

He was Genesis' resident guitar hero through the prog-friendly 70s. But since then **Steve Hackett's** dalliances with other famous musicians have included Squackett, Gordian Knot and the Yes-assisted mid-80s supergroup GTR.

**Words:** Malcolm Dome

# THE LONG DISTANCE VOYAGER

**S**teve Hackett is someone who's constantly been involved with other high-profile musicians. Perhaps his most successful supergroup collaboration came with Steve Howe on GTR. "I'd first come across Steve Howe before he joined Yes, when he was in Tomorrow," recalls Hackett. "We talked over many years about working together on a twin lead guitar project."



## ASSEMBLE!

**801**

The enigmatic Roxy offshoot that was big in Australia.

**F**ormed in 1976, this experimental art-rock band featured Phil Manzanera, Brian Eno, Simon Phillips, Francis Monkman, Lloyd Watson and Bill MacCormick, and took their name from a lyric in Eno's *The True Wheel*. 801 played three UK concerts, and released *801 Live* featuring their rearrangements of The Beatles' *Tomorrow Never Knows* and The Kinks' *You Really Got Me*. *801 Live* acquired a cult following overseas, particularly Australia, encouraging the band to put

out a studio album *Listen Now* the following year, with Split Enz's Tim Finn involved. The band underwent further changes, although Manzanera and MacCormick remained, and

recorded the *801 Manchester* album on their 1977 tour. Despite a lot of promise, they never realised their full potential. **MD**

However, it wasn't until the mid-80s when Howe and Hackett finally put GTR into place, with the line-up completed by former Marillion drummer Jonathan Mover, ex-Mike Oldfield bassist Phil Spalding and vocalist Max Bacon, previously of the UK hard rock band Bronz.

GTR's other guitar hero, Steve Howe, recalls that the band just fell into place: "Steve [Hackett] knew Jonathan and Max, while I'd bumped into Phil one time in central London. He was such an engaging personality. The two of us

came out in 1986," adds Hackett.

"Steve and I would work on ideas at our respective homes in London. One day I'd go over to him, and then he'd drive to my place the next time."

The problem was the two guitarists had different ideas about how it should sound. "I wanted us to write our own music blueprint, to be free of all preconceptions," explains Hackett. "But Steve [Howe] was more wary of doing this, possibly because he'd been involved with Asia and therefore felt the commercial pressure more than I did. And, despite the fact that Arista Records welcomed us with open arms, they *did* want hit singles."

GTR achieved success in America with the single *When The Heart Rules The Mind* breaking into the Top 20 and their album reaching Number 11. "We sold over half a million copies in the States, but Britain and Europe were a lot less convinced," he admits.

GTR never went beyond one album because Hackett didn't feel the magic could be repeated. "The interest in a supergroup only lasts for one album. If you try it a second time, it drops off."

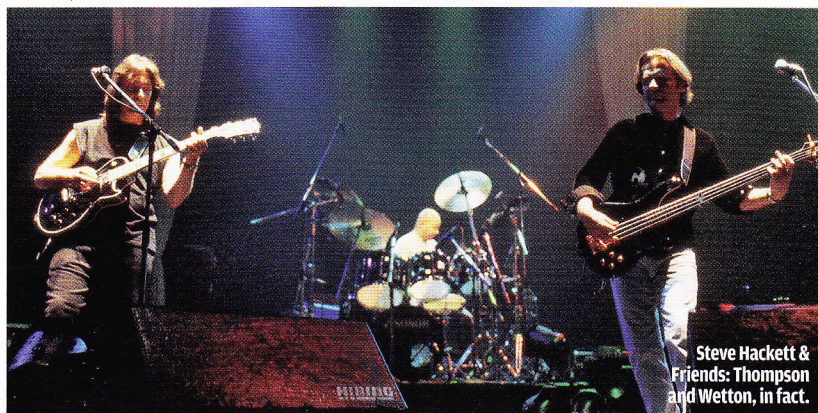
*"Steve Howe felt the commercial pressure in GTR more than I did."*

**Steve Hackett**

already had a lot of the songs prepared, so we got everyone together to see how it sounded. And the five of us gelled."

"I suppose it took us about two years to go from putting the band together to finishing our only album [*GTR*], which

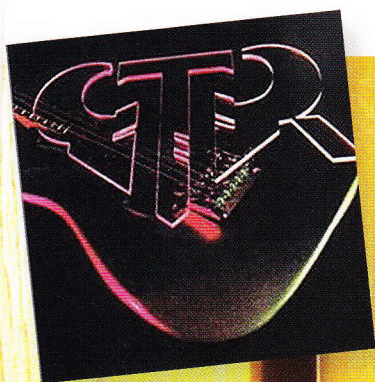
"I think we failed to get to grips with what was needed at the time," adds Steve Howe. "We should have taken a break to catch our breath, but there wasn't time. Steve felt he and I should write again as a duo, whereas



Steve Hackett & Friends: Thompson and Wetton, in fact.

YUKI KUROVANI/PIRELLA





Revved up: the two Steves become GTR.



## ASSEMBLE!

### Refugee

Prog phoenix risen from the ashes of The Nice.

**T**his all-too brief trio featured The Nice's old rhythm section Lee Jackson and Brian Davison with Swiss keyboard player and future Yes/Moody Blues man Patrick Moraz. Refugee released just one, self-titled album on Charisma in 1974, with Moraz providing the music and Jackson the lyrics. *Refugee* showed great promise, but its hyperactive, classically-tinged jazz-rock didn't catch on. Personal problems, heightened by the fact they couldn't get a deal for a second album, meant that when the offer came to replace Rick Wakeman in Yes, Moraz readily accepted. **MD**



I wanted to keep the band ethos together. In the end GTR faded away."

Hackett later collaborated with another member of Yes, Chris Squire, on the 2012 Squackett album *A Life Within A Day*. "We were under no commercial pressure," he says. "The two of us funded the project ourselves, so there was no record label breathing down our necks. And it was such an easy process writing and recording with Chris. Will there be a second Squackett album? I don't know, but I'm sure we'll work together again."

Hackett was constantly in demand to make guest appearances, and was involved with the 2003 album *Emergent* from Gordian Knot, the band masterminded by Cynic's Sean Malone: "I loved doing it. I am happy to do anything that stretches me musically. I never ask for payment but do it for the thrill."

In 1996, Hackett played four shows in Japan under the name Steve Hackett & Friends, with musicians including John Wetton, Ian McDonald and Chester Thompson. The resultant live recordings were released two years later as *The Tokyo Tapes*. "This was to promote the *Watcher Of The Skies: Genesis Revisited* album. But it took a lot of rehearsing to get it right. I was also determined to include songs from the careers of the others, which is why there are King Crimson and Asia moments."

Better still, Hackett doesn't rule out further *Genesis Revisited* collaborations in the future: "The tour to promote *Genesis Revisited II* was a huge success, so it is possible that I might do more of