

High Tide

High Tide was an English rock band, formed in 1969 by Tony Hill (guitar and vocals), Simon House (violin and keyboards), Peter Pavli (bass guitar) and Roger Hadden (drums).

A group that may have been too clever by half to succeed in England, High Tide never received more than a minimal amount of acceptance in their own country, but found a cult audience on the European continent. Formed in 1969, they played progressive rock with some folk and pop influences. Tony Hill was the singer and guitarist, Simon House played violin and keyboards, Peter Pavli handled the bass, and Roger Hadden played the drums. They were signed to Liberty Records' U.K. division in 1969 and released two albums over the next year -- *Sea Shanties* and a self-titled second album -- both of which featured dazzling guitar work by Hill and occasional striking interplay between his instrument and House's violin. The group never really found an audience however, splitting up in 1970. Simon House later became a member of Hawkwind, played with David Bowie, and joined members of the Third Ear Band to perform on the soundtrack of Roman Polanski's movie *Macbeth*. Pavli later joined in recording with House and several other Hawkwind expatriates. Hill and House have also recorded together in more recent years. The group also backed Denver Gerrard on his 1970 solo album.

History

Allmusic author, Wilson Neate, stated this of the group, "High Tide had the muscularity of a no-nonsense proto-metal band, but they also ventured into prog territory with changing time signatures and tempos, soft-hard dynamics, multi-part arrangements, and even some ornate faux-Baroque interludes".

High Tide made their first recordings as the backing band on Denny Gerrard's album *Sinister Morning*. Gerrard returned the favor by producing their first album, *Sea Shanties*, which was released in October 1969. Though it met with a scathing review in *Melody Maker*, reviews in the underground press were universally positive, and sales were just enough to convince Liberty to give the green light to a second album.

This second album, *High Tide*, was released the following year. A third album was being recorded in 1970, but Roger Hadden, who had been suffering from chronic mental instability and depression since before joining High Tide, had a mental breakdown and was hospitalized before the album could be finished. Unable to continue without Hadden, the group split up.

During the late 1970s, Hill and House recorded *Interesting Times* as a duo, taking turns playing bass and using a drum machine to replace Roger Hadden. The album featured heavy use of synthesizers, which to an extent supplanted the use of House's violin. The album was originally released as a mail order cassette, and issued on vinyl and CD in 1989 and 1990.

Any possibilities of further recordings from this semi-reunion were dissolved when House rejoined Hawkwind in 1990. However, under the encouragement of drummer Drachen Theaker, Hill pushed out no less than five albums under the High

Tide banner by the end of the following year, starting with two discs of retrospective material, and then with three albums recorded by an entirely new band.

The first retrospective release, *Precious Cargo*, consists of sessions recorded in 1970 by the original group, but their exact nature is not specified. It has been theorized, however, that they are the rehearsal sessions for their unfinished third album.^[6] One song, "The Great Universal Protection Racket" (mislabelled on the album as "Exploration"), had been recorded for *Sea Shanties* but went unreleased at the time due to space constraints. None of the other six songs were used in any earlier recordings.

The second retrospective album, *The Flood*, is a collection of demos of various origins. It includes four demos recorded by the original High Tide shortly before their breakup, six demos recorded in 1971 and 1976 by Tony Hill and Peter Pavli with other musicians, and a Peter Pavli solo demo from 1979.

The new band which recorded the remaining High Tide albums consisted of Tony Hill (guitars and bass), Dave Tomlin (violin and bass), and Drachen Theaker (drums), though various guest musicians also contributed, including a few appearances by Peter Pavli and Simon House. Eschewing the tight, complex compositions which were the staple of the original High Tide, the new band's albums *Ancient Gates* and *The Reason of Success* consisted almost solely of lengthy improvised performances with little to no compositional basis. Between these two albums was released *A Fierce Nature*. Tony Hill wrote all the songs on *A Fierce Nature* and played everything but the drums.

A two disc compilation album, *Open Season*, was released in 2000. However, with the exceptions of a new Tony Hill solo track, a new Peter Pavli solo track, and a short track from *Ancient Gates*, the content was drawn entirely from *The Flood* and *The Reason of Success*.

The tracks "Futilist's Lament" and "Blankman Cries Again" are on the United Artists Records 2004 sampler *All Good Clean Fun* CD re-package (Liberty 8660902), but High Tide did not appear on the original 1971 LP.