. Entwistle seemed preoccupied with physical and mental disintegration: his song "Doctor, Doctor", an album outtake later included on the expanded 1994 reissue, is a slice of hilariously heightened hypochondria.

So much for the weirdness. What's left? Plenty, actually. On *A Quick One* the adrenalin rush of *My Generation* may be dissipated and scattered, but there's still a liberal sprinkling of uncomplicated magic. "Run Run Run" is a tough little two-chord shakedown, the snarling bad vibes – "*the moon came out next to the sun*" – of the lyric putting a hex on some unfortunate young thing. "So Sad About Us" is even better, one of the great never-was Who singles (although it was a minor hit in 1966 for The Merseys and practically invented the musical template for mid-period Jam). A lean cut of perfect guitar pop built on Townshend's shimmering arpeggios, it eschews a nod and a wink for a convincing portrayal of emotional regret: "*You can't switch off my lovin' like you can't switch off the sun.*"

Elsewhere, the band's roots in black American music show through on their cover of Martha & The Vandellas "Heatwave", a ramshackle but irresistible performance which harks back to the propulsive energy of their debut. The ramped-up skiffle of "Don't Look Away", on the other hand, looks forward – albeit tentatively. On this track you can just about hear Townshend pushing towards the kind of spacious psychedelic rock he nailed less than a year later on "I Can See For Miles", but in the end the song settles for nothing more ambitious than an impish, rather lovely slice of countrified pop music.

At the time, what really set *A Quick One* apart from its predecessor, and indeed their contemporaries, was the final suite. Townshend had so much music – and the rest of the band so little quality material – that he ended up cramming six songs into the nine minute finale of "A Quick One, While He's Away". The resulting epic, while far from perfectly executed, is the first real inkling that he wasn't satisfied churning out simple pop songs. Townshend later referred to the song-suite as a "mini-opera" and "*Tommy*'s parent". It is his Dr Frankenstein moment.

"A Quick One, While He's Away" is rather raggedly stitched together. It's a deceptively dark tale of a girl guide left stranded by her boyfriend "*for nigh on a year*" who, after crying herself to sleep for a while, ends up on the receiving end of the charms of Ivor, an old engine driver. It's full of musical and lyrical jokes, most notably the "cello" vocal link between sections five and six. "We wanted to put cellos on the track but Kit Lambert said we couldn't afford it," Entwistle later recalled. "That's why we sing '*cello, cello, cello, cello,*' where we thought they should be."

The narrative unfolds in six distinct sections. The short, harmonised a cappella intro "Her Man's Gone" sets the scene, and leads to the caustic "Crying Town", Daltrey's sneer stretched over a two-chord drone that slashes back and forth. Building to a driving climax, "Her Man's Gone" doesn't so much segue as stagger into "We Have A Remedy", in which the band's Greek chorus of mischief-makers tell the girl that a bit on the side might cheer her up.

The "remedy" comes in the form of dirty old "Ivor The Engine Driver", played by John Entwistle, channelling his inner Welsh sex-pest to grandly seedy effect. Lo-fi steam effects soundtrack his ambiguous seduction of the girl guide, which takes so long that the couple are discovered *in flagrante* by the boyfriend. His return to the nest is soundtracked by the lovely clip-clopping country roll of "Soon Be Home", Daltrey singing high and pure as the band trill behind him and an old saloon-bar joanna flutters at the back of the mix.

The closing "You Are Forgiven" is sung by Townshend, his only lead vocal on the album. Instead of the expected threats and accusations, the song rushes to an uplifting, almost spiritual climax of universal absolution which suggests something deeper going on than the audio equivalent of *Confessions Of A Window Cleaner*. Given the abuse which an older Townshend says he suffered as a child, his light-hearted description in 1969 of the seduction – "John plays the engine driver and I play the girl guide" – hints at murkier waters.

Strip away the surface jocularity and suddenly the theme and words of "A Quick One, While He's Away" ("*Better be nice to an old engine driver*") seem more threatening than comedic.

"The first mini-opera was much more serious than it appeared," Townshend said in a 2006 interview. "It was my first attempt at dealing musically with the thorny subject of the sexual abuse of a child, in this case myself, disguised as the little girl whose crying can be heard all around the world. That isn't obvious of course, but if you listen to it with that in mind you may understand."

The statement acts almost as a summation of *A Quick One*, an album which sounds lightweight but which has an odd, unsettling undertow, a thread of fear and horror running throughout. It stands unique among the band's recorded work as the artistic expression of four men rather than simply one. A fun and interesting place to visit, certainly, but I'm not sure you'd want to live there. ⊙

THIS STANDS UNIQUE AMONG THE WHO'S CATALOGUE AS THE WORK OF FOUR MEN, RATHER THAN SIMPLY ONE

RELEASE >> DATE 15 | DECEMBER | 1967

The Who Sell Out

Time for a commercial break – and a satirical, playful, Pop Art concept album. One last good laugh, too, before the darkness descends. *By David Cavanagh*

IF THE SUMMER of 1967 was pop's season of light – from *Sgt Pepper* in June to Traffic's "Hole In My Shoe" as the long shadows of August turned to September – it has to be said that few of England's top groups were promenading down Carnaby Street in states of illumination. The Beatles, seduced to Bangor by the giggling guru Mahesh, suffered the catastrophe of Epstein's death on August 27. Brian Jones, drug-arrested in May, was more ghost than human. In June, Jagger and Richard were jailed, for three and 12 months respectively, at the trial resulting from the Redlands bust.

The Stones' shock imprisonment brought a touching gesture of solidarity from The Who. In a newspaper advertisement headed "SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT", they portrayed Jagger and Richard as scapegoats for society's drug problems and declared their intention to record and release a series of Stones cover versions, beginning with "The Last Time" (b/w "Under My Thumb"), to keep their music before the public. In the event, the sentences were soon overturned. As Dave Marsh drolly remarked in his Who biography *Before I Get Old*, it's hard to imagine the ruthless Stones being so comradely if the boot had been on the other foot.

While the Stones laboured and licked their wounds, The Who enjoyed a year of relative sanity and stability – if you include a few setbacks, false dawns and exploding cherry bombs. With hindsight, they were at an awkward age: too old for furry donkeys, not yet old enough for pinball arcades. They were, as ever, a volatile quartet of personalities, and they'd ended 1966, as was customary, mortally in debt. Daltrey later calculated it at £40,000, which, based on today's earnings, would be in excess of £1 million. Such were the consequences of their nightly annihilation. Eager to see profits, Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp launched their own record label, Track, cutting out the middlemen of Polydor. Track's first signing (after The Who, of course) was Jimi Hendrix, whose *Are You Experienced* became the summer's most ubiquitous

CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 Armenia City In The Sky ★★★
2 Heinz Baked Beans ★★
3 Mary Anne With The Shaky Hand ★★★★
4 Odorono ★★★
5 Tattoo ★★★★
6 Our Love Was ★★★★
7 I Can See For Miles ★★★★★
8 I Can't Reach You ★★★★
9 Medac ★★
10 Relax ★★★★
11 Silas Stingy ★★★
12 Sunrise ★★★★
13 Rael ★★★★

RELEASED: December 15, 1967
LABEL: Track
PRODUCED BY: Kit Lambert
RECORDED: Talentmasters Studios, New York; IBC Studios, Pye Studios, De Lane Lea Studios, CBS Studios, and Kingsway Studios, London; Gold Star Studios, Los Angeles.
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead and bk vocals, percussion); John Entwistle (bass guitar, lead and bk vocals, horns); Pete Townshend (guitar, lead and bk vocals, keyboards, pennywhistle, banjo); Keith Moon (drums, lead and bk vocals, percussion); Al Kooper (keyboards, organ).
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 13; US 48

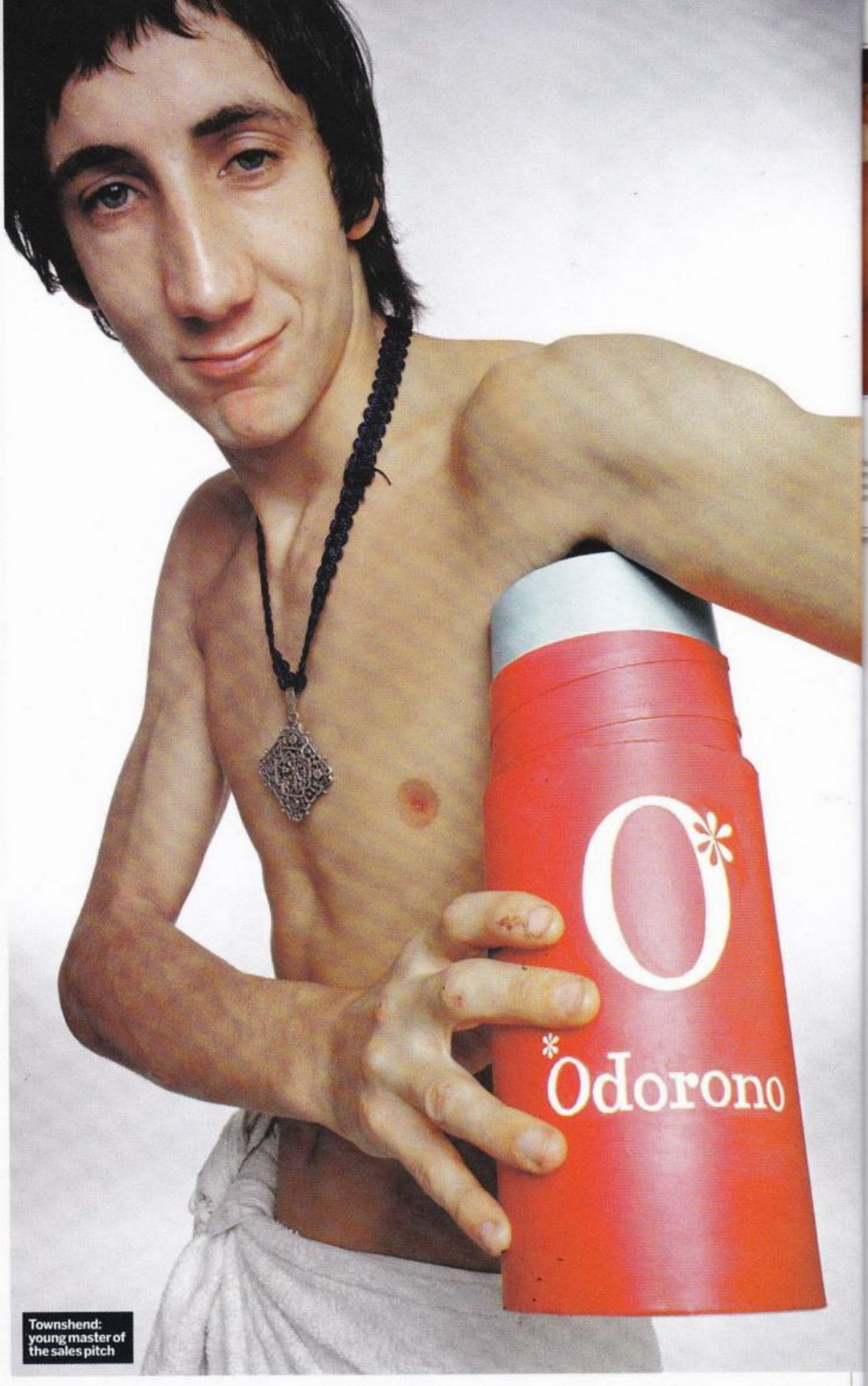
LP after *Pepper*. The Who, to their chagrin, were outsold and out-publicised by the dandyish Yank.

Meanwhile there was no let-up in their schedule. Obliged to deliver a Top 3 hit every four months, and generate music for their next album, they also had to tour regularly to pay off outstanding bills from previous tours, and were under pressure to make in-roads into America. And they had to do all of that while maintaining the difficult balance between humour, conceptualism and mindless violence.

Townshend, who turned 22 in May, considered himself a storytelling songwriter. He created offbeat characters, put them in odd situations, pondered their predicaments and slipped in a punchline. The disgruntled hero in "Pictures Of Lily" (The Who's first single of 1967) was a masturbating juvenile whose father had to break the painful news that his beloved poster girl, whom he hoped to meet, had been dead for 38 years. More quirky tales were demoed ("Tattoo", "Mary Anne With The Shaky Hand") as Townshend amassed material.

But recording sessions, fitted in between touring commitments, were sporadic. By the middle of the year, after visits to London's CBS and De Lane Lea Studios, The Who had completed only four songs ("Glittering Girl", "Girl's Eyes", "I Can't Reach You", "Early Morning Cold Taxi") and no album was in sight. Their attention turned to America, where they undertook a week of dates leading up to their famous performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in June.

Monterey is writ large in Who legend as a turning point, the moment when they joined the elite ranks of artists who would dominate the rock scene for years, but Townshend, for one, seems to have had major doubts about how to proceed. He has claimed that Kit Lambert stunned him in October by imposing a deadline for the album ("Album? What album? You're joking!"), and it's true that The Who, post-Monterey, recorded tracks in dribs and drabs, apparently with no ultimate aim in mind. They returned to America twice – including the *Smothers Brothers'* trip in September [*see The Kids Are Alright, page 106*] – and squeezed in studio sessions in New York, Nashville and Los Angeles. A judicious look at the latest albums on the market (Pink Floyd, Procol Harum, Zappa) may have convinced Townshend, not to mention producer Lambert, that a straightforward collection of tunes would not constitute a progressive enough Who album – not in such a fast-moving, experimental age.



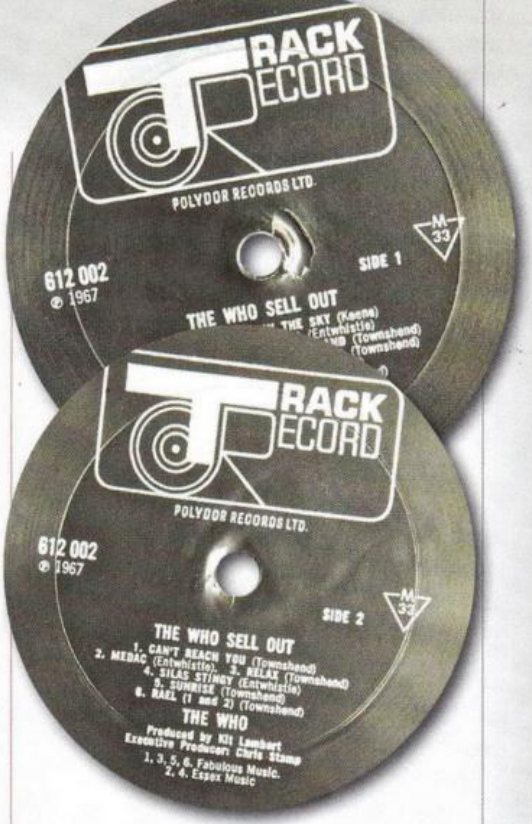
Townshend: young master of the sales pitch

DAVID MONTGOMERY/GETTY IMAGES

Record production was becoming more sophisticated, music more complex and ambitious, and bands who lagged behind risked looking old-fashioned. The album needed a twist. A sales pitch.

The Who's masterstroke was to stand back from complexity and sophistication and seek their solution in the world of instant thrills – namely, the excitement of hearing pop songs on the radio. A concept was devised, centring on the theme of commercialism. The album as an audio-visual package would poke fun at the record industry's speciousness, and at The Who themselves, and make a virtue of pop's ambiguous place on the pragmatic merry-go-round of commercial radio programming. Real-life products, such as Heinz Baked Beans and the feminine underarm deodorant Odo-Ro-No, would have their praises sung in ersatz adverts written by Townshend and Entwistle. Best of all, an assortment of slick, snappy jingles from one of Britain's top-rated pirate stations would act as linking passages between the songs to create the illusion of being tuned to a radio. For two-and-a-half years, Radio London ('Big L') had broadcast all-day pop from a ship moored off the Essex coast, giving unprecedented exposure to a generation of musicians and reaching an estimated 12 million listeners. In August the Marine

THE WHO SINGLES OCTOBER 1967 | I CAN SEE FOR MILES/SOMEONE'S COMING (UK)/MARY ANNE WITH THE SHAKY HAND (US) | UK#10, US#9 | MARCH 1968 | CALL ME LIGHTNING/DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE | >>>



Broadcasting Offences Act had closed Big L down. The Who's album was to be celebration, homage and epitaph.

On November 22, however, with the album mixed and ready, Townshend was aghast to learn that its lead-off single, "I Can See For Miles", a tidal wave of neo-Byrdsian admonition that had climbed to No 10 in the charts, was now on a slow downward slide. Recorded on two continents over a period of almost four months, "I Can See For Miles" was an incredible track, but the vindictive atmosphere that swirled around it, and the groggy, leering vocal from Daltrey, were far cries from the whimsical postcards ("Happy Jack") and adolescent grumbles ("I'm A Boy") of recent Who singles. As an advertisement for an album that would be a bean-feast of advertising, it's fair to say that "I Can See For Miles" had its limitations.

The Who Sell Out, which finally emerged in December 1967 – 10 days before Christmas and a full year after *A Quick One* – was not a commercial sensation by any means, and its unexceptional sales in America were a particularly disappointment after Monterey. In the years following its release, however, *The Who Sell Out* increased in stature, thanks to the timelessness of its ideas and the cleverness of their execution. It's now generally agreed to be one of The Who's greatest albums, and many rate it as a masterpiece. Certainly, few albums make such an immediately favourable impression. Even before we access the songs, the photos on the front and back reveal a terrific sense of humour. Comically oversized roll-on deodorants and spot removal ointments are accompanied by plausibly punning advertising copy ("*If acne is preventing you from reaching your acme...*") and wonderful facial expressions. Daltrey's weird gaze as he reclines, disgustingly submerged in a bath of baked beans, looks as if he's already preparing for the role of Tommy. How bizarre it must have been, in a time of solemn psychedelic mysticism, to see one of the country's biggest groups sending themselves up so mercilessly.

Crucial to the album's high reputation is the way The Who sing and play. With the exception of *Tommy*, no Who LP is so generous with melodies, hooks and harmonies, and several of them are majestic. Influenced by Hendrix or not, Townshend's skill on *The Who Sell Out* is to find lovely combinations of guitar sounds, both acoustic and electric, so that the songs appear to sparkle in dewy morning sunlight. "Relax", where Townshend's guitars are joined by an organ, is on the woozy cusp of consciousness, with a lyric that could be an allusion to fashionable Timothy Leary-isms, or a plea for calm in the madding crowd, or a paean to dope. "Sunrise", Townshend's solo spot, is a love song in which he never quite gets the girl, either because he can't commit to her or because in his self-destructive frame of mind love could never survive for long. And if we think that's poetic, his imagery is apocalyptic on "Our Love Was" ("*famine, frustration*"), whereupon he slams down the phone and puts the boot in ("*You're gonna lose that smile*") on "...Miles". It's a shame, in a way, that Townshend discovered operas, because he was shaping up to be a compelling writer on the extremes of love.

A MASTERSTROKE: THIS IS GENEROUS WITH MELODIES, HOOKS AND HARMONIES – SEVERAL OF THEM MAJESTIC

The two songs that bookend the album are its most off-the-wall selections. "Armenia In The Sky", written by Townshend's friend (and driver) Speedy Keen, is a droning, overloaded psych-rocker that initially sounds unmelodic because it's hard to get a sense of the chords behind the sound effects. "Rael", the final track, is more peculiar still, a five-minute curtain-closer that has the dimensions of an epic story about a putative Sino-Israeli war with most of the middle chapters missing. Fascinating stuff, all the same, especially as one of the guitar riffs will form the basis of "Sparks" and "Underture" on *Tommy*. "Rael" is also a notable Daltrey showcase, on an album where he doesn't have many, and is one of two examples (the other being "...Miles") where Keith Moon overdubs a second kit to cook up a crescendo storm.

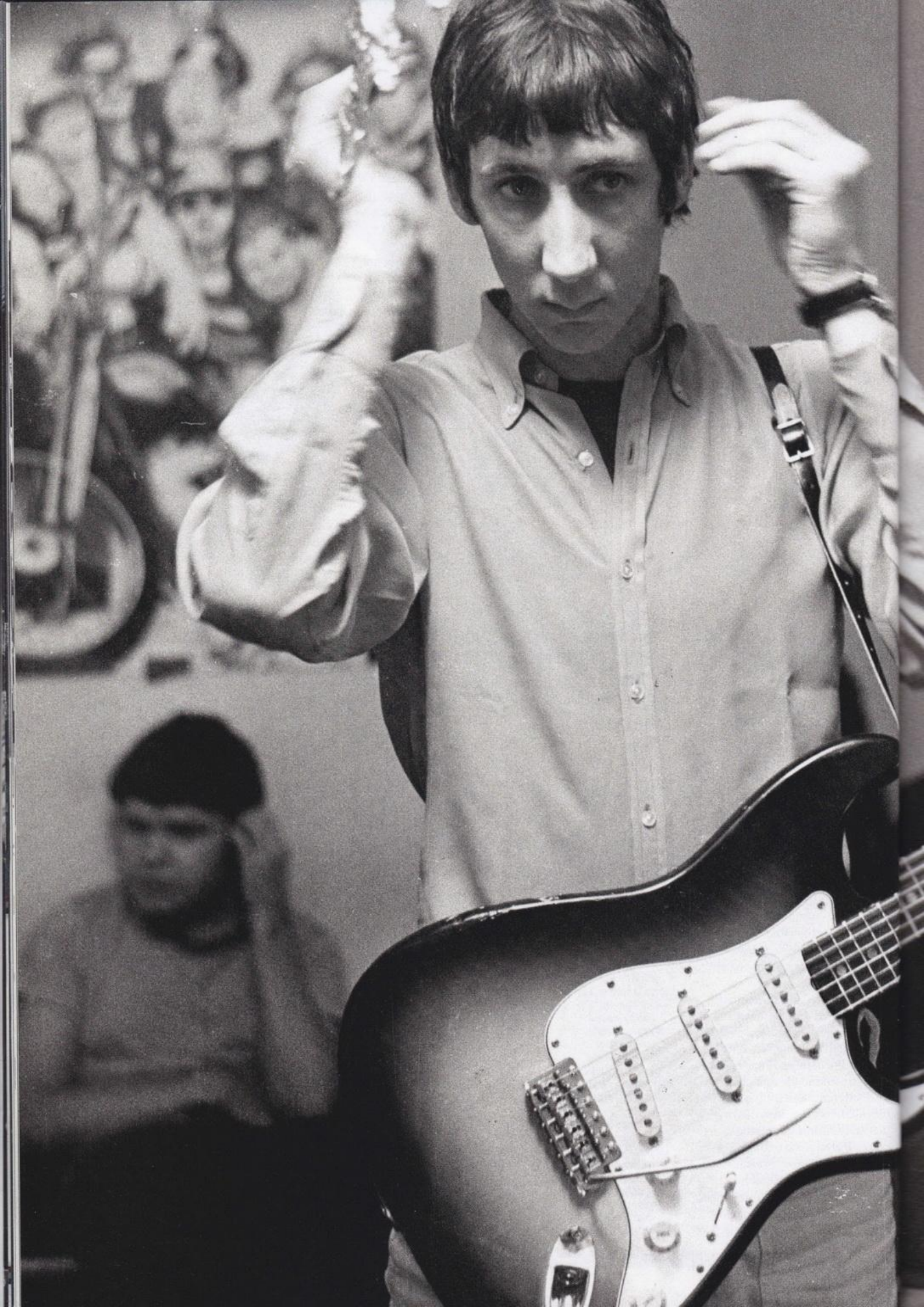
The Pop Art wheeze of bigging up beans and bodybuilding brochures, which gave *The Who Sell Out* a context in 1967 (when Warhol's painting, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, was still a topic for discussion, rather than a distant memory) is as relevant or as disposable as the 21st Century Who fan wishes it to be. Much post-modernism has flowed under the bridge. These days, "Odorono" and "Medac" can be taken either as genuine brand names or interpreted as figments of The Who's artistry. The commercialism motif is important, clearly, but we don't have to buy into a highfalutin theory of rock-album-as-hard-sell to derive intense pleasure from the songs inside. One swooning, sun-freckled harmony on "Tattoo", in any case, overrides a concept in emotional terms.

The Radio London jingles, poignant to anyone with a passion for the Pirates, put the album in an optimistic, freewheeling mood that tends to keep it near the front of our record collections. The one that goes "*it's smooth sailing*" is a mini-masterpiece of gamine insouciance, while the two either side of "Our Love Was" – the one about going to church and the one about the pussycat who knows where it's at – amusingly prick the balloon of Townshend's earnest rhapsodising, which was presumably the point. The jingles may tempt us to overstate the extent to which *The Who Sell Out* reflects its swinging times (when, actually, it does well to avoid the psychedelic pitfalls that other bands fell into), but it undeniably does a masterful job of juxtaposing The Who's sounds with the authentic peppiness of '60s pop radio. It all adds to the fun and frolics, the subtle irony and witty satire. We cast our minds back without anxiety, look at life with humour – the last time a Who album would be doing that for a while – and contemplate the world outside our window as a massive, minuscule, universal, parochial street with a tattoo parlour at one end and the Red Chinese border at the other. ⊙

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"*The Who Sell Out* really is a sell-out. In fact, it's almost 'The Who drop out of everything that is supposedly fashionable and therefore valid in 1967's flowery year...'"
MM, DECEMBER 16, 1967

"On the whole, this album easily surpasses anything The Who have done before... it doesn't really matter if they are selling out. Selling out to what, anyway?"
MM, DECEMBER 16, 1967



Townshend backstage at a Murray The K show at the Brooklyn Fox Theatre, March 1967, part of The Who's 10-day US debut

'THE ARMY IS THE *STRAIGHT MAN'S* ACID!'

As Pete Townshend conceptualises the odyssey that will become *Tommy*, **CHRIS WELCH** is granted two audiences with the radical thinker. Among the issues on Townshend's mind: revolution, guns, rock operas, the magic of Cliff Richard, and an urgent question: "Would you let your daughter marry a Venusian?"

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

MELODY MAKER
04/05/1968

A TYPICAL WHO sound blasted in stereo from a battery of speakers – screaming guitar, vocals, bass and drums. But Roger Daltrey, John Entwistle and Keith Moon were not involved. The "group" was all Pete Townshend.

Pete's songwriting for The Who is a complicated business of getting words down on tape with the aid of a guitar, then building up four- and eight-track recordings in the studio at his home in Victoria, London. Pete once had a fabulous flat in Wardour Street, Soho, complete with recording equipment, drums, organ, guitars, mammoth hi-fi set up, massive record collection and a giant rubber plant.

Most of it has been transferred to his new home, and it was there Pete played me a tape of a song called "Now I'm A Farmer", which even the rest of The Who hadn't heard. It is a song from Pete's project, the long-awaited 'Townshend Opera', which he has been working on in different forms, on and off, for a couple of years. Heavy commitments in America have held him up, and also Pete was disappointed at the image of pop opera created by Keith West's *A Teenage Opera*.

Pete, tall, angular, energetic, dressed in blue jeans, a dinner jacket and Fair Isle pullover, is ready for an open-air drink at his local.

"Ooh – Pete Townshend has got Paul McCartney's pullover," sniffed Pete, loading himself up with tissue paper to hold a spring cold in check. "I tried like mad to get this. It was the only one in the shop, but they wouldn't let me take it. When I got home, there it was! My girlfriend had bought it for me."

In the pub he fought the usual battle for service, then launched into an amazing conversational marathon full of startling ideas and wild enthusiasm.

How did he enjoy The Who's first performance in England for many months at London's Marquee Club last week?

"I enjoyed the Marquee very much. For the first few minutes I was very scared the whole thing was going to go wrong. But the audience was lovely. Although we have played there hundreds of times, it seemed strange to play such a small place after the States. In some places 50,000 turn out for us at huge stadiums. And they really turn out in those numbers for pop in Canada and America.

"Those flop tours over here recently were a drag. I don't think the 'names' were very well balanced. Last year's English tours were great, and I really thought we were getting the young kids back into pop. At the Marquee, we weren't particularly together because we hadn't actually played since we got back from the States. We didn't do any special act because we tried all those things at the Saville last year and they always make me feel uncomfortable.


Mod men: The Who in 1965

"I smashed up two guitars at the end of the show, because one I was using had recently been repaired and broke as I came onstage, so I played another one I use for recording. At the end I thought, 'What the hell,' and smashed them both. Sure – I lost money, and the amps, which were borrowed, will cost about £20 each to repair. The Gibson Stereo cost £200. I can't put it down on tax because when I say I use 70 guitars a year, they don't believe me. They put it down as part exchange.

"I DIDN'T THINK 'PINBALL WIZARD' WOULD BE A HIT, AS IT'S A SWINGING ROCKABOOGIE ABOUT A DEAF, DUMB AND BLIND PERSON" TOWNSHEND

"We make a profit, but it is a disaster for us to go touring America, because we never make any bread. Other groups do, I suppose. We make our money on recording. I enjoy going to America very much. It's changing – for the better. The war has taken the sting out of their aggressiveness.

"They're scared of war and they are beginning to respect the views of the young because of their persistence. Just think – the billion dollars a day spent by America on the war in Vietnam would keep every Vietnamese in two cars and a TV set.

"As for the race scene here... Jamaicans are such nice friendly people, I'm sure the English don't hate them as much as they insist they do. The world is a melting pot and the sooner we are all a bronzed brown the better. Half-castes are much better looking than pure-breds, who are the most disgusting, despicable characters of all. Eventually race will be non-existent, but by then the interplanetary races will be coming over here and we'll get the whole thing over again. Would you let your daughter marry a Venusian? 'But mother, we're in love!' 'I don't care, I'm not letting you marry one of those spons [*sic*].'"

How are The Who changing, and what are Pete's plans for the future?

"I like writing for The Who, but I can't do that when we're away on long tours. The group sound is changing – probably getting more sophisticated. We're conscious now of sound balance, and we do play quiet numbers. You can hear the vocals now, which you couldn't a couple of years ago.

"I'm working on an opera which I did once before, and I am thinking of calling it 'The Amazing Journey'. I've completed some of it, and I'd like to put it on an LP. The theme is about a deaf, dumb and blind boy who has dreams and sees himself as the ruler of the cosmos.

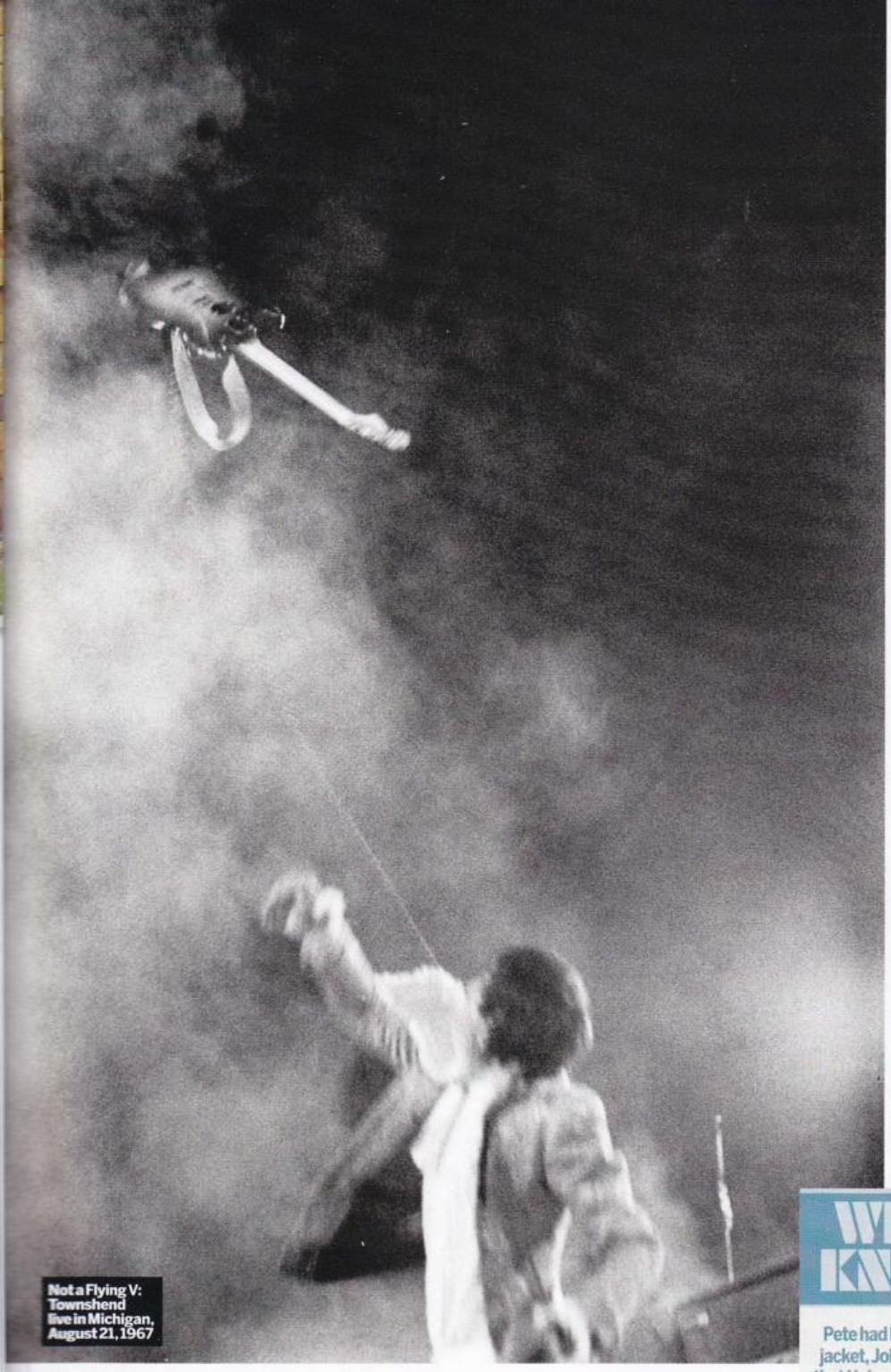
"I'd like to call it 'Journey Into Space', but there might be problems because of the old radio show. I love pop, and so much can be done through a pop medium. Pop is today. I don't think about yesterday's pop – although to make a terrible admission, I like Cliff Richard and always have done for years and years. Basically, I'm interested in the progression of pop, and I don't think it's as exciting at the moment as it should be... And I'm not saying that because we haven't got a record in the chart."

MELODY MAKER
& 19/04/1969

"WHEN THE revolution comes in England, the first to get his head cut off would be Mick Jagger, the second would be John Lennon and the third would be Yoko Ono. Tom Jones would be made Prime Minister."

This gloomy prophecy of a reactionary revolution, as opposed to the usual dream of instant socialism, comes from Pete Townshend, a pop star. And says Pete: "In two years the police in England will be armed."

This may all sound like unnecessary pessimism. After all, is not English order,



Not a Flying V: Townshend live in Michigan, August 21, 1967

freedom and tolerance a byword throughout the uncivilised world? But it must be remembered – Pete Townshend is a pop star, the lowest caste of society. He could be refused service in a pub, refused a hotel room, barred from a country, hounded by police or newspapers. Or, as in Pete Townshend's case, he could have a bullet fired at his head by a policeman at point-blank range. Thus he sees the worldwide swing to violence, intolerance, etc in uncomfortable proximity. He is fairly convinced freedom-lovers and other democracy freaks would be the first to go.

The Who, highly pleased with the success of "Pinball Wizard" after a couple of failures with songs like "Magic Bus", were exercising their individuality at BBC TV's *Top Of The Pops* studio last week with a merry afternoon and evening of taping and high jinks. Not all Top Of The Poppers joined in with the spirit of the occasion, however, and when Keith Moon caused a diversion during the show with a certain amount of leaping and hollering, one or two long faces were noted among the Men At The Top. "Fun – that's what it's all about, fun," complained Keith to me later in the bar. "Everybody thinks I'm laughing at them, but I want them to laugh with me."

Whereupon he broke into hearty laughter and flicked drink in the direction of Ian McLagan, of the Small Faces, who had dropped in to see his old mates in action. The Who have been working extremely hard in recent weeks, completing their new double album, and are now taking a well-earned holiday. But before they fled from *Top Of The Pops*, Pete chatted about "Pinball Wizard" and other pressing topics.

"It's sold much more than 'Magic Bus' already," he reveals. "I knew that would be a bomber, despite all the promotion we did with the bus touring Fleet Street. This has been a hit without any promotion, and I'm glad that in the end it really depends on the record. We did, 'Dogs' and 'Magic Bus' because our American contract forces us to release a certain number of records. We just had to have some records out for contractual reasons. I didn't think 'Pinball Wizard' would be a hit, especially as it's an uptempo, swinging rockaboogie about a deaf, dumb and blind person."

Although some DJs have called the hit "sick", it is, in fact, a serious song from The Who's next album and, says Pete: "We have done everything to stop giving offence or causing trouble. It's not sick."

Why have The Who decided on a double album? Doesn't this generally mean padding and poor production?

"We hate double albums after so many half-hearted ones have been released. You usually get two or three good tracks and the rest are terrible. But we had a lot of good stuff that needed expanding. I feel anti-pop now. I don't call our music 'pop' any more. It would be nice to be in a pop industry where music with meaning sells, but that happens so rarely. The best scenes in England are the colleges where they listen to music."

The Who are going to America soon for another tour and the conversation fell to comparing England and America, violence and pacifism. "England is on the downward path and will be like America soon," Pete maintained. "Still, it should help the music. There's nothing like a good depression to make the jazz swing. The mods are coming back to Britain. To think I was like that once. The only reason they wear short hair is 'cos you get kicked out of the pubs quicker if you've got long hair, it's frightening.

"The good thing about joining armies is the thing about discipline. Everybody needs discipline – this group couldn't work without it. That's the only good thing about the Army, because you have to suffer all the brainwashing that goes with it. The Army is the straight man's acid. Be a dropout and join the Army!

"We've never had much trouble with police, but I think the police in Germany and America must be the most violent. They all want to cut your heads off. There is always a reason when the people become violent, in America or Ireland, but the police are mindless and despise the people.

"The English police are different, ofcourse, but they are learning. They'll have guns like the rest in a couple of years. Once you've got a gun, you've got power. In New York a superintendent of police saw me smash my guitar onstage. He came into our dressing room, took out a gun, aimed it at my head, fired an inch from my skull and said if I smashed my guitar in the second half he would blow my head off.

"He could have killed me, but he probably went home to his wife and kids and thought nothing about it!" ⊙

WHO KNEW

Pete had his medal-jacket, John sported that Union Jack blazer and Keith rocked the 'Target' T-shirt. But Roger Daltrey's sartorial Pop Art statement consisted of white pullovers with geometric shapes – arrows, squares and circles – stuck on with black electrician's tape, which he would change every show.

RELEASE >> DATE 23 | DECEMBER | 1969

Tommy

Pete Townshend and Kit Lambert formulate the magnum opus that will haunt The Who for 40 years. *"From you, I get the story..."* **By Neil Spencer**

BY MID 1968 The Who – at least, Pete Townshend and co-manager Kit Lambert – knew they were in trouble, and not just financially. A dam of debt had long threatened to become a torrent that would close over the group's collective head, but the high-living Lambert, with an aristocratic disregard for mere money, gambled on the big payday.

More pressing was that The Who were being left behind in the psychedelic surge that had coursed through pop over the last year. If The Who were to keep pace, a grand gesture was needed, something that would surpass their track reputation as a singles group. Townshend and Lambert had just the thing: a rock opera! Not just a clever concept record, but a full-blown symphonic work with assorted characters and a mythic storyline. The nine-minute 'mini-opera' that closed *The Who Sell Out* would be as nothing alongside this new opus, which would open simultaneously in the opera houses of New York and Moscow.

Townshend has always been generous in honouring the input of his manager into *Tommy*. There are various stories about *Tommy*'s germination, but all involve Lambert. One, related by Who chronicler Richard Barnes, is that Townshend played Lambert a joke song called "Gratis Amatis", in which voices repeated the title endlessly, and someone said, 'Sounds like a rock opera', at which point Lambert lit up with "Now *there's* an idea".

It's improbable the notion hadn't already crossed his mind. Oxford-educated, Kit was the son of the gifted classical conductor and composer Constant Lambert, whose works attempted to unite jazz and classicism, much in the vein of Gershwin's *Porgy And Bess*. But while his 1927 piece, *Rio Grande*, was a success, Constant's 1951 swansong, *Tiresias*, had been met with disdain. He died soon afterwards, a broken man. Kit's friend, Simon Napier Bell (manager of The Yardbirds and, much later, Wham!), has suggested that the teenage Kit carried the wound of his father's rejection, and saw *Tommy* as a perfect chance to redeem his reputation.

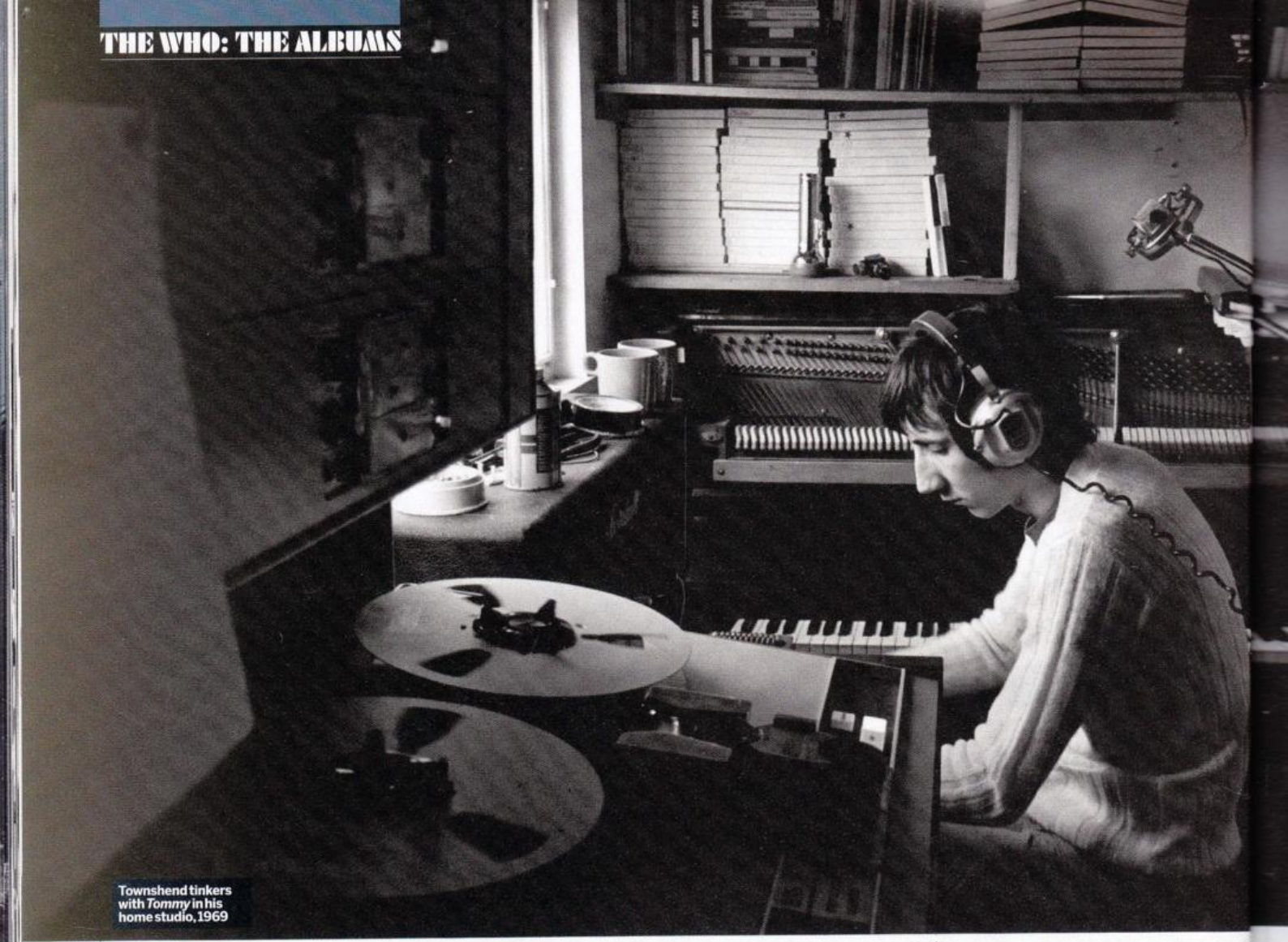
Maybe, but Lambert, installed as producer, still needed his 23-year-old protégé to write it. Townshend, ever the obsessive, threw himself into the project. There was no shortage of ideas. In fact there were far too

CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **Overture** ★★★★
2 **It's A Boy** ★★★
3 **1921** ★★★
4 **Amazing Journey** ★★★★
5 **Sparks** ★★★★
6 **The Hawker** ★★★★
7 **Christmas** ★★★
8 **Cousin Kevin** ★★★★
9 **Acid Queen** ★★★★
10 **Underture** ★★★
11 **Do You Think It's Alright** ★★★
12 **Fiddle About** ★★★
13 **Pinball Wizard** ★★★★★
14 **There's A Doctor** ★★★
15 **Go To The Mirror** ★★★
16 **Tommy Can You Hear Me** ★★★★★
17 **Smash The Mirror** ★★★
18 **Sensation** ★★★★
19 **Miracle Cure** ★★
20 **Sally Simpson** ★★★
21 **I'm Free** ★★★★★
22 **Welcome** ★★★
23 **Tommy's Holiday Camp** ★★★
24 **We're Not Gonna Take It** ★★★★

RELEASED: May 23, 1969
LABEL: Track (Decca in US)
PRODUCED BY: Kit Lambert
RECORDED: IBC Studios, London
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead and bk vocals, harmonica, tambourine); John Entwistle (bass guitar, lead and bk vocals, horns); Pete Townshend (guitar, lead and bk vocals, keyboards, banjo); Keith Moon (drums, bk vocals, percussion); Simon and Paul Townshend (bk vocals)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 2; US 4



Townshend tinkers with *Tommy* in his home studio, 1969

CHRIS MORPHET/REDFERNS/GETTY

many of them careening round Townshend's fertile imagination, which over the past year or two had been stoked by ingestions of high-quality LSD, a drug Townshend had subsequently renounced.

Two notions, however, were central. The first was that it would be a spiritual journey, reflecting Townshend's own awakening after his acid experiences and ensuing embrace of the teachings of Indian guru Meher Baba (credited on the album as 'Avatar'). The second was that of a deaf, dumb and blind boy, who, as the guitarist told *Rolling Stone* magazine in autumn 1968, "is seeing things basically as vibrations which we translate as music".

A possible template for Townshend's hero was Helen Keller, the celebrated American author and campaigner. She had been born deaf, blind and mute, but after learning to speak – 1962 film *The Miracle Worker* tells her story – Keller became a fêted writer and radical. Her death in June 1968, aged 87, proved synchronistic with the birth of Tommy Walker.

The plot and music of *Tommy* evolved spasmodically over the summer and autumn of 1968, accreting themes and settings. At London's ICB studios, the group worked and reworked Townshend's existing material, demos and scraps, with lengthy adjournments to the pub. "We probably did as much talking as recording," recalled Roger Daltrey.

There was no shortage of disputes. Daltrey put it bluntly; "It was Kit Lambert giving me hell and me giving Kit hell." Entwistle endured the creative chaos sullenly. "I had absolutely no idea what the story was or who the characters were," grouched The Ox, who nonetheless rose to the occasion when Pete, saying "You write better nasty than me", prevailed on him for "Cousin Kevin" and "Fiddle About", two key moments in Tommy's story, when he is both physically and sexually abused.

The precise plotline, typed up by the tireless Lambert, wobbled alarmingly. At its heart is a boy who is struck deaf, dumb and blind by an unspecified trauma (witnessing the murder of a husband by a lover, maybe). Resistant to cure, he is abused by family members but becomes a pinball champ who "*plays by sense of smell*". After a mirror-smashing cure, Tommy becomes a public sensation, first hailed then rejected as a spiritual leader.

For Townshend, one of the liberating aspects of the tale was that it was decidedly not autobiographical; only decades later would he see the parallels with his own life; a war child, family abuse, public acclaim, spiritual ambitions. [*See Townshend's extraordinary 2004 interview with Uncut, reprinted on p122.*]

Initially there was no suggestion that Tommy was a wizard at pinball. That arrived when Townshend played a rough mix to journalist Nik Cohn, a fellow sharpshooter on Soho's pin tables. Cohn was nonplussed, becoming animated once Pete aired the idea of Tommy as pinball king. Townshend dashed off *Tommy*'s most celebrated number overnight, adding references elsewhere in the, ahem, 'libretto'. Later, Pete cited Baba's teachings about the importance of play in support of the song. Another late addition was "Tommy's Holiday Camp", written after Keith Moon suggested Butlins as the gathering place for Tommy's congregation. Townshend duly handed the drummer the song credit.

Several songs were adapted from what was in hand. A line from the reincarnation cameo "Glow Girl" – "*It's a girl, Mrs Walker, it's a girl*" – became "It's A Boy". "Sensation" had started life as an on tour love call. "Sally Simpson" arrived after a Doors gig in New York where Townshend had witnessed a girl fan being beaten up by security men under Jim Morrison's watchful eyes. "Underture" drew on *The Who Sell Out*'s "Rael".

Material was given on-road testing during a two-week UK tour, which was meant to coincide with *Tommy*'s release for the all-important Christmas market. The release date slid steadily backwards. Working in the studio, Beatles-style, hoovered up cash, but Lambert drove the project onwards, with endless haggling over the overture, demanded by Lambert and resisted by Townshend.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Pretentious is too strong a word; maybe over-ambitious is the right term, but sick certainly applies. One line goes, *'Sickness will surely take the mind.'* It does."
NME, MAY 24, 1969

"At a time when pop is undergoing a period of heavy criticism, this achievement should be acknowledged as an important facelift to the battered image of pop."
CHRIS WELCH, *MELODY MAKER*, MAY 24, 1969

There was always uncertainty about the sonic outcome. Lambert was a conceptualist, not a technician with trained ears, and he left the studio set-up to Townshend and engineer Damon Lyon-Shaw. Lambert's reluctance to let the group overdub struck them as at best perverse and at worst sinister, a plot so that he could later overlay an orchestral score without consent. Entwistle and Townshend played French horn and keyboards, but there was no orchestra. And neither Kit nor Pete were George Martin.

Lambert's instincts proved sound. Its simplicity meant *Tommy* could be played live. The album has a warm, uncluttered feel, with voices to the fore alongside the bravura playing of Townshend, whose innovative acoustic guitar, precision strummed and laced with nimble fingerpicking, dominates the record. Moon found the sound "very un-Who-like. A lot of the songs were soft, we never played like that." The band would send everyone's ears ringing when they debuted *Tommy* live at London's Ronnie Scott's, but the softness of the album's mix – "deliberate blandness" Pete called it – works in its favour.

Lambert, knowing he had made a masterpiece, claimed with a theatrical flourish that he had burned the master tapes. No-one would mess with his creation. Yet decades later a master tape copy showed up, enabling 2004's SACD re-release, which expands the original album to 43 tracks. Townshend, too, stood back from his creation with a satisfied sigh. After all the uncertainty, somehow "it came out as if we'd done it all in one breath."

Masterpiece *Tommy* remains. Dissenting voices at the time centred on the sexual abuse – "Sick!" declared DJ Tony Blackburn – and whether *Tommy* was a 'real' opera. The music was unanswerable. The blazing exuberance of the lead single, "Pinball Wizard", marked the return of hit-making Who, but the ambition and diversity of *Tommy*, its mosaic of songs, instrumentals, links and voices, took everyone aback. It came as a double album housed in an enormous triple-fold cosmic cover designed by *International Times* art director Mike McInnerny, a fellow Baba follower, with an illustrated booklet for the libretto.

Plotline apart, inside was a musical feast. "Overture" is a magnificent statement of intent: ethereal voices, romping guitars, cavalcades of tom-toms from Moon, all whooped along by Entwistle's French horn. "It gives a continuity to individual tracks," said the converted Townshend. "Overture" opens into a rich array of styles; nuanced love song on "1921"; stratospheric psychedelia on "Amazing Journey" and the meditative "Sparks", the latter a master class in rock trio dynamics. All these are followed by the transmutation of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Eyesight To The Blind" from rhythm and blues staple to Bayreuth-sized drama, helped by Moon's timpani.

Then come the torments of *Tommy*: exclusion from family Christmas and from prayer ("*How can he be saved?*"), torture by Cousin Kevin (a bully familiar to every kid); assault by the "Acid Queen", who represents Townshend's "sinister, feline, sexual thing about acid". And, of course the murky "Fiddle About", dragging the taboo of child abuse into the spotlight. Then there's the headphones-on blank canvas of "Underture", the dancehall grotesque of "Tommy's Holiday Camp", and instantly memorable chants of "*Tommy can you see me?*" and "*Go to the mirror boy*".

DISSENTING CRITICS FOCUSED ON THE SEXUAL ABUSE. BUT TOMMY'S MUSIC REMAINED UNANSWERABLE

The narrative "Sally Simpson" (perhaps the only misfit here) is sandwiched between two memorable Townshend songs, the breezy "Sensation" oozing young man confidence, and "I'm Free", with its insistence that "*freedom tastes of reality*". These, said its creator, were "very much Baba, songs of the quiet explosion of divinity. They just rolled off the pen."

After the downbeat waltz of "Welcome", "We're Not Gonna Take It" makes for an over-compressed and slightly unsatisfactory finale. The number has simply simply too many jobs to do. On one side it articulates *Tommy*'s teachings (some Baba-like, others crass), and on the other the voices of disillusioned followers whose chorus had originally been imagined as an anti-fascist call. The anthemic "*On you I see the glory*" lines, reprised from "Go To The Mirror" and from "Overture" are really a separate song, a magnificent piece of bombast that would, of course, shake arenas for years to come.

Aside from a squiffy bit of mixing here and there, what wasn't to like? *Tommy* touched many cultural G-spots: Pop Art, psychology, working-class geniuses, religion, the spiritual quest, and the idea that rock itself was becoming a ghastly cult, a fear played out in Peter Watkins' 1967 movie *Privilege* with singer Paul Jones. Townshend undermined that idea by proposing a purer strain of spirituality, the individual quest.

Tommy was an instant and enormous success – payday! – shooting to the heights of the charts on both sides of the Atlantic, attracting rave write-ups and pulling in admirers from classical circles. At its 1970 performance at New York's metropolitan Opera House (Moscow hadn't happened as Pete and Kit had intended) the composer of *West Side Story* himself, Leonard Bernstein, was effusive.

Entwistle's complaint that *Tommy* turned The Who into "snob rock... the band Jackie Onassis sees" misses the point. The Who were now being taken seriously. The Pop Art assault on the citadel of 'high' culture had been successful. It would keep the band in work, and Townshend in interviews, for years, until the deaf dumb and blind kid grew wearisome. But *Tommy*, endlessly staged and filmed, had acquired a life of its own.

Is *Tommy* an opera? Its lack of arias, parts and strings says it isn't. But it is a rock opera, an electrified, portable artform fit for modern times and creatively ambitious young men. Moreover *Tommy* shares with 'real' opera two vital qualities; memorable melodies and mythological truth. Tommy Walker is an archetypal hero, a no-one plucked from darkness to become a someone. Not a messiah but, like his young creator, perhaps the redeemer of himself. ⊙

THE WHO SINGLES | MARCH '69 | PINBALL WIZARD/DOGS, PT 2 | UK#4, US#19 | JULY '69 | I'M FREE/WE'RE NOT GONNA TAKE IT | US#37 | MARCH '70 | THE SEEKER/HERE FOR MORE | UK#19, US#44

RELEASE >> DATE 16 | MAY | 1970

Live at Leeds

How do you assert yourself as the most potent live band in the world? By knocking off a few old covers in a northern university dining hall, obviously... *By Andrew Mueller*

IT CANNOT BE often that measurable quantities of people excitedly anticipate spending Valentine's Day in Leeds. In 1970, however, the couple of thousand folk with tickets for that evening's show in the Art Deco refectory of Leeds University have their reasons. The Who are in town. Six years and four albums after their beginnings as a rambunctious R'n'B outfit, trashing blues standards and their own instruments in grotty London pubs, The Who are properly accredited Transatlantic rock'n'roll deities.

By the time The Who arrive in Leeds, the idea of a live album has been gestating for a while, as a means of bottling their extraordinary onstage potency, and of plugging a gap in the release schedule (work on their fifth studio album, *Who's Next*, won't even begin until the next year). The Who have recorded dozens of their recent shows in the United States, where their bandwagon is careening at a fearful clip, the group ever more courted by the legendary rock'n'roll venues as they grow ever less welcome at reputable hotel chains.

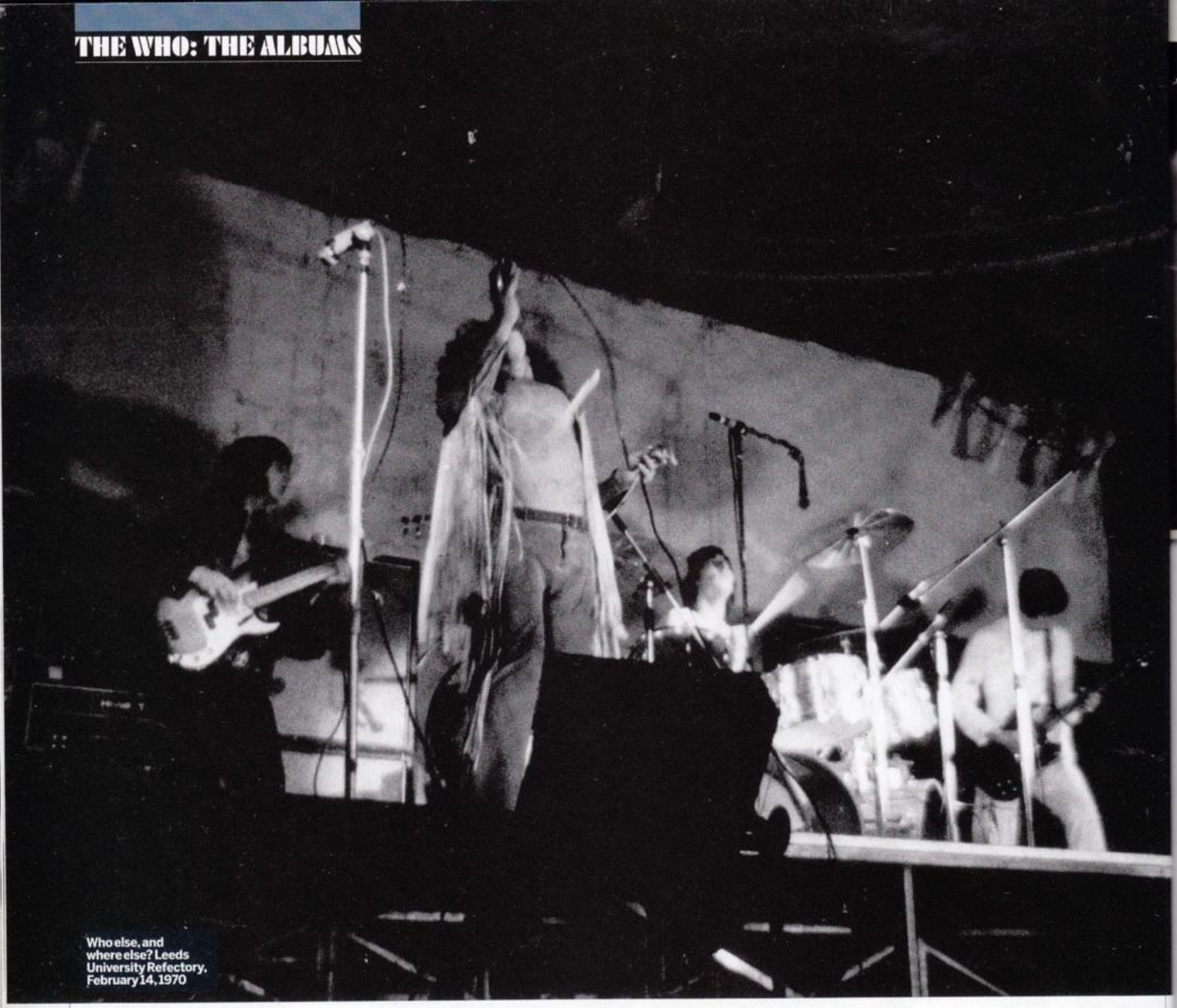
Within the last year, The Who's US engagements have included three-night stands at each of Detroit's Grande Ballroom, New York City's Fillmore East, Chicago's Kinetic Playground and San Francisco's Fillmore West. They've also played at Woodstock, in between Sly & The Family Stone and Jefferson Airplane in the dawn hours of Saturday morning a performance memorable for a stage invasion by indefatigable hippy rabble-rouser Abbie Hoffman, who wants to protest about something or other, and whom Pete Townshend instructs to "Fuck off my fucking stage," before swatting the agitator with his guitar.

There are hours of tapes awaiting editorial oversight. The task will require, as such tasks do, time and patience, commodities with which The Who are not presently overburdened. Even by their standards, matters within the camp are fraught. Though their reputation for misbehaviour is deserved, the consequences of their hellraising to date have been largely harmless (whichever members of a hotel's staff are tasked with extracting CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **Young Man Blues** ★★★★
2 **Substitute** ★★★★★
3 **Summertime Blues** ★★★★★
4 **Shakin' All Over** ★★★★★
5 **My Generation** ★★★★
6 **Magic Bus** ★★★★

RELEASED: May 16, 1970
LABEL: Track (Decca in US)
Produced by: Jon Astley, Kit Lambert and The Who
RECORDED: Leeds University
PERSONNEL:
Roger Daltrey (vocals); Pete Townshend (guitar, bk vocals); John Entwistle (bass, bk vocals); Keith Moon (drums, bk vocals)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION:
UK 3; US 4



Who else, and where else? Leeds University Refectory, February 14, 1970

RAY STEVENSON/REX FEATURES

limousines from swimming pools may beg to differ.)

Tragically, however, a few weeks before the Leeds show, on January 4, 1970, drummer Keith Moon has been involved in a hideous accident outside the Red Lion pub in Hatfield: a drunken altercation with other patrons has somehow culminated in Moon's Bentley being driven over Moon's chauffeur, Neil Boland, with fatal consequences (a coroner will eventually exonerate Moon, although according to friends and associates, the volatile Moon will never forgive himself).

Pete Townshend, whose abrupt way with vexatious equipment is already an established trope of rock'n'roll iconography, asks long-serving sound engineer Bobby Pridden to toss the recently accrued trove of live tapes onto a bonfire, and instructs The Who's management to book a couple of relatively modest shows in the UK. The Who will record their live album on consecutive dates at Leeds University and Hull City Hall, and trust that it'll be all right on the nights (it won't, as it happens the reason *Live At Leeds* is one show, rather than the intended highlights of the pair, is that the tapes of Hull prove unuseable, much of John Entwistle's bass going missing somewhere in the mix).

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

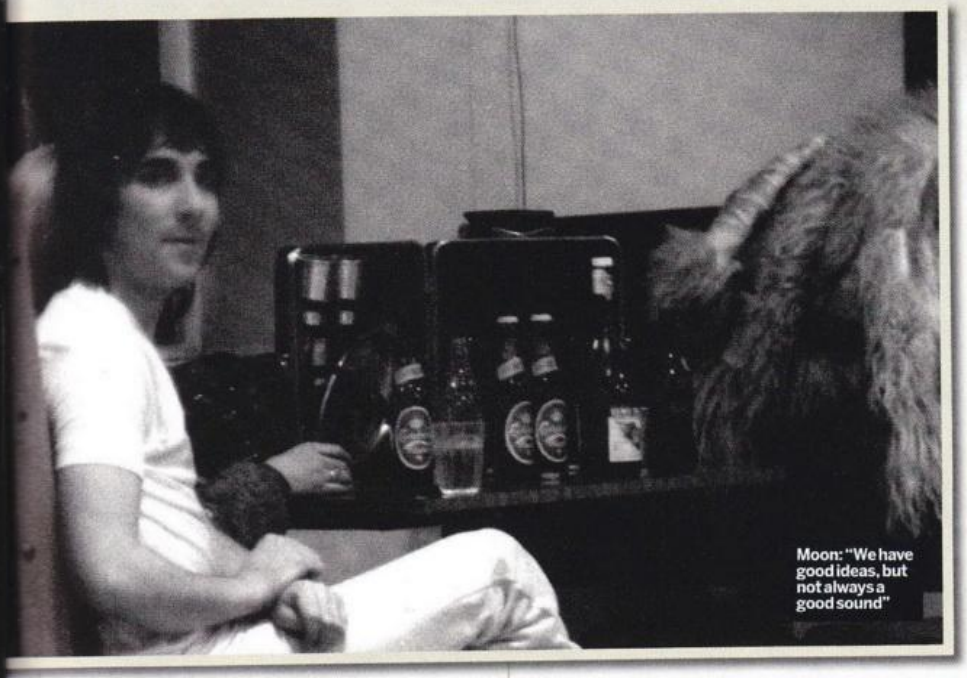
"The Who is just about the most exciting visual act in the world and it has long been Pete Townshend's ambition to capture the group's fantastic stage sound on disc. He has finally done just that and the result is this brilliant album, recorded at Leeds University. It stands up as a perfect example of just what makes The Who as big as they are."

RICHARD GREEN, *NME*, MAY 16, 1970

The sets at both shows will be long, including an expansive trawl of The Who's greatest hits to date, revisits of the canonical covers on which they cut their teeth, as well as the entirety of *Tommy*. However, the album that eventually appears in shops will be short, and understated to the verge of appearing belligerent. The finished album will barely clear 37 minutes. It will be issued in a plain brown wrapper, and contain just six tracks. Three will be cover versions: Mose Allison's "Young Man Blues", Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues", Johnny Kidd's "Shakin' All Over". Three will be Who hits: "Substitute", "My Generation" and "Magic Bus" (the latter two, granted, extended to such length that they consume all of Side Two between them). *Live At Leeds* is, after all, a throwaway, a stopgap, a time-buyer. The Who know they're a good live band, but they cannot possibly imagine that their evening's work will still, 40 years hence, be venerated as one of the definitive documents of rock'n'roll performance.

But this is what has happened to *Live At Leeds*, an album whose physical presence has burgeoned along with its legend. Various CD reissues in the 1990s and 2000s added excerpts of the *Tommy* section of the set, and eventually all of it. A 40th anniversary edition released in late 2010 included the Hull show as well, the missing bass parts dragged and dropped from the Leeds master (The Who have always maintained that Hull was the better gig, though it's somehow difficult to imagine any album entitled *Live At Hull*, however astonishing, being elevated into the pantheon). It is obviously churlish to complain about any of this. The longer recordings are a truer report of the concert and therefore truer to the warts-and-all, take-it-or-leave-it spirit of the (actually heavily edited) original edition. And it's difficult to argue that more expansive documentation of a brilliant and influential group is a bad thing. But it is possible to mourn the concise punky impudence of the original

THE WHO SINGLES | JULY 1970 | SUMMERTIME BLUES/HEAVEN AND HELL (UK)/HERE FOR MORE (US) | UK#38, US#27 | SEPTEMBER 1970 | SEE ME, FEEL ME/OVERTURE (WITHDRAWN) | UK/US DID NOT CHART | >>



Moon: "We have good ideas, but not always a good sound"

which can these days, happily, be replicated with some minor tweaking of an iTunes playlist.

The original *Live At Leeds* begins with "Young Man Blues", a '50s-vintage Mose Allison song. Though it was the fifth song The Who played on the night, it's a perfect opening for the album, sculpting Allison's affable jazz shuffle into a rampant, barely recognisable rumble of Zeppelinesque heavy metal blues, drums, bass and guitars cascading with the disparate yet congruent purpose of an avalanche carrying villages down an Alp. It must have inculcated fearful vapours in buyers attracted to *Live At Leeds* by the artschool smartness of *The Who Sell Out*, the melodramatic ambition of *Tommy*, or the foppish pop of The Who's better-known singles.

Revealingly, in an interview with Leeds University's student magazine on the day of the show, Moon shrugs, "We don't make particularly good records. We have good ideas, but not always a good sound. We are difficult to record because we don't work any different in the studio to onstage – drumsticks are in the air when they should be on the drums, and arms are flying when they should be on the guitar."

Those who bought *Live At Leeds* because they liked the singles they'd heard on the radio are are at least thrown a bone with a thrillingly brisk swipe at "Substitute", lifted from what was, on the night, essentially a medley of crowd-pleasers, introduced thus by a heroically snotty Townshend: "Three hit singles from our past for you... the three easiest. 'Substitute', which was our first No 4, 'Happy Jack', which was our first No 1 in Germany and our first big hit record in the States, and 'I'm A Boy', which according to the *Melody Maker* was our first No 1 in England, I think for about half an hour."

The rest of the first side of the original *Live At Leeds* is two cover versions. The Who's abrasive take on "Summertime Blues", though it has been a staple of their live set for years by this point, has the easy, spontaneous feel of a band winging it in rehearsals, its middle-eight meandering from the taut rockabilly of the original into a loose-limbed jazz jam.

Johnny Kidd's "Shakin' All Over" is similarly supercharged, stripped utterly of the louche, lounge-lizard pose struck by the 1960 original, and recast as a primal, priapic howl. The Who's arrangement of this song abandons the script altogether for protracted periods, descending into a fury reined in just short of total chaos. For far from the only time on this album, it's hard to say whether Townshend's guitar, Entwistle's bass or Moon's drums are the lead instrument. If Daltrey's vocals occasionally err towards sweaty bellicosity, it may be the consequence of being one of the few lead singers in history who has serious cause to wonder whether anyone's paying attention to him.

THIS IS ROCK'N'ROLL UP CLOSE, AND UNTRUMPABLE EVIDENCE THAT THE TRULY GREAT GROUPS ARE FAR MORE THAN THE SUM OF THEIR PARTS

Side Two of the original *Live At Leeds* holds just two tracks. The first is a version of "My Generation" spun out to more than 14 minutes, including several excerpts from *Tommy* and more of the violent instrumental eruptions which characterise *Live At Leeds* as a whole. The second is "Magic Bus", extended to a mere seven-and-a-half minutes, The Who taking longer over the song's monstrous ending than they did over the recorded version of the song.

The additions to *Live At Leeds* that have been made over the decades do dilute the thrill of it in some respects: the original remains an unbeatable swift cleanse for the jaded palate. But the expanded versions remind all at once of what a great and what a profoundly weird group The Who were. Their bare-bones lineup – guitar, bass, drums, vocals – means that at every point on the album it is possible to hear precisely what every member of the group is doing in relation to the others. What is startling, when the individual contributions are concentrated upon in isolation, is how rarely it sounds like any of them are playing the same song. Moon's thunderous patterns, Townshend's eloquent powerchords and picking, Entwistle's frequent deployment of the bass as the lead instrument, Daltrey's pugnacious roar, all feel like laws unto themselves. Listen to it all at once, though, and you're hearing untrumpable evidence that all the truly great groups really are more than the sum of their parts.

You're also hearing, on *Live At Leeds* more than anywhere else in The Who's catalogue, prophecies of their influence. Hearing it 40 years on, you hear not only The Who, but everything The Who inspired which is, where British rock'n'roll is concerned, almost everything. It requires little imagination to think of Peter Hook learning here how the bass guitar can be more than a plodding observer of the beat, of Mick Jones understanding the breadth of rage that can be wrung from a fretboard, of Graham Coxon realising that there doesn't have to be a conflict between studied artistry and unbound rock'n'roll, of Johnny Marr figuring out how three soloing instrumentalists can cohere into an accessible pop hit.

There's also an argument to be made that *Live At Leeds* succeeded creatively, critically, commercially because of what it wasn't. Most live albums are monuments built by artists to themselves, recorded in the most prestigious venue they'll ever play, the onstage sound lifeless, the crowd reduced to a backwash of adoring tinnitus, all mistakes excised in the edit.

Even if the show was a good one, listening to the recording of it tends to be akin to your experience of a terrific holiday that you only know from a friend's postcards. *Live At Leeds*, to understate matters recklessly, does not suck: The audience is small enough that you can hear individual whoops and whistles, the microphones sufficiently sensitive to pick up between-song coughs and mutters. It is rock'n'roll up close.

Live At Leeds is now an established pillar of rock's orthodox history, to the almost parodic extent that the site of its recording is now commemorated by a Civic Trust blue plaque (in 2006, The Who celebrated the unveiling of same by playing a return date at the venue, and eternal kudos is due *The Yorkshire Evening Post* for its caption on a picture of the ticket queue: "Hope I Buy Before I Get Cold"). It is cited as the greatest live rock'n'roll album of all time with predictable, and therefore annoying, regularity. But that doesn't mean it isn't. Sometimes, conventional wisdoms become conventional because they're wise. ⊙

A smashing time was had by all: The Who at The Marquee, London, March 1967

RAY STEVENSON/REX FEATURES

'IF WE GO ON AT THIS RATE WE'LL BE THE BIGGEST GROUP IN THE WORLD'

In the wake of *Live At Leeds*, Pete Townshend takes time out to reflect on The Who's formative years. **RICHARD GREEN** hears Townshend's tales of Acton and beyond, and discovers an ambitious man riddled with insecurities, not least a neurotic obsession with his guitar-hero peers. "I was terribly hurt that nobody said Hendrix was copying what I'd been doing..."

NME
07/11/1970
&14/11/1970

WHEN YOU COME to consider the amazing success story of The Who, the glittering superstar aura that surrounds the group and the adulation in which the four west Londoners are held by millions of fans throughout the world, it would seem safe to assume that Pete Townshend, their accepted leader, is a supremely confident man. But this is an unsound assumption.

When talking about his music, and his guitar playing in particular, Pete often reveals a degree of bewilderment and sometimes chagrin. He openly admits that groups like Led Zeppelin can hold The Who's advance back, and he still speaks with an air of hopelessness when on the subject of the late Jimi Hendrix.

As we sat in the lounge of his riverside house at Twickenham, Pete recalled the days when The Who were still trying to find themselves.

"I couldn't find a model guitarist I could focus on," he told me. "I used to like John Lee Hooker and Steve Cropper. I thought George Harrison was very lame, Keith Richard couldn't tune his guitar – he still can't! Somehow we became aware of The Yardbirds and we incorporated the things they were doing into our act without ever seeing them – it was done by word of mouth.

"I incorporated something into my style which Clapton hadn't discovered, which was CONTINUES OVER »

feedback. I discovered it by accident because I wanted my amps to be bigger than I was; this was image consciousness again. I was the first person to put two Marshalls on top of one another and this, to my mind, originated the stack. Because the amps were directly opposite the stack, when I turned round I got feedback.

"After that, I never looked at another guitarist and worried. I wasn't intimidated any more. I was a guitarist and a songwriter and I could swing my arm, so I was confident."

When The Kinks and later The Beatles used feedback, Pete was more than pleased, but his feeling of well-being wasn't to last long. Just when he believed that he was all set as a guitarist, Jimi Hendrix marched onto the scene.

"The first guitarist that really knocked me out was Clapton again about three years later," Pete went on. "I liked the fluid style. I had seen him with Mayall and hated it, I couldn't stand that kind of blues. I always thought of myself as an individual guitarist. The first time I saw Eric with Cream was at a gig in a theatre somewhere.

"Very soon afterwards came Hendrix and I don't think anyone directly influenced me more. He was the first man to come in and walk all over my territory. I felt incredibly intimidated by that."

It didn't only happen once, there were several occasions when Jimi shook Pete.

"We had our own show on at the Saville and we were feeling very, very nervous about it," he admitted. "Kit Lambert made the terrible mistake of putting Hendrix on before us and when he ended by using feedback and dropping his guitar on the floor I was terribly hurt by nobody saying that he was copying what I'd been doing. My guitar smashing was an extension of feedback and arm swinging, Hendrix incorporated it in a very silky movement and the blues."

The next time Pete felt put out by Jimi was at one of the first mammoth US pop festivals.

"Monterey – more Hendrix intimidation for me personally," he sighed. "It was right in the middle of the psychedelic era and we brought the place down with the smash-up routine. We went on before Jimi and he went on and did the same thing, and again we felt cheated because our impact had been halved. It was only since Jimi stopped working a lot in the States and Cream broke up that we started making it. There's always been a hidden audience for the guitarist – I think it's mainly younger boys – that could make a guitarist a star overnight."

Of the period when Jimi suddenly happened, Pete says: "It was about that time that we really began to change. I became conscious of myself as a guitarist and started to write in a way that would allow myself more expression. We played a Murray The K Show in the States with the Cream and we both had 10-minute spots in which to show ourselves. We made a far bigger impact because of our smoke bombs and guitar smashing and things. There was a fantastic amount of paranoia, I was always conscious of myself as a guitarist when Eric was around. I made myself much, much more positive and used it as an expression.

"The news spread like wildfire about The Who but we didn't steam back in quick enough. By the time we went back to the States, the Cream were superstars and we had to fight where we felt we didn't have to fight. We were always reviewed in the light of the Cream."

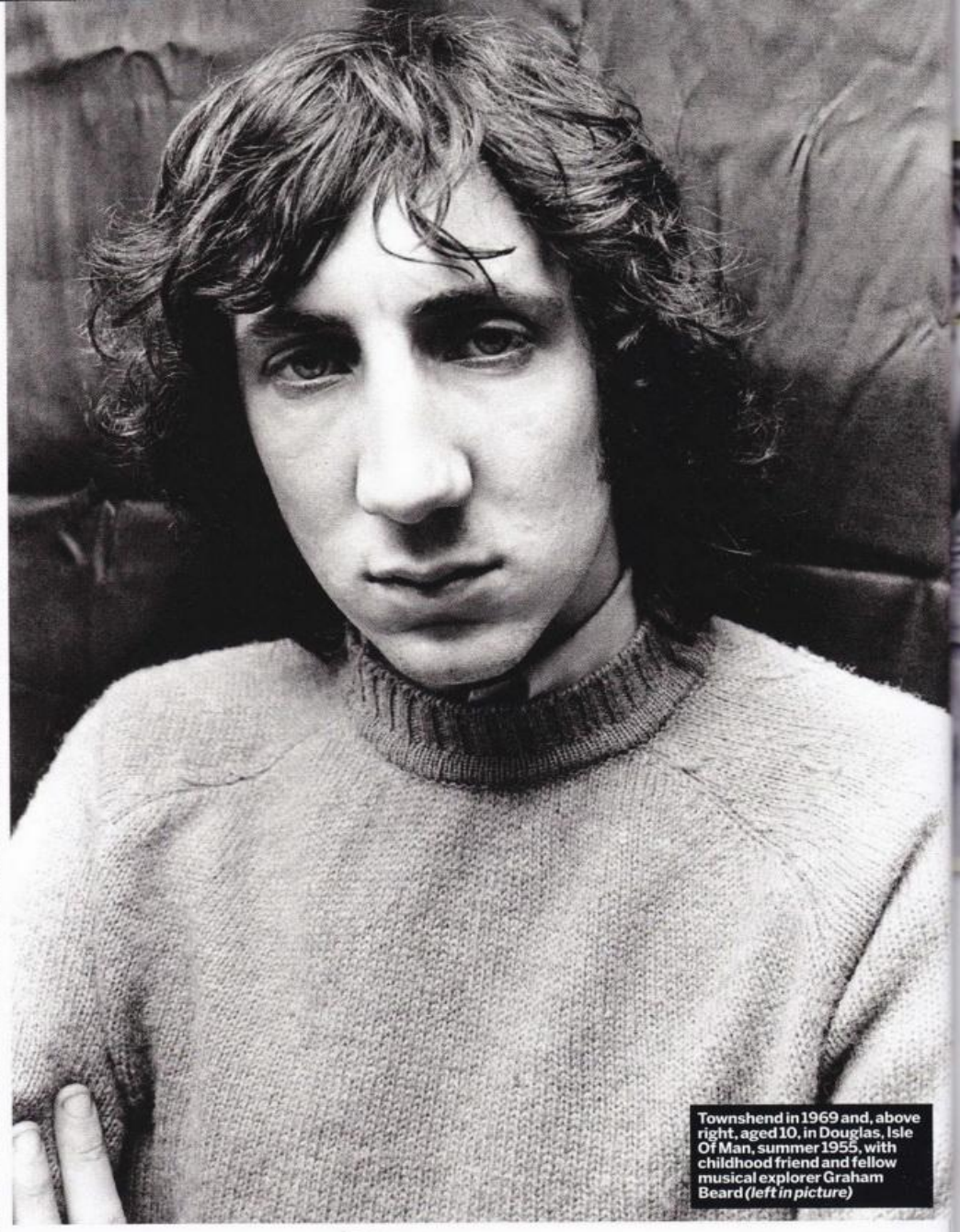
Just lately, Pete has begun to feel more satisfaction with the direction in which The Who is heading. He's witnessed a lot of changes during the group's career, but now feels that if the rainbow's end is ever to be reached it may not be a much longer journey.

"We were so hyped up on our image that we couldn't see what was going on," he stated. "It's only since *Live At Leeds* and *Tommy* that we've balanced up our music. The reason why a Who performance is an exciting thing is that there is a lot of history there. You know that Keith is going to be excited but you don't know in what way. The Who have moved up the rungs of the ladder of success at an incredibly slow rate. There's an evolution in the group going on and now there's an evolution in the music – now we can hold our own against groups like Zeppelin who are completely musically based. We're breaking up the jinx of being a guitarist group.

"The first time I saw Zeppelin it seemed they were regurgitating all the musical clichés of pop. They are a group's group and now The Who are being accepted as a group's group. But we'll never be the ultimate group while there are groups like Zep around."

Occasionally, Pete's train of thought seems to ramble a bit and he switches subjects before the listener has had time to take them in. When seen as the printed word, however, one of his rambles can give the reader an insight into Pete's complex mind and the way in which he likes to speak on a variety of subjects concerned with his music.

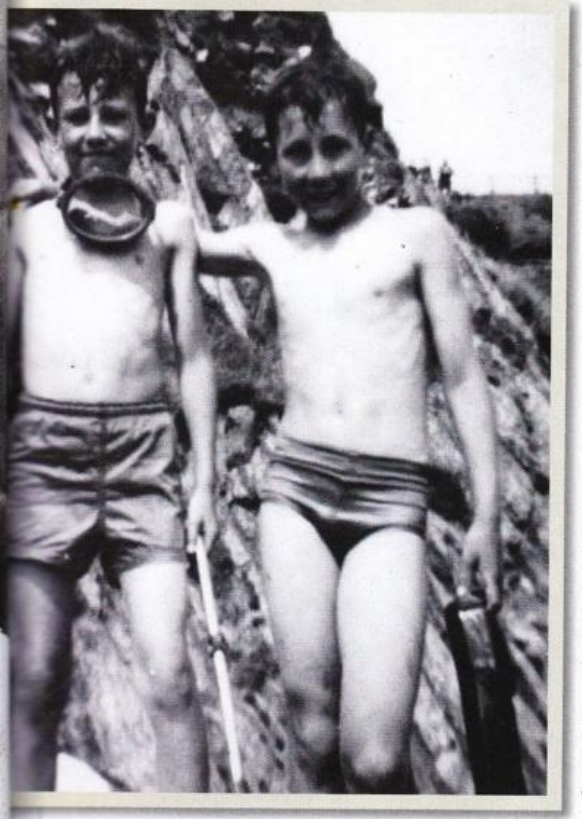
For example – "It was the image around the group and everything about it that enabled me to find myself as a guitarist and songwriter. I think about the Small Faces in



Townshend in 1969 and, above right, aged 10, in Douglas, Isle Of Man, summer 1955, with childhood friend and fellow musical explorer Graham Beard *(left in picture)*

WHO KNEW

After his spiritual leader Meher Baba died in 1969, Townshend and assorted friends recorded a series of tributes – *Happy Birthday* (1970), *I Am* (1972) and *With Love* (1976). Material first penned for these projects included "Baba O'Riley", "The Seeker" and much of Pete's first solo LP.



the same way. None of them were particularly brilliant on their own, but they were a very together group, they knew good music when they heard it. They didn't try to make individual statements.

"Eric Clapton always talks about his guitar and I always talk about rock and the ethics of rock and why it's lasted so long and what people get out of it. Eric had the stage act and I had the music, and Jimi was all that rolled into one. Jimi doesn't need musical obituaries. It was either going to be a bomb dropping or Jimi Hendrix happening – people knew, they felt something was going to happen. The impact he made was enormous. He was there, you didn't have to see him or hear him to know that it was a point in musical history.

"Keith Moon is so defined in what he does and the way he does it that he was never conscious of anything until he started to figure in drummers' charts with people like Ginger Baker. He's never been a drummer's drummer, but today people say 'technically I don't know what he does or the way that he does it, but it works.'

"The Who will probably last longer than most groups but will probably never reach the status that these other groups have reached. If we go on at this rate we will be the biggest group in the world because slowly we're realising all our ambitions. We're a group that can pull it out of the hat yet again.

"I'd like it to reach the stage where like Sinatra and Ella get 'Are They Still Stars?' features written about them because their latest record wasn't a hit, we had that said about us."

"WE KNEW WE were going to be stars. We entered the business to become stars, not to make a day-to-day business out of it. That was what was so exciting about the business about six years ago, everyone wanted to be as big as the Stones or The Beatles."

Pete Townshend almost always achieves his ambitions and there is no doubt about the outcome of his bid for stardom. It has been a long, hard, slog for The Who with various setbacks cropping up and, as Pete explained, various other groups sometimes standing in their way.

One of the most important factors in The Who's success is the length of time that Pete, Roger, Keith and John have been together. Not just as The Who or The High Numbers but before then as schoolfriends in Acton. Because they know one another so well, they are able to make allowances for each other's mistakes and faults, and the type of squabble that may have broken up a lesser group has been smoothed over by The Who whenever it has occurred. To understand the closeness between the four members, one has to travel back in time several years, to the days before The Who had even been conceived.

Pete's parents were both musical, his father playing saxophone in The Squadronaires and his mother singing with the band for a while before Pete was born.

"My father was essentially a pop musician in his day," Pete pointed out. "I dread to think what would have happened if I had been brought up in a classical family."

He recalled a time when he was very young and had to pretend to be older so that he could get into Butlins ballroom at Filey to see his father play, and how he met a Texan cowboy there. "He promised me a harmonica which I never got and in the end I think I had to shop-lift one a couple of years later," he admitted.

"I DISCOVERED FEEDBACK BY ACCIDENT, BECAUSE I WANTED MY AMPS TO BE BIGGER THAN I WAS!"

Pete sang in a church choir in Acton, "but I didn't have enough projection or a posh enough accent to get leads." Even so, he still had no real outlet for his musical talents.

"There was a period when I was terribly negative, I didn't know what to do," he said. "I was proud of my father but I didn't like listening to his music on the radio, second-hand in a way. One of the things that fashioned the musical frustration for me was that my parents didn't have a piano or a record player, which is incredible for two musicians. They still only have a record player which the kids play old Who records on and jump all over. An auntie on the Isle Of Man had a piano, but all the time I was searching for an instrument."

Through his father's connections, Pete used to go along to press previews of films with his friend, Graham Beard, and on one such excursion something happened that was to shape Pete's musical career.

"*Rock Around The Clock* did it for me," he revealed. "I hadn't been into rock'n'roll before that. Beard got into Elvis Presley, who I had never liked. He got into the guitar and used to look in the mirror to act up. After a while I decided the guitar was what I wanted. My granny got me my first guitar and it was a very, very, very bad one indeed, though it cost her a lot of money. It's important to get a good instrument for kids. I fought tooth and nail with it for a year and finally gave up because it was too bad."

He got a mandolin banjo from a friend of his father's, started to play trad jazz of all things and decided eventually that he could play with other musicians. John Entwistle and a chap called Phil Rhodes had a group going and they asked Pete to join.

"I was 13 at the time and I'd been buggering about for two years on guitar without getting anywhere," Pete recalled with a smile. "I knew they expected me to play so I rushed out and got a chord book. They were fairly impressed, which I couldn't work out. Perhaps they thought if you could play three chords you could play the rest."

The group had a variety of names, like The Aristocrats, The Scorpions, and The Confederates Jazz Band, and they used to go along and see Acker Bilk play a lot. Pete got a £3 Czechoslovakian guitar from his mother's antique shop and finally decided that the guitar was the instrument for him. By this time, John had made himself an electric bass guitar from a plank of wood and he and Pete formed a group with two boys from Acton County School.

"We played Shadows numbers, which must be the cliché story, but that's the way it was," Pete told me. "There just weren't any other groups around. I was terribly happy with it, people quite liked us and it was incredibly exciting when we appeared in front of an audience. It gave me new confidence – I hadn't made it very well with chicks, and at the time when my mates started to get it together with chicks I was getting into the guitar and it became an obsession."

John left the group and joined Daltrey's Detours and then Pete joined as rhythm guitarist at John's suggestion.

"It became a good social thing, the drummer's father ran us about in his Dormobile and we got a lot of seaside gigs. We did an audition at Peckham Paradise Club for £7 a night, which we thought was very good. Eventually we chucked out the drummer and his father-manager."

Roger dropped the guitar and started singing so Pete switched to lead guitar, "but I couldn't play properly and I built up a style around chords. My favourite group was Johnny Kidd And The Pirates with Mick Green on guitar. That's where we CONTINUES OVER »

CHRIS WALTER, MARK LARGE/DAILY MAIL/REX FEATURES

Fresh Faces: The High Numbers, 1964

first heard R'n'B second-hand."

After a certain period with a manager who thought of the group as his pets and believed he could make them stars overnight, a recording audition with Philips cropped up.

"Chris Parminter, who ran the audition, didn't like the drummer so we kicked him out. From the point we found Keith it was a complete turning point. He was so assertive and confident. Before then we had just been fooling about."

Through Peter Meaden and Guy Stevens, Pete got to hear Tamla Motown music and they played "Got To Dance To Keep From Crying" at the Scene Club near Piccadilly Circus. Pete wrote his first song called "It Was You" which The Fourmost put on a b-side, but he still wasn't doing anything positive, he felt. Kit Lambert became the group's manager and taught them about stage makeup and hair dye – "Slightly tarty at the time," as Pete puts it.

"I'd already got into the arm-swinging bit and we were all dressed like mods," Pete went on. "The product of that era was 'I'm the Face' and 'Zoot Suit', both lifted from R'n'B records with the words changed. They sold about three copies; Philips could make a fortune by issuing them in the States today.

"We had a music that other groups hadn't discovered yet. The Beatles and the Stones impressed us but they had such a defined image that we thought there was a gap there. We were after a slightly more sophisticated sound. We did an EMI audition and I was compromised into writing, which was a thing I wasn't keen to do. I was very much into an image thing – I lived and breathed image. That was the key word in those days.

"Then I heard 'You Really Got Me' on the radio and instantly knew that The Kinks had filled the hole we wanted to fill. That sort of music always came from over the water. I thought that if you want the heavy stuff you could write it yourself. I wrote 'I Can't Explain' just for The Who and it remains one of the best things I've ever done. It was based on 'You Really Got Me', it just didn't have the modulations. I was influenced more by The Kinks than any group – we weren't fans of theirs, we just liked them.

"ERIC CLAPTON HAD THE STAGE ACT, I HAD THE MUSIC, AND JIMI HENDRIX WAS ALL THAT ROLLED INTO ONE!"

"Shel Talmy signed us and it was then I really got into writing. I felt I was intimidating the group by writing for them. I rowed with Roger on 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' revising the lyrics, but that didn't last. He started believing he'd actually written it.

"The next positive thing was 'My Generation', to show what was going on. It was as much a defiance to the group as a public thing. I felt I was the only person in the group who knew about dope. Keith was on pills but I'd heard about pot. I alienated myself from the group and this gave me a pivot point to stand back and write and then join them in playing.

"Lo and behold, Lambert started producing our records. He spent incredible amounts of time with us and he changed my life fantastically. He'd listen to my demos and I'd make alterations. When we met, I was the young dropout and Lambert was the opposite, an ex-public schoolboy, very respectable – now we've completely switched roles.

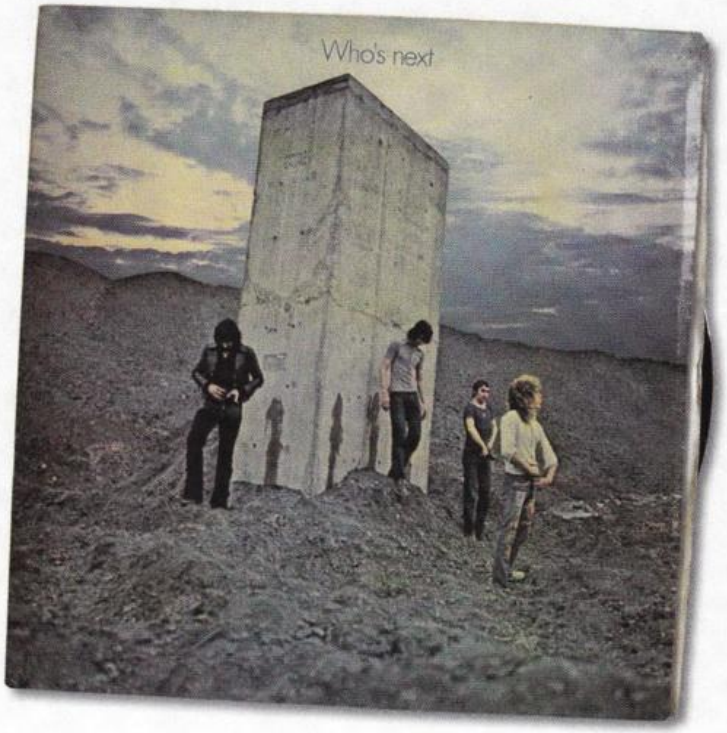
"A lot of people would think I'm terribly square sitting here in my comfortable suburban house with my wife and a baby. There has got to be a point where Lambert and I come together in our identities again soon."

Returning to his recollections of the build-up of The Who, Pete remarked: "When we had a hit with 'Happy Jack', which was a very different sound for us, it became obvious that the musical direction of the group was going to change. I'd gone back to being influenced by the Stones again. On our second LP, which is still about our best, we really discovered The Who's music for the first time, that you could be funny on a record.

"Entwistle wrote for the first time. He wrote 'Whiskey Man' and 'Boris The Spider'. My reign set aside as an individual from the rest of the group was over and the group was becoming a group. It was only then we started to work musically together."

Things snowballed until The Who reached the envious position they are in today. The outlook is rosy and everyone concerned with the group is perfectly happy. What, then, does Pete see for the future?

"I'd like The Who to continue writing and playing hard rock," he replied. "There's not another group that is as complete as The Who in every respect. There's no question of us ever being happier doing anything else. If the group stopped I don't know what I'd do. I'd make a living and be happy, but not so exhilarated."



RELEASE >>DATE 14 | AUGUST | 1971

Who's Next

Meet the new concept, not quite the same as the old concept. The Who return to the fray with an aborted film, sci-fi bombast, stadium anthems and a new electronic weapon in their considerable arsenal. *By Rob Young*

WHO'S NEXT SHOULD have been a paradigm, a watershed, a groundbreaking extravaganza bursting through the bounds of what rock could, and had, ever achieved before. It ended as a nine-track LP picturing four men in an industrial wilderness, on an ashen slagheap, pissing against a slab of concrete. It sure put the 'Who' in hubris.

And yet *Who's Next* turned out, for all the stops and starts in its inception, to be right up there with the best of the group's output. It began in the emboldened aftermath of *Tommy*, which particularly whetted Pete Townshend's appetite for approaching the rock album as a novel, or an epic ballad, or an opera; as a space for a grand arching narrative rather than a succession of three-minute Pop Art bursts. If *Live At Leeds* proved they could do stadium-sized, anthemic rock – and deliver it at the point of sale – *Who's Next* simply punched that fact home with even greater weight, as well as allowing Townshend's more experimental side to manifest, in further exploration with electronics and synthesisers.

The flurry of notes from the VCS3 synthesiser that ushers in the album is one lasting residue of 'Lifehouse', the multi-platform project which formed the germ of Townshend's post-*Tommy* plans. 'Lifehouse', he said later, was "like the Brabazon aeroplane of the '50s: magnificent in concept and appearance, but too big to get off the ground." A generous view would be to see it as a worthy, indeed necessary attempt to pick up the pieces after the Altamont debacle and the general decline of the counterculture. An alternate picture is of a colossal, misconceived venture, never properly thought through, born at the wrong end of a whisky bottle. But whichever way you look at it, the appreciation of the album is enriched once you realise where its most significant songs fit into 'Lifehouse''s crazy jigsaw.

The main thrust was towards making a movie. Cinema, for Townshend at the time, was "important… because it's still the only medium which can capture the largeness of rock, the bigness of it." 'Lifehouse' was to be set in a *Matrix*-like future where the majority of humankind are cocooned in 'Lifesuits', feeding on entertainment intravenously supplied by the 'Grid'. The rebel spirit of rock'n'roll is preserved by outlaws in the rural outlands, and the climax was to CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **Baba O'Riley** ★★★★★
2 **Bargain** ★★★★★
3 **Love Ain't For Keeping** ★★★★
4 **My Wife** ★★★
5 **The Song Is Over** ★★★★★
6 **Getting In Tune** ★★★
7 **Going Mobile** ★★★★
8 **Behind Blues Eyes** ★★★★★
9 **Won't Get Fooled Again** ★★★★★

RELEASED: August 14, 1971
LABEL: Track (Decca in US)
PRODUCED BY: The Who (associate producer Glyn Johns)
RECORDED: Olympic Studios, the Young Vic Theatre, London; The Record Plant, New York
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (vocals); John Entwistle (bass guitar, brass, vocals, piano); Keith Moon (drums, percussion); Pete Townshend (guitar, VCS3 organ, ARP synthesiser, vocals, piano); Dave Arbus (violin); Nicky Hopkins (piano)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 1; US 4

be a triumphant Who concert at the South Bank, during which the audience would be thrown into euphoric rapture before suddenly disappearing as the police move in to shut it down.

The film, initially intended to be directed by Kit Lambert, was a "portentous science-fiction film with Utopian spiritual messages into which were to be grafted uplifting scenes from a real Who concert," as an older, wiser Townshend later categorised it. "I was selling a simple credo: whatever happens in the future, rock'n'roll will save the world." Again, easy for Townshend to mock his pretensions after the fact, but under the influence of Meher Baba at the time, he was attuned as never before or since to the vibrations emanating and reflected between The Who onstage and the audience.

'Lifehouse', it was soon decided, was to expand beyond the confines of the screen, incarnating as a three-night residency at London's Young Vic Theatre, a concert performance piece with quadraphonic sound, and involving up to 400 people in "audience participation rock", trying to channel the audience's latent creativity to shape the songs as they were being performed. Townshend himself wished to harness the dawning power of the computer and electronic synthesiser, with a demonstration of cybernetic theory, assigning each audience member their own personal leitmotifs generated from a computer fed with biographical data (horoscopes, their interests and bodily characteristics), which would all be fed into a computer simultaneously to produce a universal chord, a "celestial cacophony" – the centuries-old dream of sonic visionaries the world over.

They lost their grip on it some time in late 1970. Kit Lambert, who had played such a solid role in *Tommy*, had decamped to New York, and was therefore not around to translate Townshend's fevered imaginings about 'Lifehouse' to the rest of the group, who remained loyal, if quietly sceptical. They played one Young Vic show in February 1971 and rallied when they heard the energy in the tapes. A boozy, six-day recording stint at New York's Studio One culminated with a final falling-out with Kit Lambert and a nervous breakdown for Townshend. Back in London, producer Glyn Johns took the group in hand, got them straight, booked some May and June dates at Olympic Studios, cut through the songs' conceptual fat and pulled out their heart.

"Once [*a guitar*] becomes electrified," Townshend told an interviewer in late 1971, "it's turned into a giant instrument which can play to 60,000 people. It can also do a lot of other things, a guitar can be the control centre for a synthesiser. A guitar can go into a synthesiser and have its sound taken apart and put back together again in a different form… On *Who's Next*, there's a very simple one which we use with the ARP synthesiser called an envelope follower, where you plug the guitar in and you get a sort of fuzzy wah-wah sound."

These songs were designed to be BIG, and the LP is phenomenally tight, focused, refreshed by synths while at the same time containing some of The Who's rootsiest moments, as well as playing up the complementary qualities of Daltrey's and Townshend's different voices. Scurrying ARP-peggios open "Baba O'Riley", and anyone wishing to know the impetus behind the principal writer's thinking had all the clues they needed right there in the title. Meher Baba was the teacher, US minimalist Terry Riley was the preacher (compare his 1967 meditational systems piece, "A Rainbow In Curved Air"). It introduces the character of Bobby, here labouring unknown in Scottish fields but later to enter the urban *"teenage wasteland"* as a rock'n'roll saviour. Farming the fields away to the north, he is out of Grid range, and doesn't wear a Lifesuit. Dave Arbus' electric fiddle adds a rustic touch. "Bargain" has the intensity of a prayer in its renunciation of all worldly goods in exchange for enlightenment: *"I'd pay any price just to win you/Surrender my good life for bad…I'd call that a bargain/The best I ever had."* And the band respond to the fervour: Daltrey imploring; Moon a powerhouse, with freeform fills that collapse bang on the one every time.

Rejigged under Johns from a trailblazing rocker to a slow-rocking acoustic country number, "Love Ain't For Keeping" evokes the carefree, sensual world inhabited by Bobby and his girlfriend, Sally. It seems connected to "Going Mobile", which is that rarest of animals, a convincing British driving song. Infused with wildwood freedom, Moon's snare is wound hyper-tight and the brief pauses before the chorus wriggle with glorious synth worms. In isolation, you might think lines like *"I don't care about pollution – I'm an air-conditioned gypsy"* were intended satirically, but in the 'Lifehouse' narrative, they refer explicitly to the disastrous state of the environment.

The only ghost of irony, in fact, comes on the one non-'Lifehouse' number, Entwistle's "My Wife". It's a chugging, Ox-oid knockabout, outlining the vengeful acts of an enraged battleaxe, and pierced with a stabbing brass section, but the piece feels throwaway in the elevated company of the rest.

"The Song Is Over" was supposed to be the concluding song in the movie, intended to be played over a deserted dancefloor by, of all people, The Bonzo Dog Band. It's hard to imagine it played any other way than with the muscular, anthemic treatment given it by The Who themselves. Squelching and soaring synths lend a Radiophonic Workshop-meets-cosmic disco tinge, and Nicky Hopkins rings out peals of piano. "Getting In Tune" comes across as most self-consciously part of a film musical, a song-about-the-act-of-writing-a-song, veering between triteness and bombast.

After the frenetic cruise of "Going Mobile", things gear right down into the acoustic ballad "Behind Blue Eyes", the melancholia of living with multiple façades and another appeal to Townshend's god to help him live without

Press shots in the park: Surrey, July 1971

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS/GETTY

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"A superb Who album, then; turn the bass down and the treble up to maximum to get that cutting, abrasive sound, and you can imagine the guitar-smashing at the end… For uncomplicated sheer rock, it may well turn out to be The Who's biggest recording triumph yet, for there isn't a duff track. And there are plenty of highlights."

ROY CARR, *MELODY MAKER*, AUGUST 21, 1971

THE WHO SINGLES JULY 1971 | WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN/I DON'T EVEN KNOW MYSELF | UK#9, US#15 | OCT 1971 | LET'S SEE ACTION/WHEN I WAS A BOY | UK#16, US NOT ISSUED | NOV 1971 | BEHIND BLUE EYES/>>>

them. After a gentle start, with its Crosby, Stills & Nash-style vocal harmonies, the group crashes in and Daltrey progresses to a snarl for the lines about *"When my fist clenches, crack it open/Before if I use it and lose my cool..."* For a far less pugnacious approach, see Townshend's own home-recorded version which was eventually released on 1983's home demo collection *Scoop*, where the song was cast in a much more wounded, vulnerable light.

And then comes that twisting, throbbing VCS3 fanfare, introducing the song that would hardly ever leave The Who's live set for decades to come. "Won't Get Fooled Again" must be a contender for the ultimate stadium anthem, and its eight-and-a-half minute incarnation here has none of the flab that description implies. The recording was largely made in April 1971 at Mick Jagger's Stargroves mansion, using the Rolling Stones mobile – an otherwise drunken occasion that didn't produce much usable material. Townshend's fuzzed power chords blaze and crackle with revolutionary righteousness; Entwistle and Moon chase down its racing pulse with unusually sparing embellishment, turning it almost into a speed thrash. Moon used to play it with headphones on, to keep time with the electronic backing track, which required some reining-in of his wilder side – though he superbly builds tension in the song's final minute, with a clutch of disjointed fills, before Daltrey's microphone-shredding yell and kiss-off line *"Meet the new boss/Same as the old boss"*. All of the group's efforts from the previous decade seem to suddenly focus and reach their apotheosis here. And this, surely, was the track which would gather up 'Lifehouse''s media-drugged drones, fill them with ecstatic vibrations and then hurl them into oblivion.

It's worth pointing out that, to these ears, the CD remaster from 1995 outdoes the 2003 'Deluxe' set for clarity and presence. What the newer edition does give you is the Young Vic show, plus outtakes from the abortive New York sessions.

THESE SONGS WERE DESIGNED TO BE BIG: THE LP IS TIGHT AND FOCUSED, WITH SOME OF THE WHO'S ROOTSIEST MOMENTS

On May 8, 1971, during a short tour of the UK, the band were travelling home from a Sunderland gig, when, just outside Sheffield, they demanded the driver stop the car. Moonie and the Ox had been discussing the recently released *2001: A Space Odyssey*, when suddenly a large concrete rectangle – reminiscent of Kubrick's opening sequence – was spotted thrusting through the grey slag of an industrial dumping ground. Photographer Ethan A Russell, who was accompanying them in the car, snapped the group clustering round this mysterious structure, eventually capturing the foursome zipping themselves up moments after marking their territory in nature's way, which ended up on the cover of *Who's Next*. Not for nothing did Townshend once call Russell's camera "the civilised eye on an uncivilised art form": somehow this crude image condenses the essence of 'Lifehouse' – rock gods running free in a teenage wasteland, pissing on the monolith. ⊙

EYES/ >>>> MY WIFE | US#34, UK NOT ISSUED | JAN 1972 | BABA O'RILEY/MY WIFE | NON UK/US SINGLE | JUNE 1972 | JOIN TOGETHER/BABY DON'T YOU DO IT | UK#9, US#17 | JAN 1973 | RELAY/WASPMAN | UK#21, US#39

'THERE'S NOTHING WORSE, WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO BE SERIOUS, THAN TO HAVE A HUMAN WASP FLYING ALL OVER THE STUDIO!'

All aboard the hovercraft! **ROY CARR** hitches a wild ride to the empire of Keith Moon. There, he finds The Who's resident lunatic, brandy in hand, living out his most extravagant fantasies, pondering Hitler's dodgy PR, and even revealing a hitherto repressed sensitivity.

IT WAS JUST another busy afternoon along London's crowded Oxford Street – no different from any other. Bustling shoppers, tourists and tradesmen went about their business. Suddenly a chauffeur-driven lilac Rolls-Royce oozed ominously into the kerb and out sprang two of the most menacing, scar-faced hoodlums in padded suits this side of Chicago. They ran to a bald middle-aged vicar of average build and began to set about him with a horrifying and intense savagery.

"How dare you!" exclaimed the astonished Man Of God in a haughty Oxbridge accent only just audible beneath the sound of the traffic and the awful thud of the blows upon his person. But the villains dragged him mercilessly towards the open door of the waiting car, its engine quietly ticking over.

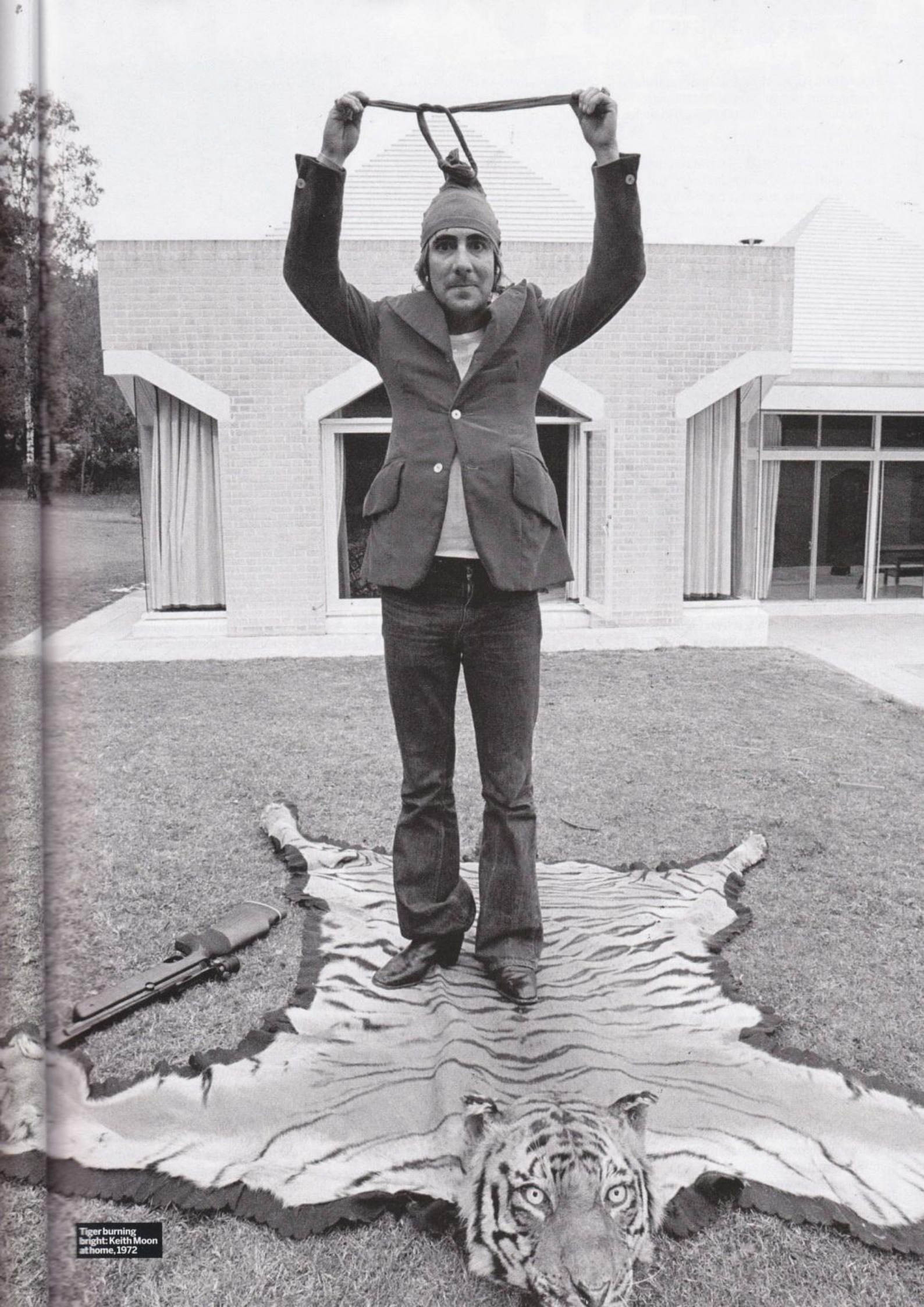
"I've never been so outraged in all my life," the struggling victim screamed loudly at his assailants. The crowd of onlookers froze, horrified, in its tracks.

"I say, have you no respect for the cloth?" was the vicar's final futile plea as, amid threats and grunts, this scuffling trio then tumbled into the back of the limousine, which promptly accelerated and sped off down the busy thoroughfare.

Enraged by such scandalous carryings-on and motivated by the sight of the pair of clerical legs thrashing feverishly out of the car's open window, a posse of public-spirited citizens gave pursuit. Half a mile down Oxford Street, the Rolls was halted at a police roadblock. The vicar was set free and his would-be kidnappers firmly apprehended.

So who were these scoundrels who CONTINUES OVER »

SHEPARD SHERBELL/CORBIS



Tiger burning bright: Keith Moon at home, 1972

dared to make the streets of London unsafe for God-fearing people to walk? And the poor clergyman, who had been subjected to such despicable violence?

I am able to reveal that the reverend gentleman was a certain Keith Moon, living out one of his more bizarre fantasies, and that for this intermission in the hurly-burly of the spring sales he was aided and abetted by Viv Stanshall and "Legs" Larry Smith. Indeed, the infamous antics of Mr Moon – The Who's Rock'N'Roll Playboy Of The Western World – have become a most colourful part of Pop Music Folklore. Be it cherry-bombing hotel bedroom doors; impersonating Hitler; driving a Lincoln Convertible into a swimming pool; or slinging a giant 21st birthday cake in the face of a gun-totin' sheriff, the perpetrator of such incidents does it with such panache, such personal flair, that he will invariably escape any drastic repercussion.

And so this week I went to see him; to examine, so to speak. The Other Side Of The Moon.

AFTER AN HOUR'S drive from London (half that time, if Moon is at the wheel), we arrived at Tara House. His home stands as a futuristic stack of concrete and plate glass pyramids, set in the middle of a secluded private estate in a lush part of England's green and pleasant land. We were greeted by Kim, the Squire's attractive lady, who immediately informed us she was not quite certain of her husband's whereabouts.

"You mean he's actually loose somewhere in the grounds?" publicist Chris Williams revealed in an initial symptom of panic. Kim affirmed his fears. "Then for God's sake we must be very careful," was Williams' directive.

"Come inside if you're worried," suggested the Moon lady with a grin, and we made our way past a chrome hot-rod with a shattered windscreen; a hovercraft; and other forms of transportation in various stages of disrepair.

Within the comparative safety of the house, music blared from apparently every room.

Sha Na Na's new album filled the bedroom; Jan And Dean's "Dead Man's Curve" from somewhere else; and the Stones' "Tumbling Dice" emitted from a huge neon-lit jukebox in the Moon playroom.

It is this solitary den, vividly reflecting his unharnessed nervous energy, that propels Keith Moon's seemingly chaotic lifestyle. Every available surface is cluttered with junk, toys, paints and booze bottles, the contents of most having been recently consumed. They litter the cushion and saddle-strewn floor as they make a crazy trail out of the sliding glass window door to the rear of the house, where they terminate in a seeming stack of a million empties.

Back in the playpen the garish figures of Spider-man, Thor, the Silver Surfer and a dozen other cosmic comic heroes, locked in mortal combat, survey the scene of utter confusion from a superb mural that completely covers an entire wall and overlaps onto another. Suddenly a large glass of brandy and ginger appears in the doorway. Our host follows immediately behind, unshaven and dishevelled. It's drinks all round and down to business.

One doesn't adopt accepted journalistic techniques with Moon. Shock tactics give the best results. "So when did you start going mad?" I suddenly blurted, attempting to throw him off guard. Alas his reflexes have been primed for the unexpected. "Good grief! I know what you mean. But I suppose it was when I realised the alternative. People often say to me: 'Keith, you're crazy'. Well, maybe I am, but I live my life and I live out all my fantasies, thereby getting them all out of my system. Fortunately I'm in a position where financially I'm able to do it.

"When you've got no money, and you do the kind of things I get up to, people laugh and say that you're eccentric... which is a polite way of saying you're fucking mad. I don't care. If I feel like doing something... I go right ahead and do it."

Caution, Children At Play! Marvel-lous Moon in his den

"YOU MEAN KEITH'S ACTUALLY LOOSE SOMEWHERE IN THE GROUNDS? THEN FOR GOD'S SAKE WE MUST BE CAREFUL!"
CHRIS WILLIAMS, PUBLICIST

THE DOOR OF THE Soho Bier Keller burst open with a resounding crash, as in marched Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler in full Nazi ceremonial attire. Singing at the top of their voices, they goose-stepped among the tables filled with gawping drinkers prior to being ejected by an irate guv'nor. Hours later this deadly duo was espied being chased around Golders Green by an angry shop-keeper wielding a razor-sharp meat axe. Moon and Stanshall were up to their pranks again.

With such outrageous extremities in public there could, perhaps, be an acute danger of even the most well-meaning stunt backfiring with alarming consequence? Moon disagrees.

"That kind of thing couldn't backfire. It backfired in 1945 when they lost the war, and they were doing it for real. This is why I like the Monty Python brand of humour. It's part of today's culture; it's today's universal humour. Nothing's really sacred any more. Everything is there to be used. You can do virtually anything. Just as long as it's done correctly, and you add to it.

"OK, Hitler started out with some ideas... knew how to sell them... sold them and very nearly succeeded. But because they were the wrong ideas, they failed. That's what I mean when I say nothing is sacred... and anyway, he had a lousy publicist."

His explanation for Moon madness is simple.

"A lot of things I do are done to see how people will react to certain situations. For instance – to see how people would react to seeing a rhino stroll across the stage during a performance of *Twelfth Night*. I love the unexpected, and I love to make people laugh. To me, that's what life's all about. You can't really plan anything and I suppose that's one of the reasons why I don't often hurt myself. I never consider I might actually sustain an injury. If I did, then I'd probably get hurt.

"Now if I had some kind of morbid death-wish, I'd never have survived any of those times when I've crashed my cars. I suppose it's luck, and the fact I never think anything could happen to me. If you think it'll be dangerous – it'll be dangerous. You've admitted to it.

"I love to see people laugh, and I love it more if I can make them laugh," Moon admits. "I think this comes across in my drumming. I watch a lot of Marx Brothers movies, and they were doing the same sort of things. You've seen the way Chico plays piano with that certain flair... adding something to the music while taking liberties within his own capabilities? It's a question of taking someone else's music, but not sending it up in a derogative sense. Just injecting your own personality.

"Pete's (Townshend) music allows me to do just this. All Pete ever says is: 'Keith, there it is. Now do what you want with it.' He never dictates. All the band ever says to me when they're in the studio singing, is 'Get Out!' Then I act as barman, 'cause they all get terrible dry throats and I have to keep on pouring out the brandy all the time.

"Also, if I'm in the studio, looning about while they're trying to lay down a vocal track they can't sing if they're laughing at me

All aboard the hovercraft: Moon lets Roy Carr be captain

dressed up as a wasp. You know, there's nothing worse, when you're trying to be serious, than to have a human wasp flying all over the studio."

I know of a number of bands in which the singer or guitarist, or both, would violently resent their drummer trying to upstage them. Had Moon's antics onstage ever caused unpleasantness within The Who, I inquired?

"It's not a question of one person trying to upstage the other, 'cos we're all in it together. If one of us can see whatever it is the audience needs at that particular moment, to get them up and get them going, then that person does it. It doesn't matter who it is – just as long as they see it, grab it, and use it for the benefit of the band and the audience. If you can do that – then you've achieved what you're there for.

"Onstage we're part of the audience, and they're part of us. It's fairly difficult, being stuck behind a drumkit and all the connotations that go with it. But unless the audience is involved – then there's no show. We've failed to establish a rapport. Rapport is a word you hear used a lot these days. But it doesn't mean just standing up there saying, 'C'mon everybody, clap your hands' and the band claps their hands and then the audience. There's much more to it than that.

"It's a question of using your power. You're onstage and amplified. The audience isn't. If it's going to be a question of ego in a group, over the enjoyment of the audience, then personally I don't see any alternative. A band is doomed to failure from the very start. A band has to sort out its own ego problems, and if the lead guitarist gets pissed off because he feels the drummer's upstaging him, then he's thinking more about himself than the audience. It's the audience he should be thinking about. Not be concerned with his own personal ego trip.

"Unfortunately I still see this happening in a number of bands, And when I do it's usually a young band that doesn't really know what it's all about. In The Who we don't know what it's all about, but we've got a good idea what it's not all about. The exclusion of ego within The Who has made a vast improvement in our band. In the early days we weren't very disciplined… but that was before we understood each other. At times it used to go in every other direction than the one we wanted to go, but we didn't know how to get there.

"Now we can work together a hell of a lot easier, 'cos we all share the same beliefs in The Who, and we've spent the last 10 years together getting to know what makes each and every one of us tick."

Moon admits to being a frustrated comedian and he places great store in human nature, even if – at times – his faith takes a severe battering.

"You know, if I ever stopped laughing inside, and quit believing in people, then I would get very hurt and totally disillusioned. You have to treat everything – even if at that time it seems like a right bummer – as a good experience. There are things that have happened to me that have made me wonder where I went wrong… things of a personal nature, like my relationship with the wife. They're the things that make you think most, because one is far more deeply involved. Like when I used to go looning off to Copenhagen a couple of years ago, and Kim left me for a time.

"You see, I love Kim very much and the group, and therefore I wouldn't do anything to hurt them in any way."

Moon reveals that the rest of The Who react to his continual bouts of chaos and mayhem in the same way that he reacts to theirs.

"We're all like a battery. We need each other, to bounce ideas off each other, and create both internal and external energies. The mere fact that we clash causes energy, and when we harness it within the context of the group, it becomes productive."

TO THE RIGHT-HAND side of the high metal gates adorned with musical motifs that makes the entrance to Tara House, there is a large board that proclaims: "CAUTION, CHILDREN AT PLAY".

Behind the tall brick wall surrounding the grounds we, the "children", are now in fact playing with our toys. With a little help from Moon I glide across the lawn via hovercraft: Robert Ellis trades in his instamatic for an E-type with which he tears up the driveway, and Chris Williams plays with bottles of coloured liquid.

When the time comes for all good children to call it a day, I turn to Moon and ask how would he have attempted to live out his fantasies had he not been successful.

He replies, matter-of-fact, "I never considered not being successful." ◉

WHO KNEW

On a 2004 edition of BBC's *Top Gear*, Roger Daltrey revealed that Moon's lilac Rolls-Royce – famously used in the "beating up the vicar" trick – had been hand-painted with house paint. The car was owned by Middlebrook Garages in Nottinghamshire, but has since been sold to an unknown trader.

BILL ORCHARD/REX FEATURES, ROBERT ELLIS/REPFOTO

'WE TALK ALL THE TIME ABOUT POLITICS, RELIGION, SPIRITUAL DESPERATION, ABSTRACT CONCEPTS...'

Tommy becomes a stage show, but Pete Townshend has already moved on to his next rock opera. Now, he finds himself speaking for and hanging out with students. But, contrarily, he can't help liking Slade and writing about teenage working-class life. "Suddenly," he tells **NICK LOGAN**, "I'm writing songs that sound as if they could've been written in 1965."

CHRIS MORPHET/GETTY IMAGES

NME
16/12/1972

A LONG WAYS BACK, when Meher Baba could have been an Indian carpet salesman for all we knew or cared – and when talk of religion in a music concept was limited to graffiti claims on Eric Clapton's proximity to God – there was a gangling, awkward kid who wrote trial laments for awkward kids of his own age.

It is now nearly 10 years since the formation of The Who in Shepherd's Bush. And if the revolution exists for Pete Townshend at all now, it's in a spiritual and cerebral form rather than a physical social change.

What was interesting about The Who in their early development was that they were the first group to associate and involve themselves with the rock grassroots (ie the mod movement of the mid-'60s) – where other acts rang up sales and adulation by precisely the opposite procedure, putting themselves on a level just out of reach of their audiences.

Townshend's *Tommy* opera – saluted last week by its presentation at the Rainbow – was arguably the culmination of the Who writer's role as an intelligent voice for working-class youth. Today, Townshend writes for the middle class, the students. The pill-head mod, in his own words, has turned Accursed Intellectual.

And another aggregation of grassroots-elected spokesmen – stomping on six-inch-high platform heels and trading on a vigorous earthiness – have moved in to turn out the kind of acned, sweaty gut-rock that keeps suburban secondary school existence bearable in the years before reality banishes fantasy and hopes are crushed on the factory floor (Townshend has interesting views on Slade).

Anyway, here we are in Townshend's hired suite at Brown's Hotel, London, where we're supposed to be talking about his *Who Came First* solo album. However, like most interviews with Townshend, the preliminaries ramble at such length and into such fascinating territory that they are devouring more of our time than the subject that's intended to be uppermost in our minds.

We pick up on the action after the preliminaries to the preliminaries have been dispatched. Townshend is pondering whether he feels able to speak for today's rock generation in the way that he did for the mods on the classic Who singles.

"I don't think it is possible for me to do that any more," he replies – after thought. "There were two ways I used to achieve it, but both were concerned with actually being involved..." He extends and lays emphasis on the final word. "...with actually being down at Brighton when there were mod riots... with actually being on the streets with the kids.

"All right, so, like any other rock star you care to name, I was middle-class. But I was nearer the action than a lot of people I've seen spouting off in the music press. You hear skinheads saying [*with assumed bravado*], 'There we all were, marching down the King's Road – it was the most incredible sight you've ever seen', but I recall the same feeling. I was 21 at the time and just out of art college. I'd had my adolescence but was having another one at the time.

"What was so great was the unanimity of it, the way I could blend in and be one of them. There was no class thing. I remember a public schoolboy who used to hang about and follow The Who – yet he was a mod, too. The point was that I was involved in it and I could write songs that were straight from the heart, involvement songs like 'Can't Explain', 'My Generation', 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere'. But I think that's where they stopped.

"The thing is, I really was writing them as a pilled-up mod. I really thought that's what I was. In my Belgravia flat. I wrote all those songs in Belgravia, y'know, until in the end I got thrown out. But that was only one side of my songwriting. The other side is stuff like 'Odorono', about the little girl who fails an audition, or 'Tattoo' about how little boys try to prove they're a man, or 'Substitute' – which is really about the frustrations of a pop star rather than of a kid in the street."

Those were the "lament" songs of early Pete Townshend. I suggested the word "cameos".

"Yeah, right, but I feel a bit reluctant to use that word now because it makes a lot of my songs seem like trifles. But really, yes, they were cameos; small cameos of big things. Y'see, I never really wanted to write big rock songs like 'My Generation'. 'Generation' was so BIG, it was almost Wagnerian in its aims."

Was it conceived as the anthem it later came to represent?

"I wrote it as a talking blues – da, dum, da, da, dum... – y'know, something like 'Talking New York Blues'. Instead of New York this would be 'Talking 'Bout My Generation'. Dylan affected me a lot. In fact, 'Generation' started off as my folk song single. Then it went through six or seven changes.

"I mean, the demo on it started off as a sort of Jimmy Reed folk-blues thing. We tried it a couple of times with the group, and it got more like a Who number, and then Kit Lambert came up and rapped with me about how I should alter this and that – and then I came up with the stutter."


Townshend with daughter Emma outside the Rainbow, 1972

"WE AUTOMATICALLY EXCLUDE SOME PEOPLE, LIKE THE RICH AND THE OLD... BECAUSE ROCK'N'ROLL ONLY WORKS FOR STUFFED-UP KIDS"

SINCE WE LAST talked on the subject of Townshend's songwriting, The Who have come up with two singles, "Won't Get Fooled Again" and "Let's See Action", both of which have come close to the quality of the "My Generation" and "I'm A Boy" period. Through mouthfuls of sandwich, Townshend nodded agreement. "Actually, the good thing I'm going through at the moment is a kind of renaissance in songwriting, which is a strange process. It's not a conscious move; it has nothing to do with the way the scene is, or rock revivals, or anything like that. Suddenly I find myself writing songs that sound as if they could have been written in 1965."

One of Townshend's current projects, among the tapes and machines in the studio at his Thameside home, is a new Who rock opera.

"It's about teenage life," explains the man. "And, funnily enough, all those real classics – 'Generation', 'Substitute' and 'I'm A Boy' – all those songs were good because I'm *good* at writing about teenage life. I wasn't a teenager when I wrote those songs but I was acting out being a teenager – in the rock tradition. Just the same as someone like Marc Bolan is now. Y'know, acting out being younger than he is...?"

Chuck Berry, I suggest, was no teenager when he wrote the all-time teenage classics.

"Right," smiles Townshend. "Actually Chuck Berry still writes like a kid, doesn't he? Y'see, I'm finding myself writing about being kicked out of home, parents not understanding, first drug use... first screw... things like that. And the melodies and lyrics are coming out reeking of, not 'My Generation', but of 'I'm A Boy', 'Odorono' and 'Tattoo' and songs of that era.

"I shouldn't call this an opera 'cos it's even less of an opera than *Tommy* was; but what I'm trying to do is get the writing to reflect the changes in The Who's character. So it starts with a sort of 'Can't Explain' '65 feel and progresses like a reflection of The Who's history. We're just coming up to our first decade, y'know. So that at the end of the action there is an incredible amount of synthesiser.

Is there a plot?

"Yeah, there's a story which is really just a caricature of The Who. It's a four-barrelled thing with one hero in the middle who, instead of suffering from schizophrenia,

The *Tommy* concert at the London Rainbow, December 9, 1972

suffers from quadrophenia. So there are four individual characters who mould into one at the end – a history of The Who.

"Like, one of the characters is called 'Joker James', which is an old song. It's about this kid who loses all his girlfriends because he plays tricks on them. He's going out with one little girl and, just at the tense romantic moment when they sit down on the couch, a whoopee cushion goes off and it's all over. There's a line that goes *'Mary Anne's so glum since Joker James gave Mary Anne some onion-flavoured gum'*.

"I fell about when I heard the demo because it's like a '65 song. Y'see I split The Who up into four archetypal characters. And it's a bit of natural typecasting that Moon is Joker James. Moon's the irresponsible daredevil part and he's a terrible practical joke player in real life. You'll open your hotel room and a bucket of water will fall on your head. He was saying, the other day, how about instead of tarring and feathering people – which is so obnoxious to look at – why not tar and glitter them?"

Townshend drops into a BBC announcer's tone. "Marc Bolan this week made another disgraceful record. He was found hanging from a lamp-post tarred and glittered, his hair shaven off and a propeller on a stick stuck to his head."

That seemed a good point to sound out Townshend's opinion on his contemporaries today and, more pointedly, whether he felt a group like Slade, which came out of a similar background, had taken over his role as spokesman for the current rock generation.

"I think that's true," he replied without hesitation. "Let's face it, apart from anything else they're a bloody good group. Yet Slade had been knocking around for quite some time before they broke. The Who were instant, we just suddenly happened. They're an example of a band being adopted by the kids and then the things they say and play being taken up by their audiences.

"In our case, the reverse happened. We adopted a section of society. We said, 'This is the group of the people we want to play for', automatically excluding certain people – the rich, the old, obviously – because rock'n'roll really only works for frustrated, stuffed-up kids."

Didn't it also exclude students at the time?

"Oh yeah, absolutely. They were too old anyway, and too bloody boring. But I don't like talking about other artists too much."

I pointed out that I'd brought them up because there seemed to be parallels between Slade's development and The Who's.

"Definitely, that's one of the reasons I like them..."

And I wondered if Townshend saw the early Who reflected in Slade.

"Well, they're a group in the Who tradition, if you like. We set up transitions, which groups like the Faces followed, and although we were contemporaries of the Stones and the Stones in turn of The Beatles, there were three distinct kinds of groups.

"There were the Beatles-type, the Stones-type – which would include people like The Yardbirds – and then there were the Who-type groups. I would regard Bolan, say, as far more a Who-type event, musically, than a Stones-type. But then, he's throwing up such a smokescreen of glitter that it's hard to tell which traditions he really follows. Slade are not so devious. They're not so clever, much simpler, less complicated. They are four Rogers, if you like – there isn't an intellectual in Slade – which means that they're a straightforward kind of band.

"Yet despite the similarities, Slade are a bit different from The Who. We've still got the ability to get through to that section of the audience we've been discussing – but, if we want to do it at the pitch of a 'My Generation', then we have to pick the audience we want and go out and live it. That's why, today, it's much easier for me to write songs and speak for students than for working-class teenagers. Because, for Chrissake, I spend all my time with students. I am a student, all my friends are students or ex-students. We talk all the time about politics, religion, spiritual desperation, abstract concepts..."

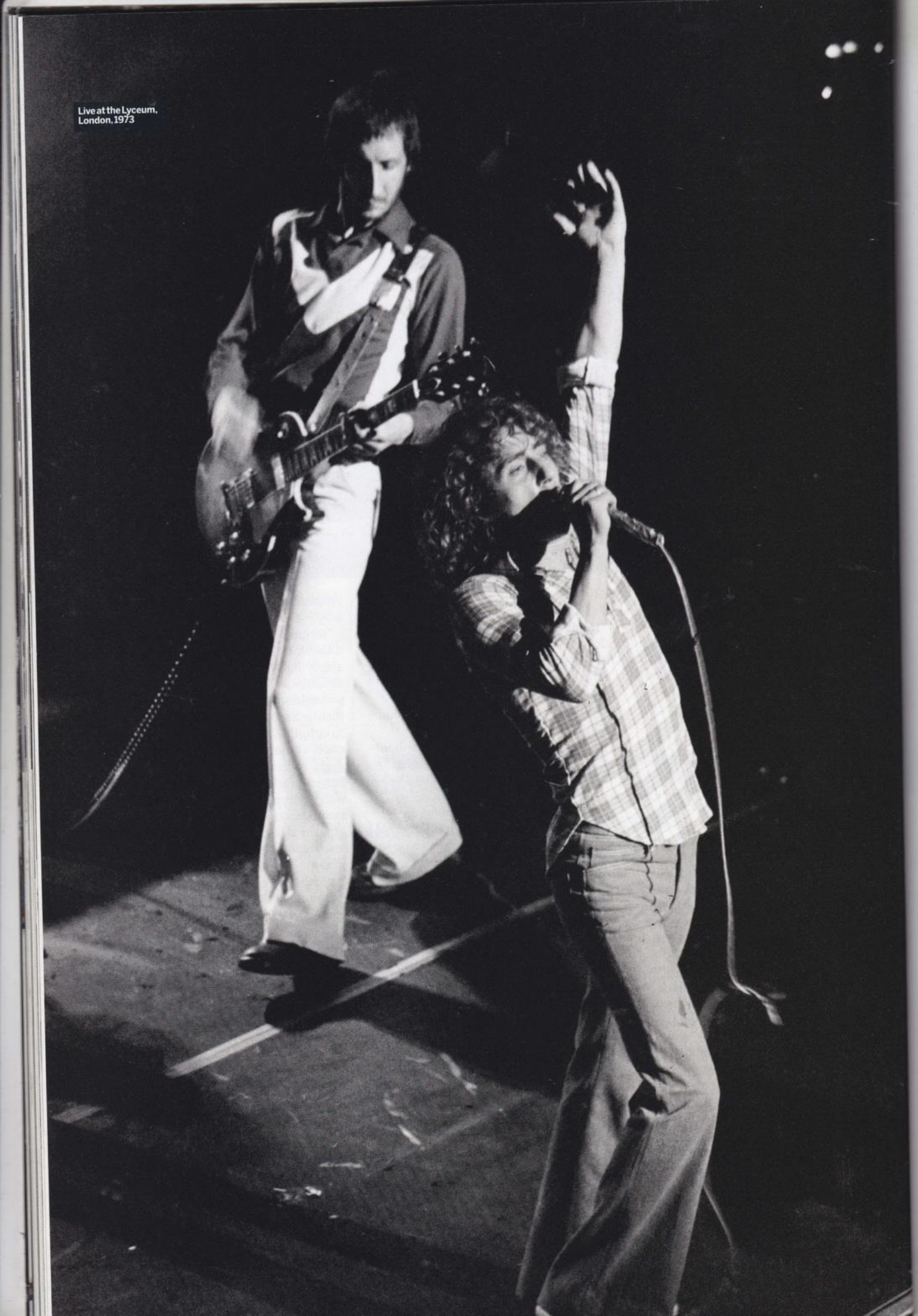
Taking Townshend's point about needing to live in the same environment, would he like to reach and speak to those people again? Just as Slade, arguably, do now. He takes a lengthy pause for thought, and carefully measures his reply. "I never ever spoke to them. I like to think I entertained and spoke *for* them at that time. And because The Who are so much entrenched in their history, they still speak for that section of people through those songs. The fact that I may not write songs like that any more doesn't make any difference, because we can still speak through those songs.

"Let's face it, a man of 80 can still write books about young love, despite the fact that it's a long time since he experienced it. That's why it is so important – that The Who stays together as a unit. Because it's a fact that we can speak through our history and at the same time progress in new areas. We're an extremely lucky band." ⊙

WHO KNEW

"Joker James" – which didn't make the final cut of *Quadrophenia* – was originally written, at the same time as "I'm A Boy" in 1966, and the lyrics were first published in the September 1968 issue of *Eye* magazine. Townshend has always claimed the song was used as a basis for the image of Jimmy The Mod.

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY IMAGES



Live at the Lyceum,
London, 1973

RELEASE >>DATE 19 | OCTOBER | 1973

Quadrophenia

Out of yet more chaos and a half-built studio, Townshend fashions another masterpiece. A mod requiem, *Heart Of Darkness* set in Shepherd's Bush and Brighton. *By Garry Mulholland*

YOUR FIRST COPY of *Quadrophenia* felt like a tablet of stone. It was thick and heavy, immediately letting you know that you'd bought much more than two pieces of vinyl. The black-and-white cover shot: a boy posing on a scooter, resplendent in parka customised with a crudely painted Who logo. The boy was facing away from the camera, while The Who's small faces were reflected in the scooter's mirrors. On the back, the same scooter, abandoned in a grey, dead sea.

Open the gatefold sleeve and your eyes were immediately drawn to the monochrome – everything is so monochrome – photo of terraced houses. It's the cover of a booklet containing pictures that illustrate the story of this oddly titled thing. Opposite the terraced houses, a great many words that turn out to be the album's storyline, just in case the photos and the music didn't punch the point home enough. The Who had made a concept album about this defunct but fascinating trend called mod, and it was beautiful and priceless, before you even put the record on.

And then you put the record on. And, being 10-years-old, you didn't have a clue what the fuck was going on.

To a certain extent, nobody really understood *Quadrophenia* until Franc Roddam's movie was released in 1979. Roddam gave the album's mix of kitchen-sink drama and enigmatic mysticism cohesion, with dramatic set-pieces punctuating a (relatively) simple coming-of-age saga. But even with a short story and a photo narrative to consult, the album, alone, felt elusive and mysterious, as if Townshend had set out to write about the futility of youth fashion and ended up with *Heart Of Darkness* set in Shepherd's Bush and Brighton.

As was usual with The Who, *Quadrophenia* had been born out of chaos. Roger Daltrey had begun to have severe doubts about the Lambert and Stamp management team. Money was missing, Daltrey was auditing his band's affairs and considering making it a legal matter. Townshend felt that Lambert, in particular, was crucial as a creative manager and worked closely with

CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **I Am The Sea** ★★★
2 **The Real Me** ★★★★
3 **Quadrophenia** ★★
4 **Cut My Hair** ★★★★
5 **The Punk & The Godfather** ★★★
6 **I'm One** ★★★
7 **The Dirty Jobs** ★★★★
8 **Helpless Dancer** ★★★
9 **Is It In My Head** ★★★
10 **I've Had Enough** ★★★★★
11 **5.15** ★★★★★
12 **Sea And Sand** ★★★★
13 **Drowned** ★★★★
14 **Bell Boy** ★★★
15 **Doctor Jimmy** ★★★★
16 **The Rock** ★★★
17 **Love Reign O'er Me** ★★★★

RELEASED: October 19, 1973
LABEL: Track/MCA
PRODUCED BY: The Who, Kit Lambert; Tracks 9 and 17 co-produced by Glyn Johns
RECORDED: Olympic Studios, London; Ronnie Lane's Mobile Studio
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead/bk vocals); Pete Townshend (lead/bk vocals, guitars, keyboards); John Entwistle (bass, horns, bk vocals); Keith Moon (drums, bk vocals)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 2; US 2

DEBI DOSS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

JACQUES BERNARD/REX FEATURES

Lambert on *Quadrophenia*'s pre-production. Drugs swirled around band and management, and the ill-feeling exploded when Townshend was hospitalised by a Daltrey right hook when rehearsing for shows in late October 1973.

Moreover, *Quadrophenia* was recorded in a studio that hadn't been built yet. The band's dissatisfaction with the sound of previous studios led to them building their own in a disused church in Battersea, south London. Townshend had demoed almost all of *Quadrophenia* in his home studio and The Who had recorded "Love Reign O'er Me" and "Is It In My Head?" with Glyn Johns at The Rolling Stones' mobile studio. It had been two years since the release of *Who's Next* and the time since had mostly been spent on solo musical and acting projects that fuelled rumours of a permanent split. The band needed to just get on with it.

The album, then, was made in among bare wires, exposed pipes and assorted debris, with builders working between songs and Ronnie Lane's mobile set-up parked outside as a control room. It was almost too poetic when, as the band recorded "Drowned", the heavens opened and flooded the studio. Nevertheless, the most complex music The Who had ever attempted found its way to tape over the summer of 1973.

The story told in text and photo in the inner sleeve is straightforward enough. A working-class kid called Jimmy is living the '60s mod dream... dressing up, popping pills, going to see The Who, fighting and fucking in west London. But the kid ain't alright. He's regularly seeing a psychiatrist over his split personality. He hates his boozy parents and has no intention of doing a shitty job in order to fund his increasingly empty weekend lifestyle. When his girl goes off with his mate, it's the last straw. He leaves home, smashes up his scooter under Hammersmith Flyover and, stocked up on hundreds of 'leapers', takes a train to Brighton, scene of his greatest triumph when he and a horde of fellow mods took over the seaside town on a bank holiday in 1963.

When he sees mod leader The Ace Face kowtowing to tourists as the bell-boy at a hotel he had previously trashed, Jimmy's last illusions about the usefulness of mod are destroyed. High on pills and gin, he nicks a boat and sails out to a rock off the coast. Intoxicated by the 'beautiful music' of the boat's engine, he has some sort of epiphany. The boat drifts off, the rain soaks him to the skin, but... he sits alone on the rock and realises that he's four separate and entirely different people. A 'quadrophenic', if you will. What Jimmy does with this discovery, we never know.

Quadrophenia's origins as a planned autobiography of the early Who become a psychodrama played out in Jimmy's mind. The four separate personalities are ascribed to the four Who members, both in text and in musical themes that occur throughout the album. Daltrey is 'the tough guy' ("Helpless Dancer"); Entwistle 'the hopeless romantic' ("Is It Me?");

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"*Quadrophenia* is by no means unflawed, but a triumph it is. I'm glad Pete decided to write it and the band decided to do it, and I don't grudge a single day of the waiting time." CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY, *NME*, OCTOBER 27, 1973

"More than an LP – a battle cry, and a hammer of heartbeats. A masterpiece – The Who at their greatest yet, sap flowing from the roots of their creation." CHRIS WELCH, *MM*, OCTOBER 20, 1973

THE WHO SINGLES | OCTOBER 1973 | 5.15/WATER | UK#20, US DID NOT CHART | NOVEMBER 1973 | LOVE REIGN O'ER ME/WATER US#76, UK NOT ISSUED | JANUARY 1974 | THE REAL ME/I'M ONE |

Moon 'the bloody lunatic' ("Bell Boy") and Townshend 'the beggar, the hypocrite' ("Love Reign O'er Me"). The typical teenage identity crisis becomes full-blown mental illness. The overall implication, in music and lyrics that constantly evoke water and the sea, is that Jimmy needs to be cleansed, in some way, before he can discover his true self and resolve the four warring personalities within. But, for all we know, he starves, drowns or freezes to death on the rock.

In order to match the depth and scope of the concept, The Who employ a sound so huge, detailed and elegiac that it's always a shock to read the credits again and realise that there's no orchestra on *Quadrophenia*. Townshend's synthesiser and Entwistle's multi-tracked horns provide the epic sweep here, and the only guest musician is Joe Cocker/Eric Clapton sideman Chris Stainton, who plays piano on "Dirty Jobs", "5.15" and "Drowned".

But this is why so many Who fans were initially bemused by *Quadrophenia*. The first-half of the album is dominated by distinctly non-rock elements. Synths, horns, sound effects, songs that drift entirely away from verse-chorus formalities. Opener "The Sea" introduces the four band members' themes and quickly gives way to the brassy Who-rock of "The Real Me", but by the time you've taken in that patented Townshend riff and just how brilliant Moon's mutant-funk playing is, you're into the title track; a six-minute instrumental overture full of weeping soft-rock guitar and synthetic fanfares, changing melodies and drifting song constructions. Two years since *Who's Next* and the greatest hard rock band in the world had gone prog. It took a bit of getting used to.

And there was plenty here that wasn't in the short story. "Cut My Hair" establishes both the detail of mod clothing and Jimmy's home life, but also introduces a disillusionment with the generational conflict caused by youth fashion. Townshend's weary, vulnerable voice sets the album's tone of resignation, punctuated by occasional flashes of anger and defiance. But "The Punk And The Godfather" is a self-lacerating study of the relationship between rock gods and fan, where Daltrey's belligerent vocal is interrupted by Townshend, bemoaning a career of *"pounding stages like a clown"*. Its criticism of the condescending, elitist rock star was an eerie prophecy of the very complaints against rock dinosaurs that would fuel punk itself, two years later. The Sex Pistols covered "Substitute" and pointedly left The Who out of their list of enemies of the people. *Quadrophenia* appeared to make sense to some of the right people.

But the album really kicks into gear at the end of the old vinyl Side Two. A six-minute mini-opera in and of itself, "I've Had Enough" stalks the listener with those familiar, suspenseful Townshend minor chords as he and Daltrey throw off the chains of London life. The music previews the album's closing theme, veers between violent rock'n'roll, country hoedown and quasi-classical elegy, and, along with Jimmy's GS scooter, crushes everything that's happened up to this point. Daltrey's voice is full of gravel and loathing and class war, yet is as pure as a choirboy's when asked to let love reign over him. When the song crashes into the train to Brighton, Daltrey's naked howl is terrifying.

THE WHO EMPLOY A SOUND SO HUGE, DETAILED AND ELEGIAC IT'S A SHOCK TO REALISE THERE'S NO ORCHESTRA HERE

"5.15" then kicks off *Quadrophenia*'s very own imperial phase. It's as if Jimmy's speed-fuelled Brighton nightmare just excites Townshend more, and everything becomes urgent and thrilling. Franc Roddam couldn't have helped being inspired to make one of rock cinema's most powerful scenes – Phil Daniels in eyeliner freaking out city gents in a claustrophobic train carriage – by the hit single, a masterpiece of surging rhythm, swaggering horns, heartbreak harmonies and *"inside, outside"* refrain.

From there, the rock'n'roll classics come hard and fast. "Sea And Sand", "Drowned", "Bell Boy" and "Doctor Jimmy" give Jimmy's odyssey energy and purpose, while forcing the listener to hurtle down into whatever dark vortex is being conjured by the sleaze and storm of Brighton and the effect the drugs and booze are having on Jimmy's delicate mind. There is brutal language (*"Who is she? I'll rape it"*, Daltrey rages on the Jekyll & Hyde anthem "Doctor Jimmy") and walls of pure rock sound that make the idea of completely losing it almost seductive. Almost, but not quite.

By the time Jimmy has set out on the final, choppy leg of his voyage – and "The Rock" is surely the best ever rock instrumental about sailing to a rock in a small boat – we're in need of a big redemptive gesture. And we get it, after a fashion. "Love Reign O'er Me" is an enormous melody with an enormous Daltrey vocal. It does wash away the dirt of much that has gone before. But its belief in the power of love is more a yearning for relief than a promise that everything will be all right. Townshend was still deeply immersed in the Sufi-mystic religious teachings of Meher Baba at this point, and the end of Jimmy's story can easily be read as a literal baptism. A born-again experience whereby the young mod becomes Townshend himself, forever searching for some Universal Truth, embracing love as a spiritual ideal rather than a need for the comfort and acceptance of people.

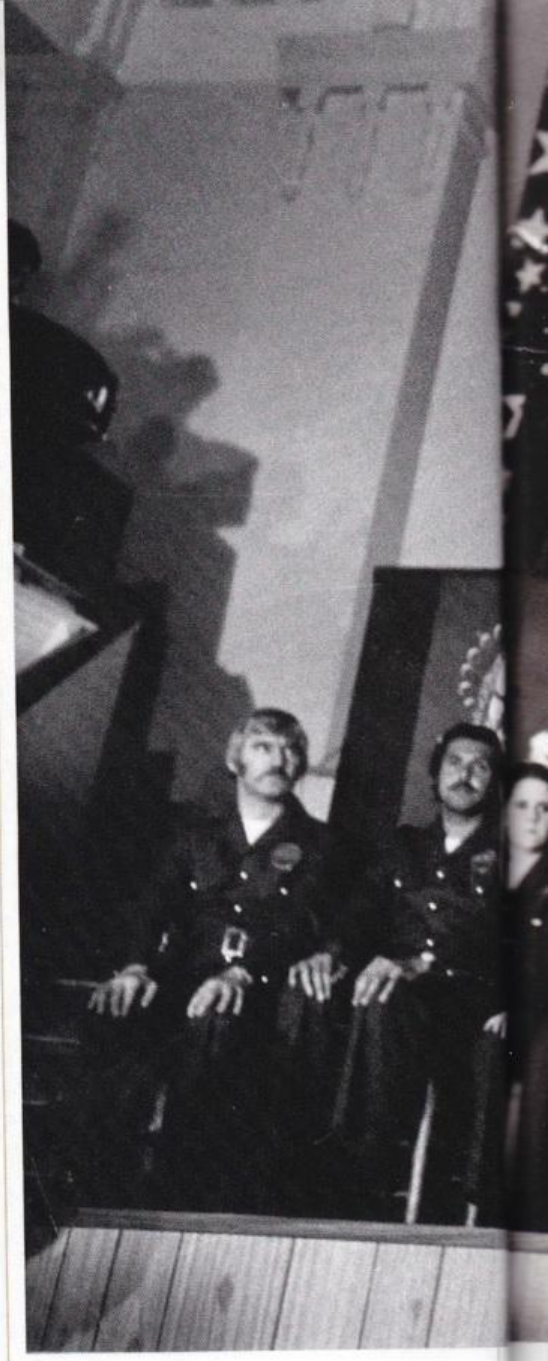
The song, and the album, though, ends with something familiar. Keith Moon smashing a roomful of percussion instruments, destroying in order to create. ⊙

'M ONE | US #92, UK NOT ISSUED | NOVEMBER 1974 | POSTCARD/PUT THE MONEY DOWN (REISSUE) | UK NOT ISSUED, US DID NOT CHART

RELEASE >>DATE 26 | MARCH | 1975

Tommy
THE MOVIE

The deaf, dumb'n'blind kid hits the big screen. Ken Russell ramps up the horrific spectacle. Daltrey becomes Tommy. Townshend fiddles about with the soundtrack and drinks, heavily. *By John Robinson*



THE STORY MAY have been personal to Pete Townshend but, by the time of the release of *Tommy: The Movie* in 1975, he was sharing guardianship of his creation with another member of The Who. How had it happened? It might be helpful to think about the chain of events in terms of a classic horror story: Pete Townshend may have been the Dr Frankenstein behind *Tommy*. But it was Roger Daltrey who gave the monster shape.

There's no question of who wrote it, of course, and from whose experiences of abandonment and abuse the story draws – these are all Townshend's. Roger Daltrey, however, has come to have a claim to ownership of the project, too. By the time the band was performing *Tommy* live, Daltrey had begun to feel estranged from the rest of The Who, and empathised with the utterly isolated subject of the story. As early as the *Woodstock* movie, you can see him warming to the role as he sings the material. As far as Daltrey was concerned, he *was* Tommy.

Townshend, we might say characteristically, wasn't so sure. But in 1972, he was finally convinced. The Lou Reizner-produced orchestral version is among the less-celebrated versions of *Tommy* (it's the big one in the box), yet it was at a performance to promote this record, where Daltrey had a guest spot as a vocalist, that Townshend first had a chance to observe the singer from the audience. "Tommy gave Roger a part to play," he told *Uncut* in 2008, "and he took it to a very high level."

The process that ended with Daltrey playing this part in *Tommy*, the motion picture, actually had its roots in the planning stages of the original Who album. While Townshend had been encouraged by his mentor/manager Kit Lambert to think bigger and bolder for the next Who album, what he came up with required some explanation for other members of The Who, who simply didn't know what he was going on about. To assist, Lambert put together a document of Tommy's life story. After the album was made, it was shelved.

Or so The Who thought. When, three years later, Townshend and The Who were scaling the conceptual mountain of 'Lifehouse', Lambert sought funding for the film element of the project. In fact, Lambert pitched a *Tommy* movie, with his working document presented to potential backers as a story outline.

In Ken Russell, the project found a sympathetic director. For one thing, music had been a strong element in his work already – he'd made a string of films on the lives of classical composers (and would go on to direct Roger Daltrey in *Lizstomania*, also released in 1975.) For another, he had written a screenplay of his own about religious cults, only to have it turned down, and now saw how he might combine the two projects in a screenplay for *Tommy*.

Obsessively, meanwhile, Townshend worked on the soundtrack. For Russell's screenplay to work, additional material was needed to elucidate the story, a task Townshend took to with gusto. Pissed he may often have been (in the DVD extras for the 2004 edition of the film, he recounts a competition with a lighting engineer to drink a bucketful of Guinness), but musically, after the complexities of *Quadrophenia*, Townshend felt himself to be at a creative peak.

At his home, he worked incessantly composing. Then he began the mammoth enterprise of recording the soundtrack – the definitive music to which the film would be synched. Jack Nicholson (time on set for filming and recording: one day) could sing. Oliver Reed (activity on set: boozing; comparing sexual paraphernalia with Keith Moon) manifestly could not. The movie would finally be premiered in "Quintaphonic" (a

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"All in all, assuming that you like *Tommy* and would want to see a film version, it's worked out as well as could possibly be expected. Apart from Clapton and Paul Nicholas, all the characters have been brought to life extremely effectively, and Ken Russell's built-in overkill switch finds plenty of call for its services... As for the album, I find it pretty superfluous..."

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY, *NME*, MARCH 29, 1975

precursor of today's 5.1). But if it sounded overpowering, that was nothing compared to what it looked like. Wheelchair-users touching the hem of a plaster Marilyn Monroe. Ann-Margret covered in baked beans. Eric Clapton's head, swollen in his years of seclusion, to the size and perfect spherical dimensions of a football... *Tommy* has an arsenal of memorable images for you, each more disturbing than the last. "It was light, colourful and silly," Townshend told *Uncut* in 2008, "but also deeply nightmarish and real."

Tommy was certainly colourful. Set designer Paul Dufficey devised continuities from wallpapers to interior furnishings that give *Tommy* its exaggerated sense of period. But silly? It's true, there's a certain pleasure to be had with the arrival of Keith Moon, for sure. But when the most innocent fun a movie can offer is a rock drummer hamming as a flat-capped paedophile, you know you're not watching *Dude, Where's My Car?*.

Instead, *Tommy*'s business is nightmare. Among the forces acting on the original album was Townshend's LSD use, and Russell's visual treatment of the story has some of that hallucinogenic quality: the utterly everyday suddenly re-ordered into a vibrant and rather intimidating new arrangement.

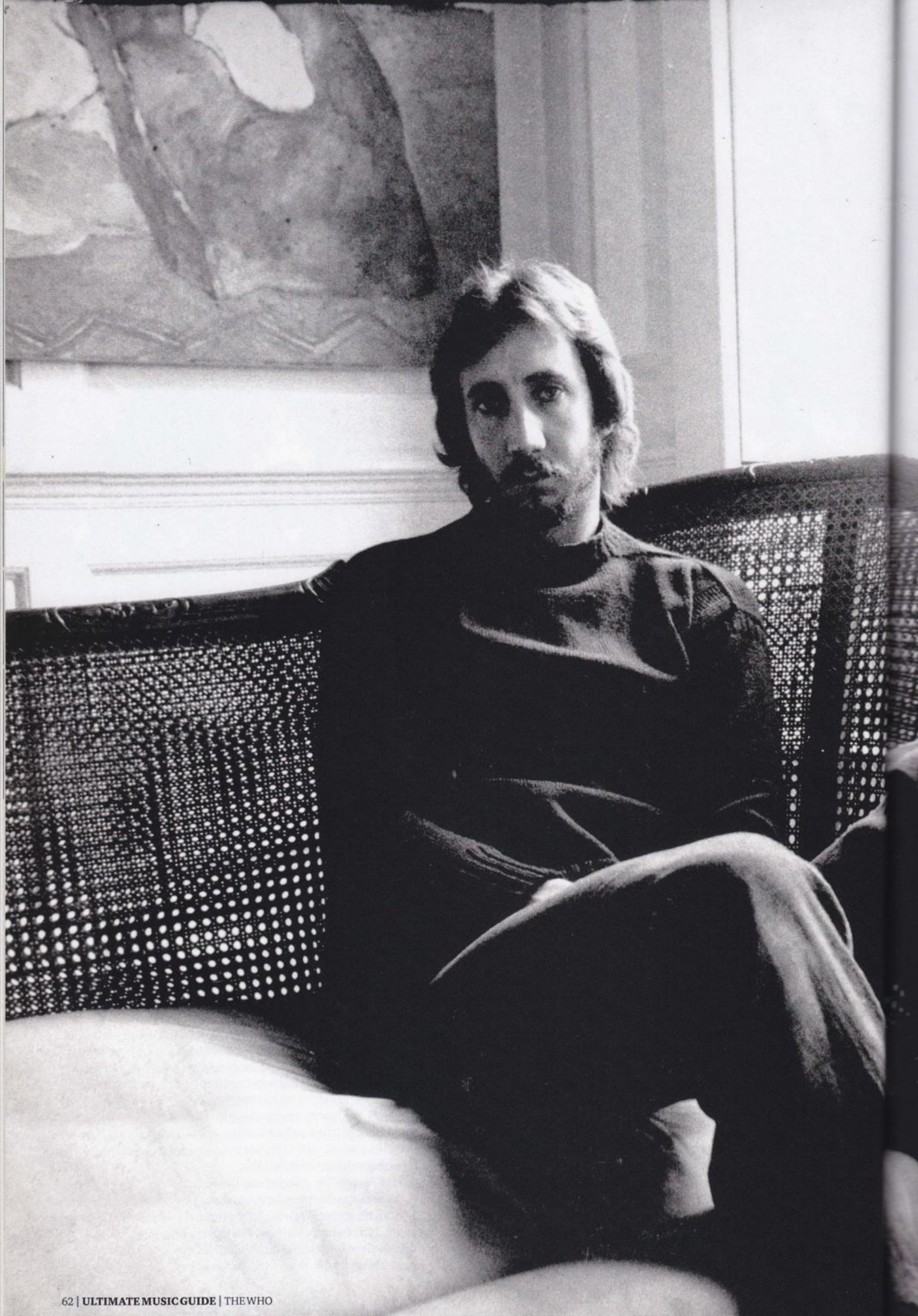
It's also a ride you can't get off. Say what you like about it, but at least *The Sound Of Music* had some bits with talking. Here, there's no respite from the music, the procession of horrible images, and strangely, the sight of Roger Daltrey's teeth. *Tommy* is visually stunning, but almost totally without beauty. When Tommy finally gets free, it's a joyous moment, but it's hard to pinpoint why. Because Tommy can see and we're out with him charging about in the Lake District? Or because the movie's nearly over?

Faint praise is generally *Tommy*'s lot, which seems unusual – this is not, after all, that movie you *quite like*. As harrowing an experience as it is, it did prove that *Tommy* could be turned into almost anything – including, rock's most unlikely payday. For Townshend it's the gift that keeps on giving. "If it's such a fucking stupid story," he said in 2004, "Why has it grossed so many millions of dollars?"

At the end of *Tommy*, Townshend may have been a richer and drunker man, but he wasn't necessarily a happier one. Wearied for the time being of big concepts, he took his chequebook with him, and – metaphorically speaking at least – crawled away to die. ⊙

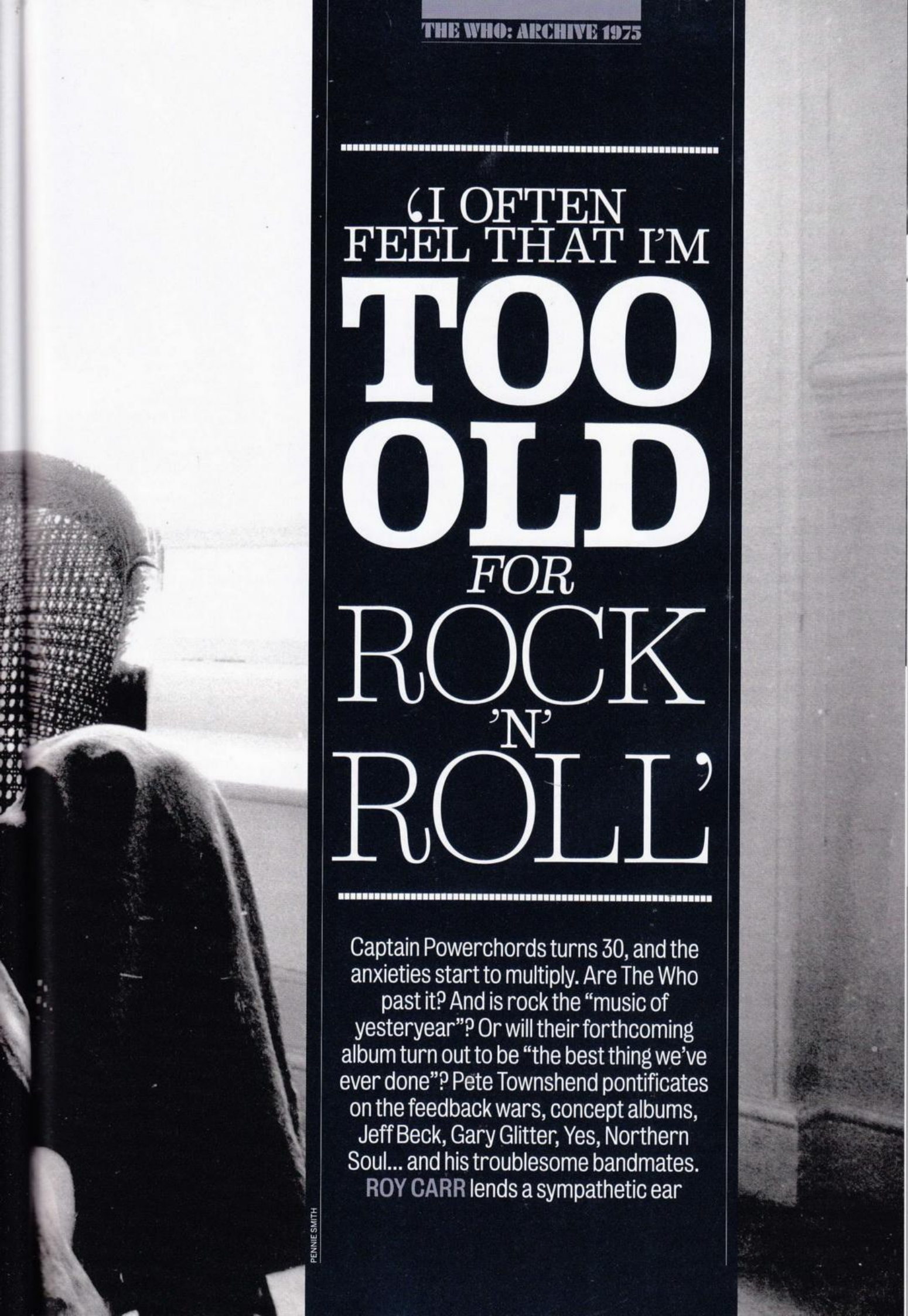
CREDITS

RELEASED: March 26, 1975 (UK); March 19, 1975 (US)
DISTRIBUTOR: Columbia Pictures
DIRECTED BY: Ken Russell
PRODUCED BY: Ken Russell, Robert Stigwood
STARRING: Ann-Margret; Oliver Reed; Roger Daltrey; Tina Turner; Elton John; Eric Clapton; Keith Moon; Paul Nicholas; Jack Nicholson; Robert Powell



'I OFTEN FEEL THAT I'M TOO OLD FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL'

Captain Powerchords turns 30, and the anxieties start to multiply. Are The Who past it? And is rock the "music of yesteryear"? Or will their forthcoming album turn out to be "the best thing we've ever done"? Pete Townshend pontificates on the feedback wars, concept albums, Jeff Beck, Gary Glitter, Yes, Northern Soul... and his troublesome bandmates. **ROY CARR** lends a sympathetic ear



PENNIE SMITH

NME
24/05/1975

PETE TOWNSHEND didn't die before he got old. Yet death isn't his problem, it's the passing of the years and his current position in what he feels is a younger man's occupation.

"If you're in a group," he begins, "you can behave like a kid and not only get away with it, but be encouraged."

The name Keith Moon somehow springs to mind.

"If you're a rock musician," Townshend continues, "you don't have to put on any airs and pretend to be 'normal' or even be asked to behave like you're a mature and responsible person. These are just the trappings that society puts on most people – with the result that most kids are burdened down with responsibilities far too early in their life.

"You know the deal: as soon as you leave school you've got to find a secure job and hang onto it. I wrote 'My Generation' when I was 22 or 23, yet that song breathes of a 17-year-old adolescence."

So what are you trying to tell us?

"Personally, I feel that the funniest thing – and also the saddest thing – about the current state of rock'n'roll is that it's the pretenders that are suffering the most. Those people who, for a number of years, have been pretending to be rock stars and have adopted false poses. It's the difference between someone who's made rock an integral part of their lifestyle and therefore doesn't feel like they're growing old."

"You want to know something? I really hate feeling too old to be doing what I'm doing. I recently went to do a BBC TV interview and when I arrived at the studios there were all these young kids waiting outside for The Bay City Rollers. As I passed them by, one of the kids recognised me and said, 'Ooo look, it's Pete Townshend' and a couple of them chirped "Ello Pete'. And that was it. Yet the first time The Who appeared at those same studios on *Top Of The Pops*, a gang of little girls smashed in the plate glass front door on the building.

"Anyway, as I entered the building, the doorman turned to me and smirked. "Ere, what's it feel like to walk past 'em now and have nothin' happen, eh?' I told him that, to be quite honest, it brings a tear to my eye. Look, I don't want them to mob me, because The Who have never been a Rollers-type band, what I'm scared of is hypocrisy."

Hypocrisy? In what way?

"Well, nowadays it's considered very passé to admit that you've got a burning ambition to stand onstage and be screamed at by 15-year-old girls. But when we started out that was something to be very proud of. If it didn't happen, there was something wrong with you. Though I haven't all that much experience as to what is happening contemporarily in music, I do feel that the 'world-owes-me-a-living' attitude still prevails, not only in rock, but in every walk of life. So now everyone's gotta look like they mean business and every bloody singer on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* looks a-n-g-r-y." He breaks off the conversation to pull relevant grimaces. "When I see this I go into hysterical fits of laughter.

"Sure, I know that I look angry when I play, but usually there's no reason for it. I suppose it's an adopted aggressive thing, which is in turn a subconscious layover from those days when I *was* angry. I don't quite know what I was angry at, but I was angry, frustrated, bitter, cynical – and it came through in the music I wrote."

C'mon Pete, you're either evading the moment of truth or approaching it in a very roundabout manner. What's brought on this manic obsession about being too pooped to pop, too old to stroll?

"It's just that when I'm standing up there onstage playing rock'n'roll, I often feel that I'm too old for it."

No kidding.

"When Roger speaks out about 'we'll all be rockin' in our wheelchairs' he might be, but you won't catch me rockin' in no wheelchair. I don't think it's possible. I might be making music in a wheelchair – maybe even with The Who, but I feel that The Who have got to realise that the things we're gonna be writing and singing about are rapidly changing.

"There's one very important thing that's got to be settled." He pauses again. "The group as a whole have got to realise that The Who are not the same group as they used to be. They never ever will be and as such... it's very easy to knock somebody by saying someone used to be a great runner and can still run but he's Not What He Used To Be." Townshend pauses yet again. "Everybody has a hump and you have to admit you've got to go over that hump."

Yes we have... no we haven't – Townshend won't commit himself either way as to whether The Who are over the hill, but he intimates in no uncertain manner that the group are beset with acute problems.

"You've got to remember that there was a time when suddenly Chuck Berry couldn't write any more. He just went out and performed his greatest hits and I've always wondered what that was all down to? Jagger told me at his birthday party that he was having difficulty in writing new material for the Stones, which is unfortunate because nowadays so much importance is placed upon writing songs. To a degree, you could call it frontman paranoia – and even Roger gets it from time to time. Let's face it, Jagger carries a tremendous amount of responsibility apart from being the Stones' frontman.

"Forget about that tired old myth that rock'n'roll is just making records, pullin' birds, getting' pissed and having a good time. That's not what it's all about. And I don't think Roger really believes it either. I think that's what he'd really like to believe rock'n'roll was all about. Steve Marriott has chosen to live it like that and, as far as I can see, he's having a good time. Fair enough – but in my opinion Marriott's music falls short of his potential, which is a bloody shame because everybody knows what he's really capable of... there's all those old incredible Small Faces records piled up. For me, *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* is one of the classic albums of the '60s and, if it's the difference between that music and having a good time, I prefer that Steve Marriott suffer because *I want the music.*

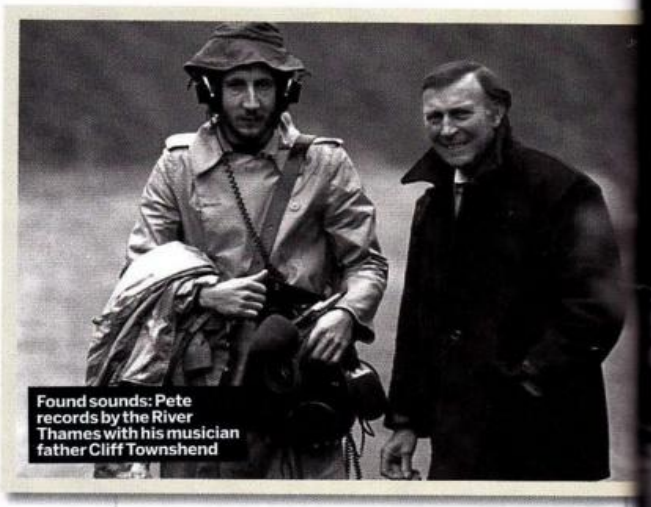
"Believe me, I don't want to sound too cruel and vitriolic, but I do think that you have to face up to the undeniable fact that there's no point in your life when you can stop working. You can't suddenly turn round and say, 'We're on the crest of a wave so now it's time to sit back and boogie.' Deep down inside, everyone wants to do this, but it's tantamount to retiring altogether. And I can't do it.

"It's not necessarily to do with standards," Townshend continues, before I have time to fire another question. "The Who's *Odds & Sods* collection would've been released even if it hadn't been all that interesting, but it's been put down in the past for being sub-standard."

Apparently the reason for its release was to make null and void the increasing amount of Who bootlegs currently being circulated, and once a second volume has been prepared and issued, there will be no need to backtrack.

"If," says Townshend, "The Who were gonna wave their banner for standards, *Odds & Sods* would still have remained unreleased. Standards have got nothing to do with it. I feel that it's the pressure at the front of your mind that... not necessarily your fans... but then, maybe your fans really are the most important people... are actually sitting twiddling their thumbs waiting for your next album.

"Every time they wait, they become more and more impatient. What Jagger said in that



Found sounds: Pete records by the River Thames with his musician father Cliff Townshend

CHRIS MORPHET/GETTY IMAGES

"IF YOU'RE A ROCK MUSICIAN YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE 'NORMAL' OR EVEN BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY"

Mine's a supergroup! Drinking buddies Eric Clapton, Pete Townshend and Elton John, mid '70s

interview with *NME* is that between the albums they are eagerly waiting for, he'd like to chuck out an R'n'B set to keep 'em happy. Fair enough, if he thinks it'll make any difference – but of course it won't. It's just like making a 'live' album. The fans will say, 'Thank you very much, but what we're really waiting for is the next studio album, so get on with it.'"

PHEWHATASCORCHA! New subject: Townshend was once quoted as stating that the eventual outcome of any Who recording depended entirely upon whether or not he could keep Moon away from the brandy and himself from imbibing whatever it took him to get through a session.

"At the moment, what governs the speed of The Who is the diversification of individual interests. We would have been recording the new album much earlier were it not for the fact that Roger is making another film with Ken Russell. Roger chose to make the film and John wanted to tour with his own band, The Ox, so I've been working on tracks for my next solo album. Invariably what will happen is that once we all get into the studio, I'll think, 'Oh fuck it', and I'll play Roger, John and Keith the tracks I've been keeping for my own album and they'll pick the best. So as long as The Who exists, I'll never get the pick of my own material... and that's what I dream of.

"But if The Who ever broke up because the material was sub-standard, I'd kick myself."

But the way you're going on, Peter, old Meter, it sounds like The Who is on its last legs?

"However much of a bastard it is to get everyone together in a recording studio, things eventually turn out right. You see, though it has never been important in the past, we do have this problem that everyone has been engaged on their own project, so that the separate social existence that we lead has become even more acute.

"I mean, if I just couldn't live without Moonie and if I could go over to the States and spend a couple of months with him we'd probably be a lot closer. But as it happens, I haven't seen Keith since last August. I may have seen a lot more of John but as yet I haven't seen his new group or listened properly to his album because, apart from working on *Tommy*, I've been putting together new material. And the same thing applies to Roger: as soon as someone decides to do something outside of the area of The Who, the pressure suddenly ceases, because they're the people who put the pressure on me.

"Let me make this clear. I don't put pressure on them. I don't say, 'We've got to get into the studio this very minute because I've got these songs that I've just gotta get off my chest.' It's always the other way around. They always rush up to me and insist that we've got to cut a new album and get back on the road."

So it's quite obvious that the pressures are back on and Townshend is feeling the strain.

"In a sense, rock is an athletic process. I don't mean running about onstage, but as a communicative process it's completely exhausting. It's not necessarily being a part of things," insists Townshend. "Like I said, when I wrote 'My Generation' I was already in my early twenties, so I was by no means a frustrated teenager. And that's what a lot of people often tend to forget."

But you were an integral part of that generation?

"Right," he retorts, "but we're also part of the generation that we play to onstage today. Let me clarify that statement."

Yes!

"What I *don't* feel part of is not the Generation of age, but the Generation of type. I mean, who the hell were all those people at the *Tommy* premiere? Whoever they were, I'm certainly not in *their* gang! Yet funnily enough, whatever the age group, I feel much more at ease before a rock audience."

So why this current fixation about being too old to cut le Moutard?

"Because to some extent The Who have become a golden oldies band and that's the bloody problem that faces all successful rock groups at one time or another – the process of growing old. A group like The Kinks don't have that problem because, theoretically, Ray Davies has always been an old

CONTINUES OVER »

WHO KNEW

Despite Pete's rather despairing comments about The Who's live performances in this interview, six months later, on December 6, 1975, the band would set a new world record for largest indoor concert at the Pontiac Silverdome, Michigan. 75,962 people saw that show.

JOE STEVENS

man. He writes like an old man who is forever looking back on his life and, thank heavens, old Ray won't have to contend with such problems. But with a group like the Stones, there's this terrible danger... now I could be wrong... but there's no question in my mind that it's bound to happen... Mick Jagger will eventually become the Chuck Berry of the '60s, constantly parodying himself onstage. And this is the inherent danger that The Who are so desperately trying to avoid.

"I can tell you that when we were gigging in this country at the early part of last year I was thoroughly depressed. I honestly felt that The Who were going onstage every night and, for the sake of the die-hard fans, copying what The Who used to be. Believe me, there have been times in The Who's career when I would have gladly relinquished the responsibilities of coming up with our next single or album to another writer. There've been a lot of people who said they would have a go but somehow it never quite worked out."

Why?

"Like a lot of things connected with The Who, I really dunno. Maybe it's because we've got such an archetypal style that's geared to the way I write."

BUT BY HIS OWN admission, Pete Townshend has always considered his forte to be writing. The fact that he also happens to be a guitarist is, in his opinion, quite irrelevant. Yet even now, Townshend is astounded when other guitarists compliment him upon his instrumental prowess. He isn't bowing to false modesty when he insists that, after all these years, he still can't play guitar as he would really like to.

In his formative years with The Who, he compensated for his acute frustrations by concentrating his energies on the visual aspects of attacking the instrument. Every time he went onstage, Townshend insists he bluffed his way through a set by utilising noise and sound effects which eventually led to the destruction of many a valuable weapon.

"It's still true even today," he confesses without embarrassment. "I may be a better guitarist now than I was when The Who first started, but I'm far from being as technically proficient as I would really like to be.

"What I like about the way that I play," he explains, "is what I think everyone else likes. I get a particular sound that nobody else quite gets and I play rhythm like nobody else plays – it's a very cutting rhythm style. Sorta Captain Powerchords! I do like to have a bash every now and then at a wailing guitar solo, but halfway through I fall off the end of the fretboard. I've resigned myself to the fact that I haven't got what it takes to be a guitar hero.

"Yet funnily enough I don't really respect that kind of guitar playing. I've got no great shakes for Jeff Beck or Jimmy Page. Sure, I love what they do, but it always seems to me that they're like the Yehudi Menuhins of the rock business. They're extremely good at what they do, but I'm sure they'd give their right arm to be writers – though not necessarily in my shoes.

"I don't really feel the showmanship side of my contribution to The Who's stage show is fundamentally a part of my personality. It's something that automatically happens. Basically, it stems from the very early days when we had to learn to sell ourselves to the public – otherwise nobody would have taken a blind bit of notice of us: and, like many things, it's been carried on through up until today. Yet I have no doubt that, if we wanted to, we could walk on any stage and stand there without doing all those visual things and still go down well with an audience."

So, why this depressing down-in-the-mouth attitude? Could it stem, I ask Townshend, from the fact that a critic once bemoaned that, in his opinion, The Who, once the true essence of rock'n'roll, now just go through the motions?

"Well, that statement was true – but on the other hand if it's unqualified then it might as well be ditched. But you've put the question to me and now I've got to try and qualify that other journalist's statement. To me, the success of any truly great rock song is related to the fact that people who couldn't really communicate in normal ways can quite easily communicate through the mutual enjoyment of rock music. And that was simply because, for them, it was infinitely more charismatic than anything else around at that time.

"For example, you're aware that there's this great wall around adolescents and that they can't talk freely about their problems because it's far too embarrassing. Personally, I feel that adolescence lasts much longer than most people realise. What happens is, that people find ways of getting round it and putting on a better show in public. And as they get older they become more confident and find their niche. Now why I think that journalists said The Who now only play rock'n'roll is because on most levels rock has become a spectator sport. It's not so important as a method of expression as it once was. Today something else could quite easily replace it."

Townshend goes on to concede that rock doesn't hold as much genuine mystique as it did with previous generations, to the extent that the stigma of the social outlaw has almost been eradicated. Those who have tried to become outlaws have failed miserably, hence the last-ditch shock tactics of Alice Cooper and David Bowie.

"For many kids, rock'n'roll means absolutely nothing." He compares it to switching on a television set, going to the movies or a football match. It's just another form of entertainment. "If what the kids do listen to consists entirely of The Bay City Rollers and the Top 10, then it must mean even less than most other similar forms of mass media entertainment because they're not really listening. The real truth as I see it is that rock music as it was is not really contemporary to these times. It's really the music of yesteryear. The only things that continue to keep abreast of the times are those songs that stand out due to their simplicity."

Example?

"'My Generation'. A lot of people don't understand that there's a big difference between what kids want onstage in relationship to what they actually go out and buy on record. Perhaps the reason why so many young kids can still get into The Who in concert is simply because it's a very zesty, athletic performance. However, if we just restricted our gigs to performing songs we'd just written yesterday and ignored all the old material then I'm positive that we'd really narrow down our audience tremendously.

"I dunno what's happening sometimes," he bemoans. "All I know is that when we last played Madison Square Garden I felt acute shades of nostalgia. All The Who freaks had crowded around the front of the stage and when I gazed out into the audience all I could see were those very same sad faces that I'd seen at every New York Who gig. There was about a thousand of 'em and they turned up for every bloody show at the Garden, as if it were some Big Event – The Who triumph over New York. It was like some bicentennial celebration and they were there to share in the glory. They'd followed us from the beginning.

"It was dreadful," Townshend recollects in disgust. "They were telling us what to play. Every time I tried to make an announcement they all yelled out, 'Shhhrrruppp Townshend and let Entwistle play "Boris The Spider",' and, if that wasn't bad enough, during the other songs they'd all start chanting 'jump...jump... jump...jump...jump'. I was so brought down by it all! I mean, is this what it had all degenerated into?

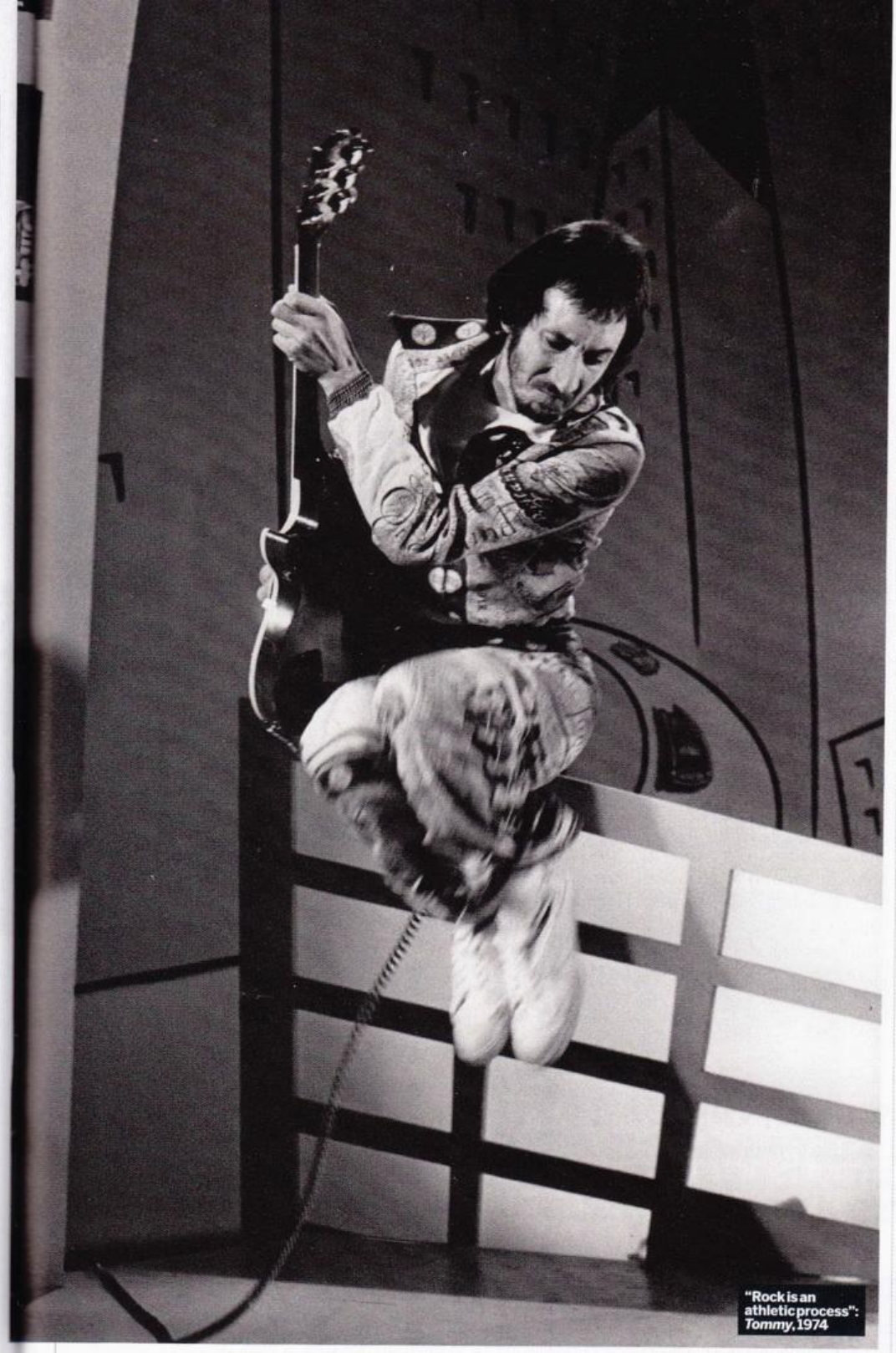
"To be honest, the highest I've been onstage last year was when we used to play 'Drowned'. That was only because there was some nice guitar work in it... Roger liked singing it and both John and Keith played together so superbly. Really, that was the only time I felt that I could take off and fly."

PETE TOWNSHEND may well have some cause to feel sorry for himself; when the final reckoning comes he's got a lot to answer for – in particular the Curse Of The Concept Album. Though concept albums are by no

"I'VE RESIGNED MYSELF TO THE FACT THAT I HAVEN'T GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GUITAR HERO"

WHO KNEW

Townshend played the first solo gig of his career on April 14, 1974 – at the Roundhouse in Camden, London – for the Camden Square Community Play Centre. He performed a handful of Who hits, including "Magic Bus" with the amended lyric: "*I'm so nervous I guess it shows/Don't say a thing about my great big nose*"



"Rock is an athletic process": *Tommy*, 1974

means new to popular music – Gordon Jenkins and Mel Tormé were churning 'em out almost a quarter of a century ago – it was *Tommy* (as opposed to *Sgt Pepper*) which unleashed a deluge of albums built around one specific theme. These ranged from The Fudge's horrendous *The Beat Goes On* through to Jethro Tull's obscure *A Passion Play*, up to and including Rick Wakeman's Disneyesque *...King Arthur*.

"None of which," says Townshend, as he bursts into laughter, "work."

Yet as we all know, Townshend himself has had no less than three stabs at the same subject. So how does he view the trilogy in retrospect?

"I don't. And if you're going to ask me which one I prefer, I don't really like any of them very much. I suppose I still like bits of The Who's original version, but the definitive *Tommy* album is still in my head."

Perhaps it would be wise to quit this line of questioning and leave Tommy where he is. But Townshend wants the last word.

"I think that everyone in rock shares the same basic urges and therefore, that it would be very unfair to me to say it's all right for The 'Oo 'cause we invented it. I have great doubts about that. For instance, when the Big Feedback Controversy was going on in the mid-'60s, Dave Davies and I used to have hilarious arguments about who was the first to invent feedback: I used to pull Dave's leg by saying 'we both supported The Beatles in Blackpool and you weren't doing it then... I bet you nicked it off me when you saw me doing it.' And Dave would scream that he was doing it long before that. Then one day I read this incredible story about Jeff Beck in which he said..." – at this juncture, he adopts a retarded Pythonesque android accent – "'Yeah, Townshend came down t'see d'Tridents rehearsing and he saw me using the feedback'... pause... 'and copied it'."

Returning to his natural voice, Townshend scowls, "I never saw The Tridents and the man is pathetic. Obviously, Beck may feel deeply enough that he invented feedback – but for Chrissakes who gives a shit? Why even comment on it? It doesn't really matter, it's just a funny noise made by a guitar."

Townshend goes on to explain that the innovatory part of rock is not necessarily the part that he's proud of, even though he's regarded as The Who's ideas man. "I was trained in graphic design... to be an ideas man... to think up something new and different... like, let's give a lemon away with the next album!"

Thank you.

"In the early days of The Who we were tagged with gimmicks and subsequently it made me very gimmick-conscious. Now if I might return to *Tommy* for a moment..."

But only for a moment.

"What I think is good about *Tommy* is not that it's a rock opera or that it's the first or the last... that's of course, if you assume that there's gonna be any more!"

Don't worry, there will be. Have a copy of Camel's *The Snow Goose*.

"What I feel is very important about *Tommy* is that as a band it was our first conscious departure out of the adolescent area. It was our first attempt at something that wasn't the same old pilled-up adolescent brand of music. We'd finished with that and we didn't know which way to go. That's when we went through that funny period of 'Happy Jack' and 'Dogs'.

"It was also a terrifying period for me as The Who's only ideas man. For instance, though 'I Can See For Miles' was released after 'Happy Jack', I'd written it in 1966 but had kept it in the can for ages because it was going to be our ace-in-the-hole. If you want the truth..."

And nothing but...

"I really got lost after 'Happy Jack', and then when 'I Can See For Miles' bombed out in Britain, I thought 'What the hell am I gonna do now?' The pressures were really on me and I had to come up with something very quick and that's how *Tommy* emerged from a few rough ideas I'd been messing about with."

And whereas The Beatles had cried that it was impossible to perform *Pepper* in public, the fact that The Who demonstrated that *Tommy* was an ideal stage presentation quickly motivated other bands to mobilise their might for the New Aquarian Age. With more sophisticated electronic weaponry than they knew how to utilise, the likes of Floyd, Yes, and ELP adopted a more "profound" stance as, in a blaze of strobes, they began to bombard audiences with techno-flash wizardry, pseudo-mystical jargon and interchangeable concepts.

Townshend may have had a helping hand in starting the whole schmear rolling (it sure didn't rock), but he is adamant in his belief that many alleged "profound"

CONTINUES OVER »

"Our love was...": Pete with wife Karen in 1975

music machines are working a clever con-trick on the public.

"All that they're really doing is getting together and working out the most complex ideas they can handle, packaging it with pretentious marketing appeal and unloading it on their fans. But" – and here comes the get-out clause – "does everything have to hold water? Obviously, it must mean something to the integrity of the band that's putting it together, but it's results that count."

Well, the result, as Townshend puts it, has turned many a rock theatre into a dormitory.

"It might be difficult to fall asleep at a Who gig, but I can understand why some bands send their audiences into a coma. I don't like Yes at all. I used to like them when Peter Banks was in the lineup, because, apart from being extremely visual, he also played excellent guitar. With so many changes in the lineup, Yes is Jon Anderson's band and he might be guilty of much of that wishy washy stuff they churn out because Jon really is a tremendous romantic. Maybe he believes in the old mystical work, and maybe poetry moves him along – but I'm not concerned either way."

Just wait until the letters come pouring in.

"It's like that line in 'The Punk And The Godfather'... *'You paid me to do the dancing.'* The kids pay us for a good time, yet nowadays people don't really want to get involved. Audiences are very much like the kids in *Tommy*'s Holiday Camp, they want something without working for it. That wasn't the way it used to be. The enthusiasm that evolved around The Beatles was enthusiasm, as opposed to energy generated by The Beatles.

"You talk to them now and they don't know what happened! It was the kids' enthusiasm for them. Now when you see it happening again you can see how strange it must have seemed the first time around.

"For instance, take the amount of energy and enthusiasm that's currently expended on, say, Gary Glitter... and Gary's just as confused as everyone else. All he knows is which curler to put on which side of his head – Gary readily admits this, and is all the better for it. Get in the middle of a crowd of screamin' kids – it doesn't matter who they're screamin' at – and there's a certain amount of charisma transferred to these people. But then, that's what fanmania is really all about.

"When the real charismatic figures like Mick Jagger came along, rock started to change and then the kids began to create their own trends in fashion. The mods not only used to design their own clothes but sometimes to make them: and the fact that they did humdrum jobs to get money to buy clothes, scooters, records and go to clubs built up this elite. Therefore it wasn't too long before the artists let that rub off onto them and in that sense, I think The Who were as guilty as anybody else.

"And I'll tell you why. Because in the end we wanted the audiences to turn up to see only us as opposed to the audience being the show and struttin' like peacocks. We had to be the only reason for them turning up at a Who gig."

With rock and its peripheral interests having been systematically turned into a multi-million pound consumer industry, Pete has observed that the customer no longer dictates youth fashion. "That's all down to some designer employed by a multiple chainstore. Everything nowadays is premeditated. Within days the whole country is flooded with what someone thinks the kids want."

He believes that the only invigorating youth movement in this country appears to be centred around Wigan's Northern Soul Scene.

"I wish that would spread more than it has, because I see it as a direct link with the mod thing. But what is more important is that it's more philosophical in its attitude about not fighting and not boozing and not smoking. Even though they're ephemeral things, they are nevertheless states of mind, which are Very Good Things. Like the early mod thing, this Northern Soul Scene has a fashionable aspect connected with it, but basically it's concerned with the exact opposite to the mod preoccupation with getting pilled-up and fighting. Funnily enough, I'm still not certain why the original mod movement was so obsessed with aggro. All I know is that at that time I felt an incredible amount of frustration and bitterness towards society and maybe everyone else felt the same."

"ROCK MUSIC GOT VERY EXCITED AND FLEW OFF AHEAD, LEAVING MOST OF ITS AUDIENCE BEHIND..."

BUT EVEN AS FAR BACK as 1968, The Who were somewhat trapped by their own image, when Townshend states that the thing that had impressed him most was the mod movement. He had been fired by the excitement of witnessing and subsequently taking an active part in what he felt was the first time in history that youth had made a concerted move towards unity of thought and drive and motive. "It was almost surreal" was how he was quoted at the time.

Somewhere at the turn of the '60s, the youth movement was derailed. Talk of a promised land and the eventual greening of America became suffocated as the consumer industry once again took command, and the Business in showbusiness grabbed the spoils.

When Townshend looks back in time, he can't help but laugh. "I don't think they were promises, it was just young people promising themselves something... having ambitions to do something... and, if you like, certain rock people were acting as spokesmen. So they are the convenient people to blame. That's if you want to lay the blame at anyone's feet.

"Basically, everyone had this mood that something was happening... something was changing. In essence it did, but unfortunately a lot of its impetus was carried off by the drug obsession. Everyone credited everything innovative and exciting to drugs... 'Yeah man, it's pot and leapers and LSD, that's what makes the world great.'

"Then when things turned out to be meaningless and people had missed the bus, they quickly realised they'd gambled everything on something that had run away. The same thing happened to rock. Rock got very excited and flew off ahead leaving most of its audience behind. The Who went on to do what I feel to be some very brave and courageous things, but in the end the audience was a bit apathetic. It was back to what I wrote in 'The Punk And The Godfather' – you paid me to do the dancing. That's why when I'm onstage I sometimes feel that I'm too old to be doing what I'm doing."

Then, by way of contrast...

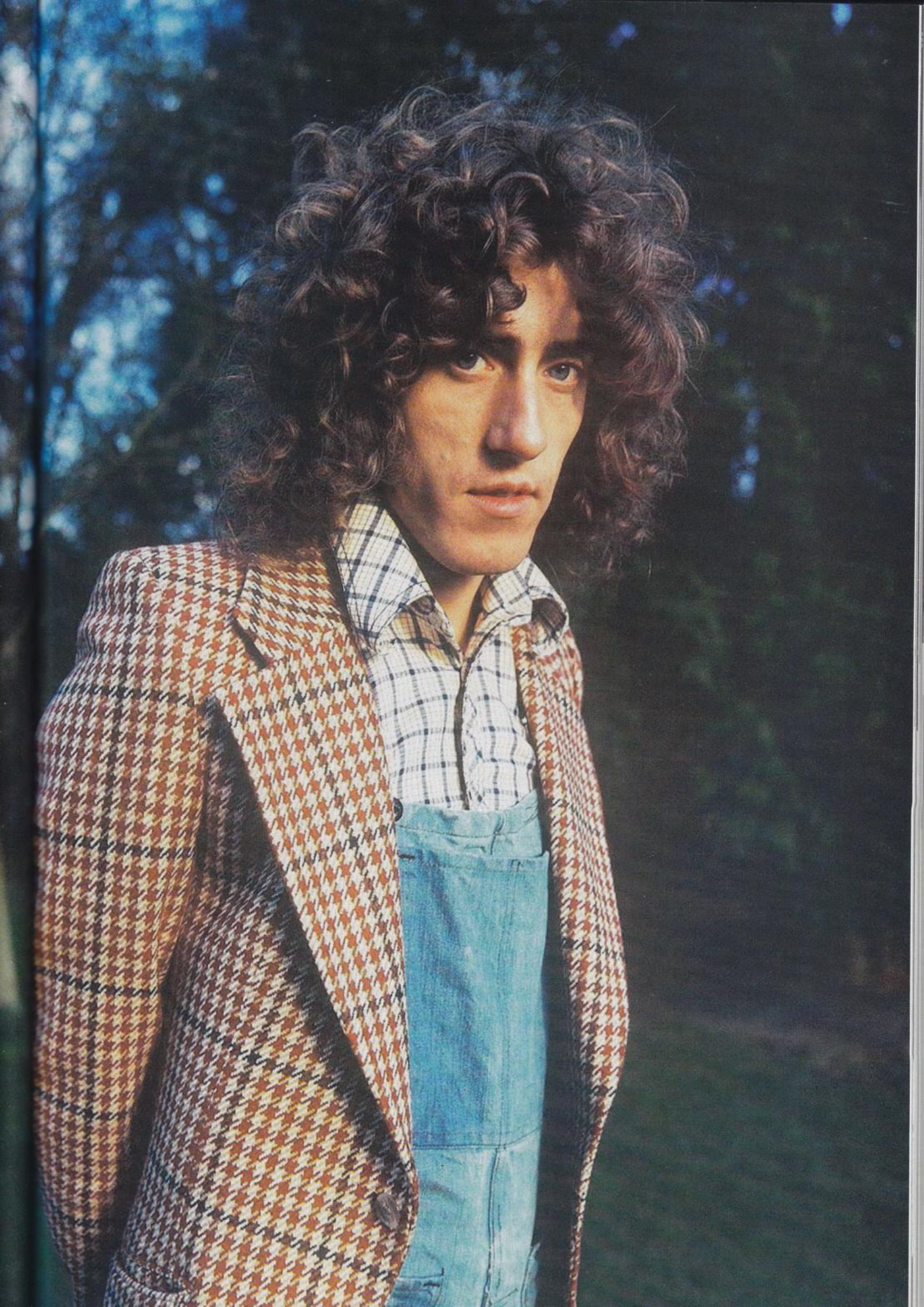
"Track by track, the new LP that The Who are making is going to be the best thing we've ever done. But if people expect another grandiose epic then they ain't gonna get it. 'Cos this time we're going for a superb single album."

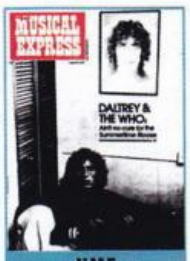
Townshend, make your mind up, squire. If the last couple of hours are anything to go by, you're either – by your own admission – past it, or you're just after a bit of public feedback. Ouch. Better not mention that word. ⊙

'THERE'S A TERRIBLE BATTLE GOING ON BETWEEN ME & PETE *AIN'T THERE?'*

A few weeks after Pete Townshend's previous, "unbelievably down", interview, Roger Daltrey fights back. "The last thing in the world I want to do is break The Who up," he says. But as Daltrey details the animosities and misunderstandings, and reveals how Townshend attacked him with a guitar, **TONY STEWART** begins to wonder: could *The Who By Numbers* be Who's Last?

REX FEATURES





NME
09/08/1975

JUST HOW DO YOU conduct yourself when interviewing a man who's destined to become A Living Legend? Do you ensure your shoelaces are tied, your hair's neatly brushed and that your breath smells sweetly? And then humbly sit opposite your subject, dutifully silent as you wait to hear his proclamations? Or perhaps you just take along a bucket and spade in case the Centaur – as his latest album sleeve depicts him – craps on the rug.

After all, this is how Polydor are promoting Roger Daltrey. The Centaur photograph exploits all the romanticism of Greek Mythology to intimate Daltrey *is* A Living Legend, as well as incorporating the sexual blatancy of the classic Satyr – the lustful beast which is reputed to be part man, part goat. But moulding the hindquarters of a goat onto Daltrey's fine torso would project a considerably less virile image than those of a stallion.

Look at the shot closely, and you'll see my (or his) point.

"It's nothing to do with me, mate," Daltrey asserts. "I can never consider that. I wish I could become Charlie Bloggs. I'm pissed off with it, because I feel it's not me. I'm not A Living Legend. A lot of old bollocks. It's all half truths and I don't really want to be associated with that kind of thing. I don't really want to be A Pop Star, believe it or not. I'd like to have successful records, but that's it. And I'd very much like never to do any more interviews or anything."

Gee thanks, Roger.

"Well, you know, the occasional one. I suppose it's the price you have to pay."

Yes. But Roger also has an ulterior motive in talking to us, and that's to answer Pete Townshend's attack on The Who, carried in a recent *NME* article [*reprinted, of course, on pp62-68*]. Stick around, because the dirt flies like a sandstorm.

Somehow, though, you just can't come to terms with Daltrey's new image. Here he is, in the Goldhawk record company offices in London. Sandwiched into a comfy chair between a filing cabinet and a stack of audio equipment, taking large hungry bites out of a pear, causing juice to trickle down his chin, the flow of which increases as he tries to talk with his mouth full.

His moods change faster than a streetful of Belisha beacons, going from sullen to friendly, and from aggressive to rationally polite. And invariably he'll laugh at his own moods, throwing his head back and roaring like a triumphant bar room brawler. You could describe him as an earthy streetboy.

The interview, though, comes at an appropriate juncture. Sessions for the new Who album, *The Who By Numbers*, have just finished, and after our rap Daltrey will go off to hear the final mixes.

"I'm really pleased with it," he says, chewing on the pear. "One song particularly, called 'Imaginary Man', I think is the best song Pete's ever written. There's a few mysteries in there, but it'll be a good album. The shape and form of it is similar to *Who's Next*, with a lot of varied material, unlike *Quadrophenia*, which was really one vein. But I don't know what it's going to do, because I don't know what people are expecting. I think it's going to be surprising.

"There's not been a lot of style change at all. How can we? Moon still plays like Moon, John still plays like John, Pete still plays like Pete, and I still sing like me. The only time that we really change is after extensive touring, never when we're in the studio."

Yet the conversation doesn't dwell on the album for long, as it's quite apparent Daltrey wishes to discuss another topic. Like the Townshend feature.

"I never read such a load of bullshit in my life," he comments, angrily. "To be perfectly honest, it really took a lot of my Who energy out reading that. Because I don't feel that way about The Who, about our audiences, or anything that way.

"It was an unbelievably down interview. And I still haven't come out of it properly yet. I've talked to fans," he continues, "and I think Townshend lost a lot of respect from that article. He's talked himself up his own ass. And there are quite a lot of disillusioned and disenchanted kids about now."

"TOWNSHEND'S LOST A LOT OF RESPECT FROM THAT ARTICLE. HE'S TALKED HIMSELF UP HIS OWN ASS!"

In fact the tone of Townshend's rap was itself disillusioned. He was highly critical of the band as a working unit, their audience and even of their future. In his introduction to the piece, Roy Carr admirably précised the prevalent attitude the Axeman expressed: "Pete Townshend didn't die before he got old. Yet death isn't his problem, it's the passing of the years and his current position in what he feels is a younger man's occupation."

But that's not 32-year-old Daltrey's chief beef about the article. "My main criticism," he elaborates, "was the generalisation of saying The Who were bad. The Who weren't bad. I think we've had a few gigs where Townshend was bad... and I'll go on record as saying that. I think we had a few gigs where under normal circumstances we could have waltzed it. We could have done Madison Square Garden with our eyes closed, only the group was running on three cylinders. Especially the last night.

"You don't generalise and say The Who was bad," he stresses, his rage stronger now. "Because The Who wasn't bad. Wasn't quite as good as we could have been, but it was because Townshend was in a bad frame of mind about what he wanted to do. And he didn't play well. Sure, we all have our off nights. But don't go round saying The Who was bad."

Did Pete sound like a Rock'n'Roll Martyr to you?

"Yes. Very much. You're putting words in me mouth, ain't ya?" He laughs.

Well sure. But only if there's room with the pear.

"Right. That's the impression I got. And it riles me when he generalises it to say The Who weren't playing well. The Who can play as well as they ever did, if we can get down to it and take it for what it is. He's just trying to make The Who something it isn't.

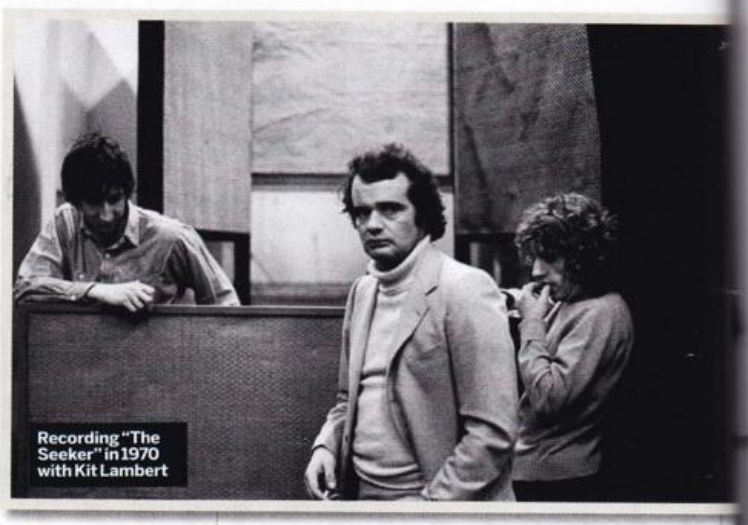
"I can understand his musical frustration," he continues. "He must be so far ahead now with just writing songs for The Who. But surely if The Who isn't a vehicle to get those frustrations out, he should find another vehicle. But use The Who for what it is. A good rock'n'roll band, that's all. And one that was progressing."

Was?

"I say 'was' because we haven't done anything for such a long time. Hopefully when we get back on the road we'll still progress. But if we have any more statements like that I don't see how we can. 'Cos I know it's taken a lot of steam out of me and I'm sure it did with the others."

But Roger, you said, "was progressing", which strikes me as a rather strange comment to make just as you complete a new album.

"I'm just talking about the road


Recording "The Seeker" in 1970 with Kit Lambert

CHRIS MORPHET/GETTY IMAGES

WHO KNEW

Daltrey refers to "a lot of litigation" around The Who at this time, and he wasn't kidding: while The Who prepared a mismanagement suit against Kit Lambert, their manager told *NME* on July 19, 1975 that he was taking action against Robert Stigwood over lack of payment for his work on *Tommy*...

Daltrey: "I'd very much like never to do any more interviews..."

side of it," he clarifies. "I mean, we are still progressing. We're never really The Who in the studio. That's one of the difficulties getting records made with the band. There was a lot wrong, but we rectified it on this album. We all got stuck in and made a record. But there's not a lot of room for a group because it's becoming more and more dominated by Pete. It's very hard to make a group contribution outside of what you actually do in the band. Outside of me just singing, for instance.

"John seems to do all right at it – but every suggestion I make I just get laughed at. But I can live with that. I don't care if I'm just the singer anyway."

On this point, though, it was Townshend who complained he had to bear too much responsibility for The Who. There was, he bemoaned, too much pressure on him.

"There's all sorts of problems going down at the moment that have got bugger all to do with the music side of it," counters Daltrey, "which is usually lumped on my bloody shoulders. But I don't ever complain about it. I agree that because he's been the mainstay songwriter of the band he's obviously going to be under pressure. But I think he enjoys that. As far as going on the road goes, I don't think he's under any more pressure than any of us, really."

Townshend's argument – just to refresh your memories – was also that because the other three guys heavied him into the studio, any songs he'd written for a solo album would be snapped up by them. And inadvertently he seemed to be moaning about the fact that Daltrey, Entwistle and Moon could work solo – but that he never saw his own efforts come to fruition – because of The Who.

Daltrey does feel it would be a good thing for Townshend if he did record a solo album, but denies it was impossible because of The Who situation. "You see, I think if he made a solo album, he would get some of the musical frustrations out which he can't accomplish with The Who. Because he can do fucking incredible stuff that The Who'll never do. They just haven't got that sort of scope.

"That's why solo LPs are nice to do. They let your head run riot for a while. And I don't see why he couldn't have done his own album before this Who set, because I can't see this one getting released for ages because we've got so many problems, outside of just the music. Then The Who would have had second choice. And I don't see it would have hurt The Who.

"I think we needed this year break. We need to sort certain things out. Like, two months ago it looked as though we weren't ever going to record again – and now at least we've made another record. And I really want to get back on the road. I just don't feel I'm in a group unless we're playing on the road. It feels like you're just another session man."

He pauses, having said his piece.

"Want a cup of tea?" he inquires politely.

SNIPPETS OF DALTREY's rap keep flashing up on the brain's screen like trailers at the cinema. And it could just be possible that's yet to come.

At intervals he's made oblique, but apparent, references to some kind of internal problems other than musical that are having a detrimental effect on The Who's well-being. Something seems greatly amiss. But as the mugs of tea are handed round – and you'll be glad to know centaurs do have sweet teeth, because Daltrey started to crunch sugar cubes – Roger seems reticent to divulge the relevant information.

"There's just certain things going down at the moment," he does proffer, not particularly helpfully. "You'll probably hear the whole story in about two months' time."

Can't we hear now?

"I can't. There's a lot of litigation going on between our record company and our management and everything else."

A clue. But not exactly a scoop. With a little prodding he does, however, begin to open up, revealing in unguarded terms there is, *er*, disagreement between The Who and their management.

"If we were free now to do what we wanted to do, we'd have our record out in the first week of October and we would be touring England in the third week of October and the first week of November. And we'd be off to the States in the second week of November, then come back here for some Christmas shows." He comes out with a series of anecdotes, which, due to the laws of libel, I can't repeat. Worse luck.

"If the record doesn't come out I don't know what's going to happen. We could still tour – but we wouldn't tour with a new act because it's hopeless trying to play people unfamiliar material. It's like, the worst thing any band can do. Even if it's vaguely familiar. Like Elton John at Wembley playing *Captain Fantastic*. It didn't work. I wouldn't mind touring with the old stuff. But that's what it'll have to be."

Any dates pencilled in?

"There are, but I can't even talk about them because it's so vague at the

CONTINUES OVER »

JOE STEVENS

moment. Maybe it will sort itself out and it'll go ahead, but I can't really see it somehow. It's probably gonna be December before we get on the road. The way things are going, and the lack of decisions and various things."

Christ. Some Main Feature, huh?

Going back to That Townshend Feature – and considering all Daltrey has just said – it does seem somewhat unfair Peter Meter should blame Daltrey's involvement in *Lisztomania* for holding up the recording of the new album. Which he did.

"Obviously he doesn't want to talk about these other problems in the press," suggested Roger quite rationally. "I do it reluctantly, but I suppose it's got to come out at one time. I can see if it does happen, then I'm gonna come out as The McCartney Of The Piece. But there again, what do you do? You can't live on lies forever. But the last thing in the world I want to do is break The Who up. Anything I can do to stop that happening... I'll do.

"Now The Who have acted." (Daltrey's referring to the legals). "But I don't know how long I could have gone on without them acting. I really don't. If the legal hassles hadn't been going on, yeah, then *Liszt* would have held up The Who recording for three months. Which isn't a long time. I know it was a drag for The Who, and I don't ever really want it to happen again. But there was nothing I could have done about it. As it's worked out, it didn't really matter anyway."

Perhaps at this stage it'd be useful to clarify one or two other matters with so many insinuations whizzing around. Roger, how important is The Who to you, then?

"Obviously very important," he responds immediately. "I mean it's part of me life, and it's the last 10 years of me life. I can accept the fact now it's not going to go on forever. That's for sure. You do start to see the boundaries. But I just don't ever want to give up.

"The Who comes before anything really. It didn't come before *Liszt*, but it was a group thing. I said, 'What do I do?'

"I think *Liszt* will do The Who good as well. That's one of the main things in my mind about it, because people – especially in the States – are gonna start thinking I'm Tommy. And I'm not Tommy. I don't think *Tommy* is The Who's best piece of work. *Liszt* is a quick way of showing people that I ain't Tommy. Which is, at least, a start in destroying that whole Tommy stigma."

But again, when discussing his career in the movies, Daltrey is prone to relate it to his musical pursuits and his role with The Who. For instance, working with Russell, he says, has given him a better understanding of Townshend's songwriting.

"Ken is very similar to Pete," he explains. "He's very visual and thinks all the time. But unlike Pete, I can talk to Ken. And he'll explain how he sees a situation to me, and I've got a terrific rapport with him. Unfortunately me and Pete have never actually got on, on that level. But I find now it's not so important, because just working with Ken so much has taught me a lot about getting into things in the way I think you should. It's given me a lot more confidence. If you can't communicate on a talking level with someone and you just go on feelings, and he's given you a sheet of lyrics and you've got a demo to work with, then you need quite a lot of confidence."

At this point, however, Daltrey is understating his turbulent relationship with Townshend because, as our conversation unfolds – covering The Who's music and the sheer aggression and frustration it incorporates – it's necessary for Roger to explain why this should be such an overt facet. And in doing so, he reveals considerably more about the personality structure of the band.

"It's probably because we're so different," he says, "and don't particularly get on that well outside the band. I don't want to be in a group with anybody else, although if I could choose three friends to go about with it wouldn't be those three. It's a very weird situation, but it does lead to frustration. But it's always worked because it's led to creating something."

"THE LAST THING I WANTED TO DO WAS HAVE A FISTFIGHT WITH PETE. UNFORTUNATELY, HE HIT ME FIRST... WITH A GUITAR"

And also led, it should be noted, to fights. On occasion.

"Yes. On occasion," agrees Daltrey.

Well, your knuckles aren't bruised so the recording sessions must have gone well.

"Look!" He cries, laughing and holding up his right fist. "Look at that!" He displays one severely swollen and purple set of knuckles. "No, no, no. We didn't have any fights at all," he points out. "That's a mosquito bite. Believe it or not."

A likely story.

"No. We didn't have any fights this time. We had fights in *Quadrophenia*."

Tell us more.

"I've only ever had one fight with Pete and that was during *Quadrophenia*. It was a bit of a shame because it was a non-argument, and the last thing I wanted to do in the world was to have a fistfight with Pete Townshend. Unfortunately," he adds petulantly, "he hit me first with a guitar. I really felt terrible about it afterwards. What can you say? Pete should never try and be a fighter. But when he was being held back by two roadies and he's spitting at me, calling me a dirty little cunt and hitting me with his guitar I became quite angry. And I was forced to lay one on him. But it was only one."

That was sufficient?

"Well," he roars with laughter, "when he came out of hospital..."

But according to Daltrey there has always been a clash between him and Townshend – with Entwistle and Moon as mediators. And perhaps for this reason Daltrey is able to contend with being laughed at in the studio when he makes suggestions.

"Like I say," he explains, "I can put up with being just the singer. It doesn't really bother me that much. It's just one of those things that make you feel – what's the word? – makes you feel a bit of a misfit. But I've always felt a bit of a misfit in The Who. That's another reason why solo things are good for me."

Cue. Change of reel, and subject.

EVERYTHING SEEMED to be going well for Roger Daltrey, the solo artist. He's now grabbed himself a prestigious slice of the Movie Biz by doing the films *Tommy* and *Lisztomania* – with another, of which he'll reveal nothing except he had to have his hair cropped, on the starting blocks. Even his solo singing career had an auspicious debut, with the excellent *Daltrey* album; *Ride A Rock Horse*, however, isn't too good. The vocal performance is good, the musicianship is good, OK, but the material just doesn't have that stamp of quality. And to date, business has not been brisk with the set, which is certainly not the kind of sequel one would expect (either artistically or sales-wise) following his first album.

"I'm pleased with it," comments Roger. "I like it. But then I'm bound to, ain't I? It is a very American kind of album and it's not particularly the English people's taste. But that was intentional. I aimed it at America. Maybe I aimed it too much at America."

Perhaps, though, Daltrey, who as a prominent British vocalist would have the world's established writers scrambling over each other's backs to get him to use their songs, has taken even more of a chance with the material than he did with the first set. Once again, he's used unestablished writers (like Leo Sayer was).

"I know it's a gamble and maybe this time it hasn't paid off, but I'm gonna carry on doing it. It's just that I get so many kids coming to me with songs and they're not all good – but occasionally you get the good ones, and I think it's worth taking a gamble. Maybe I've picked the wrong numbers this time... I don't know. Obviously, I haven't in America. It's in at 60 this week. With a bullet. So my judgment's right somewhere. I just remember the days when I would have done anything for a helping hand. If I can help somebody who can't get a look in elsewhere... then it's a valid thing to do."

Not, I wouldn't have thought, if the album bombed, along with Daltrey's sole reputation.

Polydor (who can improve your image as

WHO KNEW

Lisztomania was released the same year as *Tommy* and with the same director, Ken Russell, and same star, Daltrey. The cast includes Paul '*Hair*' Nicholas (as Richard Wagner), Rick Wakeman (Thor, God Of Thunder) and Ringo Starr (The Pope). It was the first film to use the Dolby noise reduction system.

Bad Moon rising: live in 1975

Charles Atlas helped build your body) do seem to be putting the big promo wheels in motion. This, when discussed, moves onto Roger's own reluctance to be drawn into the area which he describes as "poshlust".

"But that's the business, I suppose," he remarks mildly, "I don't suppose kids want to buy records wrapped up in paper bags. They want a bit of glamour. You do need your Jaggers and Rod Stewarts, but they're trying to make me into one, and I'm not. And I never will be."

Just why is he in the business in the first place then? You guessed it.

"'Cos I sings in a band called The 'Oo and I likes it. And That Is It."

But according to Townshend (in That Feature) Daltrey would like to believe rock'n'roll was "making records, pullin' birds, getting pissed and having a good time."

"That," retorts Daltrey disgustedly, "just shows he doesn't understand me at all. Because that proportion of my life which is devoted to that kind of living is such a minimal proportion. If he thinks that's what rock'n'roll is to me he must be kidding. Just 'cos I don't live in a studio like he does doesn't mean to say I don't like rock'n'roll much."

He pauses.

"There's a terrible battle going on between me and him, ain't there?"

In fact, you could say this last quote of Townshend's proves to weigh heavily on Daltrey's mind. It isn't until near the end of the interview when he decides to elaborate on the point. "I'm just thinking about what he said," he said. "That I'd like to believe that rock'n'roll was birds, booze and fun. The naiveté of that is that the last few bad gigs The Who did were, in my opinion – apart from his head trip – bad because they were physically out boozing and balling all night. And by the time it got to the show at night they were *physically incapable of doing a good show*. So... put that in your pipe and smoke it."

Was that all of you?

"No. That was Townshend. Moon does it, but he can control it. On a few of the last gigs Townshend was pissed and incapable." Now Daltrey's anger is rising. "So don't talk to me about booze, because I've never been onstage drunk in the last seven years, Mr Townshend! I don't know if you've ever noticed, maybe he hasn't but I have. I remember every show we've ever done! I'm just getting a bit fed-up with these left-handed attacks."

And now he's retaliating.

"One of the sad things is that Pete and I are probably never gonna be able to communicate," he explains coolly. "I think I'll have to sit down and write a letter to the band, because there's no way of ever speaking to them about it."

Jesus. What's the future going to bring, then?

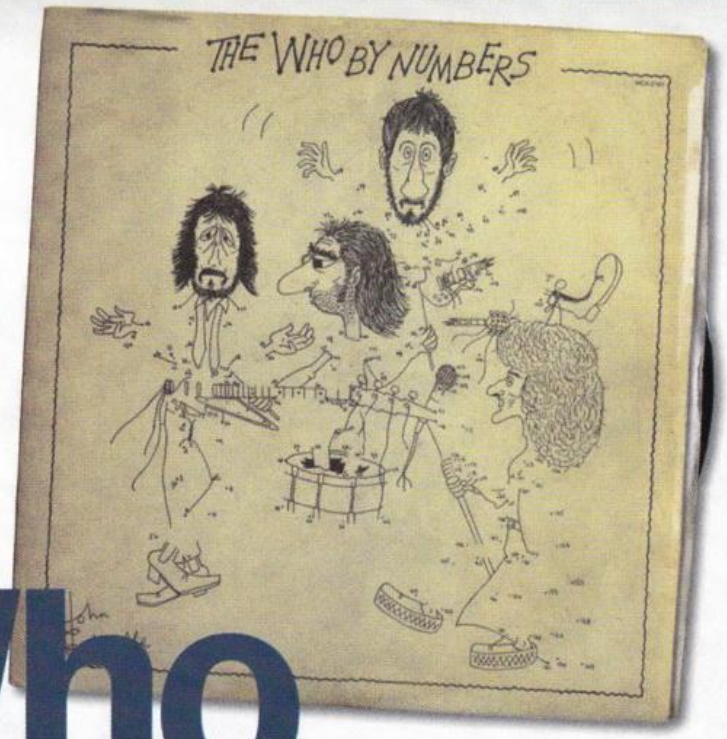
Maybe Daltrey is outspoken, vitriolic and often enraged by the circumstances surrounding The Who, and yet underneath it all runs a deep devotion for the band. He may criticise Townshend for what he describes as "pathetic" guitar playing on one gig, and yet he'll get back up onstage and work with him again.

"The only other way is to give up, innit? From my point of view... I think I've got better onstage in the last six years... and it really frustrates me that the people who were heads, hands and feet above me before are starting to fall by the wayside. I think it's unnecessary. That's why I want to get back on the road and do it. Because I know they can do it. And if they don't, then The Who breaks up. We're not a government. It's only a rock'n'roll band, after all. It'll be a terrible shame and a lot of people will be disgusted with us for letting it break up. But what can you do?

"In a way," he continues. "I don't mind if The Who do finish, because I think we've done a helluva lot and I'd hate to see it fizzle. I'd hate to see anything mediocre come out by The Who."

And in a more dispirited moment he comments, "If I feel I've come to the stage where I can't give any more into rock, and I can't do the things I like, then I might as well take up acting. I might as well." ⊙

NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS



RELEASE >> DATE 03 | OCTOBER | 1975

The Who By Numbers

The Who leave the complex rock operas behind, as Townshend turns to himself for inspiration. A tour de force of self-doubt, self-loathing and brandy. *By David Quantick*

THE WHO HAVE been extremely lucky in the casual labelling of rock history when it comes to the general rubbishing of concept albums. While the hip and groovy despise Genesis for *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, they will admit a fondness for The Who, despite the indisputable fact that between 1968 and 1979, the band released – if you count soundtracks to the film versions of *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*, and I do – arguably nothing but concept albums. How they got away with it is a matter for other writers here, but it's extraordinary. Jim Steinman only has to use the words "rock" and "opera" in the same paragraph and he's derided for being a bloated cartoon nutter. But Pete Townshend effectively spent the 1970s writing only rock operas. And getting away with it. Who fans in the 1970s seemed quite happy with this, never once saying, "Oh, how I'd like just a collection of great songs whose only linking theme is the depths of the songwriter's psyche."

And when such a record came along, when finally Townshend took a break from stitching together complex narratives that questioned the nature of our lives and made a record that was "just" a collection of great songs whose only linking theme is the depths of the songwriter's psyche, people shrugged and went, "It's OK." But then, 1975 was a very odd year in rock.

If there was ever a runt of the litter in The Who's 1970s albums, it would be *The Who By Numbers*. Leaving aside the decade-ending *Who Are You*, it's the one Who album of their career-defining era that isn't rooted in rock opera. *Tommy*, *Tommy: The Movie* soundtrack, *Quadrophenia* and its soundtrack, and *Who's Next* (which was based on the songs from 'Lifehouse') were all crammed to varying degrees with Townshend's Big Ideas, and as such were uniquely Who-like powerhouses of thought and music. *The Who By Numbers* has no such agenda. Its songs deal with young men, gay lust, the nature of fame, dads shagging mums, alcohol, the nature of friendship and being happy, among other things. It is, for once in The Who's career, officially without a theme.

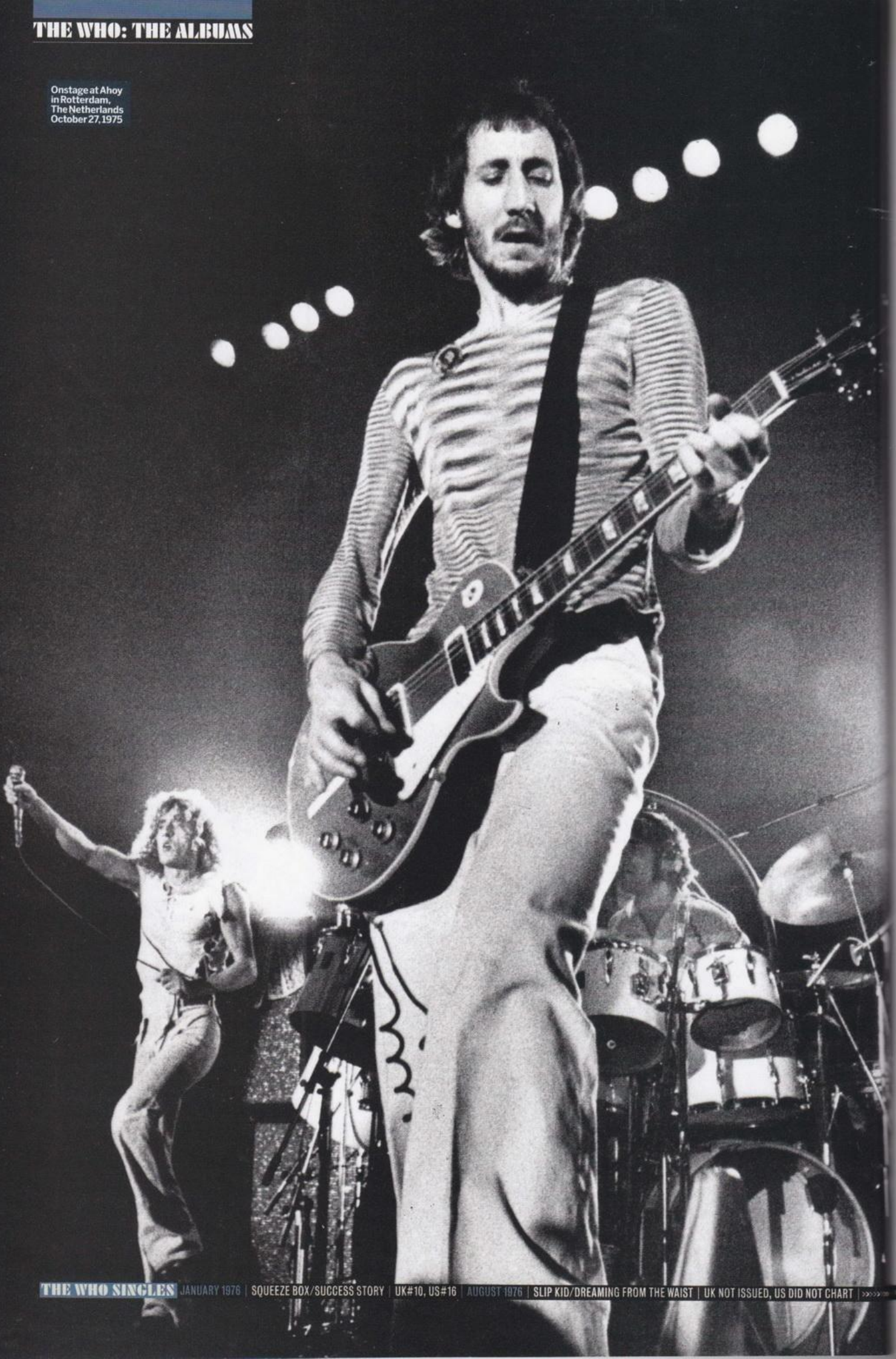
I say "official" because there is one very central theme to … *By Numbers*: Pete Townshend. Perhaps ironically, the only great Who record of the period which wasn't designed as a concept album is held together by The Who's best concept, namely what it was like being Pete Townshend in 1975, brandy-dependent, self-hating, astonishingly intelligent and so riddled with songs questioning himself it was at

CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **Slip Kid** ★★★★
2 **However Much I Booze** ★★★★
3 **Squeeze Box** ★★★★★
4 **Dreaming From The Waist** ★★★★
5 **Imagine A Man** ★★★
6 **Success Story** ★★★★
7 **They Are All In Love** ★★★★
8 **Blue, Red And Grey** ★★★★★
9 **How Many Friends** ★★★
10 **In A Hand Or A Face** ★★★★

RELEASED: October 3, 1975
LABEL: Polydor/MCA
PRODUCED BY: Glyn Johns
RECORDED: Shepperton Studios on Ronnie Lane's Mobile Studio
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead vocals, harmonica); Pete Townshend (guitars, keyboards, ukulele, accordion, banjo, vocals); John Entwistle (bass guitar, horns, bk vocals); Keith Moon (drums, percussion); Dave Arbus (violin); Nicky Hopkins (piano)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 7; US 8



Onstage at Ahoy in Rotterdam, The Netherlands October 27, 1975

THE WHO SINGLES JANUARY 1976 | SQUEEZE BOX/SUCCESS STORY | UK#10, US#16 | AUGUST 1976 | SLIP KID/DREAMING FROM THE WAIST | UK NOT ISSUED, US DID NOT CHART | >>>>>

times like a meeting of Doubting Thomases Anonymous. Even John Entwistle's excellent "Success Story" – a nice, bouncy song with a witty lyric and a great riff – shores up the central idea, being a fantastic summation of everything Pete was saying in interviews at the time (only The Who could write a press release you can dance to).

I love *The Who By Numbers*; freed from the problems associated with telling a story, making a point and answering its own questions, it's free for the first time in a long time in The Who's career to just be a record, a collection of songs in different styles that tell different stories. Imagine trying to shoehorn the magnificently daft "Squeeze Box" into *Tommy* or *Quadrophenia*; Townshend would have had to leave it out, depriving us of a very funny (and very '70s) 45 that if we'd been lucky, might've trickled out on a CD boxset in the late '80s. But he didn't have to, and for the first time since "Magic Bus", we have a song where The Who can just enjoy themselves without having to justify it. Be happy, as Meher Baba said, don't worry.

With the odd exception, true, the rest of… *By Numbers* is more concerned with worrying than being happy. This is Pete Townshend searching his own soul rather than everybody else's. "However Much I Booze" addresses, in slightly convoluted style, the issues of being Pete Townshend in 1975 (and it's only the first song on this album to mention brandy; they should have got a sponsorship deal with Courvoisier). "How Many Friends" is a classic boozer's downer song, where self-pity and self-contemplation combine. "Imagine A Man" continues the trend in a more spiritual direction. Townshend takes more lead vocals on this album than any other Who record before, and while this could have gone against The Who's best musical dynamic – the way Roger Daltrey's leonine confidence counterbalances Townshend's doubt and adds an emotional balance that, say, the similar singer/writer division in Oasis didn't – it works because this really is Townshend On Townshend. So much so, in fact, that for once the really Who-style songs – the Daltrey-sung "Dreaming From The Waist", for example – sound almost out of place, like afterthoughts included to Who things up.

It's a testament to the excellence of Roger Daltrey, though, that at no point on this record is he sidelined at all. A lesser vocalist might have gone off on a sulk and made *The Who By Numbers* into, effectively, a solo record. But Daltrey is magnificent throughout. You might have thought he'd be uncomfortable with the homosexuality (or bisexuality) expressed in "Dreaming From The Waist", but if he was, Daltrey doesn't show it; he throws himself into the performance with as great a vigour as anything else on this record. And on "They Are In Love", an atypical Who song (and there are so many atypical Who songs on this deeply atypical album), he produces one of the most idiosyncratic and effective vocals of his career, his voice catching with apparent uncertainty in the first few lines and then roaring from its rock cage in the next. And on "Squeeze Box", he seems to be the very definition of a good time, even taking a moment to give it some harmonica.

But it is, in the end, Townshend's record. It's a massive essay in self-expression, all the way from the opener, "Slip Kid" – a song so archetypally Townshend it fits in a wonderfully fit line from "Tattoo" on *Sell Out* all the way to his brilliantly homoerotic solo single, "Rough Boys" – up to the nagging, circling finale "In A Hand Or A Face" (whose final coda, *"I am going round and round"*, might have got a few cynical nods from the rest of the band). Throughout he expresses doubt after doubt. *"I'm recycling trash,"* he writes on "They Are In Love". *"How many friends have I really got?"* asks Daltrey on Townshend's behalf, and the answer is clearly not a lot, especially when Townshend claims on "However Much I Booze", *"It's clear to all my friends I habitually lie/I bring them all down."*

"However Much I Booze"'s conclusion is the cheery *"There ain't no way out"*, a sentiment that informs almost every track on the album. Even Entwistle's marvellously rocking "Success Story" (*"Take 276/You know, this used to be fun"*) is a take on fame and rock success as cynical (albeit a lot funnier) than Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. "Success Story" is probably my favourite Entwistle song since "Boris The Spider", a brilliant mini rock opera in itself, and one so melodic and beefy it should have been a single (a double a-side with "Long Live Rock" would've been nice). And "Success Story"'s rock industry referencing is mirrored in "They Are All In Love", a song with a gorgeous chorus that nevertheless contains Daltrey's raspberry-and-bile fuelled query, *"Where do you fit in PHTTTHTT magazine? With blood in your eye and a passion for gin?"* High drama among the depression, but that's The Who for you.

When Daltrey sings in the same song, *"Goodbye all you punks, stay young and stay high/Hand me my chequebook, I'll crawl off to die"*, it's absurd and melodramatic like a never-to-be-fulfilled suicide threat. Some reviewers at the time called *The Who By Numbers* a "suicide note", missing the point perhaps that, instead of continuing to make extrovert epics that didn't always say a lot, by making an introvert confessional, Pete Townshend was actually clearing the decks and starting a debate about the nature of rock and being a rock star which would eventually transform music for the better in, ooh, about a year.

So everything here is powered, not by a Percy Plant spine of cock and cockiness, but by self-doubt and brandy, and it's all the better for it. Both the booze and the introspection are related partly to The Who's position in rock's hierarchy and partly to the reputed stagnation of the era. For decades, critics have claimed that '75 was the worst year for rock, and in many ways they still have a point. Townshend, part of the problem but also – because The Who were still brilliant – outside the problem, worried and worried at it, and that process made The Who ultimately part of the solution. They may have been a massive stadium band full of money and drugs, but with a mainman so intelligent, there was no complacency. …*By Numbers* doesn't tread water, it stirs it up and looks for the annoying piranhas in the tide.

Not all here, of course, is a tribute to the worried man side of Townshend. "Dreaming From The Waist" is the gay lust song that Bowie doesn't rock enough to have written. "Squeeze Box" fits perfectly into the double-entendre world of the era's comedy and is just a joyful noise, a perfect single, in welcome contrast to the navel-digging of the rest of the album. "Success Story" is hilarious not cynical. "Slip Kid" is Pete's 1980s career in embryo. It's all brilliant, it really is.

And then there's "Blue, Red And Grey". I've saved mentioning this song until last because it is, in my fat opinion, the most beautiful The Who have ever recorded. Over his own ukulele and John Entwistle's gorgeous silver band arrangement, Townshend discusses the way some people like mornings and some like nights but, when his true love is around, he's always happy. In the midst of a record all about self-loathing and the awful emptiness one feels in the low watches of the night, it's amazing but wonderful to hear rock's king of doubt sing, *"I like every minute of the day."* Of course, you know that, like all great rock stars, Townshend only means it for the few minutes he's singing it, but it doesn't matter. He's just as convincing as when singing about his own irrelevance, something he has, naturally, just disproved by making this disc.

The Who By Numbers, then. A million different viewpoints, all of them contained in Pete Townshend, and all delivered by the greatest rock band in the world. Volume and contrast. What more could you ask? ⊙

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"If I didn't know better, I could have construed this LP as The Grand Gesture – Townshend's Suicide Note…"
ROY CARR, *NME*, OCTOBER 4, 1975

"A highly personal solo work by Townshend, which reveals him as a frustrated disillusioned man, weary of running the band, confused about financial success, troubled by rows with management and with Daltrey."
MELODY MAKER, OCTOBER 11, 1975

THEY MAY HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE BAND, BUT THERE'S NO COMPLACENCY. THIS DOESN'T TREAD WATER, IT STIRS IT UP

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

'I'VE BEEN INTO THE ABYSS'

Keith Moon returns from LA for a riotous night out in Soho, where he drags his entourage into the high temples of punk. A bewildered **CHRIS WELCH** is doused in brandy, makes friends with Generation X and PJ Proby, and just manages to detect that the party animal in a bison coat is "haunted by tragedy and fearful of the future"...

A HUGE, WHITE Rolls-Royce slid the length of Wardour Street like a skateboard, Jan & Dean blasting from its hidden speakers, the owner bellowing along to "Dead Man's Curve" like a man possessed.

From the Marquee to the Vortex in five seconds – can man live at such speeds? A queue of sullen punks stands freezing in the cold, awaiting remission. Up draws the Rolls, Jan & Dean now spilling out into the street, the battle cry of a Lost Generation. The punks, all black leather and shivering knees, gaze in wonderment.

Keith Moon strides out onto the pavement, clad in a huge buffalo coat smothered in fur, and strikes a dramatic pose like a Shakespearean actor haranguing the plebeians of Rome. "This is privilege," he shouts brazenly, "I don't fucking queue, I go straight in, first class."

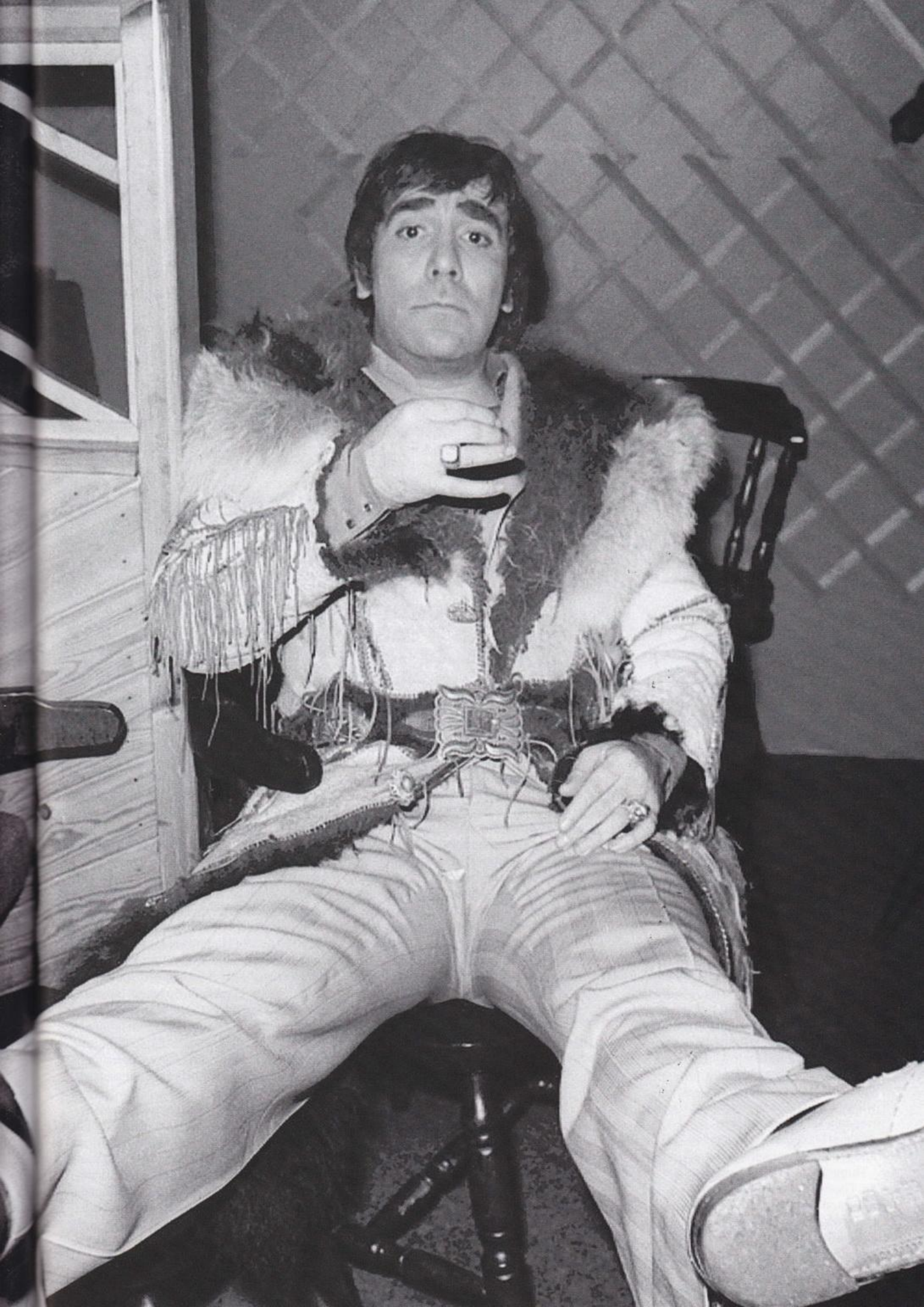
And he tossed back his head in an arrogant gesture and swept into the club past fans, bouncers and anybody else who might dare impede his progress.

It was the grandest entry since Napoleon paraded down the Champs-Elysées, and instead of provoking the mob into a fury they responded with cheers and laughter. It was certainly a hilarious moment, one of many the night Keith Moon went on a Punk Crawl.

Why should Moon go in among the punks, do I hear the cry? Was it to be patronising, to be provocative or simply to be a tourist? The answers are slightly more complex than the questions. It is certain that, of the older generation of rock statesmen, Keith Moon is more likely to be accepted than most. While most punk bands and musicians seem positively hostile to all other life forms on the planet, they have a certain grudging respect for The Who, it seems. The myth has somehow arisen that the new wave bands are "only doing what The Who did 10 years ago".

Actually, it was nearer 13 years CONTINUES OVER »

DENIS O'REGAN/CORBIS



ago that The Who were playing every Tuesday night at the Marquee, and, speaking as an eyewitness, to suggest that any one of the new wave/punk bands playing today had a fraction of the originality or excitement of the original Who is a calumny scarcely worth refuting.

But that does not mean the new wave does not have a right to exist. They exist for today just as The Who existed for a few brief seconds (on the scale of history), in their day. The Who were explosive, riotous, aggressive, violent and undoubtedly prone to fits of madness.

As far as Keith Moon is concerned, nothing much has changed. His good looks have long since gone, dissipated in a thousand nights of excess, with no Dorian Gray-style portrait in the attic to haunt him, except, perhaps, in the faded scrapbooks of past triumphs. Today good looks are the preserve of Billy Idol and his pals in Generation X, one of the few bands that do have some of the magic of the old Who and even sound a bit like them.

Keith retains his Marty Feldman eyes, his expressive face and maniacal grin that sets off warning bells among the wary. He retains his restless energy and almost physical impatience. For all his laughter and wild exploits, there is something infinitely sad about Keith at times, a man haunted by tragedy and fearful of the future.

But as soon as a dark shadow casts across his mind and flickers across his face, he shrugs it off and returns to the world he loves best – the world of endless pranks, outrageous poses and verbal onslaughts.

Although the journey from the Marquee to the Vortex is only a few hundred yards, for me it was like travelling down a time tunnel, aeons of space and time apart. I'd travelled the self-same route with Keith before, but this time, as we emerged from the tunnel mouth into the Vortex, the young Keith – a frantic blurred figure in a white T-shirt, flailing sticks and stuffing pills down his mouth – instead became a fur-clad apparition, a distortion of that figure locked away in the memory, surrounded once more by young faces, no longer fans, but distant characters in a new twist to the rock'n'roll plot.

For Keith the journey was a nostalgic homecoming. He has spent long years in the rather unreal beach house life of Los Angeles, a giant Jaywick Sands on the Pacific. To be back in London seemed like a return to his roots.

He actually looked thoroughly at home among the new kids and new bands that have inherited what was once his kingdom. That was once the kingdom of the mods, of Maximum R&B, of pills and posters, slogans and T-shirts.

Things have/haven't changed a lot. The noise is still there, only the names on the T-shirts have changed, along with the attitudes. Twelve years ago, kids resented outsiders, clung together in groups, identified with their bands, dressed alike and adopted an aggressive, defensive collective stance. Today... well, let's start at the beginning.

BACK IN 1966 Keith Moon collapsed after playing a particularly furious version of "My Generation" at the Manor House, a pub in north London. Roadies carried him head-first into the fresh air and I drove him in my shiny black Consul (£200, MoT, radio), to the Scotch Of St James and bought him a drink.

So I was delighted to be invited out for a return drink by Keith last week, although when he proposed a visit to various dens of iniquity and what have been described as the lowest-class rhythm cellars in all London, I must admit my heart began alarming palpitations.

Hailing a hansom cab I journeyed through swirling fog to the red light district of Soho, where prostitutes in fox furs lean indolently against gas lamps, Chinamen flit to and fro making significant gestures, and where Bobbies cast the light of their bulls-eye lanterns into dark alleyways to discern the mutilated remains of gang warfare.

Moon in bison, Chris Welch in (imitation) leather and "trad" pullover

"THIS PUNK SCENE, THE BANDS... IT ALL FEELS LIKE AN EARLY WHO GIG. BUT THEY'RE NOT AS TALENTED"

Keith and I were supposed to meet up in La Chasse Club in Wardour Street, a once-famous watering hole where the elite of the rock business once stumbled up and down its steep stairs in search of companionship.

I hadn't been to La Chasse for six years and suspected it was closed. It was. As I beat on the door on a tiny landing two flights up, a Chinaman flitted down from the floor above and made a significant gesture. There then followed an inane conversation, which set the hallmark for the rest of the evening. "Is the Chasse open?"

"What do you want?"

"Have you seen Keith?"

"No, I haven't seen Keith, I'm looking for Richard. We want to buy some drink."

"Yes, but I want to buy a drink too." And so on. It was established that the bar was closed and seemed unlikely to open for several hours yet, and I repaired hastily to The Ship, the pub just along the street from The Marquee, long the haunt of musos.

From about '64-'67, the place would be packed with musicians only, from Jeff Beck to Peter Frampton, from The Animals to Jimi Hendrix, from The Yardbirds to John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. It was a happy place until one night a certain drummer with a certain famous group set off a smoke grenade on the premises, and cleared the bar.

Keith Moon appeared shocked when I related the story to him, when I finally tracked him down. Arms outstretched in greetings, he launched into his "dear boy" routine, a cross between Jack Hawkins, Viv Stanshall and Noël Coward. It's one of Keith's favourite roles, tinged with a choleric Colonel and retired Empire builder.

"Delighted to see you, what will you have?" He could be greeting an old army chum at some far-flung trading post. He is immediately pounced upon by a charming foreign lady, a stranger to both of us, who wants to discuss his buffalo coat.

"Yes, it's a bison, shot it myself," said Keith, launching into a tissue of lies, which the lady seemed to accept without question. "Which tribe did that Red Indian belong to?" inquires the woman at length. Everyone is baffled but began reeling off the names of Indian tribes. "Sioux, Black Foot, Apache?" "No, no, none of them. He was the Red Indian with the Faces... Tetsu?"

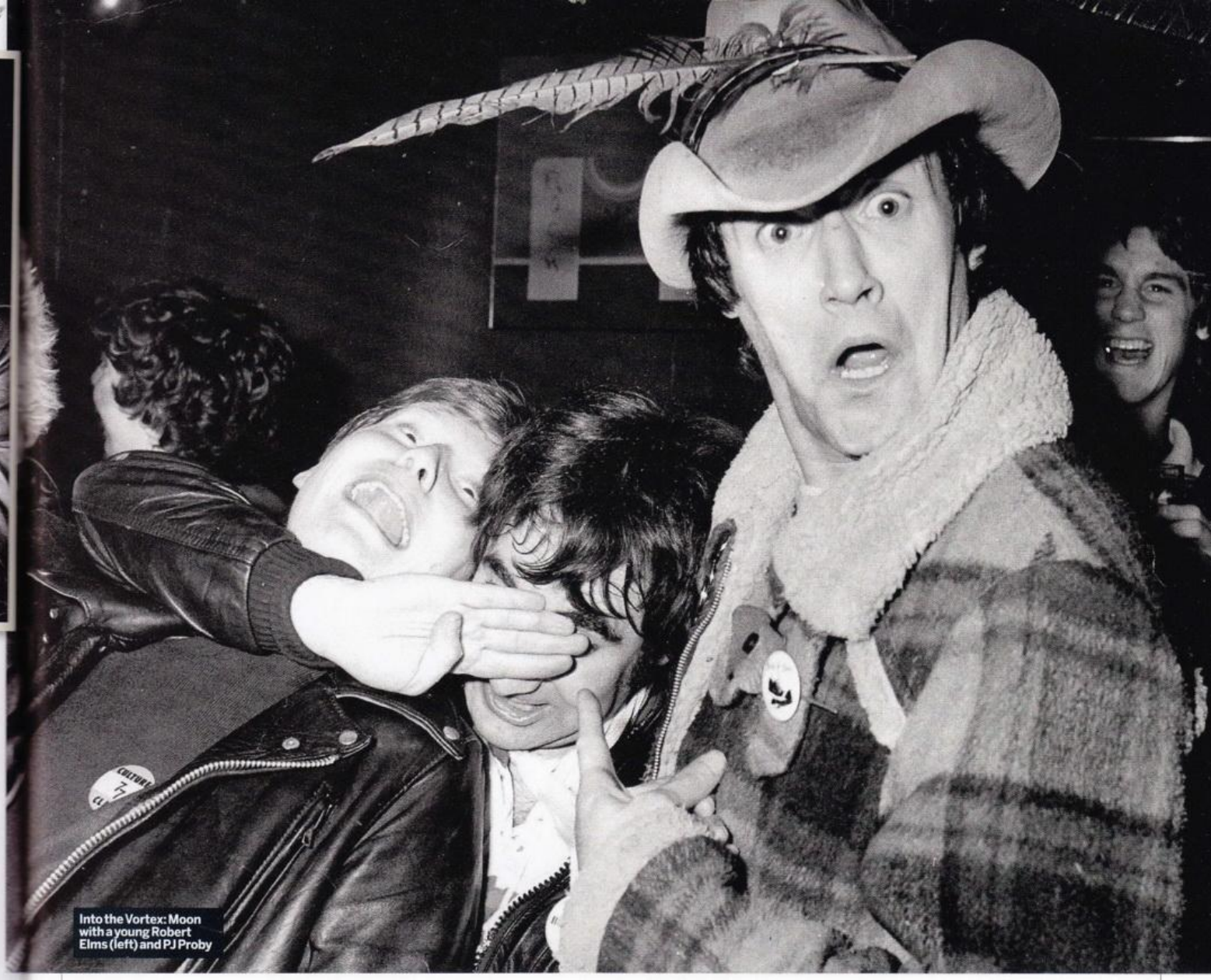
"Oh," says Keith, "he was JAPANESE! Funny sort of Red Indian, what?" The woman stared deadpan at Keith in disbelief and then withdrew from the conversation.

At this point, there was a commotion in the bar and a raising of heads. Keith emitted a piercing yell and dashed down the bar to greet the arrival of Generation X. I stayed with Bill Curbishley, the Who's manager, a remarkably sane gentleman, and Keith's chauffeur-come-minder, Richard, who is well over six feet tall and known as Little Richard.

The party began to grow larger. John D'Arcy, a new Who press officer, arrived, celebrating

WHO KNEW

The Who only played live once throughout the whole of 1977 – at the Kilburn Gaumont State in London on December 15, just 12 days after this article was published. It was the group's first gig in 14 months and featured the first – and final – stage performance of "Who Are You" with Keith Moon on drums.



Into the Vortex: Moon with a young Robert Elms (left) and PJ Proby

his first day on the job. The mumble of conversation became louder. It transpired that the publican would not service Billy and Tony of Generation X. Nothing against the group, he'd never heard of them. But if you serve one punk rocker, you serve 'em all. That seemed to be the philosophy.

"Right then, if they don't get served, we all leave," said Keith, and there was a mass exodus to the Marquee as the team, now eight-handed, marched along Wardour Street in a southerly direction.

It was an all-punk night at The Marquee and the place was packed to the walls, although not quite as frantic as when The Tom Robinson Band were on a while back.

We meet The Depressions, who will be playing at the Vortex later. Already the flow of alcohol is beginning to take effect, and as Keith shouts in my ear above the noise of The Worst (a group from Manchester) it becomes harder to discern what Keith is talking about.

"I've been into the abyss," he revealed suddenly. I knew he didn't mean another punk rock club, but that he was probably referring to some dark period in his life.

"I've looked over the edge of the abyss, but I haven't actually been inside," I tried to say helpfully. Through a haze of brandy and lager, both remarks seemed suitably profound.

We now seemed to be talking to the chaps from The Depressions, including Mr Crowbar, the drummer, who is a great fan of Keith. But music calls and we fight our way into the sweltering crowd to hear The Worst. They are. But they are also tremendous fun. Two, maybe three of them altogether. A singer with a guitar is shouting "*Rats, you're all rats!*" at us. I'm told they make up the numbers as they go along.

A drummer leapt from the audience, took over the kit, bashed away furiously for some minutes and then departed by the stage door to wild applause. The singer continued unabated, until another drummer appeared and repeated the performance. I believe there was a third, but events became somewhat blurred. A fan told me later that The Worst were the best band he had ever seen.

Meanwhile Keith was back in the bar and being accosted by suspicious youths in black leather jackets, aged about 14, or so it seemed. "Don't you get bored wiv' smashing things up?" asked one of them superciliously. "Nah," said Keith, "I smash up something different every day."

"What do you do when you're touring?"

"Fuck like hell," said our host.

The next group billed were The Flies, described by Keith as "Pre-Raphaelite scum". But once they started playing he nodded approvingly. "Ah yes, The Flies. They zip along at a furious pace."

But did he think they were as good as The Who when they used to play on the very same stage, so many months ago?

"No, but they're good. I feel like getting up and playing with them. I never sat in the audience in the old days, so I can't tell, but all this feels like an early Who gig. But they're not as talented. They have the same feeling that we had, but there's nothing new there. I've been to these clubs lots of times, and I like it all, all the clothes, all the rape and pillage."

Keith, at that moment, caught sight of The Who's new publicist, hovering uncertainly. "You look like a pillar," roared Keith suddenly. We presume he meant a pillar of society. At any rate the drummer dropped to his knees and hurled a pint beaker of brandy all over the unfortunate man's trousers, leaving him somewhat nonplussed.

The following day Mr D'Arcy reported that he had to burn all his clothes after our night out and was planning to write a book.

As John wrung out his trousers I felt a raining sensation round the ankles and found that my (imitation) leather jacket was draining off a pint of beer that seemed to have been tipped down my back. I gave a light laugh and felt one of the throng, a true initiate into the wonderful world of punkery. And when someone shouted out "Wanker!" I knew the true bliss of the newly converted.

It was considered a good time to quit the Marquee for the Vortex, and we left Billy Idol at the bar, while Keith and

CONTINUES OVER »

BARRY PLUMMER

Young pretenders: Moon with Chris Welch (right) and The Depressions

remnants of the entourage piled into the Rolls-Royce, miraculously intact in the street outside, and rolled towards the Vortex. I mused that I have once been thrown out of the Vortex, or at least refused entry when it was called Crackers, and I was wearing denim jeans, which weren't allowed in such a fashionable disco. If you weren't wearing denim jeans now, you might be thrown out for being a social deviant.

Keith staged his dramatic entry, and I fully expected the revolution to start. But after Keith's provocative speech-making, the only comment, from a cheerful bouncer was: "Is he in a good mood tonight?" Perhaps this was just one performance in a long-running show.

Inside the Vortex all was safety pins and dyed hair, but I was relieved to note there was no spitting as on my last visit. Everybody was as peaceful as the hippies in the old Middle Earth. It wasn't quite Tolkien Lives, but they seemed to be enjoying themselves in harmless fashion.

There was even a gay punk who observed a reunion waltz by Mr Moon and the celebrated US singer PJ Proby with a shocked, "There's some amazing lowlife in tonight. But it's made my night, dear, seeing Keith Moon. I mean, I go out and buy POSTERS of him."

I must admit it was stunning to meet Mr Proby in such a setting. He was strolling about in his cowboy Stetson, looking even younger than in the days when I last saw him at the height of his fame. We almost expected him to give us a burst of "Somewhere". And indeed, Mr Proby was in fine vocal form as it transpired.

FOR ALL HIS LAUGHTER AND WILD EXPLOITS, THERE IS SOMETHING INFINITELY SAD ABOUT KEITH AT TIMES...

Meanwhile Keith was engaged in heated conversation with a young student who gave Keith just as good as he got in the verbal stakes. He did tell me his name [*most likely Robert Elms, see photo on previous page*], but the shock of finding the Vortex charges 52p for a brandy drove it from an already shattered brain. I think he said it was Eric. If not – sorry Eric!

At any rate, Keith's new-found friend grinned from ear to ear, shouted his philosophy above the barrage of the band and accused us of ripping off the punks. Quite how I couldn't completely understand, but it had something to do with just being there. Eventually we received some grudging acknowledgment. "At least you've got the bottle to come down here." "What's to bottle?" snapped Keith.

"Well, a lot of people were afraid to come here when it first opened."

Keith responded to this by burning holes in the kid's jacket. "I can take anything you can throw at me," he said with remarkably good humour.

Keith threw a glass of brandy at him. "I'm 30," said Keith suddenly. "I'm 18." They looked at each other and both burst into laughter. The younger of the two lunatics told Keith that rock star status was of no interest to him. "You mean nothing to me," he announced aloofly. "Poof!" rejoined Keith, smartly. Not the most brilliant repartee, but not bad after several beakers of Rémy Vortex. Keith then began to turn his attention to me, sticking what I thought was a syringe into my wrist (it turned out to be a toothpick, mercifully), complaining about my "trad pullover," and insisting that I was a fool and knave not to spend more time with real people like the punks. Apparently he was berating me in quite violent terms, according to later reports, but I must confess that by this time I was totally immunised, and don't remember a word of it. All I vaguely remember was singing, or rather howling like a dog, along with PJ Proby and Keith to the music of The Depressions in the world's first punk version of The Hedley Ward Trio.

Keith and PJ split to Tramps club to cause some real damage among the Debs, The Who's senior PR consultant left the Vortex to find his charge, only to be refused re-entry to the club by the previously friendly bouncers ("Fuck off," they said). I stumbled into the night air, emerging from the far end of the time tunnel, my Trad Jersey soaked in beer, wines and spirits, plastered with Depressions stickers and convinced there is life after death.

But Keith did not escape from the Vortex without one parting shot. This time a punk was less enamoured to see the star of The Who and began berating him loudly for daring to possess a Rolls-Royce (that cunning example of the Derbyshire work people's arts and crafts which helps keep our economy alive).

"Capitalist pig... you shouldn't have a Rolls-Royce, you should have a people's car!"

Keith waited for the tirade to stop. "This IS a people's car... Get in!"

WHO KNEW

After his hits dried up, "trouser splitter" PJ Proby turned his attention to musicals, starring in *Catch My Soul* (the rock *Othello*), and later as Elvis and Roy Orbison. He toured with The Who, acted as The Godfather in the 1997 production of *Quadrophenia*, and recorded an LP with Dutch proggers Focus.

BARRY PLUMMER

'I WENT BARMY WITH ROCK 'N' ROLL AND THE WHO'

Three years on from his Daltrey-baiting *NME* broadside, Pete Townshend returns to the fray. In the interim, he's been to hell and back, ripped up royalty cheques, slept in gutters, made friends with The Who, been acclaimed as the Godfather Of Punk and – fortunately – had his faith in rock rejuvenated. With the "optimistic and razor-edged" *Who Are You* due any day, **TONY STEWART** meets a relatively positive Townshend: "Could it be I'm happy," he ponders, "when I'm depressed?"

THE POLICE FOUND Pete Townshend unconscious in a Soho doorway the day after he'd been to hell and back. In the grey light of a cold dawn, the copper recognised the soiled and dishevelled figure that stank of stale booze, and gruffly shook him awake.

"'Ello, Pete," he said, smiling benignly. "If you can get up and walk away, as a special treat you can sleep in your own bed today."

Eyes screwed up against the harsh daylight, cold and confused, Townshend staggered to his feet. As he slowly made his way along the bleak and deserted streets to the tube station, the painful memories of the previous day started to come back...

He'd been at a business meeting with his former manager Chris Stamp, his accountant and the infamous rock biz troubleshooter Allen Klein. For six months he'd been trying to get back payment of his American songwriting royalties, and it was the final meeting in a series of many.

Klein apparently produced sheets of figures, totally confused everybody, haggled over his cut for collecting the monies, and after 12 hours presented Townshend with a cheque. Townshend was emotionally drained, exasperated and infuriated by the whole ordeal.

"I said to Chris Stamp," he recalls, "'I don't fuckin' believe all that! I don't believe that after all these years in the rock business that I've sat through all that shit, and gone through all that for six months just to get a cheque.' I felt like a piece of shit!"

But his tortuous journey into self-abuse to visit the hell of his own personality had only just begun. And after drinking his "compulsory bottle of brandy", he and Stamp went to the Speakeasy to see John Otway And Wild Willie Barrett perform.

"I burst in, ignored John and Willie who were on their last number, smashed a few glasses, trod on a few toes and hit a few people, all friends of mine. I dunno why I went. I should have just gone and banged me 'ead against a wall. Then I thought I saw Johnny Rotten.

"Then I said to Chris, "Oo's that there?' An' he

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REX FEATURES

said, 'It's one of the Sex Pistols. It's...' And I'd already gone, and I'd got him and cornered him against the bar. I said something like, 'What the fuck are you doing here?'

"I thought he was Johnny Rotten for the first five minutes I was talking to him. Then I suddenly realised it was somebody else. It turned out to be Paul Cook, the Pistols' drummer. And I sat him down and I was really preaching at the poor little sod. Then Steve Jones, the guitar player, came and sat down and I went, 'Rock'n'roll's gone down the fuckin' pan!' and I tore up the royalty cheque.

"About halfway through the tirade Paul looked at me really confused. He didn't really know what I was talking about. And he said, 'The Who aren't going to break up, are they?'

"'Break up!' I said. "'We're fuckin' finished! It's a disaster!' And he said, 'Ahhh, but we like The Who'. I went, 'YOU LIKE THE 'OO? AHHHHHHHHHH!' And I stormed out of the place, and the next thing I knew I was being woken up in a doorway in Soho...

"And I got in and me old lady was waiting for me... sitting there with the rolling pin, but too tired to use it. She said, 'Where've you been?' I said, 'I've been to hell'. And I really did feel that I'd actually been to hell, and that's what the song 'Who Are You' is about."

Paul Cook later said that you thought you were past it – which may well have been the impression you gave.

"That's a polite way of putting it. I felt like a raging bull. I obviously collapsed just as soon as I walked out the door, but I didn't feel so bad just because I'd been drunk in the Speakeasy; it was because I'd been stone cold sober at a business meeting in Tin Pan Alley. That sort of thing had nothing to do with why I picked up a guitar in the first place.

"I think," he adds, "the whole new album will serve as an encyclopaedia of rock'n'roll for the up-and-coming group – where not to get caught."

IN THE THREE years since he last allowed the rock press to interview him at length, Pete Townshend has changed very little in appearance. Conscientiously the '70s mod, he still gives the impression of being haunted. Not even the smart white shirt with a button-down collar, the crisply tailored khaki trousers and the cumbersome Dr Martens he wears hide the nervous tension stiffening his thin, angular body. Suspicious and uneasy, his eyes dart around their sockets; but it's understandable that he should be wary at first.

His last major interview with *NME* in May '75 told of his own disillusionment with rock and The Who and led to a public feud. Three months later Roger Daltrey retaliated; he accused Townshend of going onstage drunk, betraying the group and their fans, and generally continued a vendetta that many expected would finally finish The Who.

"When Roger said I was drunk," Townshend says, "he was right. Drunk? Was I drunk!! I felt part of rock'n'roll was going on the road, getting drunk, having a good time and screwing birds. But on that particular occasion I couldn't handle it... and I was falling to bits.

"At the same time I was going slightly barmy. I was hallucinating; I was forgetting big chunks of time: I think only because I was drinking so much. Like I was waking up in bed with somebody and not knowing what had led up to that particular point. Then I was going home and trying to face me old lady. So it was a really peculiar period."

The Who survived, but Townshend declined to be interviewed.

"There's only one direct line between me and the public and that's through the songs. And that's obviously where I want to be judged, not on the strength of what I say in interviews. Because interviews are opinions. Songs are actions."

"THE WHO MUST NEVER BE A PARODY OF OURSELVES. IT STARTED TO HAPPEN IN '76 AND I DON'T THINK WE REALISED IT"

Yet he did once break his silence, even if he remained unquestioned, to write 'Pete Townshend's Back Pages', published in *NME* last November. It was a courageous attempt to exorcise the ghosts of disenchantment and the frustration of 'old-age' that haunted his career during the mid-'70s. Undoubtedly cathartic, the piece ended optimistically; and it's this spirit that's been captured on the new album, *Who Are You*.

While it may be idealistic to believe that Townshend has agreed to be interviewed again because the psychological scars have disappeared, you can't help but suspect that it's also a timely way of promoting the LP, as The Who aren't playing concerts. But that suspicion undermines Townshend's dignity.

Now regarded as the spiritual Godfather Of Punk, and arguably the single most important precursor of Rock's New Age, he's abrasive, animated and candid. Once he overcomes his initial reserve, he relaxes into a comprehensive interview lasting three hours. Obviously, the traumatic years have changed his attitudes, but more significantly he has regained his artistic confidence.

"I'm really quite relieved that we managed to get the new album done," he says. "But I'm pleased with the writing. I particularly like 'Trick Of The Light', a song John wrote. And I'm glad I managed to get 'Guitar And Pen' and 'Music Must Change' to be as optimistic and razor-edged. They're not screaming vitriol, but they're still quite hard... Not in the aggressive way that 'Who Are You' is hard; that's probably the most archetypal, old-fashioned Who-sounding track on the album... very much in the tradition of 'Won't Get Fooled'.

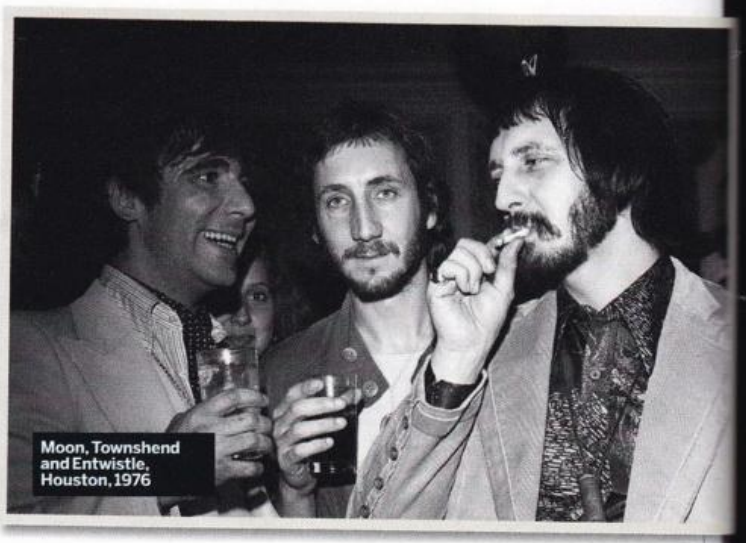
"But I know we're evolving," he adds confidently, "no question about it."

Were you in a better frame of mind when you wrote the songs for *Who Are You* than you were in '74/'75?

"Oh yeah," he answers without hesitation. "In a much better frame of mind than after and during *The Who By Numbers*. At that particular period I felt the band was finished and I was finished and the music was dying There was very little sign that the New Wave was gonna emerge. I started to get disenchanted not only with what we were doing and everything around the band, but because nobody else seemed to be pushing either. The band came through that very down period. I came out the other side giving up on the rock business and giving up on the band, but discovered three other blokes that I really liked. I stopped treating them as a group of partners and started to think about them as people to drink with. Suddenly I realised I liked them and liked working with them. It was a bit of a discovery.

"When the New Wave came along it was, for me, a great affirmation. I thought, 'Aye, aye, we're not dead yet'. I felt it was the closing of a circle. It was part of what had been nagging at me: it didn't seem the music business was ever gonna get back to rock again, and that we were incapable of going back. We were getting older, more mature and we were settling down.

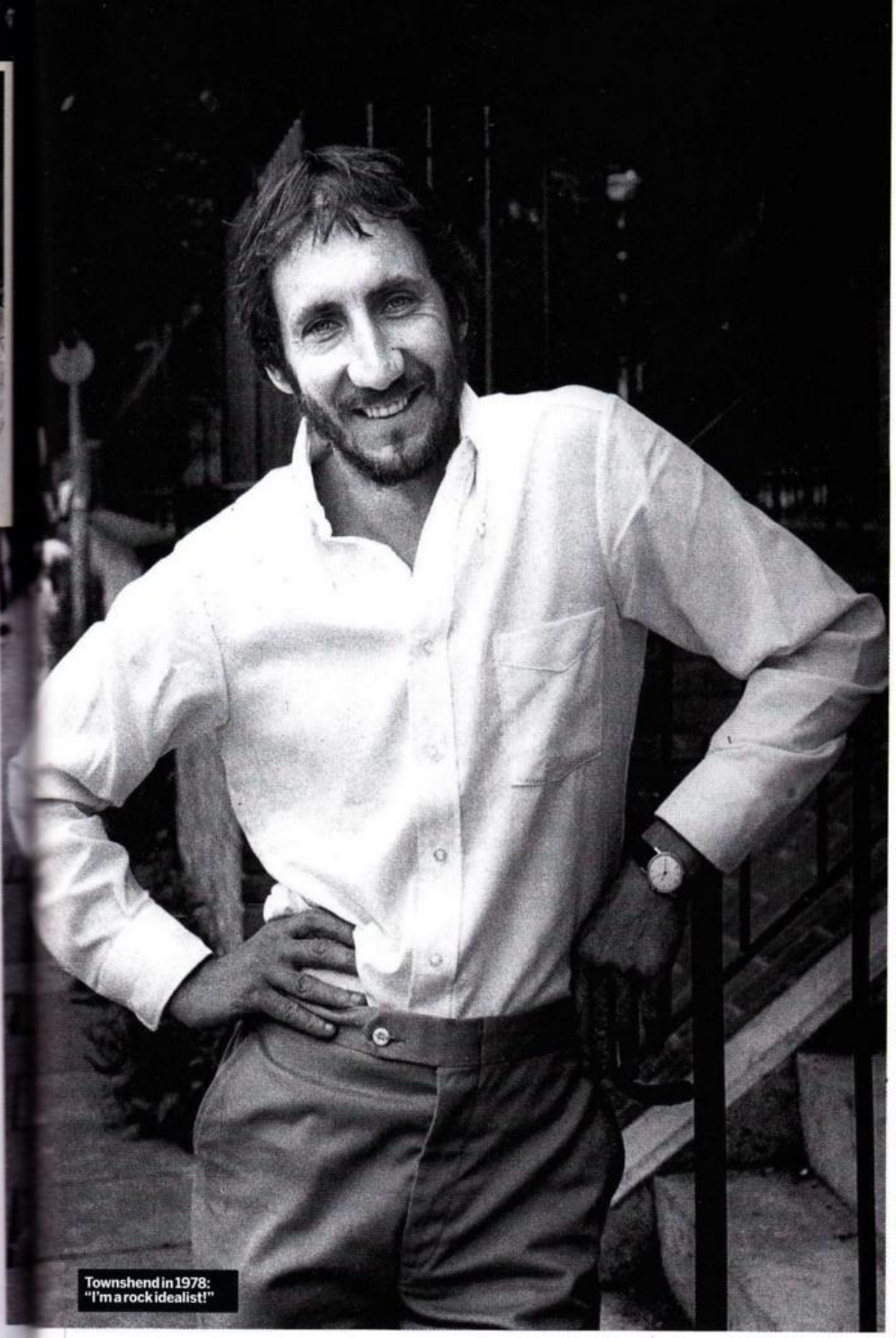
"Like there's a big difference between me playing the guitar today and me playing even six years ago. It's not just that I don't wanna play in the same aggressive way, but I haven't



Moon, Townshend and Entwistle, Houston, 1976

WHO KNEW

Family affairs! Pete's first wife Karen Astley – who he wed in 1968 and divorced in 2000 – is the daughter of BBC composer Edwin 'Ted' Astley. Ted penned the score for "Street In The City" (which appears on Pete's 1977 LP with Ronnie Lane, *Rough Mix*), and Karen's brother Jon co-produced *Who Are You*...



Townshend in 1978: "I'm a rock idealist!"

got the ability to do that. I've knocked down that wall of screaming and shouting so often that it's no fun to knock it down any more. So I'm going over and knocking at another wall.

"It's not necessarily one that's so romantic or macho or young and proud, but it's nevertheless a wall; and I like smashing at it.

"Nowadays when I write I push myself in another direction. I try and work out chord changes that turn your head inside out; I might spend a month messin' around with a particular synthesiser sound just to try and get something that's gonna last for 10 years and not sound jaded in a week. I'm trying to discover something else that's as good as a wound-up electric guitar."

Unlike you, a lot of musicians in your class-group felt threatened and intimidated by the New Wave. They thought they were finished.

"Well, I can understand that. A lot of bands that felt finished I hope are finished. I think The Who are standing on a different bit of ground. If you feel intimidated, you have to get territorial. Say, 'I'm on this patch of ground: if you want it come and get it'. The strongest survive, and if a new band wants that patch badly enough, it'll get it.

"I don't think enough people did that. If anybody should have felt completely superfluous, it should have been The Who. The roots of practically every New Wave act I saw seemed to be The Who. Then I realised that made more of us. There was a line between us and the kids on the street; people The Who are finding increasingly difficult to reach. At least it makes us feel we've achieved something over a longer period of time.

"I'm a rock idealist," he laughs. "I'm not interested whether I make money out of it. I'm interested that when I picked up a guitar to write I'd been listening to people like Dylan. You can use music to communicate with people and to affirm that you share certain feelings about the world and about the music that we enjoy. And I think that lasts to today. So now I spend my time communicating through my music to people that are about 33 years old, used to live in Shepherd's Bush, sometimes wear Dr Martens...

"When I was a kid, and when I was in me middle-twenties, I had something that they don't seem to have today. And I felt very glad I could reach younger people. It's just an amazing kick that rock'n'roll has managed to sustain. Admittedly I was wearing dark glasses at the time, and looking at everything in a grey way, but after ...*By Numbers* I saw people like Electric Light Orchestra and ELP. I thought about what we were up to, and the Stones and Mick Jagger's silk pyjamas and Elton John and Rod Stewart. I thought, 'ell, it really is dead.'

"Luckily the New Wave came when I was already down. They say if you're down far enough the gutter looks like up. Well, the gutter is where modern rock bands, all rock music comes from. It's where it starts and you've got to be in the gutter to see it. And the New Wave began when I was feeling really wretched. So I took most of the insults as grand compliments."

THE JAM WERE probably influenced more by The Who than any other New Wave band. When they released their first album, *In The City*, they were regarded as the surrogate-Who to the extent that one critic claimed they were more entitled to Who licks than The Who were themselves.

"Entitlement to a lick is a complete waste of words anyway; because all rock comes from somewhere. It all evolves, is handed on, taken, snatched, ripped off. You're entitled to it if you've got it. Possession is nine points of the law. He's probably right," Pete adds with a chuckle.

But why are you so benevolent towards them? Don't you want to retain the music yourself? For one thing, blatant mimicry (which it was at first) is unhealthy in rock'n'roll.

"I don't think it's a good thing for The Jam, because they've got a helluva lot of potential. Seems a waste of time. But I don't think Paul Weller writes because he wants to emulate what The Who did. He just sees what The Who did as being a particular way of reaching a public which would work again. It's not so much blatant mimicry as outrageous commercial Stigwoodism. He's doing it with *Saturday Night Fever*, turning Travolta into another Elvis Presley, and the old man hasn't turned in his grave yet.

"So why not do it on other levels? It's smaller but it's the same thing. I'm not trying to justify it and nor do I want to appear Mary Poppins-benevolent either."

But surely it's got something to do with the rock audience now being too big for any one band to meet?

"We can't even play for the 30-year-old B-O-Fs who want to come and see us at Wembley Pool. We could probably play six weeks at Wembley, and only towards the end the audiences would start to trail off. We could travel in America all year round playing to full houses. So it just goes to show there's not enough bands to go round. I've always said to Roger [Daltrey], who wanted badly to go to Japan, 'What's the point? We'll

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PENNIE SMITH, REX

go and they'll probably love the band, and then there'll be an amazing demand and we won't be able to meet it'. We might as well not go and prick-tease. It's a strange situation. And yet a lot of younger bands that I'd quite happily spend time listening to don't make it."

Well, seeing a band in a club is genuinely exciting, but once they get into a vast stadium the vitality is dissipated and very often the essence of rock'n'roll is lost. Unless, of course, it's somebody like Dylan, when just to see him contributes to the excitement of the event.

"It did happen with Dylan, didn't it? I couldn't believe it. My old lady took the tickets, but after the last couple of shitty albums he's put out, I couldn't be bothered to go. And she said he was AMAZING! I said, 'You're kidding. 'Ow could Dylan possibly be amazing at this point in his life?' I was just incredibly surprised he could actually do it. Perhaps it's because he's conscious of his writing today, in the same way that The Who are of 13 years of history. But in a different way. He doesn't treat his history in the way The Who treat theirs.

"We treat our history like Who fans. We look back on it as something almost sacred, not to be tampered with. You don't take a song like 'My Generation' and rearrange the fuckin' thing. You don't have black women singing on it. But I suppose we're denying ourselves a true evolution, which is one whereby the music continues to live rather than being ice-box material which is constantly de-thawed and then shoved back in the ice-box again.

"The Who are doing something wrong, and I don't really know what it is; I feel that passionately at the moment."

"IT'S A BLOODY WONDER WE'RE STILL HERE TODAY. I NEVER ATE; IT WAS ALL DOPE-DOPE-DOPE AND 'ORRIBLE VIBES"

Perhaps it's because you're denying yourself the feeling of being involved in rock, because you don't tour and *Who Are You* is the first new album in three years?

"The only time I feel the joy of rock'n'roll is when I'm actually onstage. But getting to the stage is another story: getting on a plane with Moon, going to a hotel, getting stuck in some dive in the States. Then you come back from a six-week stint feeling like a superhuman, but nobody around you recognises it, and you don't relate to your family. What's *that* all about?

"It's just disorientation; unless you're gonna spend your life on the road until you get killed in an air crash. Yeah, Lynyrd Skynyrd! I don't wanna die in an air crash. And I also don't wanna drink a bottle of brandy every day, 'cos that'll kill me, too.

"Different people want different things. I heard that Jagger said the Stones would be onstage until they're 50, and look at the human wreckage they've already left behind them. I don't want to be responsible for that for the rest of my life. I can excuse a lot of wreckage The Who have created, put it down to experience maybe. But now I can't do it. I could handle a nightly engagement at the Hammersmith Odeon, I said to Bill Curbishley (The Who's manager) I'd play every night of the week at the Odeon, but not to ask me to go round the world again because I'm not gonna do it! They're trying to persuade me to agree to three three-week tours of America. But I haven't got that kind of need any more. I don't need to get up and play.

"I enjoy it when I'm there... and I might need it more than I think I do. But when I say there's something wrong with The Who I'm really talking about the stage. We still go on and do that same old act again and again. It's so backward looking. The Who must never be a parody of ourselves. It started to happen in '76 and I don't think we realised it. I was really fucked up after that."

After you played that Kilburn gig for *The Kids Are Alright* movie last Christmas, the producer said he thought it'd given you the bug to play concerts again.

"Roger, Keith and John all came off bubbling. Roger said, 'Right Townshend, now you must feel like going back on the road'. That performance made me feel more than ever that we shouldn't go back on the road. And everybody kinda went, 'Eurghhhh!' Then Roger said, 'You're barmy, I'm not gonna let your feelings of depression affect me'.

"Of course there's always a chance that the band affect the way I feel about it. But until I can actually feel they share my neurosis then it's hard to begin to even talk about the problems I feel are there. The group has gone past the point of no return, and I haven't now got the machinery to find me way back. But I do accept that somebody like Roger could, if he wanted to, probably bring me back.

"But he'd have to work on it, because I feel such a long way from that desire to get up and play the guitar. Like I said about the album, I'm relieved we got it out. I think it's a miracle, and not because it took too long or any of the hardships."

On just one hearing, it still seems a positive album.

"Yeah. There's nothing that gets you at it like a few problems. We've been through some amazing ups and downs. A little thing like a tape-recorder breaking down is not known to stop us. It's just that it did happen a helluva lot."

Did you ever think The Who were fated?

"No. Glyn (Johns) used to. In fact he actually ran out of time completely. He'd worked a year longer on the album than he'd planned." He digresses... "See, I like to keep a space open as far as the band's live performances go. We have to find another way to do shows if it's gonna fit in with being a young married with a couple of kids who're nine and seven and need to see me every day.

"That's something I could never account for when I was 19 and wrote *'Why don't they all fade away?'* I never knew one day I'd have two kids I missed with a physical pain when I was away from home. 'Ow do you deal with that? Big fuckin' rock star!"

We were talking about communication, and you seemed to suggest you only appeal to 30-year-olds in suburbia. Does that mean you feel bands like The Clash, Bethnal and The Jam now communicate with the teen generation?

"Not entirely to the younger generation. You probably know as well as I do, a lot of the so-called young punks that you used to see down the Roxy were all about 50. But a lot of them were also very young people who were isolated. They couldn't find anything in The Who's music that appealed to them. It was weird. Just as somebody started to speak up, thousands of people said, 'Right, I want to hear that!' They didn't care whether it was music, or whether it sounded any good. It mattered more that somebody was saying it.

"The Clash are an amazing band. I hope they don't break up but, unless they go to America, they will. They're probably regretting having said, 'We never want to go to America; we're never gonna leave England; fuck America, the materialistic Cadillacs an' all that crap!' But it's not like that. The Clash have not had the kind of recognition they, yes, deserve in this country, apart from a certain inspired minority, like myself. It would be balanced and more powerful in the American environment.

"They'd be acceptable in street terms because they've got their own cultural ground. They would feel a kinship in the States rather than feel intimidated. Whereas it's difficult to feel you've achieved anything in England if you think that achievement is measured by results. America's big enough to make a small result look bigger. The Who fans there don't number anything like Elton John's, but it's still a significant enough group to pay the bills and allow you to go on and make you feel you're achieving something.

"But you could put Elton's 15 million fans against our million, and you have a different substance of people. They'd buy his records for entertainment. They wouldn't listen to the lyrics... they'd listen to the clever production and the musicians' session ability."

But nowadays don't people just buy Who albums because they want to know what you're going to reveal about yourself next? Certainly this was true with *The Who By Numbers*, which contained songs like "However Much I Booze".

"If all you had to do to sell records is be honest... it'd be really easy. *The Who By*

WHO KNEW

The US single version of lead-off single (and, latterly, ubiquitous *CSI* theme tune) "Who Are You" is shorter and features a lyric change from "*Who the fuck are you...*" to "*Who the hell are you...*" A similar edit was made when the song was included as one of 12 Who tracks on a plug-in for videogame *Rock Band*.

Townshend, with Joe Strummer: "The Clash are an amazing band". Right: with Ronnie Lane, co-collaborator on 1977's *Rough Mix* album

Numbers was revealing, I suppose, because it was all that I had left at the time. I just thought, 'What am I gonna do because I'm fucked up, not writing anything?' Not all the songs I submitted for that album – about 30 – were like that. There's one little chink in the armour, and that's the ukulele track. *'I like every minute of the day'* [*'Blue Red And Grey'*]. I put in five other things like that."

Do you think it was an album of despair?

"Not entirely. It's just a statement of fact. You don't despair about something that you feel has already gone down the pan, and I just felt the band was going down the pan. I felt the situation between Roger and me was irredeemable. The things I said I genuinely meant at the time. The reason they got up his nose, and why what he said in reply got up my nose, was because we were both speaking the truth about one another. We both made it clear we hated one another's guts. And you only hate somebody if you don't know 'em.

"I feel the reverse now. Now, if I was gonna pick three friends, I'd start with those three.

"Everybody's changed in the band in the last three years. I think *The Who By Numbers* was partly responsible for that. But the other thing that's been played down like mad – because it's very painful for the band to talk about – is that we were going through litigation with our management, Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp; people we loved. I felt myself being pulled in two directions, and in the end I had to let go my friendship with Kit and Chris, and run with the band. And I don't like that, but I knew what I had to do.

"It's like if your two kids are drowning; which one do you save? You don't necessarily save the nearest. Somewhere along the line you make a choice, and it may be selfish. In retrospect I made the right choice. It was when *The Who By Numbers* was finished that I said to Roger, 'All right, let's get together and blow 'em out'. Then he dropped his armour, and we immediately became very close. He'd seen me very much as an enemy and it explained a helluva lot. Like when we were doing *Quadrophenia* I couldn't understand why he was so aggressive towards me and about the album."

Ripped apart by mixed loyalties and your own feelings of gloom, there were those lines on "They Are All In Love" on *...By Numbers*: *"Goodbye all you punks stay young and stay high/Hand me my chequebook and I'll crawl off to die."* Why didn't you?

"I think I did. What the lines are about is that we went on to sue Kit Lambert. It's not really what it seems to be about. Punks didn't mean what it does today. Punks is what I used to call the New York fans who used to try and get you by the ears and pin you down and take you home in a cardboard box.

"The song was about what the band had become. It was about money, about law courts, about lawyers, and about accountants. Those things had *never* mattered and the band had a backlog of tax problems and unpaid royalties. We had to deal with it. I really felt like crawling off and dying."

So it wasn't abdication from rock'n'roll?

"Only inasmuch as I didn't think we were gonna be able to go on. I couldn't see how we could if we were gonna worry about these kind of things."

It must have been hard for somebody who's a rock'n'roll idealist.

"I blame The Who fans for this!" Townshend goons. "If they hadn't bought the records, if they hadn't come to the concert, we wouldn't have had all that money, we wouldn't have had to buy Shepperton Studios, and I wouldn't be here. So it's their fuckin' fault!

"It certainly hasn't changed my idealistic stance. I can't be hypocritical about it. But I'm not in the place I thought I'd end up. When the band started off in '64/'65 I really thought we were just gonna explode. I thought I was gonna die. Looking at the footage of *The Kids Are Alright* it's a bloody wonder we are still here today. I never ate; it was all dope-dope-dope, and 'orrible vibes of aggression and bitterness.

"Out of that we were saying, 'We are the mirror for the desperation and bitterness and frustration and misery of the misunderstood adolescents; the people in the vacuum.' I never expected to be able to afford a reliable car or go somewhere wonderful for me holidays, or buy a big house, or run a business. And I don't know if I want to.

"How many people do *exactly* what they want to? I've done what I want to for 10 years, so I don't mind the odd things that I don't want to do now.

"Meher Baba says, 'Don't

CONTINUES OVER »

PAUL CANTY/LFI

worry, be happy'. I think that's what rock'n'roll's about. But it doesn't walk away from the things that aren't right. It lays everything out on the table, all the problems that you've got, and all the problems society has. It doesn't squash that or screw 'em up and throw 'em away. It fuckin' lives with them!"

YOUR DEFINITION of rock'n'roll in 'Back Pages' was: 'If it screams for truth rather than help, if it commits itself with a courage it can't be sure it really has, if it stands up and admits something is wrong, but doesn't insist on blood, then it's rock'n'roll. We shed our own blood; we don't need to shed anyone else's.'

"YEA THE TEAM!" calls Townshend, punching the air and laughing. "It shouldn't be said as poetically as that, but that's really what it's about. People talk about not taking rock too seriously. But to me it's everything; so I can't take it seriously enough. If it is your release, the key to happiness, then you should take it seriously."

For somebody who follows Meher Baba's philosophies (and rock's), you've had more than your share of torment and despair.

"That's 'cos I'm silly. I remember Patti Smith said, 'How can somebody like Townshend follow Meher Baba and be such a miserable bastard?' Could it be I'm happy when I'm depressed?

"I dunno. I definitely like a bit of drama. Like I said, I'm happy when I'm taking things seriously.

"It's also difficult to practise what you believe, what you aspire to. It's one thing to say, *'I hope I die before I get old'* and it's another matter to do it. And it's easier to please other people than it is yourself. So I'm not worried about making my life cosily happy. But I know now my need for security and stability is greater than it ever was.

"People used to say to me, 'Townshend, why don't you learn how to relax? Go away for a week and have a holiday'. I'd say, 'I don't want a holiday; work's a holiday, music's a holiday to me'. Utter crap like that. Now I do need to get the business and music out of me 'ead. if you think about one thing obsessively for 15 years you eventually go barmy; and I went barmy with rock'n'roll and The Who. Through keeping it at a distance and being objective about it for a couple of years, I feel fresher and happier."

Do you think that shows on the new album?

"I hope so. The lyrics I wrote are hard-edged and cut in the way I want them to, but not in a bitter or aggressive way. They've got venom. But there's also a bit of joy in the music. I don't mean it's doom-laden music with pretty lyrics in the background; the balance is right.

"A lot of the material on this LP was inspired again by the 'Lifehouse' script. It's what first inspired a lot of music on *Who's Next*. It's a story about music, the rediscovering of music and what music is. It's not just about rock'n'roll, it's got a mystical quality.

"Seven years later a lot of what I wrote about has since become accepted, particularly in America where they're into metaphysics, the connection between your mood and the way you live your life, and the vibrations in the air. It was all spacey talk when I first started. The rest of the band thought I was insane..."

Or ready to join The Moody Blues.

"Right. But the story has inspired me to write songs like 'Guitar And Pen', which are not just about music but also about writing a song. If you've got the ability to write a song that reaches people, if you've got the ability to play guitar in such a way that it makes people jump up and down, then it's a God-given thing."

Isn't "New Song" on *Who Are You* part of that, too?

"It's about rock needing to do the same things, say the same things again and again. It's like I said before: it never lets go; it always admits to the same thing; it carries its own crap along with it. It never throws it on someone else. It can't, because when it does it's guilty of what the rest of the world does. In that sense a good bit of rock is still fairly pure. How long it can stay that way I don't know."

"PEOPLE TALK ABOUT NOT TAKING ROCK SERIOUSLY. TO ME IT'S EVERYTHING; I CAN'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH"

You said earlier The Who mirrored the frustrations of the people in a void who otherwise weren't represented. Do you still do that with your music?

"Only partly, because I'm not trying to do the same thing any more. Things have apparently changed around me. Every man is a pivot for his own private universe, and that's the way I still feel. I'm still Townshend and I'm writing every now and again, but not necessarily to change things. Perhaps now certain things could be left as they are. Certain things you can't change. Certain things aren't worth worrying about. Rather than getting desperately unhappy I come out with something like *The Who By Numbers*."

But you haven't any teen-anthems like "My Generation" and "Won't Get Fooled", and perhaps that's part of The Who's problem: you've alienated yourself from the audience. Paul Weller claimed the songs you write now are self-indulgent, that you come on with "all this martyr shit" and that you can't rest on your laurels for the rest of your life.

"There's an element of truth in what Paul said. There have been periods, and I'm sure there'll be more, when I felt like an amazing martyr. If you think you're doing something that you don't wanna do, then automatically you feel like a martyr. Particularly if you feel you're doing it for a cause.

"To me, rock's a cause. So I often end up going onstage, or into the studio when I don't really want to. As for resting on me laurels, that's the last thing anybody should want to do. He's really saying anybody over a certain age who's achieved anything should just go off and DIE! It's exactly the same thing I once said. Life isn't like that. You think it is when you're 17 – sometimes even if you're older. If somebody wants to judge me in terms of what I've produced in the band, and then write me off, fine."

You've said before, in 'Back Pages', that you find it hard to accept you're regarded as "well-nigh a saint". But that's because you're articulate and above all appreciate the social and political power of rock. When the New Wave emerged, rock did turn full-circle. It was again about the rot in society and government: some of the issues you wrote about for another generation; most of all about adolescent confusion, with songs like "I'm A Boy".

As a Who fan there's frustration for me now, as I want to know what Townshend has to say about the National Front or about the way this country is. But you haven't said anything.

"No."

Is there a reason why not? Are you oblivious to it?

"No, no, no. It's actually because I'm now actively doing something about it, whereas when you're an adolescent you're not capable of doing anything. If I wanted to I could become really practical, and not just write a song which I know now doesn't change anything. It just lets you know that there are other people who feel the same way.

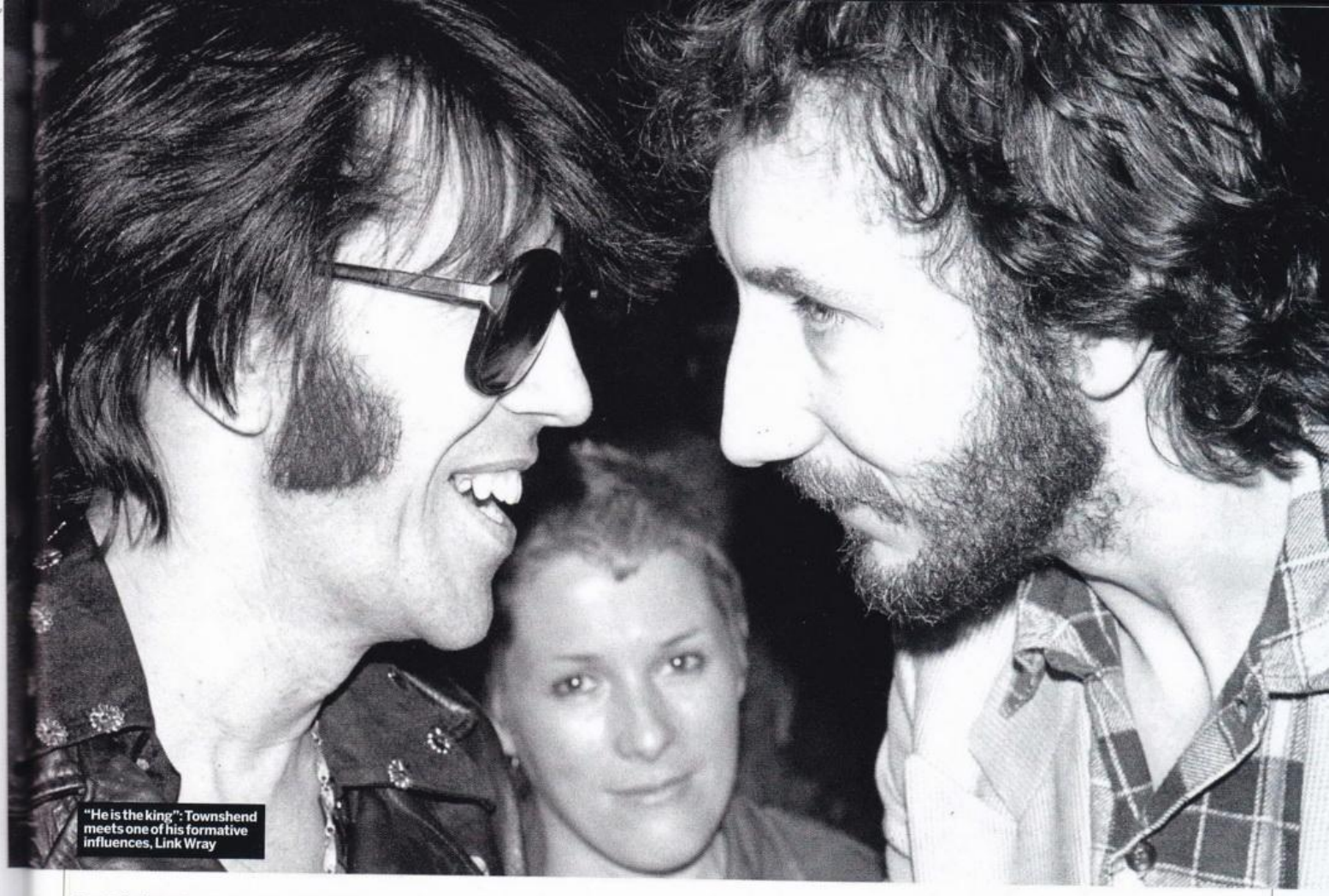
"I could be a right pain in the National Front's arse, if I wanted to be. But I don't really like Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda and people involved in petty power politics in unions. But if The Who wanted to, they could. We know Lords here and MPs there. We not only meet people with problems, we do something about them. And that's important because you feel what's happening on the streets and you're a part of it.

"If you haven't been in a black squat in Brixton, grit your teeth and try it. It's nothing like those squats in Westbourne Grove where they spend their money not on their rent but on their pot and heroin. It's people with families, people who go out in the day labouring; and mothers who try to keep their families together, sometimes large ones. And they've got dignity!

"But what kind of fuckin' music does that make? And how long can you go on doing it? I've got to the point in my life where you can't do it all, and rock is not capable of changing society. The only thing that's capable of doing that is power. So I'm more concerned now with trying to make music that makes people feel better, rather than worse. I don't suppose I ever really wanted to make people feel bad.

WHO KNEW

In October 1980, *Melody Maker* printed the transcript of the first meeting of Pete and the young Paul Weller in a piece titled 'The Punk And The Godfather'. The pair clashed repeatedly on a range of topics, with Weller even telling his former idol: "If you lot are planning to continue, you'd better change your set..."



"He is the king": Townshend meets one of his formative influences, Link Wray

But I definitely wrote songs like 'My Generation' to intimidate anybody who was driving around in a Rolls-Royce.

"The stupidity of writing it was that nobody in a Rolls ever listened to 'My Generation'. Nobody in a Rolls was ever even slightly scared of people with safety pins in their ears."

But rock's an instrument to make people aware of things, even if it doesn't effect change. And some people who need it haven't got that voice. Whether it's minority groups like squatters, blacks and gays, or disturbed kids living in highrise blocks, they want somebody to speak for them. That's why The Clash came from nowhere and were accepted almost immediately. It's why McLaren manipulated the whole Sex Pistols charade, which it often was. At least some truth was coming out.

"So many kids relate to me because... I'm in middle-class confused misery!" He laughs loudly. "I don't know where The Clash are coming from, or even where Johnny Rotten's coming from. But I know that when I wrote 'My Generation' I was in a flat in Belgravia looking down at the Rolls-Royces. It was only 12 quid a week, but it was still in Belgravia. There was an embassy over here, another over there and the Queen Mother went past every day. I've always thought that was a bit peculiar.

"I hope now people will understand what I feel about the important issues, just through the way I am as a person, and the way the band conduct their lives. If the band are gonna be worth anythin' they've got to stand up first as people. Their opinions don't matter. It's what they do that counts; not what you say. So I'm more concerned with doing; rather than pointing fingers saying, 'That's wrong and that's wrong!' But there again, it's less important to say it when other people are saying it, and when they're being heard."

Didn't you ever want to be all-powerful and shout: "Listen to me! This is RIGHT!"

"No. Unfortunately the only time I'd get like that was when I was pissed, and then I'm extremely uninterested in intelligent matters. I'm much more interested in getting in fights. I feel something incredible has happened in my life, with Meher Baba. That's what I'd be most happy to pass on to other people. But it's something you can hardly ever mention."

TIME PASSES. But to suggest Townshend is uncommitted would misjudge an awareness and sense of outrage that he simply chooses not to project in his music right now. He condemns the National Front, abhors pornography and, to précis, is genuinely concerned that the quality of life is eroding for many kids. He talks about it all with conviction.

Three years ago he couldn't even accept that his own role in rock had evolved into something different. Over a decade in, the unreality of the music business inevitably put a distance between him and the audience of which he was once a part. Now he has come to terms with it, and has made an album he says is "an encyclopaedia of rock'n'roll for the up-and-coming group": the reality of his environment. And he's no longer thrashing round in a malaise of bewildered despair.

"It is very difficult to see the problems people have in society. And to that extent The Who have lost their roots and lost that reality. Roger was really upset about a *Daily Mail* article where they talked about him being in his big 'ouse. Bill Curbishley said, "Ell man, admit it! It's true. You ride around in a helicopter... you're not a Shepherd's Bush geezer'! And Roger was saying, 'Fuck it! I am still a Shepherd's Bush geezer'.

"Without starting another journalistic interchange with 'im, I certainly don't feel I'm in the same piece of space. But it's hard to see how you change. Things change around you."

Three years ago you talked about being too old for this kind of life and activity. Do you still feel that with The Who and rock? Does it depress you as much?

"No. I don't feel the same as I did. But a lot of crap, well-meant crap, well-meant, supportive, encouraging crap, has been written to me lately: you're only as old as you feel. I know that! I know some 60-, 70-year-old people are like adolescents. But they don't prance around on a rock'n'roll stage.

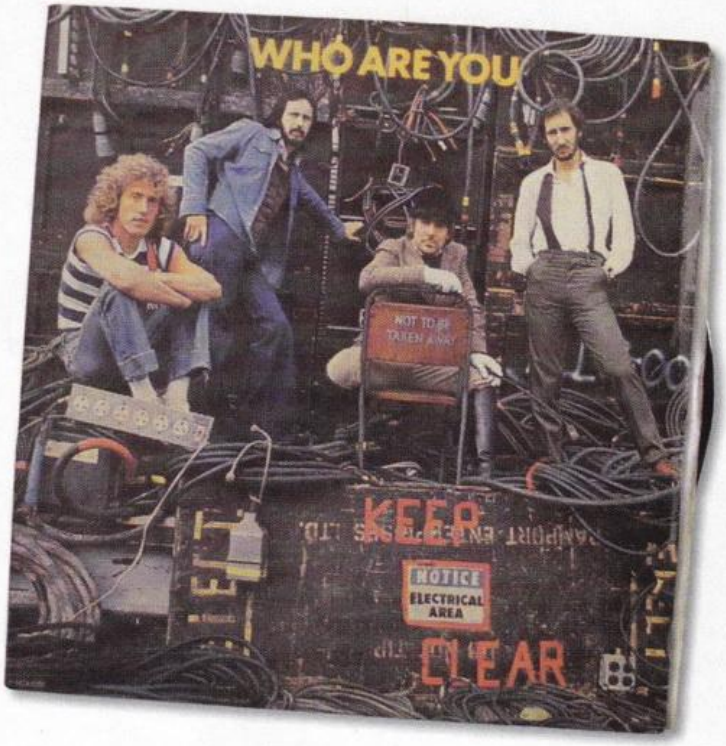
"It's not age; it's being realistic about the practicalities, particularly of the road. You have to be fit to do a year touring the States, because you don't lead a regular life and you don't have a stable existence. You travel a lot, which is exhausting. You're under immense pressure. Your ego is fed left, right and centre. You tend to look for escapes by going to parties, boozing and God knows what.

"I can get in good physical shape quickly to do a certain amount of work with The Who, by running or something. But I never used to have to do that. And Moony goes to a health farm to get in shape, just to bang the snare drum. It's absurd. Life wasn't always like that. Most of all, you've got to be in psychological shape so you don't fuck up. It's not just youngness in heart. I don't feel young in heart. I didn't feel young in heart when I was 19. I believe I am over a million years old, if you want to know the truth. It's like; hand me my straitjacket.

"'Oo wants to feel young in heart? Leave it to the butterflies."

PAUL SLATTERY


COMPLETE
FLASHIN



RELEASE >> DATE 18 | AUGUST | 1978

Who Are You

"I write the same old song with a few new lines..." Old battles drag on, old obsessions recur again and again. And a disintegrating drummer takes his last bow... *By David Cavanagh*

IN 1978 THERE was a short-lived music magazine called *Rock On* that I used to subscribe to. I remember it being a glossy mélange of new wave and metal (lots of Blondie and Boomtown Rats, but also Whitesnake and Ozzy), and one of its ideas was something I've never seen since. It arranged bands into Divisions 1 to 4, like football. Division 1 was Zep, Queen, the Stones, Fleetwood Mac... and The Who, whose inclusion took me by surprise. It seemed like ages – lifetimes! – since I'd heard anything from them. Were they still going?

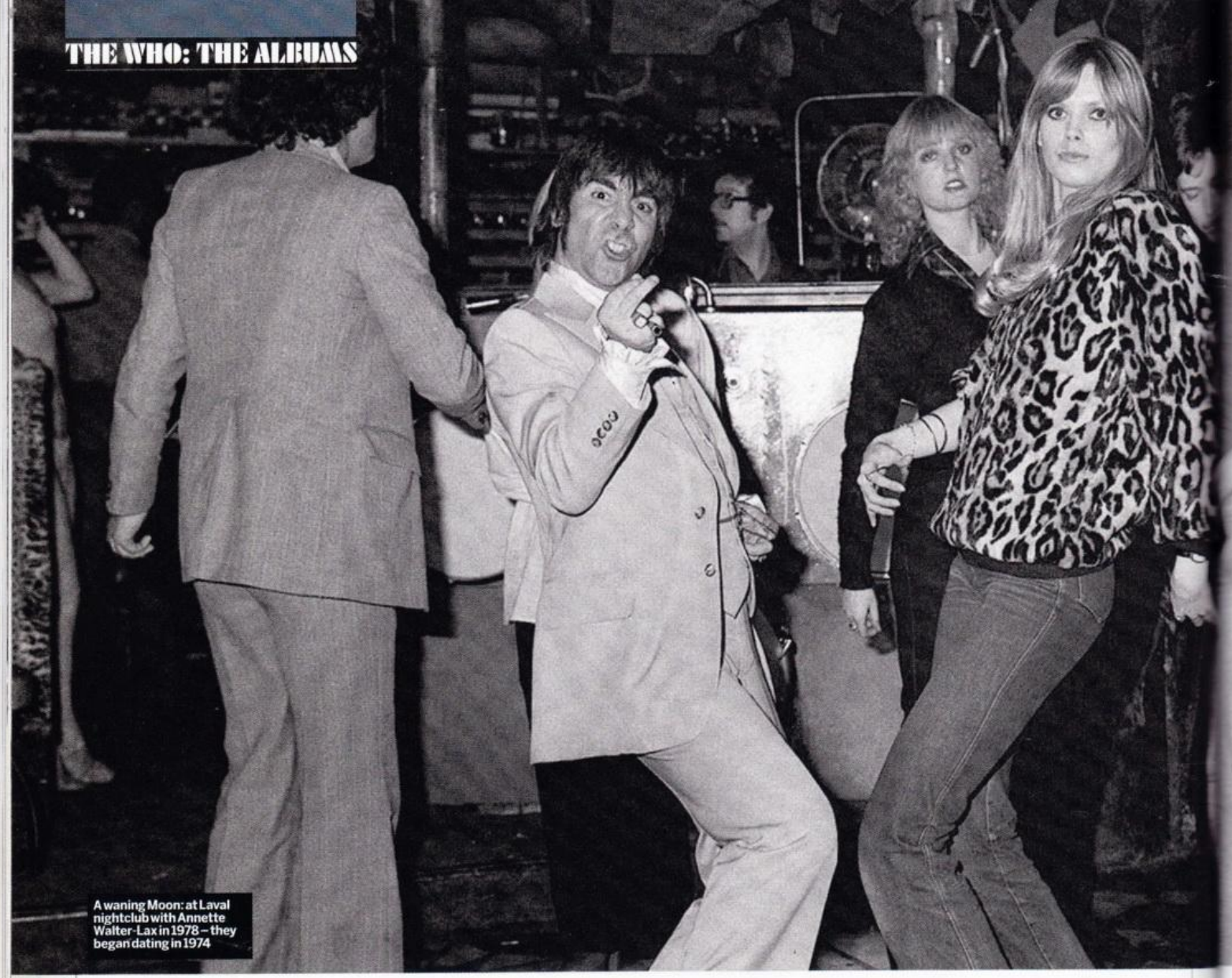
Having stripped to their soul-baring undergarments on *The Who By Numbers*, with its songs about drinking, dishonesty and failure, we now know that life in The Who got even tougher in 1976. Conflict had arisen between Townshend and Daltrey over a lawsuit against their former managers, Lambert and Stamp, and the guitarist and singer bitched at each other in the media. Gruelling tour schedules took their toll on Moon; the eternal child was becoming bloated, puffy, increasingly unreliable. Townshend, too, had his demons, not least alcoholism, and was suffering a spiritual crisis, a questioning of his faith, for good measure. Daltrey, distracted by a solo career, began work on his third album, *One Of The Boys*, in November. Meanwhile he and Entwistle argued that Moon, who had moved to California, should be eased out of the lineup as a prerequisite for The Who continuing. Townshend wondered if splitting up altogether would be a better idea.

While Daltrey was making his album (it came out in May 1977), there was a revolution in British music. Rockers of The Who's generation had been moaning about disco for a year or so, sneering at its escapism and pounding beat, but a threat much closer to home was punk, whose Damascene conversion rate among kids and teenagers had the potential to hit rock's superstars at the box office and record shop counter. The often heard complaint from musicians born between 1942 and 1947 was that punk bands "couldn't play". Townshend, true to form, had a more nuanced perspective. His famous night at the Speakeasy [*see feature, page 86*], which was to inspire The Who's best single since "5.15", started as a clumsy attempt to pass the generational torch to the Sex Pistols (two of whom were on the premises), but he was so drunk that they were unable to get any coherence out of him. What was a 33-year-old guitarist to do? Give Steve Jones advice on amplifiers? No, as Townshend was to learn, no matter how paternally he allied himself with the insurrectionists ("There is a CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **New Song** ★★★
2 **Had Enough** ★★★
3 **905** ★★
4 **Sister Disco** ★★★
5 **Music Must Change** ★★★★
6 **Trick Of The Light** ★★
7 **Guitar And Pen** ★★★
8 **Love Is Coming Down** ★★★
9 **Who Are You** ★★★★★

RELEASED: August 18, 1978
LABEL: Polydor/MCA
PRODUCED BY: Jon Astley, Glyn Johns, The Who
RECORDED: Ramport, Battersea; Olympic Studios, RAK Studios, St John's Wood; Townshend's home studio, Goring-on-Thames
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (lead vocals, percussion); Pete Townshend (guitars, keyboards, synth, vocals); John Entwistle (bass, horns, lead/bk vocals); Keith Moon (drums); Rod Argent (synth, piano); Ted Astley (string arrangements); Andy Fairweather Low (bk vocals)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 6; US 2



A waning Moon: at Laval nightclub with Annette Walter-Lax in 1978 – they began dating in 1974

great humanity in the punk scene"), there would be scant mercy shown towards The Who when the new regime drew its lines in the sand. Go back to your millionaire mansion, grandad; hope you die before we get old. After his Pistols encounter, Townshend stumbled out into Margaret Street and collapsed like a derelict in a doorway. It may not have looked romantic, but it was a magnificent piece of symbolism.

Scattered and inactive, The Who released no music in 1977, the first year this had happened. Townshend, however, made an album with Ronnie Lane, *Rough Mix*, produced by Glyn Johns. A pleasant, folky set to which Townshend contributed five songs and a co-credit, it hit a musical halfway point between *Who Came First* and "Squeeze Box", and earned some much-needed money for Lane, who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Promoting the record, Townshend took the opportunity to announce unilaterally that The Who would never tour again.

He worked on songs at home for a revived version of 'Lifehouse', but once again the unwieldy project defeated him. Agreeing that the stars were in alignment for a new Who album, the four men reassembled at Ramport Studios in late 1977, with Glyn Johns at the helm, and worked through some of the new material Townshend had written. Synthesisers were back (hurrah!), as was the hair-shirt candour of *The Who By Numbers*, and a lot of the tracks had an unfamiliar intricacy to their structures that the others weren't sure about. Could Daltrey sing these songs? Could Moon, the decline in whose powers was tragically evident, keep time to them? Things failed to click at Ramport and The Who went their separate ways having achieved nothing of note. Moon was dispatched to a health farm. Townshend damaged his fingers by punching a window. The only silver lining in a sky full of clouds was that magazines like *Rock On* still regarded them as a first division outfit.

In the summer of '78, disco-haters were relieved to see the back of *Saturday Night Fever*, the John Travolta movie-and-album franchise that had spawned eight months' worth of satin-trousered hit singles. Unfortunately, at that moment, an even more gigantic Travolta blockbuster, *Grease*, came along to take its place. Jokes about John Revolting and Olivia Neutron Bomb travelled the length of Britain, and *"tell me more"* became the three most irritating words in the English language. This was the signal for the dignitaries of rock – Dylan, the Stones, The Who – to return from their wildernesses with their first studio LPs in more than two years. The Stones released *Some Girls* in June, to immediate acclaim. Dylan released *Street-Legal* a week later, to mixed reactions. In August, once the dust had settled a little, The Who released *Who Are You*.

A new single preceded it by a matter of days. Alternating between staccato, hard-riffing belligerence (in the verses) and quieter passages with soft, cushiony harmonies (the choruses), "Who Are You" starred a dramatic synthesiser, whose sequenced metallic hubbub penetrated through the guitars at several points, sounding a bit like the laughing Martians in the Smash adverts. The result was a knockout success, a very modern Who single. The promo video, later used in *The Kids Are Alright*, was a winner, too, showing the band with their serious 'working' faces on, but also larking about, mugging and grinning, not caring whether they appeared cool, venerable or relevant. They didn't have to. The song was that good. Only the muso headphones on Moon, which looked like straps to

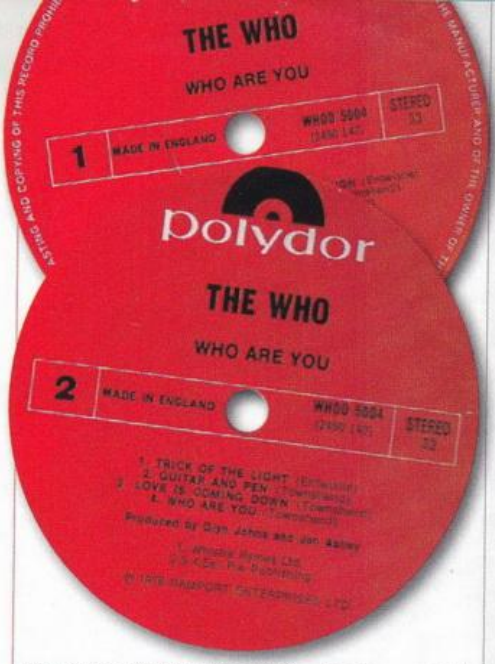
THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The Who have abdicated their role as premier suppliers of straight-ahead, ballbusting rock'n'roll with a new finality; there's hardly a moment on the album where the synthesiser does not rule."
CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY, *NME*, AUGUST 19, 1978

"This is a Who of a different colour... it would be sheer folly for them to have continued the open-ended Who sound of old..."
CHRIS WELCH, *MM*, AUGUST 19, 1978

MIRRORPIX

THE WHO SINGLES | JULY 1978 | WHO ARE YOU/HAD ENOUGH | UK#18, US#14 | DECEMBER 1978 | TRICK OF THE LIGHT/905 | UK NOT ISSUED, US DID NOT CHART | APRIL 1979 | >>>>>>>



keep his brain in, seemed an anomaly.

The album, which had nine tracks including three by Entwistle, featured more of these guitar-and-synth coalitions, though none quite as enjoyably ferocious as the title track. Some of them were reminiscent of *Quadrophenia*, if not quite as muddily mixed. Others were frilly and ornate, not a million miles from the virtuosity of Wakeman and Howe on the new Yes album, *Tormato*. "New Song", the opening track, moved confidently through multiple sections, like a prog band oblivious to music's changing mores, while "Guitar And Pen" puffed out its chest and pranced across the stage in metaphorical tights like a hoofer in a musical. "Sister Disco", the song on the album that everybody had an opinion about, programmed its synths to emulate a Vivaldi concerto, or at any rate a Giorgio Moroder panic attack, but opinions differed about whether Townshend had made his peace with disco or loathed with a passion its *"flashing trash lamps... your clubs and your tramps"*. In a new departure for The Who, "Music Must Change" had a slow, jazzy, *West Side Story* lope – you could almost see it chewing gum and combing its hair on a street corner – with occasional whipcracks of aggression. Each one of these songs boasted a shiny, brash arrangement and, from Townshend in particular, some exceptional playing.

This marked an interesting policy difference between the Stones, who'd come back from Paris with their most abrasive album since *Exile On Main St*, and The Who, who were still very much adhering to the old pre-punk tenets of dazzling musicianship and theatrical vocals. Daltrey, in fact, has never sung more like an actor than he does on *Who Are You*, apparently reckoning, not without justification, that Townshend's elaborate compositions merited the full Monty of his expressive range. Or perhaps Daltrey, feeling reservations about the album, decided to 'inhabit' the songs as he would a part in a movie. There's an uneasy truce, either way, between Daltrey's vocal exploits and the actual words that he's singing. He is demonstrably giving his all, but too much of Townshend's writing is a weary half measure: lyrics about lyrics, words about wordlessness, songs about having no song to sing.

There is a theory, popular among literary critics, that writers subconsciously reveal their insecurities about their work in the work itself. For example a novelist will, without realising it, give one of his characters an interior monologue that ridicules the whole premise of the book, as though his super-ego is determined to sabotage his creation. Now let's have a look at what Townshend and Entwistle are telling us on this album. *"I guess you've heard it all before"* ("Trick Of The Light"). *"Fooling no one but ourselves"* ("Had Enough"): *"Am I doing it all again?"* ("Music Must Change"). *"Nothing will budge... the words are immobile... never feel they're worth keeping"* ("Guitar And Pen"). Admittedly, the last example is probably deliberate – "Guitar And Pen" is about the hell Townshend puts himself through to write a decent song – but it's a curious irony of *Who Are You* that at the one moment in their career when The Who should have felt provoked (by punk, by disco, by events in their professional and private lives) to write furiously, indignantly and loquaciously, they were struck dumb. As a result, *Who Are You* is an album that has some qualities to recommend it – indeed, if you're into Townshend and Entwistle as musicians, you can scarcely afford to ignore it – but has, like the deaf-dumb-and-blind kid, not a great deal to say. Entwistle's "905", a story set in the future about a cryogenically frozen embryo, at least tries to interest the listener in an idea, but Townshend's "New Song" (*"I write the same old song with a few new lines"*), which is a disastrous choice as the album's opener, is simply an insult to its singer, its musicians and its audience. Self-flagellation is one thing. Taking the piss is another.

AT THE ONE MOMENT IN THEIR CAREER WHEN THE WHO SHOULD HAVE FELT PROVOKED, THEY WERE STRUCK DUMB...

But even more poignant, actually, than Townshend and Entwistle involuntarily admitting to themselves that their best work lies in the past, is the knowledge that the drummer has only a limited future. Three weeks after the album was released, on September 6, 1978, Moon attended a preview of *The Buddy Holly Story*, had dinner with the McCartneys, endured a fitful sleep, swallowed too many sedatives – and never woke up again. His lacklustre drumming on *Who Are You*, as much as it was given a splendidly rich sound by producers Glyn Johns and Jon Astley, had not escaped his bandmates' notice. He doesn't even play on one track ("Music Must Change"), as its 6/8 time signature utterly bamboozled him. Three years earlier, on *The Who By Numbers*, he had found waltzes ("They Are All In Love") a doddle.

Musically sumptuous, lyrically demoralising, with one of the most ill-advised opening songs in history and its classic title track buried away at the end of Side Two, *Who Are You* is lost in a mist, a fog of despair, that seems to portend something finite and drastic. Not Moon's death, of course, because they thought him indestructible; but surely the demise of The Who. If there's one statement this shockingly inarticulate album has no difficulty making, it's 'we can't go on like this'. It was as if Townshend's harangue at the Pistols, those shadows he'd left back at the Speakeasy, had somehow taken all the language out of him. Maybe he should have put the album on the backburner for a few months until his writer's block had passed. Maybe he should have written about the trees in his garden – anything. By the end of the season, as they won their relegation battle to stay in the first division, all that remained was for The Who to soldier on, and for times to change, and disco and punk to fade, and Kenney to replace Keith. ⊙

'IRONICALLY, KEITH'S PASSING WAS A POSITIVE THING'

Less than five months after Keith Moon's death, Pete Townshend is moving on. "It's impossible to continue to be bound by Who traditions," he tells **CHRIS WELCH**. "I'm really excited about it." On the horizon: two movies, yet another version of *Tommy*, solo albums, and a radically adjusted Who, featuring Kenney Jones. In the crosshairs: a couple of prominent music journalists:..

ARE THE WHO haunted by ghosts? Is the spectral figure of Tommy now joined by the cackling spirit of Keith Moon? Pete Townshend doesn't think so, but is almost ruthless in his determination to set the past aside and turn to the future, as if to forestall that very fear.

Since Moon's death last autumn, The Who have returned to a work schedule which began two years ago, and which seems destined to make 1979 a kind of celebration of the forces which resulted in the band lasting 15 years. This year will see a whirlwind of Who events, including the release of two films, *The Kids Are Alright*, which contains historic footage from their early days, and *Quadrophenia*, a musical based on the band's 1973 album.

Tommy, the rock opera which Townshend created back in 1968, also rears its head again: after being made into half a dozen albums and a movie, it will hit the Queen's Theatre in the West End on February 6 as a fully fledged musical, based on a successful repertory production.

Tommy is one aspect of the past that Townshend, ever restless and impatient, has had to live with. I recall interviews, back in the early '70s, when rock's most articulate and passionate spokesperson had tried to blot out what he jokingly refers to as "the Curse of *Tommy*". Last year, however, seeing an enthusiastic cast performing a version of his tale – on the first occasion he ever allowed himself to watch an outside production – rekindled his pride and interest. There is also his recent million dollar solo album deal with Atlantic, a project he's anxious to commence – probably before the next Who album, which will feature new recruit Kenney Jones on drums.

How, I asked, does he feel about having a West End theatre production underway?

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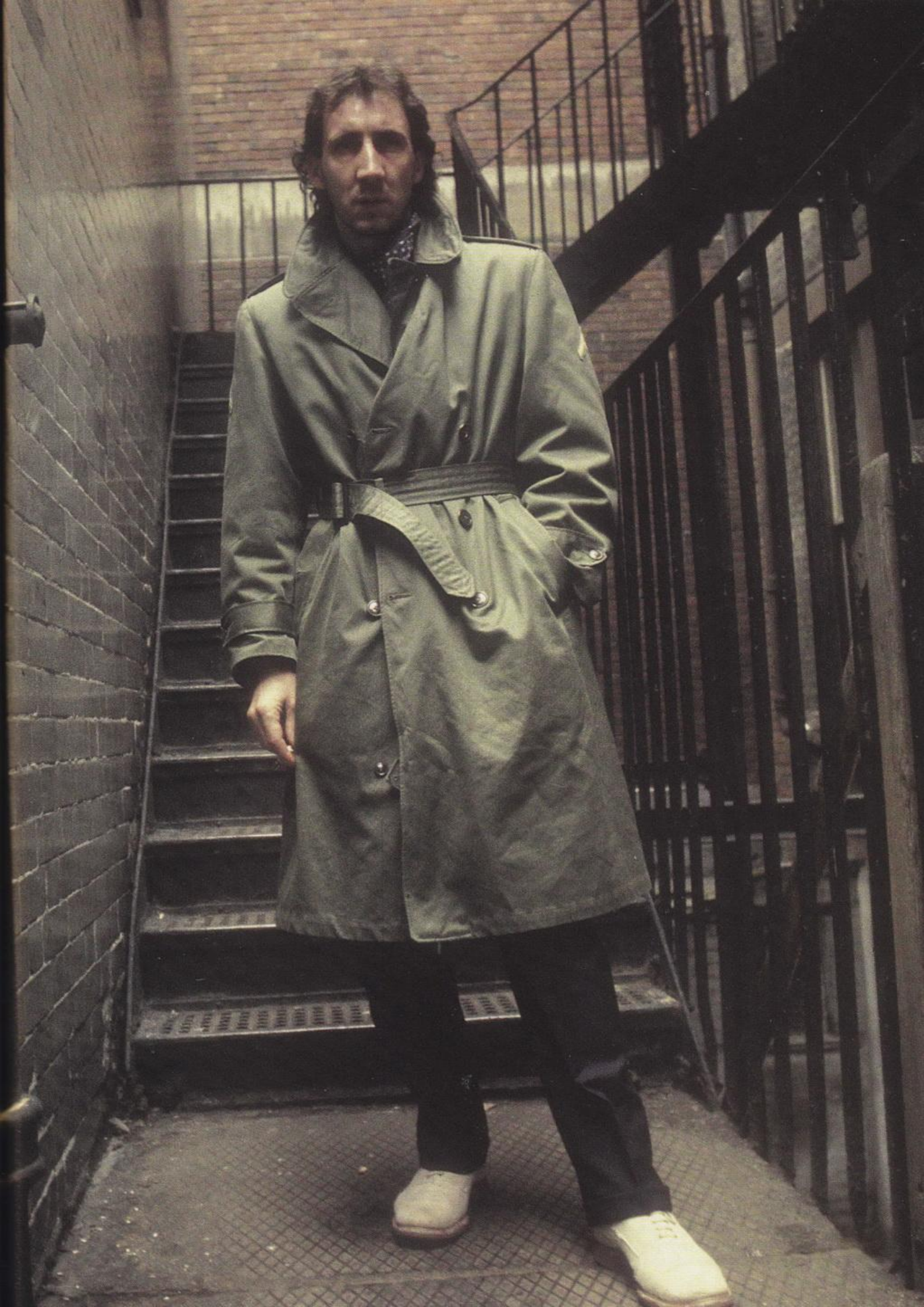


"The thrill is slightly dampened in that over the last 10 years I've pushed *Tommy* away, in a sense. And also it concerns something that has already happened. You see there were two repertory productions of *Tommy* going on, both of which people were urging me to go and see as they were especially good. There have been 20 or 30 in the States which I've been invited to, and all, incidentally, got rave reviews. There was one in Dallas that was stupendous and ran for six months!

"I was spurred to produce a piano/vocal part for the stage, because there was some confusion over what was the definitive *Tommy* arrangement, and people wanted to know where it stood today, so I sat down with my friend, Bill Connor, who is an orchestral arranger and helps me with the dots. We thrashed out an arrangement for piano parts and a loose stage direction, which I'm hoping to publish next year. Ironically, right at that time I got a phone call from a guy called Cameron Mackintosh, a West End impresario, telling me about a really good production at the Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch, and saying I should go and see it."

Pete resisted for some time, saying he wasn't really interested.

"But he persisted, and other producers rang and told me I should go to Hornchurch. It finished after three weeks and I missed it – luckily, I thought. Then another one started at the Genesis Theatre, Manchester, which got incredible local acclaim and good reviews in *The Stage*. So... the Curse returns! Public demand in Hornchurch brought it back for another three weeks, and the pressure on me to go and see it was so great. I took some French people staying with me at the time.

"I picked the show to pieces, but then I started to enjoy it, and the music was surprisingly good with a straight rock band. They used an enormous choir of children acting as musical support and also as disciples for Tommy, adding musical weight to the whole thing. When it got to the end the French people were going bananas, talking about the artistic integrity of the production, and we went backstage and met Cameron Mackintosh and talked about the possibility of going into the West End. It all went from there.

"I liked what I saw; not so much the detail, as the end result. I went out of that place feeling very high and when I went back on my own a week later, the same thing happened. I walked out flying. I don't know if it was just the music, the production or the magic that *Tommy* has, but it was tremendous.

"I was always afraid that if *Tommy* went into the West End it would be with Stiggy (Robert Stigwood), with all the attendant kerfuffle, spending 300,000 quid and doing an incredibly elaborate staging. But I really liked the Hornchurch thing. Stiggy in fact didn't pick up the option for it to go into the West End, mainly because he'd moved to America, and I didn't really have enough interest to work on a stage production. The idea of the show is not to make it a music business event, but to expose it to the public at large. Rather than make it a 'rock opera', the emphasis has been on making it a musical. It's all sung, but there's a couple of spoken lines."

An early criticism of *Tommy* was that it wasn't really an opera at all, but a cantata – ie, a dramatic sacred composition.

"Nitpicking. We only called it an opera for a joke. It's a musical. There's no chitchat and suddenly bursting into song. The film took it towards being an opera, but it's still not an opera in the finer sense, because there aren't any casual conversations, there's no explanation. In a way, a new word needs to be coined for things like *Evita*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Tommy*.

"The two musicals that have had great success so far have been spawned from the rock business. The theatrical business seems to think we haven't got the flair to pull it off, and that's one of the reasons I've never tackled it myself. I don't know anything about staging. I know about putting on a rock concert and that's the limit. The crossover between rock and theatre is close, but it's still not at all the same. Rock shows don't have to run for 10 years and play eight shows a week. It's a tremendous test of the work.

"I remember once having a conversation with Harvey Goldsmith. He'd read I wanted to do six nights at Hammersmith Odeon, instead of one night at Wembley. He said: 'Listen, you could sell out six nights a week for a year.' I would tend to debate that myself. But in the case of the theatre, after the aficionados have seen the show, you then rely on tourists, pensioners, and coach parties. That's what keeps it turning over. And people may come back five or six times."

Has the story of *Tommy* changed much since its initial conception?

"The film brought in some new ideas. Certain words changed for the film and seem to have stuck – they're slightly more intelligent. The production has taken from the original, and from the film soundtrack album. That's one of the reasons I felt the need to put together a stage score. I'm not going to write any more material for it, although I think it can always be improved.

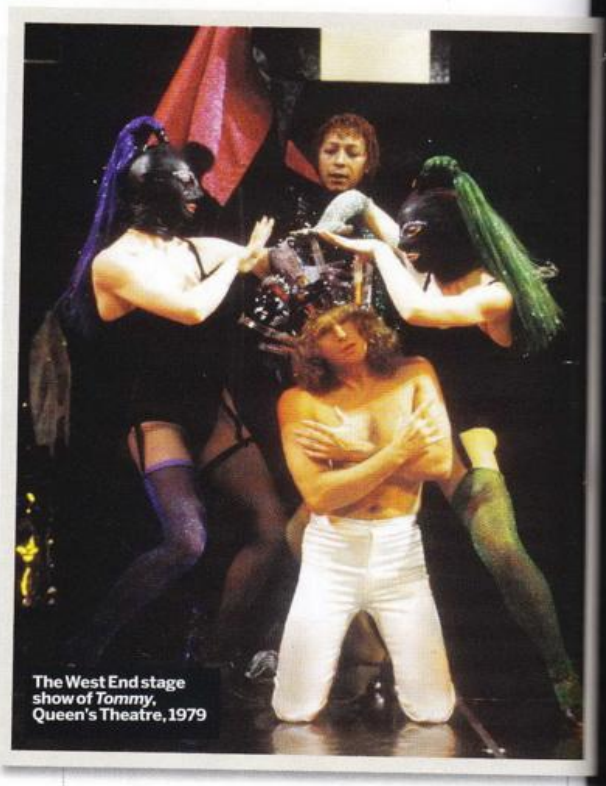
"Strangely enough, I've never seen it as a compositional work in the way I did *Quadrophenia*. It was DEVISED. The strange thing about the original album is that if you've got the time to sit and listen to it now, it's very laidback in parts. That's what strikes me now. When you listen to the early Who stuff, it's incredibly raucous, high energy, but this was fairly laidback and Kit Lambert deliberately mixed it like that, with the voices upfront. The music was structured to allow the concept to breathe. It had a certain flatness... the chorus *'Listening to you I get the music'* goes 10 times and very slowly fades out, without any increase in energy. It has a quite deliberate blandness, with no freneticism at all."

Maybe that was because you had four sides of record to play with for the first time?

"I dunno. We were making albums like we always did, and it only became a double album halfway through the sessions. I wanted a double album so that the story could unfold, and so did the other guys in the band. I felt that if it was too harshly edited it wouldn't work.

"And I was sensitive because *Tommy* had taken a long time, and other records like *S.F. Sorrow* (The Pretty Things) and *Arthur* (The Kinks), had come out. Their approach was exactly the same and it was a natural evolution for rock at the time. I wanted a bash at it. The whole idea of *Tommy* at the time was to smash at the fact The Who were in a corner. We'd had that tremendous two years of single success, and then something had gone wrong. We were masters of the art. We were the best Who-type band around.

"We'd outstripped The Kinks' style of writing



The West End stage show of *Tommy*, Queen's Theatre, 1979

"I'VE PUT LIFETIMES OF WORK INTO QUADROPHENIA... BUT I KNOW TOMMY IS GOING TO HAVE A MUCH LONGER PUBLIC LIFE"

WHO KNEW

According to the inquest into Moon's death on September 7, 1978, the drummer had ingested 32 tablets of Clomethiazole (Heminevrin). The sedative, used to control alcoholism, was intended to be taken solely under medical supervision. Just six tablets are sufficient to cause death.

The Who in 1979 with 'new boy' drummer Kenney Jones *(left)*

– which I still love to this day, and which I hope Ray never, ever changes. But we'd gone off into other areas. We'd had 'Magic Bus' and 'I Can See For Miles', which was approached as a master work, cramming in very complex harmonies, and being pompous within the space of a three-minute single, and, *er*... they both flopped."

I liked "I Can See For Miles".

"Oh, so did I! I really liked 'Magic Bus' as well, the driving energy of it, but when 'I Can See For Miles' bombed, that was the last straw. I thought, 'People aren't listening any more.' We'd lost the knack of getting ourselves in the singles market. This was around '67. I decided I was going to have one last-ditch attempt. Let's face it, for two years The Who had been saying, 'We'll be finished,' and I saw myself writing film scores, while Keith and John saw themselves forming a group called Led Zeppelin.

"I thought I'd have a go at something heavy, and fuck getting called pretentious. I'd make it a high-flying, spiritual story, and I'd throw in the works, pinball machines, deaf, dumb and blind people, plane crashes, the lot, and put the story together. I'd make Tommy into some kind of demi-god and go from there. But apart from that I was very passionate that the art of the rock single could be expanded and made to do more.

"Strung together, The Beatles' singles told you something about The Beatles, but when you went to The Kinks' singles, you learnt something very deep from Ray's writing. And it wasn't dissipated in the way that The Beatles' was by their co-writing, and by their fierce experimentation. The Beatles experimented too much for their own good. But there was an incredibly solid feeling from Ray's writing, and I felt that deeply about our work as well. You could draw a line through the songs we'd written from Day One up to that point.

"So I had this incredible faith in the rock single, and thought if I'd take a load of songs and string them together, they too would tell a story, while any one of them could be taken and played in its own right. 'Acid Queen', a song on its own, 'Pinball Wizard', 'I'm Free' and so on.

"To be frank, we didn't entirely pull it off. There are a lot of songs on *Tommy* that are nowhere near as dense or saturated as, say, 'My Generation' or 'Pictures Of Lily', but the same techniques went into making it, and it was a big kick when I discovered we could do it.

"I remember when Keith and I went down to the rehearsal after finishing the album, as we were about to go on tour. We did one day's rehearsal, did the whole thing from start to finish, and THAT was when we first realised we had something cohesive and playable, that had a story. Keith and I went to a pub on the way back and sat there, both incredulous at how quickly it had come together, and we noted how suddenly Roger had become something else, and we debated what would happen and how it would change everything. We knew we had something that was magic, and that magic wasn't as clear on the album as it would be on a live performance.

"A lot of the magic comes from the fact that somewhere along the line we stumbled on something with tremendous depth. For a long time, while touring the States, *Tommy* was a major part of our stage act and was seen to be a separate bit of theatre. That comes across in the theatrical production – it has a vitality and life of its own."

It seems extraordinary to think that, after all this time, *Tommy* lives on.

"Well, I think it's a classic. I never wanted it to happen that way, and I much preferred living with 'My Generation' as a classic, awkward beast that it is. I've put lifetimes of work into *Quadrophenia*... but I know inside me that *Tommy* is going to have a much longer public life."

How is the *Quadrophenia* film progressing?

"Very well. It's interesting to draw a line between the two things. *Quadrophenia* will one day get onto the West End stage, and it could be filmed a dozen different ways. *Quadrophenia* was us writing and singing about something we knew about, and *Tommy* was fantasy. There's a greater audience for fantasy."

Quadrophenia – the movie – will probably be ready for release in August or September.

"We don't want it to conflict with the release of *The Kids Are Alright*, although CONTINUES OVER »

ADRIAN BOOT, REX FEATURES

they are two very different films.

"We've got a problem. We've had a hiatus of events in the band – apart from the last album, which hardly made a dent in the UK. Oh, it sold up to Gold status, but it didn't have much impact. We've had two years of preparatory work for three or four major projects.

"One was *The Kids Are Alright*, second was *Quadrophenia*, the *Tommy* show emerged last year and seemed a natural thing to go on; Roger's been working on a film about John McVicar which will produce a solo album; I've been building up since late '77 to my first solo album deal, committing me to three solo albums; I've written a TV play for London Weekend, and since Keith's death we've actually..."

There was a long pause while Pete seemed conscious of the reality of what happened last autumn, and his excitement seemed to evaporate.

"I don't like the word 'death' in the spiritual sense. In Keith's case it really was a passing."

Pete laughed, suddenly, at the lugubrious sound of the phrase.

"Since Keith's PASSING... we've come to realise we have much more of an open brief of going back to the studio and having another bash at a Who album. There was a feeling, although none of us were ready to live with it, that *Who Are You* was possibly the last album, of an era. We were determined to do something different."

It seemed to me that The Who didn't sound happy on the last album.

"That's probably because it was a tough album to make, and it took a bloody long time. It was fraught with problems. Although the music might not convey happiness, it was a very happy time. The time pressure got too much for Glyn Johns as producer, and he had to step out towards the end. It was getting impossible. Apart from that, Keith and I were always laughing.

"Things did go wrong. Roger had a throat operation. Then I got drunk one day when I went out on the boat with my dad and grandad. We had a really great day, went home and my parents started having a row. I got really angry with them and tried to make a demonstration to break the row by putting my fist through the kitchen window, and they just carried on as if nothing had happened. I thought if I actually gashed my hand and smeared blood over my dad's face, maybe he'd notice me."

"But he just said, 'Look what you've done to our window.' I had to stitch up my finger and thumb and I couldn't play, so that was another two weeks cancelled.

"We were devastated by all the delays, and the slight tiredness on the album comes across. Roger has some amazing performances, but with great respect he wasn't there much of the time. 'Music Must Change', for example, is quite a weary backing track, only saved by the fact Roger came in and did a really vitriolic performance. What I'm leading up to say, is there were the usual questions knocking around the band. And now we want to get back into the studio and do another album because the possibilities are so exciting.

"Ironically, Keith's passing was a positive thing. It meant that it was impossible to continue to be bound by Who traditions. It had been a yoke on us – how did we break free of traditions, things we were responsible for? We'd always been careful not to use outside musicians on sessions, and we never wanted to get into string sections onstage. It was a big step forward for us on *Who Are You* to use session musicians. I feel now there is a tremendous open door and I feel very excited about the fact The Who is a well-established band with a tremendous history, but suddenly we're in the middle of nowhere – a new band. I'm really excited about it."

Kenney Jones seems a good choice to be the new drummer.

"There was no question of choice," said Pete emphatically. "There was nobody else, in my opinion. It's not a question of Keith being replaced, either. Kenney would be the first to say that Moon was irreplaceable, and nobody could copy him and nobody would want to.

"Kenney was a much bigger part of The Who, anyway, than a lot of people will realise. We've always had this incredible link with the Faces, we toured with 'em, went through that Australian thing together, they started at the same time as us, it's always been marvellous times. Ronnie and Steve Marriott were real friends, and Kenney worked on the *Tommy* film soundtrack, and John and I noted he was the only guy we could play with, without thinking 'where's Keith?' And we've played with some great drummers.

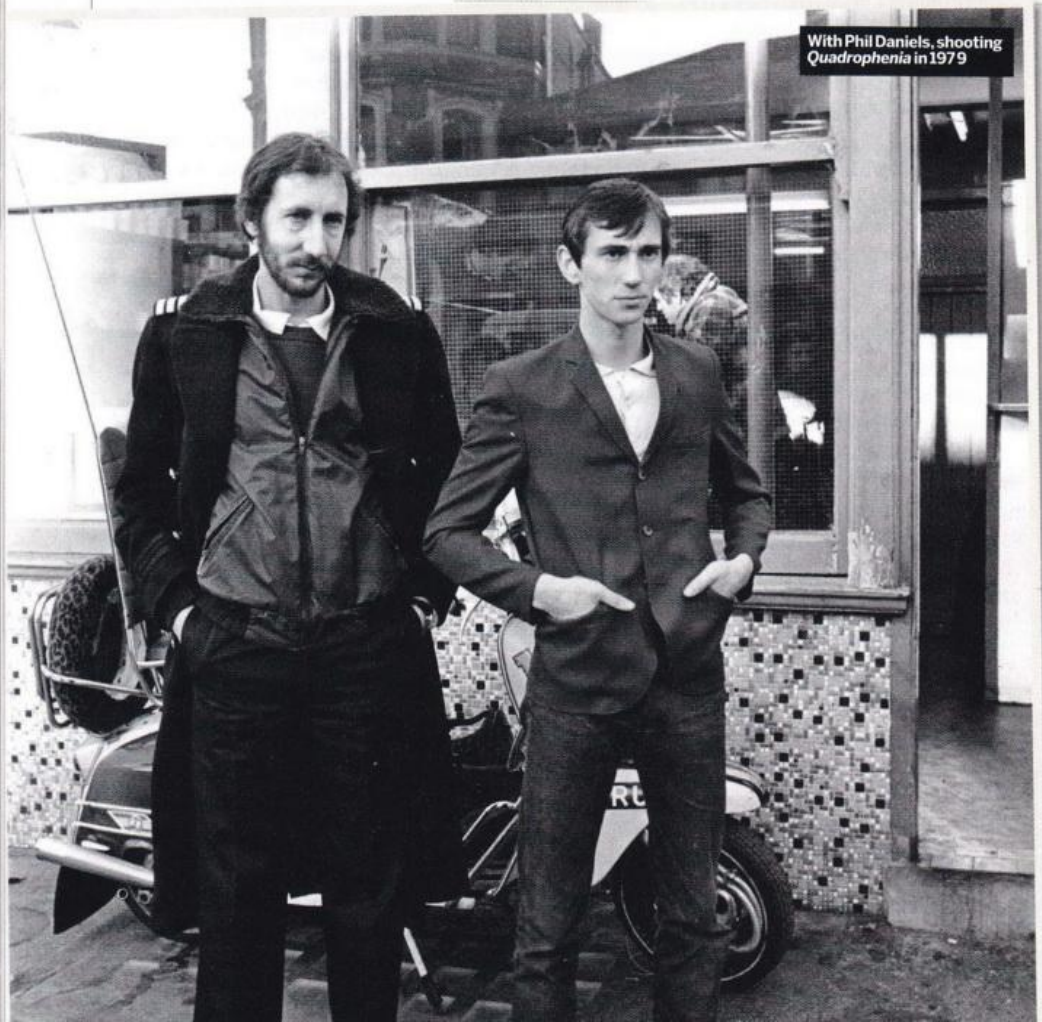
"Keith was always very responsive, he'd play off you. Kenney is a much more formal drummer who lays it down. But he's awake, he's alert, and the feeling is we are starting up a NEW band. We're making a commitment to one another."

How does Pete think the public will react to future appearances?

"People have really got to live with the fact that The Who they knew has gone, and that they'll never see it again. During the last couple of years I've been saying I didn't want to tour. I've had lots of letters from people saying they respect my decision, but some of them also say, 'I'm 17 years old, a big Who fan, I've never had a chance to see the band, and I think it stinks. I wanna see you.' But they won't – they've lost the opportunity. Keith IS dead, and that particular magic that existed is also dead. Quite whether any part of that will still exist on stage when we get together, I don't really know."

Does this mean Pete has changed his mind about live performances?

"PEOPLE HAVE GOT TO LIVE WITH THE FACT THAT THE WHO THEY KNEW HAS GONE, AND THEY'LL NEVER SEE IT AGAIN"



With Phil Daniels, shooting *Quadrophenia* in 1979

Townshend: "I didn't want to sign away me balls for money..."

"I've changed my mind – not one bit. I don't intend to tour. I get pushed up against the wall at times by the group, the management, the industry, because they want us to tour. But I do want to perform..."

Ah hah.

"Yes, it's a big difference. I'm not interested in intense exposure. I'm not hungry enough for it to sacrifice everything else for it any more, and I was for a long time.

"The big change in my life came about in '74. I decided I wasn't willing to make the sacrifice that the road needed. Because we'd enjoyed such a stupendous career, and such deep contact with audiences, it makes me more passionate now about not doing it by half.

"If ever we do go onstage, I want it to be as good as we can possibly get. If I had to go to the Hammersmith Odeon and knew that behind it lay a six-week American tour, I don't think I'd even go on. I've practically got to the stage where I'd give the audience a short speech and go home. I would. It's been the main bone of contention for the past three years – whenever we got together it was the subject for discussion."

But if The Who don't tour, where will that leave the rest of the band?

"Well, I don't really know. This may be fantasyland, but I'd hope for an arrangement where we could do concerts, in London and the provinces, and maybe European weekend trips, and even short trips to America.

"I don't wanna sound like I'm a kid on the streets or anything, but I think that whole big touring thing stinks. I'm fed up with it, people coming up to me and saying, 'I saw you at so and so stadium and it was great BUT...'"

Does he find it a drag when people come up and ask him to tour again? Does he get ratty with them?

"No, it's not a drag. I get ratty with myself, and frustrated. What's required in the band is a clean decision, and it's so hard to make. I knew for a long time that what I was saying was that if The Who wasn't going to work 'live', then it wasn't a band any more. I said that for two years and we hung together, pretty much as a business rather than a band, and as a recording act, wondering what would happen to our record sales when we didn't drag our bodies around the USA for 16 weeks. And what happened was we had our most successful album in our whole career. What that proves, I've got no idea.

"It would have been even bigger if we'd gone over there and worked. Maybe the time was just right for The Who. But in the UK, live performance is essential, because The Who is a living band to British audiences. The album did OK here. It compared favourably to *Quadrophenia* and *Who's Next*. *The Who By Numbers* has actually proved to be a good long-term seller, but it was slow at first. *Quadrophenia* was our most instantly successful album. *Who Are You* was slightly disappointing, but there was nothing we could do about it, and in America, of course, it got No 1 airplay for six weeks, and nearly knocked *Grease* off the top. It sat at No 2 for four weeks in the States."

WHO KNEW

Pete asks the question, but what did happen to The Who's record sales? *Who Are You* went platinum in the US just one month after release, and made double platinum 15 years later. By contrast, '81 follow-up *Face Dances* took six months to reach Platinum Stateside, and '82's *It's Hard* only ever struck Gold.

WHAT HAVE The Who been doing in the studios since Keith's death?

"To date we've recorded some extra tracks for the *Quadrophenia* film, and we felt that would be a good opportunity... not to mess around with a jam... but actually get something down on tape. We've three new songs for that, a song called 'Joker James', which was written for the original album and was excluded, 'Get Out, Stay Out', a new thing, and we remade '(Can You See) The Real Me'. They've all turned out great.

"It's very exciting working with Kenney, because he's a completely different drummer with a much more conventional approach than Keith. We're finding ourselves, in a way. For a long time I felt inhibited by being a rhythm player. What I'd really like is to see the band have a keyboard player, on piano and organ, and another guitar player, so that I'd be free to do synthesiser work onstage, and play various styles of guitar, so we could do some of the more complex material from Who history."

Perhaps Ian McLagan, another ex-Face, would be the ideal keyboards-player for The Who?

"Yeah, I wanted him. He's a

CONTINUES OVER »

BARRY PLUMMER


The *Who Are You* release party, August 1978

good guitar player, too. I was very keen to get him. Slight problem: he's taken a contract with the Stones. Even so, I was gonna give him a call and say, 'Fuck the Stones'. But he moved to California. And a slightly touchy point: he's married to Kim, who was Keith's ex, and she's responsible for Keith's estate, so I didn't want to make the whole thing any deeper or more fragile. At the moment we've got Rabbit [*John 'Rabbit' Bundrick, see Who Knew below*], subject to the Musicians' Union. As for guitar players, there are so many good ones. But we're NOT going to let Eric join."

Pete revealed that his solo albums won't be anything like past Who albums.

"I wanna make good-music records, and promote them aggressively to reach the public so they'll sit and listen to the music. There was wrangling to get the freedom I wanted – I didn't want to sign away me balls for money and I would have probably got greater freedom with CBS, which is a magnificent company, but I like the people at Atlantic.

"I want to make a shit-hot rock album with the same energy we'd put into a Who album, and it's very necessary for me to do it before the next Who album. It's the current thing I'm focused on. It might use other sidemen. I haven't played drums for ages.

"A spooky thing was that whenever I got onto the drumkit in the past – and one of the reasons I must definitely not get onto a drumkit in a hurry – I'd feel Keith's presence envelop me. Often, when I took the demos in, Keith would say: 'This is very weird listening to this, because I would have done that bit.' He influenced the way I played. But if it happened now, I'd go, 'Arrrgh! He's back!'"

Maybe he'll come back and haunt us all?

"Mmm, let's hope so. Well, I like to think he's back already. We've just got to track 'im down.

"But I can't think of Keith as a ghost. I always think of ghosts as people who lead troubled lives and committed suicide and thank God there was constant contact between us before he died, and I know he wasn't in that frame of mind. If he'd been in California, I would have really worried for him. I feel this; his presence, if you like, remains a purely historical one, and the memory of him is never painful, and hasn't been since the day I heard he died.

"I was shocked, and 15 to 20 minutes after hearing about it, I just suddenly went 'Boo hoo'. Whoosh – my face was wet. Then it stopped. I haven't felt grief at all.

"I don't know what Keith would be making, now, of the things we're doing. I don't really know exactly what he made of the things we were doing in the two years since he came back from California. If I feel tender about anything, it's tender about the thought that if we'd been touring, things might have been different.

"The Who HAD changed, and for Keith, being part of it was 90 per cent of his life, whereas for the others it was less so. It was 90 per cent of his ego, and that 10 per cent of himself was extremely demonstrative, and aggressively outgoing. But he was much more deeply bonded to The Who than any of the rest of us.

"WE NEEDED TO GET THE WHOLE, OLD THREE-CHORD WHO THING OVER AND DONE WITH..."

"The inactivity of the group was a drag for him. Also you must realise he was a drummer that never played drums. He only played when The Who got onstage. He wasn't interested in DRUMS, he was just interested in BEING there. If he was there, he'd do it, but there was no reason to rush out and start playing. He didn't get a lot of feedback from music, it was a means to an end.

"I think about that to some extent, but I also know there's no point in sitting around saying what could have happened, or the whys and wherefores. All I know is that if Keith had still been alive today, we'd still be faced with tremendous changes. And I would have fought a lot harder to get 'em through."

But hadn't Keith made efforts to update his style?

"Nobody was nagging him to change his style. We all liked him the way he was. It was just that the material that I was coming up with, and John, too, wasn't standard, archetypal Who material. And that was because your standard, archetypal Who material had been wrapped up in *Quadrophenia*. We'd given ourselves a totally free rein.

"We'd just done *Who's Next* with Glyn Johns, and I told Kit Lambert, who was then involved in the production, that we needed to get the whole, old three-chord Who thing over and done with, the unfettered, rambling sound, that whole adolescent-mod-social-streak Goldhawk Road TRIP – finished!

"When we went in for those sessions, they just ran the tape and we played. It was just total explosion. But the material was geared to it. We've not re-recorded it for the film, either. We're using the original tracks. I don't think we could have done it again. It took long enough doing *Tommy* again for the film. I couldn't have stood doing *Quadrophenia* all over again!"

Meanwhile, has the *Kids* film been altered to include the death of Keith?

"No. In fact, Keith saw the final cut and he approved it and liked it. A strange irony of the film is they chose 'Long Live Rock' for the titles, and under the titles were a lot of shots of Keith, so that's a real tearjerker.

"Well, Keith saw the film before he died... somebody suggested putting 'This film is dedicated to the memory of Keith Moon' on *Quadrophenia* and I said you don't need it. You don't need to say it. *Quadrophenia* is Keith Moon. They'd make a tombstone out of it. I feel very much that way about *The Kids Are Alright*, too. It should definitely not seem to be a tombstone for Keith, and God forbid it turns out to be a tombstone for The Who!

"In a way, it's not bad timing. There's 15 years encapsulated in that film, and it does bring the whole thing up to date, and now we've got the world in front of us. The film is 90 per cent historic footage and it's got the performances we did at Shepperton, which were magic. It was the last time we all played together, and it's a really nice memory."

DOES PETE DESPAIR of the contemporary rock scene, with its endless outpourings of unmitigated tripe?

"No, not really. I get very annoyed when I see great bands go wrong..."

WHO KNEW

He's played with The Who on-and-off since 1978. But before that, Texan-born keys man John 'Rabbit' Bundrick worked with Johnny Nash, Bob Marley, Sandy Denny, John Martyn and Free and recorded one album with bassist (and one-time Face) Tetsu Yamauchi, Paul Kossoff and Simon Kirke.

'Rockestra', Hammersmith Odeon, London, December 28, 1979: Townshend on stage with Paul McCartney & Friends (in silver suits!) at a UNICEF concert to help the people of Kampuchea

Examples, please?

"I don't want to slag anybody off. I really enjoyed the new Clash album. I've got high hopes for them. They're the most powerful band we've produced, and Strummer has got a head on his shoulders. The same for The Jam – I feel great kinship with Paul Weller, but it is tougher now to break the American market, which is much more snide towards English acts. They've got their own new wave, Cars, Blondie, Devo, they've all got their own thing.

"I'm not mad keen on Talking Heads or Devo. I prefer to listen to The Boomtown Rats, The Clash and The Jam. To be honest, I think Talking Heads are a bit boring, too thoughtful. Gimme a couple more years and I'll start to relate to Devo! My white hope was Television. Tom Verlaine, I thought, was a genius.

"I feel that it must be very, very sobering to young bands who've had an all-out assault, with anarchists and intellectuals, on the music business – to find that it actually is made of paper. On the other side of the paper castles, record companies and superstar groups are just people. That must be a disappointment.

"It must have been disappointing to find out it was all paper and how easy it was to smash the establishment of rock. Then they had to ask, where are the people to pay our rent, buy our records and listen to what we say? They found they were actually talking to rather a small clique.

"Sympathy isn't the right word – I identified with what was happening, as it was so much like the period we were at just after 'Pictures Of Lily'. The public got a bit blasé about us. 'Oh, 'ere they come, they're gonna stick out their new single, it's gonna be interesting BUT…' Then, as I said before, we produced 'I Can See For Miles', it got really good airplay, AND PEOPLE DIDN'T BUY IT! The industry didn't crush it.

"The same happened when we put out 'Join Together In The Band', I thought it was incredible. THAT bombed. You need good promotion, powerful management and advertising, but the public moves in mysterious ways. It's when you realise you can't bully them…"

And you've tried?

"Oh, we've tried everything, bullying them, humouring them, intimidating, scaring, making friends. But it doesn't affect your record sales. Sex Pistols swearing on TV was great. It was quick and brought them into the public eye, but the back-up wasn't there. I remember when we did our last interview, I was very concerned that something terrible was going to happen, and it happened – to Sid Vicious. I weep for that guy.

"It's gross callousness for people like Jules and Tone (I assume he meant Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons) to adopt a stance on it. I read something in *The Guardian*, when their book was coming out, and they said they didn't give a shit about Keith Moon dying because he drove a Rolls-Royce into a swimming pool when people were starving in India, and Sid Vicious will get what's come to him. It's a misunderstanding of the volition behind the acts that lead to final events. I've written them a nice song which they won't like at all, called 'Jules & Tone' [*which appeared on Townshend's 1980 solo album, Empty Glass, as "Jools And Jim"*].

"What I'm driving at is that the sensationalist side of the business is something the public react strongly to. But Keith crashed a car into the swimming pool simply because he hadn't learned to drive. He was all right pushing on the accelerator, but he didn't quite understand steering.

"One mustn't be too fascist about it. People do have human weaknesses and needs, and unfortunately they make them manifest in the strangest ways. And there's no point in pontificating about it. It's an extension of music criticism which I don't like. But I'm not picking fights. In a way I sympathise with some of their sentiments, but it isn't all just about coming out of the street, from the gutter, or from middle-class suburbs for that matter.

"My two brothers with their bands, why do they persist? Is it because they're starving or frustrated, or because they're anarchists? It's none of those things. Everyone has a different reason, and that's the value of rock. It's a channel for all kinds of people and that's still incredible.

"I've seen the magic work in The Who, with four guys from totally different backgrounds meeting and arriving at the place we all set out to get to. It's an absolute miracle. The most important thing at the end of the day is to continue to have that ability to communicate with other people. That is a lesson clear-headed, intelligent rock people can learn.

"It makes mistakes. The machine is unfair, and things can go wrong. But there IS a purity in rock." ⊙

GETTY IMAGES

RELEASE >> DATE 14 | MAY | 1979

The Kids Are Alright

Amazing journey! As the Moon era ends, The Who's cinematic autobiography arrives, in all its haphazard, exploding glory. *By Rob Young*

Their generation: The Who captured in full, sneering glory in *The Kids Are Alright*

AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, on May 13, 1979, one of The Who's longstanding unfulfilled dreams was finally realised. This group, with its unusually prolific relationship with cinema – from the epic rock mythologies of *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia* to Roger Daltrey's starring role in Ken Russell's *Lisztomania* – finally unveiled a far more artless, but no less compelling document of the celluloid traces they had left over the past 15 years.

The Kids Are Alright was the culmination of a four-year excavation of TV and film archives by American director Jeff Klein and his editor, Ed Rothkowitz. Klein first met the group as a besotted 20-year-old fan in 1971, when he published a book of photos of the band. In 1975 he attended the New York premiere of *Tommy*, and proposed to Townshend the idea of a documentary. A one-minute showreel of live clips he put together with Rothkowitz convinced the group that it would be a good idea, but the final cut, finished after painstaking labour four-and-a-half years later, would run to 109 minutes, cobbled together from a disparate dog's breakfast of conflicting formats – 35, 16 and 8mm footage, video from each side of the Atlantic, TV extracts, and so on. Reels showing The Who live at London Coliseum – underlit, but electrifying nevertheless – were rescued from a bin. There is no commentary, and the clips are not arranged in chronological order. Scorsese's editing muse, Thelma Schoonmaker, was working in an adjoining edit suite and ended up with a credit. Klein cajoled the band via their management to record some special new live footage – secret gigs at Kilburn Gaumont (1977) and Shepperton Film Studios (1978) to round out the package and bring it up to date.

At the heart of the film lie the filmed performances – from the young, hungry mods doing "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" on *Ready Steady Go!* in 1965, to the countercultural deities at Monterey and Woodstock, to the mature stadium hacks of 1978. But intercut throughout are TV appearances – interviews, promo sequences – that slowly reveal the complex interpersonal dynamics of this group. Perhaps most telling is the appearance on ITV's *Russell Harty Plus* from January 3, 1973, which threads through the whole movie. Harty, already visibly sweating, is cut to pieces by Moon's incessant clowning and jolly deprecation. Townshend looks like a ghost, as though he's crawled there from a squalid 48-hour New Year's party. You can see how he managed to steer his serious intentions past his bandmates: by retaining the ability to josh and scrap with them. When Harty presses the foursome for what jobs they did prior to joining The Who, Daltrey recoils and almost clams before squeezing out the revelation that he was a sheet metalworker, barely concealing how livid he is to have been asked.

The sheer weirdness of the group comes out in a film of Entwistle at his Cotswolds mansion in 1978, sauntering past his collection of hundreds of guitars, strolling into the grounds and blasting at flying gold discs with a double-barrelled shotgun; and in the sections showing Moon at home in Malibu being drunkenly interviewed by Ringo Starr.

But it opens with a Pop Art kaboom, a sequence from *The Smothers Brothers Comedy*

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The human qualities of the film render it accessible in a way that no other rock doc has really suggested, and it never degenerates into a homage to untouchables. Director Jeff Stein manages to capture the ethos that has earned The Who the rarely disputed title of the world's greatest rock'n'roll band."

ROY CARR, *NME*, MAY 19, 1979

Hour from September 1967. The band, in dazzling colour saturation, and in full Carnaby Street regalia, launch into "My Generation" after some painfully scripted banter with the host, ending with a fearsome explosion from Moon's bass drum, leaving Daltrey in a staggering daze and singeing Townshend's hair, as well as deafening him for 20 minutes (Moon had bribed a technician to install double the agreed amount of dynamite). On *Ready Steady Go!* in 1965, you can sense the cameramen striving after a new dynamic technique to match the impact of the music, with dramatic focus pulls, lens shakes and increased use of the dolly.

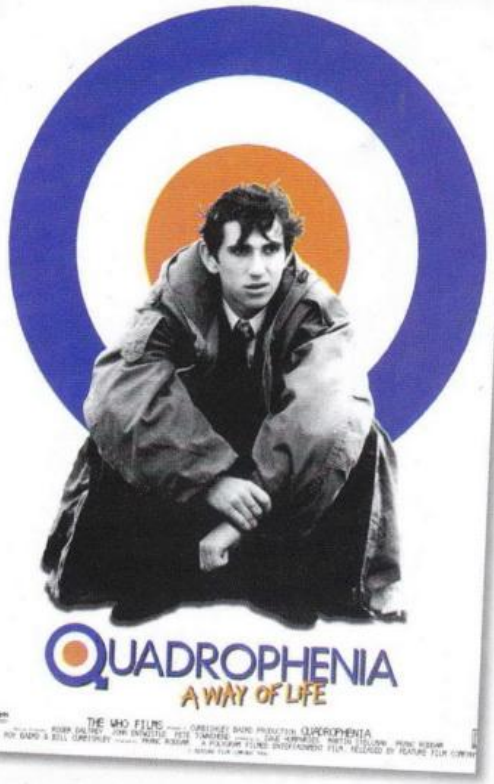
The Kids Are Alright captures the group at the height of their powers – at Monterey, Woodstock, The Rolling Stones' *Rock And Roll Circus* – but also chronicles their gradual waning. The medley of "Road Runner/My Generation Blues" from Pontiac, Michigan, 1975 shows them in complacent, stadium-pleasing mode. It's shocking how quickly their urgent, autodestructive histrionics have been tamed and formularised to sate huge, distant audiences. Convening two years later at Shepperton after a nine-month break, Moon and Daltrey have chubbied-up, and collectively they only find common ground in old chestnuts like "Barbara Ann".

Wrapping up the film, Klein desperately needed a definitive sequence of them doing "Won't Get Fooled Again", and set up a special gig in May 1978 in front of an invited audience. Three months before Moon's death, it's the last show he played with the quartet, and by that point, they are flailing. Townshend practically gives up in the middle of one guitar solo and his stage dancing looks forced and unnatural. Daltrey's voice is on its last legs and Moon looks like a pudgy Mr Micawber at the kit. Meet the new boss: fatter than the old boss.

The double album accompanying the film is mainly audio lifted from the live clips. There's a version of "I Can See For Miles" from the Smothers Brothers variety show that's not in the film; and more of the Michigan 1975 medley, but as it's now out on DVD, there's much more to be gained by seeing the music as well as feeling it. ⊙

CREDITS

RELEASED: May 14, 1979
DIRECTED BY: Jeff Stein
PRODUCED BY: Tony Klinger and Bill Curbishley
STARRING:
Roger Daltrey;
Pete Townshend;
John Entwistle;
Keith Moon



RELEASE >>DATE 14 | SEPTEMBER | 1979

Quadrophenia

From the creator of *MasterChef*, a UK cinema classic. "I love the film," says Townshend, "but it doesn't have much to do with the musical journey I mapped out..." *By Michael Bonner*

THE MONTHS following Keith Moon's death were uncertain times for The Who. Nevertheless, other aspects of The Who's organisation appeared to be in robust health. Following the success of Ken Russell's 1975 *Tommy* film, more projects were in development at The Who Films Ltd. Besides *The Kids Are Alright*, there was a film based on the life of recently paroled bank robber John McVicar, and a sci-fi fantasy, 'Lifehouse'.

Townshend, meanwhile, went to Brighton just after Moon's death to visit the set of *Quadrophenia*, the movie version of the band's 1973 LP starring a sparky cast of virtual unknowns – Phil Daniels, Leslie Ash, Phil Davis and Raymond Winstone – alongside up-and-coming musician, Sting. Townshend had considered developing *Quadrophenia* as a film back in '73. Speaking to *NME*, he explained how he had the idea of someone like Frank Zappa directing a film for The Who; the concept for *Quadrophenia*, and what Townshend described as "a loose script", followed.

But attempts to bring it to the big screen were a protracted business. The film industry moved at glacial speed, the band changed management in 1975 and other matters – *The Who By Numbers* and *Who Are You* albums, tours, solo projects, Townshend's increasing problems with drugs and alcohol – effectively extended the project's hiatus.

Quadrophenia finally began a five-week shoot on September 30, 1978. Locations included Islington, the band's old home turf of Shepherd's Bush and, of course, Brighton. The weeks leading up to the shoot had been painful, particularly for Townshend. His friend, mentor and former manager, Peter Meaden died from an overdose of barbiturates on July 29, followed by Moon on September 7. Unsurprisingly, Townshend "gave up on the film and got drunk in the first week of casting," he admitted to *Uncut* in June 2009.

To direct the film, Townshend chose Franc Roddam, a former ad copywriter who'd moved into television and found himself with two hits: a proto reality TV series, *The Family*, and a docudrama about a deaf mute girl called *Dummy*. "I went through a sort of audition period," Roddam told the *NME* in May, 1979, "then I finally met Townshend... He was like a guiding light, he was very gracious – gracious enough to say, 'I made the album, the film is yours'." As Townshend told *Uncut* – "I love the film, but it doesn't have very much to do with the musical journey I mapped out for Jimmy."

In broad terms, however, the stories are similar. Both are set around the 1964 May Bank Holiday weekend, and both are gripping portraits of teenage tribalism and alienation filtered through the turbulent inner psychology of Townshend's mod hero, Jimmy Cooper. Exhilarating scraps on Brighton seafront are common to both treatments.

The differences, though, lie in Roddam's very specific, vérité-style evocation of life in 1964 (also the year of The High Numbers' debut single, the Meaden-penned "I'm A Face"). Along with screenwriters Dave Humphries and Martin Stellman, Roddam expanded Jimmy's backstory and added a layer of social detail. The story was also more linear, while some characters – particularly Steph, the girl Jimmy fell for, and suave mod poster boy turned bellhop Ace Face – developed a more tangible presence than on the LP. The key difference, of course, was the ending, where Jimmy threw Ace Face's scooter off Beachy Head, possibly following it over. But critically, Jimmy's descent into psychosis felt more compelling in the film, thanks principally to Phil Daniels' tremendous

KOBAL

The *Quad* squad, including Phil Daniels as Jimmy (centre left), Phil Davis (on his shoulder) and Mark Wingett, in the hat

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Like a mod on speed, let's not hang about: *Quadrophenia* is probably the best British rock film ever."
NEIL SPENCER, *NME*, AUGUST 18, 1979

"I suppose we should be thankful Ken Russell didn't get his hands on the project. What he would have done with it doesn't bear thinking about."
ALLAN JONES, *MELODY MAKER*, AUGUST 18, 1979

performance (John Lydon screen-tested for the role, but proved too costly to insure).

Daniels made Jimmy likeable; here was a cheeky chap, talking up his new suit – "Three buttons, side vents, 16-inch bottoms" – or larking with pals in Alfredo's Snack Bar. But there were suggestions all was not well within. "Your Uncle Sid was always trying to kill himself," his father claimed. "What's wrong with you?" Steph asks him later. "I can't think straight," he whines. "Nothing seems right." Events only serve to destabilise Jimmy further; he loses his job, his girl, his best friend, his beloved Lambretta. Making his way by train to Brighton for the final time in the film, lounging provocatively in a First Class carriage, dressed in a sharp mohair suit and polka dot tie, eyes rimmed with Kohl, Daniels was as vivid a presence as De Niro in *Mean Streets*.

In May 1979 The Who premiered both *Quadrophenia* and *The Kids Are Alright* at the Cannes Film Festival, before *Quadrophenia* officially opened at the Plaza, Lower Regent St, on August 16. A soundtrack album followed on October 5, comprising old soul and R'n'B tracks from the film plus 10 numbers from the original LP remixed by Entwistle. Of greater interest to Who fans, though, was the inclusion of three 'new' songs: "Four Faces", an outtake from the original LP sessions, alongside "Joker James" and "Get Out And Stay Out" that marked the formal recording debut of Kenney Jones.

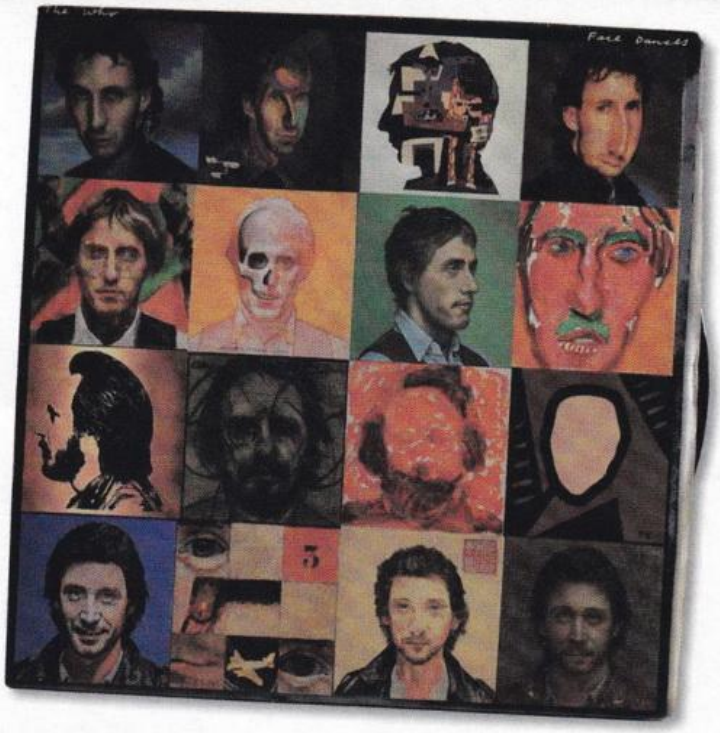
The afterlife of *Quadrophenia* rumbles on. The film's cast have become fixtures of TV shows like *The Bill*, *Holby City*, *Boon*, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, *EastEnders* and *Men Behaving Badly*, while Roddam went on to create *MasterChef*. You can trace echoes of the movie in *Trainspotting* or the 2011 remake of *Brighton Rock*, Kevin Sampson's *Awaydays* book, or Dave Gibbons' graphic novel, *The Originals*. Surely Phil Daniels was dusting down Jimmy's old tonic suit for "Parklife" or "Me, White Noise"?

Townshend, meanwhile, just won't let Jimmy fade away. So far, *Quadrophenia* has been an album, a film, a soundtrack LP, numerous tours and a stage musical. In 2010, Bill Curbishley confirmed in *Uncut* that Martin Stellman had submitted the first draft of a script for a sequel. In this age of special editions and director's cuts, it seems reasonable for Townshend to continue reshaping, re-presenting and remodelling his mod master-piece. It is, after all, more than a way of life. ⊙

CREDITS

RELEASED: September 14, 1979
DISTRIBUTOR: The Who Films
DIRECTED BY: Franc Roddam
PRODUCED BY: Roy Baird, Bill Curbishley
STARRING: Phil Daniels, Leslie Ash, Mark Wingett, Philip Davis, Sting


Jet



RELEASE >> DATE 16 | MARCH | 1981

Face Dances

A new decade, a new drummer ("Fucking awful," says Daltrey), and a still-compelling band in the throes of a midlife crisis, struggling to make themselves heard. *By Andrew Mueller*

IT WOULD HAVE been unsurprising, and entirely forgivable, if *Face Dances* had never been made at all. The band that assembled at London's Odyssey studios with Eagles producer Bill Szymczyk in June 1980 had been given more than sufficient cause, over the past couple of years, to wonder whether it was all worth it. In September 1978, their original drummer and animating spirit Keith Moon had died, 32 eventful years of life ending with an accidental overdose of prescription medication. In December 1979, 11 Who fans, aged between 15 and 27, had been killed in the crush to get into the band's show at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum.

These tragedies had troubled the members of The Who as they would trouble anybody. On top of that, they were suffering the fatigue, fractured tempers and cabin fever that result from incessant touring, especially in bands who've proved their point and made their money. The Who had been solidly on the road for more than a year, and had another hefty schlep around the US immediately ahead of them. Pete Townshend was taking heroin, and cocaine, and generally acting as if determined to continue where Moon had left off. "I got used to behaving very badly," he told *Penthouse* in 1983. He had been consigned to the doghouse by his understandably impatient wife.

Roger Daltrey was not getting on with Moon's replacement, former Small Faces drummer Kenney Jones, whom Daltrey believed was an ill-chosen replacement for Moon ("Like having the wheel from a Cadillac stuck onto a Rolls-Royce. It's a great wheel, but it's the wrong one," he told *Goldmine* magazine in 1994, before going on to elaborate that Jones' contributions to *Face Dances* were "Fucking awful drumming.") The singer was also sulking about Townshend's 1980 solo album, *Empty Glass*, which Daltrey believed, not unreasonably, contained some fine material that The Who should have recorded (John Entwistle was also writing for a solo album, 1981's *Too Late The Hero*, though little on that is regarded by posterity as The Who's loss).

So if it would have been CONTINUES OVER »

TRACKMARKS

1 **You Better You Bet** ★★★★
2 **Don't Let Go The Coat** ★★★
3 **Cache Cache** ★★★
4 **The Quiet One** ★★★
5 **Did You Steal My Money** ★★
6 **How Can You Do It Alone** ★★★
7 **Daily Records** ★★★★
8 **You** ★★
9 **Another Tricky Day** ★★★

RELEASED: March 16, 1981
LABEL: Polydor/Warners
PRODUCED BY: Bill Szymczyk
RECORDED: Odyssey Studios, London
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (vocals, congas); Pete Townshend (guitar, keyboards, vocals); John Entwistle (bass, vocals); Kenney Jones (drums); John 'Rabbit' Bundrick (keyboards, synths, bk vocals)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 2; US 4

Townshend backstage on The Who's 1982 American 'Farewell' tour

unsurprising and forgivable if *Face Dances* had never been recorded, would it have been preferable? It is certainly the case that no sane judge would rate *Face Dances* among The Who's finest hours. It is indisputable that its existence makes not the slightest difference to The Who's reputation – only one track of its nine, "You Better You Bet", is a plausible candidate for any Best Of compilation.

But while *Face Dances* is far from great, it certainly isn't bad. When conceded its context in The Who's story, this half-formed, fretful record is a peculiarly gripping portrait of midlife crisis and mid-career angst, the sound of a band who don't quite feel like they're done, but don't know quite what to do.

If *Face Dances* had gone on as it begins, the results might have been slightly more resonant. Opening track and lead single "You Better You Bet" is done no favours by the limp, washed-out, keyboard-heavy production that characterises *Face Dances* – and, come to that, much of the decade in which it was released. The mix, for reasons surpassing understanding, seems to have been conducted with an imperative to turn Townshend's guitar down as much as possible – every chord sounds primly strummed, rather than exuberantly arm-wheeled.

The listener has to imagine the song strutting and roaring with the poise and rage of "Won't Get Fooled Again", say. And, as Daltrey would rightly have preferred, with that colossal, inimitable gallop of Keith Moon's drums hauling it along. But "You Better You Bet" is a perfectly serviceable pop anthem, the choruses playing Daltrey's swaggering call against the response of Townshend and Entwistle's pristine harmonies, and a funny, self-mocking lyric clearly depicting Townshend's domestic travails and his uneasy accession to elder statesman status: *"I drink myself blind to the sound of old T.Rex... oh, and* Who's Next."

In retrospect, "You Better You Bet" sounds like a final, only slightly uncertain, hurrah from The Who of the old school – that swaggering, supercharged rock'n'roll band engaged in a perpetual flirt with chaotic self-destruction. The rest of *Face Dances* sounds very much like the work of tired men in their mid-thirties. It is the tritest possible jibe to recite the *"Hope I die before I get old"* line back at The Who – it was and is a brilliant, immortal statement of fatuous adolescent bravado, but it's fair to say that they sound a bit perplexed by the encroachment of middle age throughout *Face Dances*. This is obvious as soon as the second track. "Don't Let Go The Coat" is a modestly pretty pop tune clearly written by Townshend as a sort of spiritual mnemonic. It's Townshend reminding himself to observe more closely the pratings of Meher Baba (*"I can't be held responsible for my own behaviour/I lost all contact with my only saviour"*). The phrase "Don't Let Go The Coat" is a reference to one of Baba's self-penned prayers, in which he enjoins his followers to perceive themselves as children clutching their mother's hem as they walk through a crowded bazaar. The last verse of "Don't Let Go The Coat" begins *"Your friends all pass/For life is just a market,"* which is a long, heavy sigh away from the combative statements of intent with which The Who made their name.

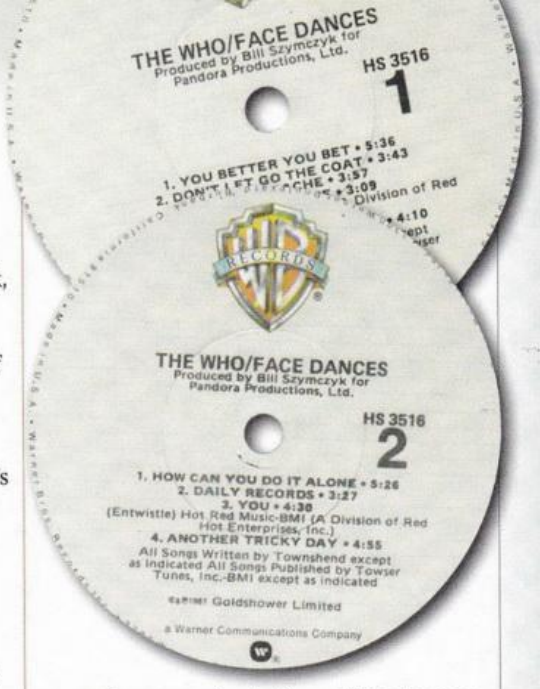
That said, it would be unfair to characterise or caricature *Face Dances* as a statement of resignation from the position of rock'n'roll titans. It does try to rock, occasionally even a little too hard in places, but is repeatedly hobbled by two primary impediments. One is

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Apart from failing to cut it in the immediate areas – social, moral and aesthetic – this LP is a hell of a shambles musically. Its overall vision is so firmly tied to 'a past' that the music can barely hope to break new ground."
GAVIN MARTIN, *NME*, MARCH 21, 1981

"*Face Dances* lacks courage... it's ordinary, and from The Who that's the worst kind of sell out."
PAOLO HEWITT, *MELODY MAKER*, MARCH 21, 1981

THE WHO SINGLES | FEBRUARY 1981 | YOU BETTER YOU BET/THE QUIET ONE | UK#9, US#18 | MAY 1981 | DON'T LET GO THE COAT/YOU | UK# 47, US#84



what might be thought of as the drumming equivalent of phantom limb pain. Kenney Jones is a fine drummer – the Small Faces would scarcely have hired him otherwise – but he's no Keith Moon (hardly anybody ever has been, though it can be wistfully wondered what might have resulted at this point had The Who ever thought to make an audacious transfer bid for Blondie's Clem Burke.) The other, at the very real risk of harping, is the pallid production. Even Townshend's hearing problems shouldn't have deafened him to the difference between the meaty wallop of earlier Who records and this milquetoast facsimile.

The third and fourth tracks are especially frustrating could-have-been-contenders. The hallucinatory "Cache Cache" – it's French for "Hide & Seek" – flourishes a terrific, pulsing Entwistle bass line, and a brash *"Oh-who-oh"* singalong refrain. Its gestation was also pleasingly rock'n'roll, inspired by a brief experiment in living rough conducted by Townshend in the forests of Switzerland in March 1980, during a period in which he was especially gripped by the always dangerous combination of having too much money and taking too many drugs.

Entwistle's "The Quiet One" also wants, and tries valiantly, to rock – if permitted the necessary blood flow, it might have shaped up akin to Big Star's "Don't Lie To Me", or at least Queen's "Tie Your Mother Down". Townshend's solos, when you disinter them from the syrup poured over them by Szymczyk, throb tantalisingly with the carefully contained frenzy of his best performances. Entwistle's other contribution to the writing of *Face Dances*, "You", is a more prosaic, if still effective, stadium rocker, but no drummer or producer could have atoned for a supremely asinine lyric – it is lasting testament to Daltrey's conviction as a singer that he maintains a straight face while negotiating this couplet: *"You lead me on like a lamb to the slaughter/ Then you act like a fish out of water"*.

Of the execrable "Did You Steal My Money", it can at least be said that no critique could condemn it as thoroughly as the recollections of Townshend and Daltrey, who have both acknowledged that it was heavily influenced by The Police. The lyric is mildly intriguing, however, another haphazard dispatch from Townshend's adventures under the influence (*"Did you search me?/Did you turn me over?/ While I cold turkeyed on the sofa?"*). And it's the only track on *Face Dances* that is actually bad – though the absolute nadir of the album is the inexplicable synthesised bagpipe solo that disfigures the otherwise likeable "How Can You Do It Alone", an upful music-hall pop outing that wouldn't have sounded askance on a Madness record.

Everything else on *Face Dances* just isn't as good as it should, and could, have been: it's an album of nearly-but-not-quites. "Daily Records" is a gorgeous miniature pop epic buoyed, it should be noted, by a splendid turn by Jones on the drums which also functions, with winning perversity, as a bleakly witty survey of the songwriter's vexatiously co-dependent relationship with his muse (*"My head is ageing/My balls are aching/But I'm not looking for deliverance"*). The song implicitly likens the creative process to drug addiction.

HALF-FORMED AND FRETFUL, A PECULIARLY GRIPPING PORTRAIT OF MID-CAREER ANGST

Like much of the *Face Dances* lyric sheet, it reads like Townshend's attempt to explain his recent derangements to himself (*"And they say it's just a stage in life/But I know by now the problem is a stage"*). There's also a generously self-mocking zinger in the last verse, as Townshend seeks to see the world through the eyes of his daughters, and admits that he has grown into the very thing he once wanted to die before becoming (*"I watch my kids grow up and ridicule the bunch/When you are 11, the whole world's out to lunch."*)

Face Dances closes on "Another Tricky Day", a muddled and hesitant five minutes which serves, if doubtless unintentionally, as a peroration recapping the flaws of the album as a whole. The song's opening bars contain, rather infuriatingly, the first proper ringing Townshend powerchords heard on the album (by this logic, had Moon survived to play on *Face Dances*, he'd have been issued with thimbles and a washboard). Not for the first time on *Face Dances*, the rest of it sounds like a decent Who song trying to wrestle its way out of a straitjacket.

All the trademarks are present and correct – Townshend's Stratocaster-via-Marshall peal, Entwistle's hyperactive bass, a (nearly) Moonesque drum part – but obstinately refuse to coalesce into the familiar fabulous product. It's unhelpful, if probably inevitable, that Daltrey oversings it furiously, a man desperately trying to coax a wheezing steed over the jumps. The lyrics are at least appropriate to the existential crisis apparently being played out in the studio: *"You can't always get it/When you really want it,"* it begins. The concluding exhortation of *"Break out and start a fire, y'all/It's all here on the vinyl,"* sounds more like wishful thinking than the call to the barricades it might have been a decade before.

The Who may at least claim that rarely in rock'n'roll history has an album sleeve so accurately represented its contents. The cover design was entrusted to Peter Blake, the veteran British pop artist previously responsible for the cover of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper*. Blake, in turn, selected 15 other British artists, and had each of them depict an assigned member of The Who. It was a cool idea, the sort of indulgence that can only be attempted by the rock aristocracy, and the results were generally inspired, particularly David Hockney's impressionistic cartoon of Daltrey, Richard Hamilton's affectionate caricature of Townshend, and Patrick Caulfield's uncompromising understanding of the bassist's role (his headshot of Entwistle is a blank space).

Whether deliberately or not, though, the 16 faces that appeared on the front summed up the group at this point: four men not altogether certain who they are any more. ⊙

RELEASE >> DATE 04 | SEPTEMBER | 1982

It's Hard

Fresh out of rehab, Townshend rallies the troops for one more fraught – and apparently final – mission; a shot at their own *London Calling*. *By Bud Scoppa*

IN EARLY 1982, Pete Townshend emerged from a Californian rehab clinic, desperate to kick a potentially deadly addiction to a variety of hard drugs; Ativan, heroin, cocaine. He arrived at the home of Glyn Johns, determined to make what he believed would be a coherent and relevant final chapter in The Who's epic story.

Johns, at the desk for *Who's Next*, *Quadrophenia*, *The Who By Numbers* and *Who Are You*, had been recruited as producer, after Bill Szymczyk's miscast turn for *Face Dances*. While Townshend was away, his bandmates had been rehearsing with Johns in preparation for his return, but they viewed their leader with scepticism and distrust. "I managed to convince the guys in the band that I would stay alive if they allowed me to work with them again," Townshend later acknowledged. "[But] I had difficulty proving to Roger in particular that I was going to enjoy working with The Who, and that it was important to me that the band end properly, rather than end because of my fucking mental demise."

More antagonist than ally, Roger Daltrey was in the process of learning to play guitar, perhaps anticipating the need to prepare himself for whatever came next. John Entwistle remained the Ox, a sanguine team player willing to do whatever was called for to keep The Who on the tracks. Despite his issues, Townshend had lost none of his vaulting ambition, leading some to conclude that he was hoarding his strongest material for his solo projects. Kenney Jones, meanwhile, was under enormous pressure, his only apparent shortcoming being that he wasn't the force of nature he'd been called on to replace. For The Who, making *It's Hard* would be like trying to cross a minefield without blowing themselves to pieces.

Townshend had brought with him only two newly minted songs, so that the initial conversations were focused on CONTINUES OVER »

TERRY O'NEILL/GETTY

TRACKMARKS

1 **Athena** ★★★★
2 **It's Your Turn** ★★★
3 **Cooks County** ★★★★
4 **It's Hard** ★★★★
5 **Dangerous** ★★★
6 **Eminence Front** ★★★★★
7 **I've Known No War** ★★★★★
8 **One Life's Enough** ★★★
9 **One At A Time** ★★
10 **Why Did I Fall For That** ★★★
11 **A Man Is A Man** ★★
12 **Cry If You Want** ★★★★★

RELEASED: September 4, 1982
LABEL: Polydor/Warners
PRODUCED BY: Glyn Johns
RECORDED: Turn Up-Down Studio at Glyn Johns' home in Surrey
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (vocals and occasional guitar); John Entwistle (bass, vocals, synth, horns); Kenney Jones (drums); Pete Townshend (guitar, keyboards and vocals); Tim Gorman (keys); Andy Fairweather Low (guitar on "It's Your Turn")
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 11; US 8

>> | IT'S HARD/DANGEROUS | UK NOT ISSUED, US DID NOT CHART | NOV 1984 | TWIST AND SHOUT/I CAN'T EXPLAIN (REISSUE) | UK/US DID NOT CHART

Stadium slicks: live in the US, October 1982

© NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS

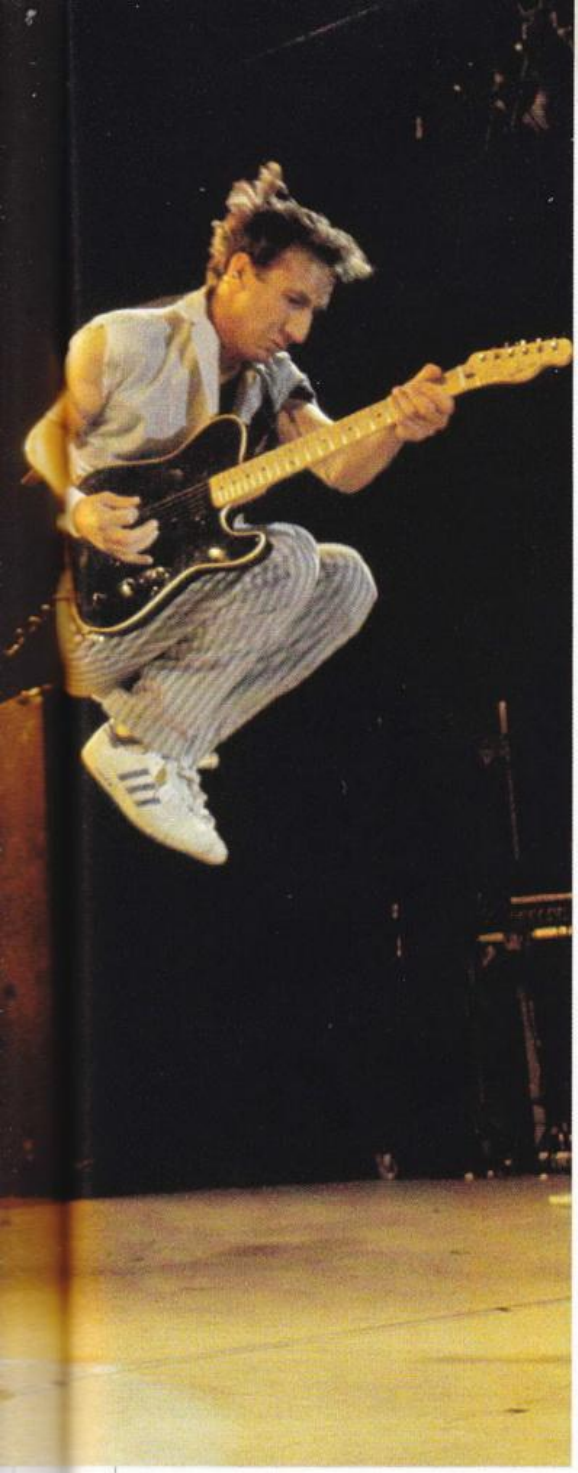
what sort of thematic and sonic statement the band could agree on for the album's direction. "Before we started recording," he recalled, "I sat down with everybody and I said, 'Listen, what's the fucking album going to be about? What are we going to say? I can't just go and write a load of songs again and bring them in and hope that you're going to feel good about them... Let's at least all decide how we want the album to fucking sound, whether we want it to be different or old sounding, open or loose or tight or what... And then, at least, we know when we've completed the album, we won't feel like we did about *Face Dances*.'"

Though it's unlikely that a consensus was reached, Townshend's writing took him in an overtly political direction, a move that would inevitably invite comparisons to the bands who'd taken The Who's place on the barricades of youthful rebellion. All in their late thirties, The Who were viewed by many punks with disdain, much like the disdain The Who themselves had exhibited toward mainstream pop when they'd first formed. In 1982, closing in on 40 was like approaching 70 is today for rock musicians – unexplored territory – while their motives for doing so were seen by cynics as dubious, a far cry from the youthful energy that had carried them to greatness in the 1960s.

IT'S DESPISED BY MANY WHO FANS. BUT A FRESH LISTEN REVEALS A LARGELY SATISFYING SWANSONG

For his part, Townshend adored The Clash, whose involvement with sociopolitical issues inspired his writing for the upcoming album project.

"About two years ago," Pete said in 1982, "while The Who were touring, I was wearing the basic Clash outfit, red handkerchief and baggy trousers and whatever else. And it really didn't come into its own until I went to a Clash concert, where I actually blended into the crowd and had that feeling of being lost, and at the same time of being... found. I think The Who are in a unique position in that we're capable of exactly the same kind of tense and desperate expression The Clash make, but with a far, far larger audience". There's a rich irony in this statement, considering that *London Calling* is now seen as one of the greatest albums ever made, while Pete's



attempted homage is all but forgotten by most, and despised by many Who fans as the band's worst album. A fresh listen, however, reveals *It's Hard* to be a sometimes disjointed but largely satisfying swansong.

The album begins rather casually, considering Townshend's determination "to re-establish our position as observers, as commentators". The lilting opener "Athena" features the interplay of Jones' most Moon-like pummelling drums and Townshend's visceral acoustic chordings, giving way to Entwistle's elaborate but unremarkable "It's Your Turn". It isn't until "Cooks County", inspired by a news story about a Good Samaritan inner-city Chicago medical facility (actual name: Cook County Hospital), that *It's Hard* reveals its sense of purpose. On the downside, Daltrey doesn't seem to know how to deal with an overly literal lyric built around its stilted three-word refrain.

"I saw a documentary on TV about a hospital in Chicago... which is the only free hospital in America," Townshend explained. "The hospital was going to close. It was in a ghetto and it was mainly black people and it was mainly drug abuse and everything else, ghetto-influenced problems, which this hospital dealt with... I just felt so moved that I had to scribble out a few lines about it and that's how it came out. I just went in with the poem I'd written, 'People Are Suffering', and we turned it into this particular track." Fortunately, the band's performance, built around a speedy repeated Townshend riff over a complementary synth pattern, robustly expresses the urgency the lyric fails to deliver.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Where the lyrics are subtle, all their suppleness is crushed by the need to tie each syllable to this lumbering tumbril of trad-rock... What's hard? Life? Being Pete Townshend? Or breathing life into The Who? Whatever the title's portent, this album sounds like it's struggling through a variety of difficulties – and overcomes none of them."

PAUL DU NOYER, *NME*, SEPTEMBER 4, 1982

The title track is a mid-'60s-style janglefest sporting a melody whose folkiness is reinforced by what sounds like an accordion. The band pleasingly toughen it up in a live performance culled from 1982's so-called "farewell tour", one of four bonus tracks tagged on the 1997 CD reissue. Leading into the rock-hard meat of the album is Entwistle's "Dangerous", which finds him dutifully writing his idea of a political rant, embedding it in a song structure full of sectional shifts, with one of his patented thick, burbling basslines providing the connective tissue. The sound is decidedly '80s – new wavey even – in its keyboard flourishes; as a result, it sits uneasily in the running order, a touch of Day-Glo amid the battleship grey of its surroundings.

What follows is the one-two punch that stands as the album's dramatic peak. "Eminence Front" is the one of the very rare tracks in The Who's canon that positively swings. Jones lays down a taut, cruising groove over which Townshead's clipped, badass riffage crackles ominously, while his signature sequencer pattern fuses with the electric piano licks of Yank hired gun Tim Gorman. The song also succinctly slams across the album's social consciousness premise, with its nagging refrain, *"It's a put-on"*, sung by Townshend with judgmental venom. Sounding just as immediate now as it did in 1982, and more pertinent today than ever, "Eminence Front" is right up there with The Who's greatest pieces. It's followed by another spot-on stunner in "I've Known No War", in which Townshend compares the experience of the older generation, which endured two world wars, with that of the *"spoilt brats"* of his own generation. It's a stark, relentless track, with metronomic snare hits so concussive they could leave craters, seconded by an unchanging piano and single-minded bassline, like a giant clock – or a time bomb.

Thereafter, The Who nearly go off the rails, offering up, in order, "One Life's Enough", part change of pace, part vocal showcase for Daltrey, who seems perfectly comfortable amid an arrangement containing little more than elegant piano and synthesised string section; Entwistle's busy but directionless "One At A Time", with his horn accents and breathless lead vocal; and the skewed, lurching rocker "Why Did I Fall For That", which aims for the righteous indignation of "Won't Get Fooled Again" but lands in the neighbourhood of "You Better You Bet". The penultimate "A Man Is A Man" might've served as a setpiece in a Townshend narrative, but the start/stop arrangement and electronic keyboard flourishes prevent it from locking in.

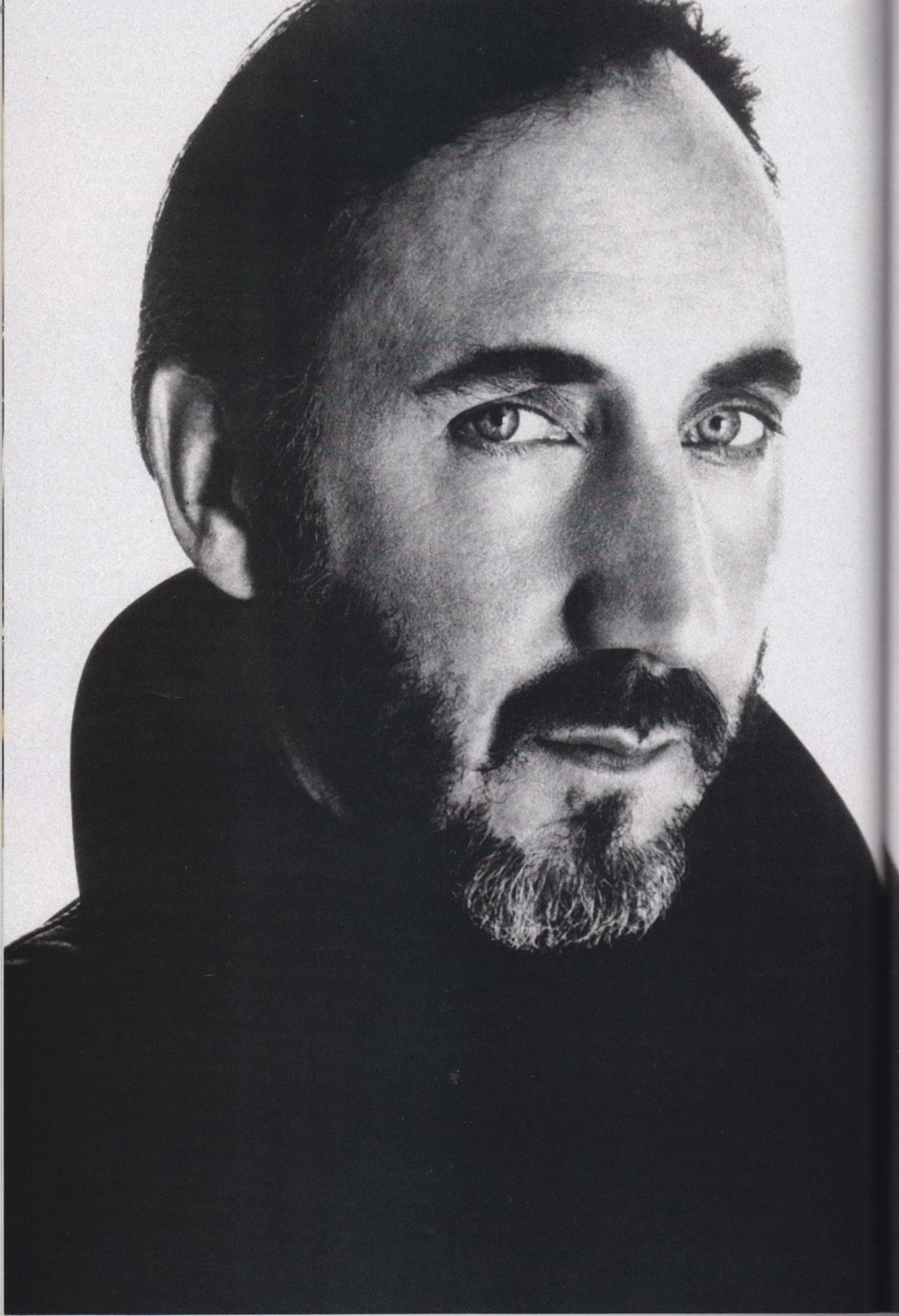
On the latter three tracks, the band's unsung hero is Jones, whose versatile, in-the-pocket drumming prevents them from careening out of control. More than that, this underrated musician provides the album as a whole with its most efficient and reliable instrumental element. It's never more dramatically apparent than on the redeeming closer "Cry If You Want", as the deceptively simple and perfectly pitched martial drumming sets the tone for a song of resignation and resilience while his tenured bandmates follow suit on the album's most economical and hard-hitting performance. Here, all the musicians attain what Jones never fails to pull off – they make every note count.

The 1997 CD reissue was more than a standard digital remastering; the album was completely remixed by Jon Astley (who'd co-produced *Who Are You*) and Andy Macpherson, without Johns' involvement, and there are all sorts of changes, mostly subtle but significant overall. It's this revamped version of *It's Hard*, and not the original Johns-mixed vinyl version, on which the album will be judged in perpetuity, for better or worse.

In hindsight, *It's Hard* is neither "their most vital and coherent album since *Who's Next*," as Park Puterbaugh gushed in his *Rolling Stone* review, nor the "complete piece of shit" Daltrey deemed it to be in 1994. And while it's hardly The Who's own *London Calling*, the album's strongest songs and performances do in fact honour that noble ambition. Conceived as a song cycle about political and cultural turmoil and dysfunction, the album can now be seen as the fascinating document of a dysfunctional band desperately fighting to stay alive. The internecine battling that can be sensed raging once again just below the surface forms the album's push-and-pull dynamic, rendering *It's Hard* nothing less than quintessential Who – maddening and enthralling all at once.

By all rights, that should've been the end of it for this one-of-a-kind band; everyone certainly figured as much, none more so than the bandmembers themselves. As it turned out, though, some unfinished business remained, beyond the intermittent touring cycles that roused The Who and their ever-loyal fans through the succeeding decades. But it would be nearly a quarter of a century before Townshend and Daltrey returned to the recording studio together. ⊙

TRACKLISTING: WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN, BONY MORONIE, DANCING IN THE STREET, MARY ANNE WITH THE SHAKY HAND



'MY THEORY ABOUT SMACK IS "KEEP TAKING THE TABLETS 'TIL THE PAIN GOES AWAY"'

1993. The Who, apparently, will never reform, and Pete Townshend – reformed heroin addict and alcoholic – is now a family man. Some things, however, don't change. As he prepares for his first solo tour, **GAVIN MARTIN** gets the updates on fame, insecurity, ageing and, of course, *Tommy*. "I'm too old to stay up pontificating," he lies...

SEEING PETE Townshend in the flesh for the first time was alarming. It was April 1993 and he was coming through customs at Heathrow Airport, returning from America, where his fabled rock opera, *Tommy*, had enjoyed a new lease of life.

But Pete looked haunted and daunted; the reckless arrogance of youth ground by the years of neurosis, addiction and confusion. His face was a map left after a war between age and celebrity. He seemed to be in a self-conscious state of shock – scared that someone would recognise him; terrified that they wouldn't.

Today, two months later, is a dress rehearsal for Townshend's first solo tour. It's over 30 years since he began life with the group that became The Who; the epitome of rock'n'roll auto-destruction. Townshend has spent much of that 30 years attacking, dodging (as publisher, filmmaker, author, record exec) the rock'n'roll machine. Now he's back strapping on his guitar, ready to perform a few "windmills", unable to kick the habit.

He may be without The Who, but he's not without the past. *Psychoderelict*, the new album which forms the core of his America-bound show, trades heavily on it. Using tapes from his self-proclaimed "white genius" early '70s 'Lifehouse'/*Who's Next* electric music era, it presents characters based on himself and others he's encountered during his career. There's Rastus Knight, a manipulative manager, Ruth Streeting, the Julie Burchill-style savage journalist, and Ray High, a brooding alcoholic rock star has-been. High's been away for a long while but he's still keen to unload his dream on the world.

The small soundstage at Bray Studios is crammed. There's a nine-piece band, three actors with head mics doing the spoken-word parts, a lighting designer sketching out ideas for the yet-to-be completed back projections, a tape operator and various clipboard-carrying assistants. Townshend leads them through the entire album. Karen – his wife for over 25 years who's weathered all the Townshend traumas (the booze, the bust-ups, the smack, the guru and the groupies) – watches in the corner. Richard Barnes, The Who biographer, longtime Townshend friend and collaborator, checks through the script and calls across, "You from the *NME*? Have they got a boring old farts column?"

There's some nervousness in the Townshend camp about how CONTINUES OVER »

Psychoderelict will be labelled and perceived. People yawn at the idea of another Townshend concept, so they've decided to call it a "radio play". But a concept it is; Pete's been making them since *A Quick One*, The Who's second LP.

Originally planned as a novel, the script is already getting short shrift from the press, but Townshend struggles on, manfully trying to give his music a new context. He's aware of the pitfalls, and his face assumes that haunted, perplexed look when tapes are played at the wrong time or when things don't go right.

"This could be like 'Springtime For Hitler' by the time it gets to New York," he says at one point. Happily, Pete is playing and singing better than he has for years. After The Who's 1989 farewell tour, where he performed locked in a box, a cruel mockery of his old guitar hero status, his hearing difficulties have cleared up. He tears into the songs, songs about Blighty's ever-present class war, about using the pain of the past, about outliving the dinosaur, about faking it, about the desire to make media myths real, about finding a soul and falling in love. Somewhere down the line he stops and jokes. "Now I know how Jesus felt." Those that are listening laugh, albeit a little nervously.

OUTSIDE IN THE sunshine by the river, birds sing and he picks over his past. He's musing on the differences and similarities between himself and Ray High. "I stand by some of the things he says. I think, for instance, it does help to be insecure to be a celebrity. Even though I don't think I'm insecure any more, I still enjoy being a celebrity – the money, getting a good table at Rosalinni's, getting laid when you want to, the usual things.

"What I really like is having two very clear lives and being able to play them off against the other. A place where you can experiment and be an actor, try things out which you can retract later on and say, 'That was an experiment, something I was going through.'

"I have to stand by the fact I was an alcoholic, that I took drugs briefly and I was a bit of a mess in the '80s, but I can't remember anyone who wasn't. If you want to measure me as a human being, look at my life; the fact I've been married for 25 years, I've got good children and friends that go back all the way and I've kept them."

With Roger Daltrey as his mouthpiece, Pete Townshend was rock'n'roll's foremost alienated modernist, a serious and seriously angry young man of the '60s. He scowled through the decade with still potent blasts of ravaged frustration and social antipathy. His songs, propelled by The Who's frenzied powerdrive, could just as easily be about masturbation ("Pictures Of Lily") as spiritual longing ("The Seeker") or futuristic omnipotence ("I Can See For Miles").

Later, he rebelled against his own status. *The Who By Numbers* (1975), was an astonishing attack on rock celebrity and falsity. Forever on the outside, he fought his own battles his way – at Woodstock in '69 he trounced Abbie Hoffman, yippie activist turned acid-fried stage invader, on the head with his guitar.

"The dream Ray High has isn't the dream I have, it's the '70s, the Glastonbury years, the hippy years. I think that's where everything went wrong. I decided to make Ray a bit like that guy in Hawkwind. He was on the radio the other day saying the thing that's wrong with Glastonbury, the thing that's changed, is that the crafts aren't there any more."

Townshend mentions the Glastonbury Years a bit too much when he explains where his vision ends and High's begins. It's an unfortunate turn of phrase; for the past 10 years the Glastonbury Festival has been one of the few events worth cherishing in England's sorry shit pit. He corrects himself.

"Well, in a sense what's happening now is that the very young audience do seem to be re-driving what was good about the hippy thing. It's not just Lenny Kravitz dressing up in bell-bottoms. I don't really know what's going on now. One of the things I expect to be able to do – wrongly – as an artist is commentate. You can't commentate if you don't know what's going on. What I'm trying to do is allow myself the ability to commentate by reliving the little period where I knew what was going on.

"FROM THE JUDICIARY TO OLD CUNTS LIKE ME, THERE'S NO GRACE OR DIGNITY IN AGEING"

"I know the '60s was about the discovery of urban black blues by a bunch of white guys. Then it somehow turned to shit. I don't really know why. We ended with this great big bubble of men in spandex trousers and it just burst. The Who were in there somewhere, probably culpable to an extent; we went out with lasers and Kiss-like explosions. We were carried along by the industry need for spectacle. I never could really understand it."

When The Who's 1989 farewell tour was planned. Pete wanted it to be small and intimate, but rock'n'roll economics intervened. They ended up in the stadiums. He's happy that *Psychoderelict* will perform mostly in small theatres; getting caught on the mega circuit treadmill is something he doesn't want to face again.

"I saw Paul McGuinness (U2's manager) the other day and he said that U2 are doing their *Zooropa* show, not because of any artistic reason or because they want to say anything, but because they felt that fans wouldn't continue to go to big rock'n'roll concerts unless there was some sort of spectacle. I don't know if that's true."

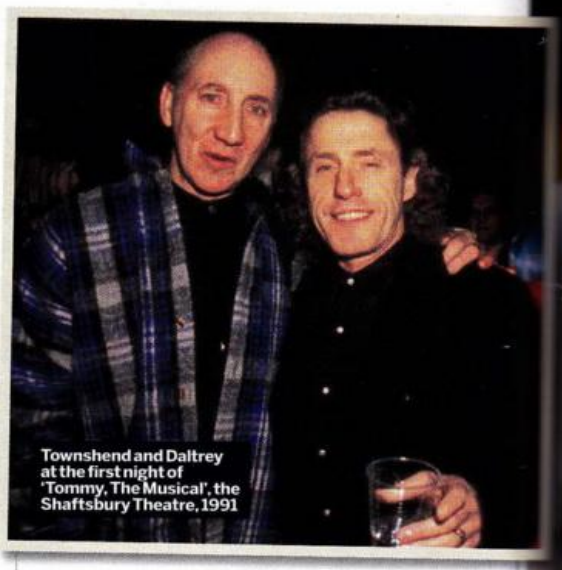
When the punk rebellion – urged into existence by *The Who By Numbers* – came, the abyss Townshend foresaw for himself duly swallowed him. Impotence, loss of identity and a penchant for cognac and smack drowned him out as good Who music became hard to find. Unlike Keith Moon, Townshend survived his mid-life crises, but by the mid-'80s he was a figure easily scorned. In 1984 he was a recovered addict addressing the Tory Conference at the behest of John Patten, presently our Minister Of Education, crappest of a very crap bunch, then a junior Health Minister.

"It kind of backfired, that," he admits. "I became a figurehead for this charity and it was very difficult. I was quite hurt by how it was perceived by the music press. As though I was trying to save the world. My theory about smack, if anyone phones me up with a problem, is 'keep taking the tablets 'til the pain goes away.' I don't know what the fuck you do. Certainly what you don't do is tell people to stop and 'just say no'.

"You just don't do that, you have to be very careful when people are addicted to drugs. When someone is even going to stop smoking there's a careful set of principles to apply. Like try not to be around your young children in the first week because you won't even know that you're hitting them.

"The Conservative Party thing was very strange, I was so manipulated by them. They said, 'Will you come and address the Young Conservatives as a socialist on any subject you want?' I went down and there was this press barrage. I realised how dim I'd been. It's interesting to do something like that and find that, compared to these guys, we're all fucking small fry. We have no idea what's going on really. They've been in power so fucking long and they're going to stay in power.

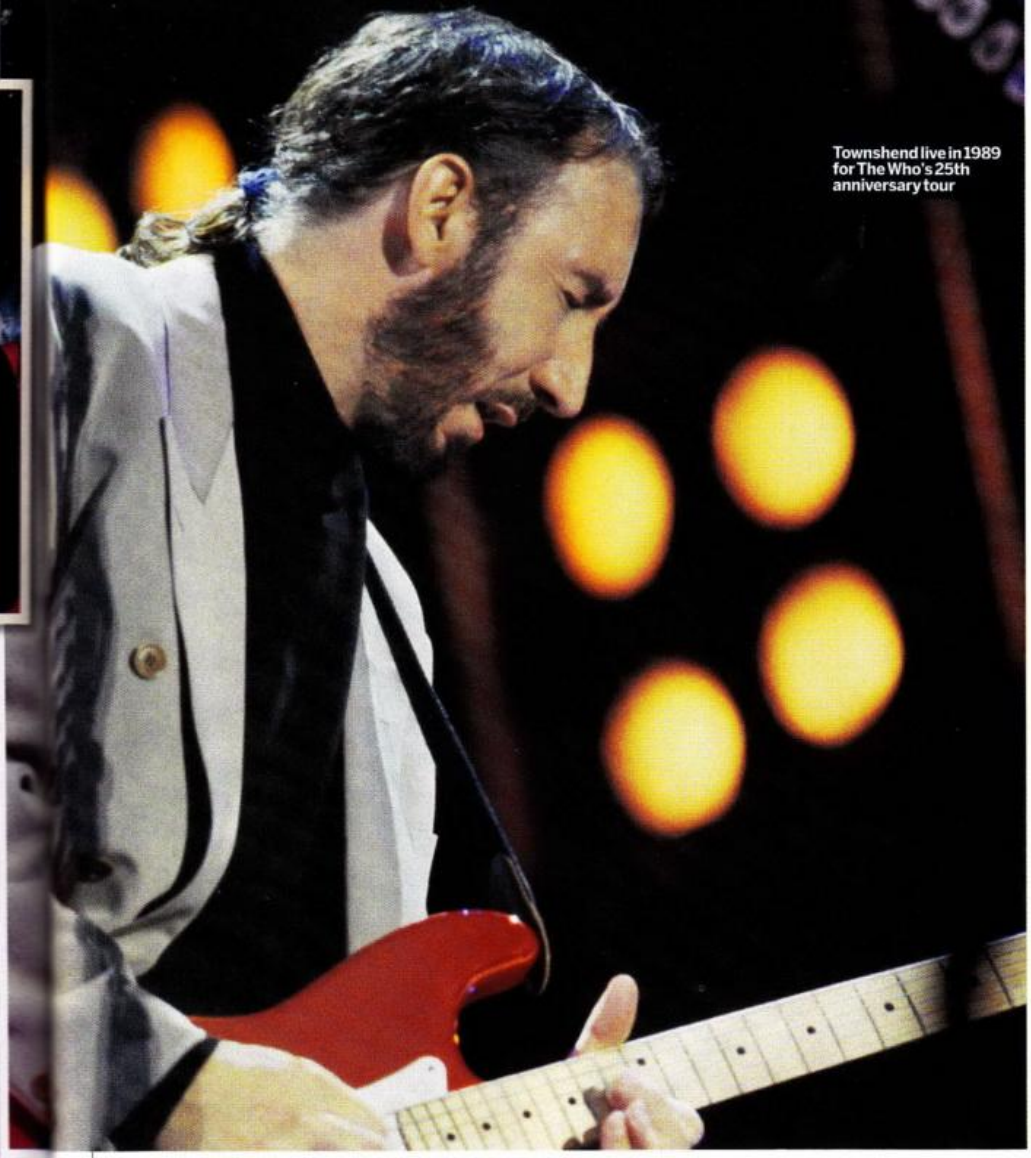
"The totalitarian thing that Ray talks about is just me talking when I was 25 and it has actually happened. It's Rupert Murdoch. Nadir, all these other cunts with their billions. No matter how much money I make out of *Tommy*, I'll never have enough to make a pinprick. I could give it all to the Labour Party. It's not going to get them back in again."



Townshend and Daltrey at the first night of 'Tommy, The Musical', the Shaftsbury Theatre, 1991

WHO KNEW

Pete Townshend's daughter Emma – mentioned in this piece – added vocals to his 1985 song "Face the Face". The then-16-year-old also made an appearance dancing with Dad – who sports era-appropriate gold lamé – in the video. She now writes a gardening column in the *Independent On Sunday*.



Townshend live in 1989 for The Who's 25th anniversary tour

"ENGLISH BOY", the single from *Psychoderelict*, is stirring end-of-the-dream material. Townshend pitches his voice on the battleline marked out in Britpop through The Who's "My Generation", the Pistols' "Anarchy In The UK" right up to Morrissey's "We'll Let You Know" (Townshend was down to produce *Your Arsenal* before the revived *Tommy* took off). "English Boy" is a fanciful but heartfelt cry of the dispossessed; after all the, *erm*, high times and storming the citadels, youth culture is beaten back, rebellion hits post-colonial crises.

"It was anger at seeing kids born, never get a job, are never given any prospect of getting a job and are always told they're wankers. They beat someone up at a football concert or nick a car and then get accused of being what's wrong with society. It's kind of caught on and stuck; eminent figures say these boys are shit, that what they need is the short sharp shock, and the right wing press fall in behind that.

"These boys are the product of first generation fighters, winners of wars, men who were expected to stick bayonets into a German at any given moment. It doesn't just offend me, it makes me unbelievably angry because I just know that if there's a war next week, all these 'scum' will be trawled up and packed off to Iraq to be blown to pieces. It's such hypocrisy and the story hasn't changed since I was a kid."

Do you feel very English?

"I do. I'm very reactionary, very conservative. I have used alcohol to control that. What I don't like about myself is that I want power through self-control and I want other people to be the same. When I come up against more liberated national traits in the Cornish, the Irish, Scots or Welsh, I'm envious. I also think that it's what makes me successful in America – they don't understand my anger is created by the repression of a natural life."

Townshend's moody demeanour breaks up after you've been with him a while; the gloomy visage hides an engaging conversationalist. He laughs quite a bit. But the message that runs through his work, one re-emphasised by *Psychoderelict*, is that, far from being a means to freedom, stardom presents a series of traps, a whole new set of problems.

"That is true, but I don't want to sit here and whinge about it. But it definitely is true – the first trap is the van. Billy Nicholls, the MD on this tour, has a son in the Senseless Things, and they're living in a van. Morgan [*currently a touring member of Muse and Lily Allen's band*] comes back from a tour, stands in the middle of Richmond High St and rants to anyone who'll listen. His head's exploding, he's been trapped in a van for 16 weeks in Frankfurt,. The van's the first trap, and the last one is one I've just got out of, being contracted to a record company to make loads and loads of records in a row until they say you're dumped.

"Something I'd never realised is that when you're in prison, or in an army or on a roll, you don't have to decide what to do next year. Someone else decides for you, or the demand for tickets decides for you. If you can get a contract for a million dollars you'll make an album for 750,000 and give the rest to the producer. That's the way it was falling for me. Then suddenly I stopped it all; about the time I had my son three-and-a-half years ago."

Townshend says that despite a forthcoming boxset and video compilation, The Who's days as an active unit are at an end. His advice to his peers is diversify; he finds that none of them – McCartney, the Stones and Dylan – interest him any more. Not even valiant English boy turned rock road-warrior Keith Richards' determination to drag the Stones on as long and as far as they can go makes any sense.

"It's as if he hasn't noticed that someone's already done it. John Lee Hooker is pushing 90, try and stop him, he's got a 30-year-old girlfriend. It's not a question of will rock'n'roll age gracefully. Age is not graceful, not for anyone in any society. I don't think there's anything graceful about a wrinkled old judge putting someone inside for something they didn't do. From the judiciary to old cunts like me, there's no grace or dignity in ageing. I think Keith should go on playing, that's what he is, he's a player, he's not a visionary or a thinker. But it's the need for The Rolling Stones that worries me, that need to go out and conquer the world when the world is so pathetically small nowadays."

Townshend talks endlessly. He tells a story about staying in the house of "Lord Fuckface" in the early '70s and being offered the chance to join the Lloyd's names. An opportunity duly rescinded. He talks about reviving his nutty 'Lifehouse' project as a theatrical workshop about the moral problems inherent in virtual reality ("If you gain spiritual brownie points without having to actually do anything, what is the purpose of life?"). He goes on about how the upper class infilitrated the working class in the '60s and how it stuck, how he still feels the same rage against the class system that inspired "My Generation" 30 years ago.

But he also realises that as his face grows longer and gloomier and the years take their toll, the line *"I hope I die before I get old"* will always be flung back at him. It's a dilemma he'll probably spend the rest of his life – or at least his career – dealing with.

"One of the things that's happening in rock'n'roll now is that Bowie, people in the Stones and The Who have got not just teenage kids, but grown-up kids. They're coming home and saying to their fathers, for fuck's sake, you embarrass me, I can't bring my friends home. They can say it in such a way that it's not unkind, but you know that they really mean it.

"You can imagine Mick Jagger going out in one of his funny stretchy outfits and meeting one of his 56 children. They have to come up to him with one of their children and say this is your grandfather. Afterwards they take him aside and say, 'Why couldn't you just today have taken the ring out of your nose, or worn something that suits your age?'

"That sort of thing gives you a different take on who you are. My daughter Emma hangs out with Morgan, so I have him in my sitting room. He's lying there where I should be lying, pontificating. So what I have to do is go to bed, which is absolutely right, I'm too old to stay up pontificating. If I do my skin starts to come off." ⊙

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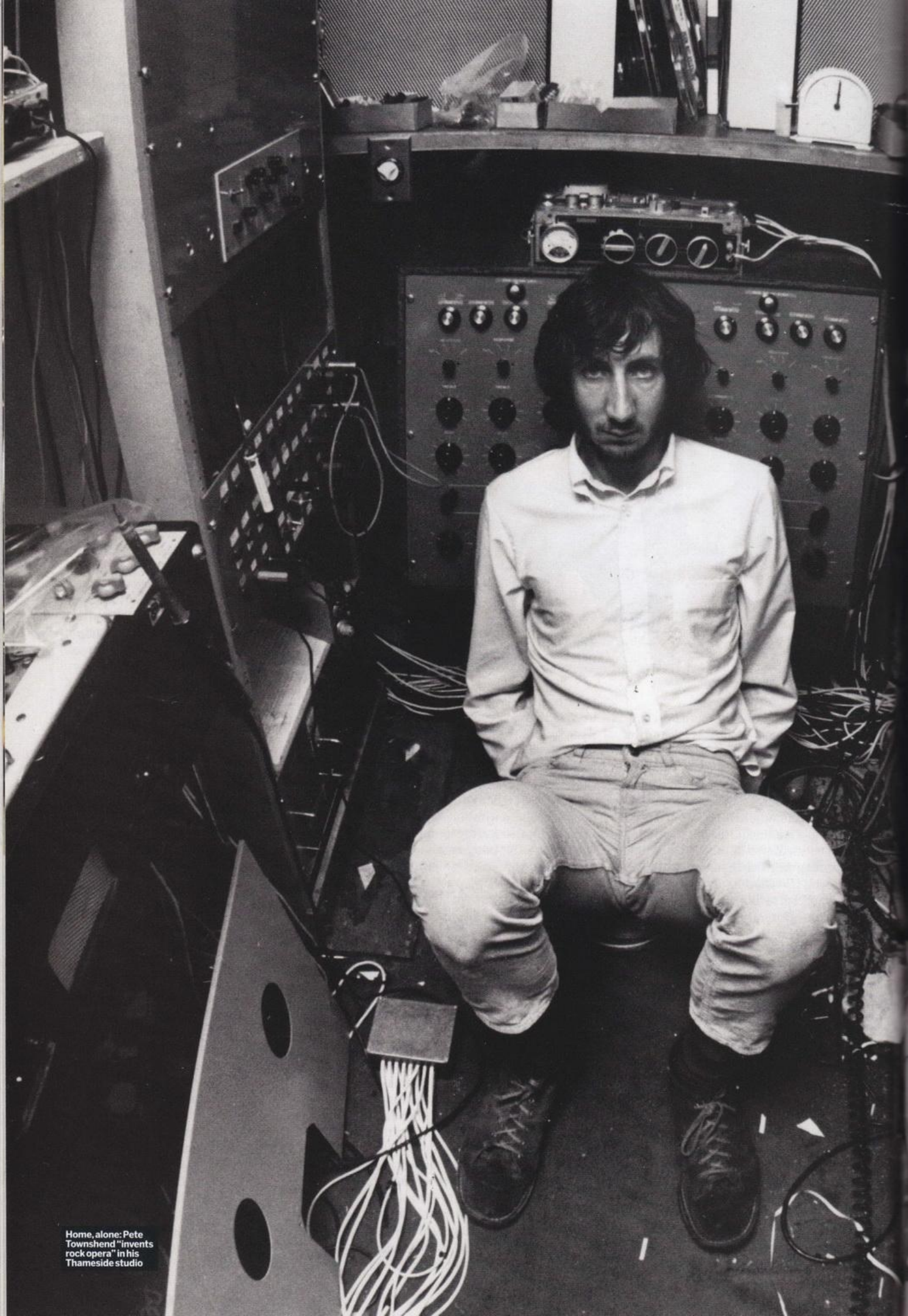
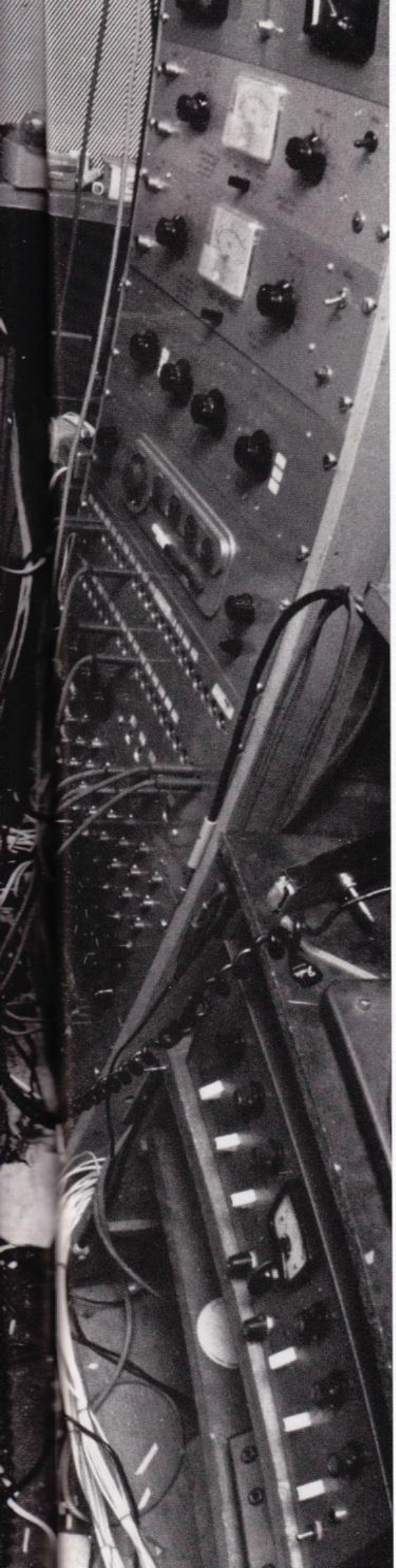


Home, alone: Pete Townshend "invents rock opera" in his Thameside studio



GETTY IMAGES

'TOMMY WON'T GO AWAY. *I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE* EVER REALLY WANTED IT TO'

Haunted, hounded and finally vindicated, Pete Townshend marks the 35th anniversary of *Tommy* with an amazingly revealing interview. In his first major magazine interview for a decade, he tells **SIMON GODDARD** about the project that took over his life and the traumatic experiences that inspired it. Plus: Roger Daltrey on the trials of being Tommy: "My feet came off the ground for a while..."

UNCUT
04/2004

HE'S LATE, and as everyone around me is keen to stress, uncharacteristically so. Which is why, when Pete Townshend finally arrives at the Twickenham studio where *Uncut* has been waiting a good half-hour, he makes a point of apologising. His excuse? "I was having lunch with my girlfriend," he puffs, while leading me up the staircase to a secluded mixing room, "and we got into a discussion about what's wrong with modern pop music. I lost all track of time." I tell him not to worry, comforted by the idea that the man responsible for some of the most urgent three-minute revolutions ever should still care about the medium all these years later. "I *really* am sorry," he repeats.

The room itself is small, soundproof and dominated by floor-to-ceiling bay windows offering a pleasant panorama of the river below. I assume Townshend has decided we conduct our interview here because he likes the view. Actually, he's picked this location for a much more specific reason. It was here, 12 months ago, that he reacquainted himself with the album we're here to

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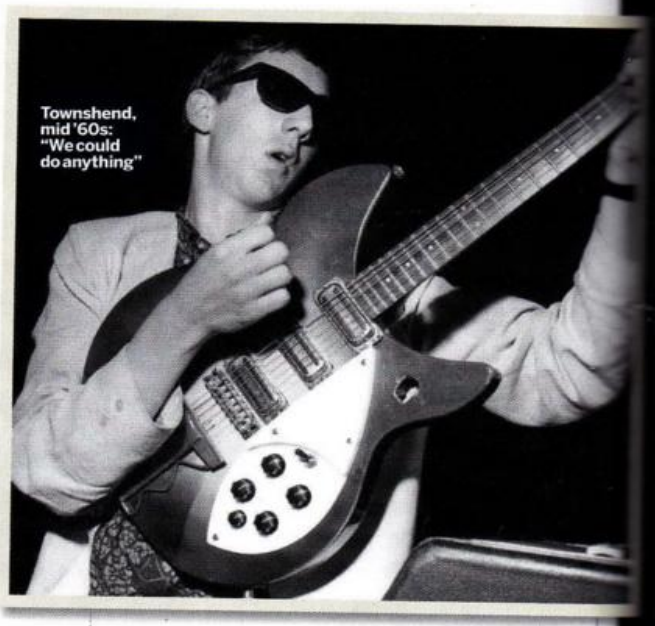

Townshend, mid '60s: "We could do anything"

discuss: The Who's legendary rock opera, *Tommy*, which Townshend has just remixed in a new 5.1 surround sound version from the original 1969 studio masters. "I put the tapes up in this room and kind of went into shock," he will say later. "It's not what I remembered."

We've barely shuffled off our coats and arranged chairs when I begin by speculating that he must have revisited this, his most acclaimed "masterpiece", purely to commemorate its 35th anniversary this coming May. "That's not why I did it, no," he corrects, placing his mobile phone on the mixing console. "I did it because I got arrested last year and had nothing else to do." His voice is calm if a little hushed. "That's the only reason."

Pete Townshend's press personnel have told me this will be his first face-to-face interview with the British music press in aeons – he prefers a more controlled email correspondence. They have also asked me not to mention "the arrest", whereby in January 2003 Townshend was investigated by Scotland Yard after confessing to using his credit card to access internet child-pornography.

"I knew I'd have to wait two or three months," he says, making himself comfortable, "because the police took 12 computers from my house. I knew that it takes them about a gigabyte a week to look through so I just thought, 'This is gonna take fucking forever.' I knew I couldn't work. I thought, 'Fuck, what can I do?'"

As if by fate, this investigation coincided with the invitation to remaster *Tommy*. Townshend readily accepted, busying himself for the next four months in an attempt to divert what attention he could from the tabloid witch-hunt gathering storm while the police scavenged his hard-drives. Townshend has always maintained that his culpability in accessing illegal material was purely to research and expose the horror of on-line paedophile rings. To his relief, the courts finally upheld his plea of innocence last May but were obliged by law to caution him, placing his name on the National Sex Offenders Register for a minimum of five years. Record company warnings aside, it's not a subject I'd expected Townshend to broach. After all, it has *nothing* to do with *Tommy*. Or so I'd thought.

"So that's why I did it," he continues, "but I also felt I should go back to the emotional source." He pauses for a moment, carefully choosing his words. "*Tommy* was where I started to see evidence of a troubled childhood, one that I wasn't really aware of."

As he'll explain during the next 90 minutes, Townshend's concern about the victims of child abuse that led to the arrest has *everything* to do with *Tommy* – the record that established the rock opera, saved The Who from bankruptcy, made them millionaires, spawned a Hollywood movie and Broadway musical and ultimately, as he'll confess, "ruined" one of the best rock'n'roll bands of all time.

BY THE TIME PETE TOWNSHEND reached his 21st birthday on May 19, 1966, he'd already written three of that decade's essential youth anthems: the Pop Art meltdown of "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere", the class-conscious spleen-venting of "Substitute" and, most seismic of all, the cacophonic 'f-f-fuck off' to the older generation that was "My Generation". In the age of Lennon/McCartney, Jagger/Richards and Ray Davies, Townshend's emergence as an audacious, original composer was no mean feat.

As a band, The Who were something else. If The Beatles had the melodies, the Stones had the sex appeal and The Kinks had the riffs, then The Who's trump card was animal aggression. There was something in Roger Daltrey's sneer, John Entwistle's solidity and the gear-wrecking anarchy of Keith Moon and Townshend himself which gave the impression, not entirely misleading either, that if these four Shepherds Bush reprobates weren't beating the shit out of their instruments onstage they'd be beating the shit out of each other off it. The Who manifested mid-'60s teenage rage like no one else, even if the band's demolishing showmanship stemmed not from yobbish irascibility but Townshend's student days at Ealing Art College where he paid attention to the work of German conceptualist Gustav Metzger and his 'Auto-Destructive' manifesto.

"TOMMY WAS WHERE I STARTED TO SEE EVIDENCE OF A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD, ONE I WASN'T REALLY AWARE OF"

Yet behind Townshend's mod belligerence lies an astute intellectual. This tension – angry young extrovert versus cerebral introvert – was beautifully illustrated during *A Whole Scene Going*, a youth magazine programme from January 1966 that I make a point of watching again the night before we meet. It features what must be Townshend's first-ever television interview. He's 20 years old, cocky but candid, affronting his audience by admitting to drug-taking one minute but vexing them with abstract cogitations the next. He's arsey but articulate, honest but elusive, his shoulders hunched, his body slowly rocking from side to side as he speaks.

Halfway through *Uncut*'s interview, as he starts to sway on his stool, I feel a sense of déjà vu. His speech is more elegant and coming up to 59 he's excusably grey, bald and bearded, but in terms of mannerisms, intensity and frankness the Pete Townshend of January 2004 really isn't so different from the January '66 variant.

And he's still a captivating orator, although his reputation for being what *The Observer* recently called "a frustrating interviewee" given to tangential flights of fancy precedes him. He flits from subject to subject like some hyper-intelligent (and only *slightly* mad) University Don. Yet it's through his lateral dot-joining that the mists clouding the bigger picture begin to dissipate. To understand the 'how?', 'why?' and 'what the hell?' of *Tommy*, Townshend insists we backtrack to the very roots of The Who, beginning when their debut single, "I Can't Explain" – all cathartic inarticulacy and power-chord spasms – rewarded them with a Top 10 hit in early 1965.

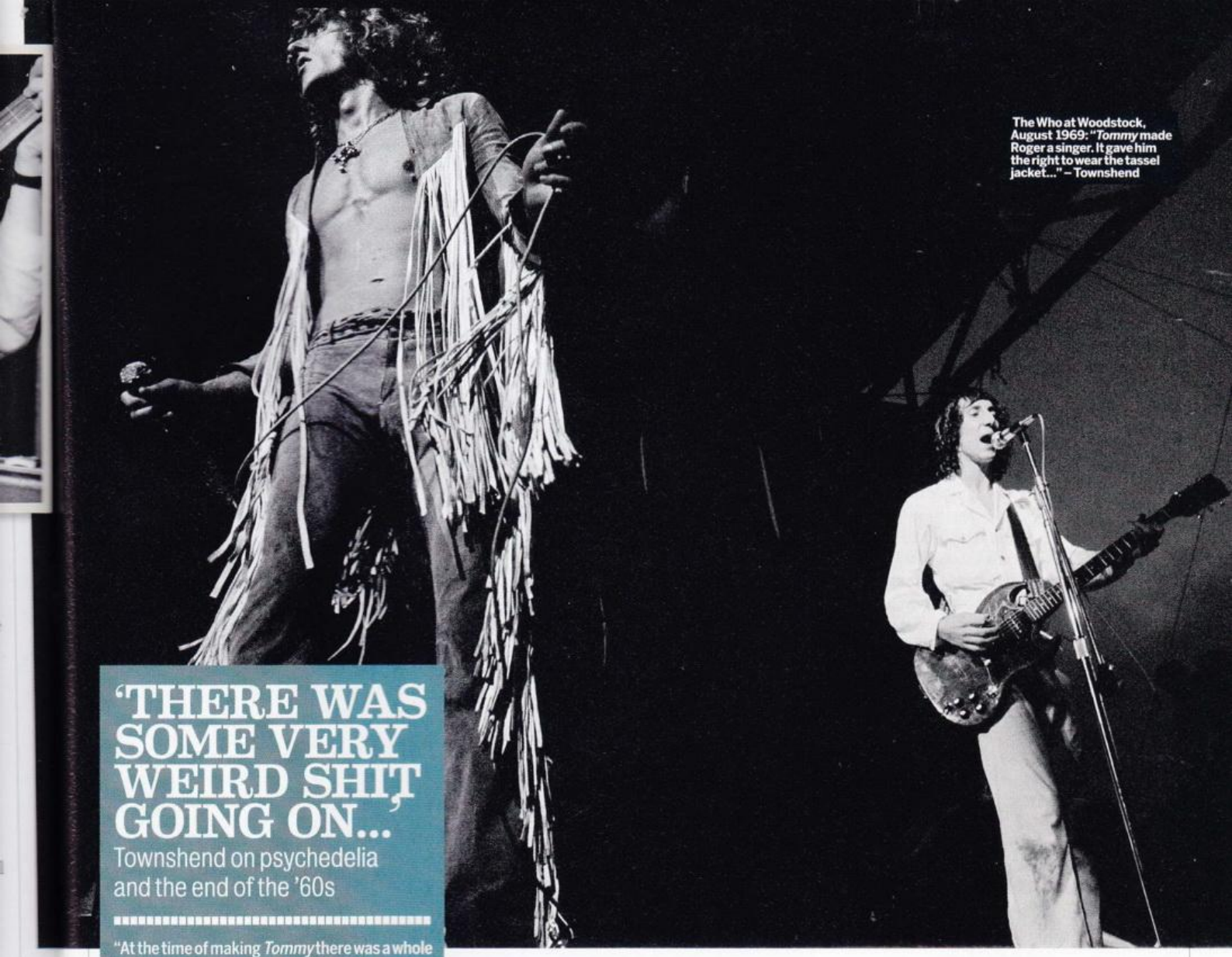
"If you look at Who history," he starts, "it's easy to forget we started with 'I Can't Explain' which was a *desperate* copy of The Kinks. I obviously worship – well, actually, worship isn't the word, I *exalt* – Ray Davies, but also Dave Davies. The Kinks were spectacularly brilliant. People in America talk about 'The Beatles, the Stones, The Who.' For me it's 'The Beatles, The Stones, The Kinks,' *they* were the ones. So having done 'I Can't Explain', just copying a Kinks song, The Who got a minor hit. But I just thought, 'This'll pay the rent for a while and then I'll go back and be an artist.' I had no idea."

It wasn't until Townshend was cornered one night by an excited rabble of kids from Goldhawk Road in the group's native west London that he realised what he'd disregarded as faddish plagiarism or "musical sensationalism" was, in fact, an even better platform for his creativity and youthful anger than the visual arts he'd been studying. He can still recall the incident vividly.

"This deputation of kids came up and said, 'This really means something.' I was kind of going [*disinterested*], 'Yeah, yeah, yeah' and they went, 'No, you don't understand, this

WHO KNEW

The Who's studio version of Mose Allison's "Young Man Blues" didn't make the final cut of *Tommy*, but did turn up on the 1969 budget sampler LP, *The House That Track Built*. The presence of "Young Man Blues" made the sampler a valuable collectable – until the track was included on the 2003 CD reissue...



The Who at Woodstock, August 1969: "*Tommy* made Roger a singer. It gave him the right to wear the tassel jacket..." – Townshend

'THERE WAS SOME VERY WEIRD SHIT GOING ON...'

Townshend on psychedelia and the end of the '60s

"At the time of making *Tommy* there was a whole load of stuff. I mean, The Doors? To this day I don't get it, but they were fucking huge. But it wasn't just psychedelia, it was also this sense that people just re-invent something about themselves. Suddenly we're dealing with Eric Clapton in Cream with a big afro haircut. I thought, 'Fuck! What's going on?' I knew Eric as a mod! And my girlfriend giving me things to wear onstage, saying, 'Put this on' – a sequin jacket – and me thinking, 'What am I, a cream cake?'

"Jimi Hendrix, I did get. Hendrix was looking in the sky and seeing purple. Purple angels. And when he played you could *see* them. He was like a shaman. So there's all these prats in London dressed in purple, me and Eric Clapton holding hands, thinking we could do it. Y'know, Robert Wyatt throwing himself out of a window and breaking his back. There was some very weird shit going on. My friend Greg Sams did exactly the same thing. Took acid, went up a tree, thought he could fly, fell out, broke his back. You just thought, 'What's going wrong here?'

"I had real difficulties with the period but I'm not sure why. I think even today, I'm very out of step with the public, the anti-war feeling, the anti-government feeling. I feel more aligned with the very middle view of what's right to do. But at that time I felt really, *really* out of step with the people around me, so a lot of the comment in *Tommy*, especially towards the end, is cynical. It's that you will tell us what to do, you will tell us who to be, you will tell us what to say, us being the *Tommy* narrator, when in actual fact we are just a mirror so you're talking to yourself. I don't know whether that came across clearly, but it's certainly how I felt."

really means something.' And I still went, 'Yeah', whatever, but then they got hold of me [*shakes fists*] and said, 'No! You don't understand!' And I thought, 'No, I *don't* understand'. I remember walking away and thinking, 'This is really significant, I think I'm going to be an artist in the modern world, I've just found that I have an audience, I've just found that I have a role which is that I can reflect this group of people immediately.' Admittedly it was a bunch of pilled-up mods [*grins*], but it was better than nothing. As Spike Milligan used to say, 'It's only a kitchen sink, but it's home to me.' So The Who progressed from there to something very, very powerful and significant. That little group of people, the London immigrant mods, were already dealing with social disaffection and disenfranchisement. They were already reflecting that. So when we got tagged on the end of the mod movement we were carried along with them."

Within a year The Who had progressed from coat-tail riding scenesters to, in chart terms at least, mod's ace faces. "We went into a whole load of image stuff. Pop Art music, Union Jack jackets, all my kind of auto-destruction, post-art college ideas," he says of their commercial honeymoon period from early '65 until late '67. "Then we started to sink. We were in our place but our place was not the place of everybody else. I mean, we knew we could do three-minute singles, we could do irony, we could do dangerous stuff, we could do sexual stuff, we could do anything. I'd done songs about fat kids who outlive thin kids because the thin kids smoked ['Little Billy'], I'd done 'Pictures Of Lily' about masturbation, I'd done 'I'm A Boy' about transsexuals, 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' was about male valediction, 'My Generation' was about petulant teenage post-adolescent resentment. This is all in the first few singles that we'd done, remember, so by *Tommy* there was almost nothing that we thought that we couldn't touch on."

Creativity wasn't the issue. The diversity of their singles notwithstanding, Townshend had by this stage successfully pulled off The Who's first 10-minute rock operetta, 1966's "A Quick One While He's Away", and already road-tested *Tommy*'s celebrated "Sparks" riff within the equally ambitious "Rael" from their third album, 1967's *The Who Sell Out*. The real problem was money, or rather lack of it. In 1965, while the average working wage was around £20 a week, Townshend was wrecking a £150 hire-purchase guitar a night. The debts soon mounted, not helped by prolonged legal tussles with former producer Shel Talmy. On top of all this, The Who, while popular enough to accrue seven consecutive Top 10 hits, had yet to notch up that all-important No 1.

In November 1967 Townshend believed this was all about to change with the release of "I Can See For Miles" and its stormy rebuke of long-distance infidelity driven CONTINUES OVER »

by a mesmerising psychedelic guitar squeal. He was convinced he'd written that elusive chart-topping Who classic capable of bailing them out of arrears.

"I really did," he nods. "I thought, 'This is it, this is my masterwork.' But it came out and it didn't do very well [*laughs*]. I imagined it would be an international No 1. Our manager, Kit Lambert, sent a copy of it to the classical composer William Walton and he sent me a note back saying, 'This is a brilliant work of genius, pop genius'. And so I thought, 'This is it, once this comes out I will be acknowledged as a great genius!' And, of course, nothing happened at all. It was kind of a hit in America and it went down well on the radio, it got to No 10 here or something.

"And so," he shrugs, "we thought we were finished."

DURING THE FIRST half of 1968, The Who's fortunes went from bad to worse. A farcical tour of Australia and New Zealand with the Small Faces in January ended in their forcible deportation. Back home, they released just two singles: the bizarre cockney knees-up "Dogs", and "Magic Bus", a fine but lyrically flimsy Bo Diddley pastiche given an acid twist. For the first time in their career, neither disc made the UK Top 10 (nor Top 20, for that matter). It seemed as if The Who had given up the fight, relinquishing their position as the most creative singles band of their era.

"Maybe a lot of the things I've said since would make you think that," says Townshend, "but in actual fact if you look back at the interviews I was doing around the time, I believed that the three-minute single was far from dead, we just hadn't used it in all its forms. I felt a series of three-minute songs, vignettes, cameos, each one very different, none of them musically related to each other, none of them having shared themes or anything would be able to tell a story, it was as simple as that."

By 1968 The Who must surely have felt some peer group pressure. After all, their rivals – the Small Faces and The Kinks – had already accomplished their equivalent of a narrative 'concept album'…

"There was a sense that what we were thinking of had already happened on *Sgt Pepper, Pet Sounds* or *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*. Nobody was daft enough to call those rock operas, but they were in a way, they were aural concepts."

You didn't feel a sense of competition?

"I certainly wouldn't have presumed to compete with The Kinks. That was a perceived thing. For me, *Village Green Preservation Society* is Ray's masterwork. It's his *Sgt Pepper*, it's what makes him the definitive pop poet laureate in a way that Paul McCartney would like to be but could never be. He's never really been able to properly observe British life with the cynical poetic detachment of somebody like Ray."

Townshend's transition from Kinks disciple and mod-anthem manufacturer to "the man who invented rock opera" was cemented by two outside influences, both of whom helped focus his nebulous idea of a story-driven song-cycle. The first was Meher Baba, an Indian yogi purporting to be a modern 'messiah' whose teachings he discovered via the Faces' Ronnie Lane during that disastrous tour Down Under. Baba's instructions on the path to a higher spiritual awareness touched Townshend profoundly, setting the framework for his opera's divine subtext and earning Baba a credit on the finished album as its "avatar" (ironically, by the time of *Tommy*'s release, Baba had "left his spiritual body" after 74 years, having spent the last 43 of those in complete silence).

The album's other muse was a lot closer to home. Christopher 'Kit' Lambert was a dandified, ex-army, Oxford graduate 10 years Townshend's senior whose original ambition was to be a film director. That changed when he and his partner, Chris Stamp, brother of actor Terence, discovered The Who during their previous incarnation as The High Numbers in late 1964 and decided to share the group's management. Lambert had always pushed Townshend's more preposterous ideas, none more so than the concept of 'rock opera' which, as the son of the venerated English composer and conductor Constant Lambert, held deep personal significance. Since Kit's extended family failed to appreciate his dalliance with rock'n'roll, his desire to aid The Who in pioneering rock's operatic equivalent became a means to legitimise himself in the eyes of such disapproving relatives.

"THE PLOT NEVER MATTERED. IT'S THE GEOGRAPHY OF TOMMY THAT MATTERS. THAT IT'S POST-WAR, IT'S ABOUT WHERE ROCK HAS COME FROM"

When Townshend reminisces about Lambert, it's with a mix of affection and hysterical amateur dramatics, leaping off his seat, flapping his arms and adopting the frenzied banter of a batty Victorian Field Marshall.

"Kit was a great raconteur," he waxes lyrical. "He was always saying to us, 'You fucking rock'n'roll people think you've done all this first, for heaven's sake! I grew up in the theatre with these people who were all heroin addicts! I can remember when my father was fucking Margot Fonteyn in the lift in the back of the theatre! They were doing cocaine back in the days when it used to be legal!' He was very, very funny, but he was constantly bringing in this pretentious pomposity. He'd tell me, 'William Walton says you're a genius, right? So you're a fucking genius!' It was this incredible pitch, pitch, pitch. He knew that there were pretensions to be broken. Kit understood before it was seen to be permissible that we could use operatic techniques in rock. His whole thing was, 'This is opera', y'know? I used to argue and say, 'No, it isn't, really,' but he'd be, 'No, no, no! This is fucking OPERA!'"

Invigorated by Lambert (who acted as producer and even contributed a working script, 'Tommy 1914-1984', originally to have been included with the album to expound its woolly storyline), Townshend's final obstacle was convincing the other three members of The Who that such an outlandish venture at such a vulnerable ebb in their career was the only way forward.

"I'm not very good at selling my ideas in advance," he admits. "That's why I've always done demos because when I talk I always tend to talk too much, I tend to roll over the subject and end up on the other side of it. I was kind of thinking, How can I rescue The Who? I had to fight very hard to hold on to my own guns, which was that I felt we needed to do something about the spiritual journey. It seemed preposterous and I could only demonstrate it by doing it. Which is how *Tommy* began, as a series of demos."

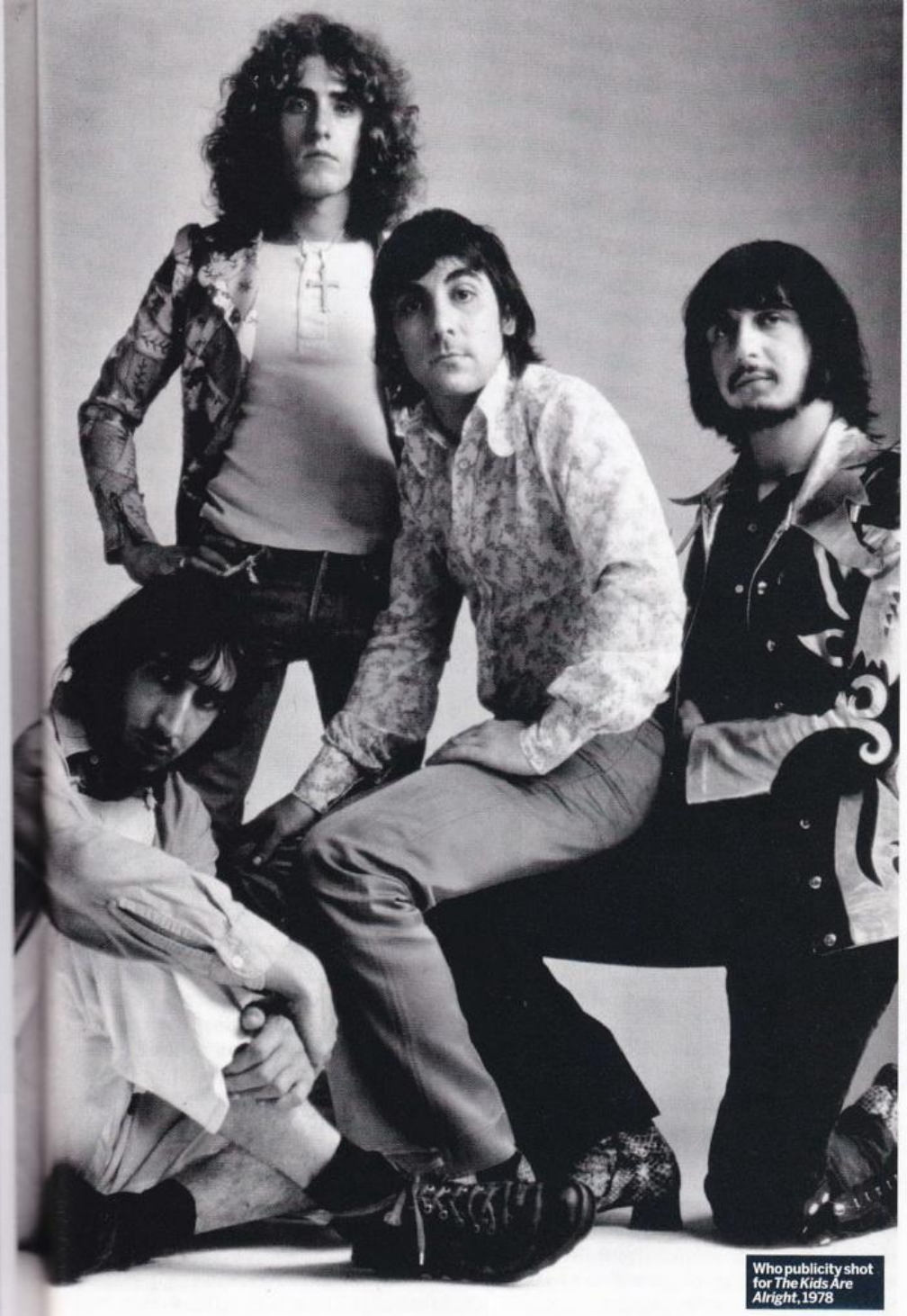
When The Who finally entered London's IBC studios in September 1968 to begin work on their fourth album, they knew only that they were making a conceptual piece dually inspired by Townshend's recent discovery of Meher Baba and Lambert's obsession with the 'rock opera' that had something to do with the spiritual awakening of a central character whose senses were impaired. Even the title was undecided, with 'The Amazing Journey', 'The Brain Opera' and 'The Deaf, Dumb & Blind Boy' all briefly considered early on. Daltrey, Entwistle and Moon were fully aware that if the project failed then the financial consequences would have meant the end of The Who. Incredibly, they never once questioned Townshend's lead.

"What I remember is that everybody kind of fell in behind me. I remember that very warmly. That trust, and how elegantly they fell in behind me. It wasn't until I played the tapes again and heard the chit chat between takes that I suddenly realised what a really great Who session it was, despite the fact that we knew this was a desperate, last-ditch attempt. We knew we'd survived a difficult time and this was having a go at the last hurdle."

Germinating from "Amazing Journey", the first Townshend lyric to specify its deaf, dumb and blind protagonist, The Who's opus began to take shape. Eventually a basic plotline emerged involving a war baby who, after witnessing a violent act, is shocked into losing all sensory perception, is then abused by family members, later becomes a media celebrity, rediscovers his senses, is hailed as a

WHO KNEW

The Who's 1968 tour of Australia and New Zealand with the Small Faces was a disaster. The press ravaged the groups and the police harassed fans after word of mod violence in England sparked paranoia. Townshend vowed never to return, and kept his promise for 36 years – returning to Oz in 2004 and NZ in 2009.



Who publicity shot for *The Kids Are Alright*, 1978

messiah but is finally rejected by his followers for failing to deliver them to the same state of spiritual enlightenment.

As the sessions progressed over the next six months, so the fine details were coloured in. Murder, infidelity, pervy uncles, bullying cousins, drugs, holiday camps, pinball, revolution and the christening of the deaf, dumb and blind hero as Tommy Walker. It was a mind-boggling if illogical yarn featuring several scenes that could easily be misinterpreted as morally offensive. Except that what even Townshend never fully realised at the time was that such nightmarish incidents had actually happened to him.

IF *TOMMY* HAS an Achilles' Heel – the cause of much of the criticism directed at The Who's 1969 album, Ken Russell's 1975 feature film and all its myriad stage adaptations – then it's the notoriously wonky plot. Even with the inclusion of a 'libretto'-style lyric book and complementary illustrations by *International Times* artist Mike McInnery with the original LP, first-time listeners were confused as to what dramatic events were supposed to be unfolding. So, it seems, was Townshend.

"When I wrote it I saw all this weird shit in there," he muses, "and I couldn't really explain it. Every time I go back to it I find much more kind of unconscious cohesion in it than I'd imagined was there when I wrote it. It's people that don't go into it deeply enough and intensely enough who dismiss it as being dramatically inept or clumsy or say, 'It's not really an opera' or 'It doesn't really work as a song-cycle' or 'It's a brain fart' or whatever. Because in actual fact it's an incredibly powerful piece of work."

What about criticisms over the plot?

"It didn't matter. It didn't have one that much. The plot's never really mattered. What has mattered has been the geography of *Tommy*. That it's post-war, it's all about where rock has come from."

With that, he elaborates on the grim parallels between the fictitious suffering of Tommy Walker and the real-life ordeal of the young Pete Townshend. "My mum and dad were musicians," he relates. "They were both in the RAF, and they went together to play in Bristol at the Hippodrome or somewhere. A bomb dropped on the theatre and they pulled bodies out. *My* mum and dad pulled dead bodies out. I didn't really think about it until quite recently because of the earthquakes that have been happening in Iran. I was thinking what it would be like to be somebody who had to go and pull bits of bodies out, bits of babies' legs and babies' heads and women's bottoms and eyes and ears and then go back to your normal life. This is just 60 years ago, too. This is still very, very recent. These people were traumatised by war.

"So as a young man, when the war was only 25 years old and I was writing *Tommy*, we had this spiritual new wave, this turn to psychedelic drugs, Vietnam, peace campaigns, but people having no sense of belonging to the world. I thought, 'Why does our music have to be violent, what's it about? What's the anger to do with?' All of this stuff seemed to me to be about the post-war geography of the UK. So I wanted to write this thing about how spirituality had come from street anger that had come from suppressed teenage disaffection that had come from post-war denial. In other words, people who had been in wars who had seen something and experienced something quite diabolical pretending that it hadn't happened for the benefit of their children who then grew up in a lie, that lie being that everything was OK now, when it wasn't. Because what has to be dealt with is the healing process and it wasn't being dealt with.

"We today, still in this country," he continues, quietly enraged, "are dealing with the post-war healing process so in a way what I was writing about was that geography rather than the story, which didn't matter. People ask me about the plot of *Tommy*, saying, 'Did the dad kill the lover or did the lover kill the dad?' and I would just say, 'Both!' I knew stories about both. In my case my father deposed my mother's lover. He didn't actually kill him but he certainly got rid of him."

So *Tommy* is autobiographical?

"It is, but I didn't realise that until I did the work on the Broadway show [1991] and then I suddenly realised it *was* my story. What actually happened was, I'd fallen off a bike, smashed my wrist up, thought I couldn't play anymore so thought I'd better write a book, an autobiography. But then I thought, 'I can't write a book until I know what happened to me as a little kid.' So I went back to my mum and I said, 'Listen, I can remember being young on the beach, I can remember being in the tour bus with you and dad, I can remember having a lovely childhood and then I can remember going to live with my grandmother and I've got two black years. I want to know what happened.' She fussed and kept avoiding it and I said, 'No, mum, I want to know what happened.' I made her sit down and she kept changing the subject. I kept banging the table going: 'Tell. Me. What. Happened!' And in the end she told me the story. She didn't look good when she told me. I was a very,

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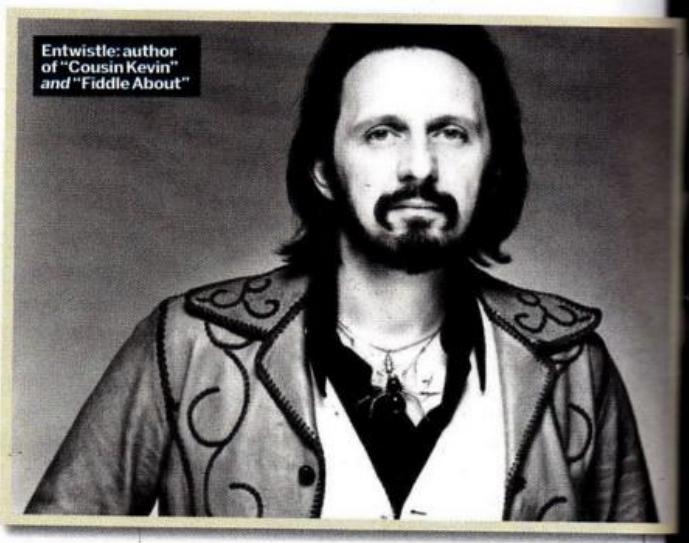
Entwistle: author of "Cousin Kevin" *and* "Fiddle About"

very clear- cut, post-war victim of two people who were married in the war too young, had problems because of the war so I went to stay with my grandmother, who happened to be off her fucking head. It was a horrible story."

It was Townshend's abuse between the ages of five and six-and-a-half during these 18 months with his mentally unstable and sexually licentious grandmother that unknowingly inspired Uncle Ernie, the character who molests Tommy during the notorious "Fiddle About". The song's graphic content (*"down with the bedclothes, up with the nightshirt"*) proved too juicy for the tabloids not to seize upon after Townshend's arrest last year. Indeed, for many it was all the evidence they needed of his guilt. Yet what the same papers failed to acknowledge was that "Fiddle About" was the handiwork of bassist John Entwistle. Though Townshend's narrative required a song to illustrate Tommy's paedophile uncle (Entwistle also penned the sadistic "Cousin Kevin" under similar instruction), Pete himself was unable to write it for reasons that now seem grimly obvious.

Although frank enough to acknowledge that he was a victim of sexual abuse (a factor which, after all, stoked his investigative outrage over paedophilic images on the net enough to get him arrested), today Townshend is still unsure about the specific details.

What actually happened?

"I can't remember particularly clearly," he says gravely, "but I know it was very, very unpleasant. I got involved with weird shit which involved some erotic and sexual stuff, that's all I know. Then I came back to my family and went to an unknown school where I experienced real difficulties of bullying. Then I grew up, I suppose, at 15, 16, 17 years of age – y'know, it was alcohol, drugs, happiness! Redemption! I married the prettiest girl at art school [*Karen Astley, later his wife*], found the spiritual path, became a millionaire superstar. And in a sense became a millionaire superstar almost because of *Tommy*, so it was kind of this weird predicative thing in my life.

"So when I sat down at the end of 1991 to work on the Broadway *Tommy*, I finally knew that there was a strong literal autobiographical component. Particularly in the opening scenes which I hadn't really quite gotten before. Y'know, my father coming back and saying to my mother, 'We have to get back together for the sake of the boy.' So there was this almost metaphorical killing of the lover. It was the first time I'd realised where all this weird shit comes from. Sexual abuse, forcing drugs down children's throats, bullying, power struggles, family lies, family denials, secrets and then escape, defiance, the absurdity of the medical profession in the face of the complex post-war denial and then ultimately, redemption through music and escape. That was it, really. And so I realised that that little story wasn't just my exorcising all this. It was actually my story."

Beyond the dark autobiographical subtext shaping *Tommy* (Townshend's post-traumatic denial, typical of abuse victims, reflected metaphorically as Tommy's sensory deprivation) yet another outside party would cast a decisive shadow over the plot during the latter stages of recording. The influence of rock critic Nik Cohn, pop columnist with *The Guardian* and author of the seminal *Awopbopaloobop Alopbamboom*, was of vital consequence.

"Nik and I used to go all over Soho playing pinball all the time," recalls Townshend. "He was fucking obsessed by it. He'd written a novel called *Arfur, Teenage Pinball Queen*, about this girl who he introduced me to one time. She was this podgy little girl who used to hang around Soho, probably a prostitute, about 15, but she was a fantastic pinball player. At that time the setting for the end of *Tommy* was going to be a church, so we played it to a few people, including Nik Cohn. He kind of liked it but he said, 'It's all a bit *dark*, isn't it!' I just remember saying to him, with maybe an element of sarcasm, 'So if it had pinball in it, would you give it a decent review?' He went, 'Of course I would, anything with pinball in it's fantastic.' And so I wrote 'Pinball Wizard', purely as a scam."

"JOHN WANTED LINES OF COKE BACKSTAGE AND GROUPIES ON THE END OF HIS KNOB ALL THE TIME... AND THAT'S HOW HE DIED"

It's part of the *Tommy* mythology that you were initially too embarrassed to play "Pinball Wizard" to the others. Why?

"There may have been some embarrassment because what I felt was that I'd been selling this thing to the band as being really quite deep and then suddenly I felt as though I was losing my nerve. I remember saying to Keith one day, 'It doesn't feel right any more, this "Pinball Wizard" thing. Suddenly he's a fucking pinball player!' I didn't think we needed to nail down what Tommy was: he could have been a guitarist or a singer or a preacher or anything, a charismatic individual. But suddenly he was a pinball player and I felt uncomfortable with it being placed in this idea of a pseudo-church. Then Keith said, 'Well, what about a holiday camp?' because I was always going on about holiday camps, I was almost brought up in Butlins. So I ran off, wrote 'Tommy's Holiday Camp' and then wrote a couple of lyrical changes to bring pinball and the holiday camp into the story, so it felt as if this was being lightened up towards the end. But it also seemed more radical, there being more of a sense of commercialism brought in at the end, that he's selling shades and T-shirts and everything in a very absurd, comical, cartoony market place. Which of course pop is! So it all suddenly started to feel natural, that we were on safe ground because we were satirising our own industry."

Recording wrapped in March 1969, just as the windmill guitar flamboyance of "Pinball Wizard" returned The Who to the UK Top 5 for the first time in almost two years. Two months later on May 23, its make-or-break parent album followed. Early sales were good, but not great. Early reviews weren't bad, either – just tepid. The Who, however, were resolute.

"We knew," says Townshend, "we'd rescued ourselves from the abyss."

OUT OF TIME and over budget, The Who barely finished *Tommy* before it went to press. Some critics misinterpreted the surprising absence of Townshend's usual electric guitar virtuosity as evidence that the LP was lacking vital overdubs when in fact, as he says, "the reason for that is Jimi Hendrix – he just made me stop playing, really". Kit Lambert, who until his death in '81 erroneously maintained he'd destroyed the master tapes soon after, was also secretly doubtful, having failed to convince Pete the LP would have benefited from extraneous string arrangements.

Yet the enduring appeal of *Tommy*, often overlooked after the high-camp synthesiser fiddliness of Ken Russell's movie soundtrack, is its melodic minimalism. Played afresh and contrary to its reputation as a portentous rock opera, The Who's original '69 album is excess-light, its only concession to orchestral grandiosity being Entwistle's very occasional French horn (already a staple of Who records since 1966's "I'm A Boy"). *Tommy* is actually bonded by a clutch of cleverly interwoven guitar riffs, many half-inched from early rock'n'roll (eg Eddie Cochran's "Three Steps

WHO KNEW

We are gonna take it! The celebrated Broadway production of *Tommy* received 12 Tony Award nominations in 1993, winning in five categories, including choreography, lighting design and scenic design. Des McAnuff took the accolade for best director, and Pete Townshend got the gong for best score.

Robe talent: Eric Clapton (centre) as *Tommy* character The Preacher

To Heaven", The Crystals' "Then He Kissed Me"). While vague in meaning and fallible in concept, *Tommy* was still rock'n'roll.

"That," enthuses Townshend, "was why it was so easy to play when we first rehearsed it. When I heard these tracks again last year, for the first time in years, I thought, 'Fuck! This was a *band*, a really *good* band.' *Tommy* is probably Keith at the height of his studio powers and John, too, before he got into [*impersonates frantic bass scales*] – all that. It was good, straightforward powerful, innovative bass playing. And Keith, too, serving the song, not serving his ego, which is what happened later on. I suppose what I'm saying is that after the movie, the Broadway show, there was a classical version in the middle of it, too, all of the different manifestations of it, suddenly I was hearing the band and realising this was The Who. This little English band."

You had complete faith it would work live?

"We'd just gone to some hall in Ealing and run it through and not come up against any problems. And I started thinking, 'Why aren't there any problems?' There were no hiccups. It was playable by a band; it was a piece of cake. It was like, 'We don't need to hear the French horns, we don't need complicated backing vocals, this is gonna work live.'"

Within weeks of its release, *Tommy* had been nipped and tucked into one 60-minute stage marathon that became the focal point of Who concerts for the next 18 months. Performances at that summer's Woodstock and Isle Of Wight festivals were career landmarks, thrusting them into the upper echelons of the international rock hierarchy, particularly in the US where *Tommy* really took root in the psyche of the post-Kennedy, anti-Vietnam generation. None benefited from its unprecedented reception in concert more than Roger Daltrey, who as the audience's focus for the narrative drama of Tommy's pain, rebirth and redemption stole the show.

"It made Roger a singer," agrees Townshend, "it made Roger an icon, it made Roger like Jim Morrison or like Robert Plant, or like The Lead Singer. It gave him the right to grow his hair and wear the tassel jacket and swing his mic around instead of just posing and looking angry and, like, 'Don't fuck with me', which isn't who he is by any means, but it gave him a vehicle, it gave him a part that he could play."

In what Townshend describes as an "inspired, brilliant, brave piece of pop brash affrontery", Kit Lambert booked The Who into classical opera houses across Europe and America, from the London Coliseum to the New York Met. But in doing so, the novelty of this raucous English mod troupe's 'rock opera' began to backfire as highbrow critics and musicologists misinterpreted Townshend's creative daring. Instead of upsetting the elite as first imagined, The Who were welcomed by the chattering classes with open arms.

"Not everyone liked it," disputes Townshend. "We were playing *Tommy* in New York at the Fillmore and somebody brought Bob Dylan to see us – that's when I first met him. And I don't think he liked it. But Leonard Bernstein fucking loved it. He came backstage and got hold of me and shook me by the shoulders and said, 'Do you realise what you've done? It's wonderful!' and I hadn't realised that what he'd seen was a lineage, an advancing of the popular form, which is what he had done with *West Side Story*. And it felt that suddenly what was actually happening was that music was evolving, pop was evolving."

But didn't hobnobbing with the glitterati and playing before the Royal Families of Europe feel uncomfortable? Even John Entwistle commented in 1970 that The Who had become "snob rock", and "the kind of band that Jackie Onassis would come and see"?

"I don't know if I was uncomfortable with it," he says. "I don't recall Jackie Onassis coming to our gigs. I never quite got what John's grief was. I think John was in the wrong band. He wanted to be in, I dunno, Whitesnake. Really. But he loved me and loved my writing and he loved playing the music but I think he wanted there to be lines of coke in the dressing room and groupies on the end of his knob all the time. And when he was left to his own devices, that's what he did and that's how he died."

There never came a point when you got sick of playing it, hitting the first note knowing that this piece of music was going to go on for the next hour?

"No, I don't think it ever became a tiresome thing because even today I know it has its own momentum. But what we were frightened of at the time was it seemed to be *all* that we did. It was the centre of our show so we'd start off with a few hits, then we'd do *Tommy* and then we'd close with, y'know, *heavy metal* including "My Generation" – guitar smashing, smoke bombs, laser beams and God knows what. It was almost like it was a tripartite show. Later, when I wrote *Quadrophenia* and certainly when I attempted to write 'Lifehouse' before that, it was to try to replace *Tommy* as the new centre of the tripartite show. So what we'd have is a new middle which would be 'a piece'. That's why I got tied into the whole business of conceptual writing."

In May 1970, having toured *Tommy* to death, The Who, aware that it was becoming an albatross, reclaimed their raw rock roots. *Live At Leeds*, taped a few months earlier on Valentine's Day at the city's

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Glory days: The Who at Charlton Athletic football ground, 1974

University Union, was an ecstatic blitzkrieg of power-chord rock'n'roll and wild improvisation (the original six-track album was later reissued on double-CD in 2001 featuring that night's rendition of the *Tommy* cycle, widely regarded as being the best ever, captured for posterity). It shifted juggernaut-loads on both sides of the Atlantic, adding to the millions already pouring in from *Tommy* and its sell-out US tours. The *Leeds* album also steered The Who towards the career highs of *Who's Next* (1971) and *Quadrophenia* (1973). Yet for Townshend, *Live At Leeds* marked the beginning of the end.

"The Who are not Led Zeppelin and we're not Deep Purple and we weren't responsible for heavy metal but a lot of people kind of draw that kind of line from *Live At Leeds* onwards. I used to see Ritchie Blackmore carrying his guitar up and down my street when I was 14 or 15. Some jazz pianist down the road used to say to me, 'You've got a guitar, there's a really great boy who comes and plays with me sometimes called Ritchie Blackmore.' *He* invented heavy metal. I didn't. He was doing it years before us and probably invented power chords as well. So I dunno why he's such a sullen, dark, evil motherfucker [*grins*].

"We did *Tommy* on the road all over the world, we did *Live At Leeds* and then it was, 'Oh, The Who have invented heavy metal.' And then we were tied into this fucking thing of every show having to be more of a virtuoso explosion of energy than the one before.

"And after that," he says, "I believe The Who were just ruined."

ON DECEMBER 20, 1970, The Who played *Tommy* for what they'd vowed would be the last time in its entirety at London's Roundhouse. Keith Moon followed Townshend's onstage announcement that this was the final performance with an audible "Thank Christ for that!" But though The Who themselves seemed committed to leaving it behind, outside forces would ensure that the public's thirst for *Tommy* became even more insatiable as the '70s unfolded.

In 1972, with Townshend's approval but much to Kit Lambert's green-eyed chagrin, US producer Lou Reizner recorded a classical adaptation with the LSO and an all-star celebrity cast including Ringo Starr, Steve Winwood and Richard Harris. The LP was so successful that on December 9 Reizner staged a live re-enactment at London's Rainbow Theatre. Daltrey and Rod Stewart shared vocal duties as Tommy, Keith Moon played Uncle Ernie ("the epitome of warped depravity, to the extent you could all but smell him," wrote *Uncut*'s Roy Carr in his *NME* review) while Peter Sellers replaced Harris as the doctor. Townshend agreed to take part as narrator, but come the night appeared less than happy with proceedings.

Apparently Townshend hated Reizner's version so much he pretended to wipe his behind with the script in full view of the audience. True?

"The story behind that is, unfortunately, a lot more shallow," he laughs. "I was drinking quite a lot at that time and I forgot to paste the words into this book which I was reading from. I'd only pasted in the first half of it, so what happened was I was wiping my arse on the basis that the book was no good. I thought somebody had ripped some pages out. I'd had too much to think about so up to that point I'd been narrating and when I got to that page and there was nothing there I thought, 'Oh, fuck.' I just arsed about, basically. I was very excited about that event but, having fucked it up the first time round, I didn't do it again."

Reizner repeated the performance at the same venue the following year with Daltrey and Moon resuming their roles. This time, Townshend stayed in the stalls.

"What was interesting about that second time was that I was sat with my wife, Karen, and it was the first time I'd ever seen Roger from the audience. I remember turning to her and saying, 'He's fucking good, isn't he?' And he was great. I'd always thought Roger was a bit naff, a bit of a nuisance – y'know, [*smiling*] swinging his mic around and getting in the way of my guitar sound. That was the moment I realised that, through *Tommy*, Roger had made this connection to the audience and become a theatrical performer. I had much greater respect for him after that."

If the mainstream crossover of Reizner's LP seemed in danger of neutering The Who then the Top 20 success of a "Pinball Wizard"/"See Me, Feel Me" medley by namby Coca-Cola-peddlers The New Seekers in early 1973 surely represented total castration. No longer a soul-searching rock'n'roll gospel, *Tommy* had become sanitised light entertainment. It took the debauched vision of *The Devils* director Ken Russell to rescue Townshend's concept from the bowels of mediocrity.

"Ken Russell wouldn't have done the film if it hadn't been for Lou Reizner's orchestral version," says Townshend, "because Ken couldn't relate to The Who album. He could only relate to the Reizner version with the full orchestra because his background was Elgar, Delius, classical composers."

At the time of the *Tommy* movie's release in 1975, Russell described Townshend as "the new Shakespeare". That must have been hard to live up to… "Well, Ken's a bombastic sort. I really shouldn't speak for Ken any more than I should, as I did earlier, speak for John Entwistle, but making the *Tommy* film, both of us, me certainly, were on the brink of alcoholism. Ken and I would be up until 2am talking about the next day's shooting and he used to get up at five! So by the time he was on Russell Harty's show and said that comment he probably hadn't slept for six months and was living on champagne, I don't know."

The Who at the 2004 Isle Of Wight Festival, Seaclose Park, Newport

Starring Oliver Reed and Ann-Margret as the parents, Jack Nicholson as the doctor, a revoltingly creepy Keith Moon as Uncle Ernie and Daltrey in the title role, Russell's *Tommy* was a stylised orgy of pop-art blasphemy (Marilyn Monroe as the Virgin Mary), surrealist fantasy (Ann-Margret writhing semi-naked in baked beans and chocolate) and kitsch hilarity (Elton John's humungous Doc Martens during "Pinball Wizard"). Though pre- and post-production duties effectively put The Who's career on hold during 1974 while Pete fulfilled his obligation as musical director, the financial and critical dividends for all concerned proved huge. Townshend was even nominated for a best soundtrack Oscar.

What does Townshend think of Ken Russell's interpretation now?

"It was typical of him when you look back at his work. He always did tend to turn things into icons and cartoons. But I watched it again recently and I like it. I mean it's *his Tommy*. He does tend to take subjects, even if it's biographies, even if it's people's lives, and make them his own."

Were the others concerned about the amount of time you spent on the film, the fact that The Who were largely inactive for a year?

"I don't think so. It may have troubled John a bit, but Keith and Roger were involved in being actors in the movie. Maybe that's why, when we came to make the *Quadrophenia* film, that John was given the job of musical director, because I just thought, 'It's his turn now.' It did interfere with the group dynamic but I don't know to what extent. I think until I go back through those years and log my time and look at the actual chronology, I won't have a clear view of what was going on because it is a bit of a smear. A lot of what I was dealing with was incredibly complex and time-consuming and a bit of an education. I could go and do a film score tomorrow. I won't. I've been offered many. I turned down *Blade Runner* because I thought, 'Fuck, I'm not going to go there again.'"

So you didn't enjoy it?

"As a composer you believe you're king, but even when you compose for a movie, even if the movie is your composition as it was, Ken Russell was the king. So what would actually happen is we'd go into the studio, he'd sit with his eyes shut, we'd play and he'd say, 'No, this bit needs to be longer' and I'd say, 'Well, what do you want us to do?' and he'd say, 'Just make it longer, I need more time.' So we'd play a longer track and you'd find that would be Ronnie Wood pissing about on slide guitar for 15 or 16 bars and then you'd find that when it's finished, the editor decides that it's not enough music to cut to so he'd loop up stuff, and then I would have to work on these loops.

"I just felt like a dogsbody. I thought, Where's the music? There are bits of the *Tommy* film, in the 'Acid Queen' bit for example, where you see Tina Turner doing her stuff and you hear this loop going round with some sound effects chucked on top of it in a hurry to try and make it sound a bit different. I didn't feel that I'd ever, ever, *ever* be able to work with a director again and I never have. I loved working with Ken and doing the *Tommy* movie, but once is enough."

"WE DID LIVE AT LEEDS AND THEN IT WAS, 'OH, THE WHO HAVE INVENTED HEAVY METAL.' AFTER THAT, I BELIEVE WE WERE RUINED"

The Who produced two further studio albums that decade – the introspective *The Who By Numbers* and half-hearted *Who Are You* – before Keith Moon died of a drugs overdose on September 8, 1978. It wasn't until June 1989 that the band, now featuring ex-Faces drummer Kenney Jones, performed the full *Tommy* again for the first time in 19 years at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Des McAnuff's Broadway production followed in April 1993, subsequently winning three coveted Tony awards and a Grammy for best cast recording.

Three decades after they'd supposedly laid it to rest, despite break-ups, fall-outs and the death of two founder members (Entwistle would join Moon in heaven's best rhythm section on June 27, 2002), *Tommy* continues to haunt The Who.

Later this month, Daltrey and Townshend will once again drag their deaf, dumb and blind boy out of retirement for a special performance at the Albert Hall in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust. But after 35 years and all its myriad stage and screen adaptations, surely even Townshend is sick of *Tommy*? "What actually happened with this remix thing is that I rediscovered it," he decides. "I rediscovered it in its original flawed, incomplete, innocent, naïve, wonderfully gauche form. It's a part of The Who's story and I'm so glad I did it. If I'd done a biography and written about The Who years without having done this remix, I'd have told a very different story. It's not perfect, nothing is, and it was never meant to be perfect. It's probably always going to be the most important thing that I've written.

"Saying that, our fans have a much better understanding of who The Who are and what we're worth than we do. Even the other day I met somebody at a party, a young guy from Essex, and he's talking to me about The Who as though I don't know what I'm talking about. He said to me, 'So what did you think of Keith Moon?' and I said, 'I thought he was a fucking pain in the arse,' and he said, 'Aw, he was a genius!' and I said, 'OK, if you say so' [*laughs*]. He was probably right. I don't know."

You've never wanted *Tommy* to just go away?

"No. Because it won't go away. *Tommy*'s not going to go away, and as an artist what you get used to is things in your life that won't go away. Like my arrest last year, that's not going to go away. It doesn't matter what people think, it'll never go away. And *Tommy* won't go away. I don't know if I've ever really wanted it to."

BY THE TIME we finish it's pitch-black outside. We make our way downstairs and I think that's that until Pete overhears me asking the studio receptionist the way to the nearest train station. Next thing I know I'm in the passenger seat of Townshend's Mercedes. Just me, the bloke who wrote "My Generation" and a gently melancholic classical symphony drifting out of his impressively hi-tech, touch-screen in-car CD player.

I ask Townshend whether he mainly listens to classical these days. He explains that it's a CDR he's compiled for a friend in hospital who recently lost a limb in a road accident. He's playing it to make sure it's copied OK. "I'd listen to more jazz," he says, "but my girlfriend can't stand it."

Despite the rush-hour traffic, he still bothers to weave his car into the station forecourt. It's then that the man who built a career out of violently hurling guitars like javelins into Marshall stacks turns to *Uncut*, brow furrowed above the most famous nose in rock'n'roll, and apologises yet again for his earlier unpunctuality. "I'm so sorry," he says.

It's only after he drives away that I remember a comment he'd made to *The Observer* just two weeks before; that if he'd had a gun at the time of his arrest in 2003, he'd have probably committed suicide. Few men in his position would have survived his recent trial-by-tabloid, his misrepresentation and character annihilation.

Sorry he's late? It's enough Pete Townshend is still with us at all.

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WHO KNEW

In the 1980s, Pete was appointed acquisitions editor for Faber & Faber. He worked on Charles Shaar Murray's *Crosstown Traffic*, Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming*, became Steven Berkoff's commissioning editor and assisted Prince Charles on a volume of his collected speeches.

CHRIS WALTER, GETTY IMAGES

'WE'VE NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED ABOUT...'

Tommy transformed Roger Daltrey into a rock god and movie star. As he tells *Uncut*, 'Never knock success when you get it'

UNCUT: Is *Tommy* The Who's finest hour?
DALTREY: Obviously it was a pivotal point in our career but I don't know. I think *Quadrophenia* is every bit as good a piece of work and musically I think it's even better.

Did you realise at the time that *Tommy* was Pete's story?
I've always thought everything Pete writes is kind of his story but, like most human beings, there's always a piece of you, your story, that will be reflected in his story. I just try to be a dramatist of his songs. He paints wonderful pictures for me, emotionally and lyrically. There's always this sense of cynicism which I think we've all got, but he does it in a way that it doesn't offend.

***Tommy* offended a lot of people at the time. Tony Blackburn, for instance.**
Tony bloody Blackburn [*laughs*]! There was always people trying to get us but we didn't give a fuck. If you start to worry about that you'll never express yourself and that's what's probably happened now in this politically correct world we live in.

What do you think it was about *Tommy* that captured the mood of the time?
There's a certain amount of violence in *Tommy*, in the music, that I think appealed to Americans. It was like this lost generation that wanted to be seen and they wanted to be heard and they wanted to be felt. They existed but all they were being used as was cannon fodder in Vietnam. It's very difficult in England to get a perspective of how huge it was, because they had very different social problems going on. We didn't. Theirs was bloody serious! For them the Vietnam War wasn't a march in Grosvenor Square.

In concert, *Tommy* was a real turning point for you as a singer.
Oh, definitely. It was the first time I'd ever been given any meat and potatoes to deal with, and I kind of found the voice of The Who from there. In those days people used to sit down, keep quiet and applaud at the end... like a Japanese audience. But the response was incredible. I suppose *Tommy* lasted the same length as a good toot on a joint.

Your image suddenly changed around that time. The tassels, the hair, swinging the mic.
I was always a rocker trying to compete in a mod's uniform. Not that I didn't like mod; I loved it. I just didn't suit it. I was very skinny back then, but I've got big shoulders, a big chest, my shape just didn't suit it so it was like trying to fit a pint into a half-pint pot. In the end I just kind of went, 'Fuck it, I'm just gonna be me!' I've always had curly hair but I used to straighten it and it used to drive me fucking insane. To be a mod with curly hair was like having the pox. So I just gave up.

I was always into American native culture and a friend was making buckskins so I just had a suit made. That's another thing I hated about what rock had become then. What I got into rock'n'roll for in the first place was that thing of breaking the rules and after a few years I realised we're just breaking the rules to make more rules that people had to follow – which is insane – instead of people being all individual. And I felt a victim to that. So I thought, 'I'm gonna go against the fashions.'

Did the success of *Tommy* feel like a burden?
Listen, never knock success when you get it.

What about Entwistle's 'snob rock' concerns?
I only ever saw that as a publicity thing. When you actually looked out at our audiences it was still full of yobs from Shepherd's Bush! But I do know where John was coming from, it could have been perceived that way in the press, but it was all rock'n'roll hype, it was all bullshit.

What did you think of Ken Russell's *Tommy*?
I thought it was wonderful. It was MTV but seven years before MTV hit. I think his interpretation was just what it needed; it was as outrageous as the original idea.

Was it hard to keep a straight face, pretending to be mute while Keith Moon *"fiddled about"*?
With Keith it was always difficult but you just had to think, 'Well, I can hold this for the minute of the take' and then collapse in laughter. It was just discipline.

At the end, when you're running half-naked in the Lake District...
That wasn't comfortable! But Ann-Margret wasn't comfortable, either. Anybody who says that wasn't an acting job, you try being that age when Ann-Margret's stood in front of you, wiv' all that, and you've got to pretend she's your bleedin' mother! That's an acting job, boy, let me tell you! There was a lot of self-control. It could have been a very incestuous film! She was wonderful, there were no airs and graces with Ann; she made us feel really comfortable. But I had to keep a distance because it *was* hard. It was *bloody* hard!

Moon was a huge Elvis fan. Did she ever talk about their affair on set?
We were *all* secret Elvis fans but we couldn't say so! It's like Lennon said, without Elvis we wouldn't have anything. Ann-Margret didn't talk about Elvis other than saying he was wonderful. She was a private lady. But what I found incredible about what her and Ollie Reed was the way they pre-recorded all the songs three months before filming but had an exact picture in their heads of every scene they did and how they'd match the vocals. Like Ann putting on her lipstick while she's singing "Do You Think It's Alright?" People underestimate the amazing creativity those two put in.

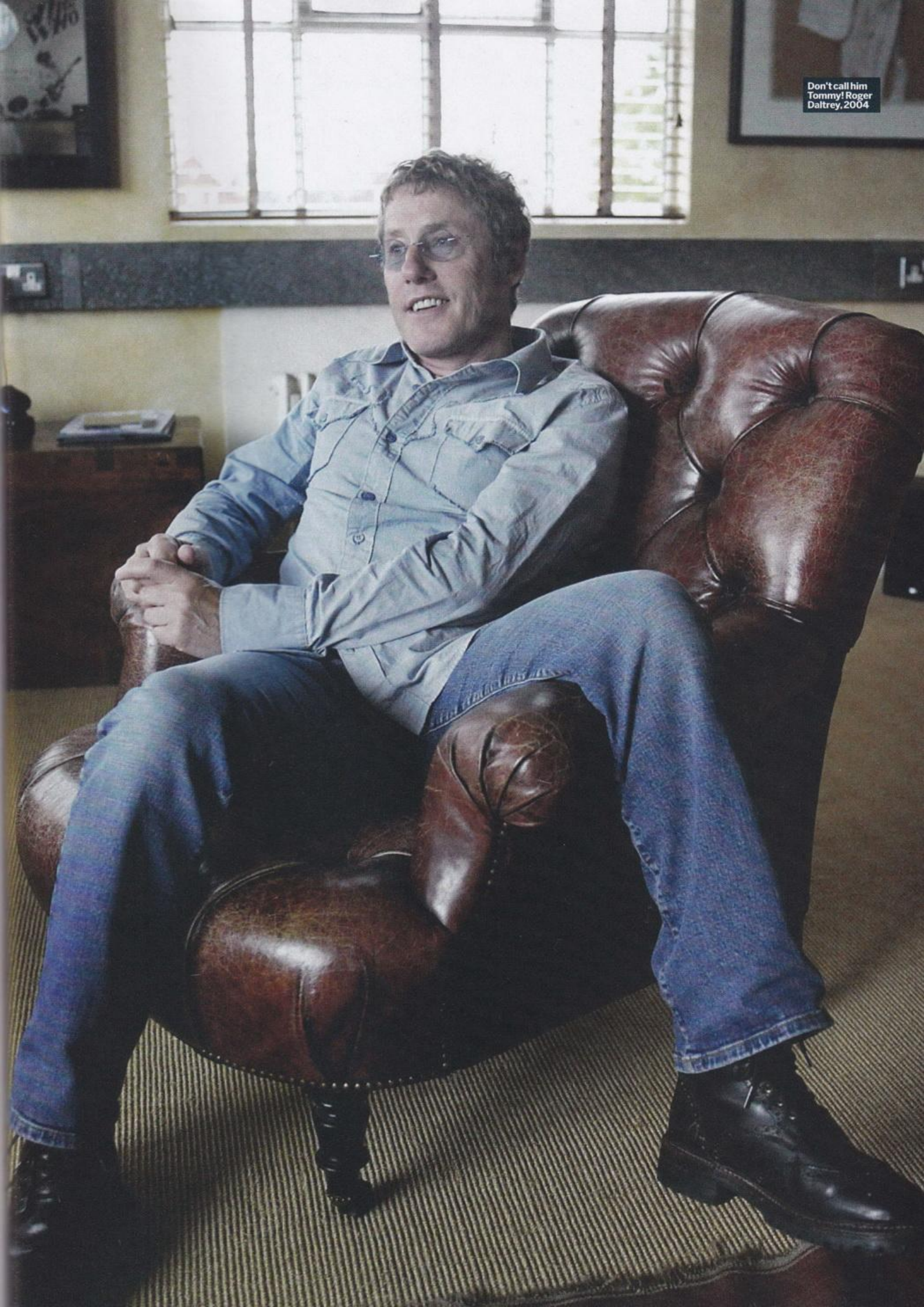
The film made you even more famous, didn't it?
Yeah, when it came out people used to come up to me and call me Tommy. It was very strange, but thank God The Who hung on to who we were. In the rock'n'roll field you can be very well-known but compared with film it's minuscule. The jump we had after the film came out was tremendous. But then again we'd never had it that big before, whereas The Beatles probably had that from day one. We had a taste of it when the film came out and I didn't like it very much.

Why? How bad did it get?
You become divorced from the audience a bit and I think my feet came off the ground for a while. It was a period where my memory goes a bit blank to be honest, that's the weird thing about it. There's so much of it I kind of don't remember. It's like someone else did it.

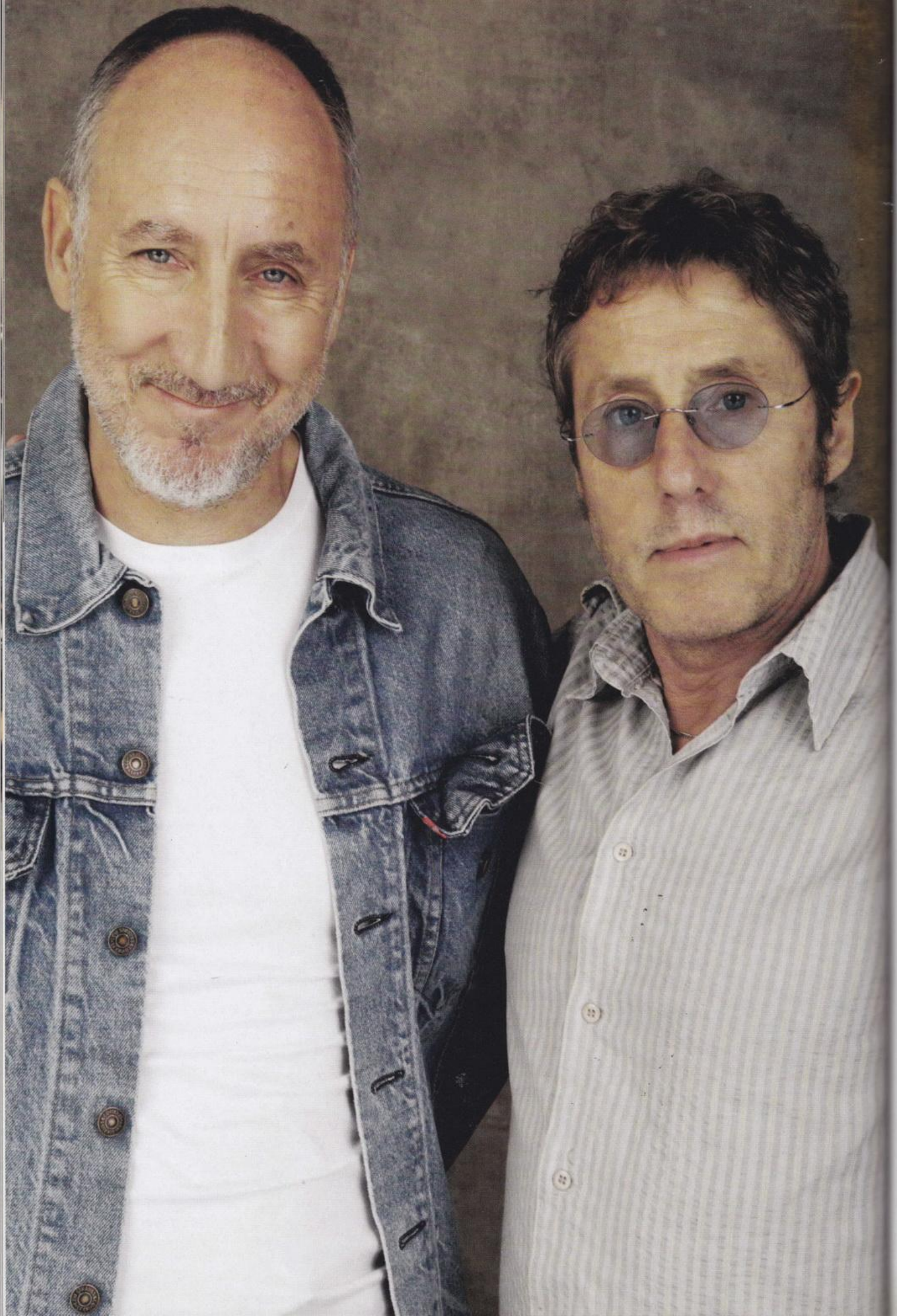
Straight after *Tommy*, you and Ken Russell worked again on *Lisztomania*.
Yeah, and I wish I'd spent some time doing tiny little things in acting and learnt what it's all about first. *Lisztomania* has some very good bits, but it doesn't hang together as a film and I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. I don't think Ken did, either. We were squashed together to do it and it ended up a bit, well, weird. I don't regret doing it because it made me realise how much I hadn't learned.

I hear you're going to play *Tommy* again at the Albert Hall this month.
I'd like to do it, yeah. We should, just to get up the press' bum after Pete's stupid fucking run-in last year. They put all that "Fiddle About" stuff down – 'Oh, this is what Townshend sang' – when what they didn't realise was that Townshend didn't write any of that stuff; it was Entwistle! They don't... [*inhales*] Look, I don't want to go into it. So I'd just like to do *Tommy* again to say we're not ashamed of it. We've *nothing* to be ashamed about. ⊙

REX FEATURES



Don't call him Tommy! Roger Daltrey, 2004



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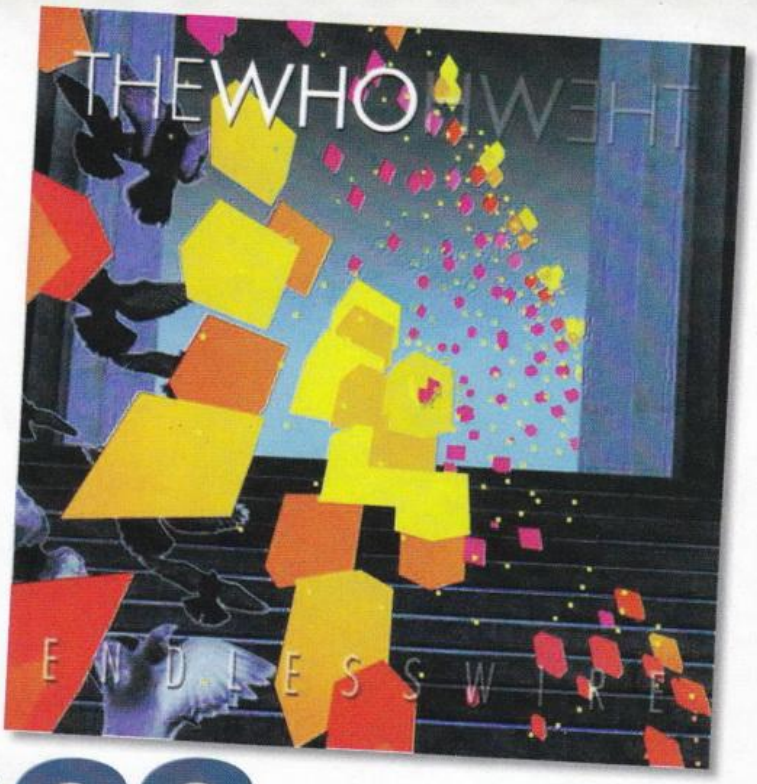

RELEASE DATE 30 | OCTOBER | 2006

Endless Wire

Incredible, rambling, focused, hilarious and angry – Daltrey and Townshend's heroic late comeback. It even has another rock opera on it! *By David Quantick*

IN 2006, AFTER almost half a century as a band, The Who released their 11th studio album, a fact that's extraordinary in at least two ways. For one, 11 albums in 40 years is an average so low as to even make U2 and Coldplay and Radiohead look hasty and uncareerist. During the time between the 10th and the 11th Who albums, not only did several bands have their entire careers, but a few even got back together and did reunion tours. Of course there are good reasons for this, the collapse of the 1980s Kenney Jones Who being one. But The Who have never been an album-a-year band, largely because Pete Townshend's projects – complex, conceptual and often featuring a boy with a problem and a large cast of adversaries – are not quickly and easily realised.

The other side of the extraordinariness of The Who's 11th album coming out in 2006 is contained in the idea that a group that has been going as long as The Who – a group, moreover, now reduced to two essential members – would still be releasing albums in the 21st Century. The only other British rock groups of the 1960s who are still releasing records with any real continuity are, I think, The Rolling Stones and Status Quo. Despite the odds, the pair are still, as they used to say in *The Oldie* magazine, with us, still writing, still singing, and still incredibly worked-up about something. The Who, whoever they are these days (and it is still them in there) are very much a real band in the 21st Century.

And, frankly, then some. Because while the Stones make records that only really sound like new albums from a great distance, like huge cardboard boxes painted like tanks to fool the enemy, and while the Quo long ago made the long voyage back to their spiritual Valhalla – Butlins in 1958 – Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey are on this album still, incredibly, acting like they're trying to get on *Ready Steady Go!* this Friday.

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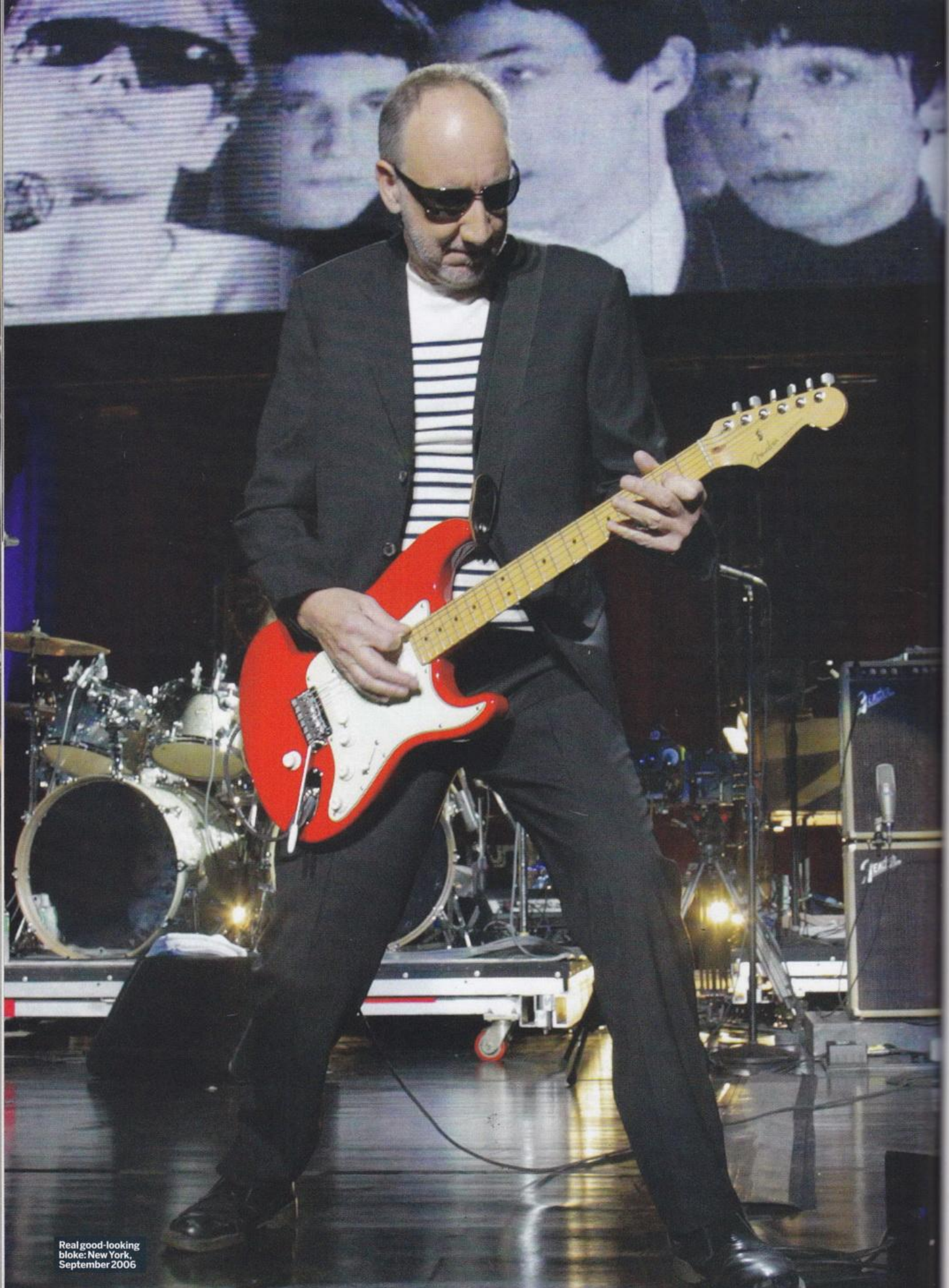
TRACKMARKS

1 Fragments ★★★★
2 A Man In A Purple Dress ★★★★
3 Mike Post Theme ★★★★
4 In The Ether ★★★
5 Black Widow's Eyes ★★★
6 Two Thousand Years ★★★★
7 God Speaks Of Marty Robbins ★★★★★
8 It's Not Enough ★★★★
9 You Stand By Me ★★★★
10 Sound Round ★★★
11 Pick Up The Peace ★★★
12 Unholy Trinity ★★★
13 Trilby's Piano ★★★★
14 Endless Wire ★★★
15 Fragments Of Fragments ★★★
16 We Got A Hit ★★★★
17 They Made My Dream Come True ★★★★
18 Mirror Door ★★★
19 Tea & Theatre ★★★

RELEASED: October 30, 2006
LABEL: Polydor
PRODUCED BY: Pete Townshend, Bob Pridden and Billy Nicholls
RECORDED: Eel Pie Oceanic Studios, Pete Townshend's home studio
PERSONNEL: Roger Daltrey (vocals); Pete Townshend (guitar, vocals, bass guitar, keyboards, violin, banjo, viola, mandolin, cello, drum machine); Peter Huntington (drums); Pino Palladino (bass guitar); John "Rabbit" Bundrick (hammond organ); Zak Starkey (drums); Simon Townshend (bk vocals); Billy Nicholls (bk vocals); Stuart Ross (bass guitar); Jolyon Dixon (acoustic guitar); Rachel Fuller (keyboards); Lawrence Ball (electronic music); Gil Marley, Brian Wright, Ellen Blair and Vicky Matthews (violins, violas, and cellos)
HIGHEST CHART POSITION: UK 9; USA 7



Real good-looking bloke: New York, September 2006

For a band who've had some epic career longueurs – the entire 1990s – The Who attack *Endless Wire* with all the mythic force of Arthurian knights roused after slumber to save England again. At no point on this incredible, rambling, focused, hilarious and angry record does anybody involved seem to think that they are too old, too comfortable or too out of touch to be making albums in the modern era. Daltrey's vocals are superb, leonine and, of course, passionate. Townshend's songs are as varied, as forceful and as melodic as ever. John Entwistle may be gone, and Keith Moon long gone, but this final version of The Who is as good as it's ever been. It's ridiculous. You start to wonder if they've been cloned, or at the very least been given monkey glands on an industrial scale.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Not as awful as it should be. Most of *Endless Wire* sounds like it was written and recorded in 1973."
MICHAEL LANE, *NME*, OCTOBER 28, 2006

"Part-exorcism, part quixotic attempt to raise the bar for today's songwriters, this is an accomplished sonic full stop and a brave and necessary means for Townshend to address his core audience after that brush with the tabloids."
PAUL MOODY, *UNCUT*, NOVEMBER, 2006

Endless Wire's beginnings were not necessarily promising. John Entwistle's death from a heart attack while enjoying himself a great deal in Las Vegas could have been a tatty tombstone to a once great band. Pete Townshend had been the subject of a paedophilia investigation (he was acquitted). Zak Starkey had brought fantastic vigour to his role as The Who's live drummer, but was soon to run off with Oasis (where he got to play a boring version of "My Generation" onstage). But Townshend was cleared and, in response to Entwistle's death, wrote the underrated "Old Red Wine" and the brilliant "Real Good-Looking Boy", both of which songs were shoved into excellence by Daltrey's adult roar of a vocal. "Old Red Wine" and "Real Good-Looking Boy" weren't just "All Those Years Ago"-style tribute songs (the latter was, as it happens, a lovely reflection on Townshend's own youth), they were a warning shot and an indication that The Who were, much more than they had been at any time since Keith Moon's death, back. In any other career, this mp3 double a-side singles pairing would have been seen as a powerful and brilliant new release; in the context of The Who, there was a element in some quarters of "them again".

Perhaps this is why the two new songs don't feature on *Endless Wire* (they're on one of the band's actual-album-outnumbering hits compilations). More likely it's because there's no bloody room. *Endless Wire* is crammed. There are 19 songs, not counting extended or bonus tracks, songs that reference The Who's past, songs that link to each other, songs that sound like nothing by The Who, and one or two songs that sound like nothing by anybody. *Endless Wire* is relentless; it just doesn't stop. It even contains a rock opera, "Wire And Glass", like Townshend just happened to have one lying around and thought he'd stick it on (mind you, that probably is what happened). Who else would do an album which, halfway through, contains a rock opera? It's like opening a Fabergé egg and finding Exeter.

And it's not even a mini-rock opera. "Wire And Glass" has a long pedigree. It features Ray High, the '60s rocker character from Townshend's 1993 solo project *Psychoderelict*. Now High is older and confined to a secure ward in a hospital. Here he meets Leila, Gabrielle and Joshua, who are members of a group called The Glass Household. It's essentially the same cast and characters as those in Townshend's internet novella, *The Boy Who Heard Music*, and the complexities of story and so forth are probably best conveyed there, or in stage productions. Either way, it makes little different to anyone listening to "Wire And Glass", as the songs – like everything here – are self-sufficient and excellent, from the self-explanatory rock of "We Got A Hit" to the miniature of "Trilby's Piano".

That miniature quality – best seen here on the pocket *Who's Next* of "Fragments" – is one of the best things about *Endless Wire*. Where once The Who could make a song last many minutes, and that before the drums came in, now they produced what are effectively little cameo versions of bigger, bolder Who songs, and are the better for it. In some ways this process echoes both the delicacy of Townshend's demos on collections like *Scoop* and the succinctness of the all-time most beautifully concise Who song, "Glow Girl". Like most of Townshend's more ambitious and conceptual works, the lyrics would be clearer with a plot synopsis but, thanks to Daltrey's as-ever spectacular emotional investment and Townshend's songwriting, it works fine on record.

THIS VERSION OF THE WHO IS AS GOOD AS IT'S EVER BEEN. IT'S RIDICULOUS. YOU WONDER IF THEY'VE BEEN CLONED

The best songs, however, aren't part of the mini opera. "Mike Post Theme" is a song triggered by Townshend's defiant attitude to leasing some of his best songs to the *CSI* television franchise and a powerful tribute to the emotional impact of TV, even soap opera. "Black Widow's Eyes" is, to some extent, about Stockholm Syndrome and sympathising with your captor. "In The Ether" sees Townshend sing, quite literally, in the manner of Tom Waits.

Endless Wire is a seriously varied album. There are songs about religion, the passionate "Two Thousand Years", a meditation on Judas and Jesus, and the very, very passionate "A Man In A Purple Dress", which Daltrey invests with righteous anger and possibly his best vocal performance for years. "A Man In A Purple Dress" is a song about the absurdity and hypocrisy of religious figures, and it's venomous and funny and angry and should be on all future Who compilations, as should "God Speaks To Marty Robbins", a light acoustic piece where Townshend sings, equally lightly, of God's entirely sensible decision to create the world so that, among other things, he can listen to Marty Robbins. It sounds frivolous, but it's as good a tribute to the importance of music as anything else I've ever heard.

And then there's "You Stand By Me", one of the loveliest and most open songs Pete Townshend has ever composed. Written with minutes to spare for a webcast for Townshend's partner, Rachel Fuller, "You Stand By Me" is a thank you letter to both Fuller and Daltrey for, well, you know, standing by him during his recent trials with the law. *"You take my side,"* sings Townshend, *"against those who lied"*. Apart from being a beautiful, folk-tinged song and a wonderful Pete vocal, it's also moving for its complete simplicity (and it's also nice for us *Who By Numbers* fans to hear the word *"boozing"* in a Who lyric again). You forget sometimes, in the bad lyrics, dull production line sounds and landfill indie of much current rock, just how great it is to hear an honest song. It's remarkable – as, indeed, is *Endless Wire*. That this record exists at all is something hovering on the fringes of highly unlikely. That it's credited to The Who is wonderful. But that it should be so good is the best part.

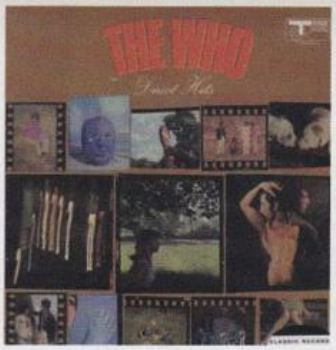
Best of all, it would appear that it's not the end of The Who (but if you're going to go out, this would have been an impressive high note). It appears that the band are planning to tour *Quadrophenia* again (say what you like about The Who, when it comes to their rock operas, they are the band who really would not let it lie). Pete Townshend also says the band will record songs from a new project, called 'Floss' and featuring as its main character another ageing rock singer (where does he get these ideas from?), who this time goes by the name of Walter. Meanwhile, interviewed about touring, Roger Daltrey says, "We feel it's the role of the artist to go through life until you can't do it any more." If you wanted a summary of what makes The Who carry on, and what makes them so good (and why *Endless Wire*, like nearly all Who albums, is the way it is) it would be hard to come up with something better than that.

It is, apparently, the job of Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey to go through life making great, thoughtful, exciting and intelligent music until they can't do it any more. And for that reason, and many, many others, we should continue to support their brilliant endeavours. ⊙

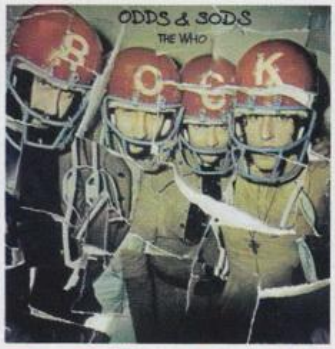
WIRE IMAGE

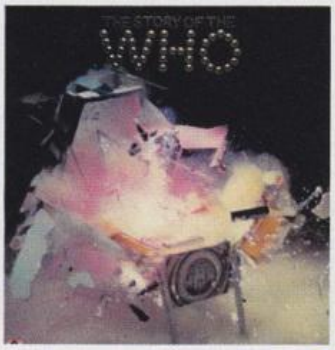
ENDLESS WIRE – 1:51. WE GOT A HIT, THEY MADE MY DREAM COME TRUE, MIRROR DOOR | OCTOBER 2006 | IT'S NOT ENOUGH/TEA & THEATRE | UK DID NOT CHART, US#37 (BILLBOARD MAINSTREAM ROCK CHARTS)

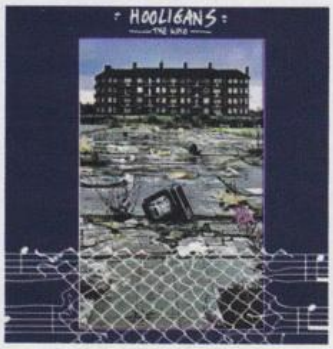

Magic BUS
THE WHO
ON TOUR

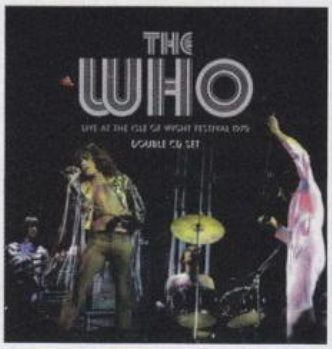

THE WHO
Direct Hits


The Who
JOIN TOGETHER

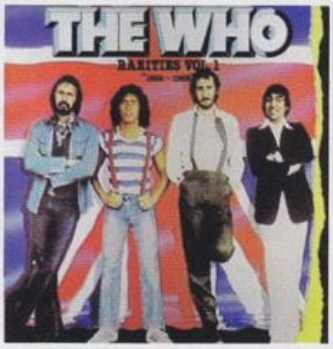

ODDS & SODS
THE WHO
B O C K


THE STORY OF THE
WHO

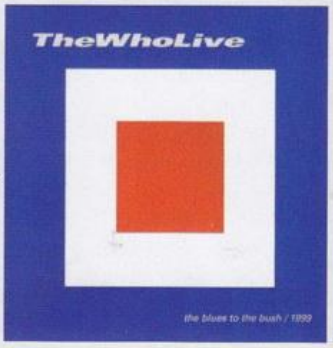

HOOLIGANS
THE WHO


THE
WHO
LIVE AT THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL 1970
DOUBLE CD SET

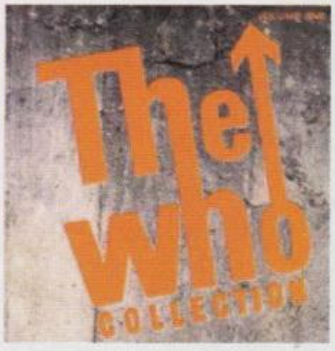

WHO'S GREATEST HITS

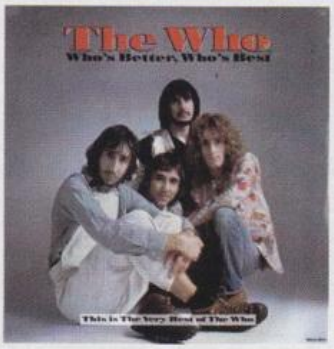

THE WHO
RARITIES VOL. 1

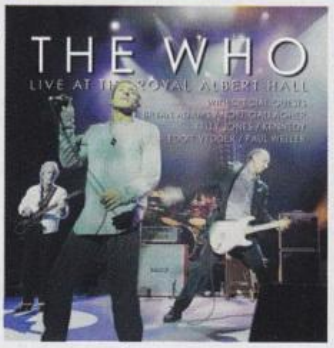

the who
the singles

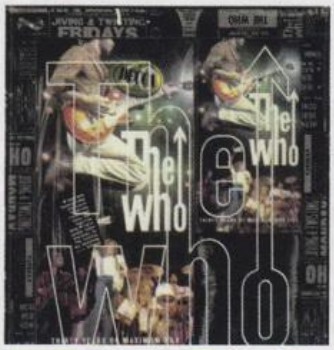

TheWhoLive
the blues to the bush / 1999

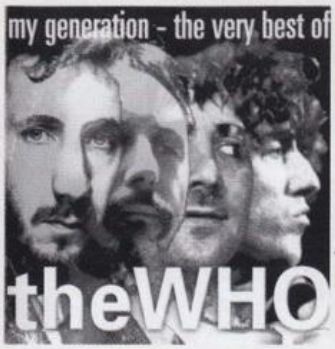

WHO'S MISSING


The who
COLLECTION

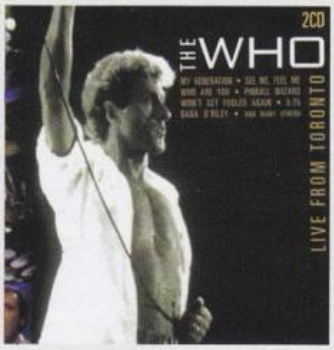

The Who
Who's Better, Who's Best
This is The Very Best of The Who


THE WHO
LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL


JUKE LETTERS
FRIDAYS
The Who

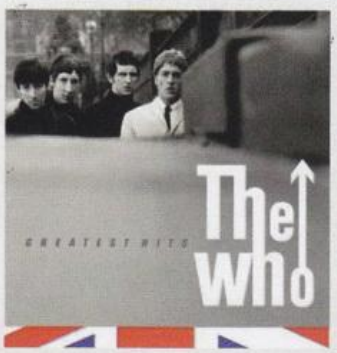

my generation - the very best of
theWHO

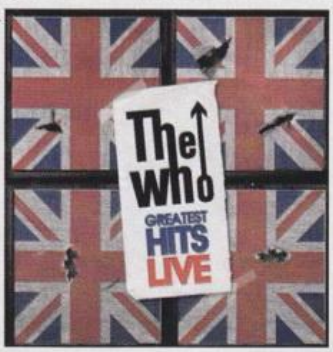

The Who
THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION


2CD
THE WHO
LIVE FROM TORONTO


THE WHO
BY POPULAR DEMAND
THE RETURN OF
The Who
THEN & NOW!
1964-2007
20 Greatest Hits Including
MY GENERATION
WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN
BABA O'RILEY
WHO ARE YOU and more!


The Who
12
C.D SINGLES


The Who
GREATEST HITS


The Who
GREATEST HITS
LIVE

The Compilation Albums

Meaty, beaty, big and boundless... A forensic tour through The Who's compilations, live albums, odds, sods and all.

By Neil Spencer

"I MEAN, THAT'S THE worst thing that's ever gone down," reckoned Pete Townshend. The object of his disgust was The Who's first, and worst, compilation, **Magic Bus – The Who On Tour**, a 1968 US release that was without any of the implied live tracks, being a couple of hits, some b-sides, bad mixes and well, whatever some numb-brained executive found to hand. It came in a faux-hippy/Swinging London sleeve with the group leaping from a double-decker bus daubed in daisy-age graphics. The band had been pulled off the *Tommy* sessions for the photo shoot, which they were told was "for publicity purposes", certainly not for an unmentioned album.

Though original copies are something of a collector's item now, *Magic Bus – On Tour* remains a piece of exploitative, corporate ordure, banged out by American Decca for the slathering Christmas market (it scraped the charts). Yet its release did have one redeeming outcome: it strengthened Townshend's resolve to exert more control over The Who's future releases.

As a result, the annals of The Who are far more organised than those of, say, The Stones. Indeed, one reason for the long-term durability of The Who brand is the clever way the group have structured and marketed their back catalogue, bringing different aspects of the band's identity into play: mod Who, rock gods Who, cinematic Who, still-relevant Who. They have sold their legend well.

What's being packaged (with lots of Union Jacks) is essentially a clutch of early singles, 10 studio albums between 1965 and 1982, plus live material, the grand total swollen by Townshend's profligate creativity, with its many trial-runs, tangents, abandoned projects, rejected tracks, outtakes and studio noodling. Townshend is his own greatest collector, and since the digital age arrived The Who's reissued albums (and Townshend's solo work) have come saturated in bonus cuts, footnotes, essays and interviews.

MOD WHO, ROCK-GOD WHO, CINEMATIC WHO, STILL-RELEVANT WHO: THE BAND HAVE SOLD THEIR LEGEND WELL

Most of the greatest hits and rarities albums, on the other hand, remain just as they were back in the days of vinyl's primal swamps. In the case of the various greatest hits, you're getting different shuffles of the same pack, though the compilation you hold will never contain the song that you most want. The no-brainer set to go for is the 2CD **The Ultimate Collection**, which majors on early hits while covering all bases of post-*Tommy* life. As for the rarities, 1994's four CD boxset, **30 Years of Maximum R&B**, did away with the need for most (though not all) of its predecessors – more of which later.

Because their first three albums were underachievers, The Who's early reputation rests (like The Kinks) on their singles, that swathe of perfectly realised pop gems that begins with the amphetamine angst of "I Can't Explain" and ends with the joy of "Pinball Wizard". The first dozen a-sides, excluding the jokey, aptly named "Dogs", still paint a vivid picture of youthful alienation and obsession. In Who-land, the colours and music were loud and the scents and temptations strong, but insecurity is ever-present; the fear of having the wrong clothes, nose, parents or sexuality. It's a world of disguises and la-la-lies, in which Townshend's heroes are either charged-up – nothing gets in their way, not even locked doors – or insecure, born with a plastic spoon.

There's a streak of '60s perv at work, too; cross-dressing ("I'm A Boy"),

CONTINUES OVER »

So which one's Bouncy? The four faces of The Who, early '70s

pornography ("Pictures Of Lily"), and masturbation ("Mary Anne With The Shaky Hand"), plus the cryptic, surrealist parable of the indestructible autistic "Happy Jack".

In the Who canon, the '60s singles have always been free radicals. Permutations of them crop up on almost every compilation, but assembling the full parade has always been nigh impossible, especially "Mary Anne...", the slippery single that never was. 1968's **Direct Hits** – released, like *Magic Bus – On Tour*, to fill the Yuletide void left by the non-arrival of *Tommy* – competently gathered half a dozen hits, supplemented by b-sides and rarities.

A complete collection of '60s singles was possible only after the expiry of Shel Talmy's rights to material he had produced. **Meaty Beaty Big And Bouncy** celebrated that moment in style, collecting almost all the early hits, adding Entwistle's whimsical "Boris The Spider" and, for update's sake, "The Seeker". Named after the four Who members – 'Meaty' was Daltrey and so on – and chosen and sequenced by Townshend, it was a cracking record that nearly didn't arrive. Manager Kit Lambert threw a hissy fit on returning from the US to find the album in the shops, and demanded a recall so his choice of tracks could be made. It was, mercifully, too late. *Meaty Beaty Big And Bouncy* proved enormously popular, a party album sprayed with beer, a worn-out car cassette. It's still great.

On the flip side of art-rock Who was b-side Who, an above-average R'n'B band, punching out warhorses like "Bald Headed Woman", Tamla covers ("Dancing In The Street"), and hot rod/surf anthems ("Bucket T"), the last highlighted on the "Ready Steady Who" EP. Early Who b-sides are rarely things of wonder, but the sullen "Circles" and Moon and Entwistle's self-celebration "The Ox" quickly became cultish.

TOWNSHEND IS HIS OWN GREATEST COLLECTOR, AND REISSUES HAVE COME SATURATED WITH BONUS BITS

For second-generation mods circa 1978, b-side Who was as important as art-rock Who; hence The Jam's version of "Batman" and their own "In The City", its title a homage to the forgettable b-side of "I'm A Boy". The best places to find b-side Who (aside from CD reissues of the first trio of albums) are **Who's Missing** and **Two's Missing**, 1988 selections by Pete with liner notes from the maestro himself and great Pop Art covers by Richard Evans. The former includes "Barbara Ann", a reminder of the Beach Boys' influence on The Who's falsetto vocal style, while the latter boasts "Last Time", and "Under My Thumb", a solidarity single for the Stones' 1967 bust, much anthologised but usually not with both sides together.

If you want to know how both art-rock Who and b-side Who sounded live and what kind of thrill was available at the Railway Tavern or The Marquee, go to **BBC Sessions**, a time capsule from 1965-'73 containing terrific performances of "Disguises", "Run Run Run" and Marvin Gaye's "Leaving Here" among others. It's raw but not chaotic – everything is intentional and modulated, not least those vocals. *BBC Sessions* also illustrates the effects of ever-more-muscular amplification. The band's assault on Johnny Kidd's "Shaking All Over" is truly seismic, but compared to the finesse of the earlier sides, Rodge bawling "Long Live Rock" is regressive.

The CD reissue of 1974's **Odds And Sods** also

features b-side Who. The original selection was Entwistle's, there to fill the hole in the 1974 Christmas market (from the outset, The Who have stayed fixated on late autumn releases), and a counter-attack on the rampant bootlegging that was driving the group nuts. The Ox gathered enough rarities for two albums but a single it remained (and a successful one), led by Entwistle's dud "Postcard". Along with the excluded material, the CD version includes Pete's straight-up opinions on some of the selections.

1976's **The Story Of The Who** was the first attempt at rock-legend Who – dressed in a cover with a glam rock flavour (an exploding drum kit in pink dry ice) it made No 2 in the UK charts. 1981's **Hooligans** updated the story to include post-Moon demi-hits like "Squeeze Box" and "Slip Kid". This was still-relevant Who, its packaging aimed at the post-punk market; a trashed TV with the group onscreen lies before a forbidding council block. No future, man!

As the group fragmented in the early 1980s, the hits packages came with increasing frequency. **Who's Greatest Hits** (1983) was followed by **The Singles** (1984), **Rarities** (1983, and, in fact, not so rare), **The Who Collection** (1985) a TV-advertised job with uninspired artwork (a logo against a concrete wall), **Who's Better Who's Best** (1988) and the unreleased *Who Cares Any Longer?* (OK, so we made that last one up.) The CD-era **My Generation -The Very Best Of The Who** (1996) trod a familiar path and caught its designer on a bad day.

The handsome boxset **Thirty Years Of Maximum R&B** (1994) ushered in the kind of in-depth pop archaeology that has since become widespread. Issued to mark the 30th anniversary of The Who's first release as The High Numbers – "I'm The Face"/"Zoot Suit" – it came with essays by Pete, ex-PR Keith Altham and biographer Dave Marsh.

The trick of *30 Years...* is to gather the essential tracks into a coherent career story. The four High Numbers tracks at its beginning are the slightly sickly cherries on the cake, poor man's R'n'B or, in the case of "I'm The Face", poor man's Kinks. The rest of the box lines up the classic singles – though infuriatingly, not "Substitute" (there's a live version), cleanly fillets the early albums, brings in the '70s anthems – "Won't Get Fooled Again", "Let's See Action" – and includes a hefty portion of live work. There's plenty of period soundbites to pep things up and it's all in one place.

2004's **Then And Now** dragged out the same old hits for the benefit of the first two new Who songs in an age; "Real Good Looking Boy" and "Old Red Wine", respective tributes to Elvis Presley and John Entwistle. The pair were also issued as a single, while later versions of the album drop "Old Red Wine", a barbed epitaph for Entwistle (*"You chose low on the list"*).

For live aficionados there is always another frontier. **Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970** (1996) is best described as a *Tommy*-heavy *Live At Leeds*, strong on atmosphere. **Join Together** (1990) boxes up the 1989 reunion tour. **Live At The Albert Hall** (2003) captures 2000's charity show and its guests (Paul Weller, Noel Gallagher, Eddie Vedder. Nigel Kennedy). The US only **The Blues To The Bush** (2000) is a 1999 Chicago show where a five-piece Who play an R'n'B-inflected setlist. **Live From Toronto (The Who Album)** (2006) dates from 1982, an arena band going through its paces. The fan-club only **View From A Backstage Pass** (2007) includes "The Punk And The Godfather" for completists. Most recently there's **Greatest Hits Live** (2010), which cherrypicks live shows from different eras for a familiar roster of anthems, with an abridged version available on the second CD of the latest Greatest Hits (2010). Those wishing to venture off-piste can scoot to **The Monterey International Pop Festival**, whose four CDs include 25 minutes of acclaimed but rather messy 1966 Who. Their performance of "A Quick One" on the Rolling Stones' 1969 'Rock And Roll Circus' is way better.

For the fan who has everything there is **The First Singles Box**, whose cornucopia of rare snaps, artwork and fan fodder surrounds a dozen CD singles featuring their two original tracks. You get get eight '60s hits, three '70s hits and "Real Good Looking Boy"/"Old Red Wine".

There is also a vinyl version, nicer of course, but one that still leave you with several missing '60s 45s, and the realisation that the only way to own "Mary Anne" on 7" is to find a US release of "I Can See for Miles". Rats! Oh, and while you're crate-digging, keep an eye open for *Magic Bus – The Who On Tour*, if only for that cover! ⊙

COMPILATIONS AND LIVE ALBUMS

MAGIC BUS THE WHO ON TOUR
Released: September 1968
Label: Decca
Chart Position: US 39
★

DIRECT HITS
Released: October 1968
Label: Track
★★★

MEATY BEATY BIG AND BOUNCY
Released: October 1971(US) November 1971 (UK)
Label: Track
Chart Position: UK 9; US 11
★★★★★

ODDS AND SODDS
Released: September 1974
Label: Track
Chart Position: UK10, US 15
★★★★

THE STORY OF THE WHO
Released: September 1976
Label: Track
Chart Position: UK2
★★★

HOOLIGANS
Released: October 1981
Label: MCA
Chart Position: US 52
★★

WHO'S GREATEST HITS
Released: November 1983
Label: MCA
Chart Position: US 94
★★★

RARITIES VOL 1&2
Released: August 1983
Label: Polydor
★★

THE SINGLES
Released: October 1984
Label: Polydor
★★★

WHO'S MISSING
Released: November 1985
Label: MCA
Chart Position: UK 44
★★★★

THE WHO COLLECTION
Released: 10 December 1985
Label: Polydor
Chart Position: UK44
★★

WHO'S BETTER WHO'S BEST
Released: March 1988
Label: MCA
Chart Position: UK 10
★★★

THIRTY YEARS OF MAXIMUM R&B
Released: July 1994
Label: Polydor
Chart Position: UK 48 ★★★★

MY GENERATION THE VERY BEST OF THE WHO
Released: August 1996
Label: Polydor
Chart Position: UK 11 ★★★

BBC SESSIONS
Released: February 2000
Label: Polydor ★★★★

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION
Released: June 2002
Label: Polydor
Chart Position: UK 17; US 31 ★★★★

THEN AND NOW
Released: March 2004
Label: Polydor
Chart Position: UK 5; US 57
★★★

THE FIRST SINGLES BOX
Released: May 2004
Label: Polydor
★★★

GREATEST HITS
Released: Dec 2009
Label: Geffen
★★★

LIVE ALBUMS

JOIN TOGETHER
Released: March 1990
Label: Virgin
★★

LIVE AT THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL 1970
Released: October 1996
Label: Colombia
★★★

THE BLUES TO THE BUSH
Released: April 2000
Label: Polydor
★★★

LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL
Released: June 2003
Label: Polydor
★★★

LIVE FROM TORONTO (THE WHO ALBUM)
Released: April 2006
Label: Immortal ★★

VIEW FROM A BACKSTAGE PASS
Released: November 2007
Label: thewho.com
★★★

GREATEST HITS LIVE
Released: January 2010
Label: Geffen
★★★

THE WHO MISCELLANY

The solo releases, collectables, memorabilia and more

THE SOLO ALBUMS

AS THE MAIN, restlessly creative force behind The Who, you might have thought that Pete Townshend's solo output would outstrip his bandmates' efforts several times over. Yet, as Pete himself has claimed, much material originally intended for his solo work was absorbed into Who albums. And in plundering his own childhood for *Tommy*, or his battles with brandy on *The Who By Numbers*, many Who records could almost be categorised as solo projects, in terms of songwriting at least. Yes, Townshend's solo output is eclectic, ambitious and diverse, but it was Roger Daltrey who had the biggest hit singles (including a solo-credited "I'm Free") and John Entwistle who began his solo career first. And Keith Moon who cut the most (in) famous solo album of them all. Here, then, are The Who boys' solo efforts – a fascinating alternative history of the band...

» ROGER DALTREY

Daltrey

TRACK, APRIL 1973

CHART POSITION: US 45

Daltrey was the first to grasp commercial success with this pop-heavy, rock-light album – brought to you by then-budding songwriter Leo Sayer – and its UK Top 5 single, "Giving It All Away".

TRACKLISTING: One Man Band/Way Of The World/You Are Yourself/Thinking/You & Me/It's A Hard Life/Giving It All Away/Story So Far/When The Music Stops/Reasons/One Man Band (Reprise)

Ride A Rock Horse

POLYDOR/MCA, JULY 1975

CHART POSITION: UK 14; US 28

Recorded during the filming of *Lizstomania* – in which Daltrey starred and contributed vocals to the soundtrack – *Ride A Rock Horse* is slightly deceptive in name. More soulful R'n'B and beat-folk balladeering than out-and-out rock music, it nonetheless boasts one of the 1970s' most macho album covers.

TRACKLISTING: Come And Get Your Love/Hearts Right/Oceans Away/Proud/World Over/Near To Surrender/Feeling/Walking The Dog/Milk Train/I Was Born To Sing Your Song

One Of The Boys

POLYDOR/MCA, MAY 1977

CHART POSITION: UK 45; US 46

This features Daltrey's first compositional credits since 1970's "Here For More", the b-side to "The Seeker", and the first-ever co-writes of his solo career. *One Of The Boys* is otherwise notable for Beatles completists: "Giddy" was a "giveaway" penned by Paul McCartney.

TRACKLISTING: Parade/Single Man's Dilemma/Avenging Annie/Prisoner/Leon/One Of The Boys/Giddy/Written On The Wind/Satin & Lace/Doing It All Again

McVicar

POLYDOR, JUNE 1980

CHART POSITION: UK 39; US 22

Could this be the 'lost' Who album? Townshend and Entwistle contribute to this soundtrack to the film of the same name, a biopic of bank robber John McVicar, released through Who Films, and starring – who else? – Rog. The only snag is that none of the band penned any of the material, which was contributed in part by '60s Brit-soul cult hero – and valued Who collaborator – Billy Nicholls.

TRACKLISTING: Bitter & Twisted/Just A Dream Away/Escape Pt 1/White City Lights/Free Me/My Time Is Gonna Come/Waiting For A Friend/Escape Pt 2/Without Your Love/McVicar

Parting Should Be Painless

WEA, FEBRUARY 1984

CHART POSITION: N/A

Following the 'break up' of The Who, Daltrey supplemented this fifth effort with songwriting contributions from Bryan Ferry ("Going Strong") and the Eurythmics ("Somebody Told Me"). It became his first solo album to fail to chart on either side of the Atlantic.

TRACKLISTING: Walking In My Sleep/Parting Would Be Painless/Is There Anyone Out There?/Would A Stranger Do?/Going Strong/Looking For You/Somebody Told Me/One Day/How Does The Cold Wind Cry/Don't Wait On The Stairs

Under A Raging Moon

10-VIRGIN/ATLANTIC, SEPTEMBER 1985

CHART POSITION: UK 52; US 42

The title is a clue. In large part a tribute to the late whirling-dervish drummer of The Who, this features a multitude of sticksmen paying their respects on the title track – including Cozy Powell, Roger Taylor, Zak Starkey and Stewart Copeland.

TRACKLISTING: After The Fire/Don't Talk To Strangers/Breaking Down Paradise/The Pride You Hide/Move Better In The Night/Let Me Down Easy/Fallen Angel/It Don't Satisfy Me/Rebel/Under A Raging Moon

Can't Wait To See The Movie

10-VIRGIN/ATLANTIC, JUNE 1987

CHART POSITION: N/A

After *Under A Raging Moon* recaptured some of his earlier solo success, Daltrey once again brought in producer Alan Shacklock in a doomed attempt to repeat the magic. Daltrey co-wrote two tracks, "Balance on Wires" and "Take Me Home".

TRACKLISTING: Hearts Of Fire/When The Thunder Comes/Ready For Love/Balance On Wires/Miracle Of Love/Price Of Love/Heart Has Its Reasons/Alone In The Night/Lover's Storm/Take Me Home

Rocks In The Head

CASTLE/ATLANTIC, JULY 1992

CHART POSITION: N/A

Daltrey's last solo album to date is an essentially collaborative effort with Gerard McMahon, who receives a co-writer credit for 10 of the 11 tracks and is even thanked in the sleevenotes for providing "musical direction". "Everything A Heart Could Ever Want (Willow)" is written about Daltrey's then-teenage daughter, who also contributed backing vocals.

TRACKLISTING: Who's Gonna Walk On Water/Before My Time Is Up/Times Changed/You Can't Call It Love/Mirror Mirror/Perfect World/Love Is/Blues Man's Road/Everything A Heart Could Ever Want/Days Of Light/Unforgettable Opera

» JOHN ENTWISTLE

Smash Your Head Against The Wall

TRACK/DECCA, MAY 1971

CHART POSITION: US, 126

With a backlog of caustic, darkly humorous material – much of it deemed unsuitable for The Who – the Ox went about recording the first official solo album by any member. Besides the new material, *Smash Your Head...* featured an extended, brass-doused version of "Heaven And Hell" – a popular opener for Who shows, including the celebrated *Live At Leeds* gig itself.

TRACKLISTING: My Size/Pick Me Up (Big Chicken)/What Are We Doing Here?/What Kind Of People Are They?/Heaven And Hell/Ted End/You're Mine/No 29 (External Youth)/I Believe In Everything

Whistle Rhymes

TRACK, NOVEMBER 1972

CHART POSITION: US 138

The title plays on the common misspelling of his name, while the music features an early use of bass synthesiser and guest spots from Wings' Jimmy McCulloch and a post-Humble Pie, pre-*Comes Alive* Peter Frampton.

TRACKLISTING: Ten Little Friends/Apron Strings/I Feel Better/Thinkin' It Over/Who Cares?/I Wonder/I Was Just Being Friendly/The Window Shopper/I Found Out/Nightmare (Please Wake Me Up)

Rigor Mortis Sets In

TRACK/MCA, JUNE 1973

CHART POSITION: US, 174

Rigor Mortis was the name Entwistle bestowed upon his backing band of this period – but was also a comment on what he saw as the parlous state of rock in the mid-'70s. It's a curio, for sure: a blend of upbeat self-compositions and affectionate takes on classic rock'n'roll tunes.

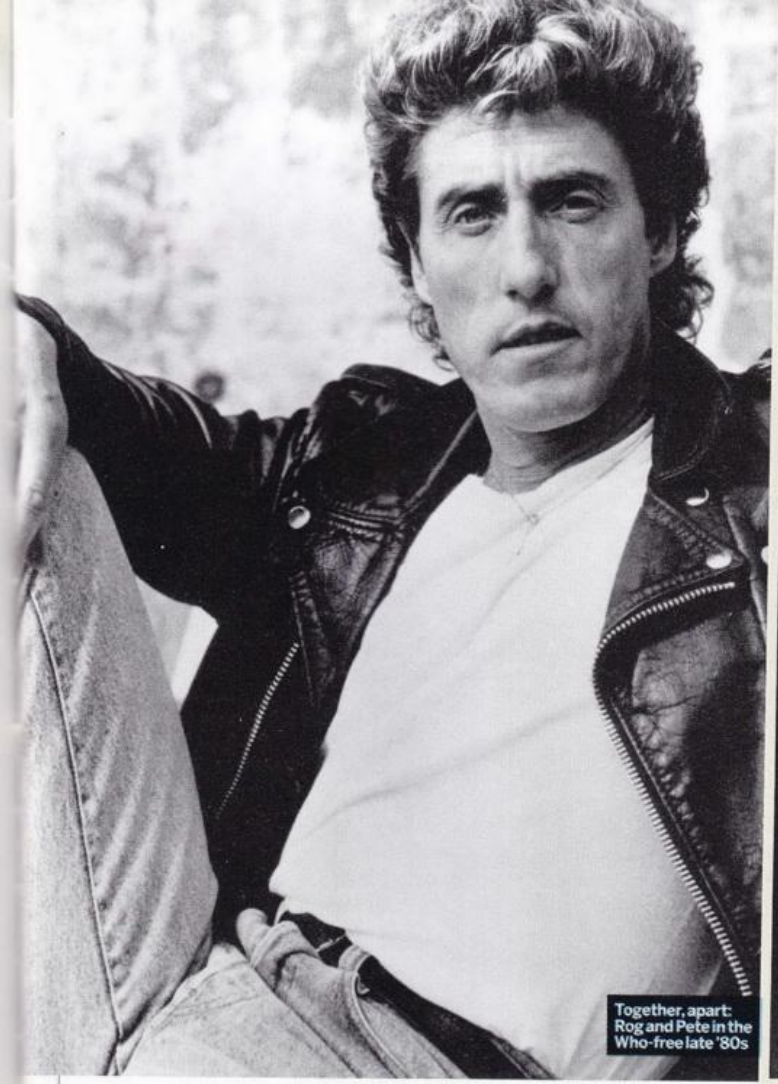
TRACKLISTING: Gimme That Rock'n Roll/Mr Bassman/Do The Dangle/Hound Dog/Made In Japan/My Wife/Roller Skate Kate/Peg Leg Peggy/Lucille/Big Black Cadillac

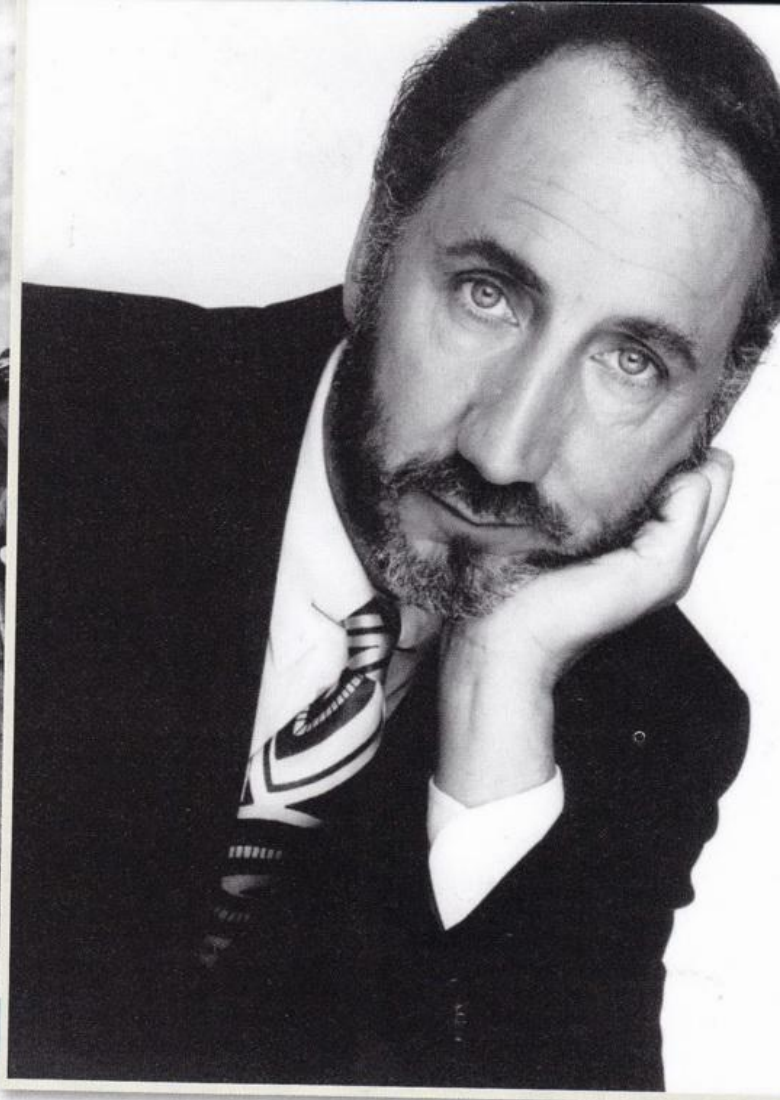
Mad Dog (as John Entwistle's Ox)

TRACK/MCA, MARCH 1975

CHART POSITION: US, 192

Mad Dog carries on the early rock'n'roll feel of *Rigor Mortis*... and is thus often referred to by fans as 'The Son Of Rigor Mortis'. The release of the album coincided with a disappointing Ox tour of the UK and the US – the American leg being cut short – with losses totalling upwards of £32,000.





Together, apart: Rog and Pete in the Who-free late '80s

TRACKLISTING: I Fall To Pieces/Cell Number 7/You Can Be So Mean/Lady Killer/Who In The Hell?/Mad Dog/Jungle Bunny/I'm So Scared/Drowning

Too Late The Hero

WEA/ATCO, NOVEMBER 1981

CHART POSITION: US, 71

Eagle Joe Walsh and his long-time mucker Joe Vitale played on and produced this early '80s effort. *Tommy* completists note: the 2005 CD reissue contains "Overture (Unreleased Out-Take)"

TRACKLISTING: Try Me/Talk Dirty/Lovebird/Sleeping Man/I'm Coming Back/Dancing Master/Fallen Angel/Love Is A Heart Attack/Too Late The Hero

The Rock

GRIFFIN, AUGUST 1996

CHART POSITION: N/A

Although it was recorded in 1986, *The Rock* didn't see public release until 1996 – 15 years after *Too Late The Hero*. Uncharacteristically, Entwistle only penned four of the tracks on the album and handed lead vocals over to former Prism singer Henry Small.

TRACKLISTING: Stranger In A Strange Land/Love Doesn't Last/Suzie/Bridges Under The Water/Heartache/Billy/Life After Love/Hurricane/Too Much Too Soon/Last Song/Country Hurricane

Music From Van-Pires

PULSAR, 2000

CHART POSITION: N/A

Entwistle's last studio album was a soundtrack for a computer-generated animated children's TV series. While some tracks had appeared on previous Entwistle solo albums, others were new collaborations with drummer Steve Luongo.

TRACKLISTING: Horror Rock/Darker Side Of Night/Sometimes/Bogey Man/Good & Evil/When You See The Light/Back On The Road/Left For Dead/When The Sun Comes Up/Rebel Without A Car/Don't Be A Sucker/Endless Vacation/I'll Try Again Today/Face The Fear

» KEITH MOON

Two Sides Of The Moon

POLYDOR/MCA, AUGUST 1975

CHART POSITION: N/A

Keith? *Singing*? Moon's sole solo record saw him take the mic, indulging his love of old favourites including "The Kids Are Alright" and The Beach Boys' "Don't Worry Baby". It boasts an astonishing all-star cast, including Ringo Starr, Harry Nilsson, David Bowie and Spencer Davis, but is a regular on Worst Album Of All Time lists. Moon only plays drums on three tracks, and his version of The Beatles' "In My Life" is quite breathtaking, for all the wrong reasons.

"The Who's management arranged for MCA to give him an advance to keep him busy," Moon's driver/minder Richard "Dougal" Butler told *Uncut* in 2006. "The Who weren't doing anything for six or nine months. So the idea was, advance him some money and hopefully you'll get some of it back. The most expensive karaoke LP ever made."

TRACKLISTING: Crazy Like A Fox/Solid Gold/Don't Worry Baby/One Night Stand/The Kids Are Alright/Move Over Ms L/Teenage Idol/Back Door Sally/In My Life/Together

» PETE TOWNSHEND

Happy Birthday

EELPIE, 1970

CHART POSITION: N/A

The first of three tribute albums to Meher Baba is credited to Pete Townshend and friends, including Ronnie Lane. Only about 2,500 copies of the album were originally pressed for its release on Meher Baba's birthday, less than a year after his death.

TRACKLISTING: Content/Evolution/Day Of Silence/Allan Cohen Speaks/Mary Jane/Allan Cohen Speaks/The Seeker/Begin The Beguine/With A Smile Up His Nose They Entered/The Love Man/Meditation

I Am

EELPIE, 1972

CHART POSITION: N/A

Pete and friends congregate once more in tribute to Meher Baba. Particularly notable on this record is the first incarnation of "Baba O'Riley" which is here performed by Townshend alone as an instrumental stretching to nearly 10 minutes long.

TRACKLISTING: Forever's No Time At All/How To Transcend Duality And Influence People/Affirmation/Baba O'Riley/The Song Is Green/Everywhere I Look This Morning/Dragon/O Parvardigar

Who Came First

TRACK, OCTOBER 1972

CHART POSITION: UK 30; US 69

From the still-smouldering ashes of the 'Lifehouse' project emerged *Who's Next* and Townshend's first major-label album, essentially a collection of previously written songs and unused demos. *Who Came First* also included four tracks from the earlier Meher Baba tribute releases, featuring contributions from Ronnie Lane and Billy Nicholls.

TRACKLISTING: Pure And Easy/Evolution/Forever's No Time At All/Nothing Is Everything (Let's See Action)/Time Is Passing/There's A Heartache Following Me/Sheraton Gibson/Content/Parvardigar

With Love

EELPIE, MARCH 1976

CHART POSITION: N/A

Hail Avatar Meher – again! Pete Townshend's friends on the third Meher Baba tribute album included Billy Nicholls, Steve Humphries, Ronnie Lane, Ron Wood, Bruce Rowland, Lol Benbow, Paul Wyld, Peter Hope-Evans (of Medicine Head), and Sydney Foxx.

TRACKLISTING: Hail Avatar Meher Baba/Give It Up/Without Your Love/His Hands/Just For A Moment Baba Blues/Meher/Contact/Gotta Know Ya/Sleeping Dog/All God's Mornings/Lantern Cabin

Rough Mix

(as Pete Townshend & Ronnie Lane)

POLYDOR/MCA, SEPTEMBER 1977

CHART POSITION: UK 44; US 45

Following his split from The Faces and a short-lived Small Faces reunion, Ronnie Lane came to Townshend for help on his next solo LP. The project grew into a full-blown collaboration. Though billed as a joint album, Lane and Townshend only share credits on the title track.

TRACKLISTING: My Baby Gives It Away/Nowhere To Run/Rough Mix/Annie/Keep Me Turning/Catmelody/Misunderstood/April Fool/Street In The City/Heart To Hang Onto/Till The Rivers All Run Dry

Empty Glass

ATCO, APRIL 1980

CHART POSITION: UK 11; US 5

New songs, new recordings, all Pete: 1980's *Empty Glass* was billed as Townshend's first solo album proper. It was a big hit commercially and critically, with some observers comparing it favourably to The Who's own *Face Dances*. Daltrey in particular was not impressed that Pete had kept tracks like "Rough Boys" to himself.

TRACKLISTING: Rough Boys/I Am An Animal/And I Moved/Let My Love Open The Door/Jools And Jim/Keep On Working/Cats In The Cupboard/A Little Is Enough/Empty Glass/Gonna Get Ya

All The Best Cowboys Have Chinese Eyes

ATCO, JUNE 1982

CHART POSITION: UK 32; US 26

A newly sober Townshend, captivated by the new wave, let his self-indulgences run free on this autobiographical record, augmented by spoken-word pieces and sprawling synths.

TRACKLISTING: Stop Hurting People/The Sea Refuses No River/Prelude/Face Dances Part Two/Exquisitely Bored/Communication/Stardom In Action/Uniforms/North Country Girl/Somebody Saved Me/Slit Skirts

White City: A Novel

ATCO, NOVEMBER 1985

CHART POSITION: UK 70; US 26

A concept album about a housing estate in west London and the crime and despair found therein. "White City Fighting" features co-credits and guitar work from Dave Gilmour.

TRACKLISTING: Give Blood/Brilliant Blues/Face The Face/Hiding Out/Secondhand Love/Side Two/Crashing By Design/I Am Secure/White City Fighting/Come To Mama

The Iron Man: The Musical By Pete Townshend

VIRGIN/ATLANTIC, JUNE 1989

CHART POSITION: US, 58

Never doubt his ambition! This musical adaptation of Poet Laureate Ted Hughes' much-admired tale was a slow-burning success, making its stage debut at London's Young Vic in 1993. Impressed, Warners optioned Townshend's version, and a movie was released in 1999, with Pete listed as executive producer.

TRACKLISTING: I Won't Run Anymore/Over The Top/Man Machines/Dig/A Friend Is A Friend/I Eat Heavy Metal/All Shall Be Well/Was There Life/Fast Food/A Fool Says/Fire/New Life (Reprise)

Psychoderelict

ATLANTIC, JULY 1993

CHART POSITION: N/A

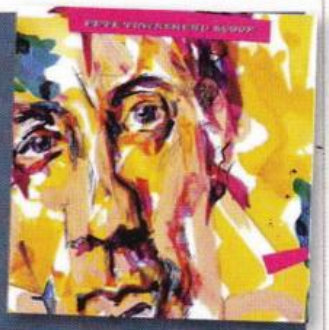
Pete Townshend's last solo album to date is, again, concept driven – this time less-than-loosely based around his own life and struggles with the long-running 'Lifehouse' project, here dubbed 'Gridlife'. Townshend would later revive the Ray High character of *Psychoderelict* for his 2005 novella, *The Boy Who Heard Music* and *Endless Wire*.

TRACKLISTING: English Boy/Meher Baba M3/Let's Get Pretentious/Meher Baba M4 (Signal Box)/Early Morning Dreams/I Want That Thing/Outlive The Dinosaur/Now And Then/I Am Afraid/Don't Try To Make Me Real/Predictable/Flame/Meher Baba M5 (Vivaldi)/Fake It/English Boy (Reprise)

GENUINE SCOOP!

Inside The Who's recording process

With the *Scoop* series – three collections of previously unreleased demos and outtakes – Townshend gave the obsessive Who fan a look around his home studio; to experience the bare compositions born there before they were diced, pulped and blown up – in a good way! – on The Who's assembly line. From early sketches of classics like "So Sad About Us" to obscure piano preludes, the collections provide a unique and thorough overview of Townshend's songwriting career. In addition, each *Scoop* is accompanied by extensive liner notes written by Townshend that explain and instruct the listening experience...



SCOOP

ATCO, APRIL 1983

HIGHEST CHART POSITION: US, 35

So Sad About Us-Brrr/Squeeze Box/Zelda/Politician/Dirty Water/Circles (Instant Party)/Piano: Tipperary/Unused Piano: Quadrophenia/Melancholia/Bargain/Things Have Changed/Popular/Behind Blue Eyes/Magic Bus/Cache Cache/Cookin'/You're So Clever/Body Language/Initial Machine Experiments/Mary/Recorders/Goin' Fishin'/To Barney Kessel/You Came Back/Love, Reign O'er Me

ANOTHER SCOOP

ATCO, JULY 1987

HIGHEST CHART POSITION: N/A

You Better You Bet/Girl In A Suitcase/Brooklyn Kids/Pinball Wizard/Football Fugue/Happy Jack/Substitute/Long Live Rock/Call Me Lightning/Holly Like Ivy/Begin The Beguine/Vicious Interlude/La La La Lies/Cat Snatch/Prelude #556/Baroque Ippanes/Praying The Game/Drifting Blues/Christmas/Pictures Of Lily/Don't Let Go The Coat/The Kids Are Alright/Prelude, The Right To Write/Never Ask Me/Ask Yourself/The Ferryman/The Shout

SCOOP 3

HIP-O RECORDS, DECEMBER 2001

HIGHEST CHART POSITION: N/A

Can You See The Real Me/Dirty Water/Commonwealth Boys/Theme 015/Marty Robbins/I Like It The Way It Is/Theme 016/No Way Out/Collings/Parvardigar/Sea & Sand/971104 Arpeggio Piano/Theme 017/I Am Afraid/Maxims For Lunch/Wistful/Eminence Front/Lonely Words/Prelude 970519/Iron Man Recitative/Tough Boys/Did You Steal My Money?/Can You Really Dance?/Variations On Dirty Jobs/All Lovers Are Deranged/Elephants/Wired To The Moon, Pt 2/How Can You Do It Alone/Poem Disturbed/Squirm Squirm/Outlive The Dinosaur/Teresa/Man & Machines/It's In Ya

THE WHO SELL UP!

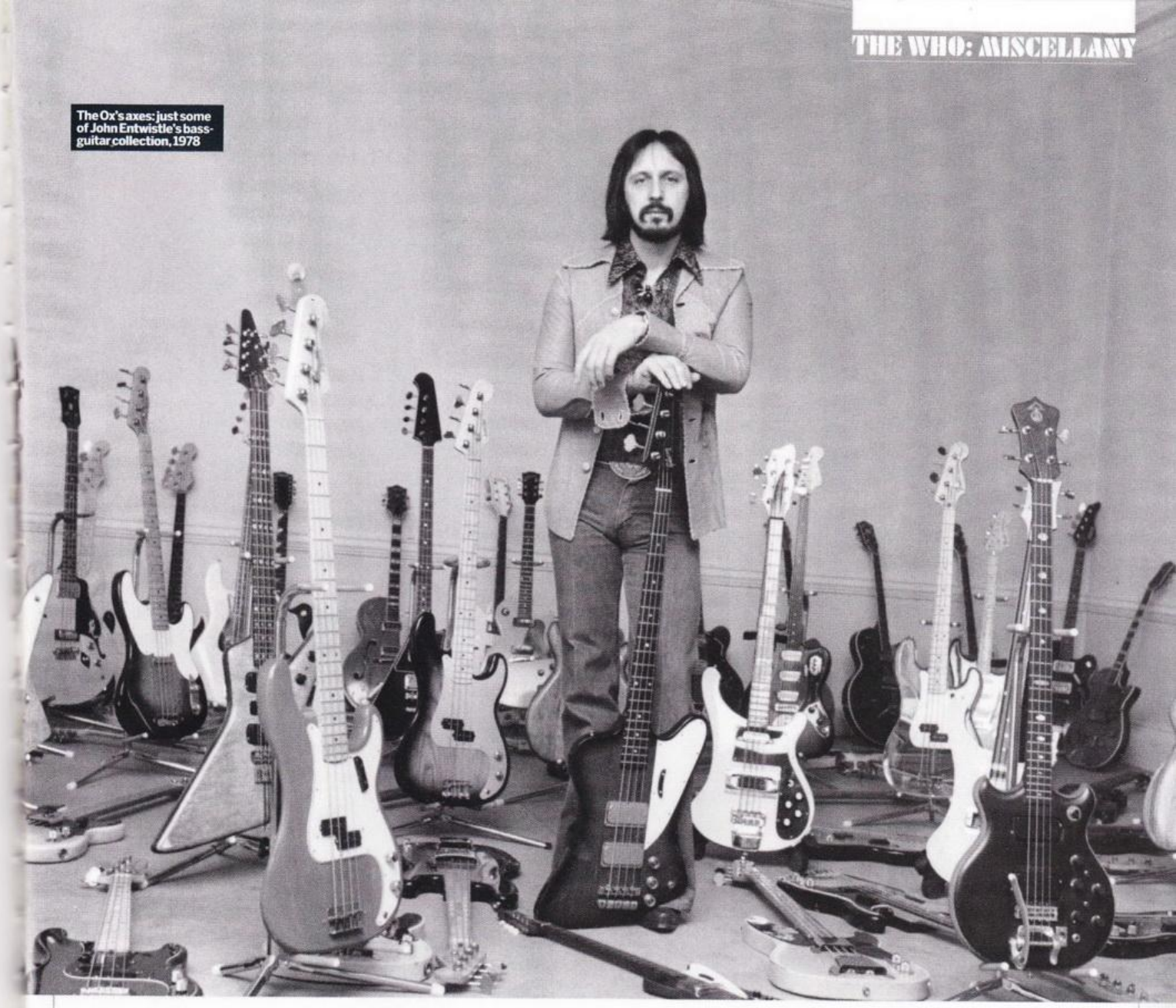
Who memorabilia and collectors' items

ONE HUNDRED and eighty guitars, 52 award discs, a small orchestra of brass instruments, sketches, stage-gear, jewellery, old Detours posters, 30 life-size casts of fish and much, much more – the auction of items from the estate of the late John Entwistle at Sotheby's in May 2003 remains the single greatest motherlode of memorabilia ever offered to the Who-buying public. Among the treasures: a 1958 Gibson Explorer (which sold for £95,200); and The Ox's favourite, long-serving bass "Frankenstein", a pink Fender Precision that made £62,400 – nearly 10 times its estimate. Sales amounted to an astonishing £1,093,372, and even the Sotheby's auction catalogue itself (an impressive 138 pages of high-gloss pictures and undervalued guide prices) is now a sought-after rarity.

What was on offer that day – and this is a truism of any kind of collecting, from antiques to baseball cards – was authenticity, genuine provenance, and not just some nice guitars and quirky keepsakes. This stuff, literally, was personal, and that is what hardcore collectors prize above all else.

Perhaps, though, you don't have room on your walls for a stuffed marlin, even if was caught by Entwistle himself. Most Who collecting starts – as the band did – with the vinyl records. Like their '60s contemporaries, the original releases tend to fetch the highest prices: a copy of the first Brunswick issue of the *My Generation* album has sold for over £1000, and demo pressings of early singles "I Can't Explain" and "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" can make £300. Don't get too excited, though: standard issues of those 7"s, even in their delightfully old-fashioned company sleeves are more likely to sell for £20. "Demo 45s and test pressings command the premium prices," confirms Julian Thomas, buyer for memorabilia specialist 991.com, "provided they are in mint condition."

Those are important words: mint condition. Pete Townshend would appreciate the fact that his band's deathless satire on commercialism, *The Who Sell Out*, can now change hands for upwards of £600, but only as long the copy is as spankingly clean, and complete with its attendant gimmicks, the bonus psychedelic



The Ox's axes: just some of John Entwistle's bass-guitar collection, 1978

poster and the all-important sticker on the sleeve. Prices for other standard album issues are strong, too: the first-pressing matt-label *Quadrophenia* can fetch £200, a laminated original issue *Tommy* (with booklet) sometimes more. But they have to be first pressings. Vinyl values tail off for later albums: *The Who By Numbers* can make £50, *It's Hard* maybe a tenner, but only on a really good day. Autographed albums are another price level altogether, particularly if a certain K Moon has added his mark. A fully autographed *Who's Next* can fetch over £800; *Face Dances*, with Rog, Pete, John and Kenney scrawled over it, around £150-£250.

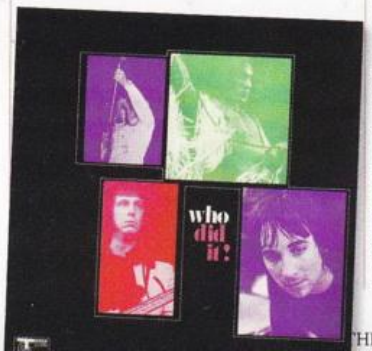
Probably the most famous Who collectable isn't technically by The Who at all: "I'm The Face", the first High Numbers single, released on Fontana in July 1964, regularly commands £1100. But the most requested item, according to Thomas, is the unspeakably rare *The Who Did It*, [*right*] a 13-track 1970 comp, available on mail-order only, and withdrawn soon after issue. Most copies were destroyed, so the near-mint version available on 991's books at time of writing ("just some light creasing and mild signs of ring wear to the reverse") represents a rare opportunity to get a hens'-teeth Who collectable. $1923.95 to you.

As you might expect for a band with The Who's live reputation, gig paraphernalia is another popular area for collectors. "'60s concert programmes, ticket stubs, gig flyers and handbills are always attractive," notes Thomas, and 991.com have a 1967 tour poster to prove his point, listed at over $300. "But," he counsels, "do your research. There are many fakes out there purporting to be the real thing."

And when it comes to 'live memorabilia', proving authenticity is notoriously difficult. There are numerous incidences of sellers claiming to have a piece of a guitar smashed by Townshend, or one of Keith Moon's drumsticks, but, as Thomas confirms, "you'll need well-documented provenance to satisfy collectors that they're genuine. If you were a roadie picking up pieces post-gig then you'd have access and opportunity, but you'd still need to be able to prove your case." And if you think your "special" copy of *Live At Leeds* will one day help pay off the mortgage, think again: "The item we are offered almost every week is the assorted contract and letter reproductions from the original *Live At Leeds*," confirms Thomas. "People find the paperwork and think they're original contracts signed by the band. Sorry, but they are facsimile copies, albeit quite convincing ones."

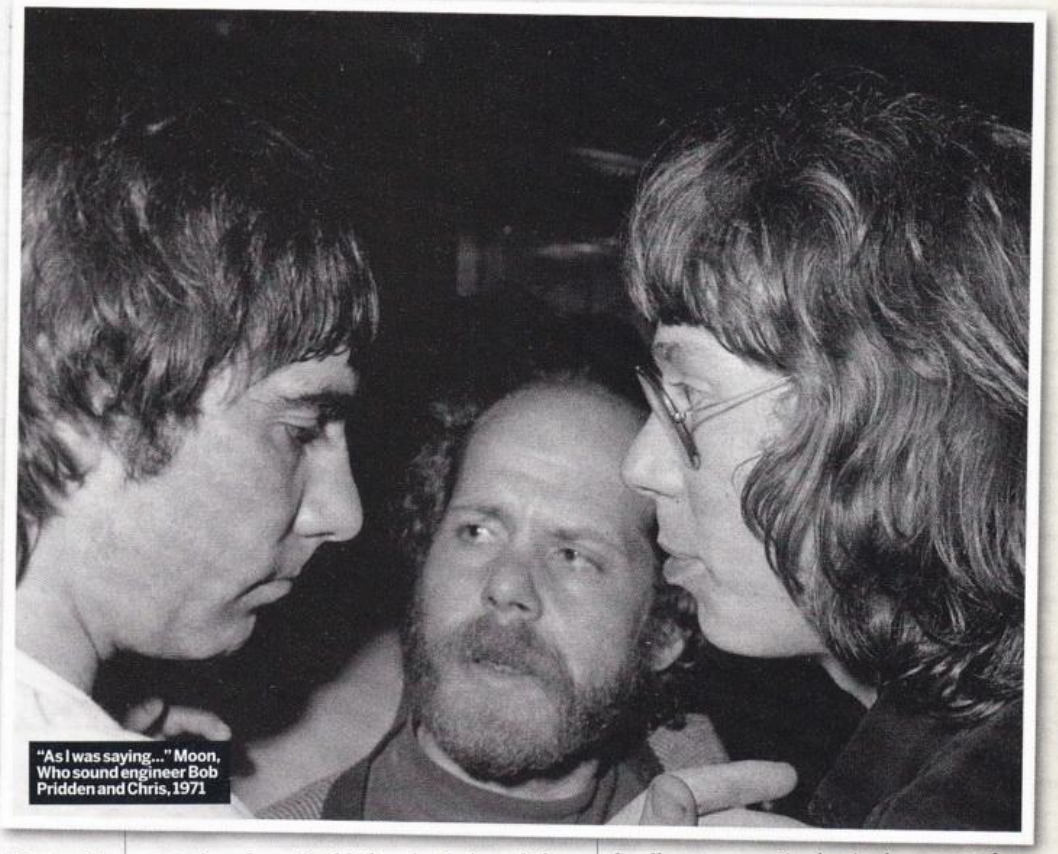
Although "'60s and '70s period collectable remain strong in 2011", more recent items can be desirable, too. And with the avalanche of promotional items that attended tours and (re)releases from the '80s and '90s onwards came some serious "next-level" collectables. Take the Road Case, for example, a box containing 25 double-CD concert sets from the 2002 North American Tour, all stored within a metal-appointed replica road case, custom-printed with the official tour logos, a 60-page tour book and authentic signature card, signed by Pete and Rog, and listed on 991.com for nearly $1300. Or The Vegas Job, a 2010 Canadian Gold disc awarded for DVD sales of 50,000, and presented to Townshend himself, with a similar pricetag.

Old or new – and to underline the point made by Sotheby's Entwistle sale – the personal connection remains key for collectors, and the professionals, too. So, what is Thomas' greatest-ever Who find? "That would be Keith Moon's cash register," he says, unhesitatingly. "A solid brass National Cash Register, circa 1915 and weighing 75kg, which Keith bought to place in the bar room of his 'Tara' house. If only that could talk!" The diehard who paid three grand for that has installed it in his own private bar. Now that's a proper fan. ***Mark Bentley*** ⊙



Stop me if you've heard this one before

NOVEMBER 1971: CHRIS CHARLESWORTH on a smashing night in with Moonie



"As I was saying..." Moon, Who sound engineer Bob Pridden and Chris, 1971

BOB GRUEN

WE'RE IN CHARLOTTE, North Carolina, on November 20, 1971, on The Who's first US tour after the release of *Who's Next*, and they are on top of their game.

While The Who are waiting to go onstage, Keith Moon and I go for a stroll along the backstage corridors of the Coliseum where, in a storeroom, we discover a hollow wooden egg large enough to conceal a man and a four-wheeled cart on which it can be mounted and transported. Keith conceals himself inside the egg and I tow him towards The Who's dressing room where he intends to leap out and surprise everyone. Indeed, he is hatching a plot to be wheeled onstage in this contraption. Unfortunately, en route to the dressing room there is a steeply sloping downhill curve, and I lose control of the vehicle, causing it to crash, the egg to topple over and break and the World's Greatest Rock Drummer to come tumbling out head first amid the wreckage. Keith and I narrowly avoid being ejected from the premises by a security guard who hears the crash and thinks we were a couple of vandals... which I suppose we are. Of course, he fails to recognise The Who's drummer. I think only our English accents saved us from being chucked out into the car park.

Back at the hotel – a Holiday Inn as I recall – we're all in the bar, aside from Roger who, as ever, has retired early with a "temporary overnight companion". And when the bar shuts, a bunch of us, some Who crew, a local fan or two who'd discovered our whereabouts, maybe the odd intrepid girl, wind up in Keith's suite, where the minibar is soon exhausted. Over at one end of the suite, some gather around a TV watching a movie. But not Keith, who's telling jokes and laughing at them himself, pretty loudly – too loudly for those by the TV, one of whom asks him to make less noise.

"We're trying to watch a movie," someone says.

This is big mistake. As calm as you like, our host strides over to the TV set and without even bothering to unplug it, wrenches it from its mounting, carries it to the closed window and lobs it through the glass. We are about eight floors up. There is a tremendous crash.

"As I was saying..." continues Keith to a now-speechless audience.

It takes about three minutes before the night porter knocks on Keith's door, but he's ready for him, and before he can even open his mouth Keith hits his stride. "I don't know how I can possibly apologise for the terrible accident that has just occurred," he begins in his best Oxford accent. "It's just too unbelievable, and I can't tell you how sorry I am. I was moving the television closer to the window so that more of my guests might watch it from the bed when it slipped from my grasp and, heaven forbid, fell through the window... Just the most awful thing to happen, and really a dreadful accident... I just hope no-one was beneath it. Where did it fall? In the car park? Oh, my God, what a terrible thing to have happened. How much will it cost? I can pay you now..."

> MOON LOBS THE TV OUT THE WINDOW. WE'RE EIGHT FLOORS UP. THERE'S A TREMENDOUS CRASH...

And it so it went on, with Keith never allowing the porter to get a word in edgeways until, finally, compensation having been agreed, the porter is about to leave and return with some material with which to effect a temporary repair on the window, which Keith has requested. Meanwhile all of us have somehow managed to suppress our laughter, so – as a crowning gesture – Keith delivers the killer blow: "Er... if you're coming back would you be so kind as to bring two bottles of chilled champagne and," Keith hesitates for just the right number of seconds, "another TV?"

The following morning I decide to take breakfast in the dining room where I spot Roger polishing off a huge fried breakfast, toast, coffee, the lot. I decide to join him.

"A bit of trouble in Keith's room last night," he mutters.

"Yes."

"I can't understand it. None of my business anyway. What time is it?"

I glance at my watch. "About 10.30."

"We're not leaving until 12... plenty of time for another blow job. She's waiting upstairs for me. See you later."

Chris Charlesworth

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