

BIG COUNTRY

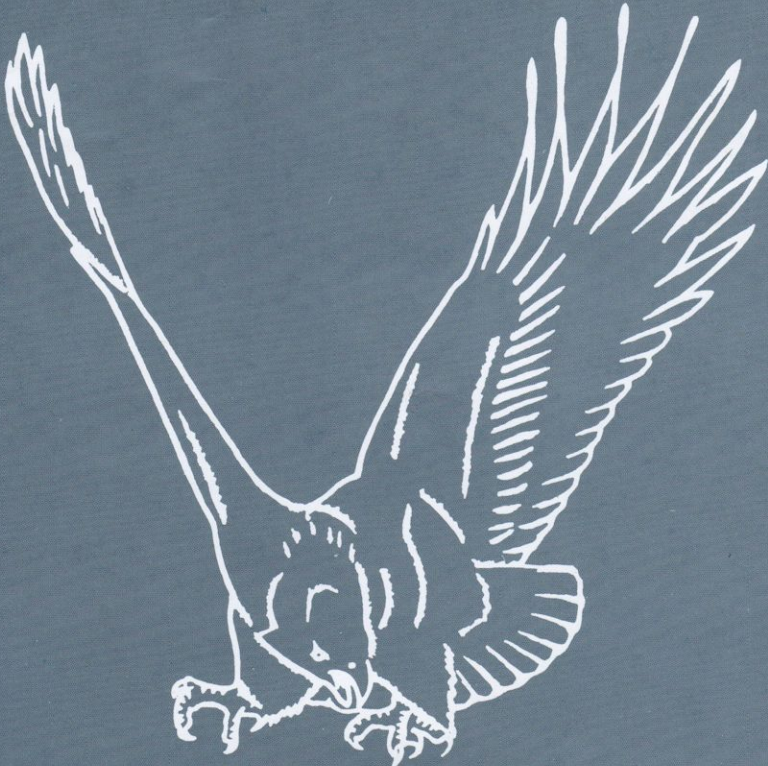
THE SEER TOUR '86



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

THE SEER TOUR '86

- March 9th Haenhos, Geleen, Holland
March 10th De Oosterpoort, Groningen, Holland
March 11th Paradiso, Amsterdam, Holland
March 15th Grugahalle, Essen, W. Germany
March 21st City Hall, Newcastle
March 22nd Caird Hall, Dundee
March 23rd Playhouse, Edinburgh
March 25th Odeon, Birmingham
March 26th Odeon Hammersmith
March 27th Academy Theatre, Brixton
March 28th Hippodrome, Bristol
March 30th Arts Centre, Poole
March 31st Civic Hall, Guildford
April 1st Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
April 2nd City Hall, Sheffield
April 3rd Apollo, Manchester



BIG COUNTRY



I haven't seen Stuart Adamson in over a year but if Big Country are back on the road and recording again, I know he must have good reasons why. A year's a damn long time in pop so, lest we forget, Big Country were more than a band when we somehow lost them, they were an attitude, not so much a reaction against the early Eighties' music scene wilfully surrendering to the accustomed ritual of idols and fans as a passionate crusade, a belief in the power of pop to bring people together in an emotional communion. And, if that sounds pompous, let's put it another way: Big Country were all about having fun together without any of the old star bullshit.

Just as the punk revolution had inspired Adamson to form The Skids up in Fife way back in '77 because it represented to him freedom of expression, so Big Country were to represent a fresh start. But punk was soon trivialised into pseudo-political negativity — No Future — and spikey hair became an hypocrisy masking the same old routine so Stuart quit. Big Country were his second stab at the heart of pop, founded on enthusiasm and experience, the basis of a better hereafter.

Well, the band did their bit but it wasn't to be — pop's still the same stinking celebrity game and, fatigued and deflated, Adamson took Big Country off the scene for a while. Naturally, rumours were rife of band break-ups and nervous breakdowns brought on by the impossibility of the task Big Country had set themselves. Possibly the gossip was true — certainly the ideal was tough enough — to play pop as if it had never been played before while appreciating that clichés are oft-repeated solely because their meanings are true.

In challenging cynicism and refuting gimmickry for rousing, traditional guitar-based rock, Big Country relied upon their music being accepted the way it was given but the obstacles they ran up against were formidable. If their honesty was every translated into one more commercial angle it's because they became so popular, because their songs touched us, because the business was incapable of manipulating them any other way and we were incapable of appreciating them on any other level than hero worship.

And so Stuart Adamson became a hero, the people's champion, against his express wishes. He could understand it alright, he could even appreciate the irony of telling folks not to follow leaders but he simply couldn't stomach the fuss — pop *should* be honest so where's the big deal?

Anyway, irrespective of the reasons for their protracted rest, Big Country are back and any attempt to continue the crusade on their behalf will inevitably be launched on the back of their past









achievements. So, remember Spring '81, after The Skids, Adamson picking up with a younger fellow from Fife, Bruce Watson, a skinny guitarist notorious for a pair of boots that glowed green at the local disco after he'd been scrubbing down nuclear subs for a living. Remember how they roped in a couple of local lads and debuted the band, disastrously, on a bill supporting Alice Cooper. Remember, too, how Stuart and Bruce met and matched up with bassist Tony Butler and drummer Mark Brzezicki, a pair renowned around the London studios as ace-sessioners Rhythm For Hire. And recall those singles, "Harvest Home" and "In A Big Country", "Fields Of Fire" and "Chance", "Wonderland" and "Where The Rose Is Sown", those chiming guitars, dubbed forever the "bagpipe" sound, celebratory terrace anthems and that initial, echoing call of intent: "Just as ye sow, ye shall reap". Look, I'm not a great one for pop history — that's just another lucrative way for hacks to indulge their nostalgia for profit. No, what matters to me is that I still play "Steel Town" and its predecessor, "The Crossing" — two LP's that mirrored the concerns of their times perfectly and still mean something today in their sympathetic evocations of the widespread despondency in the face of unemployment and the destruction of communities by an uncaring government. And again, over and above all that, there's a poetic, even mystical lyrical dimension to Big Country songs, drawing on Adamson's beloved Scotland, granting them a context, a dogged, hopeful permanence in the face of shifting values. The music industry today is in as much of a mess as it was when Big Country started — clones still pursue clones into the charts — and now, as then, this band must entertain their mission impossible. The fight's still to fight and, now as then, this group stand for pride, the bringing together of people not for adulation but for strength and sharing. So, Big Country are back where they belong, playing for us. And there's no need to worry — they aren't old-fashioned because they aren't fashioned at all. They're as real as can be and that still counts. A lot.

STEVE SUTHERLAND
March '86



Bruce's Diary

9/11/85 — Got the phone call from the office informing us that we should be on the next flight down to London for the recording session. Phonogram have booked us into R.A.K. studios for a few weeks so we should have a bit of time to get some backing tracks down before we go to New York with Roger Daltrey.

We made it just in time for the usual 10:40 flight which was being refuelled on the tarmac. As we boarded the plane I noticed the amount of stewards now flying with the airline company. I can remember the time when it was usually all female staff who were so lovely, polite and eager to please, that it used to be a pleasure to fly down to London. Now it's all these effeminate blokes with faces that would worry a rat and uniforms that smell of garlic and aunties.

"Would you like a sweetie sir?", said the steward with the grey face just before take off.

"Not from you mate", I replied.

10/11/85 — The company have put Stuart and I in a luxury flat just off the Bayswater Road. It is a lovely apartment with ornate walls, and ceilings with corniceing. Even the toilet is cleaner than my own home.

Tony came round this evening with his new computer games. Most popular of the batch being "Kill the Woman", "Scab" and "Prison Shower Room".

11/11/85 — R.A.K. studios has now opened a new games room since we were last here, including Multigym, Table Tennis etc.

Mark and Les (Stage Manager) are tennis champs so far, Mark having adopted the "floppy limp back hand serve" method and Les the "if anybody beats me I'll kill the bastard" approach.


Tony's older brother, Lennox (who incidentally looks more like Tony than say — Stuart does) is now cooking meals at the studio for us.

We are also joined by Will Goslin (engineer) and Robin Miller (producer). The last time we saw Will was when we were in Sweden working on Steel Town with Steve Lillywhite. He is looking a lot healthier now and has obviously had his haircut repaired. Talking of which, Mark could do with a bit of a trim. Ever since doing that session for The Cult, his barnet has got longer and longer. He was thinking of having it streaked paisley pattern, but reckoned it would clash with his new flock patterned drum kit.









12/11/85 — Les is in a bad mood this morning. He is discussing with Stuart and Mark, the topic of child abuse in the country today.

"If I ruled this country I would go through the telephone directory and kill one in four people, that would sort out those spineless shits". With that he walked out as if he was on some sort of mission or something, muttering obscenities and curses under his breath.

13/11/85 — Will and Robin are really going to town on the drum sound with Mark. Last time I heard a bang like that was the one o'clock gun that gets fired once a day in Edinburgh.

At dinner time we started fantasizing about what it would be like if we were conscripted into the army during the second world war and captured by the Germans. Most of us admitted that if we were going to be tortured by the SS we would probably squeal.

"Yes, I'll talk", shouted Stuart. "There's no way you're going to give me the hot lead enema". Screams of pain echoed round the room.

"Robin, turn that bloody reverb down, there are screams of pain echoing all around the room", I said.

Mark decided that he wouldn't be too keen to join the escape committee as there was no way he was going to get dressed up in one of those jaggy material civilian suits that the P.O.W.'s were making out of old potato sacks and glue. "Chaff me bloody skin that would", he said in disgust.

"You wouldn't get me on the committee any way", said Les, "You'd be in the RAF and we'd be in the commandos and commandos hate the RAF. In fact we'd probably grass you off to the kommandant as a spy and you'd be shot".

"Aha, but I'd be in with the kommandant anyway", said Mark "because I'd be doing a session playing drums with the prison guards band".

"You rat", screamed Les, "I'm going to fill the nose of that glider I've seen you building on top of the studio roof with cement".

14/11/85 — The songs are shaping up nicely as Stuart has put down some of the vocals. "The Seer" and "Remembrance Day" in particular are going to be classics. Favourite guitars at the moment are Gibson Les Paul's and Moon customs. Tony has also acquired a couple of new Fenders.

15/11/85 — The tape machine in the studio has broken down this morning so there's not much to do. The topic of death came into the conversation as it usually does from time to time in our little gathering. Stuart reckons that drowning must be the worst.

"I couldn't give a toss", said Les, "Life is tough and then you die, so what's the point in going on about it. God, the sooner the bomb drops the better. At least I won't have to put up with you whining wimps anymore."

"I don't want to die like that", replied Stuart.

"Well I'm not bothered", said Tony, "You know something, if I died tomorrow, I'd love to come back as a woman just to see what it would be like."

"Yeah, that's not a bad idea", quipped Mark.

Funny that, most of us admitted that we wouldn't mind coming back as women.

"Well maybe for a week or so", said Mark.

"Huh, you're all one step away from homosexuality anyway you cissy bastards", howled Les. "Why the hell do you all want to become women for? Christ I don't know how anybody can believe in all this reincarnation crap, knowing your luck you'll all probably all come back as dildos or something, women, I shit 'em".

Break of recording for a few days to go to America to support Roger Daltrey.

Warm up date, Utica, New York.

Utica was strange. A small town in upstate New York which could have come straight from the pages of "uncanny tales". A lot of people resembled genetic mishaps. Big Joe reckoned that they must have been involved in a uranium experiment gone wrong or that a dreaded crippling ugly ray had been fired the day the wind changed in this quaint little northern town.

Mark discovered a new way of amusing himself by sliding his right arm out of his sleeve and making a fist under his sweater, he then put his left hand through the wristband of his right sleeve and by making alternative thrusting movements with both arms and shouting "Howzat" with a lisp, he could do cracking impressions of "The Rampant Cricketer".

Boston — I think Boston could rank as one of my favourite cities in the States. It seems quite easy going and not a bit heavy like some of America's bigger cities. Tonight's gig was fantastic and the punters here really go out of their way to enjoy themselves.





Roger Daltrey seems a pleasant enough bloke, quite chatty and comes across as being "a bit of a lad".

Madison Square Garden, New York.

The Seer Tour the seer tour

Sunday 9/3/86 — Maastricht

Sat at the airport bar with Joe, Stuart and new tour manager, Peter Stevens. This morning's discussions were directed towards freemasons and pornography. We reckoned that a mason's favourite porno movie might be "Deep Goat" or "How Tight Was My Apron".

Maastricht on a Sunday is as expected, quiet. The gig was anything but though.

Tony, as usual, attempted "spew up" after the show as he always does first night on the road.

"Meatballs", shouted Mark.

Nothing.

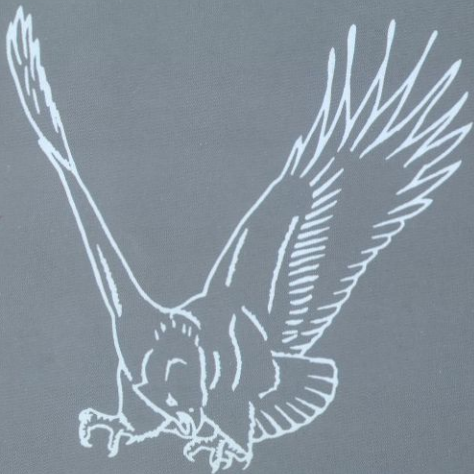
"Ravioli", replied Joe.

Nothing.

"A big dog turd", screamed Stuart.

HEUGGHHA . . . SPLAT! And then there was sick.

11/3/86 — Crossed the Afsluitdijk en route to Amsterdam which is a 20 mile long man-made causeway. Tonight's gig is in the infamous Paradiso Club so it looks like it is going to be a hot one. Seemingly everyone who has been to Amsterdam in the past has said that it has become very tacky now and is nowhere as good as it used to be. Went down the canals and red light district to have a look at Amsterdam's famous windows. It was not a pretty sight. The road crew celebrated my birthday with me by presenting me with an inflatable doll. Her name is Mabel and she looks quite cute.







STUART ADAMSON	Guitars & Vocals
MARK BRZEZICKI	Drums & Vocals
TONY BUTLER	Bass & Vocals
BRUCE WATSON	Guitar & Vocals

Grant/Edwards Mgmt.
30 Bridstow Place
London W2
Asst: Katie Asling

Management

Peter Stevens	Tour Manager
Pete Barnes	Production Manager
Les King	Stage Manager
Joe Seabrook	Security
Dino	Security
Kevin Hartman	House Sound
Paul Monahan	Monitor Engineer
Dave Taraskevics	Third Man
Pete Kapilodias	Lighting — UK & Europe
Andy Taylor	Lighting — UK
Dave Davis	Guitar Technician
Ron Manigley	Drum Technician

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