JON anderson


"Owner of A Lonely Heart" is one of Anderson's biggest hits.

Jon Anderson has one of the most recognizable voices in progressive rock

As the lead vocalist and creative force behind the band Yes, Jon Anderson was central to that band's success.

Anderson was the author and a major creative influence behind the series of epics produced by Yes and his role in creating such complex pieces as "Close to the Edge", "Awaken", and especially "The Gates of Delirium." Additionally, Anderson co-authored the group's biggest hits, including "I've Seen All Good People," Roundabout," and "Owner Of A Lonely Heart."

Jon was born John Roy Anderson in Accrington, Lancashire, England, to Albert and Kathleen Anderson, who were of Irish ancestry. Anderson dropped the "h" from his first name in 1970.

In 1962, Anderson joined The Warriors, where he and his brother Tony shared the role of lead vocalist. He quit this band in 1967, released two solo singles in 1968 under the pseudonym Hans Christian Anderson, and then briefly sang for the bands The Gun and The Open Mind.

In March 1968, Anderson met bassist Chris Squire and joined him in a group called Mabel Greer's Toyshop, which had previously included guitarist Peter Banks. Anderson fronted this band, but ended up leaving again before the summer was over. He remarks on his website that his time with the band consisted of "too many drugs, not enough fun!".

Anderson, Squire and Banks went on to form Yes, with drummer Bill Bruford and keyboardist Tony Kaye. Their debut album was released in 1969. He stayed with the group until 1980, and this period is now known as the classic period of Yes. Jon was a major creative force and band leader throughout the period (describing himself as the 'team captain'; nicknamed by his bandmates "Napoleon" for his diminutive stature and leadership of the band) and is recognized as the main instigator of the series of epics produced by Yes at the time. His role in creating such complex pieces as "Close to the Edge", "Awaken", and especially "The Gates of Delirium" is central, despite his limited instrumental abilities.

He rejoined a reformed Yes in 1983, which produced their most commercially successful album *90125* with newcomer Trevor Rabin, and departed again in 1988 over the band's continued pursuit of major commercial success and mainstream radio play. In 1989, Anderson and other former Yes members formed the group Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe (ABWH), augmented by bassist Tony Levin who had played with drummer Bill Bruford in King Crimson. After the successful first ABWH album, a series of business deals caused ABWH to reunite with the then-current members of Yes, who had been out of the public eye while searching for a new lead singer. The resulting eight-man band assumed the name Yes, and the album Union (1991) was assembled from various pieces of an in-progress second ABWH album as well as recordings that "Yes proper" had been working on, without Anderson. A successful tour followed, but the eight-man lineup of Yes never recorded a complete album together before splintering in 1992. Many more personnel changes followed, but Anderson has been with the band ever since. He appears on all Yes albums except their 1980 album *Drama*.

It is a commonly held misconception that Jon Anderson sings falsetto, a vocal technique which artificially produces high, airy notes by using only the ligamentous edges of the vocal cords; however, Jon Anderson does not sing falsetto. His normal singing (and speaking) voice is naturally above the tenor range. In a 2008 interview with the



"I could never sing falsetto!"

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Jon stated, "I'm an alto tenor and I can sing certain high notes, but I could never sing falsetto, so I go and hit them high." He is also noted for singing in his original Lancastrian accent.

Anderson is also responsible for most of the mystically-themed lyrics and concepts which are part of many Yes releases. These elements are crucial components of the classic Yes sound, but have occasionally alienated some members of the band (most notably Bruford and Rick Wakeman), contributing to their leaving the group. The lyrics are frequently inspired by various books Anderson has enjoyed, from Tolstoy's War and Peace to Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha. A footnote in Paramahansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi inspired an entire double album Tales from Topographic Oceans (1973). Recurring themes include environmentalism, pacifism and sun-worship.

One of Anderson's passions is painting, and he uses his art as another channel for his creativity and self-expression. His artwork is available to view on his website.

On 13 May 2008, Anderson suffered a severe asthma attack which required a stay in hospital. According to Yes' website, he was later "at home and resting comfortably." Yes' planned summer 2008 tour was subsequently cancelled, with the press release saying, "Jon Anderson was admitted to the hospital last month after suffering a severe asthma attack. He was diagnosed with acute respiratory failure and was told by doctors to rest and not work for a period of at least six months or suffer further health complications."

In September 2008 Jon wrote that he's "so much better...so grateful and so blessed...I look forward to 2009 for the "Great Work" to come." In 2009 he returned to touring (solo) and continued touring in 2010, even with Rick Wakeman for an exclusive UK tour.

Anderson is a supporter of Accrington Stanley football club.



Jon Anderson

Anderson has a uniquely definable voice and often sings about mystical themes . . .

Anderson was a smoker in the 1960s and 70s, but now prides himself on a much healthier lifestyle. In the mid 70s, Anderson became a vegetarian, as did most members of Yes; however in a recent interview he stated, "I was a veggie for a while, but again I grew out of that. But I do eat very healthy." In an 16 August 2006 interview on *The Howard Stern Show* Jon said he eats meat, mostly fish, on occasion. In the interview, he also stated he had a spiritual adviser that "helped him see into the fourth dimension".

To this day, before live performances, he often meditates in a tent with crystals and dreamcatchers, a practice he started in the 1980s. Anderson's religious beliefs are syncretic and varied, including respect for the Divine Mother Audrey Kitagawa. He has worked with the Contemporary Christian music band 4HIM: in 1999, his vocal was featured on the song "The Only Thing I Need", which appeared on a 'various artists' CD entitled *Streams*.