

IA: Hello, Marc Allan please.

Q: This is Marc.

IA: Hi Marc, this is Ian
Anderson from Jethro Tull.

Q: Hi Ian, how are you?

IA: I'm very well, I've just
been speaking repeatedly

to a young lady, I mean quite a young lady

from apparently on a phone number that's

calling for the last 10 minutes.

(laughs)

Q: Oh wow.

IA: And finally had to explain
what I was trying to do

and that her mom looked
up your telephone number

and I'd got the, well, whoever gave me

the phone number had got it wrong.

So somewhere out there in a
suburb not too far from you

is a young lady who is very bemused

by the fact that some
strange English person

from a rock band called Jethro Tull,

which she'd obviously never heard,

(laughs)

trying to reach her to talk to her

about our forthcoming tour.

Q: Gee, would've been kind of exciting

if you had reached a fan, you know,

and then somebody was really thrilled

and kept you on the phone.

IA: Actually, I think
the girl had heard of us,

but when she said to her mom, she said,

"What's that, a delivery service?"

(laughs)

'Cause I thought it was gonna be like

she was gonna get through to her mom,

I said mom, Mom said,
"What, let me speak to him."

But no, Mom hadn't heard of us

but little girly had, maybe
little girly wasn't so little

but she was, you know,
we're talking teenage.

But then a lot of our fans are these days,

and who's complaining.

Q: Really, you're finding
you're getting a young audience?

IA: Well, I mean, yes, in the same ways

a lot of young people go to
museums and art galleries,

the sort of things--
(laughing)

that were way back, sure.

Q: Don't say that.

I was thinking it was

that I saw Jethro Tull for the first time,

saw on the Passion Play Tour so,

yeah it's a long time,

as you look back on it

you've had some incredible highs,

a few things maybe that
are being considered lows,

is there anything you'd change?

IA: Well, I'm sure there
are lots and lots and lots

of little things that I would change,

I don't think I'd change
any of the big things

but, you know, lots of
little things, sure.

I mean, like trying to
remember to play an F natural

as opposed to an F sharp in
some particular songs somewhere

but yeah, I mean I suppose
it's not been a disastrous

series of events, it's been interesting.

But, you know, we are
amongst those few people

who are still around from the
earlier days of rock music,

as it took off in the big
sort of era of the late '60s,

early '70s into the arenas
and the stadiums of the USA.

I mean, we're one of those surviving bands

who still has an audience
of a few thousand people,

and, you know, we're not
the biggest band in town,

but we have a meaningful following.

Considering the nature of our
predominantly uncommercial

music, I suppose we're
lucky to have anybody

coming to see us at all,

because we don't do the

straightforward stuff, we kind
of fool around a little bit.

On reflection, we're very
lucky to have an audience

given that we are that sort of a band that
did the stuff that other bands didn't do
rather than follow the mainstream of rock.

IA: You had mentioned having this
audience coming out to see you
and it seems to me that
groups from the '60s, '70s and so on
seem to have the biggest followings today.

Concert tours by groups that
have been long established
are doing very well, whereas newer groups
are having a harder time
attracting concert audience.

I'm wondering if you think
that's any kind of comment
on the state of music now?

IA: I think it's more of a comment on
the state of the economy really,
because people are concerned
about value for money
and if you feel that you're gonna get

value for money by going to see a band
that is, or an artist,
that's been around for many many years,
that seems to have deliver the goods
and promised some kind of a
payoff in, perhaps not
spectacular but acceptable, terms
then, you know, value
for money seems to be
an important part of persuading people to
part with their ticket price.

I also have a sneaking
suspicion that maybe the

glory days of the big
production kind of shows

might be coming to an end, I think that

if you're at the forefront of that

large-scale touring event,

you know, the U2 tour,
or the Guns N' Roses,

or the Metallica, then
you can do very well,

but a lot of the time
it doesn't do too well,

or it doesn't do too well

two years in succession.

I know that the bands like
Guns N' Roses, Metallica,

have probably not enjoy the same success

second time around in
some of their appearances

in the last few months

than they did a year or so ago.

It's somehow satisfying to be around in a

kind of echelon that depends upon enough

punters coming to see

something that is a musical
performance rather than

the state of the art, or
the state of the month,

in the sense of being current,

the popular thing to see,
the popular thing to do.

Q: But I think about it now and
I've seen you about 10 times

maybe a little more over the years,

and I can't remember a crowd
of less than 10,000 people

and I've never seen you in
a place other than an arena.

IA: Really?

Q: Yeah.

IA: Well, because we've been playing

theaters since we've started, and

it's also been a very
important part of Jethro Tull

concert going activities
to try and make sure

that we play in a variety
of scales of events,

and indeed the 2000 seater
theaters are sort of something I

very much have tried to keep
a hold on over the years

and in the sense of keeping
that as a viable thing.

I mean, sure we play the
arenas and the festivals

and all the rest of it but, you know,

we also try and fit in
theater tours as well.

Where have you been seeing us play?

Q: Madison Square Garden. (laughs)

IA: Okay. Well we don't,
you know, I mean--

Q: And Boston Garden.

IA: We've got a couple of

shows in New York next month,

Q: Right.

IA: Or later this month,
whenever it might be.

Kind of, I don't know,

may or may not be full,

I think they probably will be full,

but we're also playing the places

where we'll probably
only play to, you know,

you know, we play for, I
mean this last European tour,

we played for maybe 30,

and maybe 2,000 people
the next night in some

village square in the
middle of the Austrian Alps.

That for me is really exciting,

you know you don't get
sucked into this kind of

one level of performance
where you're dealing

only with big crowds and big, sort of,

big events, big gestures.

I think it's very important

to try and keep this contact

with smaller groups of people as well.

I mean, I much prefer playing to, I mean,

it's much easier as a
performer to deal with people

when it's kind of a
couple of fans and folks,

then you really feel you're
kind of reaching to all of them.

But it's very hard, when it gets more than

about 5,000 people, you
know, some people are

getting short-changed, no doubt about it.

I know that, because
I've been in the audience

and I would rather go and see an act play,

you know, in a smaller
venue anytime, anywhere.

Q: Well, maybe that's the
drawback of growing up

on the East Coast where you
were enormously popular.

Until maybe fix, six years
ago I think I remember

seeing that you're playing
in a theater in St. Louis

and that was probably the

first time that I ever knew

of Jethro Tull playing a
theater in the United States.

IA: Hm, well I was actually
looking through some dates

the other day, and I was astonished to see

we were playing theaters
fairly consistently,

not every day, but I mean here and there,

all the way through our career in the USA.

There were quite a few theater dates and

I know because, having
seen them written down,

I remember them, and I can
remember those more readily

than I remember, you
know, the kind of arena

or stadium type dates which
sort of blur a little bit.

Whereas those theater dates
tend to have something

about them that causes you to remember the

actual time and place and
who was on and what you did.

Q: Let me go back and
talk about some of the

material over the years

you, especially early on,

sung a lot about God and religion.

When you look back on that material now,

how do you feel about it?

Have you changed your mind?

IA: Yes, but only a little bit.

And most of it I've changed
back again to how I felt then.

I think that one of the
reassuring things about

growing older is that a
lot of those childhood

philosophies and views that
you form in the midst of

puberty and the
conflicting emotions of the

hormonal disturbance are
not flashes in the pan,

one off things, I think
they're actually very

formant and very important
emotions, some of which

probably stay with you for life.

And a lot of those things
that I was thinking

and singing about a few years later,

I'm still fairly
comfortable with in terms of

opinion and thought, now
looking back on them.

There may have been times
where I might have changed

my views or at least entertained
alternatives during my life

but I think, pretty much, I
go along with the Ian Anderson

of, you know, 1970, '71, '72.

I mean, I'm sort of not
such a different guy,

I don't have as much hair,
but I still have the same

waist dimensions and maybe
marginally more saggy of buttock.

(laughs)

But basically I'm pretty
much the same guy.

Q: No more codpieces.

IA: I mean that is very reassuring,

when those things come back to you,

you know you think well, wait a minute

that's kind of what I used to think.

It's surprising, in a way,

that you don't change more than you do.

But I'm sure it's not just me,

I'm sure it's everybody,
or at least a lot of people

who find that those really formative years

are very crucial in the sense that they

put those sort of strong building blocks

of your opinion, of your sort,

you know, the way you weigh things up.

They provide a foundation
for your later life.

You may change a little
bit, but it still builds

on that foundation of the

exciting and dangerous years of puberty.

Q: I think that if you
talk to some of your

contemporaries that they
would probably cringe

about some of the things that they wrote

when they were young though,

so it's kind of reassuring to know that

you stand by what you wrote then.

IA: Well, I certainly
cringe about some of them,

but only some of them.

Q: Can you give me an example?

IA: Well, there are things that I, I mean,
if you want to take that period of time,
say 1970, if you take the Aqualung album,

there are songs like
Aqualung which I think are

thoroughly relevant and good
songs in a sense they're about

very real, contemporary,
and social realities.

They were songs about then,
they're songs about now,

they're songs about 20 years from now,

there will always be people
living in cardboard boxes

and about whom we have ambivalent feelings

and find it difficult to relate.

But there are other
songs on that same album

that I think are a little
heavy handed and a bit awkward.

I guess I would say that probably

I've written I'm not
too embarrassed about.

And probably about 25% of them

I'm quite proud of having written.

But I mean out of 250 songs,

we're probably talking 50,

very, very pleased with.

You know 50 or 60 songs, you know

we're talking about 10 symphonies.

I mean Beethoven only
managed nine and a half,

so I think I'm in with a chance,

Q: (laughs) Okay.

IA: ... by my own evaluation.

Not that I'm saying what
I do is as important,

but just in terms of self satisfaction

I think there's quite a body of material

in the stuff that I've done that

I'm not only not embarrassed about,

I'm actually quite proud of.

And then there's that bunch
of stuff that I (laughs)

wish I'd never seen before but, you know,

you have to accept that you did it.

Q: How does My God stand up?

IA: Oh, that's okay, that's okay.

Yeah, I mean, that's not a difficult one
to deal with, no, that's okay.

Q: And what about Thick as
a Brick and A Passion Play?

IA: Well, Thick as a Brick
is a sort of an amusing thing

because it was a response
to the critics who saw

Aqualung as being some
kind of concept album.

So we tongue in cheek and with good humor,

delivered duly a concept
album which was deliberately

overblown with kind of
a crazy way over the top

almost Monte Python-esque parody of what a

concept album is supposed to be.

But it was done with a
sense of humor and warmth

that I don't think alienated
the critics or the public.

It kind of hit the spot.

The difficulty was in following that up,

we then went to do an album which

sounded in technical disarray,

because we were working
in a studio in France

where things just went horribly wrong

and we kind of struggled for some months

to get something completed
which didn't really work out.

Although, strangely it
will in fact be released in

December this year as
a part of a two CD set,

the missing 1972 Jethro
Tull album will, in fact,

nearly all of it, be heard
probably by you and a few others.

And it's kinda good fun,
again it has a sort of warmth

and humor about it, it's not
the best music in the world,

but it's sort of amusing as
a piece of early '70s stuff.

It's a historical document.

Passion Play was the follow after that

when we went back to England
and had to kinda start again

and largely new material
and a new approach.

Imagine if you spent
three months of your life

working on an album and it
had all gone horribly wrong

and you had to then pick up the pieces and

kind of get a record delivered.

Then it was, I don't know, some
of the humor went out of it.

And that for me is the only
problem with Passion Play,

is that it is a rather a humorless,

it's just a little bit
too serious and deadpan.

It therefore sounds pompous
and totally grandiose

where it wasn't supposed to be that way,

it was supposed to be more,
or a bit more, kind of

tongue in cheek, but I'm
afraid the levity got lost

in the foundering attempts
from the Chateau D'Herouville

in Paris in 1972, so that's my excuse.

Q: Well, (laughs)

IA: What King Crimson's or
Emerson Lake and Palmers,

or Yeses or Deep Purples,

what have they got to say
for themselves? (laughs)

Q: I don't know (laughs)
though don't trash Passion Play

too completely, because really,

it's one of my favorite all time albums.

IA: I'm not trashing it,
it's just a little bit short

on the kind of warmth,

it just missed that thing, you know,

it just didn't quite
convey something which

was supposed to be a little bit of fun,

it was too deadpan, you know,

there's a kind of tiredness
about the recording process

at that moment, it just
somehow didn't convey

the thing that was supposed to be there

which was a little bit of tongue in cheek

and warmth and fun,
which was certainly there

with Thick as a Brick and indeed

was there with the album
that didn't get completed.

But hey, Passion Play is
not, I don't look back on it

and think, oh god, what a terrible record,

I just think it was a
record that was lacking

an ingredient that could
so easily have been there

if we hadn't been a little bit jaded

through the dislocation geographically

of taking to another
country to make a record

being tax exiles and you know,

having the problems with
girlfriends and family and wives

being in a strange place.

It weighed heavily upon us,

and, you know, in a soulful
sense we got a little bit

too pedantic about it.

But hell, that was 1973.

Q: (laughs) Yeah.

IA: A lot worse things happened,

I can't remember what
but I'm sure they did.

Q: Well, if it makes you feel any better,

I think that album stands
up remarkably well.

I was listening to it today,

and I listen to it
pretty frequently because

it's one of my favorite
records and, I don't know,

I think there's enough
spots of humor in there

and certainly enough that
people can read into it

or not read into it as they see fit.

And I think it's--

IA: Good, well, it's okay.

Q: Yeah. (laughs)

IA: It's kind of a seven
and a half out of ten one,

because there have been worse
but there's been many better.

Q: Okay, your more recent
albums, A Catfish Rising,

Rock Island, how are those
going to sound in 20 years

do you think?

IA: A seven and a half out of ten.

Q: Yeah.

(laughs)

IA: They're kind of, you know,
they have their moments too.

I think that, I mean, the one before that,

Q: Crest of a Knave.

IA: Crest of a Knave.

Crest of a Knave was a
good kind of balance.

Crest of a Knave is a sort
of 1980s version of standup.

It has a good, eclectic mix.

That has a good balance
of material on it, and so,

strange thing, you only see
this kind of after the fact

obviously, otherwise you wouldn't

complete them the way you do,

but Crest of a Knave had
a good balance to it.

And some good songs, for me
it's kind of like standup.

A middle period Jethro Tull
album like Songs from the Wood,

again, are put in the same vein of having

a sort of right balance
of kind of serious stuff,

humorous stuff, you know, complex, simple,

they're kind of balanced records that

seem like the product of a
sane and comfortable individual

with at least two or three
major credit cards to his name.

(laughs)

So, I mean I would always recommend those.

But if I had to stop and
recommend any particular album

to anybody, the tedious but
truthful response would be

that I would go for one
of the best of albums,

probably particularly the
one that's out at the moment,

the two CD set and digital
remasters, which are,

truly, genuinely original mixes.

But they do, I think in
every case, sound better than

they would do on their original
albums as they sound today.

But the digitally remastered
best of of whatever it is,

Q: I have those, yeah.

IA: 30 odd songs, whatever they are.

I mean that's the kind of
thing that I would say well,

if you were a first time Jethro Tull buyer

then probably a good thing to go for.

Similarly, if you were
someone who bought a lot of

Jethro Tull albums on vinyl in the past

and wanted to buy, you know,

replicate them all in
CDs then I would say that

something like that is
a good cross section of

the things that, you know, it
is just that, a cross section.

It's not including everything,
but it's a bit of this

a bit of that, and it gives
you an overall picture.

So, particularly for the younger fans,

you know, people maybe coming
along seeing Jethro Tull

for the first time, or buying
their first, second or third

Jethro Tull album, then
those best of things are

a pretty good deal if

you're looking for an answer

to the whole picture, I
mean, I speak as one whose

recent purchases include
sort of Stranglers' best of

and box set and things
from those, the Ramones.

'Cause I go for that, you know,

I'm not gonna go and buy
all their bloody records

'cause the chances are
that eight out of 10 songs

are a pile of shit.

(laughs)

You know, I'm gonna go for
the box set on the grounds

that they are the proven
track record things

over a career of some, you know,

well whatever it might be,

five years depending on your status.

But, you know, the compilation
is not a dirty word, I think

it's a pretty good way of
getting an overall picture

fairly quickly and then
if you like what you hear

you might then start investigating it
and going back into the minutia of detail
surrounding some particular album.

But, you know, I kinda like
those compilations, box sets.

I buy 'em all the time.

I mean I've finished staring
at a Muddy Waters compilation

actually on my study desk as I sit.

You know, I'm a compilation kind of guy.

(laughs)

Ain't nothing wrong with those.

And they're usually cheaper.

Q: Yeah, well, in the overall scheme of
things it's certainly cheaper than buying

every Stranglers record,
or something like that.

I guess if you're gonna divide Jethro Tull

records into periods, as
you seem to have done,

it seemed to me that
after Songs from the Wood,

you had, and I'm probably
wrong about this,

but it seemed like you had a harder time

coming up with ideas of things

that you wanted to write about

that were really personal
and affected you.

And I'm wondering if I'm just
reading something into it,

or if there is any truth to that.

IA: No, I don't have any
problem writing things

that reflect my feelings and
emotions and interests at all,

but I, you know, obviously
have more of a problem when I

have to accommodate the
kind of musical aspirations

and interests of other
members of the group, so

you know the problem for
Jethro Tull has always been

that there have been, first of all,

a lot of different members in the band,

each of whom have come with
their own idiosyncratic

expressions regarding sort
of the way they play music,

their preferences for
different kinds of music,

their personalities as
they affect the music,

and, you know, first of
all you write for yourself,

and second and fairly closely as a second,

you tend to think about the
people you're working with,

and you hope to impress
them, and make them feel good

about what you're offering
up to them to play.

So, I mean, is there a
difficulty that tends to be...

Q: Well, you were in
the middle of a sentence

and then you weren't there anymore.

IA: Yeah, well, that's right.

I got to the end of the sentence and

you weren't there anymore.

(laughs)

Q: Anyway, so can you
continue that thought,

you were saying you were writing to

impress other members of the band?

IA: Sure, I mean that's a big part of it,

that you're aware of
other people's preferences

and their wishes to
express a certain thing

and you find yourself either
consciously or subconsciously

working with that in mind and it's

the way that it is, you know,

I don't think anyone is
a true solo performer.

I think you're always
however out on a limb

you might seem to be, you're
always kinda working with

somebody, even if it's
just the recording engineer

or the tape operator, there's

more than one viewpoint at work.

Q: Did becoming successful
in terms of audiences and

making money and all that

change your perspective
about what you wrote and

sang about, you know,
does it become difficult

to write about the church
or religion or whatever

when you've been so fortunate to be

as successful as you've been?

IA: I don't think it's difficult
to write about the church

or religion, but certainly
there are some subject areas

that do become more
problematic, because you're

dealing with simple ideals
and sort of universal kind of

street sort of values.

Then it is difficult if you got a

few million in the bank

it must be difficult if
you're in U2, for example,

to be a preaching kind of a band,

when, you know, the most of
people you're preaching to are

you know, compared to
yourself, extremely poor.

It must be difficult if you're
talking about certain values

and you're Michael Jackson and

you own half the known universe.

(laughs)

Of course it's difficult

but at the end of it all

we have our pride but
areas of conflict with

our own world with all verses that

sort of universal guilt
that we must all feel

that there are people who are
much less fortunate than us,

and maybe we address
it and maybe we don't.

I mean, I do but the way in which I do

is probably quite different to the way

in which Michael Jackson does.

We're talking different also
in quantitative terms as well.

So I think the answer is obviously a

dilemma at work there
as soon as you become

monetarily successful as a musician,

you immediately tread
on very, very thin ice

when it comes to the some
of the subject material

and some of the sentiments
that you might have

expressed when you were a poor, penniless,

struggling musician.

That's one of the things
you have to cope with.

And at that point it's best
to get rid of the limos

and the dark glasses, it's best to shed

the trappings of show biz, and

you know, kind of just be

one of the guys as much as you can.

I mean, it's easier to
deal with Phil Collins

making a lot of money,

than it is to deal with
Michael Jackson or Madonna

making a lot of money because

Phil Collins doesn't seem too show biz,

that he's gonna upset you.

Whereas Madonna is sort of
archetypal Hollywood show biz

power crazy, sort of over the top.

I mean I don't think anybody
really likes Madonna,

that's the sad thing,
and yet there's a lot of

talent and, you know, character there.

It's just that, you can't like this woman,
you know, it's so sad, isn't it?

Q: Yeah.

IA: I'm sure some people
like dear old Phil.

Q: Eh, throw Phil in there with 'em.

Give the money to somebody else,

(laughing) let's not
give it to Phil either.

Let me see what else I
wanted to ask you about,

it said in one of the
bios, and some of the bio

material that have been sent that

there was a reunion not long ago

of former and current Tull
members, is this correct?

IA: That's right.

Q: Well, what was that like, when was it?

IA: It was pretty weird at the beginning,
because it wasn't our idea, I mean any
current or ex Jethro Tull member's idea,
it was the idea of the director of a video
that EMI wanted to make of sort of

He wanted to get everybody together

and we all kind of cringed a bit.

And so in the end, then
I thought, well you know,

we're either going to
end up with a halfhearted

response that will be really embarrassing

or we'd better try and
get really everybody there

in which case I have to get
on the phone and call people.

So I did, and there was a lot of

resistance among some members

but as soon as they felt that there was a

sort of genuine will to
see each other again,

you know, it kind of snowballed into,

I mean really every single
person would have been there,

except that two or three
of them were on tour.

One, his new wife was
having a baby that day,

you know, 5000 miles away
and you know, one was dead.

And I mean apart from

that, everybody turned up

so it was I think 16 out of 22 people,

and it was surprising
because all these people,

some of whom had never
met each other before

which is really interesting thing,

I mean they were kind of,

"Oh, you were the guy
who was there in '74."

(laughs)

And it was quite extraordinary.

But there were a few
people you expected to have

tense moments exhibited, but they weren't,

but some of the people you thought were

kinda gonna be really awkward
in each other's company

were actually okay and then,

strangely, there was a
little tension between

people you didn't expect
there to be tension between.

And for the most part,
people really got on,

it was a very friendly

and civilized affair.

And remarkable for one
thing which was that

at no point during the
day did I hear anybody

talking about old times.

You know, what people
talked about was today

or tomorrow in the sense of,

"Well how old are your children now?"

and "Where are they going to school?"

and "Where are you going
to holiday next year?"

and people would kind of, no
one was interested in the past

or reminiscing, you know,
that was kind of like

definitely not what anybody was there for.

It was quite extraordinary that

they couldn't get anyone
to talk about old times.

(laughs)

Not readily, anyway.

Q: Well, one of the things
that I find kind of amazing

is that 22 is a few more

than I thought there were,

but once people left Jethro Tull,

they really never did anything,

I mean they certainly
never did anything of note.

I mean, you look back
starting from the days of

Mick Abraham's leaving,

I never heard a word about
Barry Barlow after he left,

I never heard a word of
John Evan after he left,

and it's kind of curious that--

IA: Well then, but most of them
sort of opted out of music,

I mean John Evan's left Jethro Tull

and went into the building industry.

And he runs a quite
successful building firm

who does most of the renovations

on buildings around Heathrow airport.

Jeffrey Hammond left Jethro
Tull to become a painter,

which is what he was before
he joined Jethro Tull

and he's done nothing but

stay at home and paint
pictures since then.

Barry Barlow went off into the sort of

risky world of record
production and management,

and, you know, has had mixed
fortune since, I think,

which you could say.

Clive Bunker went up to set
up an engineering factory

in dog kennels.

(laughs)

And Mick Abrahams became a lifeguard

but he couldn't swim.

(laughs)

So, hang on a sec

Q: Sure.

IA: Hi Gam, where are you?

At the hotel?

Hi, sorry, got my daughter en route

somewhere in the far part of the country.

Q: Okay.

IA: Yeah, that's it, okay.

Q: All right, well I'm
hoping I can keep you

just a few more minutes,

I wanted to ask you a few other things.

IA: Yeah, have to be a
few, because I'm actually,

I should have had a six o'clocker

that I've gotta ring
through right now so we're

not to get too far behind schedule.

Q: All right, okay then
just a couple other things.

You've touched on this a
little bit already, but

what's Jethro Tull's place in
the history of rock gonna be?

IA: Well, probably not
that important a place,

but I imagine Jethro Tull
is always gonna be seen

as one of those quaint,
sort of idiosyncratic bands

of the sort of '70s that sort of, kind of

did the stuff that was

you know, kind of not the norm and had its

brief connection with commercial success

but overall was a sort of band that

kind of did things that
weren't quite mainstream.

I suppose at the end of it all I think I'd

rather be in Jethro Tull
than be in Guns N' Roses

because, you know, Guns N'
Roses, if they are remembered

in 100 years from now in
the sort of music books

or the history books,
they're gonna be remembered

as a band who kind of
were a second recycle

of a kind of Rolling Stones phenomenon.

Just as Metallica will be
remembered as a kind of

second recycle of the
Black Sabbath phenomenon.

I mean, Jethro Tull, along with
the Emerson Lake and Palmers

and Yes, and all of these
kind of progressive rock bands

of the early '70s are sort of

seen as being slightly
kitsch, slightly you know

bombastic, overblown, whatever.

But at least some people
remember our names,

and some of us are
remembered as musicians,

not just as images.

I mean you're gonna
remember Keith Emerson was

actually a very good keyboard player,

you're gonna remember that
guys in Pink Floyd or Yes

or whoever, you know,
actually had some real command

of their instruments,
whereas a lot of the bands

have really just been kind of imagey, and

some pretty faces or
around at the right time

with the occasional hit record.

And I'm not unhappy with
the status of Jethro Tull

but I don't think, you
know, I wouldn't place it as

being kind of a landmark in
the history of rock music,

we're just kind of one of those bands that

did some of the stuff that was

a little bit on the edge

of that more conventional

and satisfying mainstream of rock music,

which I, as a listener enjoy
immensely when it's good,

but you know it's very very
hard to work in that genre

and come out with anything original.

And these days even harder than ever.

Q: Bet you'll be happy with
that designation, then.

IA: Well, I'm pretty happy
with the idea that we were

one of those almost, I mean
yeah, almost an important band.

(laughs)

Q: All right, and
finally I was hoping that

you would look into your crystal ball

and tell me what you think

music is gonna be like in the year 2000?

IA: Ooh, well, I wish I could say that

there was gonna be any, I mean

we're only talking, after all,
you know, seven years away.

It really is not gonna be very different.

I mean, rock music as a genre is really

changed very very little
over the last 20, 30 years.

I mean we're still talking
the same essential rhythms,

the same tempos, the same

fairly simple harmonic relationships.

Nothing is really set down to be changed,

we've had technological changes,

but we haven't had really musical changes.

You know, rock is a pretty finite form,

it can deal in a currency which is,

you know, fairly universal
and fairly simple.

I don't think we're gonna
see any great changes,

we will see, I mean, for
sure for the next 10 years,

all we're gonna see is more recycling of

fairly established formats that have been

introduced in the last 30 years.

I mean we've seen revivals of

you know, kind of '60s stuff,

and we've seen, you know,
kinda a lot like we said

the Guns N' Roses, you know,
are not 1,000,000 miles away

from early Stones and
Metallica for Black Sabbath,

and you know you look at some of the

kinda grungy, sort of
post-hippie type bands from

Seattle or what have you, I mean

they owe a lot to a
peculiar mixture of kind of

'60s ideology and MC5 anarchism.

We're kind of recycling
all these sort of notions

and then patching them together
in slightly varied ways.

I mean, eclecticism
these days is not about

the true eclecticism of the

perhaps the late '60s or the early '70s

when people looked at world music

as it has now become known,

though eclecticism now is just kind of

from a very narrow band of
proven commercial formulae,

which conspire every so often
to produce a new hit band

that sounds different on first inspection,
but in reality is probably just, you know,
a careful amalgam of a few proven
formulaic approaches to rock music.

There's nothing wrong
with that, I mean you know

we're recycling corn
flake packets and bottles

of nuclear fuel, we might as well

recycle rock music as well.

Let's be friendly to the environment.

(laughs)

Q: If not the ears, yeah.

It just seemed to me in
asking that question,

and I'll let you go after this,

I'm 34 years old and
everybody who's my age

or maybe a little older
who grew up on rock music

probably knows the song
Bungle in the Jungle.

But now, if Bungle in
the Jungle came along

it would be a hit on a

narrow radio station where

you know, lots of kids
would never hear it.

It would appeal to a certain audience and

it seemed to me that the audience of rock

has fractured to the point
where you can be in a very

narrow scope of things and a

lot of people will never know what you do.

IA: Hmm, which is rather sad
when you think of all the

bands that there must be out
there in any point in time

who have some genuine talent
and some genuine creative

and perhaps even new approach to music

who just are not going to be heard.

And that is a worrying thing,

you know, that we're talking
about recycling a lot of

proven ideas because they
are sufficiently familiar

to those people who operate the media,

you know the record companies,
the press, the radio stations

and TV, you know, we're

dealing with things that sound

familiar and proven,
they have a track record.

They've got to sound familiar
to the guys who pull the

pro strings and you know,
allocate time and energy

towards specific projects.

But, you know there must be

a whole bunch of things out there

that none of us ever get to hear.

And that is very sad, very frightening,

but it's the age in which we live,

and music, I think as
always, just reflects

a lot of other things about the

society that we live in at the moment

and there is a need to plan to be

not too adventurous, to
be slightly conservative,

slightly right wing,
and stay with the things

that we know work, you know,

the great uncertainty about
the planet at the moment

and combined with the dangerous
forces of nationalism,

flag waving extremism, you know,

rock music has also, or
popular music has also

kinda been entrenched in
staying within the things

that are mainstream,
things that sound familiar,

reassuring, and don't pose
too many big question marks.

But the most radical music
around, for me, is not

you know, rude, rap or you
know, funkadelia, or acid, or

you know, techno, rave, or
any of these sort of absurd

definitions that get thrown around,

I mean for me I just see
just the dying embers

of what began in Tamla
Motown as sort of a final

degradation really for me
of what black music was

and should still be about.

But I don't hear anything
too radical or exciting,

and if there is anything

radical, exciting, and innovative

then it ain't getting released on record.

(laughs)

Or at least not any record
label that I know about.

And that's a scary thought,

that we're all having to play
a little bit safe these days.

But, you know, we're in
the post-Thatcher years,

the post-Reagan years, and just

everybody's a little
bit nervous right now.

Q: Very true.

IA: With probably very good reason.

Q: (laughs) Maybe so. All right
I appreciate all your time,

I'm looking forward to seeing you,

and I hope everything
works out the way you like.

IA: Well, even if half of it does

I wouldn't have a bad time.

Q: (laughs) That's true, take care Ian.

IA: Thank you, bye now.

(phone hanging up)

