

CLASSIC EPIC ROCK OF RICK WAKEMAN COLLECTED ON FIRST-EVER U.S. COMPILATION

Rick Wakeman's grandiose, retro-classical, often surreal progressive rock--heard in his solo instrumental work as well as with the supergroup Yes--has thrived in the wake of both pomp and circumstance. Decades after his '70s heyday, the emergence of New Age music and artists such as Enya, as well as his own status as one of the genre's biggest stars, attests to the resiliency of his timeless musical vision.

Now, for the first time in the U.S., all of Wakeman's most cherished solo recordings have been assembled for one compilation. **Recollections: The Very Best Of Rick Wakeman (1973-1979)** (A&M/UME), released October 17, 2000, features 14 selections spanning each of his seven '70s A&M albums. Each track has been digitally remastered from the original master tapes and the package includes liner notes and photos.

Bringing rock together with bombastic synthesizers and pianos, majestic orchestras and choirs, and his own fertile imagination, Wakeman set the standard for epic rock. A classically trained pianist, he first joined Yes for its fourth album, Fragile, and made an immediate impact that included their hit signature track "Roundabout." During the making of Close To The Edge in 1972, Wakeman also recorded his first solo album, the Euro-historical The Six Wives Of Henry VIII (1973), consisting of his musical interpretations of the lives and personalities of those royal spouses. Saying no to Yes, he went solo a year later and the Jules Verne-inspired Journey To The Centre Of The Earth was released to tremendous public acclaim in both America and the U.K., where it topped the charts.

The British folklore of 1975's The Myths And Legends Of King Arthur And The Knights of The Round Table and 1976's esoteric No Earthly Connection followed, as did a return to Yes which overlapped his continuing solo career that included 1977's Rick Wakeman's Criminal Record (which also featured Yes members Alan White and Chris Squires), 1978's White Rock (including his music penned for the 1976 Winter Olympics) and 1979's Rhapsodies.

Solo albums on independent labels, including his own, and major labels, accompanied by touring, plus various excursions with Yes, have continued apace in the 20-plus years since. In the end, Rick Wakeman's audience and reputation have survived punk, New Wave, grunge and all other trendiness better than almost any progressive rock star of his era.

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