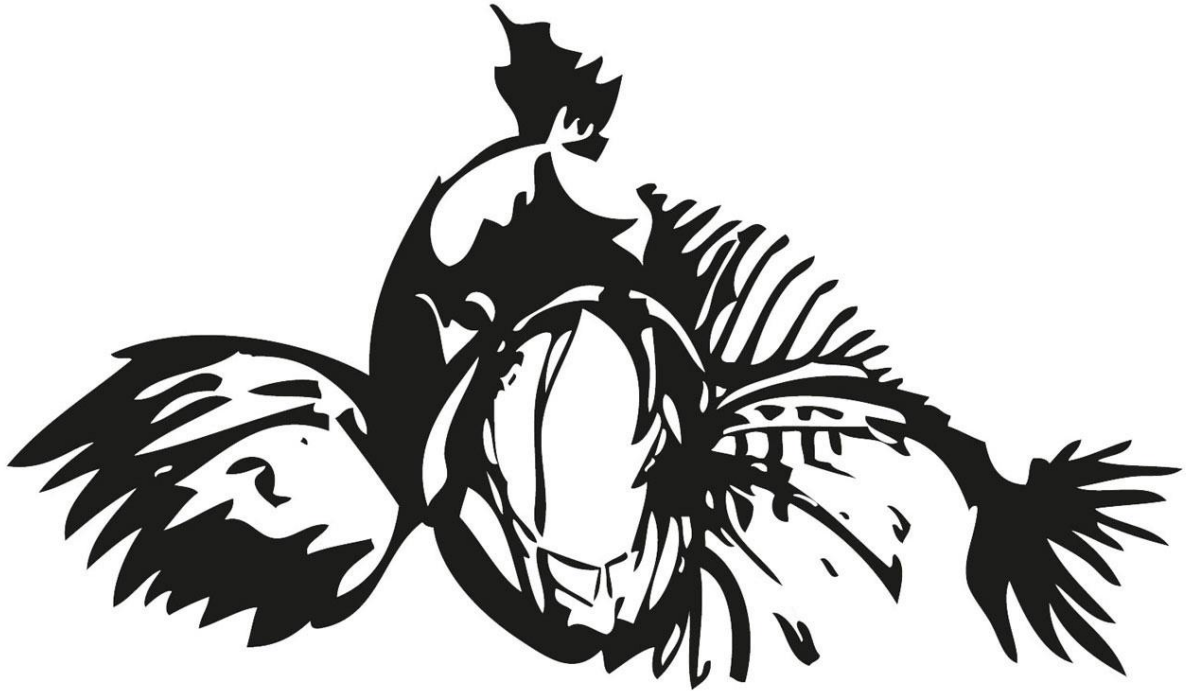


## THE WEEVER SANDS – OVERDONE. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

An uphill battle (answer)



# The Weever Sands

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## The Weever Sands – Overdone. Unfinished Business

An uphill battle (answer)

### I. Starting Point and Core Question

*The Weever Sands* project was conceived to help resolve a question we feel has never been answered: How is it possible to create music in the tradition of progressive rock music (“Prog”) – especially that of the 1970<sup>s</sup> – and make this music both in and of itself convincing and consistent (meaning here: “image-free”) and, at the same time, original and vibrant? The question is relevant because the musical phase that took root in Great Britain toward the end of the 1960<sup>s</sup> initially led to an enormous surge of musical complexity, creativity, innovative range of sound, virtuosity and use of multimedia, as well as, generally speaking, to a radical expansion of musical form, which then, only a few years later (as early as the mid-1970<sup>s</sup>) had largely already become artistically hollow. There are manifold underlying reasons for this, and they have been thoroughly examined<sup>1</sup>: Along with the emergence of socially motivated and socially impactful artistic counter-movements, what was also taking place was a comparatively rapid fusion of Prog with mainstream. Although this fusion was already strangely foreshadowed in the dominance (unimaginable today!<sup>2</sup>) of complex, quasi-symphonic albums on the international LP charts, in the background, this intertwining was much more subtle – and was rooted in the presumption that enduring success was critically dependent upon providing the audience with something that they could immediately identify: an “image”.

In 1983, the British music critic Derek Jewell made the following observation regarding the specific aspects of this process: “None even of the great pop-art-symphonic rock bands who then ruled the market – Genesis, Pink Floyd, Yes, Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin – could survive without a singer or live performances.” Indeed, the key factors for success were lead vocals, meaning-laden lyrics, live concerts that had a distinctive performance/show quality, and a (multi)media presence. These were also often associated with a marked musical, conceptual, and linguistic virtuosity and the deliberate staging of the sound creation process (highly detailed lists of musicians, instruments, and equipment). What resulted was not only the generation of an “image”, but also the exploitation of every available musical and non-musical element<sup>3</sup> that could maximise the social aspect of the rock paradigm (“you down there; we up

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<sup>1</sup> Many writings about this topic can be found here [www.babyblaue-seiten.de/index.php?content=general&page=lesestoff&top=lesestoff](http://www.babyblaue-seiten.de/index.php?content=general&page=lesestoff&top=lesestoff), mostly in English.

<sup>2</sup> Let us be extremely careful here, but recent data driven statistical research seems to indicate that at least chart primed music (which Prog was de facto in the early seventies, using the LP charts as a vehicle) has never reached classical Prog’s levels of artistic complexity again. Cf. Mauch M, MacCallum RM, Levy M, Leroi AM; 2015. The evolution of popular music: USA 1960–2010. R. Soc. open sci. 2: 150081. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150081>, focusing on the US Billboard Hot 100, i.a. with the sober observation that the rapidly declining use of the inherently dissonant dominant-seventh chord represents “the lingering death of Jazz and Blues in the Hot 100” (p. 3); Joan Serrà, Àlvaro Corral, Marián Boguñá, Martín Haro & Josep Ll. Arcos. Measuring the Evolution of Contemporary Western Popular Music, nature Scientific Reports volume 2, Article number: 521 (2012) <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep00521>, analysing roughly half a million songs from 1955 to 2010 and concluding: “Thus, beyond the global perspective, we observe a number of trends in the evolution of contemporary popular music. These point towards less variety in pitch transitions, towards a consistent homogenization of the timbral palette, and towards louder and, in the end, potentially poorer volume dynamics” (p. 5); Colin Morris. Are Pop Lyrics Getting More Repetitive? (2017) <https://puding.cool/2017/05/song-repetition>, looking at 15,000 songs that charted on the US Billboard Hot 100 between 1958 and 2017 and noting the correlation between higher chart positions and low lyrical complexity in every era as well as a general decline in lyrical substance over the decades.

<sup>3</sup> Collage techniques from Musique concrète; non-western music styles beyond cliché; electronic instruments from the late 19th century onwards. Continue at will. None of these concepts were truly familiar to the average pop audience before the late 1960<sup>s</sup>.

here”). The idea that there might be a chance of long-time identification for the average audience, that there was an option for discourse, or even simply that there could be any reaction beyond record sales, was quite limited. In this regard, irrespective of the quality and originality of the music – which was, at times, exceptional – 1970<sup>s</sup> Prog was more “mainstream” than any form of rock music that followed or preceded it.

Things could not continue like this without there being artistic consequences, and so, Prog’s early downfall was inevitable, driven by two main developments: On one hand, the same effects that had been observed in the parallel world of Fusion/Jazz Rock (which had oriented itself to expectations of repetition, trivialisation, commercialisation, hollow virtuosity, artistically-lacking “super groups”, etc.) began to be experienced. On the other hand, late Prog sometimes openly or subconsciously crossed the line between an inspiring complexity and self-parody, mauling the accessibility of Prog’s image by simply overplaying the case with bizarre over the top concepts that circled in an unreachable orbit.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, it was only a few exceptional artists who were able to transform the artistic substance of classic Prog into something that, for a time, could be preserved (e.g. King Crimson, 1973 et sqq.). The rest gave up or jumped ship into musical mainstream<sup>5</sup>, a step that, in hindsight, seemed to be part of the Prog concept from the very beginning.

Before punk and disco appeared on the scene and took political advantage of Prog’s perfect through ball, M. Oldfield (*Tubular Bells*, 1973), in an attempt to mitigate the contradiction that existed between Prog’s artistic potential and its strong latent tendency toward mainstream, took an innovative approach.<sup>6</sup> Oldfield (at first) resisted live performances, media presence<sup>7</sup>, vocals or verbal messages, song structures, and traditional elements of rock, such as the use of drums or guitar solos, integrating aspects of Minimal Music while still adhering to Prog’s forms, sound, track length, individual virtuosity, and complexity. Despite his ground-breaking success with this approach, Oldfield switched to a different artistic concept with his second album, *Hergest Ridge* (1974), gradually diminishing the repetitive, minimalistic, associatively-open style of his music to allow for the integration of elements from late Romanticism (Elgar, Delius, etc.) and a deliberate rejection of urbanity and modernity.<sup>8</sup> In our earlier writings, we attempted to use the antonym pair “urban/rural” in a humorous but precise way to exemplify

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<sup>4</sup> In his great book “Yeah Yeah Yeah. The Story of modern Pop” (London 2013/2014), Bob Stanley chooses the beautiful wording that Prog “imploded in a fog of maths in the mid-seventies” (p. 566), matching e.g. the fact that even hardcore fandom called Genesis’ 1974 album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* “one of the most [...] obfuscated works of art ever created” ([www.bloovis.com/music/lamb.html](http://www.bloovis.com/music/lamb.html)). The lines are blurred here, as elements of self-parody can be an integral part of the concept (like on *Thick as a Brick* by Jethro Tull, 1972). Stanley chooses *Tales From Topographic Oceans* by Yes (1973), *Interview* by Gentle Giant (1976), and *Pictures At An Exhibition* by Emerson, Lake & Palmer (1971) as examples (p. 367), but we feel that nothing lets the hair down like the amount of pure irony and theatre presented on *Love Beach* by Emerson, Lake and Palmer (1978). In any case, a pattern quite common for the end of musical eras (cf. Stanley, p. 91 et seq.).

<sup>5</sup> “[...] Genesis into pop funk, Yes into electro pop” (Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 368.).

<sup>6</sup> Talking about *Tubular Bells*, Bob Stanley summarizes the image-free nature of the album: “it could mean whatever you wanted it to mean.” (*ibid.*, p. 364). For us, that is exactly the point that makes the album simply matchless in pop history.

<sup>7</sup> A decade later New Order followed a similar “no interview” policy, trying to avoid the stardom effect overshadowing their work (cf. Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 605). Obviously, while creating a merger between pop and dance music, they anticipated the (honourable but futile) attempt of Techno & House to break the rock paradigm.

<sup>8</sup> One might even say that Oldfield already entered the mainstream with his second album, *Hergest Ridge*. This sounds bizarre given the uncompromising nature of this exquisite work, but as the pop/rock realm seems to move on eternally between embracing and rejecting “urban” or “rural”, most of the artists de facto choose sides here. Bob Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 260, gives an example by pointing at Bob Dylan’s highly influential *John Wesley Harding* (1967) as a rejection of the urban. Our little Weever at least tries to stay away from these categories.

that Oldfield – whether intentionally or not – had ultimately made his Prog “image-laden”, something he himself had vehemently criticised: he merely did it by means of another approach. See [www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About/Q&A/Question - A downhill ride](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About/Q&A/Question - A downhill ride)

When, at the conclusion of the quoted essay, the entire situation is described as “unfinished business”, this actually identifies the task that has been taken on by *The Weever Sands* project: How is it possible to create the immense artistic substance of progressive rock music in the tradition of the 1970<sup>s</sup> without sacrificing the focus on the music itself for the sake of “image”? To a certain extent, the Post-Rock approach, the preliminary form of which took shape a solid decade after Oldfield’s debut, can be helpful, but, since it, too, normally fails to resolve the “image” issue, it cannot suffice, especially since it (frequently) rejects some of the most significant and exciting elements of Prog: the raw, direct energy of the rock topoi that are also employed in Prog (even number of measures, singability, power chords, etc.), the expressive and climactic medium of over the top virtuosity, the productive and inspiring dynamic between soloist and band, and (best-case-scenario) the enhancing and accentuating effects of integrated art work and multimedia.

If we want to come up with a label for our ongoing attempt to contribute to the bigger idea – i.e., strengthening Prog artistically by removing meaning-laden non-musical elements (“de-imagizing”), without becoming a Post-Rock project ourselves – we might have to stick to the established term “Post-Prog”. Have a look: [www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About)

## II. Key Features of the Project

We work on four different levels, the music itself is at the centre. Around it, the other three supporting elements revolve: visualisation, artwork/content, and text. The approach to thinking of all four levels as a unit supports the concept that music is not merely a free-floating element appearing in solitary fragments, but instead (for us) is the strongest element in a closely connected network of different art forms.<sup>9</sup>

### 1. Music

Below, we have listed the most important elements of our music, including brief explanations and, where relevant, indicating their specific status in relation to Prog and Post-Rock.

- Length and Concept. Based on the most outstanding albums of the time (King Crimson, *Lizard*, 1970; ELP, *Tarkus*, 1971; Yes, *Close to The Edge*, 1972 etc.), we will mostly follow the traditional structure of Prog, which is rooted in the logic of the LP age (“A side/B side”), with one long piece and a few slightly shorter pieces. Song structure is avoided. At the same time, after the more open concept of the debut album (2016), we want to adhere to the idea of a concept album in a very strict sense, with the pieces not only

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<sup>9</sup> At least in this respect it is all about connecting the dots – which might indeed be a pre-digital attitude (cf. Stanley, *ibid.*, p. XV sq.). The ideal would be the state of pop in 1966: “All other contemporary art – cinema, poetry, painting – seemed to coalesce around it” (Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 194).

loosely grouped by content or story (as with Jethro Tull, *Aqualung*, 1971; Genesis, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, 1974; Gentle Giant, *The Power And The Glory*, 1974), but closely connected by music – in other words, pieces that have been written according to common principles or that mutually quote and reference each other or, frequently, that have a similar harmonic or rhythmic structure.

- Single-Note Source Material. Chords are resolved into small motivic units that serve as source material for the pieces – sometimes reduced down to a single note. It is important to us that this individual tone, in all of its unspectacular isolation, is first be given space. We conceive of this as being similar to the sound made by a non-amplified guitar – an extremely fragile, quiet, and rapidly-dissipating audio signal – thereby deliberately distancing ourselves to the greatest extent possible from format radio and the “compression makes the quiet fat and loud” aesthetic. In many places, it is this single “small” tone – without which, ultimately, nothing else is possible – that we want to make clearly audible.
- Polyphony and Transparency: Continual repetition and one-step-at-a-time layering consistently reveal the musical architecture of a piece. This is also enhanced by the *single note principle* for the individual musical lines – in other words, even instruments that normally are used to play chords will play primarily only one note at a time (for instance, the piano part is scored for “right hand only” and contains only individual notes). Our aim is to maintain a level of transparency that does justice to each individual note, even as the “symphonic breadth” and virtuosity of the piece are expanded, with multiple instrumental lines layered on top of each other. Here is where the mixing process merges with the process of composing, arranging, and producing the music. At the end of the day, mixing is what ultimately ensures maximum transparency and sound differentiation. Consequently, the dynamics of the music simultaneously play both an enormous role and absolutely no role at all: even at the extreme, they emerge out of the layering of the musical lines themselves.
- Ambiguity: For the listener, the challenge lies in the different facets that have deliberately been left open and unanswered: *Who is behind this project?* We wouldn’t take it as far as, for instance, the (almost) completely anonymous The Residents (1969 ff), but at [www.The-Weever-Sands.com](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com), the idea always takes precedence over the person. *How is the music produced?* For our 2016 debut album (*Keep Your Face Turned To The Light*) we exclusively used mouse-click generated notes and logic plug-ins (including all of the “solo” lines). For future projects, we want to incorporate guest musicians for a few of the important solo passages. It should not be clear to the listener, however, just how the different sounds are being produced. We will not be providing detailed lists of musicians, instrumentation and/or technology, and we will have to make certain during production that the source of each of the sounds remains ambiguous.<sup>10</sup> *What is the music made up of?* If the first thing the listener hears is simply a single note or a short motif, then it is unclear just how the music will proceed. This creates a sense of

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<sup>10</sup> Insofar, the concept of Acousmatic music (J. Peignot et al., 1955 et seq.) clearly is an inspiration for us.

“uncertainty” – and we want to enhance this productive ambiguity by building the sound just one step and one layer at a time, leaving open the question as to when or whether the musical material is actually “complete”. We could accomplish this, for instance, by continually introducing musical lines in which it is unclear whether or not they are playing the “main theme” or by introducing themes that will be interrupted or slowly become fragmented, perhaps returning in a new context as the apparent “main themes” become relegated to the accompaniment.

- Hierarchy of the Musical Elements: The basic harmonic structure serves as the source for the short basic motif, and this motif can be used to develop a melodic theme. The unifying principle throughout all of the pieces, however, is the use of the harmonic structure and the basic motif. Melodic themes in the strict sense of the term, as an extended melodic figure, appear either quite late in the pieces or not at all. The harmonic structure may take several minutes to become established and may introduce a number of different themes, which are frequently rhythmically and melodically autonomous and dissimilar. The “themes” are often merely extended motifs, and even when longer and complete melodic arches do appear, they function more as “building blocks” and do not lend themselves to further development: these are definitely not “themes” in the sense of traditional classical music.
- Structure Supersedes Ornamentation: Our aim is to so consistently reveal the architecture of the music that for everything that is heard there is an underlying reason, a compelling task. This requires the avoidance of anything that might sound like musical ornamentation. The yardstick for this could be whether a note/a noise/the motif/the sound constitutes such an essential structural component of the piece that it must appear multiple times. This would not only mean the general avoidance of the use of one-time effects, such as in a break, but also of the arbitrary multiplication of sounds. For instance, a particular keyboard sound will be used several times within an individual piece or in other pieces on the album. An example of the structured utilisation of elements (in this case, sound samples) can be heard in *Her Human Resources* from our debut album: the “falling oooh” sample continually interrupts the theme until the music, invited by the “come on” sample, asserts itself and is ultimately suitably “praised” for this by the “just wonderful” sample.
- Solo: Strictly speaking, the concept of “structure supersedes ornamentation” is “anti-cadenza”, since even the best solo is not without elements that are “superfluous” (meaning here, “appearing only once”). In our project, however, we didn’t want to miss out on the individual and creative force or the energy that solos provide. Here, it was fitting that within the progressive rock music tradition, a hybrid of solo and structurally-relevant material (as in Frank Zappa’s and Steve Howe’s guitar solos) is recognised and permitted – even if it represents a major hurdle for us, which we have to try to overcome by seeking out appropriate soloists.<sup>11</sup> In our earlier work, we had already taken somewhat the opposite approach in 2016’s *Counts of Corduroy*: at the beginning,

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<sup>11</sup> Seems it worked quite well with Speed/Technical Death Metal ace Armin Rave on guitar and Ex-Guano Apes producer Geo Schaller on flute, juggling, cutting and recombining the main motifs of our 2020 album “Stylobat’s Travels”.

the solo line plays a short motif that initially serves as a rudimentary “theme” for this, in actuality, “theme-less” piece, and then forms the basis for the actual solo.

- Minimising Contingent Transitions. In the context of Jethro Tull's *Thick As A Brick* (1972), whose album artwork is “delivered” in the form of a fictitious daily newspaper, including a fake review of the album, Ian Anderson himself perfectly and self-deprecatingly addressed a significant structural problem in Prog: “Poor, or perhaps naïve taste is responsible for some of the [...] banal instrumental passages linking the main sections [...]”. From the beginning of the twentieth century to today, there has never been even the vaguest consensus on what an obligatory organisational model for quasi-symphonic music might look like, and it is upon this point that the Classic Prog suite structure seem to be most vulnerable.<sup>12</sup> In fact, in this respect, most of the genre’s masterworks strike, at best, a mixed balance, achieved through the incorporation of seemingly arbitrary breaks, ancillary riffs, non-organic tempo changes, and the insertion of musically-disconnected passages. If our music is to follow strict formal structures, then it is precisely the transitions between the major musical sections that must not be allowed to serve as portals for contingent – and, ultimately, purely ornamental – elements. This is a difficult task: one that can most likely only be achieved by both minimising the transitions themselves and by making consistent use of musical material that has already been introduced.
- Style and Sound: Our goal is not to merely generate some kind of “image-purified” reproduction of classic Prog. Although the Prog masterpieces of the 1970<sup>s</sup> remain the basis, the influences of funk, jazz (in terms of harmony), and blues can, and indeed should, be included – not to mention four-to-the-floor sections, pop, and, of course, Minimal Music and Post-Rock elements. The latter would be represented chiefly by the minimalistic and repetitive setting of the tracks and by the use of sound samples (noises, individual words/phrases) that had been adopted by Post-Rock, in particular from Zappa and Pink Floyd. We use these sound fragments not only for their structural function, but also as a way of continually (and surely somewhat ironically) underscoring the rock characteristics of the pieces (“Yeah!”, “Come on!”, “Oooh!”), while at the same time featuring this discrete cuts & clicks element as a nod to the true electronic (Logic) basis of our music.<sup>13</sup> When it comes to selecting the sounds, we are striving, as on our 2016 debut album, for a somewhat “timeless”<sup>14</sup>, more analogue sound, with occasional references to classic 1970<sup>s</sup> Prog (effects like Moog, Solina, Mellotron, Farfisa, saw, wah-wah, etc.) and a broader range of sound. As always, during mixing and mastering, we try to stay as far away from format radio as possible (preserving the dynamic range, no over-compression, no “loudness war”).

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, even back then this insight was not Anderson’s alone. E.g., in his still remarkably balanced article „The Potential of Pop“; in: *How Music Works*, ed. Keith Spence and Giles Swayne (New York/London 1981), Meirion Bowen states that in early Prog and related forms many musicians racked their brains to find a concept for structures and ideas appropriate to album scale and that it very often failed or was built on shenanigans.

<sup>13</sup> And yes, we will NEVER give up on the TR-808-like handclaps: “Resistance is futile!” (The Borg, in: *Star Trek, The Next Generation*, Season 2, Episode 16, ‘Q Who?’ 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Let’s use this phrase: „making music that could have either been recorded centuries ago or last week” (Stanley, *ibid.*, p. 683, about an album by Nick Drake).

What we are ultimately attempting to create is a transparent, focused, stylistically-closed yet associatively-open music, the effect of which is self-evident – music that will kindly challenge the listener, but still transport the colourfulness, brilliance, and energy of Prog in a way that is stimulating and, perhaps, even captivating. It is not the (generally accessible) material itself that will pose the primary challenge to the listener, but rather, our well-meant impudence in precisely reproducing the genesis and development of this material. In this context, the music will seem – and is intended to be – radical. To sum it up: We are trying to merge the minimalism of Post-Rock with the opulence of classical Prog into something that Mike Oldfield, relating to the concept of a band, has called a “powerful miniature”.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Visualisation

The aim of visualisation should be to enhance the music, not work against it. For our 2016 debut album, we used high-resolution close-ups of materials like wood, corduroy, sand, and metal; we assigned a colour or colour combination to each of the tracks, and we used camera movement and lighting changes to modify the pictures so that the visualisation would conform to the architecture of the music. We didn’t want to make the images strictly dependent upon the music, as is the case with automated visualisation software, but were trying instead to create a slow visual transformation that simply followed the basic structure of the music. The extreme care taken in the transformations, along with the relatively strong colour scheme, allow the visualisation to be used as a large-format room installation (strictly speaking, even without sound). Our intention is that, for the observer, the perception of what is seen in the video, analogue to what is heard in the music, will remain ambiguous. Sometimes, at the end of a piece, a clue will be provided: the unedited original material will be shown very briefly. On our debut album, there was just a single instance in which we departed from the principle of abstraction: it was to allow for a concrete visualisation that indirectly paid homage to the album *Jazz from Hell* (Frank Zappa, 1986), which contains only one title that was not recorded in the studio on the Synclavier but was instead recorded analogue and live. See our track *The Fruitful Years/Epilogue* (2016).

For future albums, we would like to continue with the principle best described as “abstraction and slowness”, in which the primary challenge may lie in creating workable visualisations for longer pieces. However, we now also have new options for creating images (drones, etc.) that enable us to create the polar opposite of a close-up as well as providing us with a range of entirely new design possibilities. At the end of the day, however, these visualisations must not be allowed to become mere effects: they must always enhance the music and accentuate its architecture.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Karl Dallas, Balm For The Waking Dead, in: Let it Rock Magazine, December 1974, [www.tubular.net/articles/1974\\_12/Balm-For-The-Waking-Dead](http://www.tubular.net/articles/1974_12/Balm-For-The-Waking-Dead). And here we are, between the devil and the deep blue sea. How can we merge opulence with minimalism? Frankly, we have no idea, but believe us, we will try hard, and Master Anderson himself will assist us, shouting out loud: “Break the circle, stretch the line, call upon the devil!” (A Passion Play Part II; by: Jethro Tull, A Passion Play, 1973).



### 3. Artwork/Content

If our goal is to advance Prog's design tradition while simultaneously articulating our expectation that the music itself be the main focus, this is obviously going to require quite a balancing act. It will eliminate both taking the radical approach of rejecting the use of artwork altogether (as in many seminal Post-Rock albums, e.g. Tortoise *TNT*, 1998) as well as keeping the titles of the individual pieces on the album completely abstract (e.g. from the jazz/funk genre, Nik Bärtsch's *RONIN*, 2001 ff: "Module"; from the ambient/minimalist genre, Brian Eno's *Music for Airports*, 1978: "1/1", "1/2", etc.). The same would apply to the opposite end of the spectrum, represented in Prog by Genesis' 1974 album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. Here, the fictional story that is told on the album through the lyrics and liner notes is so loaded with detailed references to satire, pop culture, psychology, literature, and history that this aspect itself has become the object of general debate (see "The Annotated Lamb Lies Down on Broadway" [[www.bloovis.com/music/lamb.html](http://www.bloovis.com/music/lamb.html)]) overshadowing the (unquestionably fascinating) music. For our albums, we plan to adhere to the concepts listed below. Quite consciously in keeping with Prog tradition, we intend to:

- Continue developing the approach we took with our 2016 debut, producing future albums that are "true" concept albums: the small number of tracks on them will be linked not only musically, but "thematically" as well;
- Use the term "thematically" here to explicitly remain within the broad expanses of the basic Prog model, i.e., the fantasy/imaginary journey (as in Genesis, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, 1974; Steve Hackett, *Voyage of the Acolyte*, 1975; Jon Anderson, *Olias of Sunhillow*, 1976; Rush, *2112*, 1976; Grobschnitt, *Rockpommel's Land*, 1977);
- Preserve the Prog tradition of using a painting for the album cover, with special consideration given to the "look & feel" of the artwork. We primarily use oil on canvas and assemble the final picture by combining and editing the different individually created elements (e.g. characters, objects). The colour scheme and motives (foreign surroundings? journey? danger?) reflect the Prog style of the 1970<sup>s</sup> – and this will continue to be our overarching concept. Nevertheless, we will hint at present day concepts with elements of (digital) deconstruction to break the surface of an only painterly approach. See [www.The-Weever-Sands.com/Artwork](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com/Artwork).
- Animals as a guiding paradigm in 1970<sup>s</sup> Prog will be present – everywhere, always. Guided by our ferocious little Weever fish, we will visit the great variety of species and follow them on their journeys. A stylish bat on his search for his sweetheart in ancient Greece, a pheasant struggling with the everyday hassle in his quest to find his true self, a there is more to come...

What we don't want for our albums is to narrate a detailed specific story, a political fable, a spiritual experience, or any other such thing (as was otherwise frequently done in classic Prog). We want the "content" to be conveyed solely through the titles of the pieces and the artwork. For instance, in Stylobat's *Travels* (2020), our intention is that the somewhat ambiguous music

created for this story – told mostly through allusion – will create an attractive, yet vague, associative space that will (hopefully) allow itself to be filled in by the music itself. No liner notes. Maybe a few spoken word passages, but no lyrics.

#### 4. Text

The finishing touches on our projects are the writings that pick up where earlier texts that have already been cited, leave off. The text first published in 2016 (and revised in 2019) at [www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About/Q&A/Question - A downhill ride](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com/About/Q&A/Question - A downhill ride) raises the key question posed at the beginning of this essay. We presume that the working principles that have been laid out here will, over time, be either affirmed or refuted, and we will then use our own experiences in an attempt to provide a potential answer as to how the “unfinished business” might successfully be brought to conclusion. There is certainly no single “right answer”, but what we really are interested in doing, within our area of expertise, is simply adding to the lively discussion about radical and exciting musical forms and stimulating further reflection on music itself, its various forms, and the stories behind it. Interested in an exchange of ideas? We look forward to hearing from you!

*The Weever Sands, 2020*

*All tracks and more information at [www.The-Weever-Sands.com](http://www.The-Weever-Sands.com)*