



# Manchester

**801**

Expression Records - EXP CD 23R

Available from [Phil Manzanera's web site](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange

by **Mark S. Tucker**

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For an overview of the 801 group itself, see the *801 Live* review ([here](#)). *Manchester* documents a reformed ensemble, this time with 10CC's Lol Creme and Kevin Godley sitting in along with Andy MacKay (Roxy Music). Of the original line-up, only Phil Manzanera and Bill MacCormick survive, with Dave Skinner (keyboards, vocals), Paul Thompson (drums), and Simon Ainley (guitar, vocals) forming the core group. The material also switches to the bulk of the 801 / Manzanera studio works, as Phil was then releasing solo albums along with 801 and Roxy materials. On the other hand, *T.N.K. (Tomorrow Never Knows)* and *You Really Got Me* made the cut as covers, fan favorites stoking up this concert recorded at Manchester University.

The recording date was 1977, but the gig never saw the light of documented day until 2001 on Manzanera's Expression label. Remastered, it's seeing a first rebirth and not a moment too soon, in tandem with three other reissues. *Manchester* is the answer to those looking on querulously at consumers buying successive live discs and asking "Why on Earth do you want multiple versions of the same songs?". Here, *Tomorrow Never Knows* vividly supplies the answer. It's stripped down, almost vacant of the keyboards that perennially marked it as a lush paradise in the repertoire, and almost shocking. Where Francis Monkman and Eno had previously made it a swirling galaxy of floating sound, Dave Skinner, the keyboardist on *Manchester*, ducks out almost completely, leaving the chores to Phil, who turns the cut into an axehandler's raw take on the song's backbone.

Likewise, the comedic backing vocals on *Flight 19*, delivered in mocking falsetto, tune up that aspect of the track in parodic embroidery. But, by the time the CD's half through, the change over to a heavily guitar-dominated sound is striking (that, and the pushing of Thompson's drums waaaaay up front), making a heavy contrast against the original *801 Live*. This is a completely different approach, and the now-repeated songs searingly demonstrate just how many degrees Manzanera had turned his head around. Where *801 Live* had showcased a psychedelic orchestral groove, *Manchester* presents an ensemble closer to the ground, rawer, almost garagey at times. Even the take on *Out of the Blue* a Roxy chestnut, sounds like it's coming from a pub.

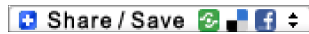
All that may seem a quantum leap backwards -- and, in ways, it is, as the group's vastly more fundamental in its rock sensibilities, less fulsomely prog—but that isn't a disparagement of quality, not at all. *Manchester* is precisely what collectors go mad for, and listening to the reworked versions, highly deviated from both studio and live dates, a treat. The re-affirming proof is in the successor *801 @ Hull* ([here](#)), which figures Ainley back into the mix more strongly, tosses the esteemed Eddie Jobson (UK, Curved Air, etc.) and his violin in, rebalances the sound entirely, shifts the vocal balances, and makes the songs seem once again new. If it all sounds a bit too complicated, well, that's what we progheads go nuts for: complexity. And if the spate of re-creations of repertoire might cause the less fanatical to pause, well, the whole thing is a luxurious vice no connoisseur will apologize for or forsake. Genesis, King Crimson, Kansas, Soft Machine, and other leonine ensembles still see revenues

and fame from the practice while consumers bask in the light and sonics of a time when talent, creativity, and wild chops ruled the day...over and over and over.

## Track List:

- T.N.K (Tomorrow Never Knows) (Lennon / McCartney)
- Flight 19 (Manzanera / I. MacCormick)
- Listen Now (Manzanera / I. & W. MacCormick)
- Law and Order (Manzanera / W. MacCormick)
- Que? (Phil Manzanera)
- City of Light (Manzanera / W. MacCormick)
- Initial Speed (Phil Manzanera)
- That Falling Feeling (Manzanera / I. MacCormick)
- Diamond Head (Phil Manzanera)
- Out of the Blue (Ferry / Manzanera)
- Remote Control (Ian & Bill MacCormick)
- Miss Shapiro (Manzanera / Eno)
- You Really Got Me (Ray Davies)

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