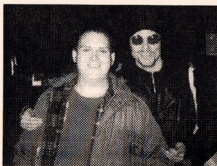


All of Us

Volume 2 number 3



BIG COUNTRY



Yours truly with one of the many vagrants
that populate the D.C. area

Dear Folx,

Well, not that much time has passed since our last newsletter, but our ranks have really expanded! A lot of the credit can be given to our inclusion in the booklet with the US WTLF cd. It's been a great advertisement and I get an average of 5 inquiries per week! On that note, I'd like to give a great big WELCOME to all our new folx!

In talking with Chris Luongo at PURE Records, he's mentioned more than once that PURE welcomes your input on any aspect of BC and the new release. If you know of a station that needs a copy of the album to use, just get the information to him and he will personally take care of it. If you have any ideas or opinions, Chris wants to hear them! Contact Chris at **PURE Records: po box 525 Georgetown, CT 06829**, by phone at **203.938.0555**, and via e-mail at **PURELTD@aol.com**.

A quick note to internet users and/or Country Club subscribers - from time to time you may see an article or review that isn't new to you, please keep in mind that it might be new to other subscribers, and thanx in advance for your patience.

By now, you may or may not know the "scoop" on the new releases. There was a bit of mistaken info on the new live cd - it's a 1989 show from the Hammersmith Odeon, *not* a 1984 show from Wembley Stadium. And the "Non (Stop The Tests)" single was pushed back from the 16th to the 23rd. Check with EQS Music for both of these new releases (see the BC shopper on the back cover).

You might notice the **Goldmine** coupon enclosed. For new folx, you absolutely *must* fill it out and try it. For those familiar, pass it on to a friend!

Finally, this issue is chock-full of nifty articles, both old & new. I hope you get as much of a kick out of them as I did. I'd like to encourage all of you, long-timers & newbies alike, to contribute to AOU in any way you see fit - the most convenient way (on my end) to contribute a text article is by e-mail. And, as always, feel free to contact me with any questions you may have - *but please note*, any letters to the band should be addressed to either Country Club or Ian Grant (po box 107 South Godstone, Redhill, Surrey, RH9 8YS - England). Due to the Holidays, the next AOU will probably not come out until late January/early February. I hope the sheer volume of articles here will keep you satisfied 'til then!

Happy Holidays, Stay Alive & See You Next Year! -

James

all of us

ritch & diane adams -
randall addison -
lowell austin jr -
edward baptista -
michael bickley -
heather blandford -
shea broaders -
howard bryan -
rob bys -
steve chapman -
ed clark -
andrew cooper -
lewis crow -
cameron davis -
steve deasley -
lance eagen -
rhonda fuller -
chris gallagher -
bill goldsmith -
carl gryzbek -
john c harper III -
ken hastings -
laura jankowski -
tom kercheval -
cole lauber -
stan lenkiewicz -
robert linguar -
art love -
chuck luther -
jennifer mccarty -
nora mchugh -
roman c mangapit -
russ marlowe -
jeffrey marsh -
donna miller -
frank j noonan -
mr lyn noricks -
eric orseck -
jeff patterson -
mark pearsall -
chris raaths -
steve rist -
les schriber III -
fran seal -
howard shapiro -
tom stieber -
beverly turner -
sherry wallace -
andrea weeks -
edward weeks -
john weigel -
jerri wilmore -
clive young -

From "Whatever Happened To..."
reprinted from
Star Hits Hall Of Fame #9
Courtesy of Art Love

Amidst rumours that they all hated each other and with no sign of any new records, lots of people seemed to think that Big Country split up. Not so. While Stuart Adamson has been up in Scotland writing songs, Mark Unpronounceable-name & Tony Butler have been doing lots of "session" work (they used to be session musicians anyway) - with Roger Daltrey, The Cult, & Pete Townshend. Together they will soon start recording a new LP.



photo by David Booth

Say It's Your Birthday: Former Big Country Guitarist Stuart Adamson

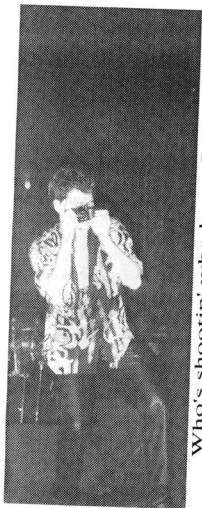
Today is the birthday of Stuart Adamson, formerly of the Skids and Big Country. Big Country burst on the rock scene in the early '80s with a uniquely expansive twin-guitar sound, that at times recalled bagpipes. Their Chris Thomas-produced debut *Harvest Home* didn't chart, but *The Crossing*, cinematically produced by the innovative Steve Lillywhite captured the band's sonic vision perfectly, it contained the bands first, and only significant US hit with "In A Big Country." The band did much better in the UK, scoring a string of hits, and garnering enough popularity to sell out two nights at London's Wembley Stadium in 1984. This was further aided by the release of the album *Steelhouse*, which entered the British charts at number one. After an eighteen month lay-off, Big Country released *The Seer*, which was a moderate hit on US radio. Their last album, *Peace In Our Time*, was a rather modest endeavor, sounding more generic than memorable, and revealed them as a band on the downward spiral of their evolutionary path. It is also the Birthday of Lisa Stansfield, and Neville Staples (Specials/Fun Bow Three).

Dawn (my girlfriend) got this off a web page, as you can see,
the author could use some guidance...

Annual All Of Us Convention and Scottish Christmas Festival

Well, it's that time of year again! Last year, due to last-minute cancellations for various reasons (ahem, you know who you are!) it was just me, my girlfriend and cole lauber. We still had a great time tho! Now that our circulation is quite a bit higher, I really hope that we get a better turnout this year. What the heck am I rattling on about, you might wonder. It's an event I've been attending every first weekend of december for at least 7 years now; the Scottish Christmas Festival in Alexandria, Virginia. It is fantastic! A whole day (or weekend, if you fancy) full of Bagpipe bands, heather, kilts, scottie dogs, authentic celtic taverns and shops, all beginning with a huge parade of all things Scots. And all this in a city that will take you back in time (even if you're sitting in the King Street Mcdonald's) with it's seaside revolutionary war period townhouses, red brick sidewalks, and charming townfolk. And no - I am *not* exaggerating, it is all that and more! last year, Dawn & I stayed over the weekend and went shopping at the huge mall and the shopping center (with a great Tower records), ate in the great eateries, and shopped the downtown record stores. I'd love to see as many of you there as I can - we can all get some drinks and wax poetic about our favorite Scots things! If you're interested, call me at [redacted] for more info, directions, etc. It's gonna be a great time I guarantee you; if this sounds the least bit appealing, you will want to be there!

James



Who's shootin' who here, Stuart???

Photo by David Booth

Big Country: The Crossing

reprinted from

People Magazine - Nov 21 1983

Courtesy of Art Love

So where does this band with the ambitious name come from? Montana? Australia? China? Nope, it's another British group - but not just another British group. Big Country is a refreshingly un-computerized and unpretentious quartet, relying on the basic old clash of guitars and drums to propell its music, which recalls the spacious, ambitious sounds of the early Who. The band is made up of drummer Mark Brzezicki, bassist Tony Butler, and guitarists Stuart Adamson (formerly with the Skids) and Bruce Watson. They share composition credit for all the songs, and in this case, writing by committee works. The tunes are inventive and at times moving. The group does seem to have some arsonist tendencies; there is frequent use of fire imagery in the lyrics, burning houses, especially. An example from 1000 Stars: "Hold me through the darkest night/I feel secure in your arms/While all the city's on fire/It's not between you and me/but we are losing." Though apolyptic in tone, Big Country's vision is balanced by sounds that kindle the spirit and at times provide a musical hot foot for those dancing tootsies.

from

"I Could have Died!"

*a collection of short quotes from various celebrities
recalling embarrassing moments - Star Hits, October 1985*

Courtesy of Art Love

Stuart Adamson: When I was 12 my father made me wear these horrendous pale blue trousers. They were meant to be permanent press, but they didn't quite manage it. I had to wear them 'cause my others were filthy.

n o t a s b i g a s t h e y u s e d t o b e

Reprinted from Brighton Evening; 6/13/95 - Courtesy of Ian Grant

Big Country aren't even dismissed by the music weeklies. They are ignored. Totally.

If pressed, cynics would describe them as a group who had their day and are now sad, miserable and boring "old farts".

But with the rebirth of guitar bands (take a bow, Oasis and Co) and a new album, perhaps some re-assessment is due.

For a start any ensemble who entitles their latest record *Why The Long Face?* obviously enjoy tickling ribs.

Well, did I tell you about the togas? No, on second thoughts, let Stuart Adamson, who formed the band 14 years ago out of the ashes of punk and the Skids, do that.

"We had a toga party in a hotel one night. We'd grabbed all the sheets off the beds and dressed ourselves and started wandering around the hotel looking for a missing member of our crew.

"During this we spent 20 minutes knocking on a door and this sleepy, 20-stone rugby type opens it up and tells us where to go! The next morning everyone was looking at us at breakfast and we got thrown out of the place."

You see, Big Country can be a little wild just like any would-be rock and roll band.

But Adamson is unconcerned about how he and his band are perceived by the media.

"I couldn't give a hoot, really," he said.

"All this wild, smashing up hotel rooms stuff. It's the same image that's portrayed through the generations. You just swap Guns 'N' Roses for Oasis.

"I'm just involved in music because I want to satisfy myself by writing songs and playing music.

"I still have a huge desire to write vital and exciting music. I started as a shy teenager behind a loud guitar wanting to do that and I still feel the same way.

"It's a great tradition that bands walk on water one moment in the media and then are nothing the next.

"The music weeklies are an example of the un-hip being hip by association."

He copes with the rock and roll baggage, which can include aggro with record companies and fellow musos, and any relationship pressures by adopting a "zen" approach.

He said: "It's not the be all and end all of life. I just go about things and do them on my own terms. I write my songs, put them on the head and send them out into the world.

"You get record company hassles and we are on our fourth one now. But that's probably down to my bloody-mindedness. They are in it to make as much money as possible.

"I've had some problems with fellow musicians in the past. There was Richard Jobson in the Skids. He was always fascinated by the media and I'm not surprised that he's in the media now. It suits him. We had some to-ing and fro-ing between us because we had strong views. There's never a problem in Big Country because we all get on and have outside interests.

"I've never had any bother with personal relationships. I've been married for 15 years and have two kids!"

He still considers himself a punk. Adamson said: "I've always considered it's the feel rather than the technical expertise and that was what punk was all about."

He then revealed his methods for writing songs have more to do with nursery rhymes than the most technically gifted song craftsman.

He said: "I sometimes sit there and write rubbish but the way to get through that block is to keep going even if I wind up writing nursery rhymes."

He is happy with his latest efforts for the new album. He said: "I'm very pleased with the songs. They are more intimate, personal than worldly."

It is the first studio album by the band (who also include guitarist Bruce Watson, drummer Mark Brzezicki, and bassist Tony Butler, all original) in two years, although there was a live record last year.

"The reason is we've been touring our backsides off and I needed time at home to write. The actual recording only took us three weeks."

Charlie Watts once coined a phrase of what life is like in the Rolling Stones.

Stuart is happy to relate it to Big Country.

"The Big Country experience has been three years playing and 11 years hanging around. It's so true."

Well, we'll see at Brighton's HMV today when the band do an acoustic PA to promote *Why The Long Face?*

"I'm looking forward to it and then we can go and fanny about on the beach," said Stuart. He was smiling and laughing again.

His son thinks he's a bit of an "old duffer". But the humour is clearly still with him.

Aberdeen Capitol - December 1993



Photos by David Booth

Birmingham Town Hall 1993



Submitted by Peter Koopman:

The biggest selling newspaper in the Netherlands, De Telegraaf (=Telegraph), often features a page devoted to pop music called Hitscore. It is a mixture of hitlists from various countries, short articles and one longer article. On Wednesday last (23rd August) it featured an interview with Stuart Adamson. Here follows an amateur's translation (the amateur being me, of course).

SCOTS SUPPORT ACT FOR LAST TWO ROLLING STONES CONCERTS BIG COUNTRY: STRONG-HEADED

Things aren't always what they seem. E.g. it seemed that Big Country, the band heavily leaning on Celtic melodies and bagpipe-guitars around former Skids guitarist Stuart Adamson, had vanished from the face of the earth. How untrue that is. The Scottish band still exists, is still pretty successful in their own country, it's just that we Dutch haven't heard from them in a long time for the simple reason BC did not have a record deal in our country. Fortunately that has changed and recently "Why the long face" was released, a typical BC-album with fourteen solid guitar-rock tracks of still the original formation.

The four Scottish musicians are lucky not just with regard to the album release. They were also asked to be support act for nine Rolling Stones concerts. So after a long period without playing in our country they now have the opportunity to play for some 100.000 music lovers. And on the Stones-stage, as well!

"My mother was more excited about that than I was", says BC leader Stuart Adamson in the Belgian town of Leuven, where BC will be playing the Marktrock festival later that evening. "But fair is fair, they're more than just a band before a large audience. What they have achieved as a bunch of guys playing rock 'n' roll is unique. The Rolling Stones (the name and the music) are known all over the world. We have all grown up with it. Yesterday we did the first show and I must say we had a good time. Hangin' out in their backstage room and so on...."

If the conversation comes to the long absence of BC in the Netherlands, Stuart immediately goes into attack. "You sign a deal with the biggest companies in the world and it turns out they don't release your record in certain countries", he says angrily. "The Netherlands, Scandinavia, we have always done well in those territories. With regard to sales, but also with regard to concerts. It is very frustrating to discover that your most recent record can't be bought there because of commercial reasons. I don't want to look around to see what scores and then make that kind of record. I want to make records the way I feel them. It's just a pity that the businessmen, who interfere with your work once the job is done, don't feel the same way. They say you just gotta do what they tell you and that you should not be so independent. I have made that mistake once by doing what they told me and that was with "Peace in our time". I hate that album, it's the black sheep of the family, the child that has chosen the wrong path. I love the songs on it, but it has nothing to do with BC. As from that moment I have decided to be misled in this way never ever again, and only make the records I want to make. We'll see what happens from there. I can only hope that the good things will come our way eventually." A second later Stuart refines his story: "Actually I find it more amusing than frustrating. You score gold and platinum records and suddenly businessmen decide what you know about making music. Crazy, isn't it?"

Fortunately, the 37-year old now knows how it goes. The guitarist has been in the business for twenty years now and he says you can tell that from the last record. "The last one really is back to basics. As simple as possible", he explains. "It's something like making your ideas stronger by making them less complicated. Along the way, you just learn to say things in a better way instead of beating around the bush." "Actually, it's kind of a funny business, really", Adamson concludes. "If someone would have said to me as a 13-year old that I would travel all over the world for the rest of my life, playing the guitar, getting to know a different town every night of the week, then I probably would have said "dream on". Still, it IS what I have done these past nineteen years. I have experienced all the ups and downs, so if it seems like starting all over again, right here, right now, then deep down inside I kind of like that. Just because it's part of the crazy business!"

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FOR DETAILS, CALL KEVIN SHORT:





PERSONAL FILE - STUART ADAMSON

Reprinted from Star Hits magazine, March 1985 - Courtesy of Art Love

Name: William Stuart Adamson.

Born: Manchester, England. April 11, 1958.

Schools: Crossgates Primary and Beath Secondary schools.

Jobs: I was a student environmental officer.

What were your duties? None - I was only a student.

Do you do any gardening? Yes, I cut the lawn and weed the flowerbeds. I don't know what kind of flowers, my wife Sandra deals with that department.

What's in your pockets? Absolutely nothing; some change, Six dollars fifty-two, some cigarettes and some matches, piece of string, bubblegum...

Favorite heavy metal song: "Stairway To Heaven"!

First Girlfriend: She was an albino. Seriously - Jacqueline her name was. The night I took her out, she went out with somebody else. I brought her to the dance and she left with an older chap.

What TV show do you always turn off? Well, there's a few I'd *like* to turn off, but my wife watches them so I'm sort of forced to watch them. "Dynasty" - can't stand it!

Favorite TV show: "The Young Ones," in England. My favorite American TV show is "Press Your Luck."

Hobbies: Extremely fast motorcycles and photography. Not at the same time. I ride a Yamaha fg-1100. I've had it up to 155 mph. I've thought of strapping a camera to me helmet but I haven't done it yet.

Who would you like to be stuck in an elevator with? I would like it to be Stan Laurel, but unfortunately he's dead. I'd really like to meet Leonard Cohen. I've been a fan of his for years. I think he's hiding out in Canada now.

Most embarrassing moment: Gettin' blown up in Tuscon! The microphone shorted out when I was singin' - zapped me right across the stage.

First record bought: Dave Davies' "Death Of A Clown." But it wasn't with my own money, unfortunately.

Do you believe in astrology? No.

When did you last speak to your mother? Last week, on the telephone.

Personal motto: Yeah, it's from Lenny Bruce: "There is only what *is*, what *should* be is a dirty lie."

Strangest gift from a fan: We've had some really crackin' ones - there were two beauties in America. One girl gave me a big huge flag she'd handmade, a Big Country flag with a sort of compass logo on it and stuff, and that was great. And someone else gave my us a blanket for Callum (my son) that was all hand-embroidered. Callum uses that, actually, which is great.

Favorite appliance: I've got a fast-beater for scrambled eggs, that my favorite one.

Favorite Duran Duran record: Actually it was the second single they ever did in Britain, a song called "Careless Memories." It's got a great guitar line in it that I really like. They're just a sorry pop group, really, aren't they? I'm not really concerned about them as a group, but I like that record, I must admit.

Do you breakdance? No, Bruce breakdances. Him and Mark 'ave got this breakdancing team, but it's like a piss-take of breakdancin'. They'll sort of jump up, then land on their backs and sort of spin 'round pathetically, y'know?



Stuart Adamson

So what has Stuart Adamson of Big Country been up to recently? Well, er, quite a lot actually. He's been out on the "road", he's been nearly eaten alive, he's been "interviewed" by William Shaw, he's...

Been nipping about a lot -

"We finished the LP, *The Seer*, in February of this year and we've been out on the road since March. We did three British tours, we've been to Canada, America, Sweden, Holland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland... We've been to lots of places."

He hasn't been giving two hoots about people who say that all Big Country's songs sound the same -

"I don't give two hoots about it. It really doesn't trouble me at all. I don't make records so that people can say to me 'Isn't that startlingly like Big Country!' Who else is going to make records that sound like *Big Country*? We are *Big Country*! (Laughs) Our songs are all different. What's the same is the commitment. Take the song *The Seer*, it's nothing like *Hold The Heart* or *Look Away*. If people say they sound the same, that's their opinion. Opinions are like arseholes. Everybody's got one."

He's been talking a lot about "commitment" -

"I think that's part of the reason we've been successful. There's a commitment in the group. If there's one thing that runs through all of Big Country's work it's that it's all done with the same amount of commitment and excitement and genuine feeling. People identify with that. Too many people go for far too low a common denominator and think of 'the kids' as some mass of mindless morons. There's a responsibility to create music that's worthwhile and lasting and invokes a sense of involvement in the real world rather than some fictitious desert island... (Pause) But then again, it's only bloody pop music..."

He hasn't been worrying whether he's trendy or not -

"The first band I ever went to see was Led Zeppelin. It was at the Caird Hall in Dundee in 1972. They're a bit trendier now but it wasn't easy to explain that 10 years ago in the heady days of punk. Things always go in cycles, don't they? Maybe in 10 years Big Country will be trendy. Do I want to be trendy? I'm not really fussed. We're trendy in my house and that's what matters!"

He's had another baby -

"My daughter was born last year, just before I began work on *The Seer*. There's a lot of work in the house when there are two children to be brought up. Am I domesticated? I don't know - you'd better ask Sandra about that."

He's been fishing -

"Yeah, I'm really into fly fishing..."

...And he's been riding around on motorbikes -

"Yes. And I've been sponsoring the Big Country Motorcycle Racing Team which did very well this year. One guy finished fourth in the National 1300 Production Championship and another guy won the MCA Production Championship which was splendid. I try to ride when I can. Do I ever fall off? Falling off is part of it. I've been in a couple of accidents but they've never been anything major. I was coming down to do *Pop Quiz* one day and it was wet and I was late for my plane. I came off going round this corner - I was leaning too far. I had a few stitches in my arm. I've never been seriously maimed though."

He's turned down a position on the board of Dunfermline Athletic Football Club -

"They offered me it which was really nice but if I was going to do it I'd have to do it properly or not at all. So I had to pass on it, but at least it's made me friendly with a few people in the club. It was nice to be asked to help but I'm not into half-doing things. It's good to see that they're doing so well though: they're at the top of Division One in Scotland and if they carry on the way they're doing they'll be in the Premier League next year. I always try to go if I'm at home; I've seen five matches so far this season. I'm not really interested in football though because of the 'Eehh ver lads!' - that terrace thug's idea of football. I actually enjoy watching the game. I think it's a splendid sport."

He's been recording a film soundtrack -

"It took me up to the end of March last year to finish the score for this new film *Restless Natives*. We had a few arguments with the director and stuff because I'd written almost two hours of completely original music but they wanted to put on all this older Big Country stuff. I was going 'Look, I've written this stuff and it goes much better with what you're trying to do,' but it caused us a bit of hassle at the time. The film suffered from it as well, but I like the finished product. The script is excellent."

He's been reading poems by a bloke called Hugh MacDiarmid -

"He's a Scottish poet, or he was a Scottish poet: he died a few years ago - and he was also the founder member of the Scottish Nationalist Party. Reading his poems gave me the idea for *The Seer*; he had this idea for a Scotland that was modern and vital and outward-looking and not one that was just a sentimental picture of clans, whisky and bagpipes - a country that was part of the world. I don't think I can ever put things as well as he did."

He hasn't been eaten by a shark -

"No. The closest I've ever been was in Miami and that wasn't very close at all. The story got blown up a bit. It was quite amusing. We were on the beach at Fort Lauderdale and suddenly the coastguards began hollering for everyone to get out of the water quick. I was miles out at sea. You know that feeling you get when you're swimming in the sea and you think 'is there something underneath?' I was crapping myself."

He's been listening to records -

"I'm currently into The Smiths. I think that *The Queen Is Dead* album is a masterpiece. I think Morrissey's lyrics are amazing. The way he gets his ideas across is splendid. I always liked Johnny Marr's playing but I never could get to grips with Morrissey - but that album's really hot..."

He's been watching the news on the telly -

"Yes. I'm an inveterate news watcher..."

He's been having trouble with his ticklish eyelashes -

"I've got these devilishly ticklish eyelashes. It's hell when I'm being made up for photo sessions." [*Makeup artist who's making him up for Smash Hits photo session: "Really? I've never met anyone with ticklish eyelashes before."*]

He's released a new single, Hold The Heart -

"It must have been almost a year and a half ago that I wrote it. It was the third song that I wrote for the LP. I remember thinking I wanted to write a very ballady song, something that people would never think of as a Big Country song, a very direct boy/girl lost and found song."

And now he's off on tour again! -

"I never get tired of the actual physical act of going on stage. I don't think we've ever played as well as a group as we have this year. But the travelling is a bit of a bind after a while and I do get very homesick. I'm too old for all that travelling around. What do you mean I'm not supposed to say that? I thought I was allowed to say what I liked. I thought I was in a position of infinite power, I thought I was blessed with God-like powers... That's what it says in the guidebook to being a pop star..."

Reprinted from Smash Hits; 1985 - Courtesy of David Booth

ERRORS ! CORRECTIONS !

Well, last newsletter I pulled a doozy! I mistakenly interpreted Stuart's line from *Blue On A Green Planet* - 'Now we buck without the fizz' as 'Now we PLOP without the fizz', which I took to be a reference to the old Alka-Seltzer commercials. Needless to say, I should have taken more care when I was writing up the review; the cd booklet was right at the desk when I wrote it. ALSO - apologies go out to Steve Chapman, whose address I kind of got mixed up with Andrew Cooper's. Very sorry. By the way, if you find an error of any kind (even spelling) in AOU, please don't hesitate to let me know, you'll be doing me a favor!

PURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1 SEPTEMBER 1995

NEW LABEL TO OFFER "PURE" INDEPENDENCE

Pure Records label launched by veteran industry trio

Music industry veterans Arma Andon, Steve Fargnoli and Gordon Anderson announced today the launch of a new recording label known simply as **PURE**. The trio will run the fully independently-financed venture.

Among the new label's first releases, to be distributed exclusively by top indie Alliance Entertainment, are the first U.S. recording in two years from Scottish favorites **BIG COUNTRY** and a debut disc from innovative Toronto quartet **GLUELEG**. **PURE** will introduce a total of six records by the end of the year.

Andon, a former Columbia and SBK Records executive, and Fargnoli, a prominent artist manager, developed the idea for the uniquely structured label after combining their respective management rosters over a year ago. The pair were in search of an alternative outlet in North America for some of their more successful European acts.

"The frustration we experienced attempting to secure U.S. deals for some of our overseas artists led to the realization that a new approach was necessary," explains Andon. "These were acts with a proven track record in Europe, who merely needed the opportunity to develop the same success stories here."

While major labels often look for immediate sales potential to justify the signing of new artists, **PURE**'s goal is to establish partnerships with acts that have been overlooked by the majors or who require the type of nurturing and development to which the majors hesitate to commit. As a small, focused operation teamed with the muscle of the largest independent distributor in the country, **PURE** will be in a position to invest more funds directly into artist development and marketing.

Anderson, another seasoned industry executive who spent 14 years at Columbia Records/Sony Music, brings his label development experience and marketing and promotion expertise to the new label. Anderson was instrumental in the launch of numerous labels, including those within the CBS Associated Labels in the 1980's, Manhattan Records and Grudge Records.

PURE has also secured the services of former Sony Music UK executive Steve Hodges as an A&R consultant. Hodges will join Fargnoli in the new label's London office, where they will seek out new and established European artists who desire a U.S. deal. "We'd also like to establish relationships with current and former A&R execs who are associated with interesting acts in need of U.S. distribution," explains Fargnoli, who adds that these A&R contacts "would serve as 'executive producers' for such records, remaining integrally involved in planning the artists' Stateside careers."

PURE's founders intend to nurture a communal spirit among the label's artists and employees, allowing a freer creative environment and true collaboration in all aspects of producing and positioning the company's releases. They plan to retain a limited core office staff and utilize independent services for added promotion, publicity and marketing punch. Their transatlantic set-up and proximity to New York City and Connecticut neighbor Alliance allow for frequent face-to-face contact with artists, managers, affiliates and key industry players.

PURE is confident that the combined strength of its executives within the industry and the label's unique business philosophy will give it the freedom to attract high caliber artists to its roster. **PURE**'s hands-on approach to involving the acts directly in day-to-day decisions regarding their careers is certain to be appealing to talented artists desiring a measure of both artistic and financial control.

The new label boasts a cutting-edge approach to technology, as well, with plans to produce interactive press kits and a site on the Internet's World Wide Web to further strengthen their artist development efforts.

Other **PURE** recordings currently slated for release this year include new albums from revered guitarist/songwriter **NILS LOFGREN**, Grammy-Award winning French dance/conceptual artist **CERRONE**, Irish art-pop group **AN EMOTIONAL FISH** and the jazz soundtrack to the critically-acclaimed film *The Last Seduction*.

from a
PURE

list of new releases:

BIG COUNTRY **Why The Long Face** 9/5/95

In the 80's, the Scottish group BIG COUNTRY burst onto the new music scene with a uniquely expansive twin-guitar sound and a string of hit singles. *In A Big Country*, the band's highly-acclaimed debut album, paved the way for several Top Ten hits, Grammy nominations, and sellout tours all over the world. Now a decade later, Big Country returns with *Why The Long Face*, the band's strongest effort since their debut. These 14 original tracks bring together BIG COUNTRY's trademark rousing melodies and poetic lyrics with a 90's raw-edged sound. The disc also features two bonus cuts: an acoustic version of their original hit "In A Big Country" and a cover of Lou Reed's "Vicious."

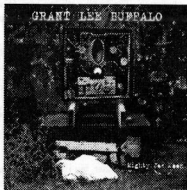
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"With Nirvana, you really had to think about what they were saying (huh? - ed). With Hootie, you don't have to think."

*a Hootie & The Blowfish fan explaining why she enjoys the group,
as quoted in Entertainment Weekly.*

Grant Lee Buffalo
the album
Mighty Joe Moon

a rough-hewn slice of
vanishing Americana

on tour now with REM
on SLASH records





"I'm not ashamed of the things I've done / I know I stayed when I could have run / I don't expect it to be easy for me," declares vocalist / guitarist Stuart Adamson of BIG COUNTRY on the band's new release from the just-launched Pure Records label. Indeed, Adamson and his longtime bandmates can be more than proud of the persistence and drive they've demonstrated over their unquestionably respectable fourteen-year career.

Few UK bands who made a splash on this side of the pond during the early '80's birth of the "MTV Era" lasted much beyond their sophomore efforts, and its an elite group who can still claim a following in America. From the start, BIG COUNTRY's rugged image and honest guitar-driven rock were the antithesis of the fashionably-packaged pop that was "here today, gone tomorrow." Several million record sales, numerous tours and festival appearances and countless top-charting UK singles later, Stuart Adamson, Mark Brzezicki, Tony Butler and Bruce Watson are making music as good as it ever was on the new album, *Why The Long Face*, released in North America on September 5.

The record's 14 tracks show a '90's perspective while remaining true to the band's trademark twin guitar sound, propelled along by hard-edged rhythms yet rich with Celtic-flavored melodies and harmonies. Adamson's quirky and insightful lyrics speak volumes about the human condition -- from the simple sentiment of "Sail Into Nothing" to the disturbing vision of post-Cold War Berlin in "Message of Love." "You Dreamer," a none-too-subtle message for those who watch life pass them by, features the kind of rousing chorus that brought BIG COUNTRY success with their first release. The U.S. pressing of the new album contains two bonus tracks: An acoustic version of "In A Big Country," the band's first Top 20 single, and a cover of Lou Reed's "Vicious."

"I don't think you ever write 100% personal songs," comments Adamson. "You take little bits from other people you know and conversations you have and you mix them all up. I like writing songs, but for me, having to edit a story down so that it will fit into a song is the real challenge. I've toyed with the idea of writing short stories but it takes so long to get to the point, whereas with a song you can get there in 18 lines or so! And then people can react quite quickly, it's like putting people on an emotional merry-go-round -- come and have a spin on this for a while and see how you feel when you get off at the other end. And if you feel extreme nausea, don't play this song again!"

Why The Long Face takes its title from an Emo Phillips joke. Adamson tells it best... "Emo was walking across Waterloo Bridge on one of his visits to London and saw this horse about to throw itself over the side. He goes up to the horse and says to it 'hey, don't do that buddy -- why the long face?' I think it has a good double meaning in that it's a message of positivism."

The history of the big guitar, big riff, big vocal harmony band is well documented. Formed by Stuart Adamson in 1981 on his departure from the Skids, the ensuing four piece cut a spectacular swath through British rock during most of the eighties. They were rarely out

of the overseas charts or off of the main stage. Initially opening for all the stadium bands -- U2, the Jam, Simple Minds, the Stranglers, the Eurythmics - it wasn't long before they were headlining their own stadium shows in Europe, America, Canada, and Japan. BIG COUNTRY was nominated for two Grammy's in 1984, including Best New Group, and the band's second album, "Steeltown," entered the UK charts at number one later that year. In 1986, BIG COUNTRY appeared as special guests of Queen at Knebworth, playing in front of 200,000 people.

Sellout tours all over the world followed, including the special guest slot on David Bowie's Glass Spider tour, appearances at several prestigious European festivals and numerous charity gigs including the Prince's Trust and Live Aid. In 1988, BIG COUNTRY co-headlined both the Peace Festival in East Berlin (with Bryan Adams) and the Soviet Peace Festival in Estonia. This led to the band performing in the first-ever concerts in the USSR to be promoted by a private individual in October of that year, and spawned the Top 10 single "Peace in our Time." Massive UK and European tours followed, and two years later their hit album "Through a Big Country" reached number two overseas.

In 1993, the band's American fans were treated to the first U.S. release since the mid-'80's, *The Buffalo Skinners* (Fox Records). The record, which debuted at number 19 in the UK, precipitated a series of extremely well-received Stateside appearances in the latter half of the year, and an appearance on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." In 1994, "Without the Aid of a Safety Net" captured the band live in Glasgow and illustrated how to be fashionably unfashionable. No frills, fuss or gimmicks -- just four musicians performing in a way that only a band with twelve years experience on the road could.

BIG COUNTRY's live sets are legend among European rock fans. An appearance this past summer at the Heineken Music Festival in Leeds brought this praise from the *Yorkshire Evening Post*: "BIG COUNTRY produced what was widely accepted to be just about the best ever performance of any group since the festival started in 1990 ... when they take the stage, it's atmosphere -- all guitars and energy ... The crowd refused to let them go and they eventually played for a full 30 minutes longer than they were supposed to." That type of all-out display recently earned the group the coveted opening slots for Page / Plant in Dublin in July, and, most recently, the Rolling Stones in Europe. A full-scale tour, including the U.S., is being planned for early 1996.

With the current controversy about the decline of the music industry as an international force, it is interesting to analyze the qualities of the great live rock bands who have survived through the chaos: no frills, no banks of gimmicky equipment, loyal followings that went beyond the transient single-buying crowd, down to earth images, salt of the earth honesty, integrity, value for the money and good music live. BIG COUNTRY to a tee. With the release of their new album, BIG COUNTRY are providing a valid point - if you've got something to say, the songs, the energy, attitude and audience, then nothing should stand in your way.

**Big Country U.S. Bio for Why The Long Face -
Courtesy of PURE Records**

The Red Fox And The Sailor: An Essay By Michael Bickle

Part of Big Country's special magic lies in their eloquent exploration of themes which are common to the human condition regardless of time, place, or circumstance. From the beginning, however, their music has also tapped a rich cultural heritage which -- when brought to the fore as in the earlier albums -- has provided inspiration for songs that hearken to specific historical contexts, thereby affording the listener added insight through awareness of the attendant associations. This article will focus on two such songs, "The Storm" and "The Red Fox", and recommend further reading for those who may be historically inclined.

An excellent study of the period which may have inspired "The Storm" is George MacDonald Fraser's *The Steel Bonnets: The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers* (Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1971; Pan Books Ltd, 1974).

While a Scottish locale is assumed for both songs, "The Storm" suggests it more strongly ("Through forest and moor as the clouds filled the sky"). The lyrics graphically describe conditions of unrest which would appear to be chronic and localized, and thus typical of the tradition of raid and counter-raid that characterized nearly 300 years of lawlessness as away of life in the "Debateable Land" between Scotland and England. Although interests and combatants of a national scope occasionally came into play, the song's narrator refers to a time when "we took back our own", which is descriptive of the shifting fortunes of neighbor-against-neighbor Border strife. The mood of the verses is one of weary familiarity ("We knew well enough only time proves the cost"). Events which would ordinarily be perceived as shocking do not evoke a shocked response from the narrator -- these misfortunes have befallen him before, and will do so again. (And the line "We chased them for miles I had tears in my eyes" was in its original version more reflective of the hard nature of Border life -- on the Crossing liner sheet the word "hate" replaces "tears". But it should be noted that the reverse is also true; while the liner sheet reads "Both horses and masters bogged down in the rain", the recorded lyric is "Both hunters and hunted...".)

An even stronger hint of fixed time and place is found in the refrain "...Ah my James, they didn't have to do this", which can be interpreted as a reference to "the heich and michtie Prince James the Sixth of Scotland, James VI, King of Scotland, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and namesake patron of the King James Version of the Bible, inherited the crown of England (as James I, first of the Stuart line) upon the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603.

Depending on one's point of view, the pacification of the Border authorized by James was either a harsh yet necessary step toward unification of the two realms, or a ruthless campaign of repression which scoured the region with little regard for the innocence or guilt of those victimized. Hence, the anguished cry "Ah my James...", perhaps voiced by a Borderer on the Scottish side, whose erstwhile King, ruling now from London rather than Edinburgh, has unleashed the storm against his own people. (The book's relevant chapter is aptly titled "Breaking The Border".)

Fraser's detailed chronicle of "the great raiding families from the six counties on either side of the Border Marches" presents a sobering yet fascinating portrait of a social structure -- in the end, anachronistic even in its own time -- which could have served as a blueprint for Chicago's gangland of the 20s and 30s (the word "blackmail" is a legacy of the Border). Murder and mayhem were at times quite formalized, such as in the practice known -- in a grimly suggestive echo from the past -- as going on "trod" ("hot" or "cold" depending upon the time elapsed between foray and reprisal.) Happily, perhaps, the book makes no reference to Adamsons or any variation thereof (although my own maternal ancestors are dubiously represented by the Dodds of the English East March).

Fraser is also well known for his historic novels (notably the popular "Flashman" series) and screenplays (e.g., Richard Lester's 1974 *The Three Musketeers*) His most recent work, a novel titled *The Candlemass Road* (Harvill, 1993) is set in the period and locale covered by *The Steel Bonnets*, and renders a fictional yet realistic account of Border (in) justice.

A different historical context is suggested by "The Red Fox". The references to firearms technology ("the guns are found") and the distinctive uniforms of the British regulars ("the red and white of the King's army") broadly define a historical period during which, for the people of Scotland, the most significant -- and indeed, catastrophic -- events were those surrounding the doomed Jacobite rebellion that culminated in the Battle of Culloden in 1745. The prologue and aftermath of that battle, as well as the engagement itself, are the subject of John Prebble's *Culloden* (Penguin Books, 1967, with 17 reprintings as of 1985.)

In keeping with the song's title, images of furtiveness abound ("Coming out into the day...I follow on in silence/With a quiet heart in fear/I will bedone before the dawn/If I'm found here...I stood up as he passes/And the time has come at last/The prey goes down/As the metals crash"). Taken together with the verse "I'll meet with them among the pines/I'll meet with them by noon/And the dirge will sound on the morrow's moon", these references do not suggest armed combat but rather stealth and ambush, the only tactics left to the clansmen after the debacle of Culloden. The narrator appears to be a covert supporter of such actions, and his non-combatant status and sense of self-justification are further confirmed when he declaims, "Kidnapped in the dead of night/I did no wrong/I would not fight/It was not me/I will not run/But I believe in what was done". (In this context, the line ending "The prey goes down/As the metals clash" could refer to a patriotic act of robbery.) That the narrator's conduct is spurred by political rather than criminal motives -- and recognized as such by those wielding the implied punitive power and against whom he contends -- can be found in the line "So send me off to the colony shore". Common outlawry would not usually have been punished by transportation (with its expense to the government), whereas a political criminal might well receive such treatment in deference to the feelings of kith and kin left behind, and such indeed was the fate of the majority of the Jacobite prisoners taken in the wake of Culloden.

Quoting from the book's preface:

"This is not another history of the Forty-Five, and it is not another story of Prince Charlie's wanderings after Culloden. It is an attempt to tell the story of the many ordinary men and women who were involved in the last Jacobite Rising, often against their will. For too long, I believe, the truth of this unhappy affair has been over-romanticized by the figure of the Prince...The book begins with Culloden because then began a sickness from which Scotland, and the Highlands in particular, have never recovered. It is a sickness of the emotions and its symptoms can be seen on the labels of whiskey bottles. Long ago this sickness, and its economic consequences, emptied the Highlands of people. And this book, I hope, is about people."

Some years ago on public television the book and battle were given a gritty docudrama treatment in a highly effective antiwar film directed by Peter Watkins (well-known for his 1965 post-nuclear holocaust shocker "The War Game"). As reflected in the descriptive (rather than interpretive) viewpoints taken both by that film and the lyrics of "The Storm", it's evident that pacifism needn't always be strident to be heard, since the behavior which it condemns often speaks loudly enough for itself.

As a final note, in his closing sentences Prebble writes: "A lost cause will always win a last victory in men's imaginations. And no British regiment now has Culloden among its battle honours."

Prebble has written several other books on Scottish history (also printed by Pan), including one other that may be relevant here, *The Highland Clearances*, which deals with the years following Culloden and the resultant dissolution of the clan system and tragic depopulation of the Scottish Highlands.

Thus, in "The Storm" and "The Red Fox", and other songs which are perhaps less open to specific interpretation, Big Country has added a poignant dimension to our appreciation of the past by reinterpreting it through the medium of modern rock. And, as has been said before in these pages, no one has done it better.



ROUND 2: Cats Vs. Big Country

reprinted from RECORD magazine, June 1984

(Ed. [of RECORD magazine] note - In a feature story in RECORD's December 1983 issue, Stuart Adamson of Big Country told reporter Adrian Thrills that "Americans have never produced a thing worth calling art themselves. They've borrowed everything from Europe, even punk rock." Adamson, as our reader mail indicated, touched a nerve. Among the respondents were the Stray Cats. RECORD's March issue included a letter signed jointly by Brian Setzer, Slim Jim Phantom and Lee Rocker objecting, in rather strong terms, to Adamson's appraisal and suggesting fans throw their Big Country albums out the window "to see how (they) fly." We offered Adamson an opportunity in this space to clarify his remark, and he took us up on it. His reply follows, along with a sampling of reader reaction to the Cats' letter.)

I am writing this as a reply to the Stray Cats letter printed in the March issue of RECORD. The "ridiculously controversial" quote in question was made in relation to the Lincoln Center in New York. I think it sad that a city with the social problems of New York finds it more important to build a multi-million dollar center for the use of a city's elite. We have the same problem in Britain with multi-story car parks, shopping malls and cruise missiles. I think the artists mentioned in the Stray Cats letter - Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Robert Johnson, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams - have far more relevance to America than do corpulent European opera stars. Art should be the visible expression of human emotion, not wealth.

On the question of who invented rock n' roll and country music, I hope the Stray Cats aren't narrow-minded enough to believe that the integration of the folk music of European immigrants and uprooted African culture bears no relation to either the development of popular music in America and the West, or to the history of the nation itself.

If music can ever be more than "entertainment," as I believe it can and has been, then America, because its youth has a great potential for change, needs to show the way.

Like it or not, popular musicians do have an influence on people. I have tried to take some of my musical roots and contribute to them by merging the music with human situations I feel strongly about, hoping this may bring about understanding and unity not only between people of different cultures but different social groups as well. I may well be failing miserably, but I feel that making the effort is better than succumbing to the apathy so prevalent in Western countries.

It's up to popular groups to show some responsibility to the people who support them and not treat them like so many "marketplaces." Perhaps we could all get together and do a charity show in a Stray Cats limousine, or, if the car's too full of sexy 40-year-olds, we could lease Brian Setzer's mouth.

Stay Alive,

STUART ADAMSON

Big Country

New York, NY

Having failed to see the attraction to Big Country, I've got one thing to say about the Stray Cats' impression of Stuart Adamson - AMEN!

Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Jim Croce, Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, etc. were such accomplished artists that their music will outlive their legends. I can't speak for everyone, but this Souther lady can live without ego feeders like Adamson.

JULIE R. VROOMAN

Montgomery, AL

It wasn't until I read the Stray Cats letter that I realized what Stuart Adamson had said. And the Cats are right. America has produced and still does produce some of the greatest music in the world. However, the Cats didn't really need to resort to childish name calling and insults. More to the point, encouraging people to throw away their records over one foolish statement is reminiscent of those "burn your Beatles records" rallies held after John Lennon said the group was more popular than Jesus Christ. On top of that, I haven't heard Big Country's "Tracks Of My Tears," but I *have* heard the Stray Cats do "You Can't Hurry Love." Now *that* was insulting.

STEVEN J. MESSICK

Laurel, DE

[AOU Ed. note: wow - Laurel Delaware is a little town about 40 minutes from me. I just went through it the other day! While transcribing this, I got up the guts to call the only appropriate listing in that area's phone book, MESSICK S J, but when I asked for Steven J Messick, they said I had the wrong number... oh well, it **was** eleven years ago!]

Stuart Adamson's remarks about American music were both inaccurate and uncalled for, but the ignorance of those remarks was matched only by the Stray Cats' statements. Big Country has a lot more to offer artistically than most American bands - including the Stray Cats, who must be worried that people are listening to intelligent music and, hence, not to theirs.

ANDREW NOBLE

Tallahassee, FL

Although Stuart Adamson's remark about America's cultural heritage, particularly in regards to rock n' roll, seems to be a gaffe of major proportions, he's actually rather close to the mark. In the 1950's two separate streams of "American" music - the rhythm and blues imported to our shores by African slaves and the so-called "hillbilly" music descended from English, Irish, and Scottish folk traditions - merged to create a unique style of music called rockabilly. America's contribution to music has been more as a synthesizer than as a progenitor. Rock did indeed begin here, though, and I'm sure Stuart Adamson is well aware of this, just as I'm convinced that his mild remark was far removed from the cheap name-calling and mud-slinging the Cats engaged in. I would like to assure the Cats that I know many Big Country fans, including my husband. I liked the Cats, although I'm not so sure I do anymore. But then, the music is more important than the spouting off, isn't it?

KATRINA MCGHIN SNYDER

Ocala, FL

Big Country: Steeltown

reprinted from

Star Hits Holiday Issue 1984

The second outing from the band that made you mad about plaid might make you feel like you're wearing the same old shirt again. Steeltown shows many sides, from warm (Girl With Grey Eyes) to strong, almost Alarm-ing sentiments (Flame Of The West, and the title track). But running through all this passion are the familiar ghosts of Big Country past, from the familiar Fields Of Fire army drum roll and cry of "Shout!" on Where the Rose Is Sown and the once-joyful, twice-redundant jingle of Wonderland on Great Divide. In the end, a good, apssionate album, but Steeltown would be a nicer place to visit if we didn't keep going back to The Crossing.

Suzan Colon

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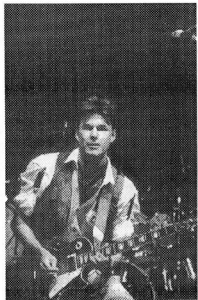
The North American

**BIG
COUNTRY**

Fan Network

410-479-0777

also, watch this space for all the usual Country Club BC merchandise, as we're making arrangements to sell the UK merchandise here thru AOU. . .



Rocking Roller Coaster

Reprinted from *The Evening Express, Aberdeen*; 6/10/95

Courtesy of Ian Grant

The rock 'n' roll highway is littered with casualties. Bitter disputes over recording rights, personality clashes between band members and disagreements over royalty percentages all take their toll.

One band, however, has survived the journey virtually unscathed. After 14 years, five top-10 albums and three record companies, Big Country is going strong.

True, the band has been out of the limelight for some time, but Scottish frontman Stuart Adamson is determined their new album, *Why The Long Face*, will re-establish them as one of the UK's most reliable rock bands.

Big Country are no longer the angry young men who boosted checked-shirt sales in the early 80s with guitar-heavy anthems like *In a Big Country* and *Look Away*. But 37-year-old Adamson insists his band is still pushing back the musical boundaries.

"Our music has been hard to pigeon-hole, and I've always had a very strong vision of the kind of music I want to do. I've never compromised," he says.

"I grew up listening to 70s guitar bands like Roxy Music, Mott the Hoople, and Led Zeppelin, but I also listened to a lot of folk and country. So there's always been this duality in my music--the guitar as a sexual rock-star thing, but with these folk melodies underlying it all.

"What I've tried to do on the album is create a kind of bastardised version of country music, played on loud guitars. This album is the most intimate and personal one I've done, and all the songs tell a story-- they're like little cameos."

Adamson's love affair with music began on his 12th birthday when his father presented him with an acoustic guitar. Growing up in a small mining community in Fife, he spent hours in his bedroom practising chords.

"As a boy, I was very shy and found it difficult meeting new people--I think it's the same for a lot of us brought up in close-knit communities," says Adamson. "But I always thought it would be cool to be a guy in a band playing in front of loads of people."

Adamson's dream came true, and at the age of 18 he joined punk-pop outfit, The Skids, as a guitarist. Five years later he left to set up Big Country with old friend Bruce Watson who had quit his job as a cleaner aboard nuclear submarines. The following year, the pair recruited bass player Tony Butler and drummer Mark Brzezicki. But in the early days at least, it wasn't all plain sailing.

"I went through a period in my early 20s of being very stressed out," says Adamson. "Richard Jobson had always been the front man in The Skids, and then with Big Country I suddenly had to do it all myself.

Now, thankfully, I'm quite relaxed about the whole thing."

While Adamson is clearly the driving force behind Big Country--and, in the early days, it was his name that all the girls were screaming--he acknowledges a huge debt to the rest of the band.

"I realise I wouldn't have achieved what I have without my band. We have a kind of collective individuality, and each member has a different strength.

Big Country has had its ups and downs, but throughout it all, Adamson has kept his feet firmly on the ground. He's been married to Sandra for 15 years, and they have two children, Callum (13) and Kirsten (10). His only concession to rock stardom is a home in Florida and a surfboard.

"After 19 years in the business, I know it's a bit of a rollercoaster, and that things ebb and flow. But being in a band isn't all about appearing on the telly and in the papers. It's about playing live and having the audience experience the same emotions you felt when you wrote the song.

"It's like putting people on an emotional merry go round--come and have a spin and see how you feel when you get off again!"

Stuart Adamson tells Brum Beat how it feels to live

i n a

B I G C O U N T R Y

Reprinted from Brum Beat; 7/95 - Courtesy of Ian Grant

It's strange how we all fall for the smoke screen of image manipulation that's thrown up by the media. Take Big Country; no one seems willing to admit liking them anymore and yet there's an autumn tour of two dozen dates in major halls already scheduled.

And then there's the recording career; having departed from Phonogram for Chrysalis, the word from insiders is that the reorganised Chrysalis have dumped them because they didn't fit the label's image. So, Big Country have signed to Transatlantic, hardly a major and yet Stuart Adamson is far from a beaten man. In fact he's brimming with positive confidence and ready to put ceratin matters straight.

"The label changes were initiated by ourselves. Chrysalis wanted to do with the new album what they did with the live album; put it out and tell no one about it."

And, indeed, it seems somehow fitting that Big Country should be on Transatlantic, a label with a solid folk music reputation when the band's roots are patently compatible with that.

"Most of western rock music has grown out of the blues whereas I grew up listening to folk and country music and I think my playing has always had its roots in that more than in blues based music. So yeah, it's the right label and whilst it may be seen as an indie their marketing and promotional ideas are like those of a major. So we get to make the records we want to and they get released worldwide."

But that still leaves the band as music's fashion lepers.

"We've been told since 1990 that guitar music is dead in Britain and that there'll never be anymore British guitar bands," rues Adamson whilst relishing the irony of "it's great to see Oasis having huge hits."

Fashion is not something that bothers him, it's more important that Big Country are true to themselves. That's ultimately the reason for their continued existence.

"I think the reason we've had the longevity we have had is that we've stuck to our guns and made the music that we want to make. I'm not claiming to be some twisted genius working away in a barret but I do have my own artistic views of what I see my songs to be and the way that I play. I'm not interested in doing it any other way just for the sake of having a career. Too many people come along and copy what someone else has done just for the sake of being successful and they're big stuff for ten minutes and it's all over and done the next day. I want to be a lifelong writer and player and I think the way for me to do that is by writing the songs and playing the way that I feel within me."

Now it strikes me that you can't say fairer than that. You can scoff but Adamson doesn't make his case with any pretension, he's simply telling it how he feels it. He comes over as a solid decent bloke. And maybe that's what the band's new album, *Why The Long Face is*; solid decent rock. Given that that means well played, good tunes with some stirring, spicy guitar bits, that's great. Maybe you should drop the hip pose and listen; better still get down to *Wolves Civic* on October 28th. A Big Country gig will surprise you if you've never seen one.

"Yeah, and the best thing is we get a mix of all different people from crusty types to clean cut pop kids to people who were into bands when I was starting out!"

Maybe it's time you joined them.

STUART'S JUST A BIG COUNTRY BOY AT HEART

Reprinted from *The Journal*, Newcastle; 6/8/95
Courtesy of Ian Grant

Guitars are something that Stuart Adamson has always had an intimate relationship with.

In 1981, when all around him were turning to synthesizers and post-Punk music was becoming bland and electronic, he formed Big Country.

Not only did this band feature a traditional musical line-up, the sound produced had never been heard before.

The guitars howled and were compared by many to bagpipes as they belted out anthems such as *A Big Country* and *Wonderland*.

Critics said the instrument was dead -- Stuart had news for them.

"People have been telling me guitars were finished for years but it's not true. When you see a guitar band it looks fantastic," he said.

"It is the most inventive instrument in pop. Guitars are brash, sexy, and in your face."

He is pleased to see the tradition being carried on by the likes of Oasis and Blur into the 90s.

And although they have been around for almost 15 years, Big Country are still up with them.

The new album *Why The Long Face* is released this month and carries the hallmark of all the others. Rousing anthems, intelligent lyrics and above all, guitars, lots of guitars. And it still stands out from the crowd.

"Most British pop music is based on the blues, but I grew up listening to folk and Country which is an entirely different sound," said the former Skids man.

"It's something that comes out naturally when I write music."

This album also sees Stuart working harder with the lyrics.

"I have been trying to write songs that are much more personal, again using contemporary folk as an influence in the writing.

"It's more about people relating to each other than worldly events."

So it's not all about creating a distinctive sound and their recent live album *Without the Aid of a Safety Net* also saw the band experimenting with an acoustic sound.

"It sounded great and it is something we will be trying at public appearances in record shops from now on instead of simply signing records."

But it is onstage that the Big Country sound is best appreciated.

Always prolific on the tour circuit, they are due to play Newcastle again in October where Stuart reckons they always "have a fantastic time".

But who are the Big Country audience these days?

"It's a mix of the old fans, their kids, the grunge crowd and even a few Take That-type teenagers. They're very confused -- I wish they'd sort themselves out!" he laughed.

Before he sets off on tour, Stuart is sunning himself in Florida where he is living for a year to "chill out".

"But the best thing about it is turning on the radio and hearing all these guitar bands!"



Tom Kercheval meets the warmly dressed Bruce Watson
at The Bayou show in D.C. Halloween night, 1993

Mr. Adamson outside the tour bus at the D.C. show



Adamson's Big career thrives in **'gator glades**

Getting the kids off to school can be a hazardous business for a rock star.

Stuart Adamson makes sure his day doesn't start with any snap. Crackle and the pop comes later.

Every morning he checks his car for alligators before loading up for the school run.

It's the price every Big Country leader has to pay for living in Crocodile Country on the edge of the Florida Everglades.

The Scots-born singer/songwriter/guitarist moved wife Sandra and their children Callum, 13, and Kirsten, 11, to the southern state a year ago.

"I'd always had a place in America," Stuart explains. "Over the years we had done a lot of work and been fairly successful.

"I thought it would be nice to live there full-time for a while for a bit of sun and to give the kids a chance of the outdoor life."

His marriage and the band have survived the excesses of the rock business for 15 years, which is a record he's proud of.

"I've always lived fairly quietly, being with the family and keeping myself to myself.

"I have seen any amount of people burning out on gratuitous sex, wild parties and all that goes with that side of rock 'n' roll.

"But I've been in it for most of my life and not lived the lifestyle. It didn't interest me. I get my kicks out of the creative side and still love performing.

"I get high out of writing a new song, recording it, playing it and seeing that it gives people enjoyment."

Through the Eighties the four-piece was one of the biggest sellers in the world, stirring the emotions with the "big guitar" sound he still loves, based around his folk and country roots.

The former Skids man launched Big Country in 1981 and says "I wanted to make sure everyone got on together, and that is still the case today.

"That has a lot to do with why we are still together, but we also had to stick to our guns. A lot of music company bosses told us they couldn't market a guitar band and rock music, but we didn't believe that.

"We were out playing and seeing the response and knew there was still a place for our kind of music.

"If I thought we had lost it, if we had become staid, I might have thought about changes. But I'd rather do what I want, and what the public wants."

It's time to test the pulse again with a new single, I'm Not Ashamed and album, Why The Long Face.

Bristol gets the chance to see Big Country 95-style at the Virgin Megastore on June 15 when they play a live acoustic gig in the afternoon.

Your Big Country Internet Directory

All Of Us/James d. Birch -

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Country Club/Jan Bremner -

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German BC Mailing List -

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Clive Young -

Lyn Noricks -

Lewis Crow -

Eric Orseck -

Tom Stieber -

David Anderson -

Jeffrey Marsh -

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Lance Eagen -

Art Love -

Laura Jankowski -

Howard Bryan -

Jeff Patterson -

And don't forget to check in with

John C Underwood,

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<http://www.cs.clemson.edu/~junderw/music/bc/>

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