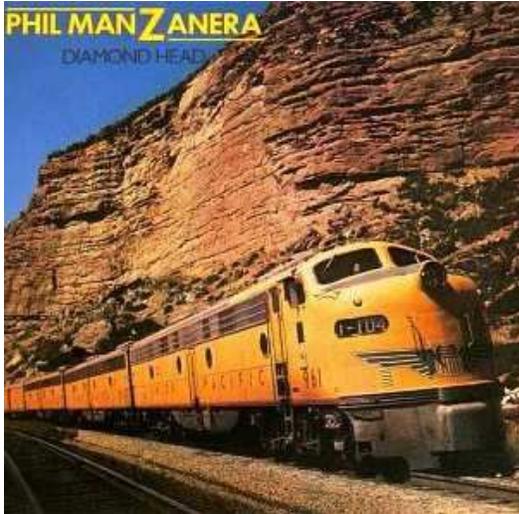


FAME Review: Phil Manzanera - Diamond Head



Diamond Head

[Phil Manzanera](#)

Available from [Expression Records](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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Not long ago, MVD started distributing Phil Manzanera's new Expression label, which included his 801 group's re-issues along with much-hungered-for new live releases. 801 was born as Manzanera's old progfusion ensemble Quiet Sun died with, among other things, his entry into Roxy Music, and while many of us have been hoping against hope that someone will locate old live tapes of QS or even canned outtakes of studio sessions, we've likewise been pining for a republication series of the solo LPs Phil produced. That time thankfully is here, starting with the very first one, ***Diamond Head***, the slab that in fact preceded Quiet Sun (whose LP, by the way, represented not precisely the pre-Roxy Music group but a reunion of the band for the specific purpose of recording and then calling it a day—yeah, things get a mite tangled in the rock music world).

At first, a casual glance seems to indicate that there are no bells and whistles here, no bonus cuts, no session outtakes, none of that, just the LP remastered and reproduced in a really nice tri-fold digipak with a brief intro by the guitarist in a booklet containing lyrics, photos, pages from Phil's notebooks, credits, and a reminiscence from Ian McDonald (King Crimson, McDonald & Giles, Foreigner), but that's deceptive, as the original vinyl contains only 9 tracks and there are 11 here, the tail two being the new features—an extra 15 minutes worth but with no ballyhoo about the fact. It also turns out that the credits remind us that the sessions were filled with giants (Eno, Robert Wyatt, McDonald, John Wetton, etc.), and the re-listen further indemnifies what great material emerged, like the immortal *Miss Shapiro*, co-written with Eno. Don't forget, too, that ***Diamond Head*** was the first time many rockers were introduced to the idea of lyrics encanted in the Spanish tongue while awaiting Manzanera's rapier guitar solos in progressive and prog-pop atmospheres.

However, few beginnings arrive without their flaws and ***Diamond Head*** possesses a rather noticeable one in its closing (bonus) cut, *Corazon y Alma*, where bassist Bill MacCormick is allowed the vocalist duties a second time (*Alma* the first, in a harmonizing duet with Phil)—with Bill, that's not always the best idea. Eno's singing may well always also come with a wealth of flaws that he, as in everything he does, manages to turn into strengths, but MacCormick is not equally fortunate. On the other hand, ***Diamond Head*** contains no less than five instrumentals, all of them a pleasure as well as a window into what the gent was capable of outside Roxy, a two-way pane that shows why someone who was obscure before accompanying Monsieur Ferry could attract some of the best musicians of the time to step into the studio with him once he arrived.

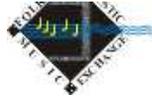
Track List:

- Fromtera (Manzanera / Wyatt)
- Diamond Head (Phil Manzanera)
- Big Day (Manzanera / Eno)
- The Flex (Phil Manzanera)
- Same Time Next Week (Manzanera / Wetton)
- Miss Shapiro (Manzanera / Eno)
- East of Echo (Phil Manzanera)
- Lagrima (Phil Manzanera)
- Alma (Manzanera / MacCormick)
- Carhumba (Phil Manzanera)
- Corazon Y Alma (Manzanera / MacCormick)

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