

## **TR-i**

*A Wizard, A True Star*. The title of Todd Rundgren's 1973 solo album aptly sums up the contributions of this multi-faceted artist to state-of-the-art music. As a songwriter, video pioneer, producer, recording artist, computer software developer, conceptualist, and, most recently, interactive artist (re-designated TR-i), Rundgren has made a lasting impact on both the form and content of popular music.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Rundgren began playing guitar as a teenager, going on to found and front The Nazz, the quintessential '60's cult group. In 1969, he left the band to pursue a solo career, recording his debut offering, the legendary *Runt*. But it was 1972's seminal *Something/Anything?*, on which he played all the instruments, sang all the vocal parts, and acted as his own producer, that catapulted Todd into the superstar limelight, prompting the press to unanimously dub him 'Rock's New Wunderkind'. It was followed by such landmark LPs as *The Hermit of Mink Hollow* and the above mentioned *A Wizard, A True Star*, as well as such hit singles as *I Saw The Light*, *Hello It's Me*, *Can We Still Be Friends*, and *Bang The Drum*.

In 1974, Todd formed Utopia, an entirely new approach to the concept of interactive musicianship, and embarked on an extensive round of touring and recording. Standout Utopia offerings included *Oops! Wrong Planet*, *Adventures in Utopia*, and *Oblivion*. Along the way, Utopia combined technical virtuosity and creative passion to create music that, for millions, defined the term "progressive rock."

Rundgren's myriad production projects include albums by Patti Smith, Cheap Trick, Psychedelic Furs, Meatloaf, XTC, Grand Funk Railroad, and Hall And Oates. Rounding out his reputation as rock's Renaissance Man, Rundgren composed all the music and lyrics for Joe Papp's 1989 Off-Broadway production of Joe Orton's *Up Against It* (the screenplay commissioned by The Beatles for what was meant to have been their third motion picture). He also has composed the music for a number of television series, including *Pee Wee's Playhouse* and *Crime Story*.

Early last year Rundgren performed his iconic 1973 album *A Wizard A True Star* in concert in its entirety for the first time ever, and recently did the same with a double bill: *Todd & Healing*. His latest two studio albums *Todd Rundgren's Johnson*, a collection of classic Robert Johnson songs, and *reProduction*, covers of songs Todd has produced for other artists. This summer he is touring with Ringo Starr (for the third time).

In 1998 Todd debuted his new PatroNet technology which for the first time allowed fans of a musical artist to subscribe directly to the artist's musical output via the Internet. This caps a long history of groundbreaking early multimedia "firsts", including:

- 1978: The first interactive television concert, broadcast live over the Warner/QUBE system in Columbus, Ohio (the home audience chose each song in real time during the concert by voting via QUBE's 2-way operating system).
- 1978: The first live nationally broadcast stereo radio concert (by microwave), linking 40 cities around the country.
- 1979: The opening of Utopia Video Studios, a multi-million dollar state-of-the-art facility. The first project produced by Todd there is Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, commissioned by RCA SelectaVision as the first demonstration software for their new videodisc format.
- 1980: Creation of the first color graphics tablet, which was licensed to Apple and released as The Utopia Graphics Tablet.
- 1981: *Time Heals*, the first music video to utilize state-of-the-art compositing of live action and computer graphics (produced and directed by Todd), becomes the second video to be played on MTV (after *Video Killed the Radio Star*).
- 1982: The first live national cablecast of a rock concert (on the USA Network), simulcast in stereo to over 120 radio stations.
- 1982: The first two commercially released music videos, one of which was nominated for the first-ever Grammy awarded for "Best Short Form Video" in 1983.
- 1992: The release of "No World Order", the world's first interactive record album on CD-i. Also the first commercially available music downloads via CompuServe.
- 1994: The release of "The Individualist", the world's first full-length Enhanced CD.
- 1995: The world's first interactive concert tour.
- 1998: Launches PatroNet, the world's first direct artist subscription service