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Arcadia
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Nick Rhodes by Norman Parkinson. © 1985 Tritone Ltd.

A R C A D I A

"It's a little bit like the Garden of Eden for Greeks," explains Nick Rhodes. David Rowley finds out what the other three Durans have been up to (apart from nearly drowning) while John and Andy have been powering around the USA getting it on.

Simon Le Bon by Norman Parkinson. © 1985 Tritone Ltd.

The day Arcadia (you know them better as Simon Le Bon, Nick Rhodes and Roger Taylor) choose to tell the world about their existence is not the best choice. Originally I was to get all three chattering excitedly about this, the latest "creative diversification" for Duran Duran. Instead both Simon and Roger have been struck down by some unidentified bug, and I'm left with Nick Rhodes, suffering from that self same bug and looking more than a little pale (or is that the make-up?). Nevertheless Nick, resplendent in a smart fringed black jacket and white silk shirt, is more than keen to talk about Arcadia, Duran Duran and beyond.

The first single from the album, **Election Day**, should already be released

by the time you read this. The album, 'So Red The Rose', is due out in mid-November. It was recorded in Paris during the northern spring and summer using a host of "name" musicians, then mixed in New York (ironically enough at The Power Station). The first question must be, did Arcadia occur because the Power Station occurred?

"No, it all started at a very similar time," replies Nick.

"Simon and I had been contemplating doing an album together for a couple of years — we first thought about doing cover versions of other people's songs. But then, as Andy and John said they'd really like to do work with Robert Palmer, a more heavy dance rock record, we thought it was an ideal opportunity to take on our project. So

"... we deserved to give each other a little bit of space to do something different and experiment."

Simon and I started writing together. We felt it had been quite a while since we'd done a lot of serious writing — "Seven And The Ragged Tiger" seemed an awful long time ago.

"When we started off," he continues, "we thought we'd just do enough songs for an E.P. but ended up with about 14 songs, which is really just about enough for two albums."

"At the time Simon and I commenced writing, Roger was actually doing some overdubs for the Power Station and he finished that and came back over to Europe — we were working in Paris — and it just seemed logical to invite him to join us on the project. Roger is still my favourite drummer — it worked very well."

Nick says the division of the Duran Duran camp into The Power Station and Arcadia is "very temporary."

"We decided after five years we deserved to give each other a little bit of space to do something different and experiment. I'd felt everything we'd done to date with Duran Duran had been great for us but I also felt we were reaching a point where, if we didn't do something radically different for a certain period of time, it could have become a bit stifling. But it was all done very amicably."

What I'm allowed to hear of the album does, in some ways seem quite different to the familiar Duran Duran territory. One track is reminiscent, at the beginning at least, of the flamenco flavour of the Doors' **The End**, and another reminded me of the now defunct Japan. It comes then as no surprise to discover one of the guitarists on the album is Masami, who played on the last Japan tour.

I put this to Nick and he concurs.

"I do know what you mean. It wasn't intentional. I think there are probably certain influences on the album which other people can pick up better than I could because I've been so close to it for the last six months."

"Overall the album sounds very European, a little bit Hispanic, a little bit gypsy, and quite passionate and sensitive."

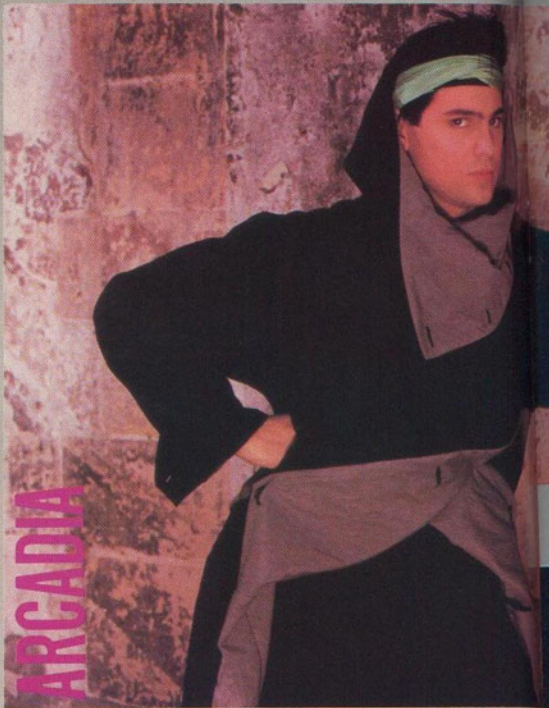
"It is very new sounding and I feel we've broken a lot of barriers down. It's time now for people to stretch things as far as they can in music and try to create something a little more radical," says Nick.

"Obviously to a degree I had more space than usual because I was writing all the music, Simon was writing the lyric and Roger was writing the rhythms. Each of us had the opportunity to stretch ourselves and maybe explore territory we wouldn't have touched with Duran Duran."

"Certainly with Simon's lyrics, I think it's the first time we've made an obvious social comment with some of the songs."

The name came out of one of those late night sessions that bands always seem to have when they need a name.

"We'd spent six months on the project and desperately needed a name. We felt that it should be something special and something people only related to this



specific project. We searched high and low and eventually one night started talking about some of our favourite words.

"One of my favourite words was arcadia which wouldn't really have been quite the right thing for the group. But when I said it Simon wrote down Arcadette, Arcadia, which is an old mystic, cryptic clue sort of thing," he said vaguely.

"I think Duran Duran will go on for a long time yet, but I think it will continue while we have good ideas and remain modern."

"It just really sounded nice — Arcadia — so it sort of stuck with us."

The name itself means an ideal, rural place. "It's a little bit like the garden of Eden for Greeks; it's very mystic," says Nick.

So will Arcadia tour?

"Right now we'd very much like to do a few concerts, if not a big tour. But Duran Duran is very important and it's also important we restart towards the end of the year with our new album. We're really

up against a time problem. I don't think we'll be able to do any dates this year. Maybe sometime in a couple of years, when we decide to take another short break."

Which brings us to the subject of Duran Duran. When will you tour?

"I would expect towards the middle of next year. And we're going to try and play New Zealand this time. I've got this terrible guilt, complex about New Zealand. I really feel we should have played there before so this time we're going to try and make it very comprehensive."

"Traditionally we've started tours with Japan and Australia but you never know, maybe it would be nice to save them for a change."

Do you ever wish you could stop touring altogether?

"The reason I get a little distressed about touring is because it's very grueling. The actual live shows I really enjoy but the travelling is quite unbearable. It becomes a bit tiresome. I do occasionally get pangs of missing it but I always think it can wait a while longer."

You're all still very young. Does it ever



Roger Taylor by Norman Parkinson. © 1985 Triton Ltd.

concern you've done too much too soon?

"Never. There's so many things I want to do, there's never enough hours in the day. I feel very comfortable with the fact that there's still a number of avenues I want to explore, like film directing. It's one of my major ambitions. I want to do more photographic work and maybe one day I'd be interested to do some acting but I'm more interested in doing directing."

How long do you think Duran Duran will continue?

"I think Duran Duran will go on for a long time yet but I think it will particularly continue while we have good ideas and remain modern, and don't become stagnant and sterile and produce the same record. It's difficult to predict how long that will be. I think the first time we make the same record again, we'll have to stop."

How do you see the other members of Duran Duran?

"Simon is very enthusiastic and quite open-minded and willing to try new things. He never seems to run out of energy. I sometimes wonder when he goes to sleep."

"Andrew is very loud and argumentative but at the same time he's a great person and a very talented musician, probably the most talented out of all of us. He's also quite stubborn but at the same time, endearing."

"John I know far too well to really start to think about describing him. I grew up with him, we often think the same way and he's always interested in the overall concept of everything."

"Roger is very quiet and passive but always very solid. He really is the heart of

the group."

Nick thinks the two groups have fallen into natural alignment.

"Simon, Roger and I do definitely have a number of very similar ideas. Andy and I are the extreme polo opposites in the group. I guess I move a little more towards the abstract and Andy moves towards the traditional. However, I think that Simon, Roger and I are always striving to break down the barriers and create something original."

What about the extra-curricular activities of the rest of the band. Simon for instance?

"Oh, sinking ships."

How did he cope with that?

"Incredibly well. It really was a horrifying accident and I guess he's very lucky to be alive but Simon still wants to go on the round the world race if he can repair his yacht in time."

"He doesn't seem to have been put off at all by the experience so I guess he's going if he can get it ready. All I can say is good luck to him, I'm glad it's him and not me. I don't think the boat was actually insured but I think the damage to his boat is not nearly as severe as it looked with it being upside down in the water."

And your activities?

"Since finishing the Interference book and doing the exhibition, I've really been concentrating on the Arcadia thing. But I've just started a new photographic book which is portraits of interesting people — famous and not famous. It's nice because it's the exact opposite of what I did last time. That was very abstract, this is very real."

"It really was a horrifying accident but Simon still wants to go on the round the world race..."

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