

WE SAVE NO SOULS!

The BIG COUNTRY Fanzine.

issue one-may 1989.

Phew! What a busy 9 months it's been since the phenomenon that is 'Peace In Our Time' started. Well here it is, 'WE SAVE NO SOULS' in all it's black & white glory, and a lot of hard work and patience have been put into it, so I hope that you enjoy what you read.

REQUEST TIME:

- 1) The next issue will be out on July 1st, and will cover the upcoming gigs, could people please send in live reviews, amusing stories, and, illegal though it is, live photos. I will try and get some from Guildford on June 2nd, but the more the merrier. By the way, is anyone reading this going to be at the gig? If so, maybe we can get together and discuss things? Give us a ring if you are.
- 2) Can anyone act as leaflet distributors at the gigs? The job will only take 10 minutes, and there's a packet of smarties for anyone who can do it. Again, please ring or write...soon.
- 3) Does anyone have any live tapes of BC, U2, Simple Minds, REM, Diesel Park West or INXS? Again, please ring, or write if you can't talk.
- 4) Anyone into Balaam & the Angel? Write to:
BEDINI LORENZO

ITALY.
- 5) Upon reading this, you will discover the total and utter lack of artwork. This is for the simple reason that I cannot draw. I need an Art Editor and people to send in suggestions. Again, please please please get in contact with me.
- 6) Anyone got any audio interviews or privately owned pictures of the band? If so, need I say anymore?

Read on

Right then, just to kick off the fanzine, I think that I should let you know a little bit about myself, and my love of the band. I first became interested, like many of you, when 'Fields of Fire' was released as a single. At the time I was nearly eleven years old, my birthday being the 2nd April 1972. I only heard it because Mike Read was playing it to death on his early morning breakfast show. The thing was, to put it simply, the song stood out from all the bullshit that was going on at the time, and still does to a certain extent. I went out the same day that I heard it and bought the thing. This soon bought about my financial downfall as from then onwards, anything they did, I bought. When 'The Crossing' came out, I was absolutely amazed. How could any group make as bold a statement as they did. The whole album stood out, and must rate as one of the top albums of the decade. After 'Chance' came 'Wonderland', a move in direction, which saw Stuart get into the role of a working man, and this was expressed through his lyrics, and this continued right through to the 'Steeltown' album. The critics, and the public, did not like this, and so the album did not reach the commercial heights of 'The Crossing'. I, and many others, watched the New Years Whistle Test Concert and, short though it was, kept my enthusiasm going. The 'Steeltown' album bought about the 'build em up, and knock 'em down' syndrome from the media, which annoyed me greatly. Then came the break after they called off their US tour. Did they split? Certainly Mark did a lot of sessions, Tony put up shelves, Bruce got very depressed, and Stuart actually quit once. However, on my 14th birthday, 'Look Away' was released much to my great joy. I bought it, and then 'The Seer' came out, and I saw them twice on the tour which promoted the album, and very good gigs they were too. 'The Seer' is a great album, and contains some great tracks, my favourite of which has to be 'The Sailor', especially the bit near the end.

After all the touring etc. had finished, life returned to normal on the BC front, and my financial position looked a lot better. News came out that a new BC album and single were due out. I must admit to being very disappointed in 'King of Emotion', but 'Peace In Our Time' was a step in the right direction, and the American influences are there for all to hear. Even Melody Maker sort of liked the album, so I can't be wrong can I? I saw the band on tour again in Portsmouth(see later in this issue), and had a merry old time of it.

The idea came to mind of doing this fanzine, and after a few encouraging responses from many of you, I set to work. And so here we are, the first edition of 'We Save No Souls'. Well I hope that you enjoy what you read, and please please please please send in contributions for the next edition which will be out on July 1st, and will hopefully include reviews of most, if not all, of the forthcoming gigs. Hope to hear from all of you soon...and remember...

STAY ALIVE.

INTERVIEW WITH STUART ABOUT CONCERTS IN TALLIN.

INDEPENDENT LOCAL RADIO NEWCASTLE.

INT: We came over on the boat together, and when we arrived in Tallin, you said to me:

"well i'm coming here with an open mind".

Is your mind still open, or has it changed about Russia?

STU: Yes. My mind's still very much open. I think it's definitely been an eye-opening trip...I think it's...some of the things we hear about in the West are true, and some of them are exaggerated you know. I think it's definitely been a case of how if you go extremes, things can go a bit...I think the people here are amazing, great spirit, great sense of humour, and they actually... the old part of the town I have to say is very pretty, but it's very difficult to form an opinion of anywhere within er...we've been here what, a day and a half, and like it's wierd when you're on tour because your visions very much like: hotel-gig-interview, and someone comes upto you and says:

"well, what do you think of the place?".

"well, the journalists were good".

INT: I don't know whether or not you've made the same mistakes as me, but i've started referring to Tallin, which is where we are now, I was going around saying:

"well, it's nice to be in Russia"...

It's something i've found that the Estonian people don't like... to be too associated with Russia. Have you found the same?

STU: Yeah. They don't like it at all. We asked the...well I personally knew about that before I came here, I knew that it was part of the

Soviet Union, and not actually part of Russia itself...and it was er...I think they call it the Baltic Republics and is very much a country in it's own right...which is strange because ye don't really see that much about the internal politics of The Soviet Union, and you never really get a chance to understand what's happening or what the nature of the beast is. But it's fascinating being here just talking to people, finding out a little bit of what it's about.

IMM:When we arrived on the boat, we were making a movie which you know about, which is about the Glasnost/Talin concerts which have taken place this weekend, and I distinctly remember talking to you and Bruce and saying:

"well, we're almost here".

as the boat came in, and Bruce said:

"it reminds me of when I was working in the dockyards in Strathclyde".

It was a sort of big dock area, it was windy, it was wet. Was that what you expected it to be like?

STU:To be quite honest, I think being in Tallin is pretty much like being in any industrial city anywhere...you know...there's a lot of apartments, an old part of the town, and there's parks and stuff...you know...and I think what you have to remember is it's obviously going to be very different for people who live here and are used to it, for someone who comes from the West where you

Stu:(cont...)can get anything you want pretty much in seconds, it's a very different system to that totally. I think there are flaws in everyone's systems, and the important thing is not to dwell on the differences between them, but to work with the similarities and use them...you know...

Int:Do you believe people are the same in the world, wherever you go?

Stu:I think so. I think people want pretty much the same things out of life, and want to have the same hopes and fears no matter where you go...you know...I think if i've learned anything over the past 10 or 12 years,it is that...that people are people wherever you go, and peoples spirit can endure anything...you know...

Int:Were you apprehensive?Or were you very wary of the idea?Are you glad that you did it?

Stu:Yeah...I'm definitely glad that I did it and we're coming back to Russia towards the end of September...and yeah I mean I think I was a bit worried about it being seen as just a publicity stunt and stuff like that. But I think people who were here at the gig last night understand that it wasn't just that, that we actually wanted to play here and let people understand a little bit of what we're about and share in what we feel about music and also as a tourist you want to come and see. I think you have to keep yourself open to new things and try and learn and understand, and not just be narrow-minded and say:

"well I don't understand this so it must be useless".

Int: At the gig last night, there were 60,000 people, and they all managed to sing along to 'Chance', just as they do anywhere else in the world.

Stu: Yeah. I think as an artist and as a writer it's very satisfying when you realise that your work has that impact on people, that they can turn something like that into an event. It makes it very very easy to tap and that...I think there's an instinctive spirit of communication music which is older than 50 years of Rock 'n' Roll that people can understand no matter what language it's sung in, or what culture or ideological system it comes from and we're very much aware of that in Big Country.

Int: We're a very traditional band. We play live, everything's done live, it's all hands on, it's all physically played, it's not computers and tapes and stuff...and I think when you receive that sort of warmth back from the audience, it tends to make me feel not big and powerful and important, but very small and humble and insignificant and witness to something that is very special, like standing in front of some great piece of scenery or piece of art or something. I really like that feeling, it's a great feeling to get.

And that's where we'll leave them for the time being...stuck in Tallin...the interview continues and may even finish in the next issue. Does anyone else have any audio interviews? If so drop me a line, stating what it is, and we'll come to some arrangement.

PHAZE 1

THE BRAINS BEHIND THE BEAT



BIG COUNTRY

how to rock the east

THE BIGGEST COUNTRY





AFTER RECORDING THEIR LAST ALBUM IN CALIFORNIA AND GIGGING IN THE SOVIET UNION, BIG COUNTRY ARE ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST "INTERNATIONAL" ROCK GROUPS. HOW HAS THE WORLD AFFECTED THEIR MUSIC?

THE ASCENDANCE OF Mikhail Gorbachev to the world stage, the warm blast of "perestroika" that has swept through the icy hallways of the Kremlin, and the subsequent regional disputes between the various ethnic races of the Soviet Union - all seem a world away from the residential side-streets of Notting Hill Gate. But here, in this quiet backwater of West London, walking distance from Kensington Palace and the Russian Embassy, is the heart of the Big Country master-plan to bring their own little bit of Glasnost to a troubled world.

Guitarist Bruce Watson and bass player Tony Butler are seated in the very same management office that, until recently, was co-ordinating the Big

Country invasion of the USSR. It lacks the grandeur of the nearby Embassy, but the compact office is unofficially helping to further the cause of international relations.

With a steady thawing of attitudes behind the Iron Curtain, and with the growing readiness of the Russians to accept Western ideas and products, rock music has suddenly become a sought-after commodity "over there". Gone are the days of the Cliff Richard/Elton John monopoly of the Eastern Bloc; official Party invitations are out of the window, as Big Country set about exporting themselves to the Land of Vodka and Volleyball.

Big Country's latest album, 'Peace In Our Time', may have been recorded

in America, but it was launched with a party in the Russian Embassy, and promoted with a series of concerts inside the Soviet Union. Others have made the trip behind the Iron Curtain, but what made this package a little bit special was that, for the first time, the organisation was in the hands of private individuals – not a Party official in-sight, comrade!

Big Country's first inroads into the Soviet market – sorry, attempts at furthering a sense of international openness – were made as a direct result of Michael Jackson's decision to play in only the Western half of Berlin. The East set up its own compensatory concert, and Big Country (along with Bryan Adams) were asked to perform. The show, staged in front of "about 120,000 people", was a "phenomenal" success, and from that point the idea of the Russian concerts began to come together...but it took time to arrange.

"We had no idea we were going to go to Russia when we started recording the album", admits Tony. "When you're sitting in the sunshine of Los Angeles, you don't think about going to grey Russia."

Grey Russia? The slight slip of speech gives rise to images of drab buildings inhabited by drab people trudging to work to do drab jobs. But can the biggest country in the world really be as grey as it's painted, or is that part and parcel of the Cold War propaganda package?

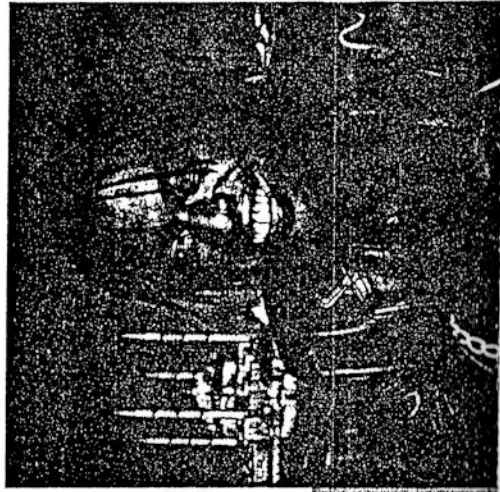
Tony: "You just have to go there with completely open eyes and a clear mind and just sort of take it in... I went to a department store just to look at clothes and shoes and things like that; they're not very well made things, but to them it doesn't matter, they're just functional. Materials were very ragged and unrefined, and people were fighting over things because they were the last ones in the shop. It was a complete culture shock. Towards the end of the trip, I think everybody got used to the environment and ended up really

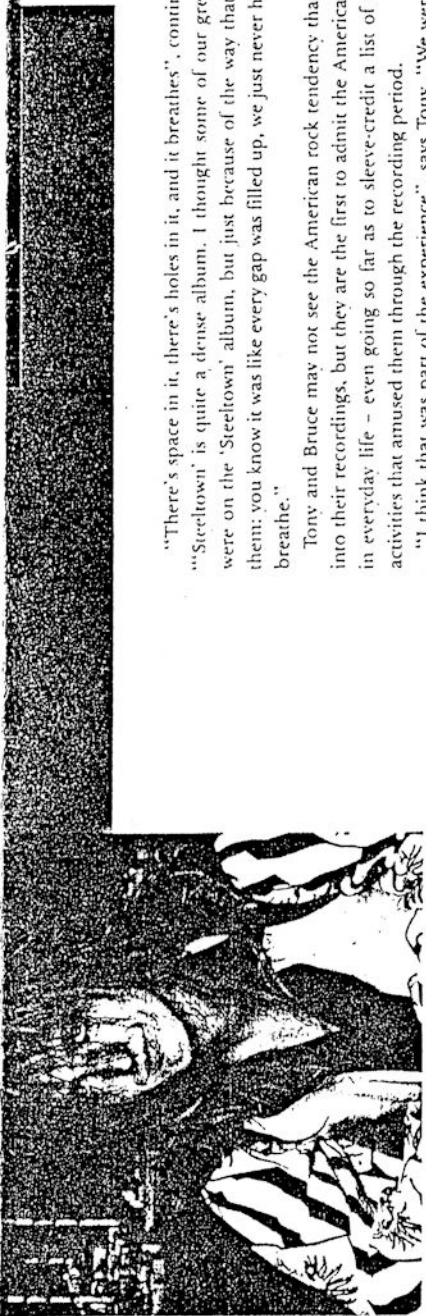
eight months in America, a week in Europe, two days in Britain. And that's a world tour!"

If the music business idea of a world tour seems a mite bizarre, then the contradictions behind the 'Peace In Our Time' promotional concept and album would seem to be irreconcilable – that the Great Russian Album was, in fact, recorded in America. And for all the talk of a more open world, 'Peace In Our Time' does seem to have taken on a more American feel than we would normally expect from Big Country. After all, its producer, Peter Wolf, is better known for his work with American AOR ("Adult Orientated Rock") bands like Heart and Starship. This is an accusation that Tony and Bruce are both sharp to refute. They regard it as by far their best album to date, and they jump to its defence.

"I wouldn't call it an American-style record", says Bruce quickly. "I'd call it 'clear'."

Tony: "It is a clear record for us."





"There's space in it, there's holes in it, and it breathes", continues Bruce. "Steeltown" is quite a dense album. I thought some of our greatest songs were on the 'Steeltown' album, but just because of the way that we played them; you know it was like every gap was filled up, we just never had room to breathe."

Tony and Bruce may not see the American rock tendency that is seeping into their recordings, but they are the first to admit the American influence in everyday life – even going so far as to sleeve-credit a list of Californian activities that amused them through the recording period.

"I think that was part of the experience", says Tony. "We were all in this environment that we didn't know a lot about, and we had to find a way of entertaining ourselves, so we all got into different things. Stuart was well into baseball, I was into hanging out in a particular bar, Mark was into jogging and going to the beach, I don't know what *he* was doing!" They both laugh as Tony points to Bruce. His broad smile widens as he continues to recall their activities in California. "All these things helped to make our stay enjoyable and we thought it would be nice to put all these things on the album.... People think that when you go to LA to record an album it's all Hollywood and big-time, and it's not really like that, it's what you make of it."

Recording in Hollywood, grigging in Moscow...Big Country are certainly taking the old adage that "all the world's a stage" to its logical conclusion. It's all a far cry from the succession of Scottish punk bands that saw Bruce Watson through his teenage years. Growing up on a diet of Nazareth, The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, and later Led Zeppelin, it was the dawning of the punk age that finally convinced Bruce there could be a future in the music business – even if your playing ability didn't quite live up to the standard set by Jimi Hendrix or Jimmy Page.

"I'd played guitar in my younger days", he recalls. "I never thought I was a great guitarist, but when punk came along, I could stand up on a stage and

appreciating it; but you have to realise that it's so different out there. "We didn't go over there as ambassadors, but we had to try and behave ourselves and show the Russians that we weren't the ogres that I suppose they think we are... We shouldn't try and foist our way of life onto the people, especially the people who were trying to help us. They were forever trying to make us realise that they mean well, that they want to learn and they want to get on and mix everything..."

"The only place we saw was Moscow", adds Bruce, "but I was speaking to a lot of other people and they've been saying: 'well, Moscow's OK, but go to Leningrad because that's happening!'. We were stuck in Red Square for 10 days! I'd love to go and see all these other places – you can't just say 'I've been to Russia' when you've only been to Moscow. It's like coming to Britain but only going to London!"

Tony: "We'd go back if we were invited again, because I think the Russians want to get involved in rock music, they want to see Western bands. It's opened up the whole of the Eastern Bloc, so when bands like us go on a world tour, we can now incorporate the Eastern Bloc and Russia."

Bruce: "When you see people going on a world tour, they seem to spend

say 'this is me, look what I can do', and not give a toss about how I played or what I played."

Tony Butler couldn't have had a more radically different musical baptism. "I started playing guitar because I didn't want to play trumpet - my father was a trumpet player... Then I watched 'Top of the Pops' and saw Norman Greenbaum doing 'Spirit In The Sky', and there was a close-up of a Fender bass. I thought: 'it's only got four strings, so it might be easy to learn...'"

Tony's early years saw him trying to fulfil a simple ambition: to achieve a greater mastery of his instrument, and to make the music business a full-time career.

"I was not so much into punk bands", he readily confesses. "I always wanted to be in a band, but I started more on the theoretical side. I studied Music at school and I was about to go to the Royal Academy of Music, but I discovered rock 'n' roll just in the nick of time. I found out that reading music and playing it wasn't the most exhilarating thing in the world...but at the time, I thought that in order to get on I had to be very good at my instrument and keep up my knowledge of the theoretical side. That's how you get in on the session world, and that's a way of making money, but you end up sitting in the studio with a sheet of music in front of you, and it's really boring."

So, although he was fulfilling his ambition to make a living from music, Tony was none too happy. Together with Big Country drummer Mark Brzezicki, he formed a session rhythm section - "hiring ourselves out to the highest bidder, like musical prostitutes".

They worked on a variety of recordings, including albums with Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend, until they were asked to play on a session with the embryonic Big Country - in other words, with Stuart Adamson and Bruce Watson. "We did the songs and sat down and listened to them - my head exploded", says Tony. "They were brilliant. Then we started talking about putting it together as a proper band!"

Almost immediately, Tony realised that working as a part of Big Country was more than just a way of earning a living - it altered his whole musical outlook.

"It wasn't until I met Bruce and Stuart that I realised what punk was really

about. It was an attitude rather than anything else: apart from being a very good musician, I wanted to be more raw within myself and my attitude to music, and meeting Bruce especially was maybe the best thing that happened to me."

"You learn off each other", adds Bruce. "I've been learning from Tony's 'real' musical background, just as Tony can learn off my licks."

And having tasted life at both ends of the rock 'n' roll career road - with a number of stops in between - both bassist and guitarist have plenty of advice for anyone just starting out along the same track.

Tony: "The worst thing that anyone can do is to get involved in rock 'n' roll just to become a star. You've got to have a talent so you can believe in yourself, so if you're a star or not, you still enjoy what you do. Stick to your main aims and try to keep a lot of self-esteem... It's worth being good at your

"WE'D GO BACK IF WE WERE INVITED AGAIN, BECAUSE THE RUSSIANS WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN ROCK MUSIC, THEY WANT TO SEE WESTERN BANDS."

instrument, but there's no point in being able to play a million notes a second. Playing it with feeling is different."

Bruce: "Some of the best songwriters in the world were never great musicians. John Lennon wasn't a great guitar player, Keith Richards was never a great guitar player; but they had such great grooves and such great feels and attitudes, they couldn't fail."

Tony: "It's like writing your first songs. Ten years down the line you refuse to write a song so simple, because you feel that you're so far down the road as a musician that each song you write has got to have at least 20 different chord changes in it. But it doesn't work like that - it's just down to feeling."

"In a song you've got A and you've got B", says Bruce, ruminating the point home. "Why take the longest way to get from A to B, when you can just have a groove and cut it short?"

Why indeed? Especially when you can keep it simple *and* see the world.

Media Show!

In Melody Makers review of the best albums of the 80's, this cropped up...

BIG COUNTRY 'THE CROSSING'(MERCURY).

'With the synthesizer in the ascent and the elitist club scene moving further away from the live experience, Stuart Adamson assembled his guitar rock as an anticote. 'The Crossing' stood for the breakdown between artist and audience, a symbolic socialism, and the songs-'In A Big Country', 'Chance', and 'Fields of Fire'-became anthems for the disenchanteds.'

Nice to see a bit of praise instead of the usual knocking that they get these days.

On January 26th, the group were thoroughly slagged off after one of their three gigs in Melody Makers review of Hamersmith.

David Stubbs review consisted of four points:

- 1)How all the audience looked like undergraduates.
- 2)Diesel Park West apologizing if they spilt your pint.
- 3)How well Roy of the Rovers would fit in to the band.
- 4)How nauseating Stuarts thumbs up gestures are("a latterday Selwyn Frogget").

What has the state of the audience got to do with the bands performance?

Who was he there to review? Big Country or Diesel Park West?

Why would Roy leave Melchester? The only other time he did that he returned almost immediately.

I think Stuarts got nice thumbs...so there!

All we got was a thoroughly useless piece of Journalism that did the writer absolutely NO credit.





Friday February 24th.

Radio One 'In Concert', featured the aforementioned gig at Hammersmith. The songs featured were:

Peace In Our Time

Wonderland(where was 'Look Away'?)

The Seer(where was Kate Bush?)

River of Hope

Come Back to Me(acoustic version)

The Travellers

The Travellers(bloody fast reprise)

King of Emotion(extended joke remix)

In a Big Country

I Walk the Hill(where was 'Restless Natives')

Fields of Fire

Great gig. Shame if you missed it.

As most of you now, Stuart was ill in February, and some gigs were either canceled, postponed or messed around with. We know of one fan(DOUGLAS), who went to Edinburgh from Newcastle, only to find out that it had been called off....until May.

January 21st in Melody Maker(again), a full two page spread was given over to the bands gigs in Ireland in January. In the end the writer said that "really I think to myself that in 1989, Big Country don't matter".

In reply to the Hammersmith gig being slagged off, someone wrote to NME's 'Backlash' column, and the Editor replied thus.....:

"It's not the fact that DC use guitars that we object to, but what they do with them".

JUST BECAUSE NO-ONE ELSE DOES IT.

The above article was originally published in 'Phase One' magazine, and has been reproduced with kind permission of the publishers.

The January edition of French magazine 'BEST'(no relation of the English womens magazine of the same name) featured a two page article about the Russian trips. One page had a picture of the band in Red Square, whilst the other page featured Beatles Lyrics, and a lot of waffle about a transparent Gorbachev(what?-Ed.).(CB)

The Clothes Show (BBC 1 19th March), featured music from 'the Teacher' as background music to a feature on a bridegroom having their hair cut.

'The Ticket'(Friday 5th May) featured a clip from the 'Peace In Our Time' video whilst the recent tour dates flashed across the screen.(PH)
Congratulations on BC's move from No.61 to No.12 in Record Collectors poll of the 500 most collectable artists.

Contributions:GE-Gary 'James' Brand. PH-Phil Harrison. Everything else was me.

IF ANY OF YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE TO ME, I SUPPOSE I HAD BETTER GIVE YOU MY ADDRESS, AND 'PHONE NUMBER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CAN'T WRITE:

JEREMY CARTER
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CHANDLERS FORD
HANTS.

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IF YOU JUST WANNA RING UP FOR A CHAT, PLEASE FEEL FREE.
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ANYONE GOT ANY BIG COUNTRY TRIVIA? IF SO...DO I REALLY NEED TO SPELL IT OUT TO YOU?

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Retain This Portion

NEWCASTLE CITY HALL 22/2/89.

This was the groups second show in Newcastle on the 'Peace' tour, always a popular show for both the band and audience. The show had been cancelled from earlier in the month due to Stuarts illness, but this did not seem to affect his or the bands performance. In contrast, it was the audience who seemed strangely muted, compared to the first show, which was without doubt the finest Big Country gig I have ever been to.

The band opened up with the title track off the last album 'Peace In Our Time', and were quickly into their stride with 'Look Away', and an extended version of 'Tonderland' which featured some guitar improvisation from Stuart a la Eddie Van Halen. Two further tracks from 'Peace' followed, 'Broken Heart' and '1000 Yard Stare', which were fairly well received by the audience. Next was 'The Seer', the

highlight of the evening with Stuart bending the strings of his guitar until it seemed certain they would snap. A superb very underrated song. 'River of Hope' followed, destined to become a live favourite with it's catchy riff and chorus.

Had I not attended the first concert, I might have been surprised to see Stuart alone on stage with an acoustic guitar to play 'Come Back To Me' from the 'Steeltown' album. The sound of one voice and one guitar seemed strangely alien compared to the raucous guitar sound we are used to. Perhaps it might have been better to have had Bruce playing alongside to add to the sound. After the song finished, the rest of the band appeared for them to romp through 'The Travellers', a Scottish style folk tune played at a fairly hectic pace. Then it was 'King of Emotion', complete with several jokey false starts which seemed to amuse parts of the audience.

The song has been described as Big Country's first real rock song, though it sounds very dated and early 70's to me, somewhat out of keeping with that distinctive Big Country sound.

The final two songs of the set had to be 'Chance', and the band's theme song 'In a Big Country'. As I alone in being tired of hearing the same old songs trotted out every time that Big Country play live? Judging from the reaction of the audience, I suspect that I am, but I do wish that they would give some of their other songs a work out, especially from 'Steeltown' and 'The Seer'. Has anyone ever heard them play 'Tall Ships Go', 'Eileedon', or 'The Red Fox'? Or how about the B-sides such as 'The Crossing', 'When a Drum Beats', or 'Winter Sky'? The list is endless. The first encore consisted of 'Lost Patrol', and 'Restless Natives', although 'I Walk the Hill' from the first show was dropped. After a few minutes, the band came back on for the obligatory 'Tracks of My Tears', another song which should be dropped. 'Fields of Fire' was next with the familiar scratch intro, featuring riffs from several well-known songs, although Led Zep's 'Heartbreaker'

seemed to confuse a large section of the audience.

After the usual request to 'Stay Alive', the band left the stage after a two hour performance. A fine show by the band, but a disappointing audience.

Douglas Johnson.

Newcastle.



SOUNDS

music paper



{d.j}

FOUR HAVE A DAY TRIP-PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL, SUNDAY 5th FEBRUARY 1989.

The story actually starts in December 1988, with me(Jeremy), saying:

"let's go and see Big Country in concert".

Russ, Matt and Gary all replied:

"who?"

"You know. Big Country".

"Oh yeah. The group who's songs all sound the same". Upon that statement, first degree murder was almost committed, but I realised that if I did, I would have to find another person for the ticket I had already purchased. Everyone paid up, except Russ, who still owes me some money.

Sunday the 5th took absolutely ages to come around, but when it did we decided to have a hell of a time. Gary came round, I went to my girlfriends house to borrow a checked shirt, faithfully promised to me. However, when I got it, it was covered in perfume, so I put it on, hoping vainly that the strong wind in Pompey would blow the smell away. I did not have to worry. We called for Russ, who as usual wasn't ready, and then Matt came round. We divvied up the Big Country badges, and off to the Train Station we went. We got to the Station at about 5 o'clock, and were told that the next train wasn't until 5.50, so we cracked open the beers, actually it was a bottle of whisky bought from an unsuspecting newsagents on the local Council estate, and a merry time was had by all. The train finally came, so we got on, minding 'the gap', and proceeded to explore the carriage, until we found that there wasn't an access from one carriage to another. We got to the first stop,

and proceeded to crack open the beer, all over Gary. A few were had, and Gary was reasonably in the clouds. This was shown when he tried to jump out of the train at Botley. We arrived in Portsmouth at about 4.30, and decided to find the Guildhall, while at least one of us was sober enough to remember where Portsmouth City Council had decided to put it. We found it after crossing some highly dangerous fast roads, and decided to head south for the seafront, as Gary wanted to lose all his money on the fruit machines. He proceeded to do this in record time.

As my Grandad lives in Portsmouth, I decided that I knew the way back to the Guildhall. So we set off in completely the wrong direction, and got incredibly lost. We started getting worried, when we were walking through a housing estate, and started seeing six year olds wielding large sticks shouting "get 'em". We didn't think that they meant us, but we were taking no chances, and so like big strong teenagers, we ran. It was then that we got really lost, so I started to look for places that I knew. We then came across a bridge that I vaguely recognised, so we went towards it. Then we saw a large sign which said 'GUILDHALL', we thought it looked a fairly safe bet, so we followed it, like the wise men did the star. At this point, Gary started to complain that he was feeling ill, and had done so for the last hour. I gave him the denim jacket that I was wearing, and that shut him up, thank God! We arrived at the Guildhall at about 6.20, and there was a queue about 6000 miles long. So, Russ put on his charm, went upto some girls, and said something like:

"we all travelled from Northern Ireland today, and our trip will be wasted if you don't let us in in front of you".

Upon this statement, we were let in, and we started receiving some pretty filthy glares. These glares lightened when Gary started shouting:

"who are Big Country anyway? I'm here to see INXS".

As was expected, the doors opened at 7.00, and we rushed in. The actual entrance to the hall, is through the bar. Quite convenient we thought, and so off went Russ to get the beer. Shortly after he got back the doors opened into the hall, and everyone rushed through. Gary tripped over a large piece of carpet, much to everyone's amusement, whilst the rest of us were more concerned about the height of those in front of us. Russ started to get a bit hot, so he tied his coat around his waist, a bad move. Diesel Park West came on, and mighty fine they were too. The real event started at about 8.50, when the chords of 'Peace' flowed out into the hall. The sea of fans swept forward, and in the next few seconds I got punched in the face, and also received a dead leg. During 'Look Away', Russ lost both his shoes and his coat, and then tried to find them. Down he went on all fours, as the crowd swept backwards, and about eight people fell over him. During 'Broken Heart', I started to reel a little bit faint, and then passed out during '1000 Yards Stare'. I thought I may be okay, if I stood at the side, but my view was obstructed by the ridiculous placings of the speaker stacks. However I enjoyed the rest of the concert, and when the encores came around, I leaped back into the fray, and enjoyed what was left of the concert.

We finally arrived home at about midnight, proclaiming the well-known phrase: "SHIT HOT".

Does anyone else have any particularly amusing stories about their BC gigs? If so, write to "amusing stories about BC gigs", c/o Jeremy, 52 Regent Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants, SO9 2GU.

LIVE!

LIVERPOOL EMPIRE I-2-89

After a particularly dull set by support band Diesel Park West, all eyes turned towards the stage as the lights went down. After what seemed like an eternity, Big Country appeared to rapturous applause. As the opening bars to 'Peace In Our Time' filtered through the darkness, the capacity crowd went wild. The atmosphere in the Theatre was unbelievable, and the band kept stopping to let the audience sing back at them, overawed at the response. Following up with spirited versions of 'Wonderland' and 'Look Away', I began to wonder if the band were not using up all their aces too early. I shouldn't have worried. The band were in unstoppable form, and the classics just kept coming - 'In Valleys', 'Just a Shadow', 'Chance', 'King of Emotion', and a storming rendition of the immortal 'In a Big Country' were duly delivered, all sounding as fresh as the day they were recorded. "This is a song about everything, it's called 'The Dictionary'", grinned Stuart as the band leapt into 'The Seer'. During the course of the gig, Stuart developed quite a good relationship with the audience, and his solo version of 'Come Back To Me' was one of the high points. The sound clarity was superb, and this helped to enhance the high quality of the musicianship. The famed Adamson/Watson guitars were given plenty of room to play off against each other, while Mark (surely one of the greatest rock drummers around) and Tony supported admirably. New member Josh made his own valuable contribution as pianist.



Soon it was encore time, and we were still in for a few surprises- 'East of Eden', 'I Walk the Hill', 'Restless Natives'(great guitar soloing here), sent the crowd into new heights of ecstasy, while 'Tracks of My Tears' bought the pace down a notch.

Finally, the band closed with the now legendary scratch mix of 'Fields of Fire', blending parts of Aerosmiths 'Walk This Way' and Led Zeppelins 'Heartbreaker' into the song with some witty guitar 'scratching'.

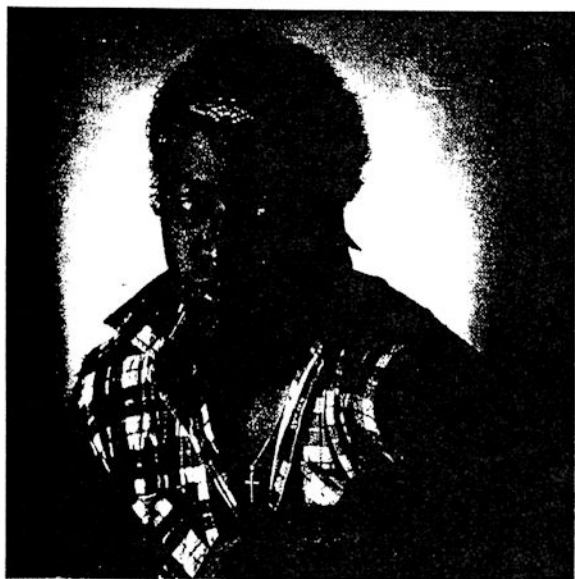
The perfect end to the perfect gig?

It certainly came close.

Lee Dearn.

Liverpool.

**BIG
COUNTRY**





'I STILL WANT TO CREATE A MUSIC WHICH I FEEL EXCITED BY,
WHICH ACHIEVES SOMETHING . . . WHAT GOES ON IN THE WORLD
IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY' — STUART ADAMSON



Does anyone want a good bootleg or two?

If so, Douglas has acquired two highly sought after BC items. One is a BBC Transcription Disc from the 1983 BBC 'In Concerts' recording from Hammersmith Palais. The second is a King Biscuit Flower Hour Show (wow man, Like spaced out-Ed) dating also from 1983. If you want a copy of either (both are superb i'm assured) send a cheque to the value of £5.50 (incl. p&p) to:
DOUGLAS JOHNSON

IF YOU WANT IT RECORDED ON CHEROKEE TAPE, ADD A FURTHER £1.00 AND STATE WHICH TYPE OF TAPE YOU WANT.

IF ANYONE HAS ANY GOOD QUALITY BC BOOTLEGS, GET IN CONTACT WITH ME. BY THE WAY, DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE COUNTRY CLUB. A FEW PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKING ME WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON AS THEY HAVE PAID MONEY BUT RECEIVED NOTHING. I AM NO LONGER A MEMBER AS I THINK THAT THE SERVICE THAT THEY OFFER IS ABSOLUTELY APPALLING. I WILL BE AT GUILDFORD CIVIC HALL ON JUNE 2nd, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE ME AS I'LL BE THE ONE CHUCKING HANDFULS OF 'WTSNS' LEAFLETS INTO THE AIR IN THE VAIN HOPE THAT SOMEONE WILL PICK ONE UP.

WITHOUT WHOM...

GARETH-Loan of The Amazing Pudding.

GRAHAM BUTTERWORTH-Kind co-operation.

PHAZE ONE PUBLICATIONS-Article.

Radio One-Hammersmith Gig.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON-Various contributions.

PHIL-Live tapes.

LEE DEARN-Liverpool Review.

CHRIS AT THUNDERTHUMBS RECORDS-Word of mouth promotion.

DIESEL PARK WEST-Brilliant support band.

MY AUNT-This flaming typewriter(what a great name for an indie band).

RUSSELL-For buying the drink.

WEASEL & UNDERGROUND RECORDS-El Cheapo supremos.

BIG COUNTRY-someone had to do it didn't they?

THE CULT-for releasing a great album in 'Sonic Temple'.

NEXT EDITION IS OUT ON JULY 1st. PRICE IS £1.20(no S&P).

ONCE AGAIN...

I REALLY NEED LEAFLET DISTRIBUTORS. THE MORE SUBSCRIBERS, THE MORE MONEY, A BETTER FANZINE.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES WILL BE AVAILBLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

KEEP THOSE CONTRIBUTIONS COMING IN.

As you will have found out already, Big Country played at Portsmouth Guildhall on February 5th. The day after the gig, Bruce went to a shop in Elm Grove in Southsea, and swapped one of his guitars for one on sale in the shop. The day after, Bruces guitar was on sale in the shop window for £650. (Ian Drain).

THE LIES...THE SEX...THE ROCK 'N' ROLL....

OUT OF FLEET STREET this week came the rumour that Bruce is learning to play a violin to play on his solo album 'Augus plays Greek'. Nana Maskouri is at the controls.

THE BAND OF THE ROYAL COLDSTREAM GUARDS is sacking all of it's percussionists and is employing 'Octopus' Mark to fill in at their annual stint at the Royal Tournament. This should buggger up the European tour plans.

TONY is learning how to spell Marks surname. He has had trouble with this ever since they were in On The Air together. He is also trying to grow another finger as the new bass lines being written require a six fingered player. He is trying to achieve this by submerging his left hand into a 'Fisons Gro-bag' for upto half an hour each day.

STUART IS TOTALLY FED UP of singing and is contemplating moving to Russia and standing for president

ELVIS IS ALIVE AND WELL and living in Dunfermline.

ALL THE ABOVE ARE totally untrue, and anyone who believes any single one of them, should be seen to.

OK that's it for this issue...

any comments or £50 notes you'd like to pass on are gratefully received.

until next time.....