

= Unhalfbricking =

Unhalfbricking is the third album by the British folk rock band Fairport Convention and their second album released in 1969 . It is seen as a transitional album in their history and marked a further musical move away from American influences towards more traditional English folk songs that had begun on their previous album , What We Did on Our Holidays and arguably reached its peak on the follow @-@ up , Liege & Lief , released later the same year .

Although featuring several at the time unreleased Bob Dylan songs , the album also marked Sandy Denny 's maturation as a singer and songwriter , including " Who Knows Where the Time Goes ? " , a song covered by many other performers and now regarded as a classic . The only traditional song on the album , " A Sailor 's Life " , is seen as pivotal in the development of English folk rock music .

Changes in the line @-@ up of the band , due not only to its musical direction but also to external events , mark this album as a turning point in the band 's history . 1969 was a prolific year for Fairport Convention ; from What We Did on Our Holidays to Liege & Lief within twelve months represented a major development .

The album also gave the band their first UK chart success , reaching number 12 in the UK album chart ( the second highest position in the band 's entire career ) , while the single release , " Si tu dois partir " , achieved number 21 in the UK singles chart .

= = Background = =

On 11 May 1969 , two months before the album was released , drummer Martin Lamble and guitarist Richard Thompson 's girlfriend , Jeannie Franklyn , were killed in a car crash as the band were returning from a concert in Birmingham . Simon Nicol later said :

That was a big watershed , I think . In the aftermath , we thought a lot about what to do , whether to call it a day . It had been fun while it lasted but it took a definite effort of will to continue . It had given us a lot but now it had taken away a lot : was it worth it if it was going to cost people their lives ? Martin was only 18 or 19 years old . He would have gone on to have been so much more than just another drummer , another musician : there was something very special about him .

Ashley Hutchings also said in relation to the album cover photograph :

My memory of it is bound up with the terrible car crash . On the back cover we 're all eating around a table . The shirt and the leather waistcoat I 'm wearing are what I had on when the crash happened . I can clearly remember them being bloodstained . You don 't forget things like that .

Unhalfbricking appeared , therefore , at a difficult time for the group , but was enthusiastically received . After a period of intense reflection about their future they decided to pursue the folk rock idea further and violinist Dave Swarbrick was invited to join full @-@ time for the follow @-@ up , Liege & Lief .

= = Production = =

Fairport Convention had been invited to Bob Dylan 's London music publishers to hear then @-@ unreleased tracks from The Basement Tapes sessions . The band 's bassist , Ashley Hutchings , said " We loved it all . We would have covered all the songs if we could . " In the event , versions of " Percy 's Song " , " Million Dollar Bash " and " If You Gotta Go , Go Now " ( retitled " Si Tu Dois Partir " ) were used on the album . The French lyrics for the latter were created during the interval of a performance at the Middle Earth Club . " Percy 's Song " and " Million Dollar Bash " had never been released before . According to guitarist Simon Nicol " I think the boredom factor was one of the reasons we came up with this wacky idea . Three or four punters joined us in the dressing room ; they were either French visitors or students of French working in London , and happened to be there that night . "

The band 's male vocalist Iain Matthews left during the recordings for Unhalfbricking to make his own album Matthews ' Southern Comfort , after recording just one track , " Percy 's Song " . Sandy Denny sang lead vocals on all the other songs , including her own compositions , " Autopsy " , and "

Who Knows Where the Time Goes ? " . The latter was covered by many artists and is now viewed to be a classic . The lengthy " A Sailor 's Life " , a traditional English folk song collected by A. L. Lloyd , was already part of Denny 's club repertoire . In particular , the version on Unhalfbricking has been described as " the turning point of Fairport 's history from earlier contemporary Americana to English songs " and by Allmusic 's Richie Unterberger as a " clear signpost to the future " .

Guitarist Richard Thompson contributed two compositions to the album . The opening track , " Genesis Hall " , is a slow 3 / 4 waltz , on which he played dulcimer , while Sandy Denny provided the vocals ; it was the B @-@ Side of the single release . Genesis Hall was the nickname of the former Bell Hotel in Drury Lane , which had become a squat in early 1969 and later became noted for a mass eviction by the police . In the view of Mojo magazine reviewer Mike Baines " Thompson 's writing reached maturity on ' Genesis Hall ' " . " Cajun Woman " , which opens the second side of the album , features Dave Swarbrick 's fiddle @-@ playing in his first work with Fairport .

= = Title and cover = =

The title arose from the band playing the word game Ghost while travelling to and from gigs . Its object was to " avoid completing a real word " , and " Unhalfbricking " was Sandy Denny 's creation .

Eric Hayes took the photo on the sleeve design for the UK release , which featured neither album title nor band name . The photo captured Denny 's parents , Neil and Edna Denny , standing outside the family home in Arthur Road , Wimbledon , south London , with the band distantly visible through the garden fence . St Mary 's Church , Wimbledon , can be seen in the background . Joe Boyd later said " Unhalfbricking , then , that cover shot was taken in the early spring , right before the crash , I think ; and that record came out in June " .

Unhalfbricking 's cover in the US , released by A & M Records , was even less informative . It consisted of a picture of circus elephants with a small inset image of the band , allegedly because " the group apparently so upset their American label that they replaced it with an image of trampolining elephants " .

= = Reception = =

Allmusic 's Richie Unterberger described Unhalfbricking as " a transitional album for the young Fairport Convention , in which the group shed its closest ties to its American folk @-@ rock influences and started to edge toward a more traditional British folk @-@ slanted sound " .

Rolling Stone 's John Mendelsohn , reviewing Unhalfbricking alongside Liege and Lief , was supportive , describing it as " Fairport Convention at its best " and singling out " Percy 's Song " in particular as " the album 's gem " . He was less complimentary about " A Sailor 's Life " , regarding it as overlong .

The album also gave the band their first UK chart success , spending a total of eight weeks in the UK album chart and reaching number 12 . The single " Si tu dois partir " spent nine weeks on the UK singles chart and reached number 21 . Fairport Convention appeared on Top of the Pops on 14 August 1969 , miming to the song and augmented by a roadie , Steve Sparks on percussion .

In 2004 Q magazine placed Unhalfbricking at number 41 in its list of the 50 Greatest British Albums Ever , and in the same year The Observer , describing it as " a thoroughly English masterpiece " , listed it at number 27 in its Top 100 British Albums . The following year , 2005 , it was included in Robert Dimery 's " 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die " . The Sandy Denny track , " Who Knows Where the Time Goes ? " , was voted " Favourite Folk Track of All Time " by listeners in the Radio 2 Folk Awards 2007 . In 2010 Unhalfbricking was voted the second best Fairport Convention album after Liege & Lief by Mojo magazine readers .

= = Track listing = =

Side one

" Genesis Hall " ( Richard Thompson ) ? 3 : 41

" Si tu dois partir " ( Bob Dylan ) ? 2 : 25

" Autopsy " ( Sandy Denny ) ? 4 : 27

" A Sailor 's Life " ( traditional , arranged by Denny , Thompson , Simon Nicol , Ashley Hutchings , Martin Lamble ) ? 11 : 20

Side two

" Cajun Woman " ( Thompson ) ? 2 : 45

" Who Knows Where the Time Goes ? " ( Denny ) ? 5 : 13

" Percy 's Song " ( Dylan ) ? 6 : 55

" Million Dollar Bash " ( Dylan ) ? 2 : 56

Bonus tracks on CD reissue

" Dear Landlord " ( Dylan )

" Ballad of Easy Rider " ( Roger McGuinn , Dylan )

NOTE : Bob Dylan is not officially credited as a songwriter on " Ballad of Easy Rider " .

= = Release history = =

Unhalfbricking has been released on several occasions and in several formats :

= = Personnel = =

Sandy Denny ? vocals , harpsichord

Richard Thompson ? electric and acoustic guitars , electric dulcimer , piano accordion , organ , backing vocals

Ashley Hutchings ? bass , backing vocals

Simon Nicol ? electric and acoustic guitars , electric dulcimer , backing vocals

Martin Lamble ? drums , stacked chair backs on " Si tu dois partir "

Additional personnel

Iain Matthews ? backing vocals on " Percy 's Song "

Dave Swarbrick ? fiddle on " Si tu dois partir " , " A Sailor 's Life " , and " Cajun Woman " and Mandolin on " Million Dollar Bash "

Trevor Lucas ? triangle on " Si tu dois partir "

Marc Ellington ? vocals on " Million Dollar Bash "

Dave Mattacks ? drums on " Ballad of Easy Rider "

Production

Recorded at Sound Techniques and Olympic Studios , London

Engineer : John Wood

Sleeve design : Diogenic Attempts Ltd .

Source :