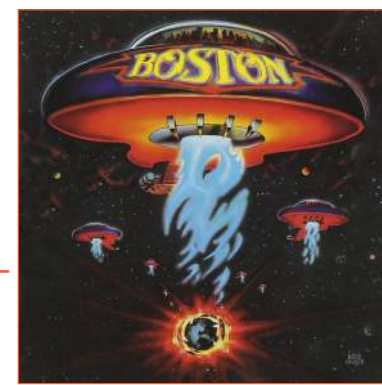


# THE MASTER MIND



**Tom Scholz**, the brains behind **Boston**, isn't a man who craves publicity. So when *Rock Candy Mag* persuaded the reluctant superstar creator of 'More Than A Feeling' - one of the greatest rock songs of all time - to go deep on the mechanics of making the classic 1976 'Boston' debut album, we knew we'd get a fascinating interview. We weren't disappointed. Words by *Jon Hotten*.

**SPEAKING FROM HIS HOME** in Boston - where else? - Scholz is reflecting on a career and life so multi-faceted that a single word seems insufficient to describe it. And if there's perhaps a note of insecurity in the above statement, no doubt it can be assuaged by the 75 million sales of Boston's six studio records and the creation of one of radio rock's greatest songs, the timeless 'More Than A Feeling'. As the ground-breaking first Boston record marks its 45th anniversary, Scholz has agreed to look back at the record's extraordinary creation with *Rock Candy Mag*, and it's an origin story like no other.

**DONALD THOMAS** Scholz was born on 10 March 1947 in Toledo, Ohio, and grew up in nearby Ottawa Hills, where his father Don designed prefab houses. The young Scholz was an outstanding student, played piano and varsity basketball, and then graduated from one of America's most prestigious universities, MIT in Boston, with a Master's degree in mechanical engineering. He was employed as a senior product designer at the film and camera company Polaroid, where he worked on sound systems for their revolutionary home movie cameras.

Tom took the job seriously, but he also played guitar in rock'n'roll bands, such as Freehold and Middle Earth, and keyboards in Mother's Milk, alongside future Boston guitarist Barry Goudreau. "It was only on weekends, though," he says. Possessed of the fierce logic of a problem solver's mind, Scholz soon realised that he'd have to work a lot harder and a lot longer if he were to fulfil his desire to create something truly special. He began writing in earnest and recording in local studios, before embarking on the process of designing and building his own home studio. Here, in his twenties, he began painstakingly reproducing and recording the sounds he heard in his head. He played every instrument, wrote every note of every song, and auditioned singers - mostly female. Demos were sent out to labels and were duly rejected. Eventually Scholz recruited another former Mother's Milk member, Brad Delp, as vocalist.

Married and approaching 30, Scholz rolled the musical dice one last time. He recorded a new six-song demo in the basement with Delp, and with the aid of promoter/

manager Paul Ahern soon secured a deal with Epic, which was part of the CBS corporation. Interestingly enough, the project was named Boston only *after* Scholz had signed with the label. With the help of co-producer John Boylan, Scholz then battled the record company for the right to use his own studio, dubbed Foxglove, to cut the debut 'Boston' album, at one point sending Delp out to Los Angeles as "a decoy" to lay down some backing vocals, while he secretly worked on the album in his converted basement filled with home-made gear.

**THE ALBUM**, led by its signature track 'More Than A Feeling' was released in August 1976, and did nothing less than redefine American music, ushering in an era of radio rock that would soon benefit the likes of Kansas, Foreigner, Journey, and Pat Benatar.

Pressured into a quick follow-up, Scholz and Boston made 1978's 'Don't Look Back', another multi-platinum hit, but one that saw Scholz decide he would never again release *anything* until he was completely satisfied with it. 'Third Stage' came out in 1986, and featured the band's first US number one single, 'Amanda'. It didn't appear on Epic, though. Boston had moved to MCA after a protracted legal battle with CBS.

Despite his enormous musical success Scholz was still curious and restless to explore other areas of life that were driven by his passions. He'd begun Scholz Research and Development Inc. to design and build sound equipment, manufacturing the hugely successful Rockman line of products and scratching his engineering itch in the process. It became a multi-million-dollar business that he would eventually sell to Dunlop in 1995.

**BRAD DELP** left Boston for the first time during the making of the 'Walk On' album, which came out in 1994 featuring Fran Cosmo on vocals, and the pair would both appear on 2002's 'Corporate America'. Delp sadly passed in 2007, committing suicide at the age of 55.

Since then, Scholz and Boston have released 2013's 'Life, Love And Hope' and have continued to tour, with the promise of more new music to come. As a long-time vegetarian, animal rights activist, and advocate

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