

Ian Anderson – Thick As a Brick 2: Whatever Happened to Gerald Bostock (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01 – *From A Pebble Thrown* 02 – *Pebbles Instrumental* 03 – *Might-have-beens* 04 – *Upper Sixth Loan Shark* 05 – *Banker Bets, Banker Wins* 06 – *Swing It Far* 07 – *Adrift And Dumbfounded* 08 – *Old School Song* 09 – *Wooton Bassett Town* 10 – *Power And Spirit* 11 – *Give Till It Hurts* 12 – *Cosy Corner* 13 – *Shunt And Shuffle* 14 – *A Change Of Horses* 15 – *Confessional* 16 – *Kismet In Suburbia* 17 – *What-ifs, Maybes And Might-have-beens* Ian Anderson - Composer, Flute, Guitar (Acoustic), Vocals David Goodier - Glockenspiel, Guitar (Bass) Scott Hammond - Drums, Percussion Pete Judge - Flugelhorn, Horn (Tenor), Trumpet John O'Hara - Keyboards, Organ (Hammond), Piano Ryan O'Donnell - Vocals Florian Opahle - Guitar (Electric)

Some 40 years after the release of Jethro Tull's prog landmark *Thick as a Brick*, chief Tull Ian Anderson crafts a sequel. Sensibly titled *Thick as a Brick 2*, this 2012 set brings us up to speed with the life of Gerald Bostock, who was a mere lad of 10 at the time of *TAAB* but is now an adult shouldering a myriad of responsibilities. His disappointments and mild triumphs make him a different man than he was, yet underneath it all he's still that recognizable child, and the same can be said for Anderson's music: it's cleaner and streamlined, not as indulgent or idealistic as his younger work, boasting a more sensible structure, yet it still bears all of his signatures from the flute to rambling folk-rock. To criticize *TAAB2* for not having a clear hook to pull you inside is unfair: Anderson is assuming a familiarity with his work, so he's giving himself time to write around the point, taking diversions wherever he finds them, sometimes in the form of eight-minute mini-suites, sometimes in the form of brief two-minute interludes. *TAAB2* doesn't sound contemporary but it doesn't sound classic either -- it sounds caught between the two eras, as if it was recorded in 1990. That may turn off some listeners, but they're the kind who wouldn't spend any time with an Anderson album anyway. Those diehards who are still curious after all these years will find *Thick as a Brick 2* an effective, if not quite compelling, sequel to a beloved classic. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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