

Yes – Relayer (1974) [2003]

Written by bluesever

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1 *The Gates Of Delirium* 21:56 2 *Sound Chaser* 9:27 3 *To Be Over* 9:19 + 4 *Soon* (Single Edit) 4:18 5 *Sound Chaser* (Single Edit) 3:13 6 *The Gates Of Delirium* (Studio Run-Through) 21:16 Jon Anderson - Vocals Steve Howe - Guitar, Vocals Patrick Moraz - Keyboards Chris Squire - Bass, Vocals Alan White – Drums

This classic had already been remastered on the Atlantic label a few years back. Now, we are treated to yet another series of Yes remasters: this time for the Rhino label. My suspicions on the motives behind this second series of Yes remasters aside, this classic remaster features a couple of single edits, and a studio run through. These are not very essential in my book, especially for people who love the album exactly as it is, but it's welcome, nonetheless.

Intense, harsh, ethereal, voluminous and ruggedly symphonic, Yes' 1974 release, *Relayer* is arguably their most dark, experimental, grandiose and aggressive. 1972's *Close To The Edge* was positive, peaceful and reflective. 1973's *Tales From Topographic Oceans* was spiritually (and/or religiously) deep. However, on *Relayer*, Yes gets bleak, harsh and ominous--attributes that are rare in the positive, hopeful, celestial and peaceful world of Yes. But, make no mistake, the cosmic factor is in droves on this album, and is one non-stop sonic adventure.

The 22-minute war tale known as "The Gates Of Delirium", is a gargantuan slice of mystical progressive rock. In atmosphere, this epic features screaming synths, manic guitar solos and overall explosive volatility. Steve Howe's claustrophobic, finger-itching and hasty-paced guitar solos qualify him as nothing less than a virtuoso. Jon Anderson's vocals are ethereal, heartfelt and moving. Some of the rhythms played by Alan White are quite tricky, and not to be taken lightly. Later, Steve Howe and Chris Squire (bass) play something of an ascending scale before the violent, stormy and powerful instrumental middle section takes off. This is followed by the

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achingly beautiful "Soon, oh soon" section. The sad and poignant synthesizer backdrops provided by Patrick Moraz, set the stage for Jon Anderson's most poignant, ethereal and shiver-sending performance. His very last sung line (The sun will lead us, our reason to be here) makes my soul cry. After that, the epic sadly fades into oblivion.

"Sound Chaser" is a manic, frenzied and aggressive jazz-fusion number, which features enough technical mastery to give classic King Crimson a run for their money. Alan White's drumming is ultra-technical and violent. He plays as if there were no tomorrow. Steve Howe's guitar parts are fluid and virtuosic. The middle section features an extended guitar solo. Steve also seems to slip a portion of "Mood For A Day" (off of _Fragile_) on here as well. Chris Squire's snaky basslines sandwiched in the crazed mix are something to behold as well.

"To Be Over" is the mellow closer of the album. It features country-esque soundscapes (courtesy of Steve Howe's pedal steel), an instrumental section featuring many eerie sounds seeping from Patrick Moraz's keyboards, and a finale of chant-like vocal harmonies.

Relayer is Yes hitting on all cylinders: Violence, intensity, aggression, gloom, despair, ethereality, love, hope (and maybe triumph). The complexity here may take some getting used to. But, in the end, _Relayer_ is a trip worth taking. ---Samhot, amazon.com

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