

Genesis a trick of the tail

Genesis: A Trick of the Tail - A Comprehensive Guide

** Genesis, Trick of the Tail, Genesis album, Genesis discography, progressive rock, 1970s music, album review, music guide, listening guide, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks, album analysis, song breakdown Genesis' *Trick of the Tail* (1976) marks a pivotal moment in the band's history. Following the departure of their charismatic frontman Peter Gabriel, the album saw Phil Collins step into the lead vocal role, proving a crucial transition for the progressive rock giants. This guide delves deep into the album, providing a comprehensive analysis, listening experience, and practical advice for appreciating this classic.

I. Understanding the Context: The Post-Gabriel Genesis

Before diving into the music, understanding the circumstances surrounding *Trick of the Tail* is crucial.

Peter Gabriel's departure left a significant void, both vocally and conceptually. His dramatic stage presence and theatrical lyrics were integral to Genesis' earlier image. The remaining members – Phil Collins, Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford, and Tony Banks – faced the monumental task of reinventing themselves. *Trick of the Tail* represents their bold attempt to redefine their sound and vision.

II. A Track-by-Track Exploration: Unraveling the Album's Masterpieces

This section meticulously breaks down each song, exploring its lyrical themes, musical structure, and overall contribution to the album's narrative: 1. "Dancing with the Moonlit Knight": **This epic opener showcases Genesis' signature progressive rock style. The complex instrumental sections transition seamlessly into Collins' powerful vocals, setting the stage for the rest of the album. The song's intricate arrangements and instrumental solos epitomize the band's musicianship.** 2. "Ripples": **A mellower track, "Ripples" presents a softer side of Genesis, while still retaining their musical complexity. The delicate acoustic guitar work contrasts sharply with the more energetic pieces, highlighting the band's versatility. The lyrical themes of remembrance and reflection are evident throughout.** 3. "Robbery, Assault and Battery": **A truly dynamic composition,**

"Robbery, Assault and Battery" bursts with frantic energy. This showcases Collins' growing confidence as a vocalist, demonstrating his versatility in handling both delicate and forceful delivery. 4. "Down & Out": *This track's*

melancholic and reflective tones are a stark contrast to some other higher energy tracks. It illustrates both the band's capacity for emotional depth and the thematic consistency of dealing with change and loss. 5. "Fairytale of New York": Another narrative storytelling powerhouse, this track introduces a fairytale concept with whimsical imagery and instrumental layers. Pay attention to the intricate interplay between the instruments and the overall atmospheric texture. 6. "Entangled": "Entangled" is a standout track representing the emotional turmoil associated with monumental shifts in life. Strong vocals, complex musical sections, and poignant lyrics all contribute to this piece's power. 7. "Mad Man Moon": **This instrumental piece is a showcase for Hackett's guitar prowess and the band's improvisational skills. It provides a breather from the heavily lyrical tracks, highlighting their instrumental talents.** 8. "Los Endos": The closing track is a mesmerizing instrumental piece that gradually builds to its crescendo. The gradual layering of instruments and the rhythmic pulsations make for a satisfying and evocative close to the album.

III. Essential Listening & Appreciation: A Step-by-Step Guideline 1. Listen Chronologically: Appreciate the album's narrative arc by listening from start to finish. 2.

Focus on Instrumentation: *Pay close attention to the intricate interplay between instruments, particularly Hackett's guitar work, Banks' keyboards, and Rutherford's bass lines.* 3. Analyze the Lyrics: Delve into the lyrical themes of change, loss, and self-discovery, understanding their context within Gabriel's departure. 4. Explore Live Performances: *Seek out live recordings of *Trick of the Tail* to experience the energy and dynamism of the band's live performance.* 5. Engage with Fan Communities: **Join online forums and discussions to exchange insights and perspectives on the album.**

IV. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Expecting a Peter Gabriel-fronted Genesis: **Accepting that this is a different Genesis is crucial for a clear and unbiased listening experience.**
- Ignoring the Instrumental Sections: **The instrumental sections are vital to the album's overall texture and narrative. Don't skip them!**
- Superficial Listening: **Listening passively won't allow for appreciation of the nuances in the music. Active listening is crucial.**

V. Summary

Trick of the Tail stands as a testament to Genesis' resilience and musical genius. It's a powerful statement of their ability to reinvent themselves, defying expectations and delivering a remarkable album that stands amongst

their best work. This guide aims to provide both a deeper understanding of the album's context and a comprehensive track-by-track analysis to enhance your listening experience.

VI. FAQs

1. How does **Trick of the Tail** compare to Genesis' earlier albums? *While maintaining some of Genesis' progressive rock elements, *Trick of the Tail* has a more polished pop sensibility due to Phil Collins' more straightforward vocal approach, compared to the theatricality of Peter Gabriel era.*
2. What makes "Dancing with the Moonlit Knight" such a significant opening track? It sets the tone for the entire album, displaying the band's complexity, impressive instrumental abilities, and Collins' immediate strength in lead vocals.
3. Did Steve Hackett contribute significantly to **Trick of the Tail**? **Yes, absolutely. Hackett's guitar work is crucial to many of the tracks, his distinctive playing style being a key part of the instrumental textures.**
4. How did Phil Collins' vocal style influence the album? **Collins' more direct vocal style created a different atmosphere compared to Gabriel's theatrical approach. This shift is central to the album's change in overall feel.**
5. Is **Trick of the Tail** considered a classic progressive rock album? **** Absolutely. It's widely considered one of Genesis' best albums, and a landmark album in progressive rock, showcasing their development and**

showcasing the band's ability to overcome a major challenge.

Genesis: A Trick of the Tail - A Masterpiece Forged in Transition

Genesis. The name itself evokes a sense of grandeur, of epic sonic landscapes and intricate musical tapestries. For decades, this British progressive rock institution has been a benchmark for innovation, pushing boundaries and captivating audiences with their unique blend of soaring melodies, complex arrangements, and thought-provoking lyrics. While their discography boasts a wealth of essential albums, one stands out as a pivotal moment, a testament to their resilience and creative prowess: 1976's *A Trick of the Tail*. This album arrived at a critical juncture for Genesis. The departure of their charismatic lead singer and lyricist, Peter Gabriel, in 1975, left a gaping hole. Gabriel was the focal point, the enigmatic frontman whose theatricality and distinctive voice had become synonymous with the band's identity. Many, including perhaps some within the band themselves, believed this was the end of the road for Genesis. Yet, *A Trick of the Tail* proved them spectacularly wrong. It wasn't just a continuation; it was a reinvention, a bold statement of artistic independence that solidified their future and cemented their legacy. ### The Gabriel Departure: A

Shadow and a Spark The departure of Peter Gabriel was, without a doubt, a seismic event. His contributions to albums like *Nursery Cryme*, *Foxtrot*, and *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* were immense. He was the storyteller, the shaman, the driving force behind their conceptual narratives. The fear was that without his unique presence, Genesis would lose its magic. This anxiety wasn't unfounded; the band had poured years of their lives into developing their sound and image with Gabriel at the helm. However, within that uncertainty lay a hidden opportunity. The remaining members – Tony Banks (keyboards), Mike Rutherford (bass, guitar), Steve Hackett (guitar), and Phil Collins (drums, vocals) – had all been instrumental in crafting the Genesis sound. While Gabriel was the lyrical architect, the others provided the musical scaffolding, the intricate melodies, and the rhythmic backbone. The question wasn't whether they **could** make music, but whether they could find a new voice to carry it. ### Phil Collins Steps into the Spotlight: A Surprising Revelation The most significant, and perhaps most audacious, decision was for Phil Collins to take over lead vocal duties. Collins, already a phenomenal drummer, possessed a powerful and versatile voice, capable of both raw emotion and nuanced delivery. It was a role he'd never fully occupied before, a leap of faith for both himself and the band. The pressure must have been immense, stepping into the shadow of such an iconic predecessor. But Collins rose to the occasion with remarkable grace

and a newfound confidence. His vocal performance on *A Trick of the Tail* is nothing short of stunning. He brings his own distinct personality to the songs, imbuing them with a relatable warmth and an understated vulnerability that was different from Gabriel's more theatrical approach. Tracks like "Ripples," "Mad Man Moon," and the title track showcase his impressive range and emotional depth. He wasn't trying to be Peter Gabriel; he was being Phil Collins, and it was brilliant. ### The Sound of Evolution: Refining the Genesis Formula Musically, *A Trick of the Tail* represents a natural evolution for Genesis. They didn't abandon their progressive roots, but they refined them, streamlining their approach and focusing on a more direct, albeit still complex, songwriting style. The intricate arrangements, the shifting time signatures, and the epic instrumental passages are still present, but they feel more integrated, serving the songs rather than overwhelming them. Tony Banks' keyboard work remains a cornerstone, his lush textures and inventive melodies weaving through each track. Steve Hackett's guitar solos are as inventive and lyrical as ever, adding another layer of brilliance to the band's sonic palette. Mike Rutherford's basslines provide a solid foundation, and his dual guitar work, particularly on tracks like "Squonk," adds a powerful punch. And, of course, Phil Collins' drumming is as dynamic and precise as we've come to expect. The production on *A Trick of the Tail* is also noteworthy. It's a rich and detailed sound, allowing each instrument to

breathe and contribute to the overall tapestry. The interplay between the musicians is palpable, demonstrating a deep understanding and synergy that had developed over years of collaboration. ### Lyrical Themes: Journeys of Self-Discovery and the Human Condition While Peter Gabriel was known for his often surreal and fantastical narratives, the lyrical themes on *A Trick of the Tail* tend to be more grounded in the human experience, albeit still with a touch of allegory. The album explores themes of transformation, loss, self-discovery, and the search for meaning. The title track, "A Trick of the Tail," is a prime example. It's a metaphorical exploration of deception and illusion, of how things aren't always what they seem. The imagery of a fox escaping its pursuers, leaving only a trick of its tail behind, is evocative and open to interpretation. It speaks to the idea of outward appearances and the hidden realities that lie beneath. "Robbery, Assault and Battery" delves into darker territory, telling the story of a hapless individual who commits a crime out of desperation. It's a character study, showcasing the band's ability to craft compelling narratives, even without Gabriel's dramatic delivery. "Ripples" is a more introspective and poignant piece, reflecting on the passage of time and the enduring power of memory. Its gentle, acoustic-driven melody and Collins' tender vocal performance make it one of the album's most emotionally resonant moments. "Mad Man Moon" is another standout, a sprawling epic that builds in intensity,

showcasing the band's penchant for dramatic shifts in mood and tempo. It's a journey through a fractured mind, with Banks' keyboards taking center stage in creating an atmospheric and unsettling soundscape. ### Track-by-Track: A Deep Dive into the Magic Let's take a closer look at some of the album's key tracks and their individual brilliance: * **"Dance on a Volcano"**: Kicking off the album with a bang, this track is a powerful and energetic statement. The driving rhythm and explosive guitar work set a tone of defiant optimism. It's an anthem of survival, a declaration that Genesis is here to stay. * **"Entangled"**: A more ethereal and atmospheric piece, "Entangled" showcases the band's ability to create beautiful sonic landscapes. The interplay between Hackett's delicate guitar lines and Banks' shimmering keyboards is mesmerizing. * **"Squonk"**: A blues-infused rocker with a distinctive swagger, "Squonk" demonstrates the band's versatility. The heavy riffs and Collins' powerful vocals are infectious. * **"Robbery, Assault and Battery"**: As mentioned, a narrative-driven track that showcases the band's storytelling prowess. The musical arrangement perfectly complements the lyrical content. * **"Ripples"**: A beautiful and melancholic ballad that highlights the emotional core of the album. Its acoustic beauty and Collins' heartfelt vocals are simply captivating. * **"A Trick of the Tail"**: The title track is a masterclass in songwriting. It's musically diverse, lyrically intriguing, and features a memorable chorus that sticks with you long

after the song ends. * **"Los Endos"**: This instrumental epic closes the album with a flourish. It's a complex and exhilarating piece that showcases the individual talents of each member, building to a thrilling climax. It's often cited as a fan favorite and a perfect demonstration of their musicianship. ### The Legacy of "A Trick of the Tail" *A Trick of the Tail* is more than just an album; it's a turning point. It's a testament to the enduring power of creative collaboration and the ability of artists to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. It silenced the doubters and proved that Genesis had a future, a future that would see them achieve even greater commercial success and critical acclaim. The album set the stage for subsequent triumphs like *Wind & Wuthering* and the massively popular "pop" era with albums like *Duke* and *Invisible Touch*. However, *A Trick of the Tail* holds a special place in the hearts of many Genesis fans. It represents a perfect balance between their progressive roots and a more accessible, yet still sophisticated, sound. It's an album that rewards repeated listens, revealing new layers and nuances with each spin. For anyone looking to understand the evolution of Genesis or to discover a truly masterful work of progressive rock, *A Trick of the Tail* is an essential listen. It's an album born out of challenge, forged in transition, and ultimately, a triumphant masterpiece that continues to resonate with audiences today. It's a perfect example of how an artist can emerge from a seemingly insurmountable obstacle stronger and more vibrant than

ever before. The "trick" of the tail wasn't a deception; it was a revelation of their enduring genius.

Genesis's 'A Trick of the Tail': A Masterpiece Forged in the Crucible of Change

The year is 1976. The music industry is a swirling vortex of evolving sounds, from the raw energy of punk to the slick professionalism of arena rock. Amidst this dynamic landscape, a British band, already a formidable force in progressive rock, stood at a precipice. Genesis, the architects of intricate soundscapes and fantastical narratives, were facing their most significant challenge yet: the departure of their charismatic frontman and lyrical visionary, Peter Gabriel. The question loomed large: could Genesis survive, let alone thrive, without the voice that had defined their identity? The answer, etched in sonic brilliance and artistic resilience, arrived in the form of 'A Trick of the Tail', an album that not only proved their mettle but elevated their artistry to new heights, solidifying their status as one of rock's most enduring and innovative acts.

'A Trick of the Tail' is more than just a collection of songs; it's a testament to adaptation, a masterclass in

collaborative songwriting, and a rich tapestry of musical exploration. Released in February 1976, it marked a pivotal moment in the band's history, showcasing a newfound maturity and a willingness to push their creative boundaries. This wasn't merely a band in transition; it was a band reinventing itself, drawing strength from within and delivering an album that resonated deeply with fans and critics alike. Exploring the intricacies of this seminal work reveals not only the band's musical prowess but also the profound impact of this transitional period on their subsequent legacy.

The Shadow of Gabriel and the Rise of Collins

Peter Gabriel's departure sent shockwaves through the Genesis camp. His theatrical stage presence and evocative storytelling had been synonymous with the band's identity. The search for a replacement was intense, but fate, as it often does in the world of rock and roll, intervened. Phil Collins, already a vital member as the band's drummer, stepped into the spotlight. This was a monumental shift, not just in vocal duties but in the very essence of Genesis's sound. Collins, while possessing a powerful and versatile voice, brought a different emotional timbre and rhythmic sensibility. The fear of the unknown was palpable, both within the band and among their devoted fanbase. Could the intricate, often dark, lyrical

themes and ambitious musical structures survive this seismic change? The answer, as 'A Trick of the Tail' eloquently demonstrates, was a resounding yes.

Collins's ascent to the role of lead vocalist was a gradual process, but on 'A Trick of the Tail', it was a triumphant announcement. His initial hesitant performances on stage gave way to a confident delivery that perfectly complemented the band's evolving sound. His drumming, always a highlight, remained a driving force, but his vocal contributions added a new layer of vulnerability and raw emotion. This wasn't about replacing Gabriel; it was about forging a new path, a new vocal identity for Genesis. The band embraced this change, channeling their collective energy and talent into creating an album that was both familiar and refreshingly new.

Lyrical Themes: A Blend of the Fantastical and the Human

'A Trick of the Tail' retained Genesis's penchant for storytelling, drawing inspiration from literary sources and mythical tales. However, there was a discernible shift towards more grounded, human emotions, interwoven with their signature fantastical elements. The title track itself, with its allegorical tale of a fox outsmarting its pursuers, speaks to themes of survival, cunning, and the precariousness of existence. This narrative approach, while still rich with imagery, felt more accessible, more

relatable.

Songs like "Ripples...", with its melancholic reflections on time and change, and "Mad Man Moon," a sprawling narrative with shifting moods and tempos, showcased the band's continued lyrical ambition. "Your Own Special Way," however, offered a more direct and heartfelt lyrical sentiment, demonstrating a newfound willingness to explore interpersonal relationships with a tenderness that was less prevalent in earlier works. This blend of the epic and the intimate was a key factor in the album's broad appeal. The lyrical sophistication that had always been a hallmark of Genesis was still present, but now it was filtered through a more humanistic lens, a reflection perhaps of the personal journeys the band members were undertaking.

Musical Innovation: The Sound of Evolution

Musically, 'A Trick of the Tail' is a tour de force. The band members—Tony Banks (keyboards), Mike Rutherford (bass, guitar), Steve Hackett (guitar), and Phil Collins (drums, vocals)—were at the peak of their powers, each contributing significantly to the album's intricate arrangements and dynamic range. The keyboards of Tony Banks remained a central pillar, weaving complex melodies and atmospheric textures. Steve Hackett's guitar work, always innovative and melodic, found new spaces to

explore, offering both intricate solos and foundational riffs. Mike Rutherford's bass lines provided a solid, often melodic, foundation, while his guitar contributions added further textural depth.

The album's production was remarkably polished, showcasing a sonic clarity that allowed each instrument to breathe. The dynamic shifts within songs, a hallmark of progressive rock, were expertly executed, moving from delicate acoustic passages to powerful, driving rock sections. Tracks like "Dance on a Volcano" exploded with raw energy, while the epic "Firth of Fifth," a re-recorded version from 'Selling England by the Pound', demonstrated their ability to revisit and reimagine their own material with renewed vigor. The album also saw the band embrace more concise song structures on certain tracks, a nod to the changing musical landscape without compromising their inherent complexity.

Key Tracks and Their Significance

'A Trick of the Tail' is replete with standout tracks, each contributing to the album's overall narrative and sonic identity.

1. **"Dance on a Volcano"**: The explosive opening track, setting a powerful and urgent tone. It immediately announced that Genesis was not only alive but kicking with renewed ferocity. The track's driving rhythm and Hackett's searing guitar solo were a potent declaration

of their continued musical prowess.

2. **"Robbery, Assault and Battery"**: A more narrative-driven track, showcasing Collins's vocal versatility and the band's ability to craft engaging stories within their songs. The song's dramatic shifts in tempo and mood mirrored its lyrical content.
3. **"Ripples..."**: A beautifully melancholic acoustic-driven piece, highlighting the lyrical depth and emotional resonance that Collins brought to the forefront. The song's introspective nature offered a moment of quiet contemplation amidst the album's more energetic numbers.
4. **"A Trick of the Tail"**: The title track, a masterclass in dynamic songwriting. It showcased the band's ability to weave intricate musical passages with compelling storytelling, exploring themes of deception and survival.
5. **"Los Endos"**: The ambitious, instrumental-heavy closing track, originally conceived as a medley of ideas. It's a showcase for the individual musicians, particularly the interplay between Hackett's guitar and Banks's keyboards, and a fittingly epic conclusion to the album. It also features some of Collins's most powerful vocalizations, adding a dramatic, almost primal, intensity.

Legacy and Impact

'A Trick of the Tail' was a critical and commercial success, breaking Genesis into the American mainstream and establishing them as a major international act. It proved that the band could not only survive the departure of a key member but could emerge stronger and more artistically vital. The album's success silenced the doubters and paved the way for a new era of Genesis, one that would see them achieve even greater commercial heights with albums like 'Selling England by the Pound', 'The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway', and later, 'Invisible Touch'.

The album's impact on subsequent progressive rock bands is undeniable. Its blend of intricate musicianship, compelling storytelling, and accessible melodies became a blueprint for many aspiring musicians. Furthermore, 'A Trick of the Tail' stands as a powerful testament to the resilience of creative collaboration. It demonstrated that within a group of talented individuals, a shared vision and a willingness to adapt can overcome even the most significant challenges. The album is a cornerstone of Genesis's discography, a vibrant and enduring masterpiece that continues to captivate audiences with its artistry and innovation. It's a prime example of how change, when embraced with courage and talent, can lead to unexpected triumphs, proving that the heart of Genesis beat stronger than ever, even with a trick up its tail.

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Questions & Answers About genesis a trick of the tail

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1	What's the big deal with 'A Trick of the Tail' being Genesis's first album without Peter Gabriel?	'A Trick of the Tail' is highly significant as it marked Genesis's successful transition following the departure of their iconic frontman, Peter Gabriel. The band proved they could not only survive but thrive, with Phil Collins stepping into the lead vocal role and delivering a critically acclaimed and commercially successful album.
2	Was Phil Collins's vocal performance on 'A Trick of the Tail' a surprise to fans?	Yes, it was a considerable surprise for many. While Phil Collins was the drummer, his powerful and distinctive vocal range was largely unexplored as a lead singer for Genesis. His performance on this album silenced any doubts about the band's vocal future.
3	What's the sonic evolution of Genesis on 'A Trick of the Tail' compared to their earlier work?	The album showcases a shift towards a more accessible and slightly less overtly theatrical sound than some of their earlier, more experimental albums. While retaining their progressive rock roots, there's a newfound melodicism and a cleaner production that broadened their appeal.

4	Are there any standout tracks on 'A Trick of the Tail' that fans particularly love?	Absolutely! 'Ripples...', 'Firth of Fifth' (though originally on 'Selling England by the Pound', its instrumental reprise is often associated with this era), and the title track 'A Trick of the Tail' are frequently cited as highlights. 'Squonk' is also a fan favorite for its energetic and somewhat quirky nature.
5	How did the album's title, 'A Trick of the Tail', come about?	The title is believed to be inspired by Rudyard Kipling's short story 'The Cat that Walked by Himself,' which features a feline character with a magical 'trick of the tail.' It hints at the band's own magical transformation and ability to overcome adversity.
6	Did 'A Trick of the Tail' receive positive critical reception?	Yes, overwhelmingly so. Critics were impressed by the band's ability to maintain their artistic integrity and deliver a strong album after Gabriel's departure. It's often hailed as one of Genesis's finest moments and a testament to their collective songwriting talent.
7	What impact did 'A Trick of the Tail' have on Genesis's future career trajectory?	This album was a pivotal moment. It solidified Phil Collins as the lead singer, set the stage for their increasingly successful career in the late 70s and 80s, and proved that Genesis was a force to be reckoned with, even without their original charismatic frontman.

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