



BRUCE HALL



GARY RICHRATH



KEVIN CRONIN



ALAN GRATZER



NEAL DOUGHTY


DISC ONE

1. SOPHISTICATED LADY
2. MUSIC MAN
3. GOLDEN COUNTRY
4. SON OF A POOR MAN
5. LOST IN A DREAM
6. REELIN'
7. KEEP PUSHIN'
8. (I BELIEVE) OUR TIME IS GONNA COME
9. BREAKAWAY
10. LIGHTNING

DISC TWO

1. LIKE YOU DO
2. FLYING TURKEY TROT
3. 157 RIVERSIDE AVENUE
4. RIDIN' THE STORM OUT
5. ROLL WITH THE CHANGES
6. TIME FOR ME TO FLY
7. SAY YOU LOVE ME OR SAY GOODNIGHT
8. ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE
9. BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Art: Tom Drennon Design

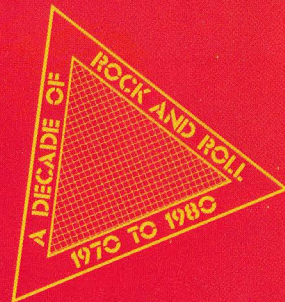
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REO SPEEDWAGON



COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
DIGITALLY MASTERED
ANALOG RECORDING



DISC ONE

The Song: Sophisticated Lady
The Album: **R.E.O. SPEEDWAGON**
The Year: 1971

Out in the flatlands of America, in places most of the movers and shakers merely fly over, a small unknown midwestern rock and roll bar band was slowly building an audience. It all started in 1968 in the university town of Champaign, Illinois, but it really happened one stormy day in Peoria.

Alan: "After playing to sell-out bar crowds throughout the midwest, we finally got some producers interested. One of them, a guy named Paul Leka, who owned a little eight-track studio in Bridgeport, Connecticut, came out and saw us that day in Peoria. It was an outdoor date and it was pouring rain. We didn't want to go on, but the group felt that if this guy flew all the way out here from Connecticut, we might as well go on. We played four songs in the thunder and lightning and we felt we were going to get killed. Believe it or not, the people wanted an encore."

So did the producer. Leka dragged the boys back to Connecticut along with their new manager, a young University of Illinois chemistry major named Irving Azoff.

Neal: "We slept on the floor of the studio and did a commercial for a zit cream called 'Night Fighter' to make money to eat. We made \$100 for the commercial. That was big money."

It was a rough time for the group. Gary had gotten the job by sheer persistence.

Gary: "I thought I got it because I was so talented and wonderful, but a couple of years later, Neal said it was because I just tried the hardest. And we all had to try hard to make the first album work."

"It was a rushed album, it was our first album and it was real raw. It was basically taking a bar band and sticking them into a studio and telling them to blast away. That's what we did. We just walked in, recorded it and walked out. In fact, our bass player was sitting playing the last bass overdub as we were waiting in the car for him downstairs. He played the last note, dropped the bass, and took off running and we went home and played a job that night. It was our lifestyle back then; play as many jobs, as often as you could, and kill yourself as quickly as you could, which I think, we really tried to do." Luckily, the group succeeded in staying alive.

The Songs: Music Man
Golden Country
The Album: **R.E.O./T.W.O.**
The Year: 1972

The band soon began to change personnel. Terry Luttrell left the group to join another midwest band, and R.E.O. soon found themselves confronted with a big problem.

"We desperately needed a lead singer," says Alan, "but we didn't know where to look. One day we found this number for a musician's referral service in Chicago and Gary called it up. It turned out that it was something Kevin had just started two days before because he was looking for a gig. Gary told him we were looking for a really

good singer who could play some rhythm guitar and Kevin said he had someone for us. . . Kevin. He came down to Champaign from Chicago, we had one practice and that was it. We got together and it worked."

No one seems to know why the group decided to record the album in Nashville, but no one doubts that it was a good idea. In a matter of weeks the band was in Tennessee, with a new singer in a sixteen-track studio.

Neal: "Recording that album in Nashville was exciting for me. We couldn't afford to be flying to Los Angeles to hit some big time recording studio so we picked Nashville. Besides, it was close enough to drive to. We lived in this one hotel the whole time we were there and when the Rolling Stones came to town they stayed there. That was a big thrill for us. I kept hoping we'd run into them and get to talk to them. One night I finally ended up in the elevator with Charlie Watts and I couldn't even open my mouth."

Gary: "We were taking a big gamble doing the second record but we were real young and it just didn't really matter at the time. We said, we've got a new singer, let's do a record and we did it."

Many of the songs were Gary's, including a classic called *Golden Country*. "Champaign was a hip town, and I couldn't help but be dragged into a political awareness. It was protest time. I remember sitting in the student union at about 8 o'clock in the morning, feeling totally burnt and fried, at that point where I was bummed with the whole world. I looked up and these people were rushing in promoting a lettuce boycott, and for some reason that got me politically motivated. I saw the light. I ran home at about 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning. There was a Newsweek sitting on the top of the piano and I just started playing. I looked up again and one of the Newsweek stories was entitled, *Golden Country*. It was an article about the war. I started writing. . ."

Back in the studio, the group was slowly beginning to take control of their musical direction. "While we were under contract to Leka," says Alan, "we started sneaking into the control room. In short, we ended up mixing that album ourselves. Imagine, ten hands on the board!"

The album launched the band on their first nationwide tour.

The Song: Son of a Poor Man
The Album: **Ridin' the Storm Out**
The Year: 1973

It was indeed a time to survive some rough weather. For a long time, the band had been known only as an excellent "opening act." But the success of the second album propelled them into headlining status.

At the same time, the group was at the Record Plant in Los Angeles recording their third album.

Alan: "Instead of staying at a motel, we rented Gypsy Rose Lee's house in Trousedale Estates. It was a beautiful house with six or seven bedrooms, and all of us crazy people running around. It was great! It was the first time we had been in Los Angeles. It cost about \$1500 a month but that was nothing compared to what we would have spent in a motel. It was definitely much more fun. We had huge rooms, a huge stereo, we could come home every night and listen to what we had recorded and it was nice."

The album was almost finished when some major problems surfaced. Kevin and the rest of the group were having creative differences. Until history is again rewritten, the current consensus is that a mutual decision was reached and Kevin left the group. When the album came out, a strange new face had been airbrushed onto its cover: singer Mike Murphy, another Champaign band veteran. Murphy re-recorded all the vocals. Within a matter

of weeks, the group went back out on the road with their third lead singer in as many albums.

"The whole album was a blur for me," says Neal. "Things were happening so fast. I remember sitting on the balcony of the Continental Hyatt House with a fender rhodes, in my underwear, trying to write a song. The Hyatt House was one of those places that had a rather tolerant attitude towards groups like us. One night we got crazy and threw a chair out the window. Ten seconds later we got a call from the desk. All they said was, 'Did you at least look first?' We said, 'Yes,' and they said, 'Okay.'"

(A special note for R.E.O. files: When compiling this anthology, the band located the original vocal tracks Kevin had recorded. They're as good now as they were then. The version on this album contains that original track.)

The Song: Lost in a Dream
The Album: **Lost in a Dream**
The Year: 1974

The group's fourth album was produced by Bill Halverson, of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young fame. Once again, the title song was strangely parallel to the emotions of the group.

"We were selling records," says Gary, "but those were the days when we had one month to do a record, whether it was done or not, and we had \$30,000 or \$40,000 to do it with, whether that was enough or not. We went in with the best of what we had and we'd often leave without even hearing a mix of it. **Lost in a Dream** was a standoff for me. Murphy did his songs and I did mine."

And then from left field, came Sly Stone. The group was at the Record Plant in Sausalito late one night working on one of Murphy's tunes.

Sly was invited over to put down a piano track. "When he was finished," Gary recalls, "he said, 'hey man, how about if I replace the bass.' So he replaced the bass. Then he replaced my lead guitar. Then he replaced some background vocals. By the end of the evening he had replaced everything except for the drums. And at the point when he said, 'hey, I'm going to go wake my drummer up,' I got up and said, 'forget it, it's done.' By that time he had erased all the tracks except the drums and replaced them with himself. And believe it or not, the song was released that way."

"The album was a success," says Alan, "but people were still asking where's Kevin, why did Kevin leave the band? Soon we were asking ourselves the same question."

The Song: Reelin'
The Album: **This Time We Mean It**
The Year: 1975

Kevin was also beginning to wonder about his departure. At the time, he was enjoying moderate success as a solo singer touring the midwest. He was into some softer acoustic guitar and piano material, opening for the

Eagles, Linda Ronstadt and Frank Zappa.

The band was down in Miami at Criteria Studios recording album number five.

Neal: "It was a fantastic, crazy experience. We seemed to spend the whole time playing pinball, basketball and poker with the Eagles who were also recording there. We had this rental car, and we could make it backfire by turning the ignition on and off and letting it coast, and we loved to go up and down the street making it backfire, watching the hookers hit the dirt because they thought someone was shooting at them. We finally got the car so messed up from doing that all the time, that we couldn't turn the engine off. Once, the car dиеseled all night long."

Which is perhaps more than the group did. Musical differences persisted and Murphy left the group and went back to Los Angeles. Once again the band found themselves face-to-face with a crisis. Once again, they were without a singer.

The search began. Soon Gary found what he thought was the solution to the problem—a kid from Denver that Gary had seen in Casper, Wyoming. The group brought him to Champaign, into a new sixteen-track studio and cut some songs. "I liked him and we decided to bring him out to meet Irving," Gary explained.

But the Bel-Air experience proved too much for the singer to handle.

Gary: "We took the guy up in the hills to Irving's mansion, with his huge cars and huge everything. This kid's looking around, doesn't know what to do. He's never seen a house this big before. When Irving came into the living room, the kid walked across the room to talk to him but there was a real slick floor, the guy tripped on a rug, and immediately his feet slipped out from under him and he did a flip landing right on his back in front of Irving. Azoff just looked down and said, 'Nope.' I told Irving, 'We're going to have to call Kevin.'"

The phone rang late one night between shows at a Chicago club where Kevin was performing. On the other end was Andy Green, the group's road manager at the time. "We were wondering what the chances might be of you rejoining the band?" (Neal was on the extension.)

Kevin paused a microsecond and said, "What took you guys so long to ask?"

The Songs: Keep Pushin'
(I Believe) Our Time Is Gonna Come
Breakaway
Lightning

The Album: **R. E. O.**

The Year: 1976

The day after Green's call, Kevin was on a plane to Los Angeles. "We had no idea what would happen," Kevin says, "so we had a rehearsal. It was very similar to how I joined the band the first time. We rehearsed and it sounded great. Within a week and a half we were on the road."

By this time the group had built a tremendous following in the midwest.

It was also the time for a physical move. One by one, the group packed their bags and moved to Los Angeles, just in time to record their sixth album.

To this day, it remains one of the group's favorites, although the album actually sold less than any of their previous albums. "The songs were strong," Alan says, "but," he laughs, "it was the artwork and production that did us in."

DISC TWO

The Songs: Like You do
Flying Turkey Trot
157 Riverside Avenue*
Ridin' the Storm Out*
(*recorded live during the 1979 R.E.O. World Tour)

The Album: **You Get What You Play For**

The Year: 1977

1977 was a banner year for the group. "It was the year where everything changed," says Kevin. Bass player Greg Philbin left the band, and Champaignite Bruce Hall, who had co-written *Lost in a Dream*, joined the group.

It was the year the group broke away from Azoff's Frontline Management, taking John Baruck with them as their new manager.

1977 was the year the band released their long-awaited live album, **You Get What You Play For**.

It soon became their first platinum record. It was now official. Dorothy had left Kansas. It was also the first time Kevin and Gary had produced a record without outside interference.

"When the album first came out," Kevin recalls, "only eight radio stations in the country would play it. We just weren't about to sit back and let that happen. So Gary and I went out and got a list of radio stations and for about a week, we did nothing but sit in John's office on the phone, calling them personally and saying, 'please give our album a listen, at least listen to it and give it a chance.'"

"It's amazing what a radio station can do for a band," explains Kevin. "If a radio station in a town says this band is great, the people who listen to that radio station think, 'Oh, they must be great.' I remember back in 1973, radio station KSHE was a real important part of our success. We were selling out Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis before we were big anywhere else. They were the first radio station to ever play an REO Speedwagon record, and they stuck with us.

"So as a result, St. Louis became our first major market. We thought to ourselves, if we can sell out a 12,000 seat hall in St. Louis, there's no reason why we can't sell out 12,000 seaters everywhere. That gave us the confidence that really held the band together and then, by playing about 200 dates that year, we gained fans all over the country."

"We were our own promotion team back then," Gary claims. "But it got the album going, it got us respect as producers and songwriters, not to mention as a major touring band."

"We knew the time was right," Neal recalls, "and we always seemed to be at our best when we performed live. Our live performances somehow always had an energy that we never really captured on albums until the live album."

"It was a special thrill for me to do St. Louis," Neal admits, "Years earlier I had gone to Busch Stadium to see the Beatles and I was awestruck. Ten years later we sold out the same place." (An attendance record which has yet to be broken.)

The Songs: Roll With The Changes
Time For Me To Fly
Say You Love Me or Say Goodnight

The Album: **You Can Tune a Piano, But You Can't Tuna Fish**

The Year: 1978

Bruce was back in Charleston, Illinois, playing in a bar called Ted's Warehouse when Gary called and asked him to join the band. Like Kevin, he responded as if he had been asked the world's dumbest rhetorical question.

With Bruce on board, the band felt truly settled for the first time.

Conceptually, the **Tuna** album was a challenge, it was the first studio album Kevin and Gary had produced together.

"We realized after the live album that we had captured our image on record," Neal explains, "but we still wanted to make this record sound as good as possible as far as studio technique. So we tried to play with all the excitement that comes with playing live. But we still spent a lot of time in the studio making everything sound as professional and slick as possible without sounding too processed."

Before they knew it, the band was \$200,000 over budget and six months behind schedule. But Kevin insisted on postponing their planned tour until the record was right.

"With all the outside pressure to hurry up and finish it," says Kevin, "we stood firm because I believed so strongly in the songs. It turned out that we were proven right, and with our first top 40 single, *Roll With The Changes*, the **Tuna** album has sold over a million copies."

"Since the **Tuna** album," says Bruce, "my whole life-style has changed. For the first time in my life I was making money. But it wasn't just the money. Musically, we had set a standard we now had to live up to. And we did, it was great fun, but for me it was also a lot of learning."

The Songs: Only The Strong Survive
Back On The Road Again

The Album: **Nine Lives**

The Year: 1979

Although Kevin and Gary produced the **Nine Lives** album, the album itself was more of a band project. It also marked the first time a Bruce Hall vocal had been represented (*Back On The Road Again*).

"What we wanted for **Nine Lives** was a cross between the live album and the **Tuna** album," says Gary. "We wanted the rawness of the live album and the finesse of the **Tuna** album. It's the best we've done," he boasts, "because we not only worked hard, but we were in control, in the studio and on the road."

"I think we've grown tremendously," says Kevin, "no one is dictating to us now."

"We have grown," says Gary, "but in many respects we haven't changed. We do what we want to do. After all," he says, "everyone in the music business is out there trying to figure out what the kids want to hear. What they have to realize is that we're kids too. After ten years," he says, "the jury is no longer out. We're doing what we've always done, and we've given the people ten years of rock and roll."

And ten years later it seems as though the band has come full circle. "During the Nine Lives Tour," Alan

recalls, "we were playing at Royal Stadium in Kansas City. 35,000 people were there. Once again it was raining, the wind was blowing and lightning bolts were flashing across the sky. At one point when the power went out, our manager, the roadies, even the promoter insisted that we stop the show for our own safety. We all looked at each other and we remembered that waterlogged day in Peoria." **On that unforgiving day in Kansas City, R.E.O. SPEEDWAGON played on.**

REO SPEEDWAGON 1980

KEVIN CRONIN, GARY RICHRATH, ALAN GRATZER,
NEAL DOUGHTY, BRUCE HALL

A DECADE OF ROCK AND ROLL

SOPHISTICATED LADY 1971 ◀

Writer: REO SPEEDWAGON From the "REO SPEEDWAGON" album produced by Paul Leka and Billy Rose II/Gary:
Guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Gregg Philbin: bass/Terry Luttrell: vocals

MUSIC MAN 1972 ◀

Writer: Kevin Cronin

GOLDEN COUNTRY 1972

Writer: Gary Richrath From the "R.E.O./T.W.O." album produced by Paul Leka and Billy Rose II/Gary: Lead Guitar/
Kevin: vocals, rhythm guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Gregg Philbin: bass

SON OF A POOR MAN 1973 ◀

Writer: Gary Richrath From the "Ridin' the Storm Out" album produced by Bill Halverson/remixed by Kevin Beamish/Gary: guitars/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Kevin: vocals/Gregg Philbin: bass

LOST IN A DREAM 1974 ◀

Writers: Bruce Hall and Mike Murphy From the "Lost In A Dream" album produced by Bill Halverson/remixed by Kevin Beamish/Gary: guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Gregg Philbin: bass/Mike Murphy: vocals, guitar

REELIN' 1975 ◀

Writer: Mike Murphy From the "This Time We Mean It" album produced by Allen Blazek, executive producer Bill Szymczyk/remixed by Kevin Beamish/Gary: guitar/Neal: organ/Alan: drums/Gregg Philbin: bass/Mike Murphy: vocals, piano

KEEP PUSHIN' 1976 ◀

Writer: Kevin Cronin

(I BELIEVE) OUR TIME IS GONNA COME 1976

Writer: Kevin Cronin

BREAKAWAY* 1976

Writers: Gary Richrath and Kevin Cronin

LIGHTNING 1976

Writers: Gary Richrath and Kevin Cronin From the "R.E.O." album produced by John Stronach/remixed by Kevin Beamish, Gary Richrath and Kevin Cronin/Kevin: vocals, rhythm guitar/Gary: lead guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Gregg Philbin: bass/*vocals by Gary and Kevin

LIKE YOU DO 1977 ◀

Writer: Gary Richrath

FLYING TURKEY TROT 1977

Writer: Gary Richrath From the "You Get What You Play For" album produced by Gary Richrath, Kevin Cronin, with John Stronach and John Henning/Gary: lead guitar/Kevin: vocals, rhythm guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards/Gregg Philbin: bass

157 RIVERSIDE AVENUE 1979 LIVE RECORDING

Writer: R.E.O. Speedwagon

RIDIN' THE STORM OUT 1979 LIVE RECORDING

Writer: Gary Richrath Recorded during the "R.E.O. Speedwagon World Tour" produced by Kevin Beamish, Kevin Cronin and Gary Richrath/Gary: lead guitar/Kevin: lead vocals, rhythm guitar/Neal: keyboards/Alan: drums/Bruce: bass guitar

ROLL WITH THE CHANGES 1978 ◀

Writer: Kevin Cronin

TIME FOR ME TO FLY 1978**

Writer: Kevin Cronin

SAY YOU LOVE ME OR SAY GOODNIGHT 1978

Writers: Gary Richrath and Kevin Cronin From the "You Can Tune A Piano, but You Can't Tuna Fish" album produced by Kevin Cronin and Gary Richrath with Paul Grupp/** remixed by Kevin Beamish

ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE 1979 ◀

Writer: Gary Richrath

BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN 1979

Writer: Bruce Hall From the "Nine Lives" album produced by Kevin Cronin, Gary Richrath and Kevin Beamish/Gary: lead guitar/Kevin: vocals, rhythm guitar/Bruce: vocals, bass guitar/Alan: drums/Neal: keyboards

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