KERRANG!

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READY, STEADY... EGO!

Will Yngwie Malmsteen and Joe Lynn Turner last the (rising) course?

RUSH
POISON
VOIVOD
PANTERA
HURRICANE
DED ENGINE
LESLEY WEST
KONCERT

KING CANUCKS

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 prick brand 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 assessed with both used on stage with subtle and beauty and also out front over the crowd where the pinetors 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 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 them.

Overall, all this impressive visual backdrop wouldn't mean a monkey's ass if the music wasn't happening, but Rush have had 15 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, a saxophone (or to the side of the stage, the actual sound wasn't as good as it could have been. Lifeson's guitar solo was lost into the roof of the NEC. I'm sure, had I been out front, things would've been much drier, but it was too late because I could witness Peart's masterful drumming, be it on a luscious pink acoustic kit or a Simmons kit that swung 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 'Tom the Piper's Son' and 'Primus Mover,' they certainly cut a more interesting piece of cloth live. My favourite moments would have to be opener 'What You'Ve Got,' 'Subdivision,' (complete with marvellous story board vid and a cool glimpse of Toronto's 'Coca-Cola neon at night,' 'Limelight' and even more Tom Sawyer.' Rush at their technocly-blasting best!

The band must have been enjoying themselves, too, throwing in an acoustic orientated 'Closer To The Heart' and songs such as 2112. Still our go-to encore. Hey, there was even comedy as Lifeson's suit grooved to the Zeppelin-esque groan at the end of 'In The Mood.' Laugh? I actually banged my head! This really was a complete performance by this most intelligent of rock bands. Rush have always understood the importance of growing old but you should at least try and do it with style. Rush have got tons of that, and the sold-out NEC doesn't need any reminding of that particular fact!

HOWARD JOHNSON

SUPERTRAMP

Royal Albert Hall, London

THE SIGHT of several rows of well-heeled fans rocking silently back and forth in their seats was one of the more eerie spectacles during two sold-out shows. The band have diversified their line-up to take in a whole horde of LA session musicians, apart from mainstays John Helliwell (saxes, jokes) and Rick Davies (keyboards, vocals), they have popped up their sound and image by the addition of Mark Lane on guitars and vocals, who sang like a well-trained bird.

There was no support band. no interval, just a succession of tunes 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 Sutcliffe laying down a relentless rhythm which was to last all night, broken up by the energetic tonal colours provided by keyboardist Steve Reid. Altogether there were some eight musicians dancing about the stage, combining the 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 Halliwell who acted as MC in between some superb tenor sax blowing, when he quoted from Duke Ellington's 'Rockin' In Rhythm' and added Lesley Young's riff 'Tickle Toe' at crucial moments.

Scenes of the American Depression were screened during 'Birdie Davie,' and I was delighted to see they used the famous 1952 film 'London To Brighton In 24 Hours,' with trains hurtling at the speed of a Hunter jet fighter. And so the band ploughed on, reaching a climax of blues 'Hoochie Coochie Man.'

Supertramp cruise along like a well-oiled Rolls Royce, gentle, lovely, spotless, gleaming and in a world of their own.

CHRIS WELCH

RUSH: GROWING old with grace

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 oxpense 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 tour ticket: tight grip on their own art and integrity. There ain't many acts like Rush that can combine the inherent overblown popness 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 no-faces (how could they be when bassist/vocalist 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 straies. When I gaze at Deep Purple, I cringe at the sheer tawdriness of those guy's 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 kinos and the hippy burnetch of yore are long gone, but what you've got is a Rush that offer something a

CHRIS WELCH