



**BIG
COUNTRY**



CROSSING THE COUNTRY
TOUR 1983

BIG COUNTRY

When Big Country's 'Fields of Fire' soared into the U.K. Top 10 in March 1983, it didn't simply herald the return of former Skid Stuart Adamson, it marked the second coming of the electric guitar as the sound to ring the real changes in contemporary music.

'Fields of Fire' was (and still is) a classic single; a whirlwind of crashing, slashing guitar lines married to a maniac Scots jig with a hard, headlong beat and a battle cry which won its place in the hall of fame through sheer force of arms. With it Big Country cut a broad swathe through soft-porn synthpop and faked-up funk in a way which did the heart good to hear. 'Fields of Fire' burst upon the charts like the light of inspiration, with an unrivalled passion and power. A rousing anthem from the throats and fingers of a band with warrior soul, it gave the lie to the notion that guitar music is dead and buried along with the music of the seventies.

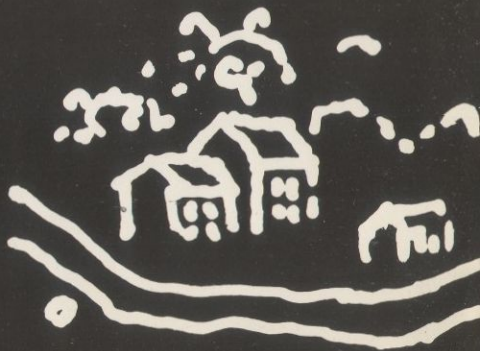


Yet it was Stuart Adamson who wrote the song. He whose guitar like sheet metal cracking first whipped the Skids in for a wild and reckless career which lasted for four years, three great albums and a string of definitive hit singles like 'Into the Valley', 'Masquerade' and 'Working for the Yankee Dollar'. But Stuart's departure in Spring 1981 — deeply disappointed that the band's youthful vigour and fervour had faded into the fashion show of Futurism — signalled the beginning of the end for Scotland's premier punk combo. Singer Richard Jobson remained in London to try his hand at acting, while Adamson returned to his wife and young family in Dunfermline to put in the groundwork on a dream band called Big Country.

The first recruit was another guitarist, 22 year old Bruce Watson — a biker, barfly and punk aficionado who needed no encouragement to leave a job scrubbing out nuclear submarines docked in the Firth of Forth. The memory of his boots glowing radioactive green in a disco still raises uneasy laughter. But the jokes gave way to hard work as the pair slaved over a hot Portastudio and Stuart's dream of Big Country slowly became a reality.



"Even before the Skids, when I was playing dancehalls in Scotland in 1976, I always said I wanted to do things with guitars nobody has ever done before" says Stuart in an accent as thick as porridge. "I wanted to use them as integral, even orchestrated, elements within a song. Not just rhythm and lead guitars. I almost got it right with The Skids, only the enjoyment went out of it after our second album 'Days in Europe'. After we split I felt the pressure on me to get a singles deal immediately and trade on whatever reputation I had. But I felt that would only cheapen what Bruce and I were trying to achieve. So I preferred to wait until Bruce and I had something which could be accepted on its own terms."



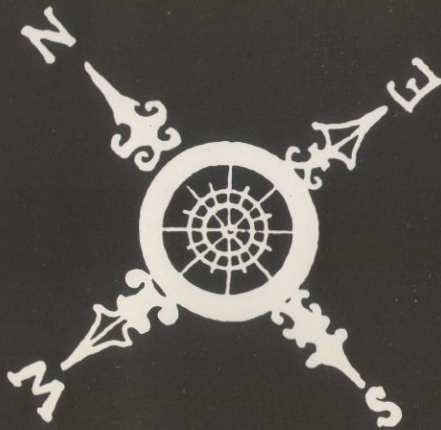
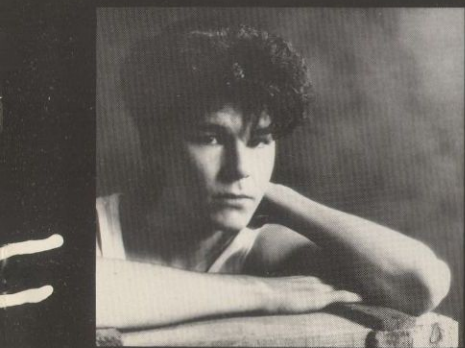
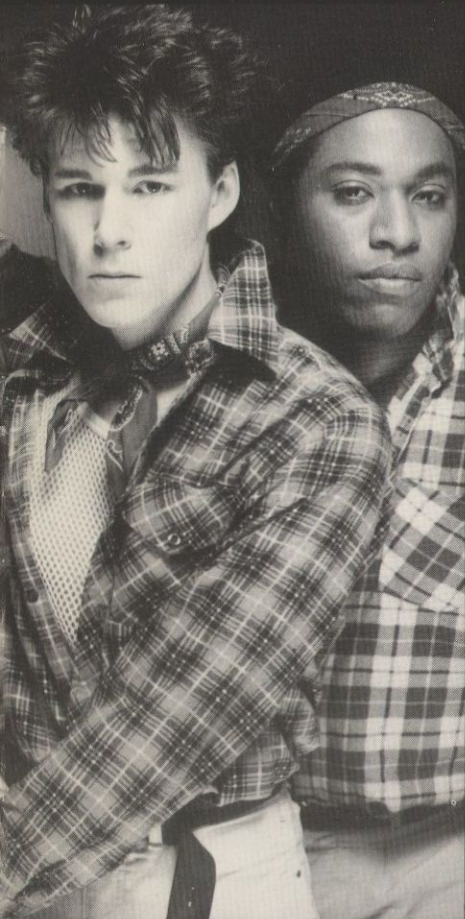
Later that same year Adamson and Watson finally teamed up with two of London's brightest young musicians, 25 years old Tony Butler (bass) and Mark Brzeziński (drums) who were already the envy of rhythm sections many years their senior. Fresh from studio stints with Pete Townshend and the Pretenders, these two shared Big Country's pioneering spirit but also brought real skill and expertise to flesh out the inspiration. Throwing their weight fairly and squarely behind the beat, they transformed Big Country into an all-action, running, jumping, standing still extravaganza and helped the feast of fierce, flailing guitars into something with the kind of poise and precision which sorts out the men from the boys on international stages. After dates supporting first the Jam and then U2, Big Country's live show evolved from great to grand and then to magnificent.



For a 25 year old who has already been through the industry rat race, Stuart Adamson survives with his personal and musical integrity remarkably intact. Indeed, he prides himself on an honesty and sense of responsibility rarely found in any walk of life these days, let alone among rock musicians. Inevitably, therefore, Big Country's career suffered a number of setbacks and false starts before it really got underway. The most notable being a disastrous — but thankfully under-publicised tour, supporting Horror-Rock Star Alice Cooper in the Spring of 1982.

Sadly the band's real splendour was hardly in evidence on their first single for Mercury, the Chris Thomas-produced 'Harvest Home'. Released in October 1982 it only struggled into the Top 100 and was largely ignored by all but the band's staunchest fans. But with New Wave wonderboy Steve Lillywhite at the controls, the next single 'Fields of Fire' smashed into the charts at 69, peaking at Number 10 five weeks later. Big Country's name was made — and the ghost of The Skids was laid forever.

And now with a follow-up 'In A Big Country' already on schedule and an album of great material in the final stages of production, it looks like Big Country are shaping up into the sort of band to make history.



Strangely though, for a man who is proud of his heritage, Stuart Adamson tries hard to play down the Scottish angle. Even though the flavour and feelings, the anguish and anger of his homeland colour every song he sings, every word he writes and every note he plays. But then he is one to react against labels of all kinds and refuses to allow anybody to pin tags on Big Country.

"You can't describe music without putting up barriers and drawing boundaries. Once you do that you find yourself closely identified to one particular scene and suddenly you're compartmentalised. There's too much of that going on at the moment, I don't want it happening to us. Big Country are no more Punk or New Wave than we are Heavy Metal, Progressive or Pop. If you really want me to tell you what we're about then I'd say Big Country play stirring, spirited stuff. Music to move mountains by!"

Chas De Whalley

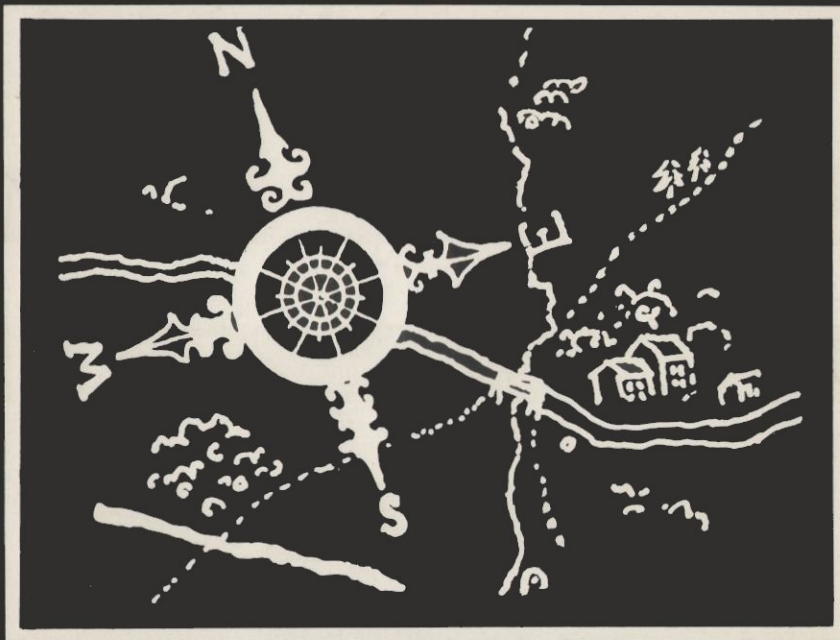
BIG COUNTRY ARE:

NAME: STUART ADAMSON
 DATE OF BIRTH: 11.4.58
 PLACE OF BIRTH: MANCHESTER
 PREVIOUS GROUPS: TATTOO, THE SKIDS
 FIRST LIVE PERFORMANCE: CROSSGATES INSTITUTION, SCOTLAND
 INSTRUMENTS PLAYED: GUITAR SYNTHESIZER
 MUSICAL INFLUENCES: BILL NELSON, LEONARD COHEN

NAME: TONY BUTLER
 DATE OF BIRTH: 13.2.57
 PLACE OF BIRTH: HAMMERSMITH
 PREVIOUS GROUPS: PETE TOWNSHEND SENATORS
 FIRST LIVE PERFORMANCE: QUESTORS THEATRE EALING
 INSTRUMENTS PLAYED: BASS GUITAR
 MUSICAL INFLUENCES: JIMI HENDRIX

NAME: MARK BRZEZICKI
 DATE OF BIRTH: 21.6.57
 PLACE OF BIRTH: SLOUGH
 PREVIOUS GROUPS: SILVER STREAM, ON THE AIR, SHEA RAMAH
 FIRST LIVE PERFORMANCE: SLOUGH WORKING MEN'S CLUB
 INSTRUMENTS PLAYED: DRUMS PERCUSSION
 MUSICAL INFLUENCES: JAZZ FUNK, FUSION, JEFF BECK

NAME: BRUCE WATSON
 DATE OF BIRTH: 11.3.61
 PLACE OF BIRTH: TINNINS ONTARIO
 PREVIOUS GROUPS: DELINX, EUROSET
 FIRST LIVE PERFORMANCE: LADY OF DOURDES CHAPEL, DUNF
 INSTRUMENTS PLAYED: GUITAR
 MUSICAL INFLUENCES: BILL NELSON, ALEX HARVEY



MANAGEMENT:
 THANKS TO:

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THE CREW:

Tour Manager — Charlie Herbert
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 Travel — Trinifold

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