

STATUS QUOTES . . .

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C O N T E N T S

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THE PEOPLE

EARLY DAYS

I ain't gonna work  
 I ain't gonna work no more  
 Stay in bed 'til I'm satisfied  
 Let my head take a softer ride  
 I ain't gonna work,  
 I ain't gonna work no more.

'SOFTER RIDE' PARFITT/LANCASTER

VALLEY MUSIC LTD.

RICHARD PARFITT: Going right back the one thing I'll always remember is the time when Matchstick Men was a hit and our manager said: 'Right you can give up your jobs now'. It was a great feeling to think that we were going to be real professionals. MAY '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: We used to think that if we ever had a hit single all our troubles would be over. We thought that everything would be fine; no problems, no worries, our Mum's and Dad's would stop 'aving a go at us. No chance! We were told what we should wear, told what we should say, what we should play on stage. All that crap, yer know. We really got into a rut. Our producer had a strange urge to put strings on every track we cut. We found ourselves in a situation that if we played a spot on television the night before we would pack out a gig, but things would die off towards the end of the week. There were usually 20 or 30 kids upfront screaming and trying to get hold of us while the rest of the hall was silent. The blokes would be there to get women and the women were there to get men. There was no satisfaction. We'd come off and there'd be nothing a couple of people would clap, that's all. They wouldn't know what you'd done and didn't care either. 74

RICHARD PARFITT: We were green then. We were being conned left right and centre, we know now, but we had to learn the hard way, which is probably the best way to do it. 73

FRANCIS ROSSI: The fans had seen us on the box, and they'd come to gigs to have a scream, touch you up and all that, mess about, pull your hair... And the place was dead - they weren't getting any buzz off what we were doing. No point in breaking up really. If I'd left or one of the others had left we'd either have had to go back to work, which none of us wanted anyway, or we'd have gone in another band and started again. So it was sensible to stay together. We didn't actually think, 'We've got to stay together and make it', but on reflection that's how it was. I don't think we realised how down we were, because we always maintained our self respect and confidence. We got in a bit of debt - we were earning very little money. In fact, I don't know how we did it. Sometimes we came out with £5. We supported T. Rex just before they had 'Ride A White Swan' - things like that - and just £5 was all you'd get for it. 74

EARLY DAYS

ALAN LANCASTER: We were having hard times. I suppose Roy thought he was leaving a sinking ship. I suppose he regrets it now really... he phoned up the other day, asked if I wanted to buy a leather jacket. Things like that. This was a while ago. Next I heard he was suing us for some money from Pye. Basically a timid kinda guy. Someone says to 'im, 'Sue 'em', so he does and then phones us up and says 'Hi, did ya get the summons?' One of the reasons he did leave was he was gradually being rode out of the music. There was no place for an organ in the band. We were doing things like 'In My Chair' and he wasn't even playing on it. All the time we were saying we'd have to get an organ part on it but it didn't seem to go. He'd just stand there playing sustained chords. 75

RICHARD PARFITT: We played to three people once... that's how bad it got. Nobody wanted to know and so we came off the road. We eventually went out and started our groundwork around the London pubs and clubs. We did a couple of years of working solidly and then it broke. NOV '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: We were very young and impressionable in those days; we thought we had really made it with one single, we were so knocked out. There were a lot of sharks about and we were shoved here and there and moulded into a certain image. It amazes us when we look back on it, the way we'd all be marched into some boutique and come out with identical satin suits and ruffled shirts! It was drummed into us that we had to have a hit single. At that time there weren't many bands who were actually working and building themselves into something. It was all just records. It was in late 1969 that we got really fed up and stopped making records for a couple of years. It was fantastic to play in a club and be applauded for what we had played rather than being ogled at because we had been on television. In clubs we would play to perhaps 30 people and have a great time. We started by playing to just a few heads and gradually people got to know us. The kids started coming in because they knew what we could do, and our audiences grew and grew. We wanted to be respected and to feel that we had achieved something. It's a good feeling. When we were playing in clubs, our performance used to be a bit of a joke because we moved with the music at a time when everyone else was very cool and laid back. Then all of a sudden everyone was doing a visual thing on stage. 74

COLIN JOHNSON: 'PICTURES OF MATCHSTICK MEN' won them international fame, but that success was very fleeting. They were immediately pigeon-holed as a pretty pop group, and they were soon back playing the endless round of second rate clubs. Things were at a very low ebb. The boys were in a bad way. They had only four dates on their books when I became their manager in 1971. Until that time they were being handled by a plumber and a waste paper merchant. Lovely guys....but! The only gigs they were getting then were around the RAF bases. I had tried to sign them to NEMS back in 1968, but they'd gone elsewhere. So naturally I was very pleased when they came back to me at last. I began booking them into hard rock venues. The money didn't matter - five or ten pounds a night was usually what they picked up. I was only interested in getting them out of the awful pop bag they'd suddenly found themselves in. I sent them abroad too - to gigs in Scandinavia, and then regular spots on the German club circuit. As far as records went, there was nothing new until 1972, when we released 'PAPER PLANE'. We got advance orders on that record, but this was based solely on the reputation Quo had built up as a live act. But it still wasn't enough to get them into the charts. One day I met Robin Nash, who was producing 'TOIP' for the BBC. I said to him something like, 'How would you like to make my year a good year? And he said, 'Yes, okay! Within a couple of weeks the boys had appeared on the TV show. 'PAPER PLANE' was in the top ten and the 'Piledriver' album they made was in the top five. It was incredible. 79

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EARLY DAYS

FRANCIS ROSSI: After three years of being sold out as teen idols we just threw up two fingers and decided to be ourselves. We grew up and so did the music. It didn't become heavy, or hard, or underground, it just became US and we achieved a working identity and respect that we never had before.

RICHARD PARFITT: We weren't aware of any change occurring. We didn't think 'Well we've got to change the style of our music to fit in with what's happening'. We could only play what we felt... what we always felt. I think it was probably a lot to do with Roy the organist leaving, that obviously changed the style. I think the sound tightened up and it basically came from there. We escalated from gigs like the Marquee... the club scene where we had a lot of fun... no joke, we were doing six or seven encores a night, gluttons for it, we just wanted to get back out there. When you escalate up to the concert thing and you see the city halls and you know that it's sold out, and you watch the people coming in, it's really a good feeling.... I keep saying that... but it's really true, it's hard to explain what the actual feeling is... but you do feel a kind of power, you're made to realise that you're a wanted product. 75

FRANCIS ROSSI: We'll plod along steadily. Things have happened to us over the years but we get over them. We keep getting knocked down, then knocked down again, but we get up again. We'll carry on and in the end we'll look up and suddenly realise that we've made it. 74

ON THE ROAD

Here we are and here we are and here we go  
Water born and we're hitting the road  
Here we go - o  
Rockin' all over the world.

'ROCKIN' ALL OVER THE WORLD' FOGERTY INTERSONG MUSIC

COLIN JOHNSON: Even after 12 years of looking after Quo, I still get chills down my spine watching them on stage. I love them. 82

ALAN LANCASTER: You're out there to do what you're meant to do. You do it. Blast it out, wallop it out, put everything into it till my hands are dropping off. Like, 'I can't play anymore of these down strokes', but you carry on. It aches but you grit your teeth, you unwind. 75

FRANCIS BOSSI: I remember my brother saying that Quo were like a fucking formation dance team. The visual thing with Status Quo started when we turned our backs on the music business, we'd been shown how to move, what to do on stage, all that six minute shit. Then we turned our backs on it, went onstage, turned on the amps, 'See you later Richard', and down went the heads. I think Status Quo's music is music you can dance to without being a dancer! Our audiences have never let us down, they keep coming back. Like this little squirt of 13 you remember, five years on he's a giant who works on an oil rig. I mean if the theory's right our audience should all be going around on crutches now! 80

RICHARD PARFITT: We've been banned from the Rainbow, Wembley, Manchester, Leeds, Cardiff, but y'know this ban lark, I don't know what to think of it really 'cause you go back there a year later and it's all alright. I mean if we really wanted to do Wembley again we could do it, they're not going to pull the switch on us. But at the time it's all you'll never play again, it sort of wears off. I can see their point, I mean their seats got busted up and the management of-course don't like it. Every other gig we've got the Biffe (security guard) on the side of the stage screaming his head off at Bob Young, who handles it very well, saying 'If they don't stop the plugs are coming out. And if the worst comes to the worst Bob will just lay them out, 'cause the plugs don't come out when we're on stage, no way. Cos if that happened there would be all sorts of disasters. The promoter doesn't want his hall wrecked, it'll take a fair bit of battering but if you pull the plugs out what sort of a battering would it take then? They'd go fucking berserk. Our audiences don't sit, I couldn't sit and listen to us ... I'd be up and bopping. 75

BOB YOUNG: Quo have got something that other bands haven't got. Maybe it's flashiness. Maybe the band is a bit flashy in the way they walk on stage, or maybe it's just confidence. Everybody knows everybody else and that doesn't just mean the band. It includes the roadies as well. If you see Status Quo on stage, you won't see roadies strolling on and off. If anything goes wrong on stage, intuition tells them that something is wrong. If the roadies have to go on, they're off in a flash. An audience isn't there to see a roadie on stage. They are there to see the band. 75

ON THE ROAD

FRANCIS ROSSI: The whole thing about Quo is getting what you expect; I know there could be one person out there waiting for just one song and you've got to give it to them. SEPT '82

RICK PARFITT: Playing a good gig is an immense turn on. It's a shame to say it but we're guaranteed a good audience and you've got to rely on yourself to make it a good one. There's such a small, tiny difference between a good night and a bad night. Perhaps the audience individually don't notice it but we do. If I come off and we've had a bad night I don't talk to anybody, I won't talk to anybody. I get in a terrible mood and I'm glad about that, glad that I still care. We have rucks immediately afterwards because we're striving for perfection. But let's be honest, you can't get the ultimate thing every night. OK? But you can't take it easy either. I can never say: 'Shit, I'm not going to bother tonight'. You can't do it. You've got to go out there, you've got to get your legs apart and you've got to bend your ankles. Got to no question. At the level we play at it really kicks you in the back and that's great fun. Even on a bad night you're still kicking arse. You've got to go out and give your all every night, and I suppose that's why we're still around after however many years. 32

ALAN LANCASTER: We're not aiming to be pop stars. The first thing we think about is our audience and every thing we do we think: 'Will they like it? and what's it going to be like on stage. 73

RICHARD PARFITT: When I sit at home and write a song I try to imagine what it's like on stage. We do it for the audience and of course for self satisfaction. You come off stage sometimes and if you haven't played well you don't get that warm feeling but when you've gone down a storm that's when you get that feeling. 73

ALAN LANCASTER: If we do a really big, big venue then it has to feel right as well. We must really want to do it and not get carried away by thoughts of something big. I think our being together for so long, musically and as people, will help us from making any rash moves, you know the kind of thing which could occur when you're as elated as we are with this Autumn's single and album successes 'CAROLINE' and 'HELLO'. I mean eleven years is a long time for a group and our togetherness must really rub off in those live gigs and for us it's good to be on the road. Actually when we do appear on stage inspite of knowing we've got this following we do have goose-pimples! You feel right cold and then the audience picks up our riffs and suddenly they're all jumping and clapping and feeling warm and it spreads! We get into a nice groove and it's quite amazing to look out and see the audience! 73

ALAN LANCASTER: I'll give you an example of how tough it can be. We were up in Newcastle having finished a gig. We went to bed at 4.00 am, we were up at 6.00 - chartered a plane to London for a Top Of The Pops appearance, and when that was over we caught another plane to Blackburn and did a show with our eyes virtually closed. Afterwards we drove all the way to Blackpool but when we got to the Hotel we found that the Faces were there so we stayed up half the night drinking with them. Then in the morning we flew back to London for a 'photo' and recording session. It can be hectic sometimes, but if you really enjoy what you're doing, like I do, then it all seems worthwhile. 75

ON THE ROAD

FRANCIS ROSSI: So much is expected of us every time that we've got to do it. It should sound like we've been playing it all our lives, but funny enough it's not that easy. I'd rather get to the point of being sick of rehearsals than go out when we're not ready. It's only then, when you're ready, that you're confident enough to realise that your fears are unfounded. Once you start, all the worries go out of the window. SEPT '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: All bands are in the position where they are begging people to like them, buy our record, make me feel wonderful. And when they do that the bands start to say, "Oh wait a minute, I feel tied in by our fans". Perhaps that's a genuine feeling but I believe it's not very fair. If you've built an audience you can't say that you aren't going to do the old favourites anymore. 79

RICHARD PARFITT: We've talked about doing more mellow things an awful lot, we would like to but the problem we find is bringing the high energy thing down to that level. We've got to bring ourselves down mentally, and we're on stage - you've got that buzz your adrenalin's high. I'd like to do some of the slower things and a couple of more melodic things where you don't have to punch it so much all of the while... I'd like to do that but it's not Quo and I think the only way I could get that is on my own, if I did my own album or something 75 (MUSIC)

RICHARD PARFITT: It's not easy for us to put new songs into the act, making them feel right. The stuff that we do on stage now all feels right, it's natural, we know what we're doing; you put something new in and a stiffness occurs and you become slightly aware of what you're doing to the number. The time is right now to put new songs into the set, it is feeling a bit stale. 75

RICHARD PARFITT: Quo fans come along and they want stuff from the past; you can't really put new stuff in. Add this, add that and Christ we'd be on there all bleedin' night. Plus our audience is constantly changing and that's great to watch. If we went out there now and saw the audience we had 15 years ago we'd wonder what was going on - who's this scruffy lot? I mean even we used to go in bell bottoms! But we're not scared of the younger audience-even though I do feel very 33 today. It's very flattering, it's a lovely thing to see young people getting off on what Quo are doing. They have a good time, they forget what they have to do tomorrow, they forget what problems they had yesterday, they just get off and that's fabulous. You take them away from everyday problems. You're living it for that two hours and that's all that matters, that's what a good gig should be. SEPT 82

RICHARD PARFITT: Andy helps a lot on the live side. I mean if Francis is playing live and I'm doing the rhythms, if the rhythm stops for me to do any licks then things drop. The rhythm is very important in the Quo sound and so Andy is able to keep that side going while I have more freedom to duel with Francis and so on. 77

RICHARD PARFITT: The trouble with this country-there's such a lack of suitable venues for a band like us to play. All over Europe they have huge sports halls holding thousands and we have nothing along those lines. Britain is supposed to be the best country in the world for producing rock bands-but there's nowhere for these bands to play. And even those that might be appropriate often don't come up to modern rock standards. If only the various bodies concerned would look into it more. 79

ON THE ROAD

RICHARD PARFITT: All you can do is threaten to pull the plugs out unless the fans quieten down. But you know deep down that there's no way you're going to pull these plugs because it would cause more trouble than it's worth. I couldn't sit down and listen to our band playing - I'd be up on my feet and bopping, that's for sure. '74

RICHARD PARFITT: In Munich one time, Francis was leaping around when he slipped and knocked himself out and was promptly carried off on a stretcher. The house lights went up with the audience obviously thinking it was the end of the show when we all came dashing back on with Francis reeling from the results of being brought around by a huge dose of smelling salts. Then another time in Germany, Francis and I were both crouched over our guitars when I straightened up before he did and my head crashed into his nose. What a mess! Blood everywhere. It was great, very spectacular.

RICHARD PARFITT: We didn't have any pre-illusions about the show because although Charles was going to be there making the show rather special, it was still a show for the Quo audience as it always is. We had to kind of look at it as just another gig. It was kind of difficult, but once we got on stage there obviously was no difference. As it happens we did play very, very well that night - it was a great gig; you're very lucky when everything's right, and it was. Birmingham's the best indoor gig in the country by any means. I think the sound was great, there was 11,000 people there and it was fab. Charles got up and jiggered about - he did! He said to one of our management staff who was sitting with him, 'Do you think anyone would mind awfully if I stood up'. So he stood up and the Mayor and Mayoress - and everybody, all these 'angers on - all stood up as well because they thought he was leaving, because when the Prince stands up, everybody stands up. Instead of leaving he starts jiving about a bit, so of course, the Mayor and the Mayoress started jiving about a bit. It must have been an incredible sight - I'm only sorry that we didn't see it. Anyway he was supposed to stay for 50 minutes and he ended staying for an hour and a half. 82

FRANCIS ROSSI: It would be bullshit to say it had been great every night. Sometimes I feel that it's not right to do a tour. If I did it when I didn't feel like it, it would be conning the audiences. 80

FRANCIS ROSSI: If we break States it'll be when we're ready, but don't worry they'll come along with time. You see, the thing with us is that we're not going to send home all this bullshit about how well we're doing in the States just to get a few headlines. It's ridiculous sending home news about headlining in 3,000 seats out there because those gigs mean nothing. The news is in filling 20,000 places and we do that by playing support to 'ZZ Top! But the tours we do out there are reasonably short, two month things. You need to go out there for five to do it right, but we're not going to do that. It would mean giving away too much. We're successful and we don't have to give away anything that's dear to us, so we spend some time at home. It's happening out there, we're confident that it will be broken. This band has not existed by selling product and then going out and playing it. It's the other way about for Quo. We sell so many albums because we play so much on the road. Kids hear us and then go and buy the albums. I suppose that does mean we're obliged to keep touring. All the States is at the moment is money, and we're not too concerned about money. I mean, if it doesn't happen there, it won't finish us. There are people around who would like to see it finish us but there is no way that it will. It's a land of bullshit. The younger people are going to revolt against it in a few years. That's why a lot of the kids over there are into us, they can feel the basic honesty of the band. People like to interpret things simply, and that's what they do with Status Quo. Everyone can relate to what we do. It's the same as England and everywhere else. People who go to see Status Quo are yes and no people, black and white people. They're straight, they give direct answers. 75

ON THE ROAD

FRANCIS ROSSI: I know America is supposed to be important. They say, 'You've got to do it out there'. But I don't really like America, and I don't like the thought of going back. But we'll go back, go in the back door, notheadlining. You've got to do it properly. 73

FRANCIS ROSSI: The first tour over here was good. We got good reactions and we were told by everybody that things were very promising. The second was a disaster. We started off at the beginning of the year with the Fleetwood Mac that wasn't Fleetwood Mac. It was that mock - up Fleetwood. The tour started to fall to bits right from the start. People were throwing bottles at them and demanding their money back. Everybody was having rows. Then we were supposed to do some dates with Nazareth but they didn't come over. I caught Pleurisy, Richard Parfitt got something so we packed up and went home. It's hard to come out here and have to start from scratch again. Over here we don't mean a thing, but in England we have reached a point where we can ask for whatever we want; each tour is bigger and better than the last one. We can have things there that we can't have here. It's a difficult psychological thing. (America '74)

QUO'S ARMY

We came a long way  
A slow way too  
Up from the down way  
And back to you  
Now that we've made it  
I don't wanna fade it  
Now that I've made it with you.

'FORTY FIVE HUNDRED TIMES' ROSSI/PARFITT VALLEY MUSIC LTD.

FRANCIS ROSSI: We play the kind of music the audience would play if they could. '75

ALAN LANCASTER: I don't think there is another rock band quite the same as us in the sense that we really put everything into the heavy rock. Sometimes it's obvious that we're getting off the audience as much as they get off on us. They identify with us and we identify with them.

FRANCIS ROSSI: These are amazing days for us. We do have memories of the past when everything was a struggle, a bitter one to keep going. And we're still around, years after Pictures of Matchstick Men! The thing we've worked hard for has paid off. Don't blame us for feeling really pleased about that! Now we can walk on stage and the people there are with us. That's marvellous, it's sweet music to our ears and gives us the big lift off. 1973 is a time to say thank-you to, our many, many loyal fans. We aim to be in the studio and recording. We've quite a lot of material in hand. There will be a progression, but we think Quo's moving onwards is a subtle thing. There will be no sudden dramatic turns leaving half our fans wondering what has happened. We want them to be and go with us. '75

RICHARD PARFITT: We don't like to feel that we're up here and the audience is down there. We like to drag 'em up on stage. Mentally. And put ourselves as near to them as possible. I'm not stretching it if I say there's a feeling of warmth and love between the audience and the band. You see their faces and they can see ours and you know when it's gelling. There's a feeling of love which the music, simple as it may be, is promoting. The only other feeling like it is when you're driving a Porsche in excess of 150. NOV '79

ALAN LANCASTER: We have a newer audience but the old faithfuls are still with us from the underground days; terrible 'ain't it. Our audiences are a mixed crowd. At some venues there have been families in the audience with Mums and Dads freaking out! There's none of that pulling at our clothing or trying to kiss us which happened in our laquered hair pop star days; nowadays, the kids are more interested in our music, so what we do is bring a few supporters back to the hotel and have tea and a chat. I think we've got a very good relationship with our supporters, we understand them and they understand us, because we're both more or less from the same working class background. Sometimes when I'm playing on stage and I see them out there swaying and clapping to our music, I feel awfully guilty that they've paid to see us. But then again, we wouldn't survive if they didn't pay! '75

QUO'S ARMY

FRANCIS ROSSI: We're a band that appeals mostly to guys. We think that's better because girls are too fickle, they change their loyalties too quickly. We know because we appealed to the girls when we first started and got nowhere as a result. But if a guy likes a group he's faithful for ever. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: Every year we've got younger fans; it's a thing we've been knocked for, as if having teenyboppers in your audience is something that shouldn't happen. Then four or five years later, they say it again. I don't see any problem. They're getting off just like us. Who are we to say they shouldn't? NOV 80

FRANCIS ROSSI: When people come to see us, it's a mass event. Everybody comes to have a good time, it's an evening together. It's a beautiful feeling which still knocks me out. The kids aren't to blame, there's no harm in them. It's the heavies. The kids don't want to wreck anywhere. The only reason that there is any damage is that the heavies try to stop them. They really whack them around in some places. They hold the fans back and as soon as they let them go, they go berserk. We played in Sunderland and the guy said we weren't going on until they sat down. The fans wouldn't sit down and they just went on shouting until we came on. It's a complete waste of time trying to restrain them. I remember Glasgow Apollo used to be the worst of the lot for heavies but they've got new guys in now and it's the best in the country. One night when we were there a few years ago, a kid managed to get up on stage. The heavies were livid and they dragged him out of the place by the hair. The thing that had made them mad was that they said that he was the first guy in five years to do that. They were so proud that nobody has ever got near the stage. Those guys get off on strange things. We had to extend the stage at Cardiff. They took out seats and in the first four or five rows, they put in old busted up seats, all different colours. They put them in because they knew they were going to get wrecked. That was a good idea and there was no problem. They get guys in there, six and half foot tall, to try and stop the kids. It's stupid. It would only take one word from us and that would finish them off. There would be two and a half thousand kids out there. Sometimes it really does annoy me because they really get nasty with our fans sometimes. It would take one word and that would be it - all over. What could sixteen big blokes do against that crowd. Absolutely nothing. It wouldn't even take any fighting. The fans would just have to push them, walk on top of them and they couldn't get up. Most of us are anti-violence because we've been through all that when we were teenagers and nobody wins by violence. To tell you the truth, violence sickens me. '75

THE IMAGE

What you gonna do with those faded blues you wear?  
 What you gonna do with those ol' rag blues?  
 What you gonna do with those ol' blue jeans you wear?  
 Ol' rag blues, Ol' rag blues, Ol' rag blues.

'OL' RAG BLUES' LANCASTER/LAMB SHAWBURY MUSIC/EATON MUSIC LTD

FRANCIS ROSSI: We like to play strong rocking music and we feel most comfortable on stage when we're doing that if we wear denim clothes. It's a habit that we've got into, too, to put our heads down and shake our hair about... it shows just how much we concentrate. We really do get lost in a world of our own! '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: If someone is put off because you project the wrong image they're fooling themselves. We've often had that at the back of our minds, but if a fan says 'I'm not having anymore to do with Status Quo because they're in the singles chart' we're not losing anything. These days it's what we're doing now. That's what we've got. That's the way it is. '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: When Piledriver broke, it was considered we had five years left at the top at the most. I think simplicity is part of the key, but other people latched on to it rather than us manufacturing it. It was the same with our image - when we started wearing jeans and T-shirts on stage 'cos they were all we could afford, people started accusing us of cultivating an image. MAY '82

ALAN LANCASTER: We want to be looked at as a concert band, not a fad that dies out in a year. And we don't want to be compared to the glitter/Bowie thing. You know, David Bowie used to live just down the road from me, he's the King on the make-up scene! He does it without looking ridiculous though. The difference with Bowie is that he is an out and out star. It's like Bob Dylan, who has always been one of my favourites. I went to see him in Los Angeles with the Band. He wasn't very good as it happens but with someone like that it doesn't matter. The important thing is just to see him, he's got such a personality and it's the same with Bowie. With us it's different. We're not stars, we're just a band. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: It all happened purely by accident. Everybody around us, our record company and our management kept complaining that we had no image. And we didn't have the faintest idea what they were talking about. They came up with so many stupid suggestions, but we tried them all out! We even got round to having our faces painted, but none of it worked. So one day we thought 'Fuck it! We don't like all this gear and neither does anybody else. What the hell are we wearing it for?' So we started playing in the clobber we wore everyday and it just sort of clicked with the audience. After all, you can't get any simpler than jeans and plimsolls, can you? But at the time, in 1968, it was a really risqué, naughty thing to do. Wearing a pair of jeans was a big step. Nobody else dared to do it. All that's been very good to us and I wouldn't dare knock it. But it can be very restricting. People expect to see us in Levis and waistcoats now. '83

THE IMAGE

FRANCIS ROSSI: I'm not here to be looked at like a pretty boy. Four chicks turned up last night - halfway through the set. Definitely a cut above the rest and they all dressed the part. They came waltzing down the front and had a quick look to see who they fancied. You could see it a mile off, "Right, I'll have him". It's no good to me at all. If they come and see us, they've got to be there to get into it. Not because they think they'd like to get me or one of the others into bed. I've seen it with so many bands. They ignore one band because you're there and when you go they'll try the other lot. It's not on. We don't associate with groupies. It's probably because we aren't groovy enough! '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: Imagine what the press would say if I was seen on stage wearing something other than denim. They'd go berserk, wouldn't they? They'd have a real field day. It's funny how simple thing like how you dress can assume such giant importance. But I don't see it happening really. I still don't feel right unless I'm wearing jeans to work. '81

FRANCIS ROSSI: Maybe if I wasn't in Quo any more I'd have all my hair off and that'd be the end of it - no more worries. But at the moment I can't see it. Everyone knows it's going a bit, but to a certain extent we are image conscious in a funny sort of way - funny because the whole thing started with trying to lose a silly image we didn't need - and the hair, the jeans, all that, it's still got to be there. It's still Quo. '81

FRANCIS ROSSI: Yeah, we have got a nice clean image, which is ridiculous when you come to think of it. We used to be regarded as dirty, rotten, scruffy and anti-establishment. Now all of a sudden we're clean and OK. If somebody had said we'd playing in front of royalty 10 years ago I'd have said it wasn't on the cards. 12 years ago, impossible. But there we were, and there was quite a buzz on the night. We've all grown up a bit and that can't be a bad thing. I did all the groupies and all that stuff years ago. Now it's all sitting around and having a drink after a gig - I've taken to the odd drink now and again, nothing serious, since we started going to this Mexican restaurant in Switzerland; I do enjoy my tequila once in a while. We are mellowing more and more as it goes on, but we're happier for it. SEPT 82

FRANCIS ROSSI: I don't feel any particular eyes on me at any time. This business can mislead you totally. In the end you're only big to certain people. One day you could be mobbed by people saying: 'There's that geezer from Status Quo', and then again you've got just as many, and probably more, who're going: 'Status who? What's all that about? It's like football players. For everyone who worships one you've got a hundred that don't even know they exist, and that's good in a way. It takes away your self importance if you think of it like that, and that is a good thing, believe me. The only thing I keep is the hair and the jeans and that's a personal thing. All I can say is that I'd feel silly without the hair doing the job I'm doing, personally. OK? SEPT 82

ROCK 'N' ROLL

Got to have something to sing about  
Everyone must have a song  
Now I've got something to sing about  
Everyone's singing my song

'AND IT'S BETTER NOW' ROSSI/YOUNG VALLEY MUSIC LTD.

FRANCIS ROSSI: It's a kinda raunchy R & B. I dunno, it's just something we get off on. '74

ALAN LANCASTER: We're definitely on the Stones/Deep Purple/Led Zepplin side of the fence. Basically we are a natural band. We've all got one-track minds for rock music, we think it should be energetic, loud, boaty and beefy! We get straight to the point with no messing about. There's a terrific atmosphere at our concerts. We get very excited and so do the audience, and the whole thing builds up into a terrific climax. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: Our music comes out of us quite naturally, we didn't set out to make it straight down the line stuff. We need to get something out of it before anyone else can. Our concerts are built on a real closeness to the audience, but if we don't play something that we can get into, there's no way we can give anything out. '74

ALAN LANCASTER: We don't need to rehearse a lot because by this time we know what the others are going to do on stage. Having to arrange our own material has made us much better musicians. In the old days a lot of Pop was made by session men but now even the best session musicians can't get the feel that a band can. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: First we were called lamebrains, and then the fans were called lamebrains just because the music is simple. But then you get to realise that the simple things in life are the better things. The best answer to questions is either yes or no. I hope we never lose that simple thing. I can see that the music might get a little more involved, but not complicated. If Status Quo got too involved it would become boring. There is a type of musical snobbery around. There are a lot of people who like complicated stuff just because they think it impresses people. Country music is something like ours. It's basic simple music from simple people. I always listen to the Quo stuff. I've got a complete set of tapes in the car, a set for home and a set for work on the road. Why shouldn't I listen to them? They do something for me. The stuff we do is the stuff I like playing best, so it's no use saying that I play this but I like listening to something else. I can't understand why people don't listen to their own music. It seems quite natural to me. It's like an artist doing a painting and then saying that he doesn't like looking at what he has painted.

RICHARD PARFITT: We used to sit around jamming and going into that 'duh duhduh duhduh duhduh' lick and everybody loved it. We just used to get off on it and it just became apparent that we should do something like that and just chonk along. NOV '79.

ROCK 'N' ROLL

JOHN COGHLAN: We've made our own sound. We've been together for so long, that's got a lot to do with it. A little while ago, Rick and I had a jam with some friends of ours and they said we gave them a slightly different sound. Maybe it's the way we were tackling the things. We go in hard. Rick really whacks his guitar. I hit the drums hard. If they're laid back it's not the same. It's the same with all of us, the solos of Francis and the bang playing of Nuff. If any other bass player came on stage to play with us, anyone you can name, it wouldn't be the same. He could play all the same things but it's the feel, you see. '75

RICHARD PARFITT: Most of the writing occurs on the road when we're touring. We get back to the hotel at night and just sit around with a guitar, and something will happen, you get an idea. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: I don't think I'm a very good guitarist at all. I know there are many, many, many guitarists better than me - technically. It all depends on how you're going to evaluate it. Either I'm a showman, or a guitarist. I don't know what I see myself as, but I'm no way a guitarist who can say 'this is this and I can teach you things' I've never learnt. There was this guy I used to know called Alan Key, whose brother used to play with Rolf Harris, he taught me how to play the chord of E, I think, and it sort of went from there. I never actually learnt, and I probably regret that to some extent. I've got stacks of cassettes that I've made up of good solos, and I've said that I'll learn them, but I never got around to it. I never wanted to be a guitarist as such. I just wanted to be able to sit there and strum and play through a song and just sing it. I got roped into playing lead. We had an organist at first, and in the early days when we were doing top ten stuff, he'd do the solos. I didn't want to know, I was just standing there and singing. They first got me to do a solo on 'Route 66', and it was dreadful. Nuff and Pat Barlow, our old manager, really geek me up and told me how fabulous it was and it progressed from there. But, like I said, I never actually got down to learning. I never do any finger exercises. Most of the day I'm playing for one thing or another, either trying to write new stuff or recording, or playing live. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: People always put it to us that we never change and always sound the same, but so does anyone who's successful. The more successful you are the noticeable it is. You can recognise ELO or Rod Stewart straight away, no matter what they do. Bands can change for the sake of being artificially progressive, but it's possible to get wrapped up in that, like you can get wrapped up in being a musician. You can get so wrapped up in yourself that you aren't doing what you're supposed to be doing. I'm content to the point that we've got some success doing something that we always wanted to do. But if you're 100% content it would go - no drive. You always need to do something else. Whether it's new Status Quo song or whatever else you must do something new. Go write another song or play another number. It's what keeps you going. '79

RICHARD PARFITT: It took me a long time to accept that I'm a rhythm guitarist because I think quite a lot of people look on a rhythm guitarist as a very secondary sort of thing, you know, if you don't play lead guitar or bass what do you play? It's funny but I've found out in the last eighteen months there's an awful lot to get out of a rhythm guitar. I've really got into playing my guitar much more so than ever before. Experimenting with tunings...things like that have helped me broaden my outlook on guitar playing. I'd like to do an album of the kind of things I like, - I think everybody else would as well. But whether I'd get round to doing it I don't know, I'd like to think that I would. To have an album released under my name would give me a great sense of satisfaction, you choose your musicians and it's all your own thing.

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ROCK 'N' ROLL

I think some of it would be my songs and I'd like to record songs that I like that are standards over the past years. I like songs like "Only You"; there are a lot of songs I like. This sounds terrible but "Now Is The Hour,- there's a way to do that and you can get so much beauty out of it, and "Amazing Grace". I've got enough confidence in myself to think that it would come off but it's totally different when you get in the studio. '75

RICHARD PARFITT: There was this local Co-op gig where everybody used to go in their Mohair sweaters and winkle-picker shoes and they used to have the local bands there. At that time it was Jackie Lynton and the teen-beats, bands like that, I used to go along with all me mates in a gang, they were all off pulling birds and dancing and I used to find myself standing in front of the stage looking at the guitarist. Everytime I watched the guitarist, and this is the God's honest truth, I used to look at the particular chord shape and I'd go home remembering it, try it and I'd get it. Christ knows what the guy's name was... but I suppose he was one of my influences. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: What takes over from youthful enthusiasm and can produce more aggression, fire or whatever you want to call it, is the pressure of the thing. You know that you've got to come up with another album. You know that you've got to write more songs. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: Punk was an insult; to be called a punk band was an insult, and I didn't like to be that outrageous, to gob in the street, to gob in someone's eye, where do you take it? Where do you stop? We've all been rebels at an early stage. Don't call it punk, call it new wave. I think there'll always be a new wave as such, which is great, and I really like it at the moment with the mixture of Fifties, Sixties, Seventies and spacey Eighties. I didn't really like any of the Pistols stuff, although the engineer played me something like 'God Save The Queen' one night, and I really liked that, the energy, the guitar sound. Then I saw Sid Vicious doing 'My Way', and it was like for years we'd always messed about with various tracks, and it proved to me you can do'en in anyway. In the early days we'd mess around before the gig, doing like all the soul stuff in the Status Quo style, and we used to think it funny. Then there's old Sid doing 'My Way'! '80

RICHARD PARFITT: We like doing it. I look at it and see the trends that have come and gone, and I look at Quo as a kind of steam train that just buffets its way through all these trends and comes out the other side and is still shunting, you know, the fire is still alight. We don't conform to any trend of dress or music. We just play what we want and what we like so you'd best ask the fans because they keep digging it and they keep buying it and we enjoy doing it. We've got a formula that works and we've been knocked something wicked for what we do. The people who don't really listen to it say it's all the same, but of course it's not all the same. A lot of bloody hard work goes into what we do. As long as we've still got the enthusiasm there, we'll keep going. '81

FRANCIS ROSSI: I reckon my singing has been getting better over the last couple of years. I don't know why because I haven't been taking lessons or anything. It's probably down to experience although the recording studio may have something to do with it. You wouldn't believe the things you can do now in a studio to make something pretty ordinary end up sounding fantastic! Mind you, I've always liked good harmony singers. When I was a kid I used to listen to the Everly Brothers all the time and now it's ELO. I really love Jeff Lynn's voice. And Squeeze I like too. I've never seen them live. For years, people in the press and elsewhere have criticised us and said that all our songs sound the same. And maybe they have done, who can tell? But they haven't sounded all the same to us.

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ROCK 'N' ROLL

We've always put a lot of hard work into making each song sound enjoyable and that little bit different. But then you can always say that eating fish and chips is enjoyable, but the taste never changes,.. I dunno. I must admit that in the past we've sometimes limited ourselves a little too much. One or two of the things we've put out have been a little dodgy, like 'AGAIN AND AGAIN' - I thought that was awful. But I got a letter the other day from a fan and he said he used to hate Status Quo until he heard that song and now he thinks we're great. So you never can tell, can you? Nevertheless, I'd like to think we could be a little more adventurous sometimes. '81

RICHARD PARFITT: I play licks, but I just can't play lead. I've never set out to be a lead guitarist, I've always been a rhythm player, never had a flair for it - I'm cut out to be a rhythm guitarist. '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: You couldn't say you liked the Carpenters. If you were into Floyd and Zeppelin, you might get away with Purple because they were a little bit good, but you couldn't approve of Quo. If you liked punk it had to be all punk or none at all. I'm pleased that's gone now. I like that Nolan's record and Sheena Easton. I can't stand looking at her doing it, but she makes great records. NOV 80

RICHARD PARFITT: Years ago it was virtually a doddle to write a twelve bar, which is a Status Quo trade mark. We could go off now and within five minutes probably write a twelve bar but it wouldn't mean anything because it would be the same as the last one. You've got to try and inject something into it, and to write what we always know as 'dum-da-dum' is not as easy as a lot of people think it is, it's really not. '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: We've been trying to move on but it's harder than it used to be when trying to write a song that is fitted to Status Quo. In fact it's one of the hardest things in the world to write a rock'n' roll song where you get the melody right and get across the feeling that will make people want to move. I mean, it's much easier writing ballads but we just have to work hard. There seems to be so many bands that struggle when writing songs, they get really close to getting it right but just fall short and often it's because the songs lack a melody. Now that we've found the formula we can't throw it away, can we? A lot of these bands you see around now substitute a melody with some bloke screaming to cover up the lack of originality. Basically it's just vocal gymnastics as they've got nothing really to sing about. There's so many bands that seem to think that looking evil is good, when really all they do is end up looking like jokes. '83

RICHARD PARFITT: Y'see Quo's hook is really the power of the band, I mean nobody goes along to have their lives changed by the lyrics of Status Quo. '75

IN THE STUDIO

Writing songs that I think sound so strange,  
Writing words that I feel I should change  
It's alright if they sound just like other songs  
My guitar strums along just the same  
If the song's underlined with my name.

NANANA - ROSSI/YOUNG VALLEY MUSIC LTD.

FRANCIS ROSSI: (PILEDRIVER) we put out 'PAPER PLANE' from that album and everything went WHAM! Everything just bust wide open. Since then we've had four smash singles on the trot in England. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: We owe a lot to 'PAPER PLANE'. A lot of people have bought that for the flip side ('SOFTER RIDE'), which I reckon is just as good. When we recorded the album 'PLANE' was my favourite track. But I like 'em all now. 'PLANE' has helped the album sell and vice versa. When we get home we start thinking about the next album and possibly a single, but we don't want to rush into the follow up thing. It's a rat race to keep on making singles. If this one gets to number one we're going to have a few problems. So much will be expected of us and people will probably try to push us out of our stride. We've taken our time so far and done things our way and we don't intend to change now. Future singles will probably only be album cuts released to promote the album. '73

RICHARD PARFITT: (HELLO) It still maintains that Quo feel but it's more melodic and it's more the band. '73

FRANCIS ROSSI: (HELLO) It's a gradual progression from 'PILEDRIVER'. Everything we do is steady, ploddy. We plod on. Everybody says, 'Yeah, that's a load of bullshit and it's a bit of this and it's very riffy and it's all very simple' - but they don't really understand. We don't consciously sit down and say let's be simple. I mean music is feel. The greatest musicians play from inside. Really we'd like some respect. Chuck Berry has respect, and he can be rough - he's just a feel merchant. I don't think people listen to where we're at - they aren't being honest about it. '73

RICHARD PARFITT: The 'HELLO' album was fabulous, and so many people say it is still their favourite. I've got quite a few favourite tracks off it like '4500 Times'. I always remember when we actually recorded it - it started off as a sort of 3/4 minute piece which turned into a track of nearly ten minutes long, and this happened because we used to record much as we're sitting now, in a tight circle on chairs with all the amplification around us. I mean, the sound was at stage volume! And it was a nightmare to try and mix it. But I always remember we all got so off on one another that the last seven minutes on the record are more or less ad lib. Nobody quite knew what they were doing, but we were so getting off on it it just went on and on and now from that 9 min 50 secs it's turned into 20 mins 30 secs - we timed it the other day at rehearsals. It's a fabulous stage number; it's a classic to us now and I think the fans love it as well. Just before we do it on stage it's 'see you later then', but it's great. On a good night it's a wonderful piece to perform. When it happens it's amazing, a real turn on. See you later. '82

IN THE STUDIO

FRANCIS ROSSI: I really enjoy making records... I like the idea of creating a product out of a lump of plastic. Some people have this thing about the music being very samey, and it is in that we play mostly riffs. But anybody who has really listened notices lots of changes in the feel. The band has a very recognizable style but it's deeper than that. We're very much a band to be listened to because there has been a constant progression going on over the past three albums which is really exciting. If you're going to satisfy people you're playing to you've got to satisfy yourself first. I'm happy the way the album ("QUO") is going, though there's bound to be people saying it's still the same old stuff. That's their problem, though, because people who listen can tell different. The band has only ever recorded in two studios, but I personally have always wanted to record in America because it's there that the best rock'n'roll comes from - I'm sure we'd get something from doing an album there. '74

ALAN LANCASTER: (QUO) It's keyed more to stereo than our previous records. They were more mono before but this one's got things like guitars answering each other and things like that. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: (QUO) We're tired of people criticising us because of our sound, so we wanted to do something different. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: (QUO) There are a lot of solos I like on the new album. I play them quite a lot at home. I don't see how anyone who is really involved in their own music can prefer to listen to someone else's at home! You should get a little rush of feeling when the solo comes in, I get it when I'm playing with them! A guitar can cry or apologise, I try to put all that in when I'm playing and I hope to feel that when I put on the record. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: ("QUO") We knew the album would do well, we knew it would. But it turned out to be incredible. The first week of its release it went into the charts at number two. From then it fought it out with The Carpenters and Rick Wakeman! It's amazing. '74

ALAN LANCASTER: ('ON THE LEVEL') It's a ten track album and the songs aren't so contrived or intricately arranged, they're more melodic and could easily be singles. We've concentrated on the writing side instead of getting involved with long drawn out jams. People have said to us that it's the best thing we've done, but funny enough this particular album hasn't knocked me out like the others did - I don't know why, it just doesn't do anything to me. Perhaps I'm apathetic? Don't get me wrong, I think this album is a natural progression, we're definitely heading in the right direction. The title created a bit of problem. At first we wanted to call it, among other things, 'Head Job', but the Americans said, 'Hey man, you can't have that' so we've called it 'On The Level'. When we recorded 'Down Down' for a single, we had to edit a lot of it and then final result was 'Yukkh'. But it sounded OK out of the studio in a more 'poppy' context. Still, I think the version on the album is a lot better, although it wouldn't have made a very commercial single like the edited version. '75

BOB YOUNG: (DOWN DOWN) It's great that the single got to number one but if it had one down the charts. We would still have been happy. It's nice to say that we've had a number one, but narrow minded people seem to think that if your next record goes to number two you're going down hill. It was the right time to release the single because we've got an album coming out soon. You need some sort of promotion and the single gives you that. It'll keep that buzz going until the album comes out and a lot of new people will buy the album because they liked the single. A lot of bands bring out singles and that's it. Ultimately, for Status Quo, albums are the most important thing. Actually, it's gigs and then albums. A single will never be the life or death of Status Quo. '75

IN THE STUDIO

RICHARD PARFITT: ('ON THE LEVEL') We basically are a roaring band and because we're a roaring band we've had trouble getting the sound we like on records. We did it on that one, and we'll now be able to do it every time. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: Various little bands can just make so much noise on record, but if there's a feeling there, or sometimes just a melody, you know that's what's selling it. People say, 'I can't understand why that record's selling'. There's no need to understand it. It's just the feeling that comes off it. Nine times out of ten that's what sells a record. We went through a whole thing of improving our recording technique when we did 'ROCKIN' ALL OVER THE WORLD'. There was a time when people were making records and getting great acclaim for making little bits of plastic, not necessarily being able to play the little bits of plastic live but that didn't seem to matter. We thought, well, we can do that, so we did. We put two singles out that we'd decided were singles before we'd recorded them - very unusual for us. We got lots of letters from fans saying we should do this and we should do that. We found it too clinical ourselves. The bulls-ups, and what have you, add adrenalin to the track. Take that out and you lose it. So we tried to get back to a happy medium between a real dry source, where everything you solo is clean, and some overspill and ambience to give it a live sound. It's taken us 'til this one to get a happy medium between a decent technical sound and a bit of balls on there. Over the years when we've been rehearsing a track for an album and we're coming up to, say, an instrumental section, we used to play around with them. When we were working on that mid-section, we'd start getting really involved with something really good, and really interesting. Then we'd lay it all down with the fancy bit in the middle and it would somehow leave us all maaugh.... It's the feel and the arrangement that count. We used to have these very clever bits and think, 'That'll make everybody sit up and say we're fabulous' and all that crap, and in the end we'd take them out to make the song right, just give it a straight treatment nine times out of ten. It's unusual for us to do a track that we don't like. When you write you've got to please yourself, convince yourself that you've got a slight turn on it that makes it different to the last song you wrote. Especially in this so-called heavy rock/twelve bar boogie, whatever you want to call it. So you decide, 'This has got something' and you stick at it, and get off on it. Then you've got to get it across to the others. If someone plays me a piece, I'll think what it's like and treat it that way, which is not the right attitude. It is itself, whatever that is, so you've got to find the right way. Then you've got it together. It's simple stuff but it's not easy. NOV 80.

ALAN LANCASTER: ('ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD') We recorded that one after being eight months off the road - so, we went into the studio's not as a band, but as just a bunch of four musicians going in to record for the first time. We weren't writing together anymore, and we had to basically get to know each other again. So we got Pip Williams to produce, I dunno, but the result was mechanical. But on 'Can't Stand The Heat' we got to know Pip better, and we cut it right after a European tour so we went in firing as a band.

FRANCIS ROSSI: We got to a point where we'd come so far producing our own albums, and then we did the live album and that was horrible. And then all these records were coming out and the quality on them was superb. So we picked a single, Wild Side Of Life - and went into the studio with Roger Glover, and it sounded great - very professional. So then we went in to do the 'ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD' album. We tried Roger again but he didn't quite fit. Looking back on it, I think we were a bit unfair. So we brought in Pip and we all got on very well with him. We enjoyed working with him, but 'ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD' came out far too clinical.

## IN THE STUDIO

We find though, that older people like the more recent albums and younger people like the older ones. 'IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT' is more raunchy, but we blew that in terms of over - dubs. We had a load of brass on, in fact we put brass on 'HELLO' but you can't fucking hear it. It's on 4500 times and 'LITTLE BLUE EYED LADY' but you just don't hear it. '79

RICHARD PARFITT: ('CAN'T STAND THE HEAT') It's more down the line than the last one, very much like 'PILED RIVER' - raw and brash. It's got no airs and graces, but it's not as unpolished because we've learnt various production techniques through time. There is a lot of diversity. You can get a song like 'AGAIN' and 'AGAIN' which I wrote with Andy Bown and Jackie Lynton. It's about a rock star looking back at his career; it's very simple, but the song's got a lot of magic in it too. It's a real pumper, goes up and down like a bicycle pump, and it's going to end up a stage favourite. You've got something like that and then you've got a really nice slow thing called 'SOMEONE SHOW ME HOME' which is about a warehouse. Two entirely different styles but all within that Quo format. Pip Williams wrote one called 'ACCIDENT PRONE' which is very fast. It's musically strange for Quo because it hasn't got the usual chord sequences. It's a very disco sound, in fact it's almost disco. Just say the album is hard rock with the power of Quo behind it. '78

FRANCIS ROSSI: ('ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD') When you have just four people making an album, making all the decisions about what it should sound like, there's a real danger of becoming too insular, too sane. The result can be very clinical and dry in a studio, especially with a band like us who spend more time doing live work. So we pulled in a new producer, and went to holland to record it in a studio that had a real 'live sound' to it. Mind you, I hate live albums. They're too risky, and always sound contrived, as though the audience has been transported into a studio and told exactly what to do. It's a bit of a cop out. There's too much brass on ours - I wasn't pleased with the album. Opinions naturally differ within the band, like Richard didn't like the 'BLUE FOR YOU' album but I love it. '78

RICHARD PARFITT: ('ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD') Pip Williams has made quite a lot of difference. I mean, he has not changed the basic sound the band has, that would be stupid, but he came up with some good ideas and if we had suggestions we could talk them over with him. It has a bit of edge over the others. I've never been really happy with the sound on record. 'HELLO' got near, about 50 out of 100. We thought of using an American producer, but to be honest we don't get on too well with Americans so we thought it unwise. '77

FRANCIS ROSSI: You see, when you make an album you're constantly trying to improve your sound, and when it came to recording 'ROCKIN ALL OVER THE WORLD', we noticed that a lot of people were getting credit for making amazing albums, when we could see that all they were relying upon was studio techniques. So of course we thought why can't we do that too? So we tried it using percussion and brass and made 'ROCKIN' a very, clean, tidy and hit - album. The next album 'IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT', was more in the vein people expect from us, though it was still 'dressed'. 'WHATEVER YOU WANT' will be rough and ready, because although our other LP'S sold a hell of a lot, it seems that our fans prefer us to record our music in its raw state. If that's what they want, then that's what we'll do. You have to weigh up what you are doing - are you going to sell more product, or give the people who made you what they want? APRIL '79

IN THE STUDIO

FRANCIS ROSSI: I thought the actual track itself, 'WHATEVER YOU WANT' could have been a lot better, a wonderful track, I was well up on it. But we didn't hit it as a band on that album. We were getting the takes down, but the 'comp' wasn't coming across. But there is a feeling that comes across from this new album, 'JUST SUPPOSIN', I suppose it's a unified Status Quo, I don't know. There was a break when we had a chance to get more material together, it sounds more like an album. I didn't really want to do 'ROCK 'N' ROLL' with Status Quo, because my partner Bernard Frost and I were writing, we were turning out a lot of songs. This year it was going to be songs like 'ROCK 'N' ROLL' or ballads. I didn't really believe we could write a rock song. 'SORRY' was written for either Denis Roussos or Judie Tzuke, and Roussos's producer heard our demo, with me and Bernard on accoustics, him on bass and me on drums, so old Denis did 'SORRY'. Not a bad bloke really! When I used to listen to, like, Guy Mitchell or the Everly Brothers, I used to think they were pop stars, but when I first went to the States, I realised they were Country. Country and Western is all the same, really simple three chords, and they're singing about actual incidents in their daily lives, in their accent. It's only now you've got young English bands singing in my accent, which is 'ere' Gorbliney', like Madness on Baggy Trousers'. Country and Western is a three chord melody, you can sit there strumming it and you don't need anybody else. I love 'WILD SIDE OF LIFE', we first did it backing Tommy Quickly. I could never get the intro right, but I've always wanted to do it. '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: 'WHATEVER YOU WANT' is basically more raunchy than the last two. We were getting more like musicians than Status Quo! The last one ('IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT') just wasn't a Quo kind of album. These production jobs just don't work for us. It isn't us. We've got back to the roots now, the real bare bones. But strangely enough it's the most expensive record yet. Cost a ridiculous amount of money. You have to use very sophisticated techniques to achieve that raw sound. We've developed our own style, and we can only work within that. However, different we tried to get it, it would always come out sounding like Status Quo. When you've played together as long as we have, it's unavoidable. For instance, I'd love to have made the last Electric Light Orchestra album - but if I had, it would have come out sounding like Status Quo. '79

RICHARD PARFITT: We've cut down on the gear in the studio. We used to record with the full stacks at ear - shattering volumes. It's great fun while your doing it, but when you come to mixing it's an absolute nightmare. I can't knock that because I used to enjoy it, and Quo fans enjoyed it too. We walk in and set up, and the first big nightmare is getting the kit to sound good. It takes a day to get it to sound right, and when it does we just play and see what it all sounds like and start adjusting from there. It's relatively simple to get the initial backing track once the basic sound is there, but you've got to have the right feel. For instance, you do a 'dum - da dum - da... everyone says it's simple but if you do it badly it sounds the pits - you've got to play it well. So we get the feel, and once we get it right and it's stepping, we do the overdubs. We all play together on the backing tracks, then take it apart and see who played badly. We all listen to our own parts and see if we're happy with them. Then we patch it up before going on to do the main overdubs. '82

IN THE STUDIO

FRANCIS ROSSI: It all comes back to the same thing with us; stripping it all down and keeping it simple, and that's up to us to do. Never mind the time, never mind the knocks; get the thing stripped down to a two song and we're in business. It's almost got to the stage where we could do it with any song. Take 'SOMETHIN' 'BOUT YOU BABY' I mean, I've got versions of that at home by at least five different people - Tom Jones and Trini Lopez for starters - and that's a two song the way we've done it. We're not stealing, or 'sounding like someone else', and to get that right is the hardest part. It's the same old argument, the one that Jeff Lynne used to get in ELO when he started... and here we're talking about someone I really like. You could see all the influences going in old Tama and all that, but so what? What came out was ELO, everyone flocks in and buys it, and you can't knock that at all. '81

ALAN LANCASTER: ('1982') It started off with a lot of messing about, and I wasn't happy about that at all. I so wanted '1982' to be a good album, even though we didn't decide on that title till later, I simply didn't want any mistakes on it. Then Francis and Rick wanted Pip Williams to come in as producer and I said; 'No! I wanted to do it my way this time around - I didn't really trust anyone else to do it the way I wanted it. I got the feeling that Francis and Rick didn't really know it all, it was as if over the last year or so they seemed to have lost their way a bit. But I was convinced that we had to find the two way again, and I didn't want the band getting cold feet about it. I ended up saying; 'Sod it, no! We'll try it for a week, what's a week in the studio for us even at that price - and see what happens. It was almost as if people were suspicious before giving their ideas, maybe because they were insecure about the band's future. Then we started and it went 'BANG!' Things started to happen and that doesn't just mean that the drummer left! With the songs we had and the approach we took everyone actually realised that it was fresh, there was a new outlook to be had out of what we were doing together. All of a sudden there was an abundance of ideas; we all realised that things we might have been doing individually could be done within two, Christ! It was actually easier to do them within two, that was our strength and for some reason we hadn't fully owned up to that. Once we did, everything came out in a great gush, and it's set us up really well for the year. We came out of the studio feeling relaxed and happy, ready to go out and blast our way through a tour with the knowledge that great, we've got it all to play for now. Let's do it! I'm very happy now, very confident about the future. The corniest sounding things are often the truest ones, and if I say that two have really only just begun I really believe it. SEPT '82

CRITICS AND THE MEDIA

There you go again telling me the same mistakes I made  
There you go again telling me the way I should have played  
Your silver tongue can talk away and tell me all I should have done  
But you'll always be the same till the very last time has come.

'WHO ASKED YOU' LANCASTER .. SHADURRY-EARON MUSIC LTD

FRANCIS ROSSI: Yeah, well before Status Quo made it again, the cats who were writing about us were people who were interested in writing about us. They thought 'Yeah, nice little band - I'll have a write on that'. They were into the band - whereas now a lot of them have to write about us because it's their job. So they figure they'll slag us off and see what happens. That's the way it reads anyway, and the way it feels. Any criticism hurts because they are slagging something you live with and something you believe in. If there's a riff to the music they think that's something terrible. Oh dear me, a riff - can't have that! But if we are really into it, it doesn't really matter. Like the whole Reading thing (Reading Festival '73) - we're supposed to have died a death there and been the worst band in the world. But go out and ask the people see what they thought. They were there - we saw 'em, everybody else saw 'em. Critics say our music isn't original but what is? It's all been done before, everything. '73

FRANCIS ROSSI: When you get a number one album you feel good, extremely good. It's something you aim for, you've dreamt and longed many a night for it to happen. You turn to the charts and see other people there at the top and the next day it happens to you. 'HELLO' seems to have been a album which with its success has sent the critics into some confusion. I think for sometime we've been the group some critics have their knock at. When you get successful in sales and chart terms then people have to write copy, and sometimes the people who write are not the people who have been with us through the good and bad days. The week we were high in all the music paper charts, one major pop paper decided to review the record and didn't find all that much good in it! You always read what the writers have to say, every word. And on the whole, apart from a few, we get treatment. People like Tony Stewart and Julie Webb from the NME have always been fair. '73

JOHN COGHLAN: There are still some knockers about but there's not that many now. Sometimes, we get people coming in to the dressing room and they knock us in a roundabout way. They speak to Francis a lot and try to slag him off but he's got them well sorted. Sometimes, people say I should do this and that on drums and I just say that that's the way I do it and if they don't like it, well it's too bad. '75

JOHN COGHLAN: There were a lot of people who a few years back, gave the band the cold shoulder. They are now seeing what the band is doing and they still won't accept it although they have got to accept it. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: For years the critics used to slag us and our music, basically because we lacked image and glamour, and it wasn't trendy to say you were into us. So we were either ignored, or criticised. It hurts us naturally, but we adopted a 'sod the lot of you - we're gonna do it anyway' attitude, and it paid off because we got through to those that count - people who buy records. Now of course, a lot of the people who knocked us before come along to our gigs and actually admit they enjoy it. '78

CRITICS AND THE MEDIA

FRANCIS ROSSI: One of the worst pressures is trying to follow up your last record. You look at bands like Fleetwood, when they spend so long making an epic album, the pressure to follow it must be greater. I don't worry about the reviews. I don't take it to heart, but obviously some of it creeps in. You feel you can't believe the good ones unless you believe the bad ones too. But most of the roastings have done us good. I remember when we were starting out, we were doing a gig and I went to look round the curtain to see if the hall was filling up. I think it was too early on in the tour to be trying to get the girls at it. Anyway there were about half a dozen girls out there and they started screaming. The manager of the place came up to me and said, "If I catch you doing that again sonny, you'll never work in another theatre again". And we took all that stuff. I'm surprised we're still around. We were the most unlikely band to break, and the most unlikely band to hold on. '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: If we put out something different, kids have to start all over again and try to get into it. They don't expect us to change the music. They want the ingredients to stay the same, so I don't see why we should struggle and do our damndest to change it. But we always make an effort to improve with each album and be a little different within the framework of the band. The fact is, that if we changed the music completely, critics would pick up on something else then have a go at that. '73

RICHARD PARFITT: We did this Wembley gig. It was a fabulous gig; we all enjoyed it. The audience went mental; it was great. This guy said it was a load of crap and all the business. He said you could see the dandruff flying out of their hair and things like that. It's things like that that annoy us. But also, this was fairly recently as well, we were doing Hammersmith and I went out to a club afterwards and there's this guy sitting in there with this young bird and he says "How'd it go tonight? Good reaction and all that?" and I said "Yeah great - and he said" "Coe I've got to do a write up on it tomorrow and I just needed to know how it went" - he hadn't even gone, he's been in this club all night! MAY '82

ALAN LANCASTER: It doesn't really matter to us at all. I think firstly you've got to realise that we enjoy what we're doing. We're playing music we want to play, hard, gutsy music, that's not necessarily the only music we listen to but it's the music we like to play the most because we feel we do that type of music better, and whatever critics said really went in one ear and out the other unless it was a good criticism or fair criticism that could go either way. I think lately we've had a lot of good criticism from the press. MAY '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: I used to find that when a gig was reviewed, nothing was mentioned about the kids who enjoyed themselves, it was always a slant on the band; the criticism of us sounding the same is fair, because we do sound like that. Another thing is the three chord thing, which is fair too; but nobody realises just how difficult it can be to write in three or five chord tricks or whatever. I think over the years you're scared to move because of the criticisms, you're almost convinced that your audience won't accept something unless it's a certain way. Like however great and wonderful the Eagles were when I saw them, if they hadn't played my favourite ('Already Gone') I'd have been well pissed off, and it's the same for everyone, it's understandable. People come to see you because they like your stuff, and if you don't play their favourites, it's like kicking them in the gonitalls. So I have to own up to the fact that sometimes it's a pain to play this one or that one. But on the right nights, like just after a break, you can play 'em and they hit you like they did the first time. '80

CRITICS AND THE MEDIA

BOB YOUNG: Nobody has ever got across on television what Status Quo is about. There a lot of TV shows that have tried it, including TOTP, but they haven't been able to do it. They put a picture of the drummer on the screen when the guitarist is playing and sometimes when the guy is singing they show you a picture of the guitar neck. If a band is going to do a TV show, a lot of time must be spent talking about it beforehand. The band, the Director and everybody else involved should sit down together and talk about it. They should find out what is best for everyone. The band has got to be happy after that film is completed, not just the director. It's better to have one minute of good TV exposure than a whole hour of bad. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: Being in a studio and just doing one or two numbers is not our scene. I mean when you mime to a backing track it's not easy to really get going and then there's no deliriously happy audience giving that marvellous feeling any performer must surely love. And then again you're somewhat restricted in movement, and we do like a bit of strutting here and there! We think that visual movement is vital. '73

JOHN COGHLAN: In the states they've got programmes like In Concert and Midnight Special, which are done live and they are much better. They don't tell you to turn down in the States but here they say that the cameramen can't hear to see what they're doing. England is a good market to play and make records in, and if these television people really got it together they could do well but they just can't be bothered. The good old Beeb will always be the same. I reckon it would be good if it (TOTP) were completely re-thought and then brought out as a completely different thing. I don't agree with the audience running about the place. They should be out of the way at the back, sitting down. They could have loads of stages for the bands and it could probably be done live in some way. The problem with these TV shows is that they look like a TV show instead of like a real gig. I'd prefer to see a whole lot of films on telly from gigs rather than that. The thing is that they never seem to get the sound right. They show a piece of film of a drummer playing and the timing is completely out to what he is doing. That always happens and it's a shame. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: We look peculiar on television. We can't do what we do on stage, on television. It seems dead somehow. We're always aware of the cameras, there's not much audience reaction and no buzz at all for us. There we are in our jeans among all the dressy people, looking lost. Last time we couldn't believe what the other bands were wearing, we kept nudging each other and saying, 'Did you see that?' We can't knock these people like Gary Glitter though. If you take away the image there's a lot of work gone into the records and he has a good product. But we couldn't go on stage dressed like that, we'd feel uncomfortable. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: We used to get asked silly questions like what was our favourite food, and you were always supposed to say "beans on toast". Even the Music Press was like that. Now they treat us more seriously. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: I tell you what - 'headbanging' really gets up my pipe. I saw an article the other day that described how kids were supposed to do it - really banging their heads against a wall. That's bullshit. I've never seen that happen anywhere. I've seen our fans nod their heads to the beat, but people are trying to convince others to go out and bang heads on walls. I've got one 11 year old and a 15 year old and I'm very concerned that kids could think this is the next craze. '83

CRITICS AND THE MEDIA

ALAN LANCASTER: We've toured Australia three times now, and the first time was terrible, but it's gradually improving because the last one was a monster. The audiences were warmer and more appreciative, and now we love the country. There's a few tales I can tell you about Australia. Like on our second trip we had a bit of a party on the plane with streamers and bubbly, and it just so happened that someone spilt wine over Francis's trousers, so he took them off and walked around with his shorts on. The next day Truth magazine got hold of the story and splashed across their headlines, 'Pop star strips on plane'. It was rather silly because Francis had shorts on underneath, it wasn't as if he was going around stark naked. The Australian press certainly had the knack of blowing things up. Anyway for the rest of the tour we had two beefy FBI men trailing us, honest! The press laid on a reception for us, but alas the food was diabolical. Mind you the spread was laid out very well indeed, we must say that for 'em. What happened was one of the band threw a piece of meat and the other person retaliated by throwing a piece of ~~blaw~~ sponge and so on, until the place was full of food. It was just like one of those pie-in-the-eye sketches you get in the silent movies, Christ! you should have seen it! The manager of the hotel was not amused and asked us to leave. When we got to the lift there were two girls waiting inside, and just as we were about to descend the manager threatened us with a bottle opener, honestly he was foaming at the mouth! Next day the story appeared in the same notorious publication mentioned earlier, and once again the story got completely twisted. They said that we had two groupies in the lift and also that we'd threatened the Manager with a bottle opener. Anyway apart from all the hassles we had to contend with, the group enjoyed Australia. '75

THE BUSINESS

Is it really worth it?  
Could it all be real?  
Am I just living out a dream?

'BREAKING AWAY' ROSSI/PARFITT/BOWN - STATUS QUO

PUBLISHING/EMI MUSIC

JOHN COGHLAN: We've been together a long time and we are very close. We understand each other and I think that really helps the music. I don't think we're a flashy band, but we're certainly full of self confidence. '75

FRANCIS ROSSI: We got out to make records to appeal to people. During the so-called Punk movement a lot of people were saying that they didn't want success; they didn't want fame or money. 'We are street people', they said. But really they did want to be famous, just like the rest of us in rock. They were just kidding the kids. '83

ALAN LANCASTER: We've been going a long time and have probably worked harder than any other band. The amount of work we've done and the amount of years we've been going we should be rich, 'cause we've had quite a few record successes as well; most of the money has been put back for the things to help us get the sound across. I'm not saying we're not in it for the money, we are as well, but if we were money grabbers we'd take it and spend all of it. '73

RICHARD PARFITT: Even when the club scene was going, for just a few bob a night, we'd do as many encores as people wanted. You could say we've always been gluttons for sheer hard work. Then you start branching out and you're into the big city halls and there are sold out notices outside and you feel really great when you see those thousands of people coming in. It all makes you determined to work that bit harder. The thing is to find a way of relaxing a bit more. We go on tour and everything is crammed into the schedule and there's barely time to write new songs. You write when you're actually on the road, but you have to take care all the time that you're keeping up the standards you want. '74

ALAN LANCASTER: It's a very interesting life, I'd recommend it to anyone as long as they've got their heads screwed on the right way. We have a taste of routine when we're recording and we have to get up to go to the studio in the morning. And when we're touring we miss our families of course, but then we do get free time to be with them in between tours. '74

RICHARD PARFITT: If we felt Francis was taking over we'd pack up tomorrow, but we all have a part in producing, arranging and writing, we're a family - which may sound corny - but we don't look at each other as members, it's a way of life. I can't imagine what life would be like without Status Quo, I love the band. I love doing what I'm doing; I'm not saying it's everything I want from life, I don't want to get heavy about that, but as far as I'm concerned I wouldn't want to be with any other band. We've all got musical tastes which we're into and I think that they'll come out eventually, but it can only change naturally. If it's not natural we won't do it. We've found a direction, a musical direction we follow but we don't know where it's going to yet. But the way things are going it looks as if we'll be here for a long time. '75

THE BUSINESS

FRANCIS ROSSI: There are times, when you sit in the dressing room, the crowd going wild outside just before you are due to go on, and you think, 'Am I going to look back on all this in ten or twenty years time, and think what an idiot I made of myself?' Then the curtain goes back, and before you've got a quarter of the way through the set you're thinking, 'What am I talking about, I love this!' Of course, sometimes you wake up after a night spent in the studio until two in the morning and you think that there's no way you can go back again - you'd give anything just to be able to roll over and go back to sleep. But you go off, and once you get started it's fine. In fact, when you get a day off, you suddenly think um... I feel a bit lost, what can I do with myself for the day? Somebody once asked me what my hobbies were - and it just occurred to me that I don't have any. All I seem to do when I have time off is go into my music room and start playing again! You go on stage every night for years, struggling to make it - for somebody to think you are wonderful, to want your autograph, to make yourself famous - and when you do it gets to be like a job. You can either treat it like a job or you can go to the other extreme and treat the whole affair as though you are a sensitive artiste, with true artistic temperament. The fans wait a year, travel to see you, queue up for hours in the rain for a ticket - how can you turn around and say, 'I've got a headache, I am not going on tonight. It's just a joke when people spend years trying to get others to recognise the genius in them, then turn around and blow it like that. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: It got to a point where we knew each other so well we didn't have anything to talk about, and everything was so predictable. We always used to have such a lot of fun on the road but we seemed to lose it all of a sudden and start getting at each other just for a laugh. But we got over that and things are much better now. I know I'm generally thought of as the front man but that's not really true; everything that we do on stage is done on a vote and we always discuss everything beforehand. Things work out better that way. '74

FRANCIS ROSSI: I've a feeling that we could do more in terms of getting established in countries like Japan than we could in America. It's going to take us a long time to get across to US audiences in the right way. Like I said we're a band who have always progressed steadily but it seems there's no room for that in the States. It is so brash there and if you take something like the quietest PR stunt in America, would be the most outrageous thing you could think of in this country. When you're not used to dealing with things on that level it can get very scary. '74

RICHARD PARFITT: We've outlived so many bands ... new bands that have come in and all went flying straight up to the top and then went zonking back down again. Quo just bashes its way through everything. Nothing will stop us. The only thing that will stop us is if our people stop enjoying us. The only time it doesn't become like a business is quite honestly when you walk out on stage. When the four of us walk out on stage you forget the business. We're in it because we love it. I'm not saying money brings you happiness because it doesn't. But going out on stage and tearing up an audience brings happiness. There's no feeling to match that in the world. NOV 79.

THE BUSINESS

FRANCIS ROSSI: There's a market for singles, another market for albums with an overlap, and there's a live concert market. A lot of people who buy albums or singles wouldn't go to a gig. The idea is to make Status Quo bigger, so you have to keep going. To be too careful - 'What's too commercial' or 'You can't put out two singles' - is to hold yourself back. Up to this period we were busting our guts to be able to release the new album 'JUST SUPPOSIN' and we were told we couldn't release an album without a tour. Why? Because you won't sell records. So we were being told we couldn't sell without a tour, plus we couldn't sell anyway because there's a down in the market. We're selling records faster than we've done before, so that's one disproved. I don't say touring doesn't help, but a while back we were in America and tore the place apart at a gig, but it didn't sell albums for us there. But a good gig picks you up fans, so you break even in a way. I don't want to go backwards, thanks. NOV '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: A few years back we got fed up with the old routine of releasing an album, then a single, album, single and so on, so we thought we'd put out an EP - quite unheard of at that time. But as it happened it was our 13th year together, it was our 13th 45 and the running time totalled 13 minutes! Now none of this was planned it just worked out that way. It was the same with our 'ROCKIN' ALL OVER THE WORLD' campaign. It just so happened that we going that at the time, which no-one else was I can tell you. So we named the album after it. It wasn't any sort of master plan, like trying to prove to everyone-look-we can handle a world tour. It just worked out that way. A guy in the Boomtown Rats said to me the other day - no, not the one with the big mouth, y'know the one in the dark glasses - he says "You've always broken all the rules". Well, yes and no. Our attitude has just been, yeah, like you say, whatever you want. We don't actually plan what we're doing next. It's just that things do have a knack of sorting themselves out. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: You can be backstage standing there and the audience is going bananas and you just feel nothing. People who kid you it's wonderful everynight, they're bulleshit - there's plenty of that in this business. You can't play fabulous everynight, you can't feel fabulous everynight and you can't actually feel like doing it every night. If you've been married you'd know what I mean! I remember one night in Germany, the audience were going crazy, it was deafening you know. I thought, 'what the fuck am I doing here - the place is going mad and I don't feel a thing'. Most of the time, though, for a lot of people to like you don't half make you feel good. '81

FRANCIS ROSSI: We're spending more and more each time out just to keep it as good as it was before. And on the record front saying that is a joke. I mean they used to say that we could put anything out and it'd sell, and that's simply not true. We've failed twice now and I'm actually pleased about that, believe it or not. The first time was with 'ACCIDENT? PROBE', which I thought was a lovely single, but it didn't do a carrot, then we had the last one which was hardly worth a light either, "She Don't Feel Me". It all goes back to the basic theory - if you put something out that people want to hear they'll buy it; it doesn't matter what the brand name is. It's just a question of getting the right sound at the right time .... and getting it played. There's no way your reputation is going to get you into the Top 20 every time out, and correct me if I'm wrong. We can last for a very long time yet I'm sure of that, as long as we concentrate on making records, which is what we want to do. The main thing now is to sell records and satisfy ourselves. There's lots of interesting things we can do, and maybe will do. But no? I'll just sit here and make records; that's what I'm good at and that's what I want to do....SEPT '82

THE BUSINESS

FRANCIS ROSSI: In 1969 I met this geezer in Berlin who told us he was planning to do a version of our 'DOWN THE DUSTPIPE'. Great, I thought. Anyway, that didn't work out and his next album didn't sell either. But the next thing we knew, he was in America and the biggest thing since God knows what. Know who that guy was? Elton John. '79

FRANCIS ROSSI: There'll always be internal problems with Status Quo, that's how they manage to stay together. People tend to think that because we're together there's nothing wrong, but a lot of people split up because they couldn't get the problems sorted out, and the things that cause bust ups are always quite minor. I've known them all since I was 11, so even if I felt we wanted to fold, it's worth hanging on till '82, which after all, is only round the corner. To get to 20 years is an achievement, and because of that there's no reason I can't do this or that outside Quo. Initially, when 'PAPER PLANE' broke, I thought 'Well, if we've got two or three years we'll be well lucky'. And after that I thought 'Blimey, we'll be lucky if we've got another two years now. But like this morning, Cliff's 40, and I'm still buying his records...I said to myself five years ago, if Lennon can do it at 35, I can still do it, physically I mean. Making records I can't see any problems, it's just going on the road, that is hard work. Your neck really does ache, your arms go silly, your legs go, because if you're jumping around like an idiot, it does physically do things to you... '80

ALAN LANCASTER: It was always on the cards that we would stay together because we got on so well, and money has always come secondary to our enjoyment. All the travelling and flying is just for that two and a half hours on stage and it's a question of loving our job but hating the work. If there's one thing I'd like us to do, it would be to break the US. We seem to have Europe sewn up while other bands concentrate on the US. I think it would need a great deal of investment in time and money to do it, and I think we would be reluctant to neglect our fans in Europe. MAY '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: We enjoy the music and I suppose we must like each other. And of course, the adverse publicity we've had in the past has helped. People just took to Status Quo. It's simple basic music. There are no spot noses at our gigs. No class structure. That's bad enough in anything, but in music? Anyway it all goes straight out the window when we play. We've developed our style and we're not going to let go of it. If we'd been successful for five or six years then changed our style and bombed, people would have said, 'they're idiots, they had a successful formula and they gave it away'. In any other business, if you find a successful formula you hang on to it. You're shrewd. But if you do it in music, they all say everything you play is the same. I heard Spandau Ballet on the radio the other night saying that they don't play what the audience want but what they want. I thought hold on; you start off playing what you like and if the audience get to like it you get a following. The audience are in charge, they call the shots. They control everything; the music, the papers, TV, the radio, and we'd be finished without them. All we can do is do what we do best and give people what they want. '82

THE BUSINESS

ALAN LANGSTON: Without boasting I can say that everybody knows that we did it, they know about us now, even all around the world. It's done the band a hell of a lot of good prestige wise. There is talk of aiming at the US market, that could well be the next step. I've been wanting to go for a long time, but you know how it is. Quo are simply not in business in the States, and that I can't understand. For me it's not a question of whether we can or can't break the States, it's when. We make thomusic, and it's up to us whether we bring in a producer for the next album to try and get the sound that will break it, I don't know yet; it's not a major worry the way I see it. But what is important and will be for years to come, is how happy Quo are within themselves at the moment. It's like you sometimes have to go down a dusty track to find the road that leads you to where you want to get. If you always follow the main road you might end up going over a cliff. That's the situation we were in, and we have sorted it out. We've been trying to find a new approach within our own style, and I think we've found it. People want rock'n'roll, and that goes right back to the early roots. It's like, if in doubt turn back to the reference books. Quo I'm convinced, are the ones trying to turn the roots of rock'n'roll into the eighties.  
SEPT '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: If there's one thing I've learnt in my lifetime, it is never to take anything for granted. I constantly keep a close eye on other bands and I'm always watching out for people who seem bigger or who've done something better or have sold more records than we have. And I'm never contented until we go one better than all the others. If we're going to be around another twenty years we're going to have to work hard to make sure that we stay on top. '82

THE PEOPLE

Easy when you're number one  
Everybody say you're having fun  
Smiling for the public eye  
When your body say he want to die.

'LIVING ON AN ISLAND' -PARTY/YOUNG - SPANIS QAO PUBLISHING

FRANCIS ROSSI: All I ever wanted to do was play a song through on guitar. After that it was just to be famous. Then you realise you don't feel any different in the morning. '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: I'm known as the recluse within the band. Quite honestly I'm just not interested in that kind of life. For a start, I don't drink, and I can't be bothered with sightseeing or sampling the local nightlife. Usually after a gig, I'll go back to my room, watch telly for a while or play my guitar, then sleep. '78

FRANCIS ROSSI: John's got a couple of things coming along, but it's very difficult for him. You can't really write a song on the drums. He can't sit at his kit and say, 'yeah, that sounds nice'. Bob(Young), Good boy, he to...doesn't really like being on stage because he feels silly. But he writes songs and looks after the band. He's Mother, around all the time - the main problem is gross lack of time. But we're always plodding around. '73

RICHARD PARTON: We've always had a faith and belief in ourselves that we were good. We just stuck to it. 1969/70 was dreadful for us, when underground and hard rock came in. We'd never get out to be a hard rock band. All the ballrooms we'd been playing were closing down, so we had to go to the underground clubs too. But we've never been stuck for musical direction, the Qao sound came quite naturally. The only difficulties we had were personality clashes within the band. When you're 25 or 26 and doing pretty well, egotistical things begin to creep in. We used to roast each other, argue about silly things. But we eventually got through it. OCT '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: There's no need for me to get my head lost in the clouds of my own success. Put it this way, no matter how big you are to one set of people, to another lot you're nothing at all. They haven't even heard of you. The first time we played Wembley, it was a very big thing, 'cause no-one played Wembley in those days. Yet we came out of the gig and y'know, life was going on as usual. A couple of minutes away and there were people who weren't even aware that there had been a show going on. That kind of thing prevents you getting carried away with what you're doing. It's very important to realise your limits. However great you feel on stage it's vital to realise that there are other things going on in the world. I mean, some bleedin' hippo at a waterhole in darkest Africa doesn't know about us, neither does a woman with three starving kids in India. It's wonderful to be brought down with a bang. So with regard to how many millions of records we've sold, I'm just not interested. And anyway, I might get upset if I find out that someone else has sold more than us! '79

ALAN LANCASTER: Of course money changes you in some respects, but if anything it's made us better people. '75

THE PEOPLE

FRANCIS ROSSI: I've spent a lot of my life being pretty poor. These days I suppose I'm fairly well off. But that doesn't mean that all of a sudden I've developed expensive tastes. I like to spend my money on little things like cigarettes. It's funny, because although I still get a really big kick out of being famous, there are other times when I want to be completely on my own - anonymous. It often happens that I'll go into a store one day, say, and so many people recognise me and come up to me that the situation becomes completely impossible so that I have to go straight home again to get away from it all. And then the next day, I'll go out and I don't get any recognition whatsoever - not even a glimmer. And that can be even more worrying. I get very paranoid about that. '82

FRANCIS ROSSI: It's my life. What else could I do? What else do I do? - literally nothing. When I'm at home the most I do is take the dogs for a walk, have a wander in the garden, or go for a drive. I sit around, relax, play my guitar and write songs. My whole life is geared to it. '78

FRANCIS ROSSI: I'm a real telly addict, I worry about it sometimes! I watch everything that's on. Mind you, that doesn't mean to say I take it all in. Lots of the time I watch programmes to see how bad they are! Crossroads and Coronation Street are good for that. Some of the actors you get on those shows are definitely a bit dodgy. You can't help laughing.

FRANCIS ROSSI: I don't like seeing myself on telly. I love doing things like Pop Quiz but I can't stand looking at myself for some reason. It's worse in Europe where the TV companies put a big monitor by the side of the stage so you can see yourself all the time. I get people to stand each side of me so I don't see my face when I'm playing. '83

FRANCIS ROSSI: We like being together too much. We've always had a lot in common, especially on the humour side. When we're touring, we like to have a good laugh. You can't take it too seriously or you'd go nuts. We just couldn't keep going if we didn't enjoy ourselves. We're good friends and that's very important. If you're all pulling for each other then I think you're more likely to come through your problems okay. When we have time off we don't see each other at all; we all go home to our families and enjoy just being at home. But then when we hit the road again we're soon back to larking around. We tend to confuse people a lot of the time. We have private jokes running through the band and we'll suddenly curl up at something somebody's said and nobody else will have a clue what we're laughing about. We like swapping jokes too. Whenever I hear a good joke I can't wait to tell it to the rest of the lads. We all do that - all except for Richard. You see, he never tells new jokes! He's had the same bunch of gags since 1965 and we still laugh every time he tells them, even though we know them back to front!

RICHARD PARFITT: I can't remember the number of times I've said in all seriousness, 'That's it, I've had enough, I'm leaving'. But the next morning it's all forgotten. We're able to fall out and make up again. I'd be lost without the band, it's my whole life. Not only the band, but the audiences as well. At some stage I suppose it must come to an end, but it doesn't feel like it yet. Our relationship in the band has never been so good. I suppose I've bought everything I wanted and sold it again. You dream about things, but they don't live up to expectations. Except my house, I was pleased to get that. And being a car freak, I was able to indulge in that. Over the years I've had five Porsches. I've got a turbo just now. I bought myself a plane and a boat and sold them both.

## THE PEOPLE

I learned to fly two and a half years ago, but then I developed a fear of flying with one engine. I thought I'd kill myself. I'm just not cut out to be a flier, though I'd love to fly a helicopter. After I learned how to fly, I went away for six weeks, and when I came back, I'd developed this fear. I'm not afraid of flying though. When the band goes anywhere, I like to sit beside the window and look out, or go up front. We use light aircraft all the time. If your time's up, that's it. You go through all the turmoil of wanting to buy everything you see. I had to stop myself. If you spend like that, you soon lose your money. I've just put a 24 track studio in my house, so everything's on hand if I'm sitting about in the lounge and think of an idea for a song. That way you can do what you want without someone saying they don't like it. The studio used to be a billiard room. I'd wanted a house with a billiard room since I was about twelve, but that was another thing where the dream didn't match reality. I knocked it down and built a studio. The songs I write are ballads. They could be used by Quo, but maybe not in the same way. I tend to write a lot of slow songs. I like Gerry Rafferty and Babara Dickson. The first song I ever wrote, when I was about 15, was called 'THINKING OF YOU', all about a boy who loses his girl and all that stuff. I don't think I'm romantic. I was frightened to kiss girls. I used to stand at the gate for an hour trying to get up the bottle to kiss her. Then I'd go home all pleased when I had. It was terrible getting the courage to put your arm round a girl in the cinema. I was drunk when I met Marietta. Rossi and I were in a disco in Germany and I saw this chick and I really fancied her. So I just went up and said 'Hello' without thinking if she'd even understand. But it turned out she spoke perfect English, she was a student. So a year later we ran off and got married. '80

FRANCIS ROSSI: They say I'm a recluse but I don't know if that means I'm a dodgy guitar player or someone who spends a lot of time on his own! MARCH 81

RICHARD PARFITT: Everyone in Quo's got their own personality and because of that we have all these silly little internal giggles that keep us happy. But if I went round calling myself a star I'd get so much stick from the others it'd be untrue. I'd be roasted. I don't know what it is, I like fast cars and fast boats and I like going out. What else? You said I was the pop star figure, not me. I don't live it out to that full extent. I like going to clubs and wearing the white jackets that pop stars wear... Oh Christ! .. That sounds terrible Delete, 'Edit: '82