

## = Selling England by the Pound =

Selling England by the Pound is the fifth studio album from the English progressive rock band Genesis , released in October 1973 on Charisma Records . It reached number 3 in the UK and number 70 in the U.S. A single from the album , " I Know What I Like ( In Your Wardrobe ) " was released in February 1974 and became the band 's first top 30 hit in the UK ; November 1973 in the U.S ..

The album was recorded in August 1973 following the tour supporting the previous album , Foxtrot ( 1972 ) . The group set aside a short period of time to write new material , which covered a number of themes , including the loss of English folk culture and an increased American influence , which was reflected in the title . Following the album 's release , the group set out on tour , where they drew an enthusiastic reception from fans .

Critics and the band have given mixed opinions of the album , though guitarist Steve Hackett has said it is his favourite Genesis record . The album has continued to sell and has reached Gold certification by the British Phonographic Industry and the Recording Industry Association of America . It was remastered for CD in 1994 and 2007 . Several of the album tracks became fan favourites and featured as a regular part of the band 's live setlist into the 1980s .

## = = Background = =

By late 1972 , Genesis had stabilised around Peter Gabriel , Tony Banks , Mike Rutherford , Steve Hackett and Phil Collins . The group had been regularly touring , achieved commercial success with their previous album Foxtrot , and were starting to gig in the U.S. , particularly in New York City , where they had a positive response . However , journalists were still criticising the band and comparing them to other progressive rock bands such as ELP , Jethro Tull and Pink Floyd . The group were too busy touring to write new material , so after coming off the road in spring 1973 they set aside time to create new songs . The group 's record company , Charisma Records insisted they had three months to come up with a new album , which Rutherford considered " the kiss of death " . Collins formed a pick up band with former Yes guitarist Peter Banks for a few gigs , and Rutherford revealed in an interview to Sounds in 1976 that " there had been worries that Phil might want to leave the group " .

Gabriel chose the album title , a slogan adopted by the UK Labour Party manifesto , to ensure that the British press would not accuse them of " selling out " to America . Overall , it represented a decay of English folk culture and an increase in Americanisation .

## = = Production = =

## = = = Recording = = =

Gabriel later said he wrote all his lyrical contributions to the album in two days . Having rehearsed and written enough material for an album , the group entered Island Studios in August 1973 . As with Foxtrot , John Burns helped with production . Burns ' technical skills resulted in a good recorded sound and environment , and this motivated the group to play better and tackle more complex arrangements . Banks recalled the sessions being difficult , adding " it was hard to get things going . " Charisma released a live album , Genesis Live , compiled from concerts taped for the radio , to fill the gap between studio releases .

## = = = Songs = = =

" Dancing with the Moonlit Knight " evolved from a number of short piano pieces composed by Gabriel , which was combined with some of Hackett 's guitar figures to make up the track . Gabriel added English @-@ themed lyrics to counter the impression from the music press that Genesis

were trying too hard to appeal to the American audience , including references to Green Shield Stamps . Banks had upgraded to a new model of Mellotron and used the choir sound on the track . The track ends with a series of 12 string guitar figures that were originally supposed to segue into " The Cinema Show " to make a piece around 20 minutes in length , but this idea was dropped as the result was too comparable to " Supper 's Ready " .

" I Know What I Like ( In Your Wardrobe ) " came out of a jam session by the group around one of Hackett 's guitar riffs . He had presented the riff to the group previously , but it had been rejected because it sounded too much like The Beatles . It was released as a single from the album , which became the first of the group 's to chart in the UK .

Banks wrote most of " Firth of Fifth " on his own , and had presented it to the group for Foxtrot , but it was rejected . He reworked some sections of the song for Selling England by the Pound , where it drew a more positive reception . The track opens with a solo piece for piano , that is repeated by the band later in the song . Hackett took one of Banks ' piano figures and rearranged it as a guitar solo , which dominates the latter part of the track .

" More Fool Me " is the second of two songs ( the other being " For Absent Friends " from Nursery Cryme ) to feature Collins on lead vocals before he became the band 's lead singer in 1975 . Uncharacteristically for the group 's output at the time , the song was a tender , romantic ballad . It was written quickly by Collins and Rutherford while sitting on the steps outside the recording studio .

" The Battle of Epping Forest " was inspired by a news story that Gabriel had read several years previously about the territorial battles by two rival gangs in the East End of London . He placed an advertisement in The Times in attempt to find more about the story , but was unable to find any further information , so he created his own fictional characters , including " Liquid Len " , " Harold Demure " and " The Bethnal Green Butcher " . The lyrics have since been praised for their humour and wit , but they did not gel well with the music , which the band subsequently felt was complicated for the sake of being so .

" After the Ordeal " is an instrumental written by Hackett ; the first half is a classical guitar and piano piece followed by an electric guitar solo . Banks and Gabriel did not want to include the song on the album , but Hackett insisted it should be kept . It was ultimately left on after Gabriel and Banks argued about the length of " The Cinema Show " , which meant everything was included as a compromise .

" The Cinema Show " is divided into two sections . The first section is a 12 @-@ string guitar @-@ based piece , featuring vocal harmonies between Gabriel and Collins , as well as a short flute / oboe solo . The song concludes with a four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ minute keyboard solo on the ARP Pro Soloist , with Rutherford and Collins playing a rhythm in a 7 / 8 time signature . The lyrics , written by Banks and Rutherford , draw much of their inspiration from the T. S. Eliot poem The Waste Land .

The album closes with a segue from the end of " The Cinema Show " into " Aisle of Plenty " , a reprise of " Dancing with the Moonlit Knight " which gives the album a book @-@ end effect . The track uses word play such as " Easy , love there 's the safe way home " and " Thankful for her fine fair discount , Tess co @-@ operates " , referring to British supermarkets .

= = = Sleeve design = = =

The album cover is a painting by Betty Swanwick titled The Dream . Swanwick had designed posters for London Transport between the 1930s and 1950s . The original painting did not feature a lawn mower ; the band had Swanwick add it later as an allusion to the song " I Know What I Like " as Swanwick told them that she had not enough time to paint a new picture for their cover .

= = Release = =

Selling England by the Pound was released in October 1973 , reaching No. 3 in the UK charts and No. 70 on the U.S. Billboard Pop Albums chart . The album 's success in the U.S. benefitted from a

switch from Buddah Records to Atlantic . " I Know What I Like ( In Your Wardrobe ) " was released as a single in February 1974 . It was the band 's first single to enter the UK chart , and peaked at number 21 . In 2013 , the album was certified Gold by the British Phonographic Industry .

The album was digitally remastered for compact disc in 1994 and again in 2007 by Rhino Records .

= = = Critical reception and legacy = = =

Contemporary reviews for the album were mixed . Rolling Stone 's Paul Gambaccini praised the band for attempting something utterly different amidst " a stagnant pop scene " , but criticised the album 's lyrics , feeling they overused British pop culture references , and complained about some musical passages . Despite this , Gambaccini thought the album " merits some recognition " . NME 's Barbara Charone said the album was " the band 's best , most adventurous album to date " . The Guardian 's Robin Denselow wrote that " much of the material is indistinctive and tedious " .

Retrospective reviews have been more favourable . AllMusic and BBC Music remarked that the album returned to the whimsical eccentricity of Nursery Cryme while retaining the hard rock intensity and pessimism of Foxtrot , combining the best of both elements to make Genesis 's best album up to that point . Robert Christgau , who thoroughly panned most of Genesis 's albums , admitted that the songs " Firth of Fifth " and " The Battle of Epping Forest " have " a complexity of tone that 's pretty rare in any kind of art " , though he summarised the rest of the album by saying " it sounds as snooty as usual . "

In 2012 , the album ranked seventh in Rolling Stone 's " Readers ' Poll : Your Favorite Prog Rock Albums of All Time " . It was also included in IGN 's list " 10 Classic Prog Rock Albums " in 2008 , who praised its " subtle elegance , sublime textures , and lyrical splendor " . Rock author Edward Macan has mixed feelings towards the album , praising " Firth of Fifth " and " The Cinema Show " but questioning some of the other material . Motoring journalist and broadcaster Jeremy Clarkson is a fan of the album and wrote sleeve notes for it when it was included in the box set Genesis 1970 @-@ 1975 .

Hackett has considered the album to be his favourite Genesis record , and was happy with his extensive contributions to it . Banks and Rutherford have had mixed feelings , saying there are a lot of high points but also some lows .

Selling England by the Pound has been praised by other songwriters and musicians . Rush drummer Neil Peart has said : " I think Selling England by the Pound is an enduring masterpiece of drumming . Beautiful drumming , lovely sound , and the arrangements , I think they really nailed the best of what that band as an entity could have done with that album . " Fish , solo artist and former lead singer of Marillion , has called it " the definitive Genesis album " , praised its " emotive " quality , said the wordplay was " one of the things that became quite an influence on me - the games within the lyrics " and concluded it " took a whole jump forward and was the album that really got me into Genesis " . Singer and songwriter Robert Pollard of Guided by Voices considers Selling England by the Pound one of his ten favourite records of all time . John Lennon said he really liked the album during a radio interview , which the band took great encouragement from .

= = = Tour = = =

The group went on a sell @-@ out tour of the UK immediately following the album 's release , but had to cancel the first date at the Green Playhouse , Glasgow due to electrical safety issues . The group realised they were substantially in debt and needed better management , so they recruited Tony Smith ( no relation to Charisma Records boss Tony Stratton @-@ Smith ) as their new manager . The tour was filmed by Charisma for a possible cinema release , but was rejected by the band who felt it was not up to standard . The group returned to the U.S. in December 1973 , with three shows at the Roxy in Los Angeles .

By this time , Genesis were suffering from press attention being exclusively directed towards frontman Gabriel at the expense of the rest of the band , a notable factor that ultimately led to Gabriel leaving the group in 1975 . They took an extended break in 1974 following the Selling

England by the Pound tour ; Collins joined a side project , Brand X , while Rutherford worked with former Genesis guitarist Anthony Phillips .

Several tracks continued to feature in Genesis ' live set after Collins became the group 's full @-@ time lead singer . The instrumental section of " The Cinema Show " became part of a medley with The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway 's " In the Cage " and remained a fixture of the band 's live set up to the Invisible Touch Tour in 1987 . Versions of " Firth of Fifth " , " I Know What I Like " and " The Cinema Show " appeared on the live album Seconds Out ( 1977 ) , while portions of " Firth of Fifth " and " I Know What I Like " featured as part of the " Old Medley " on The Way We Walk , Volume Two : The Longs ( 1993 ) . " Firth of Fifth " was performed as a one @-@ off reunion with Gabriel at the ' Six of the Best ' concert in 1982

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written by Tony Banks , Phil Collins , Peter Gabriel , Steve Hackett and Mike Rutherford .  
All tracks produced by Genesis and John Burns .

= = Personnel = =

Taken from the sleeve notes

Genesis

Peter Gabriel ? vocals , flute , oboe , percussion

Tony Banks ? keyboards , Hammond organ , piano , ARP Pro Soloist synthesizer , Mellotron , 12 @-@ string guitar

Steve Hackett ? electric guitar , nylon guitar

Michael Rutherford ? 12 @-@ string guitar , bass , electric sitar

Phil Collins ? drums , percussion , lead vocals on " More Fool Me " , backing vocals

Production

John Burns ? producer , engineer

Rhett Davies ? assistant engineer

Betty Swanwick ? cover painting

= = Certifications = =