



Photo: Jini Crutchley

# THE CHOSEN ONE

Former Deep Purple legend **Glenn Hughes** has enjoyed a stellar 50-plus year career of bands, collaborations, and solo records. As he releases 'Chosen', his first solo album in nine years, Hughes discusses his work with *Howard Johnson*, and ponders whether he might now have made his last rock solo recording...

**YOU MAY WELL HAVE** noticed that rock music is all about opinions, and it wouldn't be half as much fun if we all shared the same one, would it? Debating the relative merits of the bands we listen to is all part of the pleasure, has been since time immemorial, and it's rare to find unanimity in an art form that's so intensely personal. Glenn Hughes might be the exception that proves the rule, though, because it's really hard to find someone who *doesn't* give a massive nod of approval to the notion that the man from Cannock in the English Midlands, the man who turns 74 years old this August, is blessed with the greatest voice of them all.

Since the singer and bassist made his recording debut with Trapeze back in 1970 (if we discount the novelty song 'Sadie (The Cleaning Lady)' that he played bass on in his first band Finders Keepers in 1968), Hughes has constantly been hailed as 'best in class' – and with good reason. His ability to deliver stellar performances – at one and the same time controlled, soulful, and high-wire in their ambition – has never been bettered. No wonder that in 1973 Hughes was chosen together with David Coverdale to be part of a two-man vocal force to replace Ian Gillan in behemoths Deep Purple, a move that he interestingly calls "a heavy rock derailment" when we speak today. That's because there's always been more to Glenn Hughes than the long-haired rocker blessed with what he himself calls "The Turbo Voice." Of course Hughes can play that role – and play it better than pretty much any other hard rock guy out there – but he's insistent that there's much, much more than that in his locker.

"Whenever I go into the studio there are four or five different Glenns that show up," he tells me by way of explanation. "There's the rock Glenn, there's the funk Glenn, there's the pop Glenn, and then there's the jazzy Glenn. They're all there and really

the question for me is always, 'Who are you going to serve today?'"

Hughes was asking himself exactly that question last year when he wrote and recorded 'Chosen', his 15th solo album that's released on 5 September. Readers of *Rock Candy Mag* will be pleased to hear that this new piece of work is very much a rock record, but nevertheless it's a rock record that grooves with that innate funkiness that is the Glenn Hughes trademark. Opening song 'Voice In My Head' tells you all you need to know about where Glenn Hughes is at right now. It's a song that's as powerful emotionally as it is musically; a sinewy number that blends hard

with soft, and groove with power, in a way that's quite frankly beyond most rock musicians. There's plenty more where that came from too, on a 10-track album that shows that well into his eighth decade there's much fire still left in the Hughes belly. Songs such as 'My Alibi' and 'Chosen' push out giant riffs, yet cloak them in spacey, groove-driven sheens that serve Hughes's amazingly flexible voice incredibly well. This is genuinely good stuff from a man operating in an arena where it has to be said much of the new music that appears from old stagers feels like a pale imitation of the protagonists' former glories. Not 'Chosen', though. This is a rock album that bristles with intent and purpose. Glenn Hughes is absolutely *not* treading water here. But even though 'Chosen' feels like it's laser-focused, Glenn claims he's not exactly sure where this rock music business is going exactly.

"Rock is basically a dying art form," he tells me with what appears to be all due sincerity. "In five or six years time there'll be no Rolling Stones, no Who, no Rod Stewart, bless him. Even if those guys are all still alive, the likelihood is that those bands from the '60s and '70s will no longer be

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