

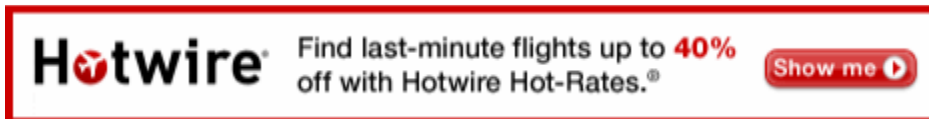


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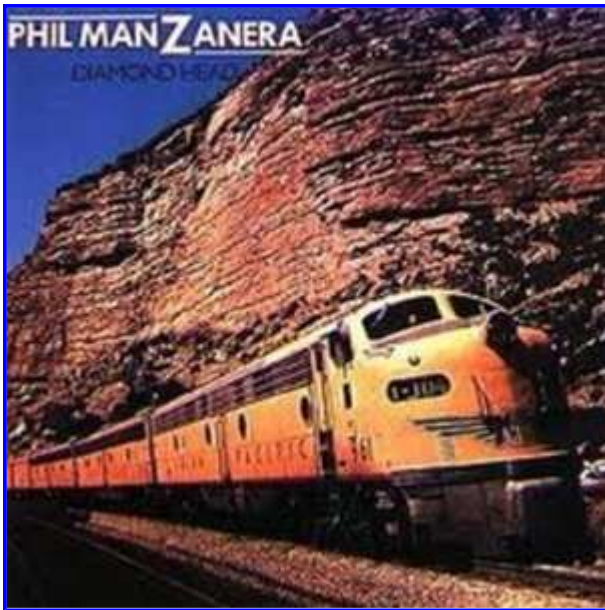
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Fri, 20 May 2011 | Published in [Music Reviews](#)

Phil Manzanera: Diamond Head

By: [Michael Jefferson](#)



Phil Manzanera

Diamond Head
(Expression Records)



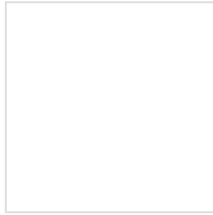
Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera's first solo album, 1975's *Diamond Head*, is an all-star affair that includes Manzanera's Roxy bandmates reed man Andy Mackay, drummer Paul Thompson and keyboardists Brian Eno and Eddie Jobson. Guest singers include Robert Wyatt (Soft Machine), Eno, John Wetton (King Crimson, Asia) and Bill MacCormick (Matching Mole) with Wetton and MacCormick's performances rising above the others. The album's original ten tracks are divided between five vocals and five instrumentals, but that's where the similarities end, with Manzanera incorporating influences that range from rock to Latin rhythms, boleros, ballads and bizarre vocal excursions. (The remastered 2011 reissue includes a bonus instrumental, "Corazon y Alma.")

Robert Wyatt's half gibberish, half Spanish vocals on "Frontera" is an acquired taste, but Manzanera's liquid lead and Thompson's driving beat help make it a daring and intriguing opening cut. The title track is a precision instrumental cut, highlighted by Manzanera's crisp, high-end leads and Thompson's purposeful percussion.

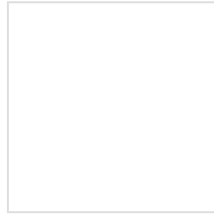
"Lagrima" returns Manzanera to his childhood roots when he lived in Latin America and was exposed to meringue music, Cuban folk and cumbia. Manzanera bounces his dexterous riffs off of Mackay's sax, creating exotic textures that sound like Roxy Music mixed together with a spaghetti western soundtrack. Manzanera slips into a gritty rock rhythm resembling Heart's Bebe Le Strange for the disconcerting "Miss Shapiro," which misses, thanks to all-over-the-map vocals from Brian Eno. Eno's scatological singing proves Brian Ferry wasn't wrong to force him out of Roxy Music. Conversely, MacCormick's "Alma" is a gentle, heartfelt ballad highlighted by Jobson's sweeping synths and Manzanera's monolithic licks.

Diamond Head is a gem in the rough that improves with repeated spins. It's an interesting diversion for Roxy fans still waiting for the follow-up to their superb studio swan song, 1982's *Avalon*.

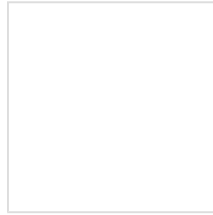
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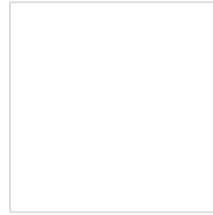
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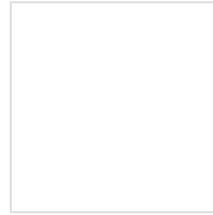
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