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Publisher: [Eric Olsen](#)

REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Jon Anderson - *Tour Of The Universe*

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Published March 02, 2009



My first introduction to the band [Yes](#) came via my older brother's record collection back in the early 1970s when I found his copy of the triple album set *Yes Songs*. The first thing that grabbed my attention about the collection was, like I'm sure so many other people, [Roger Dean's](#) art work. The futuristic and fantastic, landscapes that decorated both the outer and inner sleeves of the album were sufficiently bizarre (even today his work from that time makes me think of giant toadstools) that it made me want to hear the music that inspired it.

In those days swirling synthesizers, twenty minute songs, and the use of orchestral instruments in pop music was still a novelty and so the music lived up to the expectations that the artwork created, that this was going to be something different. However once the novelty wore off I quickly tired of their music. While there was no question that they expanded the horizons of pop music's potential with their approach to composition and their incorporation of electronics, their material all began to sound the same very quickly. Instead of continuing to push the envelope of discovery that they had begun by continuing to experiment, they seemed to have settled on a formula and stuck with it.

That's not to say that I've ignored the band, or the solo careers of various individuals after they left Yes. Periodically I've checked out what they've been doing in the hopes that they've managed to recapture that spark of invention that inspired their first albums and that maybe one of them will have come up with something a little different or new. It was for this reason that I decided to check out the DVD, [Tour Of The Universe](#), distributed by [MVD Video](#), that was created out of a live concert that [Jon Anderson](#), one time, and still occasional, lead singer of Yes, gave at the XM Satellite Radio station in Washington DC in 2004. While some of the concert was going to be comprised of older material from Yes and Anderson's solo career, it was the promise of new material that really interested me.



Anyone even slightly familiar with the music of Yes will remember Jon Anderson's very distinctive soprano voice. It was the perfect match for the keyboards and the ethereal sound that the band was after. While the voice hasn't changed at all, what has changed is Anderson's approach to the music. While the music was as lush and textured as one would expect from a former member of Yes, the focus was primarily on Anderson's voice and whatever instrument he was playing live. (As this was a real solo gig, all accompaniment was prerecorded or preprogrammed)

past, but here he brought it into the foreground. Instead of electronic music that had a suggestion of folk undertones, the traditional music was brought front and centre and the electronics were used to generate an ethereal atmosphere evocative of the bygone era where the music originated.

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Richard Marcus is a long-haired Canadian iconoclast who writes reviews and opines on the world as he sees it at [Leap In The Dark](#) and [Epic India Magazine](#).

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