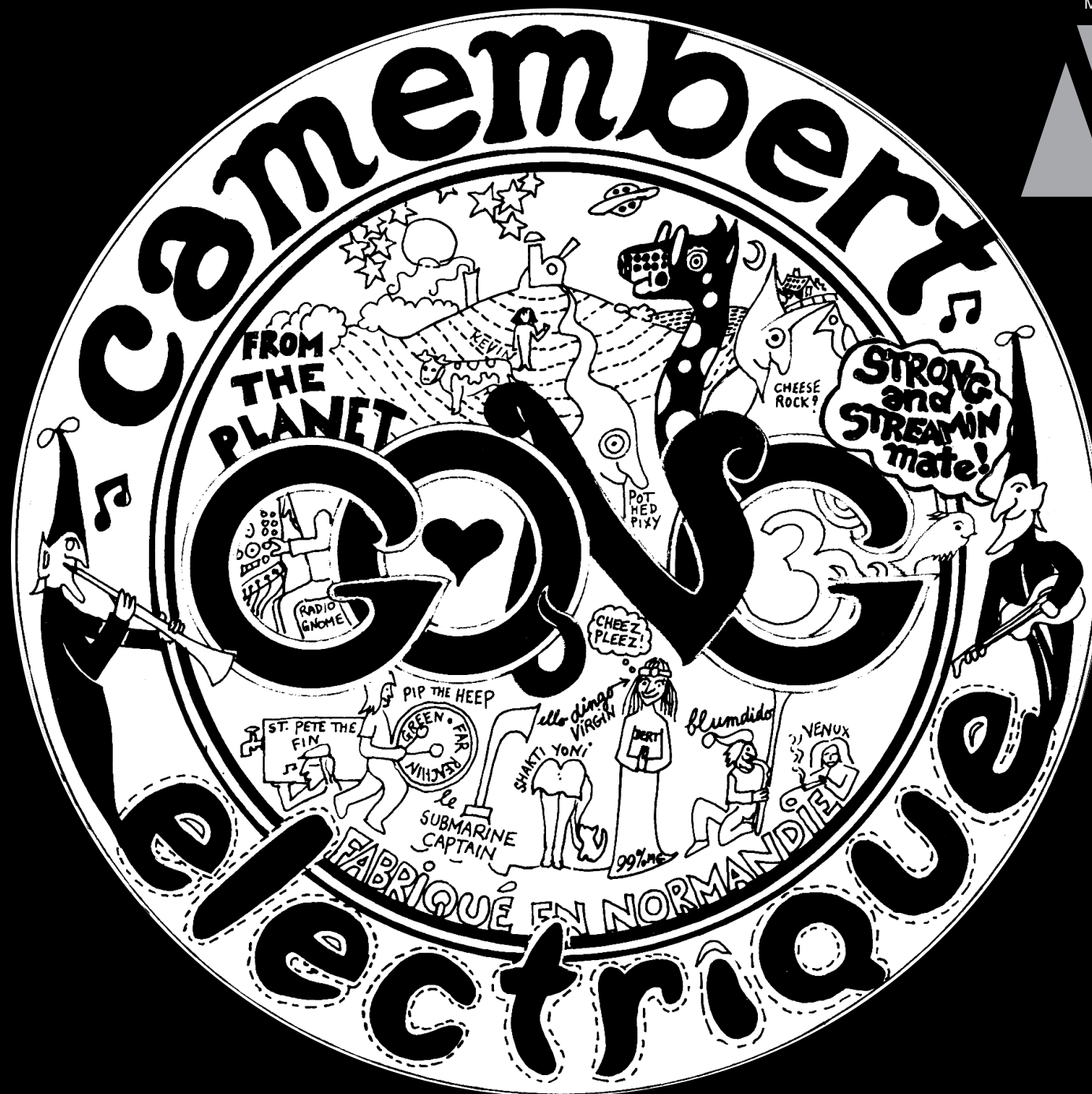


MONO/STEREO CHARLY X 680D

actuel

680D



Remastered Audiophile Edition



RADIO GNOME
allen / 0'27"
YOU CAN'T KILL ME
allen / 6'16"
I'VE BIN STONE BEFORE :
MISTER LONG SHANKS : O MOTHER
allen / 4'51"
I AM YOUR FANTASY
smyth/tritsch / 3'39"
DYNAMITE : I AM YOUR ANIMAL
smyth / 4'29"
WET CHEESE DELIRIUM
allen / 0'28"

SQUEEZING SPONGES OVER POLICEMEN'S HEADS
allen / 0'12"
FOHAT DIGS HOLES IN SPACE
allen/smyth / 6'20"
TRIED SO HARD
allen/tritsch / 4'36"
TROPICAL FISH : SELENE
allen / 7'32"
GNOME THE SECOND
allen / 0'25"



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BONG! **Gong** THE END

from the PLANET
CONC
RADIO GNOME
INVISIBLE
DIRECT
EMISSION
DE LA
PLANET
CO



bon apres-midi!

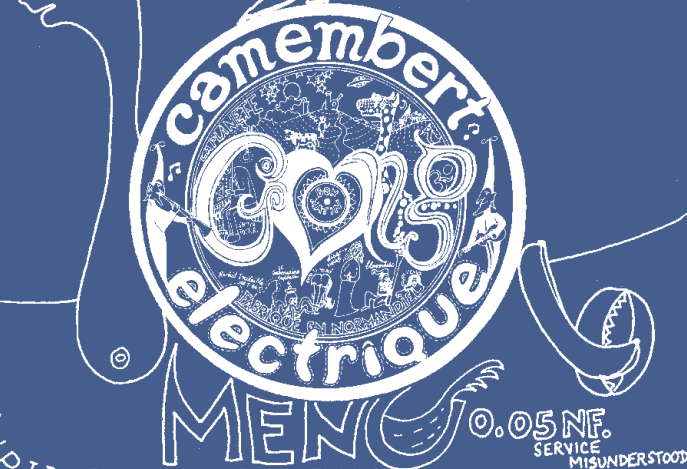
'til Nex' TIME
xx

radio Gnome
INTRO

Bon Soir!
c'est une
émission
PLANETE GONG
PAR
RADIO GNOME
INVISIBLE
direct
de la
PLANETE
GONG



WORDS
PAROLES
FROM



THIS LP
WAS RECORDED DURING FULL MOONS OF MAY,
& JUNE & SEPTEMBER, 1971, CHEZ MICHEL MAGNE AT
STRAWBERRY STUDIOS, HERROUVILLE, FRANCE BY ENGINEAR
GILLES SALLÉ WITH EXEC. PRODUCTION BY PIERRE LATTES.
* EDDY LOUÏSS PLAYS ORGAN & PIANO MOSTLY, HOWEVER,
CONSTANTIN SIMONOVITCH PLAYS PHASED PIANO
ON 'DYNAMITE'. VOILA!

DYNAMITE
DYNAMITE
BABY...

I AM YOUR ANIMAL
YOUR HEAD IS IN MY HANDS
AND I'M GOING TO FUCK YOU

[illegible]

TU VEUX
UN
CAMBERT?

- BLUMPIDO

CAMEMBERT ELECTRIC!

4

A hand-drawn diagram of a musical staff. The staff is a horizontal line with a treble clef on the left. There are several notes on the staff, including a half note and a quarter note. Below the staff, the lyrics "GONG... O wot! THE GONG HA HA HA HA OBSCENE" are written in a stylized, hand-drawn font. To the right of the staff, there is a small figure of a person holding a telescope, with the text "TIME 6-38" next to it. Above the staff, the text "Side:2" is written in a large, stylized font, and a speech bubble contains the text "face B".

CALLING MISTER BAD DE GRASSE
and there's one other thing, right?
TU VEUX UN CAMEMBERT?
HAH! MAIS C'EST PAS POSSIBLE CA..

HAH! MAIS C'EST PAS POSSIBLE ÇA...
TRACK.1. FOHAT DIGS HOLES IN SPACE

IN SPACE
A RYTMICK GLISSANDO
WIF BERT THE BERT &
HIS ALLUMINIUM ORK &
YONI 'PON THE BROOMSTICK

WIF BERT THE
HIS ALLUMINIUM ORK &
YONI 'PON THE BROOMSTICK

THEN AT THE END OF THE GLISS THERE CUMS THE MOUTH TO SING:
WE'LL HOLD

WELL HELP ME HELPMEE SING THIS SONG
I WANNA STAY LIVING FOR MUCH TOO LONG
NOW I WANNA RIDE THIS BIG BRASS GONG
WHERE AM I BABE?

YOU DONT KNOW!

I GOTTA TAKE PILLS TO KILL MA PAIN
TO KILL MA PLEASURE I BLOW MA BRAIN
I GET SO HIGH I FALL DOWN AGAIN- WHATS HAPPENIN'
YOU DONT KNOW!

I GOTTA DRINK BOOZE TO HELP ME SWING
BELLA DONNA TO HELP ME SING
I GOTTA SMOKE GRASS TO HELP ME SEE
WHO ARE YOU BABE? I DON'T KNOW

YOU DON'T KNOW!

WELL MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL
WHO'S THE BIGGEST FOOL OF ALL
HALLUCINATING FREEDOM CALLS
WOTS FREEDOM BABE?

I GONE AND
GOT ME
DIRTY BERT
A HANGIN'
ON THE LINE
(END)

WHEN COMES BLUMFELD
WHIPPING UP HIS ENTRAILS
-RON GROMPHONE
FOLLOWED BY SPOTY
GUITAR BY DINGO
WHEN SUDDENLY

if YOU DONT KNOW./

5



BLUMDIDO
BAD DE GRASS
EX DIDIER
MALHERBE
SAXOPHONES
AND FLUTE

SUBMARINE
CAPTAIN
CHRISTIAN
TRITSCH
BASS GTR
(LEAD ON TRIED
SO HARD)

PIP PYLE
DRUMS
TABLES
CHAIRS

SAMUEL
ELLIDGE
ESQ

BERT
CAMEMBERT
AND
DAEVID
ALLEN
GUITARS
&
ALUMINIUM
CROON

VENUX
DE LUXE
SWITCH
DOCTOR

GILLI
SMYTH
AND
SHAKTI
YONI
SPACE
WHISPER
&
LADY VOICE

June 1974 was a good month for rock misfits. On the first of the month, ex-Soft Machine bassist/singer Kevin Ayers invited two ex-members of the Velvet Underground, Nico and John Cale, together with Roxy Music's estranged alien synth fiend Eno to join him at London's Rainbow for a night of musical mischief. David Bowie, who'd done much to bring the Velvet Underground to belated prominence, spent much of the month at No.1 with his dissolute concept album *Diamond Dogs*. And in the British rock press, full-page ads appeared for an LP by a barely known band from the French avant-garde, its main selling-point being that it was priced at 59p, the same as for a 45rpm single.



It was **Camembert Electrique** by **Gong**, and it became a hot topic and decent seller that summer. The previous year had witnessed a similar campaign to launch enigmatic German experimentalists Faust. But many of those who'd parted with a speculative 49p for *The Faust Tapes* - a mesmerising collage of chants, grooves and improvisations - felt they'd been duped, that the so-called Krautrock frontiersmen were too anarchic, too 'out there'. The domestic scene was, after all, still dominated by Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon* and Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*. Classically inspired techno-perfectionism prevailed.

Financially flush with the unexpected success of Oldfield's 1973 opus, Virgin boss Richard Branson felt that Gong - discovered by original Rolling Stones manager Giorgio Gomelsky, signed by French left-field label BYG and fronted by Kevin Ayers' old Soft Machine colleague Daavid Allen - were worth a second gamble.

Gong's two previous titles, *Flying Teapot* and *Angel's Egg* (both released in 1973) had generated some interest over the preceding twelve months, a period that had also witnessed a minor renaissance in the work of '60s cult innovators like Arthur Brown, Syd Barrett's original Pink Floyd and Velvet Underground frontman Lou Reed. By licensing for the UK what the advert called "the first true Gong album", originally released on BYG in 1971 and only available as an expensive import, the label hoped to capitalise on the subterranean desire for a bit more sonic chaos. "At normal price, you'd love it," ran the ad. "At 59p it'll drive you crazy."

Crazy was the word. Several months earlier, *Let It Rock* critic Simon Frith cited Gong alongside Lol Coxhill, David Bedford and Ron Geesin, all "progressive loons... who are regularly booed offstage and whose albums are bought only by each other". And with **Daavid Allen** at the helm, they had a direct line to the wilder fringes of the '60s hippie underground and, further still, to '50s beat culture radicals like William Burroughs. But what Allen and his fellow travellers embodied most of all was the spirit of 1967 - that watershed year when all rules seemed momentarily superfluous.

A veteran of tape-loop experiments with Terry Riley, and as much poet and spiritual guide as he was musician, Allen shared with Syd Barrett a reluctance to embrace the hoopla surrounding London's psychedelic scene. He was also slightly uncomfortable in his abilities as guitarist in Soft Machine, the band he co-formed in October 1966 with various well-trained Canterbury Scene jazz and beat enthusiasts. But, as Ayers acknowledged later, Allen was "the father figure". Several years older than the others, he ran on ideas, all the way from his native Melbourne, Australia, to Paris then to London, with intermittent retreats to the Balearic islands of Ibiza and Mallorca. Initially resistant to rock'n'roll, it was The Yardbirds' 1965 single, 'Still I'm Sad', a sort of beat group Gregorian chant, that turned him on to the possibilities of pop.

Six Ways Of Parting With 59p.



11b MUSHROOMS



A SECOND-HAND TRUSS



TWO SPECIAL ROLL-UPS



1 PUNCTURE OUTFIT



A GROUNDED TEAPOT



A WOMBLES SINGLE

One way of snapping up an unbelievable limited-offer style bargain which will render you the envy of your friends



Gong's notorious Camembert Electrique, hitherto available in England as an expensive import only (No. 2 in The Import Charts), is now available on Virgin in an English pressing for the staggering low price of 59p.

Camembert Electrique is the first true Gong album. Gong love it. At normal price, you'd love it too. At 59p it'll drive you crazy.

It's available from all retailers. VC502.

Gong's Camembert Electrique. 59p
An album for the price of a single.

More significant in terms of what he'd later achieve with Gong, were Soft Machine's long nights of improvisation during the first months of early 1967 at London's UFO club, where they were virtually house band. Allen himself cites an April 29, 1967 performance by fellow UFO regulars Pink Floyd at the *14-Hour Technicolor Dream*, held in London's Alexandra Palace, as a key moment. That's when, reckoned Allen, the Floyd's tripped-out frontman Syd Barrett scaled

the heights of Bartok or Wagner with his inspired, celestial bottleneck guitar playing. The effect was both inspirational and enduring.

In many respects, *Camembert Electrique* - released four years after the Summer of Love - bridges the gap between Soft Machine's jumpy jazz dadaism and Pink Floyd's cosmic explorations. It was a potpourri of UFO-evoking Goons-like zaniness and meditative drones, tribal rhythms and nursery rhyme melodies, tape loop experiments and the occasional pop song structure.

Having been forced to quit Soft Machine in August '67 on account of his visa running out, Allen and poet/partner Gilli Smyth re-emerged on the more radical and politicised Paris underground scene. "*It was completely freeform,*" he told *Beat Instrumental's* Steve Turner around the time of *Camembert's* original release. "*No structure, no rhythm section, [just] two girl singers a flute player and me playing glissando guitar.*" Glissando was Allen's take on Barrett's slide technique, a soundclash of metal on strings fed through an echo chamber.

MUSICIENS

de gauche à droite

RACHID HOUARI
RACHID INVISIBLE
batterie: né en Perso.

DIDIER BLOOMDIDO*
MALHERBE Saxos,
flutes: né en France.

SHAKTI YONI
Voix: née Pays de Galles

CHRISTIAN TRITSCH (THE SUB-MARINE CAPTAIN)
Vocals: guitarbass: guitar: né en Tahiti.

DAVID ALLEN
alias Bert Camembert
alias Dingo Virgin.
Chant: Guitar.
Né en Australie.

*perdido dans les mauvais jours

MIXE & TOUT ÇA

GEORGES VIDON & FRANCIS LINON
alias **VENUX**
né en Espagne

JAKES FIVEL
né en Islande

BOB BENAMOU
né en Judée

S'OCCUPENT DE LA SOUPE

GONG MANAGEMENT
20 rue Serpente 62
742 01 69 277 96 80

LA PRESSE:

LE GONG EST CONSIDERE PAR BEAUCOUP COMME LE MEILLEUR GROUPE DE MUSIQUE POP EXISTANT ACTUELLEMENT EN FRANCE...

PIECE A CONVICTION NO.1. GONG. ILS NE SONT PAS TOUS FRANCAIS. ET POUR CAUSE, MAIS LE GROUPE EST PLUS QU'UN ESPOIR. (L'HEBDO HARA KIRI)

C'EST LE SON TRES FORT, TRES PUISSANT DU MEILLEUR DES GROUPE FRANCAIS. (ROCK & FOLK)

NOUS AVONS PEUT-ETRE LA CHANCE D'AVOIR, RESIDENT EN FRANCE, UN DES MEILLEURS GROUPE DU MONDE. (BEST 1971)

GONG EST SANS DOUTE LE GROUPE LE PLUS FOU ET LE PLUS EXTRAORDINAIRE A LA FOIS DE TOUTE LA POP MUSIC FRANCAISE... (BEST 1970)

After *les événements* on the streets of Paris in May 1968 - "*We want a music that is wild and ephemeral,*" raged one of numerous slogans daubed across the city - Allen and Smyth withdrew to a barn in Montaulieu, a remote part of south-east France close to the Alps. From there, they travelled on to the bohemian refuge of Deia, Mallorca, where they wrote much of *Magick Brother*, Gong's freak-folkish debut released on BYG later that winter. The LP featured a new and hugely influential musical traveller, sax player and flautist **Didier Malherbe**.

Having gone public as a band at the Amougies Festival in Belgium on October 27, 1969, Gong gigged regularly throughout 1970, even earning applause for sets that increasingly solidified around song forms. Privately, the newly expanded band, now including drummer Rachid Houari, bassist **Christian Tritsch** and 'switch doctor' **Venux De Luxe** - enjoyed a communal lifestyle that, by early 1971, revolved around an old hunting lodge outside Sens, about an hour's drive south east of Paris. Gong's base for the next three years, it's where much of *Camembert Electrique* was worked up - with drummer **Pip Pyle** now in place of Houari. At least two songs, including '**Dynamite**' and '**Tropical Fish**', had been written at Montaulieu the previous autumn. Another, '**Fohat Digs Holes In Space**', was debuted [as 'What Do You Want?'] at the April 1971 sessions for the *Continental Circus* soundtrack album released the following year.

The basis of *Camembert Electrique* was recorded over ten days in May 1971 at Michel Magne's state-of-the-art Strawberry Studios - later more commonly known as the Chateau - in Hérouville, north west of Paris. According to Daavid Allen, in conversation with *Melody Maker's* Steve Peacock that October, the whole thing was driven by, "*the idea of the unexpected. As soon as something seems to be going along in one way, change it,*" he philosophised. "*Throw in the banana, do something absurd, something completely opposite. Anything.*"

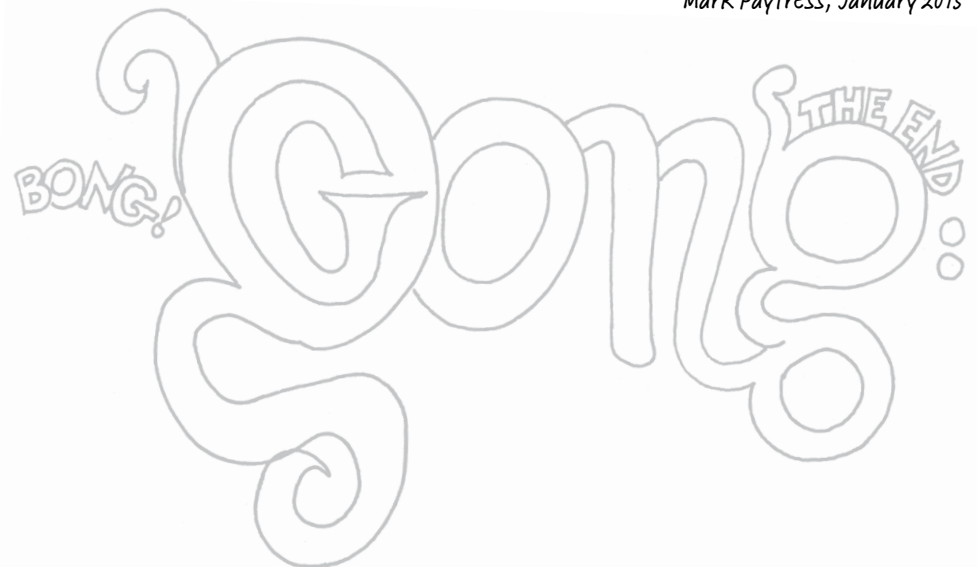
That in part explains the album's thrown together feel - where seemingly unrelated songs are segued together, where the sequencing threatens to bury its best material, and where bursts of tape-loop crankiness hint that the whole endeavour might just have been played for laughs. Even in 1971, let alone sombre '74, that rule-defying sense of irreverence made Gong's reputation on the continent. Yet until the 59p *Camembert*, they remained virtual strangers on the more po-faced British album market then dominated by prog, hard rock and earnest singer songwriters.

Finished off at further sessions in June and September, *Camembert Electrique* betrayed a whiff of jazz, but was nothing like the Proms-playing Soft Machine, who'd long dropped their psychedelic clowning. Though Daavid Allen's glissando was heavily present - especially on the 'Fohat Digs Holes In Space' centrepiece - mirrored by Gilli Smyth's wonderful 'space whisper' (pitched midway between Yoko Ono and *Je T'aime*), this was as far from the austere cosmic architectural of the post-Barrett Pink Floyd as one could get. Instead, the album rejoiced in an amateurism rooted in 'anything goes' '67-style philosophy, a bite that betrayed their continued radicalism, a masculine/feminine harmony of sound rare in rock at the time, and a juxtaposition of styles that testified to the band's delight in mischief-making.

Gong's post-hippie peers could be counted on one hand - Quintessence, Pink Fairies, Hawkwind, perhaps regular bill-sharers Magma, too. Oddly enough, given the huge aesthetic gulf between them, there are some parallels with early Roxy Music, not least in both bands' determination to defy easy categorisation and make light of rock adventurism. Check out the prominent sax, the 'switch doctor' spaciness, and the occasional, Phil Manzanera-like blast of acid solo guitar from Daavid Allen - notably the one that leaps out of 'Fohat'.

But Gong weren't crafting a new, post-modern pop from lessons learned in art school. Their collective heart still belonged to 1967, rather than anticipating a shiny, irony-heavy 1972. And their cause, a patchwork of possibilities forged from earthly desires and a cosmic consciousness, was rooted in freedoms won during the previous decade. "*You can do what you want,*" was the mantra repeated on the album's first song proper, '**You Can't Kill Me**', and at the record's end. It was the cliché to end all clichés, but in 1971 - or '74 for that matter - no other band carried the baton for sonic and spiritual liberation quite like Gong did.

Mark Paytress, January 2015





Gong / Camembert Electrique credits

Blumdido Bad De Grass Ex Didier Malherbe – Tenor Saxophone & Flute
Submarine Captain Christian Tritsch – Aqualung Bass Guitar (Lead Guitar on 'Tried So Hard')
Pip Pyle – Drums, Tables, Chairs & Breakage
Bert Camembert and Daavid Allen – Local Vocals & Aluminium Croon, Lewd Guitar (Bass Guitar on 'Tried So Hard')
Venux De Luxe (Francis Lindon) – Switch Doctor & Mix Master
Gilli Smyth and Shakti Yoni – Space Whisper & Lady Voice



Eddy Louiss – Hammond Organ & Piano (mostly)
Constantin Simonovitch – Phased Piano on 'Dynamite – I Am Your Animal'

Samuel Ellidge Esq.

Produced by Jean-Luc Young, Jean Georgakarakos & Pierre Lattes
Engineered by Pierre Lattes.

This LP was recorded during full moons of May, & June & September, 1971,
chez Michel Magne at Strawberry Studios ("Honky Chateau") Herrouville, Normandy, France.

Artwork & Design by Dingo Virgin.
Photo by Phil Franks, taken near the house of GONG near Sens in France.

Originally released in France during October 1971 by BYG Records (BYG 529 353).
Originally licensed for release in the UK during June 1974 by Virgin Records (VC 502).

2015 Remastered Audiophile Edition

Executive Producer: Jean-Luc Young.

Re-issue produced for release by Rob Caiger.

Project management for Charly: John O'Toole
Project assistance: Sam Szczepanski, Cliff Dane, Richard Beeching,
Johnny Wilkes, Eric Van Oort, Chris Woodman, Matt Colton.

Digitally remastered from the original BYG ¼-inch analogue master tape by Nick Robbins
at Soundmastering Limited, London.

Artwork and design for this Re-issue by Phil Rogers.

Sleeve notes for this Re-issue by Mark Paytress.

For further information on Gong: www.charly.co.uk



'TIL Nex' TIME
xx

