

# The British Rock Symphony

TIM JONES HAS A HEARTY LARF WITH  
ROGER DALTRY, THE WHO FRONTMAN  
WITH MORE THAN ONE STRING TO HIS BOW

**R**oger Daltry, singer, actor and loud tenor, was in fine fettle when he paid a visit to London to promote his latest artistically-leathered rock extravaganza. Still the steady stream down the pub, he laughed at the "bestie presentation" surroundings of his post-hall, before talking about his latest project.

The British Rock Symphony is a concept album and live show involving 100, which took the USA by storm and arrived on these shores this month. Roger Frampton, a veteran of the American performance, was one of the many big names contributing to renditions of classic songs for such regards as the Who (naturally), the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and the Rolling Stones.

The array of talent on the album, produced by Ron Jackson, also includes Paul Rodgers and his partners, Geoff Whitham, Alice Cooper, The Kinks, Ann Wilson (Heart), Tommy Stinson (Steel), John Bonick (The Who), Ian Stanley, and Roger Kennedy.

**Do you ever have fun with your album's look, Tim?**

It wasn't the who got it together but producer David Flood. At Christmas '81, he said, "I want to get a rock band and orchestra and choir, and play the music of all the great rock and roll bands. What do you think?" I said, "I've experimented with orchestras and it works wonderfully when the songs are well structured and the orchestra doesn't play music. It's some of the best music you'll ever hear, but you'll go broke doing it!"

He said, "What do you, headline is how I got one together!" I said, "NO! I had a lot of going work, the Who had just finished touring 'Quadrophenia' and I just didn't want to be on the road for a while. Then my friend, the producer Keith Greenstein, who I'd recommended to David, phoned me and said, "There's got students from the Royal College of Music and this choir from Berlin. I won't headline, it won't happen. Just think of the benefits that there'll be for these students and their kids — can't you just do it for that?" I said, "Oh... alright!" And the record did nothing at all: the students and kids — to watch them develop their confidence.

I was nervous early on, but I was very aware that it could become stupid. "Terry Lane," for instance, is great when the Beatles play it, but it can only be music 'cos it always was music! Laughed, but I hadn't been in that situation since the 60s with the Who, playing water pipes, struggling to make something work. I really got off on that, and he proved there was an audience for it — he'd been touring (quite a right, which is good when people don't know what it is). They love it's symphonic rock, but I don't. It's a rock band, but a great one, not an orchestra just playing rock.

**Had you worked with Peter Frampton at any of the others before?**

Peter did the first show in New York, but I didn't. It's a tour that changes lineup. It's headline for these shows, but someone else can take over. Alan Cooper did one in Australia, and Peter's Paul Rodgers. Robin Burdon's on it too. He's brilliant. If I ever get a rock band together and go out and play, that's my best man. When he had joined the Who, he had the usual problems of excess of substances and he found it very difficult to live on the road. But he's come through all that and turned into a lovely human being.

**When you started out, James the Blue, you were the Outlaws, and then the High Numbers. What music were you doing then?**

The Outlaws was when I was fourteen — it's a bloody long time ago! We did Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Bo Diddley — a "great old" band on the pub circuit. Whatever was in the chart, we had to reproduce for the following weekend. We even did the jazz — John was trumpet. Pete was horns, I was members around like an Irish show band!

Then we got into blues. Pete went to an school and met this guy with a huge record collection, and we saw (down back). That's really where we started to develop our own thing, but blues isn't get monotonous. You have to be in a particular mood, and when you're young, you can't be down forever! So when I got to the point the foundation of 'Oh, how me, it's another one of those "beatle-like numbers" came out. That's where all the feedback and oh's started and now the Who's music was born.

**Do you have any amusing stories from the time that are published?**

The 60s was like a big, bloody party! You'd go out to clubs, with your mates, and it's with the Beatles and the Stones, Marley. And I think the funniest one was the last of Clapton's, Beavis and Teacup's time, when we went to see that Jimi Hendrix gig at Blaxton in '68. We went all day... looks stupid, and laughs. I think I'm good. "I'm going home to practice!" I mean, it did make you feel like going up.

What I mean regarding Led along the road here (at Hagan's) was at 1961, and no Lambert (the Who's co-manager) brought me in, having just signed him — he used the money out on a two-night in a restaurant (I thought Jimi had got the wild hair, and we were like, "back!" or... "what's that?") He was such a gentleman and a quiet bloke, but he looked like a typing machine! He said, "You a guitarist were just signed."

Four weeks later, "the Jim" came out, and that's when he got his first showcase at Blaxton, and everyone was good, but then he stage and get change a lot, and he came in at four o'clock. Unhappy, he was just playing songs. All that stuff with the guitar, head-bob, banging the speakers, with pure Teacupism. What I mean doing at that time '64, so we let a lot happened. Obviously he went home and practiced as well. Probably your best known album is "Tommy," isn't it?

It's a shame, 'cos it's not our best work by far (laughs) but I think it was a gear change for the whole pop industry, doing with "Tommy."

**New generations know "Tommy" from record to stage. What do you think about them, and performers in them, the Who?**

That, in '80, we did charity gigs with Paul Collins and Billy Joel. Billy was great as cover! Brian, and as the Ace Face in "Quadrophenia". Only he wasn't right for that, so we changed to a young one, but it more worked for me, simply because Billy wasn't the right age. He was representing what was going on in the head of a pissed-up kid, and the fact that Billy had was a star (it

the way. What was needed was an ordinary kid, and the 26-year-old we got it. Ben (Wilson), was brilliant. The last show at Kennedy was some of the best we ever did. We also had Guy Fisher as the guitarist, and a lot of talent in its midst. One he never got it right [laughs] it added to it — the fact that he could never get the kick tempo together with the group [laughs].

**What did you think of the competing that was done on the radio album?**

I don't know why they do it and spend so much time on it. There's something about the old and stay on the original that I like. [laughs] Some people like them, some hate them. I like the old ones.

**Did you select the bonus tracks on your own-released 2004 CD?**

I just let 'em get on with it. I don't give a shit, to be honest [laughs].

**I hear you're doing a film about Keith's life. Is that?**

Yeah, and there's another film that I'm shooting being made [laughs] I tried to work with them, only their budget is crap. It's so tight, it'll be a misery if that was ever planned to be a document on the life of Keith Moon. We'll see who gets their film made first. ... Well, see who gets the film with any film music in it [laughs] I can't see this year but we'll see get made, but I've got great people now, and I'm just waiting for another song, any week now. All I can say is, I've got the best possible chance of getting it made now. If I don't, I still don't want to see the other one made. It's Hollywood. Although he lived at the junction of it, the one thing Keith Moon wasn't, was Hollywood. He was much more-just and honest, and dangerous.

The song they've got is by Dick Clement and Ian Le Franks, and it's written like a TV sitcom. I don't think that works for cinema. It isn't going to be about a character like Bob Dylan, there has to be a hell of a lot of subtextual stuff/character. It's sort of like the *Boyz n the City* with Moon in it, there are too many sub-plot notes. A film can never be the truth, but I think it could capture his true personality. There's gonna have to be some things that people are familiar with, but I want it to be true to the composer.

**What did you think of the book *Dear Boy* about Keith?**

I flicked through it, and it's typical of what's always happened in film. Most of the people giving the information either aren't there, or when they were there, they were either drunk or on drug addies. One of the biggest problems about Keith's life was that he was surrounded by them. So when's your sense of normality? The book has more in it than most books do that is correct about Moon. But there's still an awful lot that isn't.

**What do you recall about doing the *Picture Memory* album gig?**

I don't think it did — and it was good fun. Cool what I like about the great groups is that

they're so unique, and that uniqueness survives even the loss of a member. Without Freddie, you're still on stage with Queen, and as soon as they pick up, the songs they tried it. Looking 'til, it's Queen 'til. If the *Wings* played it, it sounds like the *Wings*, even if I wasn't there and someone else was singing to the sound of the *Wings*.

It was a one-off, as I'm partly inclusive. With my [other] work, I'm usually away in America. In fact, the next film will probably have to go. 'Cos I can't be here now. Last year, I did a live with



Christopher Lloyd, which was fun. This year I'm going to Robert Redford's *Business First* in a very sweet genre production of *Oliver*. Then I'm gonna do a quality American sitcom with Lyn Collins.

I love love and I'd like to work here, but unfortunately, the stars are here. I don't know any thing, 'cos *McFlyer* was very successful. I did *Stratospaces* for the BBC, which got great reviews, so why don't I get offered more? I don't give a shit. People can't see me as anything other than McFlyer and I'm not like that. You want the ropes, just my damn polishing turds on American TV!

**I heard that Pete Townshend is writing an album about UFOs. How do you feel anything about that?**

He probably is. I've heard that he's doing a *Radio Utopia*. Earth-shaking isn't it. At least he believes, I think [laughs].

**Do you have any favorite new artists?**

A guy I discovered last year was Don Bunn, an American humourist folk singer. But the person who's turned me on most recently is Peter Palmer. He now stuffs in shockers looking outstanding. He's almost Oscar brilliant, but the supreme everything.



**How do you make any guest appearances that colleagues would look out for?**

The one I'm most proud of is the live show I did with the *Who* at the Boston Court House. I sang a couple of their songs, and I made them go 'behind the bars' that 'What's New?' which is the track on the record. People in America could not believe the *Who* were playing that [laughs]. They got them that first *Who*, and I was that song that got the record released. Only matter is, they got the fucking Grammy and I didn't, 'cos I was only a guest singer. In fact, I didn't even get paid. 'Cos Freddie loved to sleep with a long-haired woman [laughs]. So there anyone who you haven't played with who you'd like to?

Eric Burdon, [laughs] how fun. Let's be short to be serious, especially about music!

The British Rock Symphony play the Royal Albert Hall 22 July, Ponderosa Castle, Essex 27 July, Reggae Hall 27 July, Liverpool 28 July, 29 July, Birmingham 29 July, Manchester 27 July, Blackby Hall, Newcastle 28 July and Castle Howard, York 29 July.