

said: "Dad! For one night can we please not talk about art?" [laughs] He just started laughing, 'cause that's all he talked about. His whole life. It's all he fuckin' talked about. Well, he talked about football sometimes, but that's it. And it bored me to tears but all I noticed about him is how happy he was. He was so proud of what he did. And I just loved music so much. I was a little church choir singer when I was very young, like eight, nine and ten, and I loved singing. And there weren't a lot of singers around when I was thirteen or whatever... There were always bands looking for singers. And there were none! There were no singers of bands! Everybody sucked ass! [laughs] There were always guitar players, drummers, bass... but I was like "Okay! I'll sing. Fuck it." That was weird.

Being quite a rockstar now, how do you cope with the pressure in a rock band? You're a lead singer, so...

Hmmm... Well, the road is very physical. Being on the road is very physical. In fact I forgot how physical it is. And I brought Minnie [Gupta] with us on the first European bus tour and she's kinda like going "Wow! I don't know if this is for girls, really!" [laughs] I mean you've got nine dudes on a bus, stinky, sweaty, smelly. [laughs] The bathroom is not exactly like the Ritz, you know? I go "Babe! This is a European tour!" She goes "Not the Europe that I've been to!" [laughs]

Girl's gotta have balls!

[at Minnie, laughing] Look at it like research for your book! It's all I can say, ha ha. No, it is tough. But it's fun. But it is physically challenging. To drive every night to the next town... But it's fun to do.

There are people who say they've got no regrets. You've heard that before. I think that's just pure crap; we make mistakes, we should acknowledge them and learn from them. During your career do you remember any particular mistake that you made but that you learn from?

Yeaaaaa... [laughs] I don't know if I want to say what they are but... [sighs] Any time anybody gets hurt physically or emotionally, then that's bad. Rock 'n' roll's supposed to be fun. Rock 'n' roll's supposed to be the most fun you've ever had. You know... you're not supposed to get hurt. You can Google some shit and figure out what I'm talking about. But it should be fun.

You've got quite an acting career there too. I was just thinking - you've done bits and bobs in theatre and TV series. But I never read an interview where you'd mention Gilmore Girls where you played Gill and I actually loved that show. I think you did an amazing job. How was it for you with the kids in the band?

It was a fun thing to become a different character, learn lines and become a different guy on TV and have dialogue and shit like that. Because it's like now, every TV show pretty much is a reality show or a contest. Like fuckin' Britain's Got Talent or American Idol or... there seems to be very few shows, like a sitcom or a drama. And that was an hour-long show and that was on for like six or seven years. I just did a show called 'Californication', which I had a very cool part in.

I'm looking forward to it!

That'll be really funny. When you all see it, you'll laugh! It's very funny! And I'm also in the new 'Rock of Ages' movie with Tom Cruise. And I have not seen it yet but it was great fun to hang out with Russell Brand.

And my last question for you: You played in theatre - what would you say are the main differences between being on stage in a theatre and being on stage doing your own show?

In rock 'n' roll it's the object to make an eye contact with every single person in the room at a point at a show. Now, on Broadway they have what's called the fourth wall where you're telling a story, and you cannot reference the crowd or look at them at all! And that was completely challenging for me at first! Because I have to play the same thing... I can't look at anybody in the crowd at all. I have to just do my fuckin' - blocking it's called. Stand where I'm supposed to stand, say what I'm supposed to say, sing what I'm supposed to sing and never change because everybody's depending on you in the cast. So you can't just do what you want. It's a story, you're telling a story. So that's the main difference - the fourth wall. And rock 'n' roll's purpose is to break down the fourth wall.

WHO CARES?

Deep Purple vocalist Ian Gillan teamed up with Black Sabbath star Tony Iommi for a charity release, a double track CD featuring the songs 'Holy Water' and 'Out Of My Mind' last year. The response has now resulted in a full double album release, featuring the two new tracks, some previously issued material from Gillan and Iommi's careers, and some fantastic rarities, B-sides and unreleased material. With Deep Purple stepping into the studio with their new producer Bob Ezrin, Ian Gillan took a few minutes out of his busy schedule to grant James Gaden a quick fire email Q&A...

How did the whole 'Who Cares' project first materialise - I believe it was inspired by a trip to Armenia?

Yes, on the plane home from Yerevan after being honoured by the president for past work in aid of victims of the 1988 earthquake that killed 25,000 and rendered 250,000 homeless. We'd been deeply humbled by the honours and expectations bestowed upon us.

You worked with Tony Iommi on the 'Born Again' album and tour with Sabbath, before returning to Deep Purple. I personally thought 'Born Again' was a superb album - did you have a feeling of unfinished business between yourself and Tony musically, and was this a factor in working together on 'Who Cares'?

Not specifically but you have a point; I always enjoyed working with Tony and we have stayed in touch over the years.

If this album is well received, do you think it might be something for follow up with another collection of rare, unreleased and new tracks?

I don't know about rare and unreleased, there can't be many of them left... as for 'new' we'll have to see if the opportunity arises...

There are two great tracks Tony did with Glenn Hughes on here and the excellent 'Anno Mundi' featuring Tony Martin - I know in the past you had stated you didn't listen to what Deep Purple were doing when you were no longer in the band. Did the same apply to Sabbath, or did you check their work out before and after your stint?

To be honest - no. I don't actually listen to rock music when I'm relaxing... my tastes are a bit weird or as some might say, eclectic.

There's a good mix of material on here, from the overlooked to the unreleased. Are you somebody with a large stockpile of material in the vaults?

Not any more... that's about it, although I do have a large library of unrecorded songs - demos that is - that would never be released unless part of a project.

Some of these tracks have been released before, but it's good to give them a fresh airing - especially 'I Can't Believe You Wanna Leave' from the Gillan/Glover record 'Accidentally On Purpose'. Did Roger and yourself ever consider a follow up to this gem of an album?

Not really, it was a one off - I love it.

'Easy Come Easy Go' is excellent, featuring the Repo Depot group of yourself, Brett Bloomfield, Leonard Haze and Dean Howard. There was talk of you guys writing some stuff back in the day, and finally we get to hear a finished track. Were any others completed?

Well there were a few more, and they must be lurking around somewhere... maybe they'll turn up one day. 'Day Late And A Dollar Short' and 'Sugar Plum' were two of the songs we wrote, since recorded by other line-ups for different projects.

There is a great live version of 'When A Blind Man Cries' - this seems to have become a real favourite over the years with both Purple fans, and the band themselves. Originally though it was a B-side and not on the parent album of 'Machine



Head' - can you tell me why it wasn't put on the album originally, and is that a decision the band regret?

I don't remember any discussions about that song, and, for technical reasons, there were strict time limitations for vinyl albums; 19 minutes per side. Any longer and you'd lose bass-end or the needle would jump out of the groove. So 38 minutes and that was it... I believe most of our records from that period had 7 tracks, some of them quite long. I would like to get back to that - as there is no need to consider radio play any more than we did in '69 - '73.

Last time I had chance to interview you, you were promoting the 'One Eye To Morocco' solo album, which remains one of my favourite things you have done. Was it received well enough for you to think about another album in that vein?

I think once is enough for that kind of instrumental voicing, maybe something similar but with a big band or at least more of a racket.

'She Thinks It's A Crime' sounds like it was from the 'One Eye To Morocco' sessions. Is that right - if so, why was it left out?

Yes, I think I must have been out-voted by those in high places!

You are going to be working on the new Deep Purple album with Bob Ezrin producing. I think that's quite an exciting choice for producer - how did he come to be in the frame?

Well, it is very exciting to have some objective discipline and great sounds. I say that on day one of the session in Nashville. How did it happen? No idea!

Do Purple still write in the studio via jams, or as you have all become song writers with solo careers and side projects over the years, do you bring ideas in with you?

I still can't describe how it happens, but I gave up bringing in ideas centuries ago.

When can we expect the new Purple record to be released?

I'd love to be able to tell you but I really don't know!

