

BE GLAD...

FOR THE SONG HAS NO ENDING



*AN APPRECIATION OF
THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND
PAST AND PRESENT*

Fair Thee Well Sweet Mally



In fond loving memory of Mally Schofield Levett.

She danced as a member of Stone Monkey.

Later she ran the Friends of The Incredible String Band club.

*Later still co-founded the band When Stars Collide in which she wrote,
sang and recorded:*

*"Are you still here in my time, the only man I've ever known
who taught the wild wind and the child"**

She departed her body in February 1979

*It seemed fitting that within the pages of this magazine dedicated
as it is to an appreciation of The Incredible String Band that we
remember and appreciate her too:*

*"There's many wise words on the parting of friends
but for you and for me there was never an end
so forever and on until we meet again
fare thee well sweet Mally."***

*To a darling wife, friend and mother until we meet again ...
Gray Levett, Sarah Ashew & Jem Schnier*

** Wild Wind and the Child by Mally*

*** Fair Thee Well Sweet Mally from the album*

Songs of Love & Parting & Five Bardic Mysteries by Robin Williamson

We're here again, and if all has gone to plan this issue will be out in time for the October 29/30 String Band Convention in Leeds, and a great many of you will be sat there now reading it. Hi.

A few events this summer had me thinking (again) just what a huge influence the ISB have been on other musicians and bands, and not necessarily of their particular genre. Marc Bolan obviously springs to mind, but he was too overt, too obvious. There are others.....

Firstly, by a stroke of good luck, I was invited to attend the MTV filming of the Robert Plant/Jimmy Pages 'Unledded' special. I've always been a bit of a Zeppelin fan - nearly got expelled from school for queuing for tickets to see them at Bradford in '73 - so this was the proverbial dream come true, and what's more it was over two nights! But the point of all this is, although people often make passing comments about Zep's ISB influences, here they were tangible. The intonation in Plant's voice sometimes, their innovative arrangements of traditional material (*Gallow's Pole* in particular), their eclectic choice of instruments - and for the MTV special they augmented with hurdy-gurdy, bohran, banjo, and a whole troupe of Egyptian percussionists and stringed instrument players who just blew me away - you should have seen the guy playing finger-cymbals, he was totally into it! - and so on. The ISB influence really shone through, even though the music is different (the mark of a genuine influence as opposed to a 'steal') and sent me back to their albums - listen to Zeppelin 3 and 4. It's all there. I can really envisage an album on which Robin collaborates with Plant. Just imagine it!

Incidentally, Robin came close to opening the show for the MTV event, Plant and Page were up for it but the artistic director, or some such entity decided against it unfortunately. Inspired by all this, I wrote a piece detailing some ISB/Zep connections for the Plantzine *The Lemon Tree*. We might run it here next issue.

The second thing to trigger the old synapses was with the Rolling Stones. My son recently discovered rock music and is currently a bit obsessive about the Stones (I blame the parents meself)

and purchased *Their Satanic Majesties Request* - again an album I'd paid lip service to as having an ISB influence without too much consideration. But cut off my legs and call me shorty if it isn't even more pronounced than I remember it - Mike and Robin should sue! From the opening *Sing This Altogether* onwards there are lots of ISB-isms and similar instrumentation and again like the Zep stuff, it's almost subliminal but yet obvious at the same time if you know where it's originated from.

Of course the Rolling Stones have admitted to their fondness for the String Band in the past. Jagger apparently produced Marianne Faithful singing such gems as *Painting Box* (where oh where is that material now?). Joe Boyd also thought that *Majesties* was, "very influenced by the String Band", and indeed the time came when the Stones approached the ISB with a view to signing them to their Mother Earth label. They refused. In the June '93 Q article from which this info is taken Robin is quoted as saying, "We went to visit them in London. It was quite...interesting. There were a variety of very odd people in that apartment including an Indian numerologist. We had a long discussion about magic. But they liked us, the Stones. They seemed to like unusual things of one kind and another."

There's no real meaning to these musings other than to accentuate the ISB's influence on a couple of the world's largest musical attractions and to wonder cynically why in articles and books the String Band are never given their due by the chroniclers of rock history. But don't start me on music journalists, I'm afraid I'm not impressed with the music journalism scene at all.

The usual complaints this issue - not enough people sent material when they said, and we are always looking for other people to write articles besides the hardcore few who contribute to each issue. Featured album for the May '95 issue will be *Wee Tam And The Big Huge*, so come on, get those thinking caps on and get writing. Deadline for that issue is April 1st at the absolute latest. And apologies for those people who sent material

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which didn't get used. Next time.

I suppose that as this issue and the Convention marks the 20th anniversary of the String Band's demise we should really be running a feature about the split. But we're not. For the simple reason that I don't think enough information is available yet about exactly what happened. Instead and in lieu of that, think about where they all are now and how, if it wasn't for the split, we probably wouldn't be having an ISB Convention, the musics they are producing separately and successfully wouldn't exist and you wouldn't be reading this. On with the show.....



The editor, accompanied by his mother, looks into the future with his new telescope. "Gosh mum, what's a gimbril? There's one over there. Can I have one mum? Can I? Go on".

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News * Views & Reviews

A round-up of ISB related ephemera



I Looked Up, released on Ryko in the US should be available here by the time you read this (release date given as 18/10). Try giving that nice Mr Anstey at Network Mail a ring on 0246 274441, he'll have it in stock, and we'll have it at the Convention on 29/30 October. No news yet on *Be Glad* or *U* though.



The ISB (along with Dr. S. S. etc) feature on a new Island folk sampler CD (IMCD 197). All fine and dandy except that the song - *Black Jack Davy* - is actually the version from *I Looked Up* - which Island doesn't own the rights to - and not *Earthspan*, which Island obviously do. The album also includes Mike Heron's *Audrey* (from *Smiling Men*...).



Kate Green, who many of you will remember from her and partner Raymond's performance at the January mini-convention in Hebden Bridge, has a new album out. A cassette only release, *An Unkindness Of Ravens*, features thirteen songs ranging from folk of the trad. variety through to a Leadbelly song and a Holy Modal Rounders version of an old US railroad song. Of even more interest to Be Glad readers is Kate and the band's version of *Empty Pocket Blues* (possibly the best ISB cover I've ever heard), along with an equally accomplished *The Circle Is Unbroken*. Robin's *By Weary Well* is also expertly tackled. The rest of the album - in places just a tad too folksy for my tastes, but then I was brought up on Edgar Broughton and The Pink Fairies so what do I know, is more than worthy of a listen and the number (16+) and variety of

instruments (cittern, viola, mandola etc) played hints at a certain ISB-ness in their approach to things.

Kate and Raymond will be performing at the October Convention, together with other musicians, as an ISB covers band, under the *nom de musique* of The Half Remarkable Questionnaires (!)

The sound quality is top notch and the cassette inlay card beautifully laid out with copious notes on the sources of the songs. On-body cassette printing finishes the whole package off nicely.

Strongly recommended at £6.00 inc. p&p from Taproot Productions, 11 Radcliffe Road, Sheffield, S11 8YA.



Readers impressed by the article on Pooka in the last issue (and I know many of you have the album - if not buy it now!), may be interested to know that Pooka are no longer with WEA but are on the verge of signing to Rough Trade. When the deal is inked - as I believe they say - Pooka will be studio bound with album and tours to follow next year. Go see them if possible. More Pooka news next issue.



Following my request for ISB cover versions last issue we've had a few in and offers of more. If you think you and/or your band can produce a competent ISB cover version (and if possible with a 'new' arrangement just to add variety and excitement), get those tape heads revolving and 'lay one down'. The object being to collate them all onto cassette for sale to Be Glad readers, with any profits going to a charity. It will be a professionally produced cassette and the ultimate ISB rarity. Contributions so far include *First Girl* (Gil Murray), *Everything's*

Fine Right Now (Spitting Feathers), *Empty Pocket Blues* (Kate Green & Co). Promised and in production are *Pictures In A Mirror* (Adrian Whittaker), *Tree* (Grahame Hood) and others. So come on, do it, it's for charity. If you are interested let me know at the editorial address.



All being well Robin Williamson will have a new album out sometime around next April on the Unique Gravity label. No album title or songs as yet but it promises to be Robin's first album of new self-penned material since 1987's *Ten Of Songs*. If you want to be able to obtain a pre-release copy of the album send an sae to the Be Glad address and we'll let you know the whens and hows.

Robin will be touring Europe in Feb. 1995 with John Renbourn, followed by UK tours in March and April, May in the US and the UK again for the summer.



Malcolm Le Maistre's album *Nothing Strange* (UGCD 5401) is selling well in the UK despite no reviews in the major music magazines as yet. The album is being rush-released in Germany on 11th November on the Strange Ways label, followed by a single in January (together with unreleased tracks), and a German tour is being booked for March '95. Other territories have expressed interest in Malcolm's album and he looks set to be, ahem, 'Big In Europe' - and that's not to mention the record shop in Japan that's shifted 40 copies of his album so far!



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The year? 1969. It's late autumn and if you were a String Band fan you'd be persuading people to buy you the new one for Christmas, if indeed you didn't have it on the day of release. It was *Changing Horses* of course, the follow up to *Wee Tam*. Would it be as good? Would it take you to the same places? Well yes and, only occasionally, no.

Recorded during the summer of 1969 - *Big Ted* at least was recorded in New York - it received mixed reviews on release and reached a very respectable no. 30 in the album charts.

Its six songs, with few exceptions, seemed lyrically to be in a similar vein to what had gone before, about the perception and interpretation of life, the natural world and so on.

But things had changed somewhere in the minds of its creators. Scientology had arrived, Heron commenting that, "The album which marked our conversion, if you will, was *Changing Horses*". And so it does, producing a clear, confident, and palpably different album to its predecessors.

Be Glad contributor Gil Murray, in an extract from an as yet unpublished article states:

"*Changing Horses* was just what the title suggests. The then-tired chemical horses were being exchanged for cleaner, healthier beasts. On the one hand was *White Bird*, which told of the more painful of drug experiences:

"Who among you, who has not laid his head beneath some holy awning, would think that such a night of tortured travelling could bring such a glory morning."

On the other hand was the cheerful *Dust Be Diamonds*:

"Dust be diamonds, water be wine, Happy happy happy all the time time time!"

Some reviewers at the time took issue with this 'new' ISB and even now 'retrospectives' are strangely harsh on

INCREDIBLE STRING BAND: Big Ted (Elektra)

A jaunty ditty with a hill-billy farmyard flavour, backed by a harmonica and steel guitar. It's a novelty song with lyrics, and is treated in tongue-in-cheek style, complete with a boogie break! The incredible String Band has established a considerable LP reputation, but hasn't yet enjoyed singles success. I doubt if this will, but it's good light-hearted fun
NME 25/10/70

the *Horses* period, "by 1969 the rot had set in", "1969 and the loss of plot was well under way" (Marc Ellen, Q).

Strange. These allegations that following *Wee Tam* and *The Big Huge* the ISB fell from grace in some way really need more analysis than we have space for here, but reflect on this - it was mainly men who were saying it - then and now - and what had changed exactly? Well the girls had become a major feature in the band, one step on from mere hippy chick girlfriends, and - dare we say it? - breaking up the perceived hippy chappishness that Robin and Mike as a duo had. Were the boy fans jealous? I think so.

And worse - for some - Scientology had arrived - unpalatable evidence, perhaps, to the druggies amongst the fans that acid wasn't 'The Way' after all, that communication was far more useful than introspection if you actually wanted to get anything done in the world.

The general impression that the ISB were coming more out of their shells was backed by statements such as this from Robin: "Our earlier albums were looking inside rather than out - now I'm more interested in looking at other people and looking out."

Times and people change.

Big Ted lures you into the album in a jolly mood and is one of the songs people always seem to make fun of - String Band fans included, but that's because it's silly, wonderful, makes you feel happy and because it's about a pig who might be reincarnated, and of course a pig is duly chased across the screen by a knife-wielding human in the *Be Glad* film.

A single (EKSX 45074) was drawn from the album featuring *Big Ted* - the natural choice - and backed with *All Writ Down*, later to appear on the *Be Glad* soundtrack. Of interest here is the fact that both are alternate takes on the album versions.

White Bird (originally called *Reflection* in a the *Wee Tam* tour prog and also in Mike's sleeve representation of its lyric). Peter Cole of the London Evening News commended the album thusly: "*Changing Horses* is more encouraging than their Royal Festival Hall concert - not as good as their last, but worth buying for one superb track,

Changing Horses

"Existentialism mingled with euphoria..."
Andy Roberts saddles up

White Bird"

Dust Be Diamonds is a paean to seeing 'good' things in the most ostensibly plain - in a heaven in a grain of sand sort of way. *Dust Be...* is also the only song credited to Mike and

CHANGING HORSES, The Incredible String Band (Elektra EKS-74057)

This is the ISB's sixth album in a matter of about two years. In ways this one is more eclectic than any of the others, yet basically it is still Mike and Robin with a myriad of instruments and the free-form poetry of Mr. Williamson that makes it all work. Yes, even number six has a personality all its own.

The ISB now has enough confidence in their poetic/musical abilities to enable them to actually base an entire album on two extended cuts; "*White Bird*" and "*Creation*" combined cover over a half hour. Compared to the complexity of these two cuts the other four shorter selections seem pretty tame although "*Dust Be Diamonds*" and "*Mr. and Mrs.*" are stunning in the by-now expected String Band style. Existentialism mingled with euphoria in equal doses (with some swift-footed satire in "*Big Ted*") is perhaps the most accurate summation of their effect on the listener.

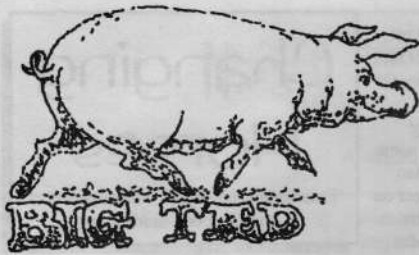
One can approach the long cuts in a variety of ways and this is what the ISB intended. The lyrics of "*Creation*" are on the back cover while Heron's personal exposition of "*White Bird*" appears on the inside. Both employ repetition, shifting rhythm patterns and oodles of minor harmonics, both vocal and instrumental, to give each song depth yet resiliency—they never waste a moment. "*White Bird*" evokes echoes of the It's A Beautiful Day cut of the same name. Two dimensions of the same motif. "*Creation*" is the culmination of the album—Williamson's lyrics are Blakeian in cast and I suppose you might compare the ISB's realization of them with Blake's etchings.

This is by no means the album to introduce yourself to the ISB with—the moods and textures are more diverse and musically varied on many of their earlier albums. But as a reflection of where two poets in the guise of musicians/minstrels are at right now, it is quite adequate. Swinburne and Shelley would have been proud.

GARY VON TERSCH

Rolling Stone 30/4/70

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He's dead you know!

mystery bells on, leaving you feeling high, elated and happy with the world.

Horses was the album where the best ISB line-up, that of Robin, Mike, Rose and Likky came together and gelled. Both Likky and Rose playing a far more active part than before, if not actually writing any songs.

Dr Strangely Strange's

Ivan Pawle, now a firm friend of Robin's and hanging on from the Penwern commune days was roped in to add distinctive organ and piano on *Creation*, together with the mysterious Walter Gundy added harmonica on *Big Ted*. Did we say mysterious? Well no more as, courtesy of Joe Boyd we now know that he was no less than Maria 'Midnight At The Oasis' Muldaur's first hubby and later became the road manager for the String Band.

Joe, the String Band's manager and producer at the time gave his recollections of *Changing Horses* in a recent interview with Adrian Whittaker:

AW: "Did the recording process seem very different now that Scientology was well established?"

JB: "Yes, dealing with them was in some ways more straightforward because they were prepared to confront and deal with issues - they'd also become very good friends, the rivalry was put aside. I think, because they were conscious about a lot of people's misgivings about Scientology - it was them against the skepticism of the world - there was a bond between them."

Due to the complexity and length of many of the songs on *Horses* little of the material made it to the stage or radio recordings (see Bill Allison's article elsewhere)

Following the initial Elektra CD release of *Changing Horses* in the UK, Hannibal have since reissued and remastered the album, and by golly gumdrops if it doesn't sound even better. The voices are clearer and more defined, the instrumentation crisper and the percussion, especially on *White Bird* and *Creation*, is sat on the sofa at your side tapping a tabla. Highly recommended and no rip-off.

So, *Changing Horses*, whilst not a

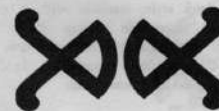
The String Band: Incredible

Peter Beren
(Publication and exact date unknown,
but American in origin)

Their new Elektra album *Changing Horses* is a conceptual embodiment of their whole gestalt. On the inside jacket, Robin's pen and ink representation of their music faces a sample of Mike Heron's verse, done in his own hand. The finest work is *Creation*. It is at once both an apocalyptic vision and an innocent fable in the best Tolkein tradition. The arrangement exhibits the String Band's enormous range, coursing from hymnal celebration to 1920s doe de o doe. When the vision turns to the ocean, "And for each eye that shed one tear, we made of that tear an ocean." the vocal tracks, through eerie harmonies, capture the cold, inhuman power of the raging sea. *White Bird* and *Sleepers*, *Awake* provoke the same intensive involvement as *Creation*. This intensity is balanced by *Dust Be Diamonds* and *Big Ted*, lighter, more country-oriented pieces. The only weak piece is *Mr & Mrs* which suffers from a droning heaviness that that String Band occasionally lapses into.

The album, as a whole, shows the most carefully considered, restrained use of sophisticated studio equipment that I have ever heard. This is possibly due to the fact that the group's manager, Joe Boyd, is also their producer, which keeps everything in the family. The only criticism that could be levelled at the the Incredible String Band is that their music never lets itself be used as background. It demands complete attention. But this is exactly as it should be.

stratospheric album is more than worthy of re-investigation if you haven't played it for a while and if you haven't got a copy buy it immediately on the re-mastered on CD and hear the difference.



CHANGING HORSES: THE MASTERPIECE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

RAYMOND GREENGARDEN

You've heard it all before. Every so-distant 'authority', from the *Rolling Stone Guide To Rock*, to *The History Of The English Speaking Peoples* (vol. 22 - *Scottish Folksingers Who Made It Big*), offers the same catchpenny analysis of the ISBs career: a brief but brilliant efflorescence...four classic albums...peaked too soon...lost direction...years of decline. It was on *Changing Horses*, the difficult fifth album, that the rot supposedly set in. There are various counter-arguments to this. For one thing, it is predicated on the dictum, dear to the hearts of the moguls of pop culture, that novelty is the proper measure of progress. With *5000 Spirits*, *Hangman's* and *Wee Tam And The Big Huge* the ISB had astonished the pundits by the dizzying originality and diversity of their music. But *Changing Horses* was simply *more of the same*. Originality and diversity were promptly redefined as obscurity, self-indulgence, diffuseness. The virtues were suddenly vices.

Nevertheless, it will be argued, even the balance of opinion among String Band devotees suggests that *Changing Horses* was not of the calibre of its predecessors. It's hard to disagree, but I would propose that this had less to do with any putative 'decline' in the ISBs artistry that with an uncharacteristic

and needless caution in assembling the album. With a main course consisting of two tracks - *White Bird* and *Creation* - that between them ran to over half an hour of playing time, a decision seems to have been taken (at what level we can only guess) to serve them up alongside a selection of much lighter and more digestible fare. In the ISB songbook, the likes of *Big Ted*, *Dust Be Diamonds* and *Mr and Mrs* are not regarded as compositions of greater substance, whatever their other virtues. They are frothy, amiable ditties, but were never designed to transport the listener to the lunar extremes of imagination, to unlock the gate of the soft mystery. Moreover, all were sung by Robin, but none really offered him the opportunity to cut loose vocally - and few will dispute that Robin in full spate, swooping, wailing, ululating, pushing his voice to its vertiginous limits, is one of the core experiences of our faith. Now, consider what other songs were theoretically available for inclusion on *Changing Horses* - *Vishangro*, *Won't You Come See Me*, *Fine Fingered Hand*, *All Writ Down* to name but four. Copper-bottomed classics every one. And though *Vishangro* and *All Writ Down* eventually surfaced on the *Be Glad* soundtrack album, the other

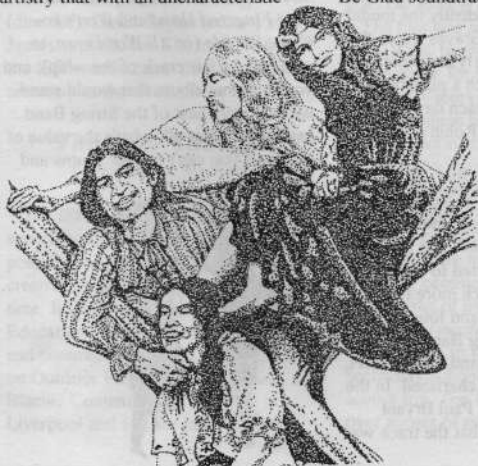
two bafflingly never made the transition from concert hall and radio session to cold vinyl.

Perversely, then, I'm tempted to assess *Changing Horses* more on the basis of what it could (and arguably should) have been, than what it actually is. And what it could have been is a great album, every bit the equal of *Wee Tam And The Big*

Huge and *5000 Spirits*, rather than merely a very good one, on a par with, say, *I Looked Up* or *Liquid Acrobat*. What can't be gainsaid, however, is that, in *White Bird* and *Creation* at least, *Changing Horses* offered first class tickets to those places only the String Band could take you.

The needle's on the disc. You've grinned along to the easy-going hayseed whimsy of *Big Ted*: Boogie-boogie-boogie...sham-sham-shadoo! There's Robin's final note hanging in the air, high and strange, hinting that there's more than just country corn on the menu. A gently descending figure on the guitar, a flute floats like a moth over darkening reed beds, and here's Mike at his most tenderly confidential: "Who among you...?" The journey begins...

Music's a very subjective thing, sure enough. You may disagree forcefully with me when I say that only a listener with a breast of solid obsidian would not be unmoved by the heart-stopping minor 7th cadences, the lambent vocal harmonies and Mike's keening counterpoint in that magical opening section of *White Bird*. And just when you think that no music could be more nakedly emotional than this, Robin's sarangi comes sawing and soaring in. "Warm in his ecstasy" indeed - this is better than sex! But it's note a serene, oceanic beauty: an intense poignancy throbs within it like a wound, and it's almost a relief when the tension breaks and, after a second chorus, the song wanders off into a cool, meandering guitar meditation, punctuated by a brief wintry vocal. "Seeing not water but ice/Death not life". The suspicion begins to form that the rest of the band have nipped off down the road for a curry, leaving only Mike plunking abstractedly in an empty studio. But wait...a hymnal feel begins to develop, and suddenly the organ and sarangi are back, and the congregation kicks into a final jubilant chorus to a backdrop of skittering hand drums and finger



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cymbals. The title phrase is repeated like a mantra until an emphatic slap on the drum brings the track to a close.

White Bird demands to be taken on its own terms. There's little profit in arguing that that long, rickety guitar break should have been ruthlessly pruned, leaving a ten-minute song of heartbreaking loveliness and emotional force. When the ISB take you on a journey you have to go wherever they lead you and trust to their sense of direction, however wayward it may sometimes appear. That guitar break might be hesitant, might seem directionless - it might break all the rules the academic critic holds inviolable - but it's a crucial to the song, and to the journey, as any other element. It's part of the deal.

Creation is a journey of quite a different sort. Where *White Bird* carries you lightly on swanback over twilight landscapes as a small symbolic drama patiently unfolds below, *Creation* bears you across perilous sea to faery lands forlorn, on an amethyst galleon laden with scriptures, amulets, fabulous beasts, spices and sweetmeats, crewed by godlings recruited from assorted mythologies... and at the tiller, chanting wild rhapsodic stanzas into the salty wind, Robin himself. This is Robin at his most voluminous, most encyclopedic, and most abstruse. Robin has always veered away from offering precise interpretations of his more esoteric utterances, preferring to let the listener interpret them in the light of his or her own experiences and perceptions. In an interview in the late 70s he revealed: "There's a chap in America who did a PhD thesis on *Creation*, a whole thesis he'd written in terms of Freudian and Jungian analysis and as far as I was concerned it was total bullshit, but it was very sweet of him to do it." It's fair to say that the piece is thunderous with unshed meaning, and that anyone attempting a line-by-line exposition of the text is doomed to inevitable disappointment. It's "based around the seven days of Creation with a whole bunch of other ideas thrown in there," says Robin helpfully. It's just possible that in these dauntingly Byzantine tropes we can detect allusions to L. Ron Hubbard's conception of the Earth's colonisation by a race of

spiritual beings - Thetans - who took up residence in the bodies of humans, enlarging their brute natures with the powers of imagination and creativity. Indeed, according to Hubbard, the Thetan is the creative principle.

In truth, it hardly matters whether this is correct or not; what *Creation* does reflect vividly is Robin's own artistic project of making meaningful connections between bodies of tradition and belief throughout the world and throughout time. Little wonder, then, that this piece seemed to draw so much of its terms of reference from Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, itself an immensely erudite if highly speculative work of mythico-



religious syncretism. In particular, the "seven days of creation" sequence is deeply indebted to Graves' examination (in chapter 15, *The Seven Pillars*) of the Genesis account, and his development of the theme in the companion work *Adam's Rib*, where he supplies a King James Bible-style 'restoration' that is evidently the model for Robin's version. (Graves traces the account back to an early Babylonian creation myth, in which a planetary power is assigned to each day; in Graves' scheme, as in Robin's, the Creator is female.)

It has to be admitted that, as a poem - and it's just included as such in Robin's book of verse, *Home Thoughts From Abroad* - it is just too opaque and disconnected to satisfy. But of course it is much more than a poem: it's 16 minutes and four seconds of the Incredible String Band at their most Williamsonian - and that, readers, is an experience to be cherished. In the first issue of *Be Glad*, Paul Bryant waggishly suggested that the track was

some ten minutes too long. Faugh, sirrah! There is not a single superogatory second in *Creation*, from Robin's eerie wordless invocation at the beginning to the preposterous vaudevillian lullaby a quarter of an hour later. It would be easy enough in these cynical times to snigger at the heiratic solemnity of Robin's recitative, the ragged harmonies and all that "verily, verily" stuff. Personally I love it from first to last, and I've made that journey many a time over the last two and a half decades. It never fails to delight, exhilarate and amuse.

Creation and *White Bird* guarantee *Changing Horses* an honourable place in the ISB canon. The critics, as I've hinted, were not comfortable with such ambitious exercises. Wide-screen epics of this sort required too much sustained attention of a listening public weaned on the three-minute pop single. Put simply, they were just too demanding. Not even the inclusion of *Sleepers Awake*, a piece of Heronesque hymnody that distilled the essence of the band's world-view into two verses and a chorus, served to mitigate the charge. The critics, of course, were missing the point. To the committed Stringhead, 'demanding' material was food and drink. We wanted to be stretched, to be challenged. We ached to make that journey to those faery shores.

Not quite a neglected masterpiece, then: to my mind, *Changing Horses* is the masterpiece that Might Have Been. Give *Dust be Diamonds* and *Mr and Mrs* the old heave-ho, replace with *Fine Fingered Hand* and *Won't You Come See Me* (or *All Writ Down*, to give Mike a fair crack of the whip), and you've got an album that would stand with the very best of the String Band catalogue. After all, what's the value of history if you can't rewrite it now and again?



Documentaries, Docu-dramas and the Duke of Edinburgh

The Incredible String Band's film soundtrack work with James Archibald

by

Adrian Whittaker

Editors note - please read

This, incidentally, is the first of three ISB film-related pieces by Adrian, and this fact, combined with the Joe Boyd piece he's already done for this issue, may lead the less charitable among you to suspect he hasn't got anything better to do and no hobbies either. Not true, he's just keen as mustard - so keen in fact that I feel obliged to make both him, and Raymond Greenoaken - a man also possessed with the desire to make all things string available to mere mortals - the proud scribe of three articles in this very 'zine, deputy editors. Welcome and cheer them in your own way.

The late James Archibald became known in the early 60s through his work on one of the original 'teen culture' movies, *Some People*. It featured Ray Brooks, later in *The Knack*, as a working class hero with musical ambitions, and pioneered the 'docu-drama' approach, intermingling professional actors with ordinary people playing themselves. *Some People* signalled Archibald's on-going interest in music and youth culture (the theme song made it to *Top of the Pops*), compounded by his later position as Chairman of the National Music Council of Great Britain. In July 1968 he went on to shoot some remarkable footage of the Beatles recording *Hey Jude* in Studio Two, Abbey Road for a short, titled *Music!*.

The three films he made with the ISB in the early seventies involved a creative team of Robert Young (director), David Taylor (editor) and James as producer. The initial link with the ISB's music came through James' secretary at the time, a keen fan!

Time For Thought

(1972 35mm, 40 mins)

The ISB provide the entire musical soundtrack for this entertaining polemic about the growing need for creative and stimulating use of leisure time. It includes footage of Adult Education classes, community centres and community theatres, school parties on Outdoor Pursuits trips to Wales, the Blackie Community Arts Centre in Liverpool and a scene in a cigarette

"We've been taken up by a film director in Britain - a very good documentary director called James Archibald who has featured our music in three movies."

Mike Heron, February 1974

factory which clearly made an impression on Mike Heron at the time:

"there's a story about a guy who just sits at a factory bench watching a cigarette machine in case it suddenly starts to put out one huge, long cigarette. This happens about once every four days. So there he is, doing nothing, man - by this machine all week long. And then at the weekend he goes out to be a park warden."

The film was sponsored by W.D. & H.O. Wills by the way!

The music for the sequence where the factory worker heads for the hills was *Air*, which had already been used in Milos Forman's *Taking Off* as the backdrop to a scene where middle class parents attend a seminar on tuning in and turning on.....

On the evidence of *Time For Thought*, there must be an ISB song for every occasion. There's some neat intercutting of music and speech - the "cod-faced master" bit in *Darling Belle* segues to the head teacher of a secondary school talking about the school trip. *You Get Brighter* is played over scenes of smiling pensioners at a

social club, the "boys and girls come out to play" part of *Ducks On A Pond* used for a scene of - just that, and the credits roll over the verse from *The Circle Is Unbroken* which talks of "unborn children glad and free".

Other bits of songs used (largely instrumental) are *Beyond The See*, *Evolution Rag*, *Lordly Nightshade*, *Talking Of The End* and *Job's Tears*, and are the original L.P. versions.

It seems that the selection of tracks was down to the editorial team mentioned above, James Archibald was keen on mystical and gentle music, and felt the ISB soundtrack would provide more of a lasting element than other contemporary pop. *Time For Thought* won an award at the Florence Film Festival and still exists as a 35mm print.

Rehearsal

(1974 35mm, 55mins)

This is the best known of the three films - it was shown twice on Channel 4, and won prizes at the Cork, Chicago and Melbourne film festivals. It was much more of a collaborative project, and shows the ISB doing *Ithkos*, both in rehearsal and in performance.

The concept was to "give an insight into the rehearsals of four very different kinds of musical performances, and their common denominator of practice and hard work." The National Musical Council sponsored the film, and the other three subjects were the Band of the Scots Guards, the Royal Opera and

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Wandsworth Boys Choir. James Archibald picked the ISB to represent the pop/folk element in the film because of their keen 'musical intelligence', coupled with extremely diverse instrumentation and a considerable cult reputation. Again, the timeless quality of much ISB music meant that their segment would date less than other bands which could have been used.

Robert Young says that the team's relationship with the ISB was much closer than with the other subjects; they lived at Glen Row for four or five days during the summer of 1973 to film the rehearsal bits, and he has strong and pleasant memories of halcyon summer days, and of the elements of spirituality and communality which were part of the Glen Row lifestyle. He found the ISB interesting to work with from a visual angle too - he remembers them as "a good-looking and very varied bunch". Part of the subtext of the film was the differing values and cultures represented by the musicians involved, and in this he says the ISB made by far the greatest contribution, their latter-day hippiedom contrasting with the money and sense of hierarchy involved with the Royal Opera, for example...

The team took a straightforward, fly-on-the-wall approach to documenting the rehearsal sessions; they didn't stick rigidly to a script, and like most documentaries, the film continued to evolve and change as it progressed. The ISB basically agreed to take part, without editorial involvement, and allowed some revealing behind-the-scenes glimpses; a somewhat fed-up looking Robin complains at the lack of variety as Mike proudly unveils *Ithkos* to the group; Mike gets irritated with Jack Ingram's overloud (and pedestrian!) drumming; and Malcolm is seen rather self-consciously working up his sub-Jagger moves.

According to Robert Young and Sheila Archibald, the topic of Scientology was avoided by both sides; it was a period when the ISB were often down at East Grinstead for weekend courses etc. but, says Sheila,

"they wouldn't have got very far on that with James!"

To complete the film, three cameras were taken to the Colston Hall, Bristol, in October 1973 to film the ISB live. In case you're wondering, there is no other footage from the concert - the costs involved meant that only *Ithkos* was filmed. The film ignores the mysterious addition of Graham Forbes on lead guitar, who had joined the ISB after the Glen Row rehearsals!

Rehearsal has stood the test of time well and, quite apart from the intrinsic interest of the ISB segments, is a

has never seen the finished version, which has been lost for the last fifteen or so years. I eventually tracked it down in the recesses of an EMI film vault (it had been misfiled), and Sheila Archibald kindly organised a video transfer.

Ironically, it was a major project; an ambitious, full-length film which was to be distributed as a B-feature round Britain by EMI - and for which the ISB again provided the entire soundtrack. The idea was to extend the 'docu-drama' approach, using well-known actors and actresses in the lead roles, but with a reliance on extemporization then rare in mainstream


productions. Budgets were a recurrent problem during the making of the film, and the whole project was very much touch and go.

The documentary element of the film was footage of the construction of Concorde leading up to its first flight, most of the filming was carried out on location in Filton, Bristol and in Toulouse. The drama was set round the struggling marriage of an overworked British Aerospace engineer (Alan Dobie) and his wife (Monica Grey, later in General Hospital) who has sacrificed her teaching career for him and their children.

There are other subplots involving their teenage daughter Cary's relationship with Paul (unemployed and heavily into pills and booze) and subsequently with an older man,

a colleague of her father's. Paul meanwhile ends up in hospital after an overdose. Son Colin is estranged from his father and it's hinted he may be in a gay relationship. Cary is also, through the local youth club, involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, which she attempts to interest Paul in as a rehabilitation move. Quite a heavy weighting towards 'youth' issues in short, though character development and motivation are rather sketchy; the film tries to cover a lot of ground using an innovative mixture of documentary shots, scripted scenes and on-camera improvisation, very much ahead of its time - which was the critical consensus.

It's tempting to speculate that its anti-drug message would have



"Music is an eternal power that comes from the beginning of time and goes to the end of time and musicians get allowed to play it."

Robin Williamson, quoted in *Q* magazine, June 1993

revealing and amusing documentation of the processes involved as a piece of music takes shape. It is still available through London Films.

No Turning Back

(Working title: *White Bird*. 1974
35mm, 100mins)

The final film in the trilogy, made over a six week period in 1974, has to be the most obscure film the ISB were involved in. It was not formally released and was shown only three times - a world premiere at the Bristol ABC, once in Birmingham and at the 1975 Bulgarian International Festival, where it won a prize. Robert Young

endared the film to the all-clean Scientology era ISB; it certainly gave their music a very upfront role. Unusually, whole songs were played rather than being faded in and out as background music, and the song lyrics often provided a kind of substitute script.

No Turning Back provides the theme song, cropping up three times (including title and credit sequences). As Cary goes canoing with D.E.A.S. mates *The Explorer* is used, *Dumb Kate* makes an appearance on the home transistor radio, and part of *See All The People* turns up again for a romantic scene in a wood between Cary and Paul. Alan Dobie's encounter with a beautiful French colleague in Toulouse is wordless - *Adam and Eve* says it all. *Old Buccaneer* crops up as teen disco fodder in a youth club scene, and *Beyond The See* makes its third film appearance as D.E.A.S. participants play with mental hospital patients. The introduction to *Beautiful Stranger* provides an unexpectedly ominous

backdrop to a scene where Paul is beaten up by his father, and *Worlds They Rise And Fall* is used to comment on Cary as she frantically searches for Paul, who has been kicked out of home. There's one non-ISB selection - a Vivaldi guitar concerto. The credits simply read Music by the Incredible String Band - compositions by Mike Heron and Robin Williamson. All the songs mentioned are the album versions.

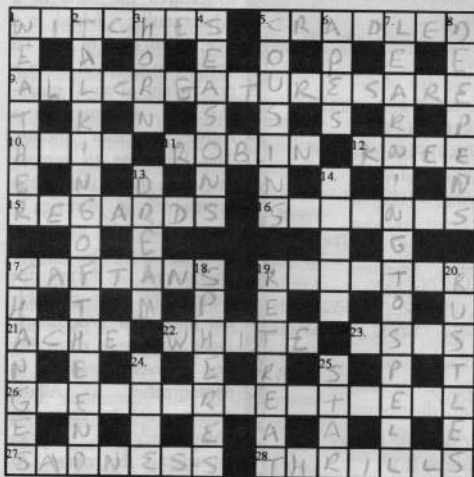
Like *Some People*, *No Turning Back* was partly financed by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme through their Filton office - they were trying to broaden their range of participants, and it was felt that N.T.B. would be a good publicity vehicle. The D.E.A. scheme were also to help with distribution costs and would have received a percentage of any profits, but tragically the key public relations officer at their head office died in a car crash shortly before the premiere; this, coupled with a poor reception at the Bristol ABC, meant that EMI got cold

feet on the distribution deal and the film was effectively shelved. Probably even more impetus was lost when the ISB broke up in the same year; we can only speculate how successful *No Turning Back* would have eventually been, and whether Mike and Robin would have been offered other film soundtrack work as a result.....

I'd like to thank Sheila Archibald for her considerable assistance with this article. Thanks are also due to Robert Young and Monica Grey.



ISB Crossword



ACROSS

1. They can balance a hat
5. Five withered violets... in his hand
9.Brighter than the brightest 25dn
10.falling into our faces or like the sky
11. He played 16ac like they led to 14dn
12. And old ladies's
15. Acrobatic sign off
16. When played by 11ac they led to 14dn
17. Fans act crazily in hippie gear
19. 18dn all do this!
21. Pinewoods that ? for the sail
22. Bird colour
23. But most of all I need a maker of this
26. Singing through the
27. Spotted in Mike's eyes by a hedgepig
28. One of these appears as a foolishly fashionable passing (in M.I.M.s dream)

DOWN

1. Survive a feuding storm
2. Finish speaking
3. I can't 13dn well because of my ?s
4. No asses - they change!
5. Relations accept 17dn easily
6. We're the sea peas
7. J wsa. I wsa - but failed apparently!
8. No ISB connection - but a mystery often does it
13. I can't ? well because of 3dn
14. Playing of 16ac by 11ac led to this
17. Accepted easily by one of 5dn
18. She created them all this shape!
19. Tree Rat - red herring clue - giving another good time or just withdrawing
20. Noisily worn by gracious ladies
24. before the world began
25. The brightest is still less than 9ac

Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

COVERED WITH GLORY

or: Wearing your Art on your Sleeve

Part Two

by

Raymond Greenoaken

It's convenient, for the purposes of this survey, to divide the chronological sequence of ISB albums into three phases. The first of these we might give the heading Breaking The Mould - the *First album to Wee Tam And The Big Huge*. With these albums the ISB conceived and elaborated a unique musical vision that beguiled and enchanted the late 60's counter-culture; the album sleeves too offered a series of innovations in the field of cover design.

The second phase could be described as Levelling Out - *Changing Horses to Liquid Acrobat* (and *Myrrh*). The band had reached a sort of plateau in their musical and spiritual quest and, while continuing to develop and diversify, became much more of a recognisable entity. The album sleeves in this phases reflected this sense of consolidation, edging towards an identifiable 'house style'. The third phase it's tempting to call *The Wilderness Years* - *Earthspan to Hard Rope* - in which the ISB seemed to have lost the plot, both in their music and in the packaging of their records (and themselves!). The first phase was discussed in the first part of this survey, last issue. The *Wilderness Years* will be examined in the final part, two issues hence. In this current issue and the next I propose to look at phase two.

"I had a copy of *Changing*

THE FIRST DAY WAS GOLDEN
AND SHE COLOURED THE SUN
AND SHE NAMED IT HYPERION
AND SHE MADE IT A DAY OF LIGHT AND HEALING

THE SECOND WAS SILVER
AND SHE COLOURED THE MOON
AND SHE NAMED IT PSEOBÉ
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF ENCHANTMENT AND
THE LIVING WATERS

AND THE THIRD WAS MANY COLOURED
AND SHE COLOURED THE EARTH
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF JOY
WITH THE SCARLET STRENGTH OF SEED

IN THE FOURTH, BLACK AND WHITE WERE MINGLED
INTO QUICKSILVER
AND SHE COLOURED MERCURY
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF WISDOM
AND THE SIGNS THAT WERE PLACED IN THE
FIRMAMENT

THE FIFTH WAS BRIGST BLUE
AND SHE EMBAGED JUPITER
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF AWE AND CIRCLES,
CIRCLES
AND SHE SET IT TO GUIDE THE BLOOD OF THE
UNIVERSE

THE SIXTH WAS BURNING WITH RY, GREEN
FLAMES THAT GLOUED WHITE
AND OF HER BEAUTY SHE MADE VENUS
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF LOVE
WHEREBY ALL THINGS ARE UNITED

THE SEVENTH WAS RICH PURPLE OF THE
MOLLUSCS
AND SHE COLOURED CHROMOS
AND SHE MADE A DAY OF IDLENESS AND REPOSE
WHEREON ALL BEINGS SHALL CEASE FROM
STRUGGLE

VERILY, VERILY

From the sleeve notes of *Changing Horses*
Extract from *Creation* by R.W.

Horses on my bedroom wall." Allan Frewin intimated a few issues back, " - that's what an ISB cover should look like." Over a year had elapsed since *Wee Tam And The Big Huge* in its various formats had hit the shops. During that time the band and their entourage had ceased to be a fractious Welsh commune and were establishing themselves as a harmonious Scottish community. Rose and Licorice were promoted to fully-fledged band personnel, despite Joe Boyd's dogged resistance. Drugs were out, Scientology was in. A time of transition, then, of which the sleeve of *Changing Horses*, their fifth release, is an apt emblem.

As with previous sleeves, it featured the band in a sylvan setting - indeed, in a tree. What kind of tree I'd hesitate to guess: it bears a rich freight of small grape-like fruit, and may be a native American species. This leads me to surmise that the photo was taken somewhere in America - despite the solid medieval-looking masonry in the background - during the summer '69 tour: probably not long after Woodstock. Janet Shankman earns her first cover credit, as photographer. Album covers were to carry the Shankman imprint throughout this phase. As illustrator and photographer Janet's input was

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considerable during this time: concert programmes, posters and leaflets also bore her distinctive stamp.

By mid-'69 the band's exotic couture was almost conventional - no radical fashion statements here, for all that Robin's diaphanous garment flutters fetchingly in the late summer breeze and Mike's shirt features a built-in cravat. At this time Robin was cultivating his Occasional Moustache. The tableau is surmounted by the band name and title in unpretentious white typeface. The reverse cover is a riot of foliage onto which the track list and credits are superimposed, and the full text of *Creation* (apart from one missing line: "Where iron-eyed your sight was cast") looking convincingly like Poetry. One item on the credits has been effaced, but can still be read by the light of the Dog Star at certain times of year: "All songs copyright C 1969 Paradox Music". Clearly too redolent of unregenerate capitalism to disfigure such a quintessentially counter-cultural artefact.

Gatefold sleeves were by then *de rigueur*, and *Changing Horses* fell cheerfully into line. The inside spread was devoted to examples of Mike's and Robin's expertise - if that's the word - in watercolours. A piece of Williamsonian psychedelic whimsy adorns the left hand panel. Serpents, mythical beats, galleons, minarets, stairways, doorways, swirling vapours and curling fronds, and a bare-bosomed angelic figure that might be a fanciful representation of one of L. Ron's Thetans - and then again, might not. Stylistically, it's a casual conflation of Celtic and Oriental elements. Mike's contribution, on the right hand panel, also bears an Eastern - Sino-Japanese in this instance. It takes the form of an illustrated handwritten text of *White Bird*, confusingly entitled *Reflection*. On the evidence presented here, neither Mike nor Robin will have been contemplating a second career in Fine Art, but their efforts preserve a certain period charm.

There was little about the *Changing Horses* sleeve that mapped out new territories in album design - but then, why should there have been? The ISB were by now an established feature of the 'Underground' music scene. They embodied certain attitudes, certain ideals, and it was perhaps enough that their album sleeves honoured these and reflected them, enough that *Changing Horses* went straight onto Allan Frewin's wall. In their music, after all, they were continuing to push back the boundaries, to boldly go where none had gone before...man.

Meanwhile, songs were pouring out of Mike and Robin, and it was only

lived Medusa perm. The photo is fuzzily triple-exposed, giving the effect of a view through frosted glass. The plain, spindly typeface of the title also echoes the autumnal, Back-To-Basics feel.

The front cover was a different matter, consisting of one of Janet's otherworldly El Wool paintings. At its best Janet's work could be inventive, charming and graceful. But this one, alas, was a stinker: messily organised, rudely executed and tooth-rottingly twee. Four elfin dancers, winged and spiny-haired, caper earnestly on a sand dune. Above them a mermaid and a hippogriff hold out a string, about three

inches in length, from which dangle the letters of THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND (perhaps a hidden visual pun - Three Inch Readable String Band, anyone?) over which an orange-skinned acrobat vaults while puffing at a globular musical instrument. At the dancers' feet the words I Looked Up, on another readable string, are suspended between a toadstool and a plant-creature. This, unhappily, was the kind of composition that gave hippies a bad name, and ensured that only fanatical Stringheads would risk being seen in public with a copy.

In the late 70's *I Looked Up* was repackaged with

the Skinner photo on the front cover and an aimless cut'n'paste melange of old publicity shots replacing it on the back. The original front cover had disappeared without a trace, and it must be admitted that, for once, Elektra erred on the side of good taste.

The release of the *U* soundtrack album six months later gave Janet a chance to redeem herself, which she did in fine style. A slightly modified version of her Roundhouse poster design - which has claimed pride of place on my wall for the past 24 years - her front cover is a perfect distillation of the colourful, zany, magical, homespun shenanigans that composed the notorious *U* stage production. On a buttercup-yellow field with a green



mildly surprising when a sixth album appeared a mere four months after *Changing Horses*. *I Looked Up*, in contrast to earlier albums, was a chaste affair: a handful of instruments and a stripped down, live sound. The subdued tones of Ian (sic) Skinner's back cover photo signal the change of emphasis. Gone are the satins, the furbelows and the breeze-ruffled fabrics, to be replaced by sturdy rustic clobber (apart from Rose's bride-of-Geronimo outfit) in muted, earthy hues. The four stand, beaming contentedly, in one of the Glen Row doorways, the women to the front in contrasting hats: Rose's wide-brimmed and flycap-red, Licorice's prim and black, only partly restraining a short-

foliate border, two jugglers from an El Wool harlequinade balance on their elbows to form the letter U; their tresses coil promiscuously together and two other faces emerge from the tangle to meet in a kiss. Between the jugglers' upstretching legs the band's name is printed in white. The bold primary colours of the clothing leap out from the warm summery backdrop; heads and tendrils sprout from the borders. Simply a delight to the eye.

The rear cover offers a track list plus instrumental and production credits over a photo of band and cast performing *Hiram Pawmitoff*. The inside spread of the gatefold is frankly a bit of a mess, a perfunctory collage of ill-chosen action shots from the show in which Malcolm's knobby knees and Rose's lurex tights vie for attention with Malenie in her Christmas cowgirl outfit and a man with a clock on his head. Two of Janet's watercolour back-projections are crammed into a corner, replete with rainbows and ambulant shrubs; luminous with wonder (*I'd just love one of the originals of those - my*

favourite bit of ISB cover art, 'specially the one with the part man part tree - sad editors note.) The overall design was credited to Bob Heimall and Graphbreaks: how to make a sows' ear out of a silk purse.

As I suggested earlier, this was a period of consolidation for our heroes. The shock of their originality and visionary perspectives had subsided among the pundit and the record-buying public; by now everyone knew roughly what a reference to the Incredibles, the Increds, the ISB implied. They had become the acknowledged icons of the anti-materialistic, Pantheistic, back-to-nature, joss sticks and herbal tea subculture. Their group identity had crystallised even as their music was becoming more hectically eclectic than ever. And with Janet as In House artists, their album sleeves confidently enshrined that sense of identity, much as Roger Dean's designs were to do for Yes a few years along the road. But even as the ISB basked in their heliotrope dream, changes were

afoot.....

Next issue: Solo flights and the Rhythm Method.

CREDITS

CHANGING HORSES

Design: William S. Harvey
Photography: Janet Shankman
Artwork: Mike Heron and Robin Williamson

I LOOKED UP

Design Coordination: Diogenic Attempts Ltd
Photography: Iain Skinner
Artwork: Janet Shankman

U

Design: Bob Heimall
Coordination: Graphbreaks
Photography: Francis Loney,

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DOING SUCH A FINE JOB, SO THEY ARE.
GOD BLESS THEIR LITTLE POINTED HEADS!!!!!!"**

Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

John Renbourn and Robin Williamson
 JFK Middle School, Waltham, MA,
 March 24, 1994

Before last year, John Renbourn and Robin Williamson — two nominees for anybody's Lifetime Achievement Awards in the Anglo-Scottish Folk category — had never performed together in their careers that stretch back to the 1960s. But their joint British tour in 1993 and the album that resulted were both successful and fun, inspiring a second tour that included North American dates. A windy Thursday night in March these masters were found at a school auditorium in suburban Boston before several hundred appreciative fans, many of whom seemed to be veterans themselves.

It was a low-key, informal evening, having more the feel of a song swap than a carefully choreographed act. That format worked fine, since Renbourn and Williamson seemed to enjoy each other's solo pieces as much as the audience did, and the duets, many of which were taken from their recent *Wheel of Fortune* CD, were generally tighter than what you'd hear from some full-time bands.

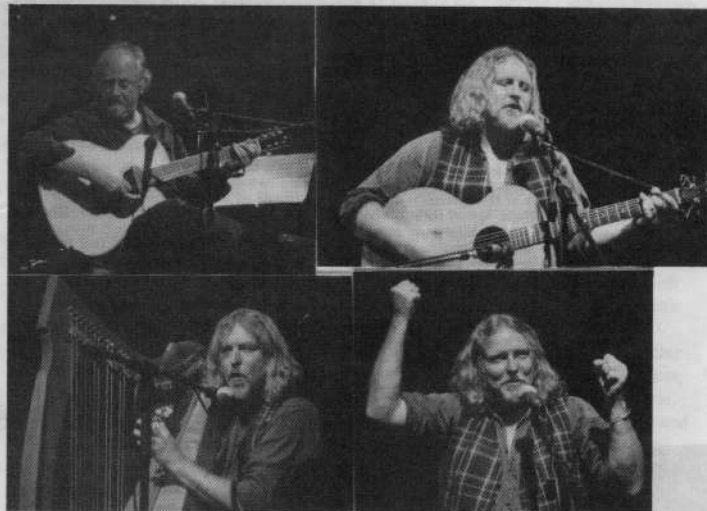
There were several gentle harp/guitar arrangements, like the medley of O'Carolan's "South Wind" and the jig "Blarney Pilgrim," or the Scottish tune "Port Patrick," where Williamson's expert plucking was enhanced by Renbourn's Renaissance-style guitar. Williamson told one of his classic Celtic stories in each of the two sets (with his voice, he could read a stock market report and make it sound like poetry) and did a pair of Incredible String Band songs from times nearly as ancient: the keening, surrealistic "Maya" and a bright song of seasonal renewal, "The Circle is Unbroken." Renbourn was as eclectic as usual in his solo spots, ranging from a flashy guitar cover of a jazz piano tune, "Little Niles," to an in-

tense version of "Lord Franklin," a ballad he first recorded with Pentangle circa 1969. Williamson typically looked serious and energetic, whether pushing himself into the strings of his harp or flailing at a guitar, while Renbourn simply sat and smiled and played his magical licks with little commotion.

Other highlights included Renbourn's quiet song "The Snows," a 19th-century lyric that he set to a Northumbrian pipe tune, and Williamson's stark recounting of the ballad "Lord Bateman," a lengthy tale of love and war. The evening ended with a sing along version of "The Lights of Sweet Saint Anne's," a Williamson composition saluting a long road and a long career.

— Tom Nelligan (Waltham, MA)

DIRTY LINEN



ROBIN - AVEC MR RENBOURN - AT LEICESTER
 PICS - JOHN LITTLE

ROBIN WILLIAMSON AND HIS MERRY BAND
American Stonehenge

EDSELED CD 389
 Dedicated, rather sweetly, to the Incredible String Bandman's American ancestors, circa 600 Years BC, this 1977 recording is folk-tongued in the same way that Saturn is planet-tongued. Kate Bush has a copy, you can tell. Sometimes bawdy, always Celtic, unremittingly stringy and featuring the line (in the silly, jug-bandular Zoo Blues) "I miss you an ocelot". Mmm. ★★

Q. SEPT. '94

JOHN RENBOURN & ROBIN WILLIAMSON
Wheel Of Fortune

DEMON FRIEND 746
 The Impenetrable String Tangle? Erstwhile Pentangle principal John Renbourn's mid-set announcement of a possible name for his collaboration with former String Band mainstay Robin Williamson is as delightful as the folksy fare the duo serve up. Recorded in early May last year in America, the nimble-fingered twosome twizzle their way tunelessly through a selection of mostly traditional English and Celtic songs. Williamson's stolid rhythm guitar, brilliant harp-playing and occasional ethereal whistle providing a perfect complement to Renbourn's fine fingerpicking. The instrumental tracks are especially enjoyable —

Renbourn's never been much of a singer — but those who enjoy Robin Williamson's tale-telling will find the eight-minute Finn & The Old Man's House a tasty treat. The Impenetrables will tour the UK this Spring.★★★
 John Boulde

Q. MARCH '94

ROBIN WILLIAMSON
Songs Of Love & Parting

THE MUSIC CORPORATION TMC 9403
 One of the two hearts that made the Incredible String Band beat with such originality, this re-issue of arguably Robin Williamson's finest solo album comes equipped with an extra treat — Five Bardic Mysteries, a hitherto hard to get collection of the spoken tales favoured in his live shows. Originally released in 1981, *Love And Parting* may sound harsh and unsophisticated to those raised on more electric interpretations of the traditional spirit, but if Williamson's style takes a little acquiring, he's much more than just another Celtic headcase. For Mr Thomas is simply astonishing, a dense vocal tribute to Under Milk Wood against a background of acoustic guitar and eerily humming wine glasses; Tarry Wool is a deft and soulful outing on the border pipes, while Sigil twines the hard edges of his voice around a rich, fluid harp.
 ★★ ★★

Q. AUG. '94

Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

Incredible Robin uplifts spirits and entertains

"May the long-time sun shine on you, all love surround you and the pure light within you, guide your way on." - Incredible String Band.

Spiritually uplifting? Or deep and meaningless hippy piffle?

Like all soccer managers, those exemplars of boot salesmanship, I'll set my stall out right away and plump for the spiritually uplifting.

Why? Because the music of the Incredible String Band was a beautiful and joyful soundtrack to my younger days; and because it still moves me today, in the cynical '90s, as the true embodiment of 'Back to Basics'. Oh yes, we've got to get back to the garden, before they pave over paradise and build a parking lot.

Robin Williamson was an integral part of the Incredible String Band. Robin, together with Mike Heron, came out of the Scottish folk scene in the early '60s to create the first 'world' music fusion. The Incredible String Band won plaudits from such disparate individuals as Robert Plant and Bob Dylan for their series of successful albums in the '60s and early '70s.

ROBIN WILLIAMSON
Theatr Mwldan, Cardigan

Sadly, for the song did have an ending, the band split. Since then Robin has built a reputation for himself in Celtic music circles as 'a bard for the 20th century.'

Playing Cardigan last week must have earned him the sobriquet Robin the Prodigal. In the '60s, when heads were getting it together in the country, knitting their own yoghurt, growing their own denim and so forth, west Wales was a hippy haven, an ideal home for the Incredibles.

Indeed, most of the Theatr Mwldan audience probably remembered him from first time around, especially the man who took a seat in front of me, removed his beret, and remarked to his companion: "This is the other half of the band you don't like."

Robin is part poet, part musician, part storyteller, part cultural guardian. He's a consummate performer with an easy-going stage manner, delightful wit, and a captivating musical technique. I last saw him at the Cropreddy Festival, where

his intimate set seemed out of place early on Friday, in a wet and windy field.

But the Theatr Mwldan was his perfect setting: a cosy, appreciative audience enabled him, in Mike Heron's words, 'to keep the connection and energy'.

He opened both of his one-hour sets with confident and adept harp playing, which enriched his tales and tunes, both original and traditional, drawn largely from Celtic mythology.

Robin also proved himself no slouch on the guitar, pipes and fiddle - all of which featured in a solo performance that blended folk, classical and modern styles.

Occasionally he dispensed with instruments altogether to relate fabulous tales of magic, mystery and derring-do drawn from the folklore of these fair islands.

Spiritually uplifting maybe, but his knowledge of geography was out of this world. I began to think that the spots on his face and neck, which he constantly fingered, were nothing less

LIVE!

than a braille atlas of the UK.

He was most impressive on tunes, dealing with such arcane topics as Mabinogion myths or fondly remembered school smells, in which his tremulous vocals were given full rein. It was ironic, yet somehow fitting, for a man who claims his songs have 'no symmetry' to have a lyric about 'babes in arms' interrupted by a child crying.

That's the sort of evening it was. Absorbing and disturbing; sort of Aubrey Beardsley brings goals to Newcastle.

A defiantly hirsute Robin, still crazy and a little paunch drunk after all these years, was tremendously entertaining. But for me it was rather like a bird with one wing - it couldn't take flight without Heron's feathering of rock and blues.

B. B. Skone
(Your man sleeping on his stomach and dreaming of liquorice).

WESTERN TELEGRAPH, Wednesday, January 26th, 1994

ROSE SIMPSON OF THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND ON WOODSTOCK



"When we arrived on the Friday the only refreshments were strawberries and champagne. It was like a garden party gone strangely wrong - nerve-racking, but exciting. By Saturday

afternoon we were much more aware of the community thing - there was a sense of a new world. The spirit of that time was a hope that things would change, that we could build a more humane society. Of a generation beginning to become the movers and shakers, who could rebuild the world. It's a hope that has been a long time dying, but I can't say that I see it in society now. I see ideals surviving in my friends, but not in the world they live in. We didn't manage to change things to that extent."

After....and before. From Woodstock to Wales. Picture and text left are from the Radio Times 25/6-1/7. I hoped to have an interview with Her Roseness in this issue (and indeed have one on tape) but space and time restrictions preclude it 'til next time. The moral of all this I think is that when your child picks up a geetar and says he/she wants to be a rock'n'roll star, keep calm, take a deep breath, and think of Rose as a shining example of where it can take you. Aberystwyth!



Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

Close Encounters of the Incredible Kind

Including the Wild Pursuit Of Vinyl

by

Tim Moon

I was a callow youth in 1969. Having been released from the warm haven of private school I was now in the wicked world of computers; alcohol and women. Music? Well, I had Beatles and Bonzo Dogs and Radio One. Moving to computer operations I met Dave Leech who knew this secret world of album bands, Fairport Convention, Humble Pie, Steppenwolf, you name it. And he had hair, long and parted in the middle like John Lennon. He suggested we go to a Rock festival, me him and Arthur. And we did. Oh Lordy! Drugs, bare things that wobble, meals without chips! It was the Great Western Festival, held near Lincoln and Dave said, "Listen to this bird's voice in this next band, it's amazing". It was the String Band, my first encounter, and I was impressed, though I couldn't tell you what songs they did and I stored the memory away in my record buying head. Thus in John Street Market did I buy *Earthspan*.

Now about this time my parents moved to Blackpool, my hair grew and I went to see the band again, at Preston Guildhall, taking my mum as this allowed you to sneak a tape recorder in. They were wonderful. I remember *Ithkos* had a great riff which never made it to *Hard Rope*, I liked *Circus Girl* and the storming *Everything's Fine Right Now*. I enjoyed the *Giles Crocadeel*, *St Giles and the Dragon* interlude. There was also *Dumb Kate*, *Dreams Of No Return*, *Cold Days of February*, *Rip the Velvet*. The girl with the voice may have gone but I loved them even more. I bought *Liquid Acrobat* and a poster (the one with Mike's check trousers, a dog, Graham Forbes and Mr Dott's bald patch) and now fancied myself a cut above Radio One listeners. 31st October 1973 was the date and it was the last time I would see the band together.

For £1.50 I bought *No Ruinous Feud*, without the inner sleeve, so I only caught up on the CD, but working back wasn't easy. My NME book showed me the titles, but I couldn't find 'em in the shops easily.

Remember where you bought your first ISB album? Tim Moon does. Tim also remembers other lots of things about his lifelong encounter with the String Band and its effects on him. Bugger Kennedy, I can still remember where I was the day I first heard Liquid Acrobat. Are we all mad? Where will it end? Most of us are in our late 30s to mid 50s now and I have an intermittent vision of the Wee Tam nursing home for Hairy Oldies in thirty or forty years time - you're being interviewed by one of those young snotty school kids for a project on how it was in the late 20th century....."Mr Roberts, can you tell us about what the death of the woolen industry meant to the socio-economic structure of West Yorkshire". "Nay lass but did I ever tell you about Mike Heron's Incredible Acoustic Band's rockin' version of Mexican Girl at Jim's Cafe, Colne in 1994, or the time I heard Robin singing Wheel Of Fortune at Chesterfield in 1993, and then there was that time in October '74, when I went to see the ISB at Barnsley Town Hall with Helen and my best friend Nick and how we used to think Hangman's and U held the secret of life if listened carefully whilst under the influence of LSD, or how about the real meaning of Hiram Pawmitoff, and did you know that In having 'Gone like snow on the water' on my headstone - the nurse says I can you know, how about....."

Cue doctors voice stage left, "500 milligrams of librium for Mr Roberts today nurse I think, and turn that bloody stupid song about that pig off!"

Relics served to tantalise, and in January 1974 Be Glad showed me I'd missed a film as well, and in March I bought Hard Rope as soon as it arrived in Pearson's record shop. Meanwhile a hippy shop in Preston was proving invaluable. I got Hangman's with it's booklet and Changing Horses, both later replaced with new copies when a friend became

manager of Express Records in Halifax and bombarded Elektra with orders, which I repeated elsewhere. Still, it got me U, and the hippy shop came up with the First album with the library sleeve, not the more usual double decker one. Wee Tam appeared at Left Bank records, Exeter - Sat. 6th April '74, and Big Huge from Submarine, Kensington Market (4th May). I thought you could get 'em all in the smoke but no 5000 Spirits and I Looked Up came from Bruce's Records (Edinburgh and Perth in that order) And Seasons came from a friend's Record Wholesalers. I'd got 'em all! Hooray!

So back to the live stuff. March 31st 1980 at Hebden Bridge Cinema. We had Bob Pegg (Ex Mr Fox), Alastair Anderson (joined by the star for two tunes), a local band and a very stoned French girl. And then Robin Williamson himself, on early so he could catch a 'plane. He opened with First Girl I Loved, with a new, erotic middle bit, but mainly he stuck to traditional songs and tunes on fiddle, mandocello, celtic harp, border pipes, guitar and accordion. He was warm and friendly, played and sang well and everything. But why was one of my favourite songwriters so folksy?

Meanwhile back in March 1975 (the 20th) at Leeds Town Hall the rest of the String Band was supporting the Andy Fraser Band. The band, Mike Heron's Reputation, had Mike and Malcolm and Graham Forbes and bass and drums. They rocked along with Do You Want To Hear The Music, Call Me Diamond, Pull Back the Veil, and Malcolm tap danced around a lamppost for Lamplight. It was a short set and a loud one, my ears rang for hours. I bought Diamond and Portland Rose and got a tape of the Casablanca album. And I bought Robin's Merry albums. And I thought that was it. Then came the CDs, this magazine, and the other day I interviewed Mike and it brought it all back, so I thought I'd write this article.....

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See All The People

ISBers through the ages

Top left: The boys in blue visit Glen Row - no doubt to try for a copy of that obscure Big Ted white label release. Sundry ISBers, Stone Money-ites and Dr Strangely Strange people hover around. Left to right Janet Shankman, Robin, Rakis, Mike, Ivan Pawle. Undaunted by the police presence Robin does the only sensible thing and plays the guitar. Photo: Iain Skinner.

Bottom right: Unknown location and photographer. Mike, Gerard Dott, Robin and Malcolm model some ill-advised fashions.

Bottom left: Robin, Ishy, Rakis and Mike outside the cottage at Penwern during a rest from the *Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending* filming.

Top right: The 'original four', plus dog hang out at Glen Row. Photo - Gray Levett.

Bottom right: Two old guitar-slingers looking for trouble. Robin Williamson and John Renbourn in their publicity photo for the tour. Photo: James Fraher.



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Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

The ISB at the BBC

Introduction

The second part of this article describes the ISB BBC sessions from 1971 to the end of the band in 1974. The introductory notes to the first part (Nov. 1992 issue) outline how the article is intended to work. However, in this second part we see several things beginning to happen. I might argue strongly that the band was at its zenith during the period of the first part of the article, so as we move towards 1974 everything seems to pass, everything seems to change. Radio sessions start to sound like album versions. You could say that this was because the band was trying to 'produce' their albums. Re-creation of this sound live may have seemed important. Personnel changes were also fairly frequent in the later period.

Fortunately the majority of material from these sessions previously unavailable on record can now be heard on two CDs, *The Incredible String Band On Air* (Band Of Joy CD004) and *The Incredible String Band Live In Concert BBC Radio 1* (Windsong CD029). These CDs are essential. Since much of this stuff is now available I have merely listed and dated sessions. Thankfully I do not have to invent prose to describe music that you may never hear; a difficult task at the best of times. The material is now there and you can listen to it. Then you can find your own words to describe it.

Of the seventeen or so ISB BBC Radio One sessions I mentioned in the introduction to the article, three of these were In Concert recordings. These were longer radio slots recorded before and audience.

Some of the material has recently appeared on CD. Therefore not only is the material readily available, in high quality, but songs only performed in these concerts and not released on record are now within the easy grasp of

by

Bill Allison

Part two of an exploration of the Incredible String Band and their BBC Radio Sessions

the fan desperate to get his or her mitts on them. Things are different as always, but then again you knew they would be. Check 'em out.

I've adopted a slightly different way of writing about this In Concert material in that I've annotated the list of songs performed at the beginning of each section.

Songs on the *BBC Radio One Live In Concert* CD (WINCD 029) are marked *. Other songs are followed by titles of the record album on which they may be found. The list at the beginning of each In Concert entry is, by the way, a list of *all* songs performed on that particular In Concert session as originally broadcast. It is worth pointing out that not all songs performed on the In Concert session appear on the CD.

BBC Radio One - In Concert

March '71

*Bright Morning Stars** (MH) *Worlds They Rise And Fall** (MH) *Jigs - Sunday Is My Wedding Day* *> Drops Of Whiskey* *> Grumbling Old Men* (RW) *Spirit Beautiful** (MH) *Willow Pattern** (RW) *Cosmic Boy* (LM/MH) *Turquoise Blue** (MH) *Whistle Tune** (RW/MLM) *Darling Belle** (RW) *Adam And Eve* (RW) *You've Been A Friend To Me** (Carter Family)



John Peel - Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 5/10/71
Broadcast: 13/10/71

You Get Brighter (MH) *Jigs - Bird That Lives On Rain* *> Flames Of Wind* *> Sally To The Mosshouse* *> Drunken Black Winter* (RW) *How We Danced The Lord Of Weir* (RW) *The Actor* (MLM/RW)

A good strong session, capturing the ISB at another peak. Malcolm Le Maistre was by now a fully integrated member of the band and beginning to feature his own material. The ISB constantly toured and often featured material for the BBC which were the highlights of current stage shows. This October session was quickly followed by a November session with different material.

The first song, *You Get Brighter*, is a reworked version of an ISB live favourite. This version is more moody and lingering than the 1968 original (on *Wee Tam*). Mike Heron sings lead vocal and plays piano. The piano seems to bring a maturity and feel which is, perhaps, superior to what might have been the novelty value of the harpsichord on the original recording. Voice and piano interplay, the one chasing the other through the song. There are tempo changes - the verses being taken slowly with a faster chorus.

Robin Williamson plays flute, another dominant instrument in the make up of this version. In the instrumental break the flute and piano interplay in the way that the voice and piano do during the vocal passages. Malcolm Le Maistre adds glockenspiel to the well worked sound. Likky plays bass and adds vocal support.

Next comes a set of jigs, unreleased on record. The ISB were brilliant at performing this kind of material live. Here the band play four short tunes, bass and assorted percussion provide solid rock - Rock with a capital R -

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foundation on top of which Williamson plays lead fiddle.

The third song in the session is *How We Danced The Lord Of Weir*. This is a strange tale, told in frenzied words and music. Williamson was, at this time, beginning to lay down sessions for what would be his first solo album (*Myrrh*). On the solo album cut of this song he plays all the instruments. On this band version, all four members provide a similar backing using the same instrumentation.

Although the ISB took to performing what might be described as theatre pieces on a small, and sometimes large scale, their best songs were often much more theatrical and contained far superior drama in the words and music, to their so-called theatre pieces. *How We Danced The Lord Of Weir* would stand as example of this.

The session ends with *The Actor*, one of the few songs that members of the band co-wrote. The recorded version would appear on *Earthspan*, twelve months after this session. Again, mandolin is the lead instrument, supported by bass and acoustic guitar.

Pete Drummond - Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 17/11/71

Broadcast: 25/11/71

The Circle Is Unbroken (RW) *The Sailor And The Dancer* (LM) *Tree* (MH) *Living In The Shadows* (RW)

For the second time, the String Band cut two sessions in rapid succession at the end of the year for the BBC. The second sessions contains four songs.

The Circle Is Unbroken continued to move the ISB through changes in line-up. Two whistles, Robin's and Malcolm's heighten the drama now. Mike's organ and Robin's vocal are as supreme as ever

Lord Weir 'stable'

Lord Weir, the Scottish industrialist, was 'stable and alert' after surgery following a head-on crash near Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, with a stolen car, in which three men died.

The dangers of messing with those from the Hollow Hills! *Observer* 11/9/94



Lost in the wonders of nature - or something like that, Mike and Likky ponder the upcoming BBC sessions on the ice near Glen Row
Afghan coat alert! (Photo Iain Skinner)

Sailor And The Dancer, like *The Actor* from the previous session, would also appear on *Earthspan* in twelve months. A good performance of Malcolm's song, different in arrangement and instrumentation to the recorded version.

The only song performed from the then current album, *Liquid Acrobat.....*, was Heron's *Tree*. This was the third song from the first album to be rearranged during this period. And just for once in a while the band recreate the sound of that recording for the studio.

The session ends with another wonderful song, unreleased on records, Robin's *Living In The Shadows*. Here Robin plays with elementary jazz type styles, alter heard in songs like *Restless Night* and *Saturday Maybe*, amongst others. *Living In The Shadows*, to me, is more successful than both. On this song, as in other songs on these last two

sessions, flute and piano work together. The song and performance has a vagueness of lyric and maturity of musical style which combine well. Mike plays piano, Robin acoustic guitar and sings lead with Likky singing support. There is a flute and bass. It's a love song of sorts,

*I tasted every drink
I was a sober man
You were my wine
You left me outside*

The radio version I've heard to work from fades out at the end of the song. This has always struck me as part of the song's appeal - I don't know why.

John Peel's Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 29/2/72

Broadcast: 17/3/72

Oh Did I Love A Dream? (MLM)

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Restless Night (RW) *Down Before Cathay* (MLM)

Astonishingly, another session with three more songs that weren't on the record at the time of the broadcast. It was a long session too, given that it contains only three songs, each of which lasts over five minutes. The first song, *Oh Did I Love A Dream?*, hasn't appeared on record in a studio version at all, although it was regularly performed live in concert. A live BBC Radio One session has now appeared on *The Incredible String Band On Air* (Band Of Joy BOJCD 004). Le Maistre had only been in the band for about twelve months but was beginning to contribute songs to the repertoire and in fact two of the three songs on this set are his.

Malcolm wrote good songs with both strong lyrics and music. He could seemingly capture, well, moods and atmospheres of other times and plays. Several of his songs describe the feel of continental Europe in the twenties and thirties and this particular piece has a slightly laidback jazz tinge about it. Mike plays accordion, Robin and Malcolm, acoustic guitars, Likky is on bass. Malcolm takes lead vocal and tells of the heroine of the song who....

From Paris to Rome she tossed her hair.....

Plenty of support vocals from Likky throughout the number her voice combines well with Malcolm's.

The second song in the set is Robin's *Restless Night*. However, if you want to be pedantic (we do Bill, we do -ed.), you could argue whether or not this song ever appeared on record too, since it is a markedly different set of lyrics from those that appeared on *Earthspan*. The version in this set is taken at a slightly faster tempo, and there is no middle bridge as on the record, the song continuing to follow the pattern set by the first verse. The jazzy feel lingers on from the first number in the set.

Finally comes *Down Before Cathay*, another good strong, swirling Le Maistre number to end the session. This song would appear on record - *No Ruinous Feud* - twelve months after the session. Here it is perhaps more forceful than the recorded version and

THE IN BETWEEN BITS

Vocal interludes from ISB concerts. This issue - Robin introduces *Evolution Rag* at Birmingham Town Hall, October 1971

Following *Lowlands* (aka *Ladies*)

MH: Over a far country on a rainy day in June a stork is flying over the island of Britain.

RW: ...by a little known Bolofskian composer known as Heinrich Ludovic Bladhoven. He composed this piece late one afternoon after a mushroom-gathering expedition in Baden-Baden. One of the mushrooms appeared to disagree with him to such a degree that he immediately, in a flash, as it were, one of those moments of inspiration in which the whole cosmos seems as but a nut, he conceived the idea of *Evolution*. And there, straightaway, composed this tune called *Evolution Rag*. It's played tonight by members of the Edinburgh Symphony Fools featuring Mr Malcolm Le Maistre, ex-Lord of the Channel Islands on assorted junk, Mr Michael (Doyce the Carrott) Heron upon dilapidated Japanese organ. Never buy a farfeezzer, folks. That might sound far-fetched. And in the back, Miss Martha McKechnie, Miss Martha McKechnie on the clod-poker. God it takes a long time doesn't it? Slick eh? Slick, super-slick, never a pause....
(*Evolution Rag*)

slightly faster. Stan Lee plays steel guitar, and that old live favourite the mandolin is well to the fore. Drums, bass, acoustic guitars and plenty of vocals.

BBC Radio One In Concert

Recorded: 12/72

*I Know That Man** (RW) *My Father Was A Lighthouse Keeper* (MLM) *The Circle Is Unbroken** (RW) *Black Jack Davy** (MH) *Jigs- Bird That Lives On Rain-Yellow Flames Of Wind-Sally To The Moss House>Drunken Black Winter* (RW)

December 1972 saw the second In Concert broadcast. The full concert listing is shown above. Much of the material appears on the *In Concert* CD WINCD 029. Songs marked * are on that CD.

It's worth pointing out that *The Circle Is Unbroken* has been placed out of its original sequence on the CD. Also that the collection of jigs at the end of the concert is not on the CD or on record.



John Peel's Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 14/8/72
Broadcast: 29/8/72

Black Jack Davy (MH) *Rends Moi Demain* (RW) *Oh Did I Love A Dream* (MLM) *Medley: Witch's Hat>Skating On Happy Valley Pond>Goodnight>May The Long Time Sun*

The whole of this session is available on the Band Of Joy CD On Air

John Peel's Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 26/2/73
Broadcast: 6/3/73

At The Lighthouse Dance (MLM) *Maker Of Islands* (MH) *Raga Tune* (RW) *Saturday Maybe* (RW)

Two songs from the new album, *No Ruinous Feud* appear on this session. These are Malcolm's *At The Lighthouse Dance* and Robin's *Saturday Maybe*. *Maker Of Islands*, one of Mike's master works, won't appear on record until *Hard Rope And Silken Twine* at the end of the year. *Raga Tune* featuring Gerard Dott is an unreleased on record instrumental.

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Bob Harris' Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 27/2/73
Broadcast: 19/3/73

Cold Days Of February (RW)/*Little Girl* (MH)/*Sailor And The Dancer* (MLM)/*At The Lighthouse Dance* (MLM)

The first three songs on this session appear on the Band Of Joy CD *On Air*

John Peel's Sounds Of The Seventies

Recorded: 9/10/73
Broadcast: 23/10/73

Dreams Of No Return (RW)/*Black Jack Davy* (MH)/*Jane* (MH)/*Dear Old Battlefield* (RW)

Apart from *Black Jack Davy*, the rest of the session is available on the Band Of Joy CD *On Air*. Mike Heron's *Jane* is worth singling out for mention. Another unreleased on record delight, which would languish in peoples tape boxes for almost twenty years until Band Of Joy liberated it for the masses.

BBC Radio One In Concert

Broadcast: 1/6/74

Ithkos (MH)/*Log Cabin Home In The Sky* (MH)/1968 (MH)/*Jack Straw's Wishes* (RW)/*Maker Of Islands* (MH)/*Dear Old Battlefield* (RW)/*Jigs - Good Morrow To Your Nightcap* > *Crawley's Reel* > *Small Coals For Nailers* > *Katie Hill*

The final BBC broadcast by the Incredible String Band was a mammoth In Concert programme. *Log Cabin* and *1968* are available on the Band Of Joy CD. *Jack Straw's Wishes* is a long instrumental. I've tried to be positive about everything in this article, however the most interesting thing about *Jack Straw's Wishes* is its title. The track itself never seems to live up to the promise of its title. It meanders and drags, speeds and slows, containing every known ISB riff, pushes, pulls, stops and starts. One of the few unreleased on record pieces of music on these sessions that's best left forgotten.

However the show ends with a fine selection of jigs which also don't appear on record. Electric wah wah guitar, organ, drums, bass and of course fiddle, tight together, do all the things that *Jack Straws Wishes* don't. These are worth having.

Conclusion

As I finished this article for publication the BBC published Ken Garner's *In Session Tonight* book, which lists all Radio One sessions. I was, in fact, too scared to take the book from its shrink wrapping and open it, for fear. Fear of the fact that I might have it all wrong. Fear of the fact that there might also be sessions that I knew nothing of. However, I was pleasantly surprised.

The sessions I describe are identical to the BBC Radio One listings. The order of individual sessions may appear different but the sessions and songs are all the same. All praise then to the amateur Rock Historians who have pulled these things down from the airwaves and saved them down through all the years, without whom, until now.....

The only apparent difference is on the Nightride 6/3/68 session. Garner lists *You Get Brighter*, *All Too Much For Me* and *Ducks On A Pond*. The session I worked from contains, as listed, *Wont You Come See Me*, *You Get Brighter*, *All Too Much For Me* and *Goodnight*. The session as listed in my article exists. What actually exists in the BBC Archives, other than what is on the list, needs to be ascertained.

Now, you're going to say, "Ok. So where do I get all this stuff?" or "Just

who has tapes of this material?"

Obviously the material exists in the BBC Archives (Eds note: Actually most of it doesn't anymore - it's been 'lost' - nicked basically, so if any of you know the whereabouts of discs or transcription discs I'd be very interested to know of them). The recent CDs I have mentioned have made some of the material available. However, all the unreleased songs described in the first part of my article remain unavailable. And although the majority of unreleased material mentioned in the second part of the article are now available there are several songs listed which remain unheard by the majority of String Band listeners.

So, just for fun, here's a list. Hi to all you trainspotters out there. The unavailable on record stuff is worth looking at - again - just to make us all oggle.

Won't You Come See Me...

All Too Much For Me
Fine Fingered Hand
Gather Round
Rakish Paddy
Raga Puti
Ringdance
Long, Long Road
*Bright Morning Stars**
*Willow Pattern**
*Whistle Tune**
Four Short Tunes
Living In The Shadows
*Oh Did I Love A Dream**
*I Know That Man**
Raga Tune
*Jane**
*1968**
Jack Straw's Wishes
Jigs - Good Morrow To Your Night Cap etc.

* Available on recent CDs

There are twenty tracks here. Thirteen have never been released in any format. All I can urge is that somebody makes the unavailable material available. It would make a great many people hap-hap happy all the time and it would go some way to completing the canon of String Band material available to the ardent fan. Just all the unavailable songs on one CD. Imagine it. Do it, somebody please.



Since Malcolm's album came out in early summer things have happened. The album was well received generally and some excellent reviews have been published up and down the UK. At the time of writing none of the big music magazines have reviewed it but they are due.

The album, *Nothing Strange*, was immediately seized on by German label Strange Ways who recognised it for the excellence that it is and it hits the streets over there on November 11th. They hope to follow it up with a single - *Sarajevo* - plus unreleased acoustic material, early in the new year. Malcolm will be going on tour in Germany around March 1995 and hopefully other continental territories will pick the album up as well.

The promised interview with Malcolm hasn't materialised yet - my fault, too much to do I'm afraid - but next issue maybe.

If you haven't got *Nothing Strange* I suggest you tootle off and remedy the situation. It's on Unique Gravity Records, UGCD 5401. Some branches of Virgin, Our Price and HMV, amongst others have it in stock and if not it can be ordered by them. Tell 'em the distributor is Pinnacle, or alternatively you can obtain it from Network Mail (196 Old Road, Brampton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 3QW) for £11.75 including p&p.

On the review front the best so far was Tim Moon's, written for the West Yorkshire folk magazine, Tykes. So we've reprinted it here. You've read it? Good - see what I mean.



Malcolm has the audience agog at the January '94 Hebden Bridge event

Malcolm Le Maistre

His father wasn't a lighthouse keeper!

MALCOLM LE MAISTRE *Nothing Strange*

Unique Gravity UGCD5401

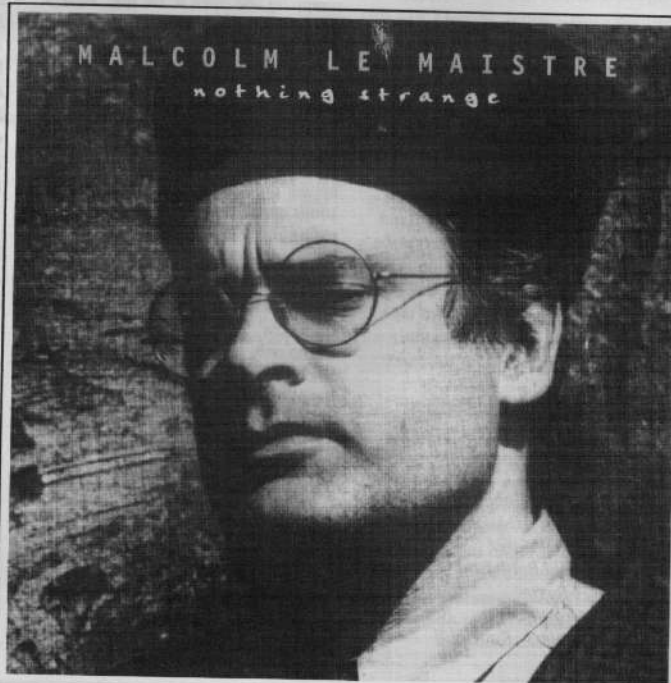
Go on. Say it. Who He? He Incredible String Band, member from 'Liquid Acrobat...' To the end, though present on the two albums before that. After 'Hard Rope & Silken Twine' (the last ISB Album) he was backing vocalist for Mike Heron's band and had a spell with 'The Enid' since when, nothing. Until the String Band Day in Hebden Bridge when he played a set that was the highspot of the day. An album was called for and I have had the privilege of hearing the various stages of this album. Live, home demo's of the songs, half mixed tracks and now the finished CD. Cards on the table, I can't see anything topping this as best album of 1994, yea even above that of the great Lord Richard of Thompson. It's that good. Every song is a gem, every chorus a brain sticking, hummable joy. 12 songs, a lyric sheet and a rear sleeve that recalls the gatefold inner of 'Liquid Acrobat'. And crystal clear production that stresses Malcolm's most English of voices.

Opener, 'In 1968' bolts along with Jangling Byrd's 12 string and a joyous look back at the changing world when we were all a little madder. 'Men & Boys' features the string quartet in a gentle waltz with powerful lyrics about the testosterone driven fools. Didi Finlay, one of the string players, does backing vocals in a style not a million miles from licorice (the ISB singer, unbelievers).

The title track has a great intro where three beats enter one at a time until it settles down to unity. Great chorus, as has 'Joie De Vivre', one of the group of tracks that include 'Big Boss' and 'Liner' that just make you beam. At the risk of filling the magazine let me say that 'Headlines', 'Dancing', 'Love Let Me Down' and 'Panama' are fantastic songs, while 'This Is Life' is even more than that. Finally 'Sarajevo', a possible single, is one of the best songs I've ever heard and should be a huge hit if there was any justice.

Find this album filed under Incredible String Band or artistes name, but find it and buy it. You will not regret it.

Tim Moon
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Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94

Joe Boyd grew up in Boston, surrounded by a very broad range of music - his grandmother was a concert pianist, and his school years were dominated by 50's pop, old jazz, Woody Guthrie and blues artists from Robert Johnson to Leadbelly. At Harvard he went on to promote folk and blues concerts, and first arrived in Britain managing a blues and gospel tour in 1964.

Having liked it here, he was determined to set a few things up when he returned in early 1965 with Jack Elliot and Reverend Gary Davies: "I went with Bill Leader up to Newcastle to help him record the Fisher Family LP for Topic; I was his assistant and took the photos used on



A youthful Joe er, 'relaxes' at the String Band's Pemwern commune during the filming of *Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending*. The writing across the object he's holding says, 'Famous Rolling Earth'. Quite! Leopardskin leotards were all the rage with producer-managers in the late 60s!

the cover. Then I wanted to hitchhike up into Scotland and Bill gave me the number of George Brown and Delina McLennan in Edinburgh. We had quite a wild night with a lot of drink the day I arrived. The next night was a lot quieter and George told me there was an interesting group playing in a nearby folk club - which is where I saw Robin and Clive."

After an unenviable task as onstage sound mixer at Newport in 1965 when Dylan went electric, Joe came back in November 1965 to run Elektra's London office. Determined to sign up this Scottish bluegrass duo, there then follows the well-worn story of his arrival in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, to see a gig by the newly expanded ISB (Mike Heron having joined as a 'strummer'), only to find the Incredible Folk Club being raided by the police and the musicians fled to a farmhouse outside Glasgow.

Recording the first LP, in early 1966, was pretty straightforward - two days in the studio! *October Song* stands out as one of his favourites. After Robin's return from Morocco, the ISB reconvened without Clive to play a short November '66 tour supporting Tom Paxton and Judy Collins; Joe had been lobbying Elektra furiously to get them on the bill. He can't remember whether there was still a chance of Clive rejoining, but certainly his programme notes (see illustration overleaf) bill Mike and Robin as "two thirds of the ISB." I asked him if the *5000 Spirits* demos were partly to see how recording worked as a two-piece:

"You're probably right - it's funny 'cos just the other day for some reason the melody of 'Alice Is A Long Time Gone' came into my head."

"Joyful Experimentation"

In spring 1967 work started on *5000 Spirits* proper - for Joe the most exciting record he worked on with them: "I knew at the first sessions it was going to be as great as I'd hoped. Recording the first LP had made them aware of the potential of the studio in terms of overdubbing, and recording it was a

JOE BOYD

by

Adrian Whittaker

As manager and producer of the ISB from 1966-1970, Joe Boyd has an interesting and important angle on their history. This article, part one of a two part series, is largely based around an interview I did at Rykodisc in July 94, and any other sources are credited at the end.

lot of fun - smoking a bit of dope in the studio, experimenting with recording technology - though it was limited to 4-track then, whereas *Hangman's* was on 8-track. Work was incredibly fast-moving and productive - there wasn't a lot of dithering, there was general agreement as to how we would proceed - they were such fertile musicians. The fact that it was acoustic instruments meant we didn't have to get a rhythm track, or a drum sound, or make sure the timing didn't waver - the kind of problems you have with a band - it was just a question of doing takes and selecting the best one. Particularly with *5000 Spirits* and *Hangman's*, there was a tremendous feeling of joyful experimentation - listening to something back and one of them saying - 'let's try this!' Occasionally someone would say 'I don't think that worked', but as I recall they were pretty smooth, action-packed sessions. A lot of producers talk about how they end up restructuring songs, telling writers to write another middle eight and so on. My contribution is much more listening to two ways of doing it and saying 'I like this one better'. I'm not the person who says: 'What you should think is this!'

AW: You've said you saw them pretty early on as a psychedelic band?



Robin and Mike at the 1967 Newport Festival. Joe Boyd lurks somewhere on site and look, can it be? Yes! An intense Judy Collins gazes adoringly Robin-wards. The famous painted guitar reclines on the grass awaiting its turn and meanwhile Robin frightens the Americans with a mid-eastern stringed device. Mike - dig those crazy sideburns daddy-o - strums along with gusto. The song? Unknown, but could be Chinese White mayhap.

JB: "I thought they had an audience wider than the folk audience - they transcended the folk scene. It was a combination of factors - including hallucinogens - and they were part of the spirit of the time. The cover painting was a signal to the audience of what they'd grown from."

During the sessions, Joe had taken them to a basement flat in St Stephens Gardens to check out the cover artists, Simon and Marijke, and they sat around listening to studio takes and jamming with them, David Crosby and Graham Nash.

Was the *Painting Box* single aimed at being an underground hit?

"It was pretty much like today - those things were released as single mainly to get airplay. It didn't really work! What really worked was John Peel's Perfumed Garden show on Radio London - he played the LP all the time!"

It was around this time that Joe became their manager:

"I left Elektra in November 1966 and at that point I was faced with a choice - going back to America or staying in Britain - so I had to figure out whether I could earn a living, whether I could get a visa to stay. I got a visa and the UFO club which I ran with John Hopkins provided me with the weekly cash to pay my rent (*it also subsidised International Times and, later, Release*). I got a production deal for them with Elektra and started managing them through Witchseason - but the management was never a very lucrative proposition!"

Witchseason, in its famous headquarters at 83 Charlotte St, was Joe's management and production company for a whole extended family of 'folk-rockers' including the Fairports, Strangely Strange and Nick Drake. Wearing his manager's hat, he

got the ISB "a very brief slot" at the Newport Folk Festival in 1967. As all the Newports were recorded, he reckons it's possible that Vanguard Records may have tapes of the gig. He also recalls the Big Sur Festival (probably in 1968) where Rose met David Crosby et al and sang *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* in a mudbath with them! (See last issue).

"Everything fell into place" - *Hangman's* and beyond"

The next recordings, in winter 1967, were for *Hangman's*. Again, there were a lot of overdubs:

"A lot of time and care was taken recording *Hangman's* - it was my most satisfying record with them, and they were sessions where you couldn't get bored!"

I asked him if he realised at the time

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what a brilliant LP it was:

"I felt it was a great record - we put it out and it went straight into the Top 5 in the pop charts. It didn't *last* there very long - it sank! - but it did very well for that era. It sold twice as fast as anything had done before in America or Britain."

Shirley and Dolly Collins, who guested on the sessions, were friends of the band:

"Shirley was married to John Marshall, who was the editor of the Observer Colour Supplement - and he did a big feature on the ISB" (2/7/67 *actually*).

The band hadn't gigged very much in 1967 (see box), but touring moved up a gear with the release of *Hangman's* in March 1968:

"The two and a half years of their career from 1968-70 were just about what I'd hoped for as a manager when I set out - that sort of thing, that sort of audience. I guess the big turning point for me was when I went to Roy Guest and suggested a solo tour of big halls (*Festival Hall, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow*). He was sceptical and wouldn't guarantee it, so we did it ourselves and got a much better deal - he thought I was mad! They were all sold out. I tried to get Edinburgh too, but we couldn't get the hall for some reason.

The same thing happened in America - Jay Hoffman, who'd seen them in London at the Festival Hall, put them on at the Lincoln Centre, New York. I just flew to San Francisco to meet Bill Graham and arranged a concert at the San Francisco Fillmore - I think it was a double bill with Jefferson Airplane - and he saw them, saw the way the audience responded and said fine. From then on, every time we came to the States we did two or three solo concerts at the Fillmore East and in San Francisco. It was one of those things that seemed effortless, everything fell into place."

AW: Was it you who set up the WBAI stuff? (*live broadcasts from the Fillmore East and from the WBAI studio*)

JB: "I guess - I used to do programmes for WBAI in the early 60s. It's a non-commercial listener-funded station. I don't think they really needed my help to get on it though". After the Lincoln Centre gig came the conversion to Scientology, unwittingly engineered by Joe. The full story is detailed in Neil Parry's Record Collector article (5/87), but basically they all met up after a gig with an old Boston mate of Joe's, David Simmons, who was a recent Scientology convert. Robin and Licorice were impressed enough by his new-found togetherness

Wee Tam.

"My only regret is allowing Mike to talk me into cutting off *Maya*"

"Some of that was done in the States; we did some sessions at Elektra studios in Los Angeles including *Puppies*, I think."

The cover shots were indeed taken in Frank Zappa's garden, but Joe says no musical links were made. I must say I've always wondered if *Log Cabin Home In The Sky* was connected with the fact that Zappa then lived in Tom Mix's former log cabin....

Sessions were held in April, June and July 1968:

"My only regret is allowing Mike to talk me into cutting off *Maya* at the last chorus. Originally it was recorded the way they performed it, with a final chorus at the end. But one day - I think when we were putting the running order together - Mike came in with the idea of instead of having *Maya* finish just as it gets to the big climax, to take a razorblade and cut it off and go straight into the birdsong (and *Greatest Friend*). I tried to persuade them otherwise but in the end I succumbed. Listening to it now, I still regret it!"

AW: There were some incredible collage songs - like *Job's Tears*, *Ducks On A Pond* - lots of different musical parts.

JB: "All those were products of the way they worked, in which Robin would write long epic songs and Mike would kinda roll his eyes a bit..."

AW: Well he started doing it too - *Thomas Traherne Harding* is quite an episodic song.

JB: "Yeah, but it's not as stylistically varied. Robin would go from rhythm to rhythm and mode to mode, so Mike would say - 'OK, on this bit I'm gonna put *this* instrument, on this bit I'm going to play *that* instrument, I'm gonna sing harmonies on *this* bit - and, in a way, accentuate the differences between the two sections, make them more stylistically varied - and it worked!"

We talked about the creative tension between Mike and Robin, whereby they'd only agree to use each other's

My Guitar Day - Early Gigs

Until the major 1968 tour, the ISB kept a fairly low profile. Thanks to the archives of Be Glad subscriber Richard Bartram, we can fill in some of their early gigs. The first south of the border was a November 1966 Royal Albert Hall concert, third on the bill to Elektra label-mates Tom Paxton and Judy Collins. Apparently their short (3-song?) set included a preview of *Chinese White*. Joe remembers a couple of UFO gigs with Pink Floyd, too. Other early concerts:

- 3/2/67 - Les Cousins (with the Young Tradition)
- 4/3/67 - St Pancras Town Hall (with Alex Campbell and others)
- 10/3/67 - Les Cousins (with Roy Harper)
- 20/5/67 - ditto
- 22/5/67 - A huge bill at the Festival Hall, including the ISB and Shirley and Dolly Collins, Al Stewart, Julie Felix, the Watsons, Sandy Denny and many others.
- 12/8/67 - Les Cousins (with Al Stewart and Stefan Grossman)
- 1967 - Speakeasy (with Joni Mitchell as support!)
- 1/10/67 - Saville Theatre (the ISB meet psychedelia with Pink Floyd, Tomorrow, Tim Rose and Fairport Convention.)
- 4/10/67 - Queen Elizabeth Hall (with S. & D. Collins)

to demand their portion of the Lincoln Centre fee in cash and to enrol in the Church of Scientology the following morning. Mike and Rose followed suit back in London. Joe talks about Scientology later in the article, but we're now in the middle of recording

song if they could play a role in it, adding the instrumental colouring and virtually doing the arrangement, leading to intensive input on each other's compositions. Mike tended to be slightly more disciplined about his contributions, apparently. I asked at which point this had started - *5000 Spirits*, maybe?

"I think I was aware at a fairly early point that Clive had been the connection. They were both friends of Clive's - they weren't friends of each other, so when he disappeared it left these two people who weren't quite sure about each other, locked in this group which they'd each joined really because of Clive - and so there was a bit of wariness or uncertainty. Over a period of time, as they became more successful and had to spend more and more time together and work together, I guess the rivalry and antipathy, whatever, grew rather than dissipated."

As Joe says earlier, this didn't really affect their studio work - in fact it made for much more intensive collaboration.

With the incorporation of Rose and Licorice, *Wee Tam* was recorded with less overdubs and much more as an ensemble, with each of the four playing what they might play in concert. Although Joe felt Rose and Licorice added an extra dimension live, their studio work was a different matter.

"They ended up spending a long time getting their parts right and we disagreed on the extent of their involvement - the need for endless takes lead to some tensions. But Licorice was quite a powerful personality in her own quiet way and I don't think Robin was prepared at that point to risk her wrath."

I asked how their incorporation had come about:

"Well, it began with Licorice's participation on *Hangman's*. Robin encouraged her to add her voice to harmonies and neither Mike nor I had any real objection - she had a very weird voice but it sort of worked and

ROBIN WILLIAMSON AND MIKE HERON
(2/3RDS OF THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND)

The Incredible String Band has gone through many changes before arriving at its current stage—with an LP just out and a whole new career beckoning. Several years ago, two English-born musicians living in Scotland, Robin Williamson and Clive Palmer, drawn together by their common interest in traditional instrumental styles, formed a two-man group called Robin and Clive. They played Scottish traditional music and also a good bit of American country music. Gradually the styles merged until they were playing a kind of Scottish bluegrass. Robin began writing songs as well and before long they were among the most popular groups in the Scottish folk clubs—and certainly the one with the most unique repertoire. Mike Heron joined them last year. He used to play in skiffle and rock and roll bands (didn't most of today's leading folk singers—including Louis Killen, the Watsons and even Ewan MacColl?) but had begun to take an interest in the new singer-songwriters and write some things himself. Then calling themselves The Incredible String Band, they met Elektra last spring just as their repertoire was changing almost entirely to their own original material. Most of the songs are written by Mike and Robin, the 2/3rds you will hear tonight. (Clive is visiting a dream in Kashmir at presstime). Their styles are quite different, but complimentary. The influences are many, and eager critics will enjoy finding a bit of Jansch here, a bit of Dylan there and an overall blues-cum-ragtime-cum-Lennon/McCartney or whathaveyou. But 90% of it is all Williamson and Heron. Their songs are unlike anything most people have ever heard before, but as they begin to end their long Scottish exile and play the English clubs and concert halls, it won't be too long before they and their songs are familiar to the ears of all varieties of music-lovers.

Joe Boyd's programme notes for the November 1966 Royal Albert Hall gig

added to the atmosphere and the success of *Hangman's*. Licorice went everywhere with Robin, and he said if they were going on a concert tour doing these songs she might as well come on stage and sing the bits she sings or play tambourine or whatever... and Rose later told me that the day Robin released that notion was the day Mike bought her a bass and said 'here - learn this!' - because he saw it as becoming outnumbered, suddenly Licorice was part of the band and it was going to be two against one. That was my depression about that - the whole logic of it didn't seem to be musical. I think if you're charting their career you chart a meteoric rise to a pinnacle of *Hangman's*, holding for *Wee Tam*, then a slow decline and a falling-off at the end..."

AW: With occasional flashes of brilliance along the way!

Continued next issue

Many thanks to Joe Boyd for the interview and time. I've also drawn on interviews in Howey Powey 10, Record Collector 10/89 and Neil Parry's interview used in his 5/87 Record Collector article. -AW



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"A little Upstate Folk Festival" Woodstock & THE ISB

Ever thought you were the dust of stars? Or perhaps you perceived yourself the colour of gold. Or maybe you've experienced a strong desire to 'get back to the garden'. If so then you're part of the Woodstock generation. The Incredible String Band however were more than that, they were the only Scottish group to play the festival. Andy Roberts roots about a bit.....

By the time I got to Woodstock,..... well, it was twenty five years too late for a start and the nearest I ever did get was interviewing Rose Simpson of the ISB Woodstock line-up in the study of her Welsh home on the 25th anniversary of the event. But more of that at a later time.

In retrospect Woodstock has become everything the *idea* (rather than the reality) of the 60s counter-culture stood for, and consequently is frequently derided and ridiculed, now even by its originators by the vacuous recent attempts to re-create it which have been risible.

You had to be there I suppose. "Yeah, yeah", you might say, "so what", before flipping on another Maximum Throb Japanese import, "what's all that got to do with anything in these parlous times." Not much really but the fact remains that the event happened, is now a touchstone for some, a millstone for others and a benchmark for everyone when it comes to the archaeology of rock festivals. And of course the Incredible String Band played there. So, what do we know? Well various bits from various sources.....

If *Barefoot In Babylon* by Robert Spitz is to be believed, on May 28th 1969 Michael Lang, the Executive Producer of the festival, phoned Artie Kornfeld, the guy dealing with Publicity and Subsidiary Rights to tell him that he had obtained the

services of the String Band for the sum of \$4500. No small amount and in fact the same sum they paid for Ravi Shankar. Artie was apparently impressed by the acquisition of both and commented in the argot of those far off days, "Far out! They'll be dynamite to open the evening's shows, soft, moody." Little did he know what was to actually happen! Described to the String Band as a "little upstate folk festival", they had no idea what to expect as they flew in. Robin: "It was a military helicopter with only one side. As we flew over the site, all you could see was millions of tiny dots, spreading right up to the heavens. I realised then it was the biggest thing I had been at."

show in New York the night before and the organisers were keen to have us on. A helicopter took us to the site, and I recall all these people looking like ants trapped in a sea of mud. I don't know what we were doing then but we played and left again. I think the girls were with us then." They certainly were there Mike!

The String Band flew into Woodstock from New York's White Lake heliport (where, incidentally, as we mentioned in issue two Robin met the Dead's Tom Constanten, leading to him later doing the arrangements on *Queen of Love* from the *U* album), together with Ravi Shankar and John

Sebastian (who happened to be on the chopper because he was very close to Licorice at the time). Originally due to appear late on the Friday evening as their performance time drew close they were confronted with every festival performer and organisers worst nightmare - torrential rain, and understandably promptly refused to go on due to the lack of overhead cover and threat of electrocution. Joe Boyd re-arranged the set for the following afternoon and meanwhile they were replaced by Melanie. The effect and imagined consequences of this

rearranging seems to have grown out of all proportion over the years and is the most written about aspect of the String Band at Woodstock, so we'll



Likky and Robin on stage at Woodstock

Heron's memory of the Woodstock gig was, "That was through people who knew Joe (Boyd), we'd done this

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round up the various bits and pieces here.

Mark Ellen, writing in Q magazine (June '93) notes that despite the ISB having cancelled due to the rain the helicopters had now stopped flying (cock-up on the cash front) and the String Band, not being able to hotel it for the night, spent a gloomy nocturnal sojourn "damp and muddy, packed like sardines, intensely uncomfortable and wearing our stage gear", be-tented together with John Sebastian, Joe Boyd and Melanie. A no sleep blues situation ensued and the percussion drums got somewhat moistened.

Joe Boyd's view of these events is now tempered by the passage of time but still tinged with a hint of the 'what ifs'. This from Adrian Whittaker's recent interview with him:

"We were booked to go on on Friday night. We had a perfect slot - we were after Joan Baez, 10.30 in the evening - but they didn't have a proper stage roof, just very flimsy tarpaulin, which was the most elementary cover you can imagine - and it started to rain. At that time the ISB had started very actively with amps, so they had a pick-up on the sitar, pick-up on the gimbri etc and the electric bass. Of course you couldn't play in the rain with all these electric instruments - so we were struck. I said 'just go on with your acoustic instruments and play' and they said 'we can't, wait 'til it's stopped raining'...."

"What happened then was I said 'you don't know what's going to happen - you may never get on stage' but they wanted to wait for the rain to stop and so someone else went on - Melanie - who triumphed in that slot and wrote 'Candles In The Rain' about that exact moment! We talked to John Morris [one of the organisers], who was a friend of mine, about the logistics of where we could pick up on the following day...and it sort of haunted me, that moment, because I should've pushed - just dragged them bodily to the stage and said 'forget the amps, just play acoustically'. It might have been wonderful, it might have been a great triumph - we might have been in the film and on the record, the whole thing! We ended up going on the following afternoon after Canned Heat, in the baking sun. People were ready for something heavy and loud and they came on and just - died!"

Mmmmm it might equally have been terrible. Sounds like Joe is being a bit 'wise after the event' on his involvement with the String Band at Woodstock. How it happened was how it happened and that was the

High On The Hog

Woodstock watchers, and students of all things psychedelically American, will be aware of Wavy Gravy - Hog Farm communer, charity worker, and all round wonderful human being. He and his cohorts were also in charge of security at Woodstock - "Do you feel secure? You do? There, it's working already". Wavy was also a big String Band fan. In his book *The Hog Farm.....* we find Wavy conducting a marriage ceremony on the Farm: "Repeat after me, 'May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on.' And they do that and everybody makes these circles around them and starts singing, 'May the long time sun.....' just like we secretly rehearsed late around the fire, and guitars come out of nowhere playing this song we learned from Bob Fass' tape of the Incredible String Band. '.....guide your way on.' Over and over and over, as we carried them into this tee-pee, onto the floor of pine boughs. The walls are lined with fruits and cake. They are left alone and the tee-pee sealed with 50 yards of American bunting. '.....all love surround you...' Into the sunset.

And again, in his book *Something Good For A Change*, as he is entertained by Tibetan couple: "Then it was my turn, and there in this tiny hut in the high Himalayas, as the sun and moon exchanged command we sang this Incredible String Band classic:

*May the long-time sun shine on you
All love surround you
and the pure light within you
guide your way on...."*

Bloody hippies!



ISB's contribution to Woodstock. But there was obviously tension about the event and perhaps confusion about just what Boyd's role was and exactly what power he could exercise over the band.

Rose Simpson, long out of the music business has a focussed vision of what should have taken place and of Boyd's role:

".....he should have just said 'get on that blessed stage and you play, shut up moaning about getting wet and getting shocked and get up there', and we should have done it, we were silly not to, he regrets it I know. The String Band would have had a different history if we had. One of our big mistakes really. I can see why we did it. We were a bit miffed really, it was just unpleasant, it wasn't very nice

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being in the wet and cold, hungry and not knowing how the hell we were going to go anywhere next."

And Boyd again, finally on this matter:

"It was Joe Boyd's Greatest Mistake. If I could do it all over again I would have put them on in the rain. They would have triumphed like Melanie. They would have been in the movie, and everyone who was in the movie had a huge break. Who knows what would have happened....." Who knows?

Their moment of glory at Woodstock finally came, rather dissonantly, after Canned Heat and before Creedence Cleawater Revival on the Saturday afternoon when the crowd were high, hot and rocking. Not a good place to be and as a result they were apparently the only band at the festival not to be called back for an encore.

Heron: "It was incredibly high, right up on this scaffolding, and three out of four of us had vertigo. Little flimsy dresses on the girls, acoustic guitars out of tune, the drums still damp, up

this bloody tower, like playing off the Firth Bridge to these seas of people cooking beans in the mud. Oh it was impossible. We were terrible."

Heron again: "It was terrible for us. We had to go up this very, very high scaffolding in the wind.....and it was just...I mean Woodstock was all these people living in mud. We got helicoptered out, we had a gig that night at the Carnegie Hall, so we didn't have to stay there. Canned Heat was the best for me, kind of latrine digging music, totally brilliant, really brilliant, you could thrust the spade in time with the music! But some of the stuff seemed

not really suitable. Certainly not us, we were terrible for it."

Williamson: "Our performance at Woodstock was not great. But we did enjoy being there."

Although the String Band later became a brilliant festival band in the UK Woodstock was perhaps too big and too impersonal and very probably too 'British' in both content and execution.

As with most things you need they surface eventually and as part of the 25th Woodstock celebrations the ISB footage turned up and some has been used in the new film of the event. Not all their performance was filmed apparently due to the high price of film stock, but it all exists on audio - somewhere. The song used in the film is *When You Find Out Who You Are*, from *I Looked Up*. Additionally the BBC ran a three part Woodstock series in late July which also included the ISB.

On the BBC series we saw the ISB arriving by helicopter, and leaping out one by one, clutching their instruments

and in Mike's case a briefcase (!) - a chance also here to admire Likky's fine physique! (sorry girls).

The ISB performance we have seen of *When You Find Out Who You Are* appears not to be as bad a performance as either Mike and Robin's memories suggest, considering the problems which surrounded it. The musicianship is fine, Robin's vocals are strong and clear and Likky adds excellent backing vocals while Rose grins and plunks bass and Mike delivers trademark piano (have you ever though how much early Heron looks like that Marty Pellow chap from *Wet!Wet!* - just a thought!). Sartorially, Rose has some form of diaphanous garb draped about her person, Mike sticks to a simple T shirt and trouser arrangement, Robin in seriously striped trousers and attempted mustache looks very 1969 and Likky departs herself wonderfully in dress and ring of flowers head accessory.

The final viewpoint here, from Robin, takes a step back from the performance aspect and concentrates on his views on the festival as a whole - views which were shared by many who attended the festival.

"I thought it was the beginning of a new era and I think that people at that time thought everything would change at that point, that money would break down, that we'd go back to a barter economy, that the world was forever going to go back to a more idyllic state. Everyone was very optimistic about it, and it was very disheartening to find that this did not occur. A lot of people got cynical and then you had the cynical and self-seeking 70s."

And that, really, is the true spirit of Woodstock. Ah well, looks like the sun's coming out. Time to get back to the garden I guess.....

You cannot be serious?

Various suggested bands to cover ISB songs. For your amusement and consideration. If you've got any strange ideas like this, send 'em in.

Stuart Godfrey	Sailor & Dancer: Paul Weller
October Song: Bob Dylan	Sunday Song: Tori Amos
Painted Chariot: REM (yes please-ed)	Maker Of Islands: Barry White
First Girl...: Paul Young	
Air: Mark Knopfler	Grahame Hood
Turquoise Blue: UB40	Black Jack Davy: Albion Band
Half Remarkable: Robert Plant (oobaby)	Blues For The Muse: Bob Dylan
This Moment: The Pretenders	First Girl: Mary Coughlan
All Writ Down: Eric Clapton	Dumb Kate: David Lindley

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STRINGS - AND THINGS

A

ACCORDIAN, PIANO: - Used only once on record - on the chorus of *Seagull* (E) - though it turned up on *Did I Love A Dream* on a 1972 Peel session, included on OA. It was also featured in concert on Robin's *Cajun Song*. Played on all occasions by Mike.

AUTOHARP: - A 20th century modification of the zither (see **ZITHER**). Approximately 30 strings are arranged across a wooden soundboard. Chord bars are attached, which when depressed, damp all the strings except those needed to form a particular chord. It was popularised in the 30s by the Carter Family in the USA, where it is strummed with fingerpicks. Appears briefly on the LAARTA dance tunes set, played by Licorice (with a plectrum), and on 1968 (OA), where the player is uncredited.

B

BANJO: - Occurs principally in 4 and 4 string forms; the 5 string variety has an additional treble string tuned to G, with a tuning peg halfway up the neck. 6 string varieties were also produced, usually known as banjo-guitars and tuned accordingly. It's the 5 string banjo Robin's playing in *Darling Belle* (LAARTA). Also plunked by (I'd guess) Graham Forbes on *Log Cabin* as featured on OA.

BANJO, CHINESE: - No such animal, strictly speaking. The instrument so designated, as played by Robin on *White Bird* (CH), is probably the pi'p'a, a Chinese lute - reputedly 2000 years old - with four silk or gut strings and a shallow rounded back.

BASS DRUM: - See **PERCUSSION**
BASS GUITAR: - See **GUITAR, BASS**

BASS, DOUBLE: - The Pentangle bass-player Danny Thompson appeared on FTS and years later on HRAST (*Dreams Of No Return*), despite declaring publicly his unease at Mike's and Robin's sheer oddness. Concert-goers

One of the many charms of the ISB for their doting admirers was their ability - or at least willingness - to produce interesting noises on a vast array of musical instruments, many of which originated in distant and uncomfortable parts of the world. We nodded approvingly whenever a shenai, or a sarangi, or even a soondri made an appearance in album credits, even though we could only guess wildly at what it might be or whence it came.

Raymond Greenoaken sheds some light on this foggy area of ISB study in the first of a two part guide.

Instruments are listed alphabetically; most have individual entries, though the majority of percussion instruments are gathered together under a general heading (PERCUSSION, oddly enough). The coverage is confined to ISB albums and other performances, plus Smiling Men and Myrrh; later solo work is not dealt with. Albums are designated by the initial letter of their titles, as follows:

ISB - first album; FTS - 5000 Spirits; HBD - Hangman's Beautiful Daughter; WTATBH - Wee Tam & The Big Hugs; CH - Changing Horses; ILU - I Looked Up; U - well, U; BGFTSHNE - Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending; SMWBR - Smiling Men With Bad Reputations; LAARTA - Liquid Acrobat As Regards The Air; M - Myrrh; E - Earthspan; NRF - No Ruinous Feud; HRAST - Hard Rope and Silken Twine; STC - Seasons They Change; OA - On Air; IC - In Concert.

report that Stan Lee occasionally played double-bass on stage, notably (and perhaps exclusively) on *Maker Of Islands*.

BELLS, TUBULAR: - See **TUBULAR BELLS**

BODHRAN: - Irish circular frame drum, usually with a goatskin or - on cheaper models - a calfskin. Popular (excessively so, some might argue) in the playing of Irish dance music. Its origins are obscure. It seems at first to have been struck by the hand; latterly a single - or double-headed beater has been preferred. The name means something like 'thunderer' - aptly enough as any folk festival-goer will confirm. In Eire the name is pronounced BOW-RON ('bow' rhyming with 'cow'); in Ulster it's pronounced BORE-AN. The ISB's preferred spelling - 'birronne' - may be an attempt at a phonetic rendering of the former. Played by Licorice on the LAARTA dance tune set, and by Robin on *The Dancing Of The Lord Of Weir* (M).

BONGOS: - See **PERCUSSION**

BOUZOUKI: - The ISB favoured the spelling 'bazoooki', inviting confusion with the anti-tank weapon. Long-necked Greek lute, probably quite a recent development of the Turkish saz; it has four courses of paired strings and a rounded back. In the early 70s it was adopted by Irish musicians and is now usually manufactured with a flat back for ease of playing while standing. It's the round-backed Greek form of the instrument played by Malcolm on *Tree* (LAARTA) and Robin on *Lord Of Weir* (M).

BOWED GIMBRI: - See **GIMBRI, BOWED**
BOWED PSALTERY: - See **PSALTERY, BOWED**



Be Glad For The Song Has No Ending - Winter '94



CELLO:- First album appearance, in Robin's hands, is on LAARTA (*Worlds They Rise And Fall, Red Hair*). Liberally used on M, and once on E (*My Father Was A Lighthouse Keeper*). The author, however, fancies he can hear it on *Ring Dance*, from a Sounds Of The Seventies radio session in 1970. Robin produced a singular-looking solid-bodied electric model in concert in late '71 (*Sunday Song*), it was never seen, or heard, again.

CHANTER:- So designated on M (*Lord Of Weir*). The chanter, properly, is that part of the bagpipes on which the tune is fingered. Scottish pipers tend to practice their fingering on a mouth-blown version. By extension, it can be used off any single or double-reeded pipe, such as the Breton bombarde or the Indian shenai (see SHENAI), and perhaps it's the shenai Robin is playing on *Lord Of Weir*.

CHIMES:- See PERCUSSION
CHINESE BANJO:- See BANJO, CHINESE
CHINESE FLUTE:- See FLUTE
CHURCH ORGAN:- See ORGAN

CLARINET:- Reed instruments come in two basic forms: those with a single-reed (clarinets), and those with a double-reed (oboes or shawms - see OBOE). The Welsh pigborn and the Scottish stockhorn, both now obsolete, are examples of indigenous folk clarinets. The classical clarinet was developed around 1700 by the German instrument maker Donner. It was occasionally puffed by Malcolm - on *Darling Belle* (LAARTA, IC) and *Willow Pattern* (IC) - but became an integral part of the ISB sound with the recruitment of Gerard Dott.

CLASHERS:- See PERCUSSION
CLAY DRUMS:- See PERCUSSION

CONCERTINA:- It's been recently suggested that the instrumental break in *Down Before Cathay* (NRF) is essayed on a concertina; neither the instrument nor its player, however, is

mentioned in the credits. Mystery therefore surrounds this subject, and the author quietly abstains from wild surmise.

CONCH:- A large tropical sea-shell used as a horn or trumpet by Pacific islanders, and by Robin on *Queen Juanita And Her Fisherman Lover* (STC).

CYMBALS:- See PERCUSSION

CYMBALS, FINGER:- As the name suggests, small cymbals attached to the thumb and first finger, producing the delicate chiming sound heard on *Painting Box* (FTS), *A Very Cellular Song* (HBD), and *Theta*, the final piece in the *Song Has No Ending* medley (BGFTSHNE). Mike was also heard to tinkle them on Shirley Collins' album *The Power Of The True Love Knot*.



DOUBLE BASS:- See BASS, DOUBLE
DRUM, BASS:- See PERCUSSION

DRUM, SYRIAN:- According to ISB legend, Rose - or her Roseness as we must now call her - was presented with this drum shortly after meeting the band and invited to whack it at their prestigious Albert Hall concert the following week. She dutifully whacked - the rest is history.

DRUM, TALKING:- An African hour glass-shaped drum whose skin is held taut by vertical cords. By pressing the cords towards the waist of the drum, the pitch can be raised to varying degrees. Heard on *Creation* (CH) and *Theta* (BGFTSHNE).

DRUMKIT:- The conventional Western drumkit was developed by American jazz musicians in the early years of the century, and now underpins most forms of rhythmic, amplified ensemble music. Prior to the ISB employing a specialist drummer, just about everyone in the band had a shot. Robin can be heard pattering through *Lordly Nightshade* (WTATBH) and in the rockier sections

of *White Bird* (CH) and *Queen Juanita* (STC); Licorice, often on the drum stool in concert, spanking the skins through such headbanging classics as *Lady Wonder* and *Down Before Cathay*, gives her all on *Bridge Theme* (U). Even Mike was seen to pitch in on occasion - eg. *The Bird That Lives On Rain* medley in late '72. The ISB also lured drummers from other bands onto odd album tracks: Dave Mattacks (Fairport Convention), Gerry Conway (Fotheringay), Alun Eden (Trees), B.J. Wilson (Procul Harum); and SMWBR features American sessioneer Mike Kowalski and a pseudonymous Keith Moon!

From time to time the ISB assembled less conventional kits of their own, usually consisting of ethnic drums of varying sizes. Examples can be heard on *When You Find Out Who You Are* (ILU), *Rainbow* (U), *Waiting For You* (BGFTSHNE); you can see one on the restored Woodstock footage.

DRUMS, CLAY:- See PERCUSSION

DULCIMER, HAMMER(ED):- A broad zither (see ZITHER) struck with hammers or beaters. It was introduced into Europe from the Middle East in the 11th century, and was popular among fashionable European audiences from the 17th to 19th century. It has survived as a folk instrument in many European countries, including England (where, curiously, it is largely confined to East Anglia). The prefix 'hammer(ed)' has been recently attached to distinguish it from the Appalachian dulcimer (which is actually a plucked zither rather than a true dulcimer). Mike used it to good effect on *Witches Hat* (HBD), and Licorice drew some suitably eerie timbres from it on *Pictures In A Mirror* (ILU). Last heard on the concert version of *Lord Of Weir*.



ELECTRIC GUITAR:- See GUITAR
ELECTRIC GUITAR
ELECTRIC PIANO:- See PIANO, ELECTRIC

F

FIDDLE:- In folk circles the violin is invariably known as the fiddle, though as a taxonomic term 'fiddle' embraces the whole range of bowed instruments. Robin used fiddle throughout the band's existence, particularly in the later phase of their career, and during Rose's time with the band, she occasionally 'doubled' with Robin, as on *Log Cabin Home In The Sky* (WTATBH) and *Black Jack Davy* (ILU). IN 1972 Stewart Gordon recorded with the band on fiddle and viola (see VIOLA) - on *My Father...*, *Antione* and *Black Jack David* (E), and on a radio session that found its way onto OA (*Black Jack David* again); but he seems never to have been on official member of the band, or of its 'extended family'. He went on to form the ISB-influence Shortwave Radio Band (and, incidentally, was a fellow-member of your author's in a theatre group in the late 60s).

FIDDLE, HARDANGER:- A modified violin developed in the area around Hardangerfjord in Norway. Usually beautifully carved and decorated, it is fitted with four additional resonating strings below the melody strings to give it a keening, droning sound. Used by Robin on *Banks Of Sweet Italy* (E).

FINGER CYMBALS:- See CYMBALS, FINGER

FLUTE:- Robin used a variety of flutes with the ISB. His flute playing is first heard on FTS (*No Sleep Blues*, *You Know What You Could Be*, *Gently Tender*), and the models used there are probably of North African origin, made of wood or cane. The Chinese flute (tizu) is occasionally used (*Lord Of Weir* (M), *Sailor And The Dancer* (E)), and an Indian Flute (probably the bansri) once - on *Through The Horned Clouds* (M). By 1971 Robin was also playing the metal concert flute, and on the odd song, both on record and in concert,



Robin and Mike, together with Mimi & Mouse, their pre- Stone Monkey 1960s dancers - demonstrate a variety of unusual instruments - work 'em out from the text!

was joined by Janet Shankman or by Susie-Watson-Taylor. Mike also had a stab at the instrument in concert, performing capably on *Willow Pattern* and perhaps less well on *Darling Belle* (both IC), and made a solitary appearance on vinyl on *Here Till Here Is There* (LAARTA). On *Glancing Love* (HRAST) Robin plays the lower alto flute.

FLUTE ORGAN:- See ORGAN, FLUTE

G

GIMBRI:- A small North African lute, more usually spelled **GUINBRI**, commonly played with a plectrum made from a "hard native reed" (to quote Robin); it is a popular street instrument and is associated with the Berber people. As far as can be discovered, Robin was the first person to take a bow to it (actually a double bass bow) - which is why it is sometimes prefixed 'bowed' in album credits. First heard on *Chinese White* (FTS), it was little used after U but made a poignant reappearance on the coda to Mike's pensive 1968 (OA) at

the very end of the band's career. It's hard to say whether the 'bass gimbril' listed on *Gently Tender* (FTS) is a different instrument - it could be the same one with the strings tuned slacker. Barry Dransfield, on his 1978 album *Bowing And Scraping*, plays a bowed gimbril on an instrumental version of Sandy Denny's *Who Knows Where The Time Goes*. It was hinted at the time that this was Robin's instrument, but this is evidently not so.

GLOCKENSPIEL:- Regarded in the West as something of a 'toy' instrument - one model was marketed in the 60s as the Pixiephone (as used by Tyrannosaurus Rex before truncation and teeny acclaim). It's sole appearance on record is on *Darling Belle* (LAARTA, also IC); it was also heard on the concert version of *Lord Of Weir*.

GONG:- See PERCUSSION

GUITAR, ACOUSTIC:- Central, of course, to the ISB sound from their folky beginnings to the rockular posturings of their final days. Though Mike and Robin were the band's 'specialist' acoustic guitarists, almost everyone picked one up at some time

or other, from Clive Palmer to Graham Forbes. Even Gerard Dott and Rose contributed modest measures of fret-fondling in live performances; to the author's knowledge, the only abstainee was drummer John Gilston.

As with Jansch and Renbourn in Pentangle, Mike and Robin brought quite contrasting styles as guitarists. At the outset both favoured fairly intricate finger-picking techniques, but as the arrangements grew more spacious less emphasis was placed on this approach. Mike's picking style became greatly simplified around the time of HBD, and he cultivated a vigorous strumming style from WTATBH onwards. By HBD he was playing a handmade guitar by John Bailey (the lutenist Robin is seen visiting on the *Be Glad* film) with a highly distinctive, almost abrasive tone. His second guitar, a 'very cheap' Japanese Cavalier, was occasionally seen in concert but seems not to have found its way onto record.

Of Robin's early efforts on guitar, the esteemed folk blues guitarist Wizz Jones reports that "he was much better at the bluesy, Broonzy-style guitar stuff than any of us". "Us" then included the likes of Jansch, Renbourn, Archie Fisher and John Martyn, as well as Wizz himself - illustrious company! That blues influence is everywhere apparent on the first album, but by FTS an utterly new element had entered his playing. The scurrying, flat-picked arabesques on *Eyes Of Fate*, *Painting Box* and *No Sleep Blues* seem to draw their inspiration from the North African oud styles Robin had been studying in Morocco the previous winter.

Those who bent an ear to *Born In Your Town* from the FTS demos at Hebden Bridge last January will have heard the influence even more plainly. It's clear that at this time Robin was working to liberate guitar accompaniment from the rhythmic constraints of the ubiquitous blues-based styles. The fact is that the Irish and Arab elements in his singing require something more flexible than conventional guitar techniques; years later he was to observe that "the harp is the instrument I should have been playing all along." This thought may have entered his mind in the early 70s, when he was employing a harp-like ripple effect (perhaps derived from flamenco?) on the guitar (cf. *Darling*

Belle (LAARTA) and *Will We Open The Heavens* (M)). The two influences - the harp and the oud - intertwine in his playing throughout the 70s, and it may be significant that when he took up the harp seriously his guitar playing reverted to the pure, oud-based flat-picking style. Robin's preferred guitar was a Swedish Levin, donated in the early 60s by a friend intending to become a monk! Robin stripped the varnish from the soundboard and decorated it lovingly with coloured inks: as seen and admired on the Julie Felix Show. It's been suggested that the American guitarist Happy Traum accidentally destroyed this guitar and, as an act of contrition, did the transcriptions for the first ISB songbook. This is not borne out by chronology: the songbook was published in 1968, whereas the Levin continued to give faithful service until 1972 (albeit with some sort of surgical attachment in the final months). (*Eds note: Robin informs me that the Traum/Foot/Levin story is not the case and that it was eventually stripped by aforementioned Lutenist, Bailey*).

Robin occasionally used 12-string guitar on record (*Time* (U), *My Blue Tears* (NRF)) and in concert; and Licorice played tenor guitar - a 4-string guitar devised in the 20s as an equivalent to the 4-string tenor banjo - on the Peruvian whistle tune featured on IC. Robin also had occasional recourse to Spanish (nylon-strung) guitar (*Banks Of Sweet Italy* (E), *Did I Love A Dream* (OA)), though sadly his accomplished flamenco technique, as evidenced on *El Ratto*, was never preserved on vinyl.

GUITAR, BASS:- First appeared on WTATBH, played mostly by Robin. In concert, however, the mantle fell early on Rose. Joe Boyd offers a somewhat jaundiced account of the politics surrounding this move. "On *Wee Tam* Licorice assumed a much stronger role. Robin then started bringing her in more and more, and writing stuff for her to sing. Mike was alarmed by this development, particularly when Robin mentioned taking her out on the road. He resisted it for a long time, but when it became an accomplished fact, he bought a bass, thrust it in Rose's hands at home and said, 'Learn this, you're going on the tour.' He knew the

balance of the group would be tilted if Licorice joined, unless Rose joined as well. I was appalled..."

Rose's own account is more laconic: "Mike came home one day with an electric bass and a Harvey Brooks record on how to play...and he said here you are, plug it in and get going." True to the ISB ethos, however, everyone played it at one time or another before Stan Lee was anointed official bassist in 1973.

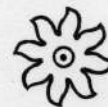
GUITAR, ELECTRIC:- Earliest album appearance was on *Changing Horses* (*Big Ted, Dust Be Diamonds, Mr And Mrs*), though Robin had attached a pick-up to his Levin acoustic to approximate an electric sound on *All Writ Down* (BGFTSHNE). Initially used exclusively as a lead instrument. Robin and Mike shared the duties (latterly with Jack Ingram) until Graham Forbes, "whose playing style," the Melody maker gleefully reported, "is said to resemble Rory Gallagher's", was drafted in as official plank-sparker.

GUITAR, SPANISH:- See GUITAR

GUITAR, STEEL:- Solid-bodied electric instrument plucked with fingerpicks or plectrum while sliding a metal bar - or 'steel' - along the strings. It comes in two forms: the Hawaiian or Lap Steel guitar, which, as the name implies, is usually played resting across the knees; and the Pedal Steel guitar, which is mounted on a stand and has floor pedals and knee levers for changing string tunings during play. The Pedal Steel is an elaboration of the Hawaiian. Stan Lee's Pedal Steel adorns the coda of *Talking Of The End* (LAARTA), *Rends-Moi Demain* (M and OA) and *Sandy Land* (M), and was a prominent feature in the concert arrangement of *Down Before Cathay*.

GUITAR, TENOR:- See GUITAR

GUITAR, 12 STRING:- See GUITAR



There Is A Music.....

*There is a music that will melt blood and bone
there is a flood that will wash away the rock of the mind
I have heard it hinted as the wind blew through a herbal portal
I have heard it hissing on the waves of a self created sea
I have dreamed it in the chambered mountains of my body's dreams
I have imagined it in moments of sorrow and in hours of joy
I have remembered it in visions of the lost children of the slender air
it creaks in the hinges of forgotten doorways
it is played on the harp haired gods by the fingers of tomorrow
it is held in the ace flashing cards of the seeming silent stones
it is cradled precious in the water quality of every blue bellied lake
played always but we hardly hear it
lost in the pursuit of that which has already snared us
this music
it kills the scaly shell it blinds the shadow
it is to be found in the stretching out of a hand
or in the opening of an eye*