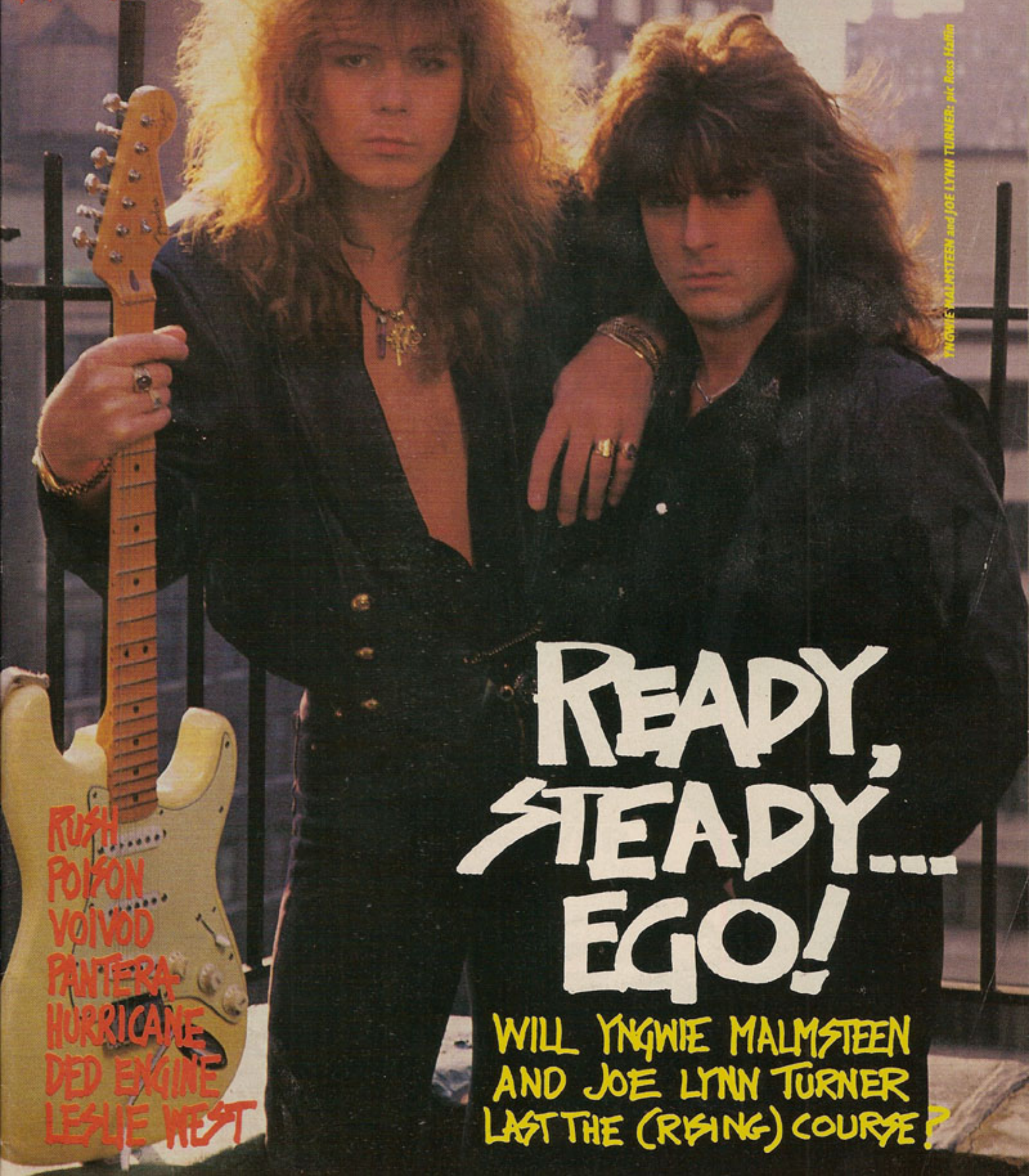


No 186 May 7, 1988 90p

£1.32 Eire

# ROCK



YNGWIE MALMSTEEN and JOE LYNN TURNER: pic Ross Haffin

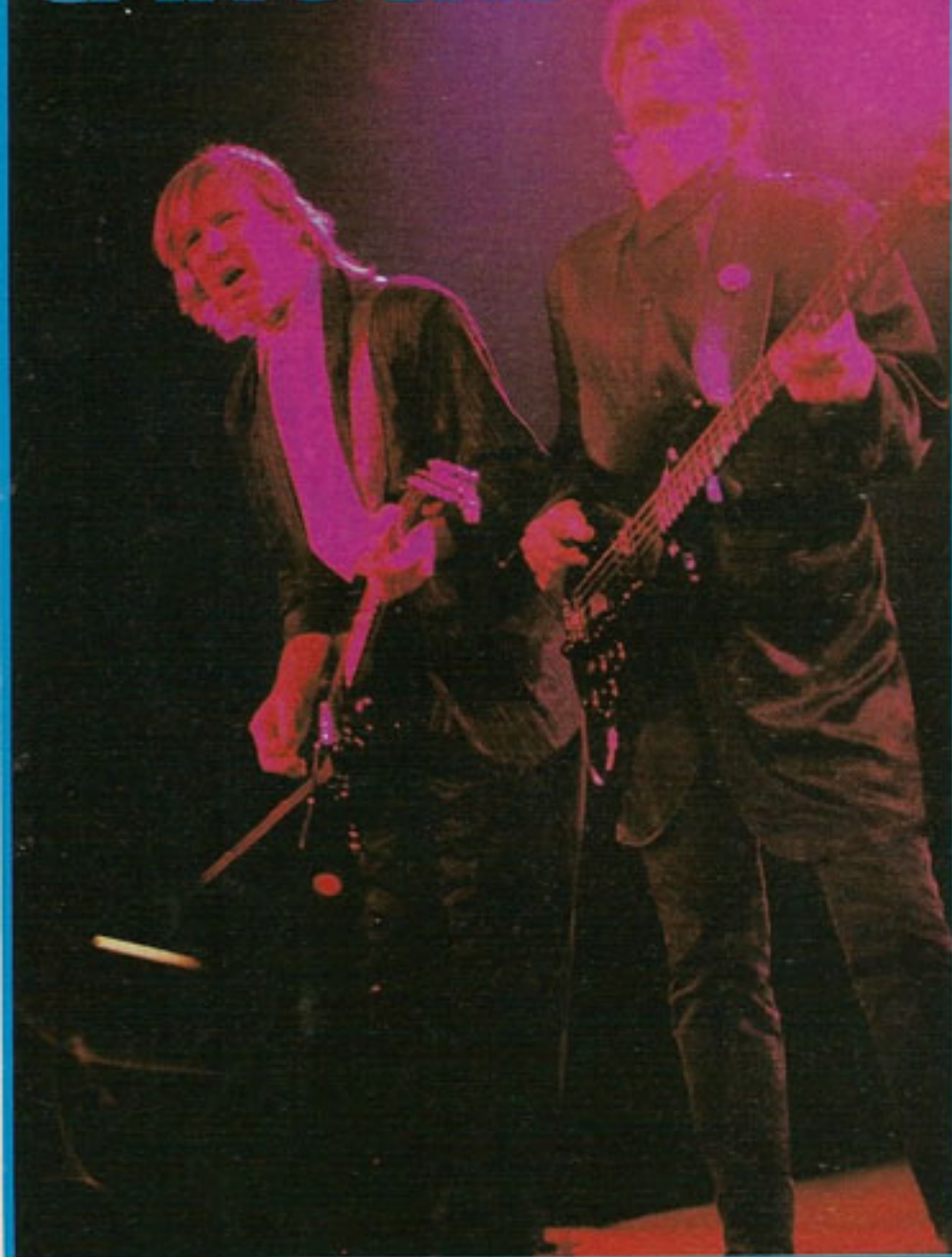
## READY, STEADY... EGO!

WILL YNGWIE MALMSTEEN  
AND JOE LYNN TURNER  
LAST THE (RISING) COURSE?

RUSH  
POISON  
VOIVOD  
PANTERA  
HURRICANE  
DED ENGINE  
LESLIE WEST

# KONCERTZ

## KING CANUCKS



**RUSH: GROWING old with grace**

### RUSH Birmingham NEC

RUSH'S ONLY remaining long hair, Geddy Lee, looking fit and in fine fettle, scuttles off stage at the end of an effortless two hours. I take a look around the enormous, sold-out expanse that is the NEC and think. I think about the remarkable achievement of this band Rush, from their humble beginnings as enthusiastic Zep copyists to... well... to an institution.

There ain't many bands that can fill stadiums in each and every corner of the globe while still keeping a tourniquet-tight grip on their own art and integrity. There ain't many acts like Rush that can combine the inherent overblown pomposity of stadia rock with both a human touch and a capacity for the intellect. Yeah, Rush are a thinking man's band in the nicest sense of the term.

They ain't po-faced (how could they be when bassist/vocalist/keyboardist Geddy skips about like a Disney cartoon character?) but they offer their audience something that's way above the simple 'hey rock 'n' roll'. How can I explain? Aw shucks, you just have to see them to really understand.

Rush are all about growing old with grace. When I look at a band like Judas Priest, I have to grit my teeth at the plain old embarrassing nature of these old men squeezing into their leather strides. When I gawp at Deep Purple, I cringe at the sheer boredom on those guys' faces. When I look at Rush, I see three guys who've really got their act together when it comes to doing what comes naturally.

The kimonos and the hippy drippy barnets of yore are long gone, but what you've got is a Rush that offer something a

whole lot different but equally as entertaining and exciting. Alex Lifeson is honest enough to play the guitarist bit in a dapper suit 'cause he'd look a right dick head any other way, and he's using a whole new angle to enhance his music. The image is more from the inside rather than the outside.

That image is a truly creative joy. The lights are quite awesome, both used on stage with subtlety and beauty and also out front over the crowd, where the punters are bathed in a myriad of brilliant colours. The band incorporate an elaborate and striking laser show beamed onto the roof of the NEC and onto the backdrop behind the group. Each piece of artistry relates to the song, such as the runner who moves in time to the beat during 'Marathon'. Richly impressive.

Then there are Rush's famous pieces of video film, all superbly constructed and capable of adding a whole new perspective to their live performance. I wouldn't be so presumptuous as to claim to actually understand all these pieces, but, hey, I'm sure Neil Peart could explain.

Of course, all this perceptive visual backdrop wouldn't mean a monkey's if the music wasn't happening, but Rush have had enough years in the game to have that side of things sewn up. Consummate musicians and thoughtful songwriters, for the musically minded amongst the audience it was a joy to watch.

Stuck behind the majority of the sound system, square on to the side of the stage, the actual sound wasn't as good as it could have been, Lifeson's guitar floating up, up and away into the roof of the NEC. I'm sure, had I been out front, things would've been hunky dory, but I wasn't too bothered because I could witness Peart's masterful drumming, be it on a lurid pink acoustic kit or a Simmons job that swivelled round during the likes of 'Red Sector A'. Perfection!

The majority of the material was culled from the last three albums, and while I'd been a little disappointed in some of their tunes such as 'Turn The Page' and 'Prime Mover', they certainly cut a more interesting piece of cloth live. My favourite moments would have to be opener 'Big Money', 'Subdivisions' (complete with marvellous storyboard vids and a cool glimpse of Toronto's CN tower), 'Limelight' and encore 'Tom Sawyer'. Rush at their techno-blasting best!

And the band must have been enjoying themselves, too, throwing in an acoustic orientated 'Closer To The Heart' and snatches of '2112' as an encore. Hey, there was even comedy as Lifeson's suit grooved

to the Zeppelinesque groinal thrust of 'In The Mood'. Laugh? I actually banged my head!

This really was a consummate performance by this most intelligent of rock bands. Rush have always understood the important maxim that you've got to grow old, but you should at least try and do it with style. Rush have got tons of that, and the sold-out NEC didn't need any reminding of that particular fact!

HOWARD JOHNSON

### SUPERTRAMP Royal Albert Hall, London

THE SIGHT of serried rows of well-heeled fans rocking silently back and forth in their seats was one of the more eerie spectacles during two sell-out shows.

The band have expanded their line-up to take in a whole horde of LA session musicians. Apart from mainmen John Helliwell (saxes, jokes) and Rick Davies (keyboards, vocals), they have pepped up their sound and image by adding good-looking long-haired Mark Hart on guitars and vocals, who sang like a well-trained bird.

There was no support band, no interval, just a succession of jams interspersed by well-arranged songs, all with that distinctive Supertramp mix of passion and melody epitomised by tunes like 'Bloody Well Right' and 'Logical Song'.

They kicked off with 'You Started Laughing', drummer Bob Siebenberg laying down a relentless, unswerving beat which was to last all night, broken up by the energetic tonal colours provided by percussionist Steve Reid. Altogether there were some eight musicians wandering about the stage, constantly swapping instruments, while Rick Davies tended to remain at his command post by a huge grand piano.

"This is real music, with no machines, played by real men... except me," said John Helliwell who acted as MC in between some superb tenor sax blowing, when he quoted from Duke Ellington's 'Rockin' In Rhythm' and added Lester Young's riff 'Tickle Toe' at crucial moments.

Scenes of the American Depression were screened during 'Better Days', and I was delighted to see they used the famous 1952 film 'London To Brighton In Three Minutes' during 'Asylum', with trains hurtling at the speed of a Hunter jet fighter. And so the band ploughed on, reaching a climax with a bluesy 'Hoochie Coochie Man'.

Supertramp cruise along like a well-oiled Rolls Royce (I was going to say sewing machine), spotless, gleaming and in a world of their own.

CHRIS WELCH