



David's solo work, his time with Kevin Ayers and Roy Harper, plus Bedford today (bottom pic).

related." The album was his first where he properly integrated synthesizers into his compositional palette. "In those days you had to have a different synthesizer for every timbre. When we did a concert of *The Odyssey* at the Royal Albert Hall in January 1977, I had Jon Lord [Deep Purple], Mike Ratledge [Soft Machine], Dave Stewart [National Health], Neil Ardley [composer of *Kaleidoscope Of Rainbows*], Pete Lemer [then of Seventh Wave] and Mike Oldfield as well as the Queen's College Choir (where I was teaching) helping me out. A galaxy of synth-playing superstars!" laughs Bedford.

The piece contains one of Bedford's most evocative pieces, *The Sirens*. Its sumptuous haunting choral theme, pitched against a sombre undertow of menace, reflects

Bedford's love of the human voice. "I don't like wobbly sopranos in opera. I love the music but once the soprano starts wobbling, I don't like it. So the fact that children's voices don't wobble and are totally pure gives any piece a humanity which people relate to. That's why I use them so much."

In July 2011, a radio broadcast of the concert was released by Gonzo Multimedia on CD for the first time. While he never minds hearing any of his arrangements, (be it Camel's *Snow Goose* or Madness' *Our House*) listening back to some his older albums means "I hear flaws and things which I might do differently perhaps, but I wouldn't revisit any of the old pieces."

Bright and energetic, Bedford is constantly in demand. He's currently working on a piece called *The Wreck Of The Titanic*, a large-scale orchestral production with a choir involving up to 400 school children, as well as also preparing for a reunion with Roy Harper in November 2011, celebrating the singer-songwriter's 70th birthday. "I was involved in his 60th celebration and we revisited all the old songs we'd done in the 70s. Unfortunately his voice had gone down three semi-tones in however many years it was since I'd last worked with him. So I had to go through all the songs and put them down to the appropriate key. That took a bit of work. I'm using Sibelius, the music software now, so I can fix the scores fairly easily. I didn't have this 10 years ago, so had to do it all by hand!"

As ever, Bedford remains unworried about what classical music conservatives think about him. "Thankfully that attitude has largely changed now. Look at people like Johnny Greenwood, Joby Talbot and others, they're all getting into writing for orchestra. Nobody cares nowadays. I'm about to start a piece which includes dubstep! These days nobody minds if you introduce different genres into your work. Some people are stuck in the past, but not me." ✍️

The Odyssey Live is out now via Gonzo. DB plays for Roy Harper's birthday on November 5 at www.southbankcentre.co.uk.

suggested that I buy some lower grade manuscript paper to write out the score because I was working with rock musicians!" Following *Star's End* came *The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner* (1975), *The Odyssey* (1976) and, in 1977, *Instructions For Angels*, his final album for Virgin. Of these, what does he consider to be his most successful? "I think for consistency and for musical flow and it all hanging together it would be *The Odyssey*. It has a very well defined story line with different episodes and very evocative ideas including lots of feeling of the sea and waves. I was able to construct a mood which carries on. It's not a set of separate pieces but all