

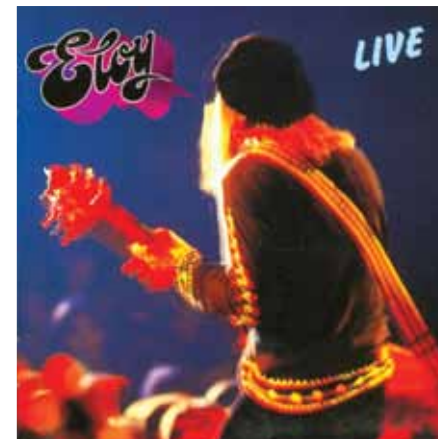
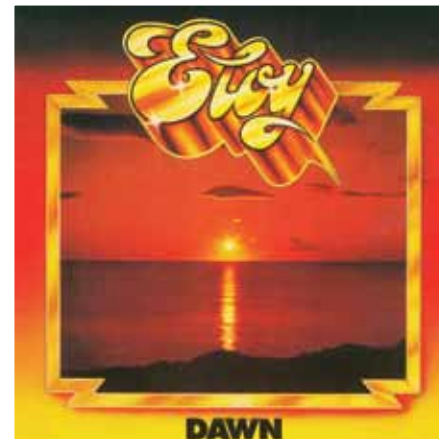
# FANTASY & REALITY



Eloy 2009: Frank Bornemann has his hands on the controls



Eloy are the great prog band that slipped through the net, failing to achieve due international acclaim, perhaps because their records mostly came out in Germany. But they rock on, and it's about time we got in tune with their concept, says Joe Geesin



In the late 60s and early 70s, Germany had a burgeoning rock music scene that many associate with what would later become known as krautrock. Many get confused over the distinction, but krautrock was frequently too electronic, experimental, ambient or alternative to be considered prog. One German band played a more traditional form of progressive rock (if there is such a thing) and were overlooked because of it. That band, Eloy, took their influences from the British scene of the time and had more in common with Genesis, Yes and King Crimson than Neu, Amon Düül or Can. And with lead guitarist Frank Bornemann a confirmed David Gilmour fan, it's no wonder that Eloy are sometimes referred to as the German Pink Floyd.

When Eloy formed in the late 60s, many young German bands were playing covers of Top 40 hits and songs by British bands – a trend rooted in British rock'n'roll groups playing German clubs. So when Hannover-born guitarist Frank Bornemann put the band together in 69 to play original material, it was considered a brave move. Joining Bornemann were drummer Helmut Draht, vocalist/keyboard player Erich Schriever, bassist Wolfgang Ströcker and guitarist Manfred Wiczorke. Taking their name from the Eloi, a race of futuristic humans from HG Wells' *The Time Machine*, the band started playing live and won a regional talent contest. This led to the release of their self-financed debut single Day Break/Walk Alone on a private label.

A deal with Philips followed, who released the band's eponymous LP in 1971. Receiving mixed reviews, the original sleeve had a gatefold dustbin lid, which revealed its contents when opened. This version now fetches over £100, though Philips issued a limited numbered replica, distinguishable only by a number appearing inside the gatefold, on the rear of the lid.

Following its release, Schriever left the band, citing musical differences, and guitarist Bornemann took over lead vocals. Drummer Draht was involved in a serious car accident, forcing him to stop playing, and the band replaced him with Fritz Randow.

This new line-up signed a deal with EMI Germany, on the famed Harvest imprint. Their music took a new direction, heavily influenced by UK progressive rock. The first

album for Harvest, '73's *Inside*, included the 17-minute Land Of No Body and sounded like a mix of Deep Purple, Uriah Heep and Pink Floyd (some would add Yes and Jethro Tull) with spaced-out guitar and swirling keyboards, plus the aggressive edge of Led Zeppelin. The band gigged heavily and started to find a degree of success.

With new bassist Luitjen Janssen on board, Eloy cut *Floating* in 1974, which cemented their success in their homeland. A little heavier than *Inside*, the band didn't consider it a development; wanting to stretch themselves further, they added second guitarist Hannes Arkona for live purposes. Their first concept set, *Power And The Passion*, soon followed. It demonstrated just how good Eloy were at telling a story, musically and lyrically. Sadly, this line-up didn't last; tensions within the band came to a head through some pretty disastrous management and Eloy split.

The label, however, kept faith with Bornemann, who rebuilt the band from scratch. He was joined by keyboard player Detlev Schmidtchen, bassist Klaus-Peter Matziol and former Scorpions drummer/songwriter Jürgen Rosenthal. This new line-up released *Dawn* in 1976 and the concept album *Ocean* the following year; the latter went gold and became the band's magnum opus.

It featured a string orchestra, which added an extra dimension to their spacey progressive rock. Boasting just four tracks, ranging from eight to 15 minutes apiece, the album was epic in every sense. The following double live album, however, saw so many aggressively negative reviews that opinion between fans and critics was divided. In an era drowning in double live sets (think Kiss, Thin Lizzy, UFO, Rainbow and Genesis) this was a surprise.

Arkona rejoined as a touring second guitarist, but musical differences between Bornemann and Rosenthal, who had written a lot of the band's lyrics since he joined, meant that Eloy fractured again after 1979's *Silent Cries And Mighty Echoes*.

Bornemann, Matziol and Arkona recruited new drummer Jim McGillivray and keyboard player Hannes Folberth. The direction for 1980's *Colours* was slightly more keyboard-oriented and more rock than prog, with the songs tighter and shorter. There was also the

chart-oriented non-album single Wings Of Vision. Both pleased the critics, but split fans.

Bornemann's reaction to this was to write another concept album and he soon had enough material for a double album, mixing the new more electronic sound with the prog of old – think 80s Yes meets IQ. And with Hannes Arkona handling both guitar and keyboards, the band had plenty of options.

Until then, many of Eloy's albums had been released in Germany only, with piecemeal releases in the US (on Janus) and in other European territories (usually EMI Electrola and Pathé Marconi in France). A couple of albums reissued on EMI's Fame label found their way into the UK market in the early 80s. There was also a compilation issued in North America using a variation of the *Ocean* sleeve.

This limited exposure changed with the new album, which was released as two single albums at the record company's insistence. These LPs, 1981's *Planets* and the following year's *Time To Turn*, were issued in the UK on the Midlands-based Heavy Metal Worldwide label, with new and far more glorious artwork

**“Sci-fi and fantasy makes our music more colourful”**

from fantasy illustrator Rodney Matthews. For the latter, the track Magic Mirrors was dropped from the UK release and replaced with Illuminations, from *Colours*. In terms of music, concept and packaging these two albums represented a highpoint in the band's career, but sadly they got lost amid a trend in Germany for new wave and German lyrics. The radio-friendly title track, featuring a choir and searing slide guitar did, however, win chart success. *Time To Turn* saw the return of drummer Fritz Randow (who had been playing with Epitaph), as McGillivray had left midway through the sessions.

In comparison, 1983's *Performance* sold badly. Friction within the band over direction saw Bornemann take more of a creative back seat and the band experimented with a contemporary sound which alienated some fans. The following year's *Metromania* again featured artwork from Matthews and its atmospheric sounds and pulsating rhythms



were well received. While Bornemann was finishing the production, the rest of the band cut the soundtrack to the film *Code Name: Wild Geese*. The band played two nights at the Marquee in London, with one show broadcast by the BBC. In the UK, *Metromania* was apparently released on CD (it must be quite an early example). Just as things were looking good for Eloy, the band split again.

The former members continued to play and record, notably Fritz Randow who would go on to join Victory and Saxon.

During the band's inactivity, Frank Bornemann struck up a friendly working partnership with keyboard player Michael Gerlach and the resulting album, 1988's *Ra*, saw Eloy reduced to a duo with a host of guests. The swirling guitars and keyboards with female backing vocals and electronic sounds gave a futuristic progressive feel that suited the album's concept of immortality.

Due to other commitments (Frank ran a studio and was an in-demand producer) Eloy's next album, *Destination*, didn't appear until '92. It again received good reviews.

1993 marked Eloy's 25th anniversary and they celebrated by re-recording material from across the catalogue, issued as *Chronicles 1 & 2*, which saw guest appearances from Fritz Randow and other past players. Original pressings had a gold design on the plastic case. The following year's *The Tides Return Forever* featured returning bassist Klaus-Peter Matziol and continued the modern progressive sound, marking the point where Eloy became more of a band again. It also spawned a real rarity: a Greek LP limited to 1,000 numbered copies, which now sells for up to £100.

In '98 the band released *Ocean 2: The Answer* to considerable acclaim. This was a coherent development from the original concept and featured new cover art by the original illustrator.

The band retained a strong and loyal following, served by a proactive fanclub. While little was heard from the Eloy camp, the catalogue was remastered, with the EMI Electrola albums revamped with booklets, and many of them boasting extra tracks.

A few years ago Bornemann set up Artist Station and issued a fantastic new album *Visionary*, which successfully nodded towards Eloy's early-80s sound. The label has also issued a double-DVD, *Legacy*, featuring live shots, promo videos and interviews, as well as a remixed *The Tides Return Forever*. Its bonus track will amaze many Bornemann fans and is available through the band's website (Eloy-Legacy.com).

Due to fan demand, the band is increasingly active; 2012 will see several European live dates and a festival appearance in the US. Germany's most successful progressive rock band seem to be working as hard as ever, and the music is just as glorious.

Here chief time traveller Frank Bornemann takes us through the band's highs and lows, while illustrator Rodney Matthews and Heavy Metal Worldwide boss Paul Birch provide comments about the UK releases.



Eloy, 1977-style, proudly ignoring German new wave fashion. Frank Bornemann is wearing the black cap

**RC: You took your name from the HG Wells book; did science fiction influence you to a great degree?**

**Frank Bornemann:** Science fiction and fantasy offer wonderful options to interpret things in a very exciting way which relate to the world of today. It fits our music and makes it more colourful, particularly when we create a concept album.

**Was playing your own material considered bold in Germany when you formed?**

Yes, completely.

**How important was winning a band competition for getting your first deal?**

Very important! It gave us the power and the courage to go our own way and to realise our dreams and wishes.

**Your debut album on Philips was more hard rock than progressive...**

When we recorded our first album for Philips we didn't have a clear identity and everybody in the band had different images. Eloy was really born with the first EMI album, *Inside*.

**How influenced were you by the UK progressive scene at the time?**

We had many influences. The late 60s and the early 70s were the most creative time in the history of rock music.

**How did the deal with EMI Harvest come about?**

The reason for that was the English A&R manager who worked for EMI Germany. He appreciated our music and wanted real music from real artists. He was impressed by our album, *Inside*, which had already been

produced by myself and the band. Being signed to the famous Harvest label was a big step.

**Power And The Passion was your first concept album; do you find that sort of material easier to write?**

Not really. It is always a big challenge and I find it very exciting to invent stories.

**Did adding a second guitarist affect the writing as well as the sound?**

We needed a second guitarist for our live performances. That was the main reason.

**“At the end of the 70s we felt only hate in the press”**

**By 1975 Eloy were growing in popularity in Germany but remained almost unheard of elsewhere. Why?**

Playing concerts in other countries was not possible without a strong management. We didn't have that kind of backing until the middle of the 70s. The position of EMI Germany in other countries was not strong enough. We had an artist deal in Germany and we were in a way musicians in chains. EMI Germany were happy with the sales figures in Germany, they didn't care about other markets.

**How did you get the new band together after you split following Power And The Passion?**

I was compelled to find new musicians and, thanks to the trust of the record company, I got the chance. The managing director of EMI Germany had a strong belief in my talent. After a couple of auditions, I finally found three

musicians in my hometown of Hannover who were perfect for Eloy; Klaus Peter Matziol [bass], Jürgen Rosenthal [drums] and Dtelev Schmidtchen [keyboards and guitar].

**The late 70s saw a more grandiose orchestral space rock sound, had that been a long-term plan?**

It was always my dream to work with a real orchestra in the studio, but it hadn't been possible for financial reasons. In 1976, with the band's return with a new line-up, we got the chance and I was ecstatic. *Dawn* is still one of my favourite albums and it was the breakthrough album in the German market.

**Ocean is considered the band's magnum opus. What inspired the concept?**

*Ocean* is without doubt our most spectacular album; extraordinary in every way: the lyrics, the music, the sound. The music was the result of many rehearsals. Everybody in the band was enormously creative and worked hard to contribute some absolutely sublime ideas.

Jürgen Rosenthal wrote the lyrics during that period. He's an extraordinary musician, fascinated by esoteric things and interested in occultism. We put all our creative energy into this project and finally created an album which really has its own spirit.

**Your '78 Live LP really stands out in a time when double live albums were popular, why do you think it received such a bad press?**

Towards the end of the 70s we felt only hate and envy everywhere in the German press. The reason for this treatment was probably that most of the people who wrote the comments and articles for music magazines in Germany were unsuccessful musicians.

**Your 80s releases, starting with 1980's Colours, mixed more commercial hard rock with electronic prog rock – was that a deliberate move?**

Not really. We didn't have enough time to create another concept album. We collected our ideas and found this mixture of dynamic rhythms and new synthesiser sounds.

**The concept albums Planets and Time To Turn were planned as a double LP. Why did they come out individually?**

It was a decision of the record company, probably for commercial and financial reasons.

**The concept centres around the battle between good and evil and the quest for knowledge. Is it still relevant today?**

Yes! I think it is always relevant.

**How did your deal with FM Revolver come about?**

They asked our German label for a licence. That was why we got to play in the UK.

**Why did the UK issue of Time To Turn have a different track on it?**

I think magic Mirrors, the original song, is not as strong as the one on the UK version. And the new one fits the concept equally.

**On those two LPs, the Rodney Matthews artwork**

## RODNEY MATTHEWS ON HIS AMAZING ELOY SLEEVES

In 1982 I was asked by the Heavy Metal imprint to design a cover for the *Planets* album. This was to be a reissue of an existing album. Upon hearing the music for the first time I was most impressed, and set about the task with conviction.

*Planets* is the first of two related concept albums in the fantasy genre, the other being *Time To Turn*, which also came my way for design and illustration. When I'm designing for record packaging it helps if I like the music – and in this case I did. It seemed to me that lyric writer Frank Bornemann was conveying – across these two albums – a parallel to Earth, a sort of parable dealing with war, peace and spiritual freedom, in which the inhabitants of planet Salta were caught between spirits of light and of darkness. I tried to remain true to this concept in my design for a planet, which is divided into light and dark areas featuring an angel (right) and demon (left).

For *Time To Turn* I depicted Ion, the hero of the story, contemplating a mystical landscape with a bridge over a “space pool”.

The third Eloy album I was involved with was *Metromania*, and a second rights agreement (licence of existing artwork). The original art was produced for a poster titled *Be Watchful* and originally featured the face of Christ, as seen on the Turin Shroud. For all these albums I designed the Eloy logo and title lettering.



**matches the music perfectly – how did you get to work with him?**

Our label in England had a good relationship with Rodney. His work was indeed unique.

**Wasn't the following year's Performance marred by tensions in the band?**

After the concept albums *Planets* and *Time To Turn* I felt burned out. The other guys wanted to change the style of the band and I left them to it. I contributed three songs to *Performance*: Fools, Shadow And Light and Heartbeat. I wasn't happy about this album and we had many discussions regarding our direction. Finally, we found our way to *Metromania*.

**Early drummer Fritz Randow was by then back in the band – how did that come about?**

Fritz Randow came back to the band during our recording of *Planets/Time To Turn*. Jim McGillivray left us in the middle of the work on these albums. He was a good drummer, but the vibes were not as they should have been.

**Two concerts at the Marquee in '84 were recorded by the BBC – would you like to see them released?**

As far as I know the concerts at the Marquee were broadcast live by the BBC but not recorded. We have made some recordings for the BBC, but these weren't the concerts.

**With Metromania you had a chance to make it in the UK, but the band split soon after; do you regret the missed opportunities?**

Yes, I was very disappointed because of the split. The band was in wonderful shape on stage and all doors were open for us, not just in the UK. Unfortunately the band was still frustrated because of the failure of *Performance*

and without direction regarding the future. Things like that led to us burning out.

**Weren't internal battles also responsible?**

Internal battles regarding the music were the main reason. I think that the other guys felt too dominated by me. Not only were we burnt out, but our management were pretty helpless to sort the situation out.

**How did several band members come to use the band name for the Code Name: Wild Geese soundtrack – the only Eloy album you don't play on?**

*Code Name: Wild Geese* is not an Eloy album, it's only a soundtrack for a movie, made by Eloy musicians who used the name. I was working on *Metromania* at the same time.

**You got back together with Michael Gerlach for 1988's Ra and you've since kept Eloy as a duo with guests; why?**

By the middle of the 80s Eloy were only Michael Gerlach and me. In the beginning it was just a project, but the music we have made sounded like Eloy and finally we decided to produce another Eloy album with some guest musicians on drums and bass.

**Ra dealt with the concept of immortality...**

I think humans cannot stand being immortal and, furthermore, I think it is finally impossible. It is only possible to make the human race immortal by exploring new worlds somewhere in our universe.

**Weren't you also working as a producer?**

Yes, our album *Destination* was particularly influenced by my production. I was mainly producing mainly heavy metal bands, but



there are many Eloy moments on the album. I was working with The Scorpions and other heavy metal bands in Germany.

**Previous members of Eloy joined you for the *Chronicles* CDs. How did that come together?**

Our 25th anniversary was nearing and I invited previous bandmembers to join the project. We spent a wonderful time together and all the old friction had gone. During the recording session I turned back to our previous set-up and enlarged the line-up. The first step was the return of our wonderful bass player Klaus Peter Matziol. We played some concerts with the drummer Bodo Schopf and the guitarist Steve Mann and our fans saw a real band again!

**How involved were you with the EMI remasters?**

I didn't have much influence and had to trust their work. They were an amazing success.

**You've never really made it in America, does that bother you?**

Not really, but we will play there next year. We headline on the famous NEARfest festival.

**Is there much more left in the archives?**

No, everything was released, even filled with bad bootleg stuff, which is really funny.

**Would you like to play the UK again?**

Yes, with pleasure! 🎸

**WIN AN ELOY POSTER SIGNED BY THE DESIGNER!**



Rodney Matthews, the brilliant artist who created the sleeves for Eloy's *Planets* and *Time To Turn*, has kindly signed two different posters for RC to give away to our readers. We are offering you the chance to win one here, and the other will be given away in a competition in our e-newsletter. To win one of the posters, simply answer this question: which album cover was Rodney Matthews commissioned to design directly by Eloy?

To enter, write to rccompetitions@metropolis.co.uk giving your email the subject line "Eloy", or write to Eloy Competition, *Record Collector*, Room 101, The Perfume Factory, 140 Wales Farm Road, London W3 6UG. The competition closes at 2pm on 23 May 2012.

Not signed up for RC's weekly e-newsletter? You are missing out on news, live reviews and competitions galore. Send an email to eden.guin@metropolis.co.uk and type "RC newsletter sign up" in the subject line.

# ELOY DISCOGRAPHY

## GERMAN SINGLES

- 70 United D 700
- 73 Harvest 1C 006-30 481
- 80 Harvest 1C 006-46 046
- 80 Harvest 1C 006-46 158
- 80 Harvest 1C 006-46 158
- 82 Harvest 1C 006-46 583
- 82 Harvest ICK 052-46 583Z
- 84 EMI 146 9787
- 87 ACI ACI-01
- 88 ACI 01-4804
- 88 ACI 01-4806
- 92 SPV LC 7893
- 92 SPV 055-48093
- 94 SPV 084-48202-P
- 94 SPV 055-48213
- 98 GUN/BMG 4321625652
- 10 Artist Station

- Walk Alone/Day Break** (7", p/s) ..... **£200**
- Day Break/On The Road** (7", p/s) ..... **£25**
- Silhouette/Horizons** (7", p/s) ..... **£10**
- Wings Of Vision/Sunset** (7", p/s) ..... **£10**
- Wings Of Vision/Silhouette** (12", p/s) ..... **£15**
- Time To Turn/Through A Sombre Galaxy** (7", p/s) ..... **£7**
- Time To Turn/Through A Sombre Galaxy** (12", p/s) ..... **£12**
- Stranger/Stranger** (promo 7") ..... **£15**
- Excerpts from Ra** (promo 7", 1 sided) ..... **£15**
- Sensations/Hero** (edit) (7", p/s) ..... **£7.50**
- Rainbow** (edit)/**Invasion Of A Megaforce** (edit) (7", two p/s) ... each **£7.50**
- Call Of The Wild** (edit) (promo CD) ..... **£7.50**
- Fire And Ice** (edit)/**Call Of The Wild** (edit)/**Prisoner In Mind** (edit) (CD single) ..... **£7.50**
- Generations Of Innocence/The Tide Returns Forever/Generations Of Innocence** (edit) (promo CD) ..... **£10**
- Childhood Memories (2 edits)** (promo CD) ..... **£10**
- The Answer** (edit)/**Awakening Of Consciousness** (edit)/**Ro Setau** (edit) (CD single) ..... **£10**
- The Challenge** (Radio Edit)/**The Challenge/Summernight Symphony** (promo CDR) ..... **£10**

## ORIGINAL GERMAN ALBUMS

- 71 Phillips 6305 089
- 73 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 062-29 479
- 74 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 062-29 521
- 75 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 062-29 60
- 76 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 062-31 787
- 10/77 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 064-32 596
- 10/77 EMI Electrola/Harvest 344275
- 3/78 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 164-32 934/35
- 79 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 064-45 269
- 80 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 064-45 936
- 81 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 064-46 483
- 82 EMI Electrola/Harvest 1C 064-46 548
- 83 EMI Electrola 064-46714
- 9/84 HARVEST 1C 038 15 7628 1
- 85 Milan MIL CH 014
- 88 ACI 4800-1
- 92 SPV 084-48082
- 93 SPV 084-48182
- 94 SPV 084-48192
- 94 SPV 084-48202
- 98 BMG/GUN 167
- 2009 Artist Station ASRLP 047
- 2009 Artist Station ASR043/4
- 2010 Artist Station ASRDVD070

- ELOY** (dustbin sleeve) ..... **£125**
- INSIDE** (gatefold sleeve) ..... **£25**
- FLOATING** ..... **£25**
- POWER AND THE PASSION** (gatefold sleeve) ..... **£25**
- DAWN** (inner sleeve) ..... **£20**
- OCEAN** (gatefold sleeve) ..... **£20**
- OCEAN** (gatefold sleeve, club edition) ..... **£25**
- LIVE** (2LP, gatefold sleeve) ..... **£20**
- SILENT CRIES AND MIGHTY ECHOES** (gatefold sleeve) ..... **£20**
- COLOURS** (gatefold sleeve) ..... **£20**
- PLANETS** (gatefold sleeve, inner sleeve) ..... **£18**
- TIME TO TURN** (gatefold sleeve, inner sleeve) ..... **£18**
- PERFORMANCE** (inner sleeve) ..... **£15**
- METROMANIA** ..... **£15**
- CODENAME WILDGEESE** (Switzerland, OST) ..... **£20**
- RA** (with inner sleeve) ..... **£15**
- DESTINATION** (CD) ..... **£12**
- CHRONICLES 1** (CD comp, orig with embossed gold design on case) .... **£15**
- CHRONICLES 2** (CD comp, orig with embossed gold design on case) .... **£15**
- THE TIDES RETURN FOREVER** (CD) ..... **£10**
- OCEAN 2: THE ANSWER** (CD) ..... **£10**
- VISIONARY** (LP) ..... **£20**
- VISIONARY** (CD, also in a digipak edition) ..... **£15/£10**
- THE LEGACY BOX** (2DVD) ..... **£15**

## UK RELEASES

- 4/83 Heavy Metal Worldwide HM INT1
- 4/83 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMPD1
- 7/82 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI LP 1
- 7/82 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI PD 1
- 82 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI LP 3
- 82 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI PD 3
- 4/83 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI LP 12
- 4/83 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI PD 12
- 9/84 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI LP 21
- 9/84 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI PD 21
- 9/84 Heavy Metal Worldwide HMI CD 21
- 88 FM Revolver REV LP120
- 88 FM Revolver REV LP120
- 88 FM Revolver REV XD120

- Fools/Heartbeat** (7") ..... **£3**
- Fools/Heartbeat** (7", silver or clear vinyl) ..... **£6**
- PLANETS** (LP, different sleeve, inner sleeve, some on clear vinyl) ... **£15/£10**
- PLANETS** (picture disc LP) ..... **£20**
- TIME TO TURN** (LP, different sleeve, inner sleeve, some on clear vinyl, 1 different track) ..... **£15/£10**
- TIME TO TURN** (picture disc LP) ..... **£20**
- PERFORMANCE** (LP, some on clear vinyl) ..... **£12/£8**
- PERFORMANCE** (picture disc LP) ..... **£15**
- METROMANIA** (LP) ..... **£12**
- METROMANIA** (picture disc LP) ..... **£20**
- METROMANIA** (CD) ..... **£20**
- RA** (LP) ..... **£8**
- RA** (LP, picture disc) ..... **£15**
- RA** (CD) ..... **£10**

