

Biography

Contributed by Karen
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Beginnings : Birth Of The Beat.... Roger Andrew Taylor was born to Jean and Hugh Taylor on April 26, 1960, in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, England. Roger and older brother, Steve, lived only a few doors down from Jeff Lynne of ELO. Quiet, shy Roger often found himself at the back of the classroom at Castle Bromwich Junior and Parkhall Secondary schools. According to Roger, he was painfully shy as a kid. "If I saw someone walking down the street that I knew, I'd walk across the other side of the street." His shyness earned him the nickname "Roger the Dodger." As a kid, Roger played harmonica and guitar, but age 10 was banging on saucepans and milk bottles with his mother's knitting needles. He later purchased his first kit (Edgware B & H) for only 55 pounds and joined a band shortly after. During the Seventies, 75% of Birmingham was working in the car industry, Hugh Taylor included. Roger refused to fall into that rut. "You could either escape through football or music and I wasn't much good at football." He taught himself how to play drums by playing along with his favorite records. Though he tried learning from books, Roger admits he was impatient. "I wanted to go straight into playing drum solos and playing with a band." But, he believes, learning to play along with the likes of Jethro Tull, Genesis and Yes allowed him to develop his own style. A style influenced by former Roxy Music drummer, Paul Thompson, Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones, John Bonham and his idol, Tony Thompson (Chic/ The Power Station). But his biggest influence, The Jacksons, which happens to be the first concert he attended. Before Duran Duran, Roger and friends formed a couple of bands. Probably the most talked about: Crucified Toad and the Scent Organs. Though often referred to as punk, Roger says the sound was more new wave oriented; nothing like the Dead Kennedys.

The Legacy.... In 1979, after the departure of Simon Colley and Stephen Duffy from Duran Duran, Andy Wickett met Roger at a party and invited him to a rehearsal. Roger later formally auditioned and was hired on the spot. Nick Rhodes' drum machine is replaced and Roger gets his first professional gig. By 1980, the classic line-up of Nick Rhodes, John Taylor, Roger Taylor, Andy Taylor and Simon Le Bon was in place. Duran Duran's reputation was built through music videos, which accentuated their fashion-model looks and glamorous sense of style. Without music videos, it is likely that the band's pop-funk -- described by the group as the Sex Pistols meets Chic -- would never have made the group international pop stars. Their 1981 self-titled debut met with some underground dance club success, but their sophomore effort Rio made them an international phenomenon--largely due to heavy MTV rotation. "Durlia" swept the globe, with Duran Duran plastered on every conceivable piece of merchandise and the covers of practically every teen mag. Their third album, Seven And The Ragged Tiger, was equally successful, hitting number one in the U.K. and number eight in the U.S., spawning the hit singles "Union of the Snake" and "The Reflex," their first number one U.S. hit and their second British chart-topper. The band took an extended break after completing their year-and-a-half-long international tour in the spring of 1984. In November, they released the non-LP single "Wild Boys," which reached number two in the U.K. and the U.S., where it was added to the live album Arena. By 1985, Duran Duran fever was beginning to cool off, and after the band completed the title track for the James Bond film A View to a Kill, the group went on hiatus. July 13, 1985 saw Duran Duran's last on-stage performance as the Fab 5 for quite some time for the Live Aid charity event. Early in 1986, Roger Taylor announced he was taking a sabbatical from the group; retiring to the English countryside with the band's blessing.

Family Man.... Roger married his longtime girlfriend, Giovanna Cantone, in a small ceremony on July 27, 1984, in Naples, Italy. Simon Le Bon served as Roger's Best man. Andy Taylor and his wife, Tracey, were preparing for the birth of their first child and unable to attend the wedding. The wedding was followed by a reception on a ship that cruised a bay for 12 hours and later a honeymoon cruising up the Nile River in Egypt. The Taylors, which eventually grew to include James, Ellea and Elliot, lived on a farm in Gloucester during Roger's hiatus from Duran Duran. After 20 years together, Roger and Giovanna decided it was time to explore their own interests. The Taylor children remain in close contact with their father while he's touring and have even been spotted at shows along with many of the other Duran kids. Roger and Giovanna maintain an amicable relationship. On April 26th, Roger confirmed rumors about his up and coming marriage to girlfriend Gisella Bernales. On May 12, 2007, Roger married Gisella in St Lucia surrounded by friends and family. Their wedding was featured in OK Magazine.

Life Beyond Duran Duran.... The band began to experiment musically in 1985. Roger joined Nick and Simon in Arcadia for the release So Red The Rose in 1986. He also assisted Andy and John with the Power Station. Lending percussive effects to "Some Like It Hot." That same year; Live Aid. "It wasn't a great moment for the band. I think everyone was in different spaces really. It was the first time we had done a show after John and Andy were in Power Station and I was in Arcadia and there was some disquiet within the band at that time." Living the quiet life on his farm didn't stop Roger from making music. Ten years after his departure from the band, he returned to help with the Thank You album. Roger contributed to three songs for Thank You: "Perfect Day", "Watching the Detectives" and "Jeepster." However, "Jeepster" never made the final cut. Since 1994, he has been invited to play on following albums. In May 1997, along with Mark Anthony of Fuzzbox, Roger formed the short lived group Freebass. Freebass performed a few shows in Birmingham, and recorded Sweet's "Love is like Oxygen", but received little airplay. In early 1998, the group disbanded. Roger continued to record material in London with Jake Udo. In 1999, Roger and Jake Roberts released a limited edition 12" vinyl single called "Lost This Feeling" on Roger's label, RT Music. It was sold via website outlets only. Roger released a limited edition 12" single in 2000 under the name of Funk Face on his own independent label, RT Music. The single, "Shine," featured two different mixes: Stab Mix and Funk Mix, along with a press sheet. The Fab 5 Are Back.... Roger received a call from John and Simon in 2000, and, after some hesitation, agreed to rejoin the band for a reunion and to record a new album. "We knew if we were going to do this, it had to be a full-on

commitment. There had to be a new album and a new creative chapter for the band," Roger said. After meeting in 2001, it was apparent they still had the chemistry between them. They performed around the world in 2003. In October 2004, Duran Duran released *Astronaut*, their first studio album with the original five since *Seven and the Ragged Tiger*. The *Astronaut World Tour* kicked off in 2005, with numerous tour dates throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia. Roger told a reporter in 2004, "I'd forgotten how much I missed it. It's a powerful seat, the drummer seat. It's all coming from what you do with that kick drum. That's why I started playing, to play live and feel the adrenaline from the audience. When you experience that and then you don't have it, you feel like something is missing. To get that back has been incredible." Duran Duran released their latest recording, *Red Carpet Massacre* (2007). The group worked with famed producer Timbaland on some of the tracks.