



## Recorded Live in Concert at Metropolis Studios, London

### Van der Graaf Generator

Convexe Records - CVX902139 (2 CD / 1 DVD)

Available from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
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Van der Graaf Generator. Utter only those four words and many a progrocker's eyes will glaze over, his knees go weak, and an ineradicably seraphic smile will appear from out of nowhere. I know, I caught the band's debut LP, *Aerosol Grey Machine*, in '69 and was instantly converted to dwell among the fen. For the succeeding three LPs, I likewise stood entranced, after which time changes occurred and the ensemble became more Peter Hammill's function than otherwise, benefitting or "suffering" thereby (the sonic shift was fairly pronounced), depending upon one's affinities. There's a certain justice in that, though, as *Aerosol* was originally a Hammill solo gig. The label just made him an offer he couldn't refuse, and so a legendary prog band was born.

VDGG's trademark has always been one of complex sonic architecture, baroque lyrics, intense angst, paranoia, and psychedelia, each and every trait one that is well loved by the fans. The mainstay of the melancholic side has ever been Hammill's, an eccentric figure in rock and roll, so it wasn't terribly surprising when the core group eventually fractionated, resulting in one unbelievable splinter, David Jackson et al's *The Long Hello*, and a number of other combos, including the imperishable VDGG in unending personnel changes...and then Hammill's own prolific solo output. Though the band has any number of marked periods, fans of each have ever looked on no matter what occurred, fascinated, and this rather superb new issuance will prove to be no exception. With just two other original VDGG members flanking Pete, Hugh Banton and Guy Evans, the sound is daunting and fulsome for a trio, the compositions simultaneously provocative and curious, complex and laconic, and still quite experimental alongside the historied expected.

Time has mellowed neither Hammill nor Banton nor Evans. I fact VDGG was the time-lost reason for the founding of Charisma Records (no one would sign them, the lads frightened the suits and ties, so an imprint had to be started up!), and one wouldn't be too far off the track to look upon the hoary venerables as likewise a germ seed for the RIO (Rock In Opposition) movement. There has only been one Peter Hammill, there will never be another, and such a force of nature does not pass unnoticed. This is, I will venture to guess while having been privy for a while now as to the label's planned roster of the first six releases in what everyone's hoping will be a long succession, is going to be most radical release that will emerge from this wonderful Metropolis Studios line so far, and if it doesn't cause rapture among the proginistas, then damn me for a heretic...but I have zero fear of that, as *Recorded Live* is a leviathan leap back to the most intense heyday of progrock, and this configuration is just as muscular, articulate, and creative as ever Van der Graaf Generator has been.

### Track List:

#### CD 1 / DVD:

- Interference Patterns (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- Nutter Alert (Peter Hammill)
- Your Time Starts Now (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- Lemmings (Peter Hammill)
- Lifetime (Peter Hammill)
- Bunsho (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- Childlike Faith (Peter Hammill)

#### CD 2 / DVD:

- Mr. Sands (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- Over The Hill (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- We Are Not Here (Hammill / Banton / Evans)
- Man-Erg (Peter Hammill)

This is one of 3 critiques of the first half of a six-title issuance in the Metropolis Studios Concert series. For the other two, see [here](#) (Bill Nelson) and [here](#) (The Zombies).

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