

## Groundhogs – Thank Christ For The Bomb (1970)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Strange Town* - 4:18 02. *Darkness Is No Friend* - 3:45 [play](#) 03. *Soldier* - 4:50 04. *Thank Christ For The Bomb* - 7:17 05. *Ship On The Ocean* - 3:27 06. *Garden* - 5:20 07. *Status People* - 3:31 [play](#)  
08. *Rich Man, Poor Man* - 3:25 09. *Eccentric Man* - 4:54  
Personnel: - Tony McPhee - guitar, vocals - Peter Cruickshank - bass - Ken Pustelnik – drums

Thank Christ for the Bomb was the first Groundhogs album to indicate that the group had a lifespan longer than the already-fading British blues boom suggested. It was also the first in the sequence of semi-conceptual masterpieces that the group cut following their decision to abandon the mellow blues of their earlier works and pursue the socially aware, prog-inflected bent that culminated with 1972's seminal *Who Will Save the World?* album. They were rewarded with their first ever Top Ten hit and purchasers were rewarded with an album that still packs a visceral punch in and around Tony McPhee's dark, doom-laden lyrics. With the exception of the truly magisterial title track, the nine tracks err on the side of brevity. Only one song, the semi-acoustic "Garden," strays over the five-minute mark, while four more barely touch three-and-one-half minutes. Yet the overall sense of the album is almost bulldozing, and it is surely no coincidence that, engineering alongside McPhee's self-production, Martin Birch came to the Groundhogs fresh from Deep Purple in Rock and wore that experience firmly on his sleeve. Volume and dynamics aside, there are few points of comparison between the two albums -- if the Groundhogs have any direct kin, it would have to be either the similarly three-piece Budgie or a better-organized Edgar Broughton Band. But, just as Deep Purple was advancing the cause of heavy rock by proving that you didn't need to be heavy all the time, so Thank Christ for the Bomb shifts between light and dark, introspection and outspokenness, loud and, well, louder. Even the acoustic guitars can make your ears bleed when they feel like it and, although the anti-war sentiments of "Thank Christ for the Bomb" seem an over-wordy echo of Purple's similarly themed "Child in Time," it is no less effective for it. Elements of Thank Christ for the Bomb do seem overdone today, not the least of which is the title track's opening recitation (a history of 20th century war, would you believe?). But it still has the ability to chill, thrill, and kill any doubts that such long-windiness might evoke, while the truths that were

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evident to McPhee in 1970 aren't too far from reality today. [Originally issued in 1970, the LP was reissued on CD in 2007 and features bonus tracks.] ---Dave Thompson, AllMusic Review

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