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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Music Review: Phil Manzanera - *Diamond Head*



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Author: Greg Barbrick — Published: Mar 01, 2011 at 3:14 pm

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Although it took the music world a little while to catch up with what Roxy Music were up to back in the early seventies, by the time of *Stranded* (1973) they were acknowledged as true rock innovators. Of course any band that spawned both Bryan Ferry, and Brian Eno would be recognized at some point. Strangely enough, it took the departure of Eno before the public really woke up to the beautifully subversive music of Roxy. Sadly, one of the prime architects of their sound - guitarist Phil Manzanera was never really given his due at the time.

It is a shame, because along with other guitar-players extraordinaire of the era, such as Bill Nelson (Be Bop Deluxe) and Mick Ronson (David Bowie), Manzanera defined the British sound that has come to be known as glam. Manzanera's peers certainly understood however. His debut solo album *Diamond Head* (1976) is a star-studded event that sounds very much like the great lost Roxy album of the time.

While Ferry and Company were on hiatus, preparing for a North American tour, Manzanera invited some friends to join him in the studio to work on *Diamond Head*. Vocalists included Brian Eno, John Wetton, and Robert Wyatt. Additional musicians included fellow Roxy-ites Eddie

Jobson, Andy Mackay and Paul Thompson, plus Iain MacDonald, Dave Jarrett, Bill MacCormack, and many others.

Diamond Head opens up on a surprising note with Soft Machine founder Robert Wyatt singing (in Spanish) "Fronterera" (which he co-wrote with Manzanera and Bill MacCormick). There is a familiarity to the tune, primarily through Phil's instantly recognizable guitar solo, as well as a bit of a foreign feel. A very nice way for the artist to carve his own space from the outset.

The title track is the first of five instrumental tracks on the album, and it sheds a lot of light on the project. Manzanera is a brilliant guitar player, but in the context of Roxy - that fact was too easily overlooked. Rather than showing off, Manzanera plays the same clean, economical leads he is so well-versed in. The main difference is in this context we do not have the distractions of Ferry's all too often affected voice to contend with.

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Article Author: [Greg Barbrick](#)

Greg Barbrick is an old time "music biz" groupie/writer. He thinks that nothing good has been recorded since 1978.

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Diamond Head

Release date: 2011-03-08

Publisher: EXPRESSION RECORDS

Diamond Head is Phil Manzanera's first solo album from 1975. For this release, the Roxy Music guitarist enlisted vocalists like John Wetton (Asia), Robert Wyatt and his Roxy band mate, Brian Eno. ...

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Mar 16, 2011 at 7:01 pm

Manzanera was an underrated psych-rocker as well as the rock backbone of Roxy. Diamond Head was a ripper.

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