



## Jethro Tull's Thick as a Brick and A Passion Play: Inside Two Long Songs (Profiles in Popular Music)

By Tim Smolko

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Since the 1960s, British progressive rock band Jethro Tull has pushed the technical and compositional boundaries of rock music by infusing its musical output with traditions drawn from classical, folk, jazz, and world music. The release of *Thick as a Brick* (1972) and *A Passion Play* (1973) won the group legions of new followers and topped the Billboard charts in the United States, among the most unusual albums ever to do so. Tim Smolko explores the large-scale form, expansive instrumentation, and complex arrangements that characterize these two albums, each composed of one continuous song. Featuring insights from Ian Anderson and in-depth musical analysis, Smolko discusses the band's influence on popular culture and why many consider *Thick as a Brick* and *A Passion Play* to be two of the greatest concept albums in rock history.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"[D]elves deep into the past in this new work to bring us the story of these two albums as well as a painstaking analysis that allows us to see not only the particular genius of Tull but the important role both records played in shaping '70s rock.... Smolko's passion for the subject matter and ability to wax enthusiastic about the smallest details makes this volume worth reading.... A volume that excites with its intelligence and sense of observation, two of the many qualities that will actually find you giv[ing] this book more than one read." ?PopMatters

"Tim Smolko's book makes a significant contribution to the literature in popular music studies and musicology. Furthermore, it is an important addition to the available literature on Jethro Tull, which?despite their commercial success and longevity?has not been rewarded as of yet with sustained analytical study." ?Kevin Holm-Hudson, author of *Genesis and The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*

"[R]ather than offering yet another biography, Smolko takes a musicological?as well as a cultural? approach to just two of Tull's albums [...] an endorsement from such a notable authority [as Adrian Stone-Mason] surely makes this worth reading for those of a scholarly bent." ?Rock n' Reel

"Tim Smolko has written a book that no fan of Jethro Tull should be without, with his analysis of *Thick as a Brick* and *A Passion Play* representing the most comprehensive yet of the music of this seminal band. His consideration of similarities between the structure of Tull's concept albums and Monty Python skits is especially original, and opens up a valuable avenue of inquiry into the relationship between sixties and seventies rock and contemporary visual media." ?Edward Macan, author of *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*

#### About the Author

Tim Smolko holds master's degrees in Musicology and in Library Science and is monographs original cataloger at the University of Georgia.

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