



A Passion Play: The Story Of Ian Anderson And Jethro Tull

Brian Rabey

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In the summer of 1972 Jethro Tull hit the dizzy heights of number one in the Billboard album charts, and thus could lay claim to being the world's biggest band at the time, with *Thick As A Brick*. They repeated the feat the next year with *A Passion Play* and have sold over 60 million albums to date. Considering just how big this group is (they are still going to this day, of course) there is surprisingly little written about them - only a couple of books, which is scandalous when you consider how many books have been written about their contemporaries. This book is a gem containing interviews with band members such as Jeffrey Hammond-Hammond, John Evans, Martin Barre and... of course Ian Anderson. In fact, this book may well contain the longest interview Anderson has ever given. Biographer Brian Rabey and Anderson really hit it off, possibly because Brian helped the latter recover his beloved harmonica which was stolen backstage - something Anderson never forgot. Brian was given access all areas and used this wisely. Via new interviews he traces the history of a band which started life as the Blades, briefly included Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi (his plastic finger tips grafted on after an accident didn't lend themselves to playing Tull's subtle music!), and went on to become Prog Rock royalty (or Elizabethan Rock as they were sometimes dubbed!), but constantly re-invented itself with new personnel and styles. Due to Brian's contact book there are also quotes from contemporaries such as Greg Lake and John Wetton, which really helps to put things in context. Another really appealing aspect of the book is that it looks at the landscape of the times - for example, the flat Tull lived in during the 1960s would be regarded as unfit for human habitation today. A final nice touch is that several band members have sent photographs from their personal collections making this a unique book.

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