

Sneak Preview: Todd Rundgren's State of affairs to include a CD signing in L.A.

MUSIC NEWS | APRIL 6, 2013 | BY: PHYLLIS POLLACK |



Todd Rundgren performs in Los Angeles on his AWATS tour, 2009

Credits: Susana Capra/AEG photos

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By Phyllis Pollack

It was announced yesterday that at [Todd Rundgren](#) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-invites-fans-to-camp-out-with-him-the-catskills>), 's Park City, Utah concert, slated for tonight, he will be playing with the String Quartet Ethel.

Rundgren will also be holding a meet and greet CD signing at Barnes & Noble at The Grove in [Los Angeles](#) (<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/tag/phyllis-pollack>) to promote his upcoming album *State*, slated for release on April 11, 2013.

Rundgren's [Los Angeles](#) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/roger-daltrey-says-he-s-announcing-to-marijuana-at-los-angeles-concert>) signing will take place on April 15, 2013 at 6pm.

[Rundgren](#) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-biography-to-be-released-next-week-an-extended-version>) is currently on tour. Dates are listed below.

The following is a sneak preview of what fans will hear on his upcoming album *State*.

Rundgren's extensive catalogue is so diverse, what might be heard on this album could be *Something, Anything*, to quote the title of his memorable 1972 double album that cast him into international stardom.

As a result of that release's noteworthy single, "Hello, It's Me," those that are unfamiliar with the entirety of his catalogue have inaccurately typecast Rundgren as a "singer/songwriter," a term that far from captures his many notable achievements in the studio.

Rundgren's work as a record producer has resulted in the sales of millions of albums, including Meat Loaf's iconic 1977 release *Bat Out Of Hell*, which has sold an estimated 44 million albums worldwide. 36 years after its release, it remains one of the top-selling albums of all time.

[Rundgren](#) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-to-play-los-angeles-concert>) has also been at the helm in the studio, working as a producer or engineer for countless other releases from a diverse range of artists. A few of them include punk poetess Patti Smith, rockers XTC, Rick Derringer, The Tubes, Badfinger, Grand Funk, Alice Cooper and Electric Light Orchestra.

His own recordings have been as diverse as the artists he has produced.

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While [Rundgren](http://www.examiner.com/article/new-todd-rundgren-album-to-be-released-april) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/new-todd-rundgren-album-to-be-released-april>) began his career in the Sixties, playing blues guitar in Woody's Truck Stop, he ventured into blatantly distant musical paths.

[Rundgren](http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-talks-about-inviting-his-fans-to-camp-out-with-him) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-talks-about-inviting-his-fans-to-camp-out-with-him>) has maintained a fiercely loyal following since his early days with the Naz. During this time, from 1968 to 1971, the band released three albums with Rundgren.

After going solo and securing a growing following with his sophomore album *Runt* in 1971, Rundgren achieved international fame as a songwriter, performer and producer with 1972's prolific double disc *Something/Anything*.

Having achieved immense success as a singer/songwriter, he returned in 1973, this time, heavily immersed in prog rock on '73's *Wizard and A True Star*.

The next two years would result in more heavy doses of prog rock, with the self-titled, double-disc *Todd* and *Initiation*.

As a case in point about not knowing what to expect from Rundgren, tracks on *Todd* included the heartfelt track "A Dream Goes On Forever," which could drive a listener to tears, to the defiant rocker "Heavy Metal Kids."

It was if there was nothing that Rundgren would not, or could not do in the studio.

During his Utopia years, Rundgren continued to initiate further stylistic transformations. Additional changes in musical direction ensued through several more albums and phases of his career.

Rundgren's work has always been unpredictable.

He has also quite dramatically showed he could can turn back the hands of time.

In 2009, Rundgren returned to his Utopia days with his heavily welcomed [AWATS](http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-revives-1973-album-at-los-angeles-concert) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-revives-1973-album-at-los-angeles-concert>) tour dates.

The following year, Rundgren then went back to where he had begun, with the blues, playing Robert Johnson songs at his concerts.

In 2010, he released [Todd Rundgren](http://www.examiner.com/topic/todd-rundgren) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/todd-rundgren>)'s *Johnson*, a tribute to Robert Johnson, with its thinly veiled title, referencing a condom.

Subsequent to his blues release, Rundgren electrified his fans on tour, by revisiting periods of his *Todd* and *Healing* albums.

Among those singing Rundgren's praises, Eagles guitarist [Joe Walsh](http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-praised-by-eagles-guitarist-joe-walsh-at-the-grammy-museum) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-praised-by-eagles-guitarist-joe-walsh-at-the-grammy-museum>) has cited *Healing* as one his most beloved albums.

Case in point, praise that Walsh, himself, has received includes being lauded by Rolling Stones guitarist [Keith Richards](http://www.examiner.com/article/sir-richard-branson-says-keith-richards-taught-him-how-to-roll-joints) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/sir-richard-branson-says-keith-richards-taught-him-how-to-roll-joints>) in his autobiography *Life*, which cites the inescapable guitar solo in "[Hotel California](http://www.examiner.com/article/former-eagles-member-don-felder-gets-his-own-gibson-signature-hotel-california-guitar-1)" (<http://www.examiner.com/article/former-eagles-member-don-felder-gets-his-own-gibson-signature-hotel-california-guitar-1>)."

In 2010, Walsh showed up to a Rundgren appearance at the [Los Angeles](http://www.examiner.com/article/los-angeles-licks-it-up-at-kiss-concert-los-angeles-as-first-live-facebook-concert-is-broadcast) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/los-angeles-licks-it-up-at-kiss-concert-los-angeles-as-first-live-facebook-concert-is-broadcast>) [Grammy Museum](http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-praised-by-eagles-guitarist-joe-walsh-at-the-grammy-museum) (<http://www.examiner.com/article/todd-rundgren-praised-by-eagles-guitarist-joe-walsh-at-the-grammy-museum>) to tell everyone, "I started off enjoying, then ended up really studying" *Healing*.

Despite the offerings on *Healing*, Rundgren's catalogue also includes many lyrically scathing works that have been critical of numerous individuals.

In the song "Jesse," named for Jesse Helms, Rundgren condemns priests that engage in sexual molestation, and disses the music censorship campaign waged by Tipper Gore, wife of Al Gore.

Later, during the Bush era, Rundgren's 2004 album *Liars* was even more outspoken.

There are also songs he has written that have an almost Buddhist expressionism to them,

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like his beautiful ballad "Wheel of Karma."

All of these works only represent part of his immense discography.

Rundgren is person with many faces, yet he has never exhibited a case of multiple personality disorder throughout these changes. There is nothing disordered about it.

Rundgren's long and winding road now leads his listeners to the album *State*, released by Esoteric Antenna, with distribution through UK label Cherry Red.

Scanning back through Rundgren's 23 previous albums, also noting his collection of indelible releases including *The Hermit of Mink Hollow*, *Faithful*, *Arena*, *Nearly Human* and others, there are also his live albums.

This leaves fans of the *Wizard And True Star* wondering where he would go next, with this album.

Well, the answer is, all over.

State is a musical infusion with everything brewing in the pot, including metal, electronica, funk, soul, new wave, dance, and a trip through synth city.

Whether conscious or not, Rundgren seems to be making a point of letting the listener feel his diversity when it comes to his love of music. With *State*, Rundgren again proves his mastery, not only when it comes to writing and playing, but also when it comes to creating computerized sounds.

He does this skillfully on the album, regardless of the genre he is playing.

On *State*, Rundgren brings out his heavily potent guitar chops, and goes into overdrive to prove his proficiency when it comes to what can be done in the studio with computer technology.

Rundgren's diversity is arguably far more flagrant on his new album than on any other work of his.

When it comes to Rundgren's approach, the album's sound is far from the purity and earthiness heard in his recordings that were primarily dependent on solely playing instruments, than on the use of computers.

On these 10 tracks, Rundgren is ahead of his time, as he has been at other times in the past.

More so than has been the case with most other recording artists when it comes to technology, the future has been a very familiar musical place for Rundgren.

That said, *State* is from another time and place, in which Rundgren again ventures to the future with experimenting, not only technically, but also musically.

That point cannot be stressed enough.

All parts on *State* were recorded by Rundgren, with the exception of vocals from bassist Rachel Haden, who contributes vocals on the its track "Something from Nothing."

The album's opening track "Imagination" is arguably the most enticing track on the album. Rundgren is still one of the true "heavy metal kids." Its doomy Black Sabbathesque guitar work and keyboards will get the listener hooked.

Laced with computerized keyboards, and another heavy layer of keyboards underneath, Rundgren soon throws the listener off, with a demure vocal melody line, as it continues with an alluring trail of computerized wizardry.

Luring the listener back into the dark metal feel, he goes back into another verse.

We then hear his keyboards layered under computerized sounds, and his stunning rock guitar, playing through a chunk of changing chords. It becomes a sound wall, as heavy as something from a Pink Floyd album, and then back into another verse.

Rundgren is such a great songwriter and producer. Additionally, when listening to this album, one is reminded of how tasteful his lead guitar playing is.

Rundgren showcases far more of his guitarwork on "Imagination."

The second track, "Serious," puts out the message that Todd's got the funk.

It morphs into a mix of computerized sound, dance rhythms, soul and R&B. Rundgren weaves in a lot of keyboard work between its funky rhythm guitar vamps.

"In My Mouth" is a soulful track, taking the listener to yet a completely different place, with its seductive lyrics that include "There is something in mouth for you."

This track is destined be among new favorites for Rundgren fans.

Rundgren's keyboards and sense of rhythm keep the song uptempo, despite its soulful delivery.

By the time the striking "Ping Me" begins, all bets are off as far as what will be heard. Rundgren's enduring reputation for being a prolific

singer/songwriter is solidified yet again in this ballad.

Rundgren enlists the highest register of his vocal range in parts of this song beautifully written composition.

He adds some intriguing computerized sounds at different parts during its chorus, particularly towards the end of the song.

"Angry Bird" has an emphatic bass riff that becomes caught in a trance, morphing itself into a futuristic, computerized creation, with a bit of subtle guitarwork, drums and keyboards.

Offering more proof of Rundgren's genius, "Angry Bird" is as "out there" as the Beatles' "A Day In The Life" once seemed.

Somehow, inexplicably, the multi-faceted Rundgren manages to take all of the track's seemingly musical non-sequiturs, and makes sense of it all.

With all of its seemingly unrelated ingredients, it shouldn't work, but it does.

The song "Smoke" is a synthed out, polyrhythmic work, with layers oozing from under Rundgren's vocals.

With its fetching chord arrangement and harmonic structure, Rundgren has ultimately written a very alluring song, using a specter of his songwriting pallet that is long familiar and perhaps one of his best.

"Collide-A-Scope" offers computerized musicianship, via more of Rundgren's experimental meanderings.

One of the highlights on the album is "Something From Nothing."

Rundgren sings, "I create something from nothing," in this duet with Haden. Rundgren's fans will find some of the album's best vocals on the album in this track.

Another unexpected turn, Rundgren serves up "Party Liquor" as the subsequent number. Believe it or not, this is a club track, pumped up and danceable.

The album's tenth and final track "Sir Reality" is a predominantly keyboard-oriented piece. Here, he brings in some more much-welcomed guitar, although not long-lived.

Despite all the studio tricks and computerized amenities, the focus on this track is still Rundgren's relentlessly expertise when it comes to his songwriting ability.

Whatever state Rundgren is in on this album, it is impossible to gauge, because Rundgren has proved on *State* the answer is limitless.

RUNDGREN TOUR DATES 2013 STATE TOUR

May 5, Sun Woodstock (Bearsville), NY - The Bearsville Theater
May 6, Mon Woodstock (Bearsville), NY - The Bearsville Theater
May 7, Tue New York, NY - Rundgren will in with the David Letterman Band
May 8, Wed Norfolk, CT - Infinity Hall
May 10, Fri New York, NY - Gramercy Theater
May 11, Sat Philadelphia, PA - Trocadero
May 12, Sun Huntington, NY - Paramount Theater
May 14, Tue Kent, OH - Kent Stage
May 15, Wed Pittsburgh, PA - The Rex
May 16, Thu Columbus, OH - Pavilion
May 18, Sat Cincinnati, OH - Bogart's
May 19, Sun Chicago, IL - Park West
May 20, Mon Minneapolis, MN - Varsity Theater
May 28, Tue Helsinki, Finland - Tavastia
May 29, Wed Malmo, Sweden - Debasser
May 30, Thu Stockholm, Sweden - Debasser
June 1, Sat Oslo, Norway - Rockefeller
June 2, Sun Verviers, Belgium - Spirit of 66
June 4, Tue Amsterdam, The Netherlands - Paradiso
June 6, Thu Glasgow, Scotland - ABC
June 7, Fri Edinburgh, Scotland - Picture House
June 9, Sun Manchester, UK - The Ritz
June 11, Tue Gateshead, UK - The Sage
June 12, Wed Birmingham, UK - Academy
June 13, Thu Bristol, UK - Academy
June 15, Sat London, UK - Shepherds Bush Empire
June 23, Sun New Orleans, LO - House Of Blues
June 25, Tue Houston, TX - House Of Blues
June 26, Wed Austin, Tx - The Belmont
June 28, Fri Dallas, House Of Blues
June 29, Sat New Braunfels, TX - Gruene Hall