

Live: The Collector's Edition

801

Expression Records - EXP CD 3R

Available from [Phil Manzanera's web site](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange

by **Mark S. Tucker**
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No self-respecting proghead can be without at least one 801 album (there are now six), and the original issue of this live gig tends to be the one that's most oft coveted, featuring, as it does, the ubiquitous Brian Eno flanking an all-star cast of progressive rock greats: Simon Phillips, Bill MacCormick, Francis Monkman, and Lloyd Watson, who opened for or sat in with a number of progrock groups (Bowie, Roxy, King Crimson, etc.) but here had the unlucky task of filling in for Robert Fripp's sizzling, never-to-be-equalled-or-topped, rock-out solo in the earlier studio version of Eno's *Baby's on Fire*. Watson, of course, didn't carry it off, as this disc shows, but acquitted himself well despite (because, well, who the hell **can** step into Fripp's shoes??).

The 801 group was an extension of Manzanera's not very well known but great fusion group Quiet Sun, which quietly issued one marvelous LP and died, few realizing it also featured the perambulatory Eno, one of the 20th century's great musical figures...along with Fripp. Quiet Sun released in 1975 and died the same year, '76 seeing 801 rising from the ashes. Like Sun, it was a progfusion ensemble, and bassist Bill MacCormick—later of another underlauded nail-it-to-the-wall group, Random Hold—transferred over with Eno.

In typical turned-around prog fashion, *Live* was the first release, the later *Listen Now* studio LP following in '77. *Live* was also a first in the utilization of several recording techniques becoming new standards for concert documents. Though the LP went over well enough in the UK and States, it created a huge demand in Australia, becoming the biggest selling import of '76, helping fan the flames leading to the studio venture. Not hard to see why, nor did Icehouse miss the attractiveness of the compositions, playing 801 and Eno covers in their own live gigs.

Manzanera and Eno had established with Roxy Music alongside *enfant terrible* lounge lizard Brian Ferry, all known for experimental, psychedelic, progressive strains. 801 creamed the best of the far-side and compacted it into a concentrated effort typical of the mid-70s era. Hence, the group has come to be signatory of the time and is still hallowed in progmusic realms. One listen to this CD shows why that is, especially in the haunting *Lagrima* leading into a full-blown extravaganza upon the Beatles' *Tomorrow Never Knows*, MacCormick's bass furious with dark tones and heady patterns.

This killer set republishes the legendary disc (Queen Elizabeth Hall - Sept. 3, 1976), adds two new tracks (*Golden Hours* and *Fat Lady of Limbourg*), and then throws in an entirely new second disc of rehearsals for the concert, a warm-up conducted at Shepperton Studios (Aug. 23, 1976), a 'prequel' if you will, something progrock fans, who tend to be just a touch fanatical (I know, I'm one), die for. However, as the generations succeeding the Baby Boomers are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their music diets, *801 Live* will be a very welcome new avenue of exploration for fresh ears and inevitably shuttle into CD players for many replays.

That's just the beginning, though, as Expression Records, Manzanera's label, now being distributed through the MVD Entertainment Group, has remastered it to new heights of perfection and simultaneously republished the *Manchester* ([here](#)) and *Live @ Hull* ([here](#)) platters as flanking marvels. In this, and in other mindblowing re-presentations and new discoveries (such as Cuneiform's growing Soft Machine and Matching Mole re-discovery menus), we see why the new watchword of every genre is what it is: **progressive** bluegrass, **progressive** country, **progressive** folk, etc. It all started with progressive rock, and the genius of that mode's brief-ish heyday continues to rescue the entirety of the music world from mindless, cookie-cutter, corporate assassination.

Track List:

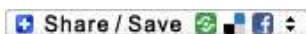
DISC ONE

- Lagrima (Phil Manzanera)
- T.N.K. (Tomorrow Never Knows) (Lennon / McCartney)
- East of Asteroid (Manzanera / MacCormick)
- Rongwrong (Charles Hayward)
- Sombre Reptiles (Brian Eno)
- Golden Hours (Brian Eno)
- The Fat Lady of Limbourg (Brian Eno)
- Baby's on Fire (Brian Eno)
- Diamond Head (Manzanera)
- Miss Shapiro (Manzanera / Eno)
- You Really Got Me (Ray Davies)
- Third Uncle (Brian Eno)

DISC TWO

- Lagrima (Phil Manzanera)
- T.N.K. (Tomorrow Never Knows) (Lennon / McCartney)
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- Baby's on Fire (Brian Eno)
- Diamond Head (Phil Manzanera)
- Miss Shapiro (Manzanera / Eno)
- You Really Got Me (Ray Davies)
- Third Uncle (Brian Eno)
- Lagrima (Reprise) (Phil Manzanera)

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