

London's Royal Albert Hall Filled with ARP Sounds

LONDON (ARP) On the night of January 25, 1977, some of Europe's foremost ARP synthesists gathered on the stage of London's famous Royal Albert Hall for a performance of David Bedford's "Odyssey." No, not the same Odyssey that ARP fans have grown to know and love, but rather a musical work based on the Homeric classic which Bedford has recently recorded and released in the United Kingdom via the Virgin record label.

Joining the orchestra and chorus were many of the top ARP synthesists on the London and European music scene. The program opened with Deep Purple founder Jon Lord performing a segment of SARABANDE, his latest solo release produced in collaboration with German composer and conductor Eberhard Schoener. According to Lord, "the theme behind the music is that of a baroque dance suite, a form of music which was brought to its highest level by Bach. The title of each track is the name of a dance used in one of these dance suites, and I have tried to use the same tempo and feel as an original Sarabande, Guigue, etc."

The second and major part of the program consisted of English composer David Bedford's "Odyssey" in twelve movements, closely paralleling Homer's original story of Greek super-hero Odysseus' travels across the seas. Those on ARP keyboards included Jon Lord, Michael Ratledge (formerly with Soft Machine), and David Bedford himself. Synthesizers used included Lord's own two ARP Odysseys, several ARP 2600s and an ARP String Ensemble. Several representatives from ARP's English distributor were on hand and report that a "splendid time was guaranteed by all." Which may finally answer the question: How many ARPs does it take to fill the Albert Hall?



Composer David Bedford's "Odyssey" follows another classic score which he wrote and recorded on Virgin Records, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," based on Samuel Coleridge's narrative poem.



Jon Lord on double ARP Odyssey and Mike Oldfield (of "Tubular Bells" fame) on guitar prior to the performance of "Odyssey" in London's Royal Albert Hall.



Former Soft Machine member Mike Ratledge plays an ARP 2600 in David Bedford's live production of "Odyssey."