

Sensation

The Making of The Who's TOMMY

1968 was a time of soul searching for hit making British Rock band THE WHO. With three badly performing singles behind them they needed a big new idea to put them back at the top and crucially to hold them together as a band. Pete Townshend's bad experiences with LSD and his questioning of the cult of celebrity lead him to seek answers. He looked for spiritual inspiration from Indian Spiritual Master Meher Baba who had kept a vow of silence since 1925. Baba's message of love was simple, but the deeper message of discovering reality through different states of consciousness without relying on our natural senses, inspired Pete to create the character of Tommy, the "deaf, dumb and blind boy". Again inspired by Baba, Pete gave his creation extraordinary powers as a Pinball Wizard who soon gathered around him a band of loyal devotees. THE WHO were broke and fragmenting when they started recording and they stayed on the touring treadmill to generate the cash that would pay for the studios and keep their passion and the project alive. When completed the album went on to sell over 20 million copies and it was an exuberant and renewed band that took this unique album on a triumphal tour. It put them firmly back on the musical map and as gigs sold out it became clear that far from losing their magic this most iconic of bands had created a character and a redemptive narrative that struck a chord with fans and non-fans alike. They toured it to vast acclaim and even when the band thought it was a bad gig the audience loved it! Tommy wowed them at Woodstock and at the Isle of Wight Festival. It elevated Pete Townshend from a tunesmith into a composer and crystallised Roger Daltrey into one of the world's leading front men and launched his acting career. Ultimately the story of Tommy has a happy ending both for the fictional character and the band who brought this extra-ordinary being to life. This fascinating film, made with the total co-operation of the band, tells how The Who struggled to create the first Rock Opera – and how its success changed their lives.

New Interviews include

Pete Townshend – THE WHO

Roger Daltrey – THE WHO

Des McAnuff – Director of Broadway version
Richard Barnes – Author “The Story Of Tommy”
Jan Wenner – Founder of Rolling Stone
Richard Stanley – Film maker and friend of Pete Townshend
Mike McInnerney – Illustrator of the album cover
Richard de Curtis – American Rock Journalist
Bob Pridden – Engineer on album recording
David Wild – Rolling Stone journalist
Chris Welch – British music journalist

Archive interviews with Keith Moon, John Entwistle, Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp.



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