



THE CURIOUS RUMINANT

Jethro Tull leader Ian Anderson's mind is as sharp as ever, and as the legendary band return with a 24th studio album, *Howard Johnson* finds him in great form; engaged, loquacious, and reflecting at length not only on music, but on life itself...

THERE ARE TIMES AS a rock journalist when even the best-laid plans go astray. It's not happened too often over the course of my 40-year plus career, but if there's one thing I've learned in that time, it's that when it does there's really not very much you can do about it. When it turns out that your interviewee isn't much interested in the fact that you've compiled meticulous notes and queries with which to drive the shape and context of the conversation, then your best bet is simply to rip them up and deal with what's in front of you. Sometimes it happens because the person you're facing doesn't really want to be there and is making it perfectly clear that the task at hand is beneath them. That's not a particularly comfortable place to be. But sometimes - as is the case with Jethro Tull leader Ian Anderson - it happens because the musician has *so many* ideas and notions whizzing around their head at one time that following a linear or chronological line of enquiry is all but impossible. Their synapses just don't match up that way. This isn't born of ill will, a desire to blow the journalist off course just for the sheer hell of it. No, it's born of a curiosity that stretches far further than the boundaries of their own music, or of music in general, and a need to think, to question, to investigate all aspects of this weird and wonderful thing we call life.

Within five minutes of starting what turns out to be a two-hour conversation with Anderson, I've already mentally ripped up my notes and have readied myself

for a free-form dialogue that will cover topics as wide-ranging and disparate as the conflict in the Middle East, Taylor Swift, the artist Damien Hirst, the ancient amphitheatre at Ephesus, Manchester United, and Iron Maiden shopping at Waitrose. Which means that if you've come for an in-depth chronological analysis of the

50-plus year career of Tull, well you're going to have to move along, nothing to see here. But if you're at all interested in the inner workings of Ian Anderson's formidable mind, and plenty of insightful musings on the vocalist, flautist, and guitarist's endlessly fascinating time at the head of Tull, then pull up a chair, settle down, and settle in. You're in for a real treat...

HELLO IAN, NICE TO MEET YOU. WE'RE NOMINALLY HERE TO DISCUSS JETHRO TULL'S 24TH STUDIO ALBUM, 'CURIOUS RUMINANT'. SO TELL ME, HOW DO YOU STILL FIND THE INSPIRATION TO CREATE WHEN YOU'VE ALREADY COME UP WITH SO MUCH MUSIC IN YOUR CAREER?

"It's born out of a mixture of desperation, of being both blessed and afflicted by visitations from the muse. I say desperation because at my time of life there's an

inevitable awareness that I don't have that long to go. My mental and physical capabilities may be on the wane in two years' time, five years' time, whatever it might be. So there's a feeling in the background, a sort of a desperation to do the things I want to do... *and to*



"BACK IN THE '60S AND '70S YOU GOT TOGETHER SOCIALLY TO LISTEN TO AN ALBUM, NOT JUST HEARING IT IN THE BACKGROUND WHILE YOU'RE HAVING A DINNER PARTY OR SOMETHING."

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