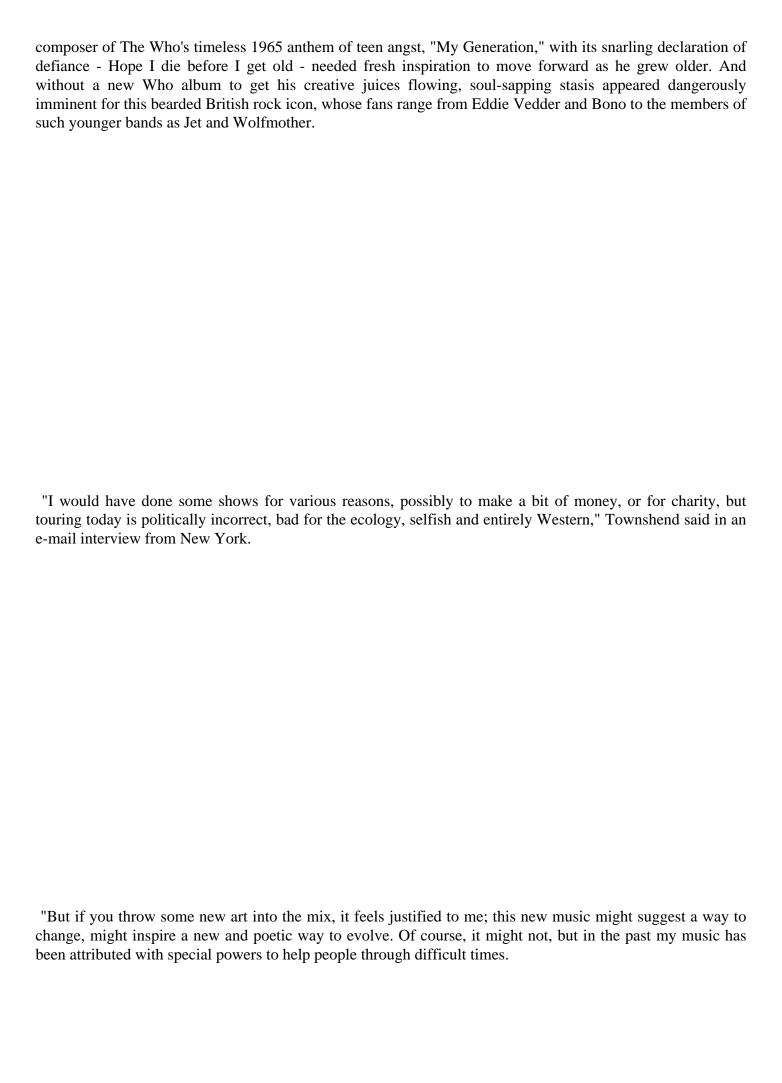
Pop Talk: New music lifts Townshend's burden by George_Varga For fans of The Who, last year's "Endless Wire" represented the English rock band's first album of new songs

since "It's Hard" in 1982. But for Pete Townshend, The Who's guitarist, sometime singer, principal songwriter and all-around creative visionary, "Endless Wire" represented nothing less than life or death for the London band he has led for more than 40 years.

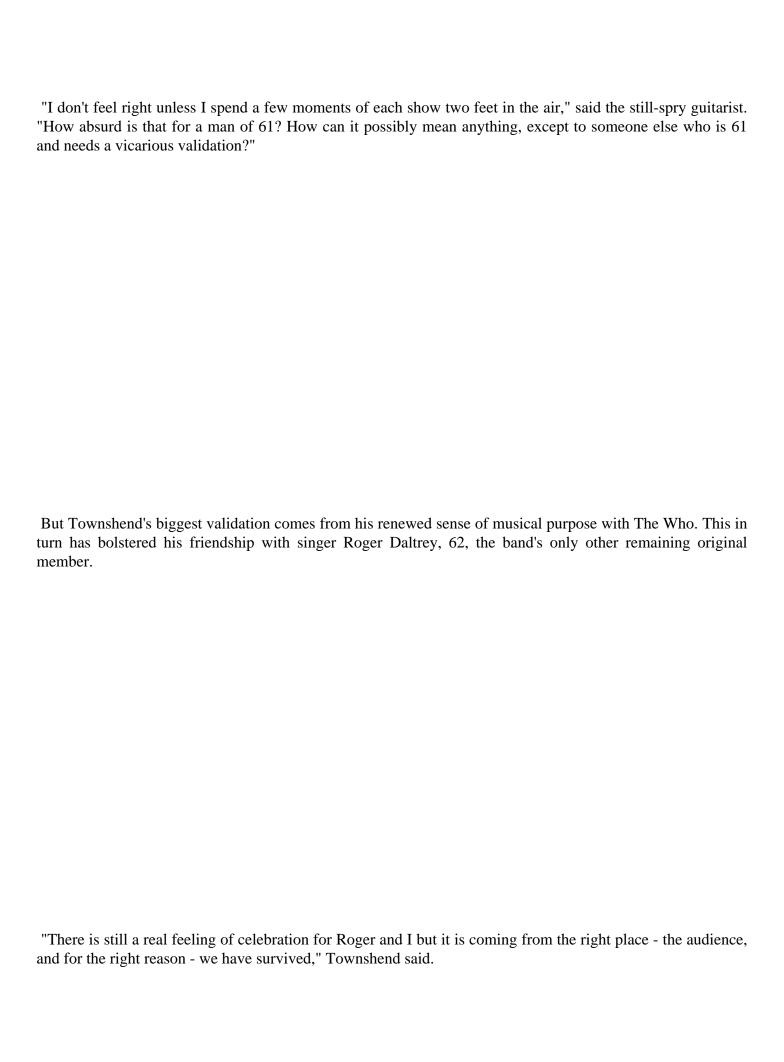
"I could not have done any more, and made it very clear that I would do no more big tours without new music," said Townshend.

More shows, yes. A major tour, no.

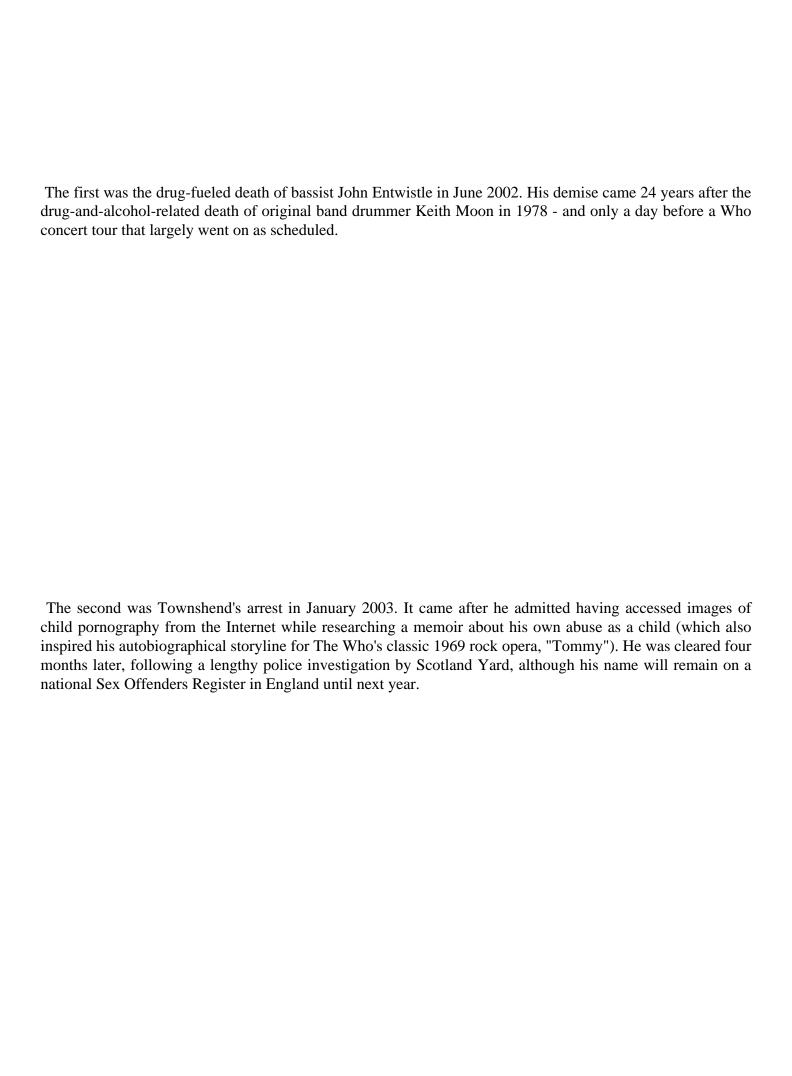
THE WHO - The Who's new album, 'Endless Wire,' shows off Pete Townshend's renewed sense of musical purpose, and has bolstered his friendship with singer Roger Daltrey, the band's only other remaining original member. CNS Photo Illustration by Jacie Landeros. Townshend, who in the 1960s helped lay the foundation for punk rock, power pop, hard rock and rock opera, didn't want to repeat himself any longer. The



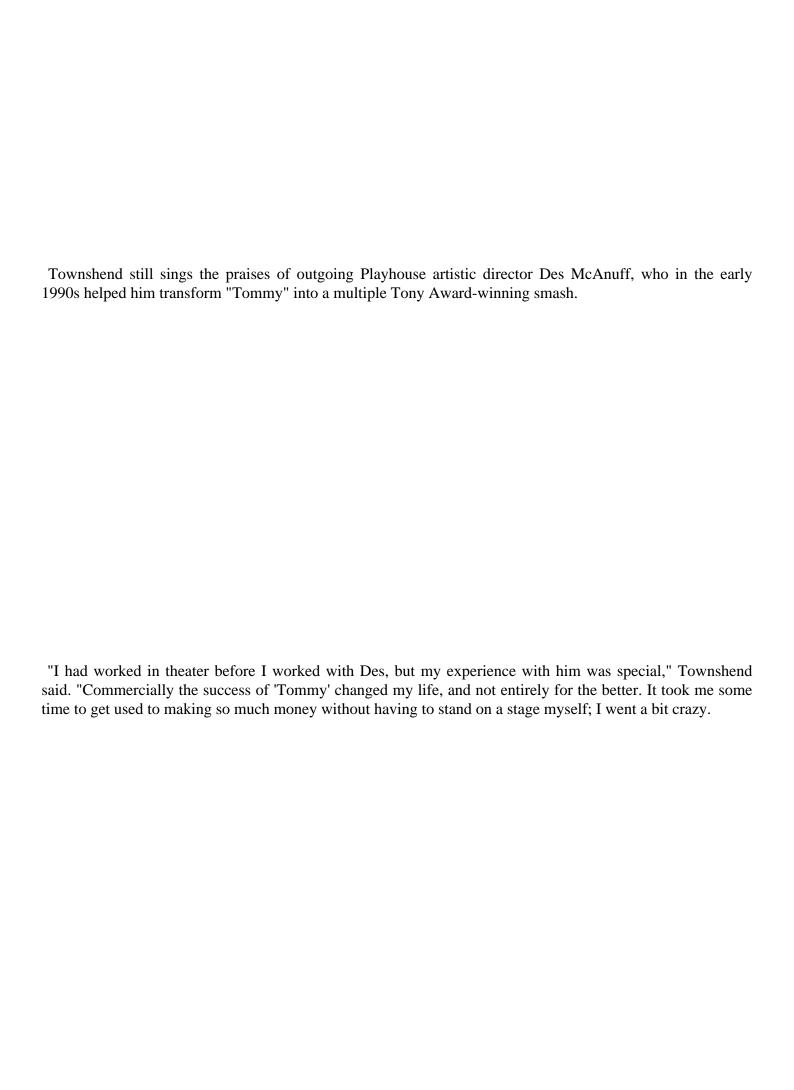
"We'll see what happens with the new stuff. It's helping me."
Townshend seems very much like a man reborn, artistically speaking, as he demonstrated at the first of The Who's two sold-out concerts last November at the Hollywood Bowl. Ditto on "Endless Wire," which features a 10-song mini-opera.

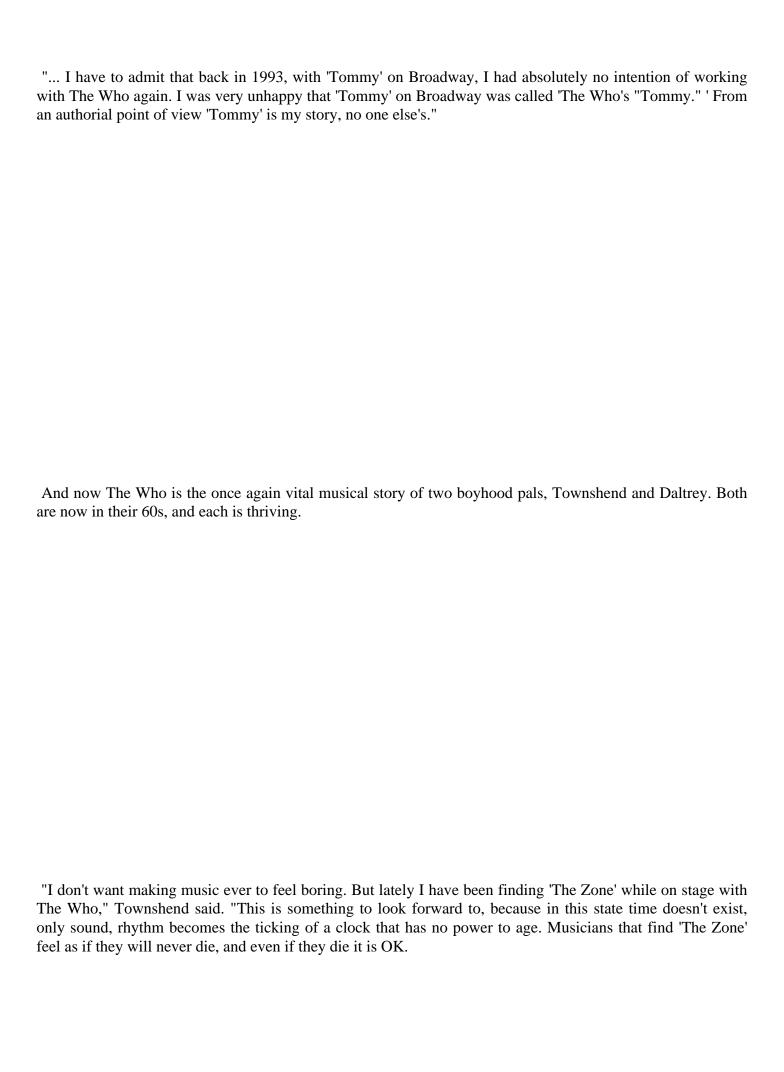


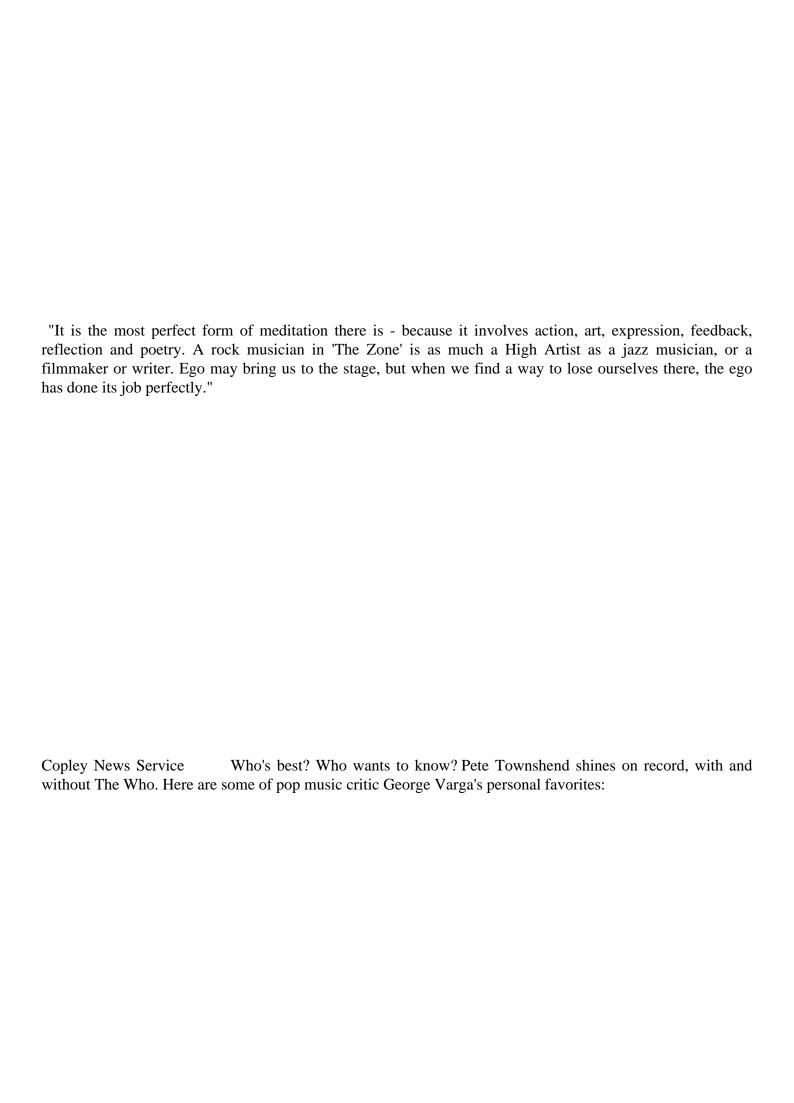
"Our music is a real mixture of acoustic, light rock and heavy rock. That reflects better what I have always done in my own life and solo work. So at last Roger and I feel we both can view The Who as a vehicle for every shade of my songwriting, not just the bravura and bombast. Some fans may feel slighted, or cheated in some way, but the old music is there always, and it is a joy to play it live because of the way it triggers an audience to an unexpected level."
Nearly five years in the making, "Endless Wire" was delayed - and almost derailed - by two dramatic events.



"Child porn enraged me," said Townshend, who has rarely addressed the issue in interviews since his arrest.
"The only good thing about my arrest was that I had to put a cap on that rage. If I had gone on with my rage-driven campaigning I would probably have been shot by some branch of the Balkan Mafia or agents of some burgeoning dot-com empire that was building Wall Street flotation stats based on porn delivery dollars counted in billions. Sometimes a broken nose and a badly cut eye means you have to stop the fight. Somebody saved me."
So, a decade earlier, did the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego.







- § "The Who Sings My Generation" (1965): Still one of the most ferocious debut albums by any band. Highlights: "My Generation," "The Kids Are Alright."
- Â\\$ "Tommy" (1969): The Pretty Things beat The Who by a year with the first rock opera, but "Tommy" is the more daring and satisfying. Highlights: "Pinball Wizard," "I'm Free."
- § "Live at Leeds" (1970): One of the most combustible live albums ever. Get the CD reissue, which adds a whopping 27 songs to the original, six-song LP. Highlights: "Magic Bus," "Summertime Blues."
- § "Who's Next" (1971): Originally planned as an expansive concept project, "Who's Next" was pared down to a single album by co-producer Glyn Johns, but what an album it is! Musically and emotionally, this set a standard for rock, and beyond. Highlights: "Won't Get Fooled Again," "Behind Blue Eyes."
- § "Quadrophenia" (1973): Wildly ambitious and, at times, unwieldy, this double-album achieved a heady degree of grandeur without sacrificing its hard-rocking grit and fire. Highlights: "5:15," "Love, Reign O'er Me."
- § "Rough Mix" (1977): A duo project with Ronnie Laine, this aptly titled collaboration finds Townshend at his most earthy and unpretentious. Highlights: "Heart to Hang on to," "Till the Rivers All Run Dry."
- § "Empty Glass" (1980): The lyrics to some of these songs are so intensely personal that Who singer Roger Daltrey felt uncomfortable trying to perform them when Townshend first presented them to the band. The result is perhaps Townshend's most moving solo outing, with added urgency coming from his then-rapidly deteriorating personal life. Highlights: "Let My Love Open the Door," "Rough Boys."
- § "The Lifehouse Chronicles" (2000): Townshend released this six-CD set himself in an effort to document his greatest artistic failure: A 1970 concept album intended as his sequel to "Tommy." Highlights: "Teenage Wasteland," "Baba O'Riley."
- § "Pete Townshend: Live La Jolla Playhouse" (2001): Recorded at a pair of mid-2001 solo shows in California, this two-CD set captures The Who's leader at his most direct and intimate. Highlights: "The Sea Refuses No River," "St. James Infirmary."

Join together with the brand At least for The Who, yesterday's parody is today's reality.

When "The Who Sell Out" was released in 1967, the album included several songs that were mock advertisements, including "Heinz Baked Beans," "Odorono" and, prophetically, the luxury automobile-championing "Jaguar." Today, classic songs by The Who are prominently featured on TV commercials - and as the theme songs for all three "CSI" TV series.

Some fans regard this as a real-life sellout by The Who. But Pete Townshend, the veteran band's leader, pays them no mind, especially in an era when radio playlists grow ever narrower and young and veteran bands alike fight for exposure.

"I'm for sale," he said. "I'd sell flakes of my skin if anyone would pay for them. What I wouldn't do is try to sell flakes of your skin. 'CSI' has been vital to The Who ... it has extended our reach internationally."

What about musical purity?

"Purity? Forget the art, the purity of Pete is being cheapened," Townshend said.

"But hey, that's show business, and at least I'm not working down a (coal) mine."

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Here's a look at some of The Who's songs used on TV shows:
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- § "Baba O'Riley" "CSI: New York" (2004);
- § "Won't Get Fooled Again" "CSI: Miami" (2002);
- § "Who Are You?" "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" (2000).

On TV commercials:

- § "Magic Bus" Nissan Quest minivans (2006);
- § "Baba O'Riley" Cisco Systems networking equipment (2006);
- § "The Real Me" NBA draft (2006);
- § "I'm Free" Saab automobiles (2005);
- § "Baba O'Riley" Hewlett-Packard computers (2004);
- § "Happy Jack" Hummer jeeps (2003);
- § "I Can See for Miles" Sylvania SilverStar high-performance car headlights (2004);
- § "Baba O'Riley" Nissan automobiles (2000);
- § "Won't Get Fooled Again" Nissan automobiles (1999).

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