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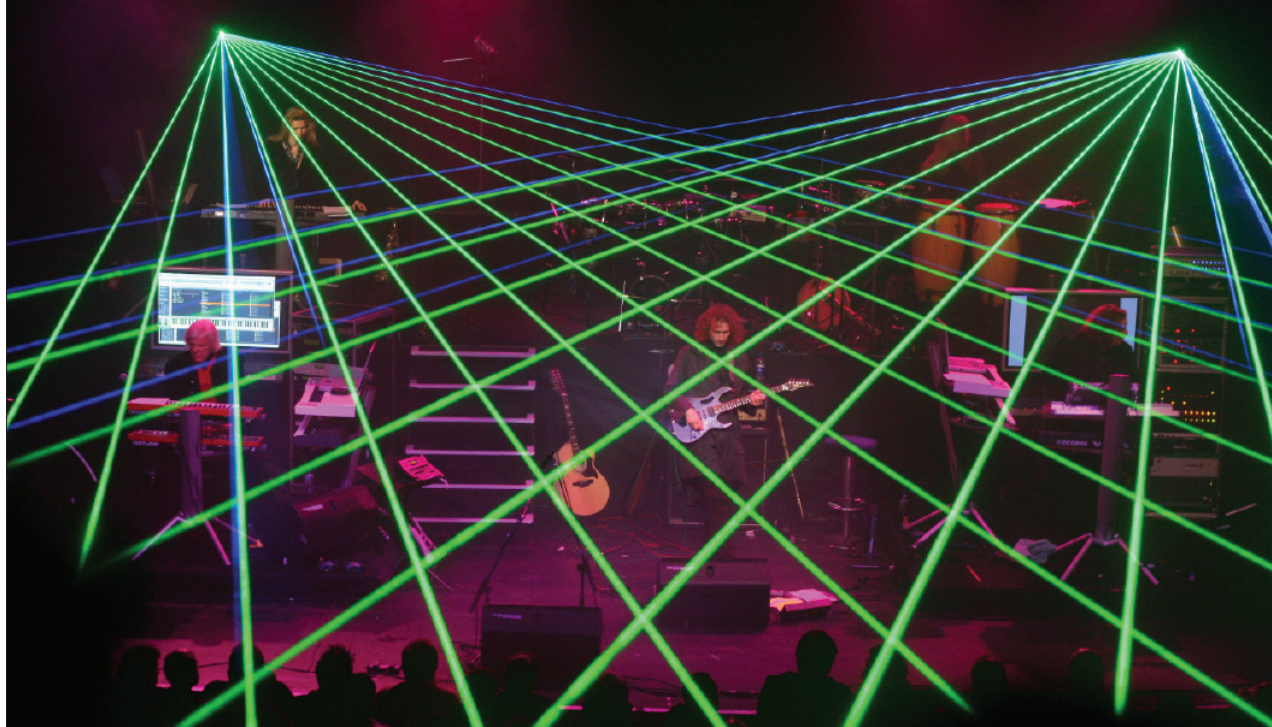


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## Picture House Dreams

Since their formation in 1967,  
Tangerine Dream have  
constantly evolved to retain  
a fresh sound. Jonathan Miller  
caught up with the latest  
incarnation of the band at  
Edinburgh's Picture House . . .

"When Walt Whitman wrote 'I Sing The Body Electric' he could never have imagined the contemporary reality of that phrase - electronics will be opening even broader horizons in the future and Tangerine Dream will have been the first pioneers."

Tangerine Dream: these words conjure up images of a bygone psychedelic era. Yet this long-lasting, innovative German group has eagerly harnessed the latest technological developments in an ongoing quest to remain on the cutting edge of music production and performance for four decades, always prolific in recorded output while making regular concert appearances. Ask a true music connoisseur whom they consider to be the world's premier electronic music group . . . many might say Kraftwerk, but given pause for thought, chances are their reply could well be Tangerine Dream - perhaps vindicating that eerily prophetic introductory 1970s-vintage quotation, courtesy of North America's *Contemporary Keyboard* magazine.

Although 40-plus musicians have passed through the group's ranks since its formation in September 1967, Tangerine Dream's approach to instrumental music has always been a reflection of its founder and mentor, keyboard player and guitarist Edgar Froese, now 64. As a sculptor, he spent time studying under renowned Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali, whose unorthodox techniques he later applied to music, resulting in a distinctive sound owing little to any other thanks to an advantageous early wholesale adoption of analogue (then digital) synthesisers, sequencers, and such like.

"We had all sorts of electronic gimmicks in the early- to mid-70s," states Froese, before admitting to being forced to change with the times as the once specialised tools of his trade became more

widespread and, ultimately, commonplace: "From that chaos situation up to what we could call nearly a perfect setting of sequences, harmonies, melodies, sound structures, and soundscapes that you can bring onstage today, I had to decide for myself and the band which way to go: are we in that specific field of experimental song-orientated music just because we like it, or do we have to work with the audience to get them participating in what we really do?"

"So we decided to experiment more, using the toys surrounding us and developing new stuff ourselves; and in doing so we felt obliged to perform again, but it was a question of how to go about doing that - sort of rock music wearing new clothes, and the funny thing is that by working in that direction we figured out that there are just a few artists heavily doing this. Most are still in the synthpop area or experimenting as a two-piece with DJ stuff, putting a few sequences under harmony patterns, so there isn't really any group trying to combine all and everything so that it sounds new and fresh, but keeping the good vibes."

Today, then, Tangerine Dream travels a resolutely independent, though no less innovative musical route in an effort to remain fresh and vibey. And what better place to demonstrate this than at Edinburgh's equally fresh and vibey 1,500-capacity Picture House on the second of two UK dates closing the group's European performance schedule for 2008, with Froese's latest Dream team comprising some fresher-faced - though no less talented - musicians, male and female: Thorsten Quaesching (keyboards), Iris Camaa (percussion, Codo drums, V-Drums), Linda Spa (saxophone, flute, keyboard), and Bernhard Beibl (electric and acoustic guitars).

Indeed, the German proto-synthmeisters are amongst the first to play at the Scottish capital's





brand new production-ready venue that had begun life on Edinburgh's Lothian Road back in the 1920s as a cinema. Any act similarly interested in including The Picture House in its touring itinerary is catered for online with dedicated pages listing production, sound, and lighting information.

By way of a quick overview, FOH speakers listed include L-Acoustics ARCS and accompanying 218 subs, powered by L-Acoustics LA48a and Chevin Research A6000 power amps, and overseen by XTA DP224 loudspeaker management systems; FOH outboard includes Klark Teknik DN3690 EQ and SQ1D Square One dynamics, Yamaha SPX1000 multi-effects, and TC Electronic D2 delay, together with 'virtual' alternatives found within a Digidesign Venue D-Show Profile and Mix Rack combo (a 40-channel Midas Heritage 1000 being available as an alternative analogue FOH console).

Meanwhile, monitor speakers include Turbosound NuQ-15s and XD-252s, powered by Dynacord CL 2000s and LX 1600s; analogue monitor mixing duties are ably handled by a 32-mic input-equipped Midas Verona 320, supported by more outboard from Klark Teknik (DN3690 EQ and SQ1D Square One dynamics) and Yamaha (SPX990), together with a healthy selection of (mainly) Shure stage mics.

Lighting-wise, an Avolites Pearl Expert console can control Robe ColorSpot 700Es, ColorWash 575E ATs, ColorSpot 250 ATs, REDBlinder 2-48s, Molefay blinders, Source Four Jr Zooms, Atomic strobes, and more.

General manager John Stout says: "It's very useful to have that quality of equipment in-house; it makes planning a lot easier for artists coming here in terms of integrating what they've got on tour with them, but, importantly, the sound is excellent for this space and the acoustic that this space has."

Tangerine Dream's Edgar Froese certainly knows a thing or two about quality concert sound, having played some notable shows during his pioneering band's 40-plus-year career, and sees only sense in production-ready venues like The Picture House: "The equipment is usually state-of-the-art, and it sounds good; the lighting is good - not always what you want, but it saves a lot of money and energy for a mid-range band. Instead of hiring five or six trucks, you just hire a nightrider and put your backline under the seats. That works pretty well wherever, and, I guess, is the future of performance structures up to three-, four-, or five-thousand people; above that, you'll need extended forms of PA, but I love the production-ready philosophy. I love anything which makes life easier, to be honest!"

Sound-Linear Elektroakustik GmbH's Kalle Hogrefe, acting as Tangerine Dream's FOH engineer on this particular UK outing, is possibly better positioned to comment on The Picture House sound specifically: "The sound system here is great; the desks are fine; the service guys are great."

Another job well done for Stout, then. He says: "Across the board - journalists I know, artists that have played here, and the audiences, everybody has been incredibly positive so far, which is great," he concludes with an audible hint of Scottish pride.

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