

JUNE '74 25p

# MUSIC WORLD & **BEAT** INSTRUMENTAL

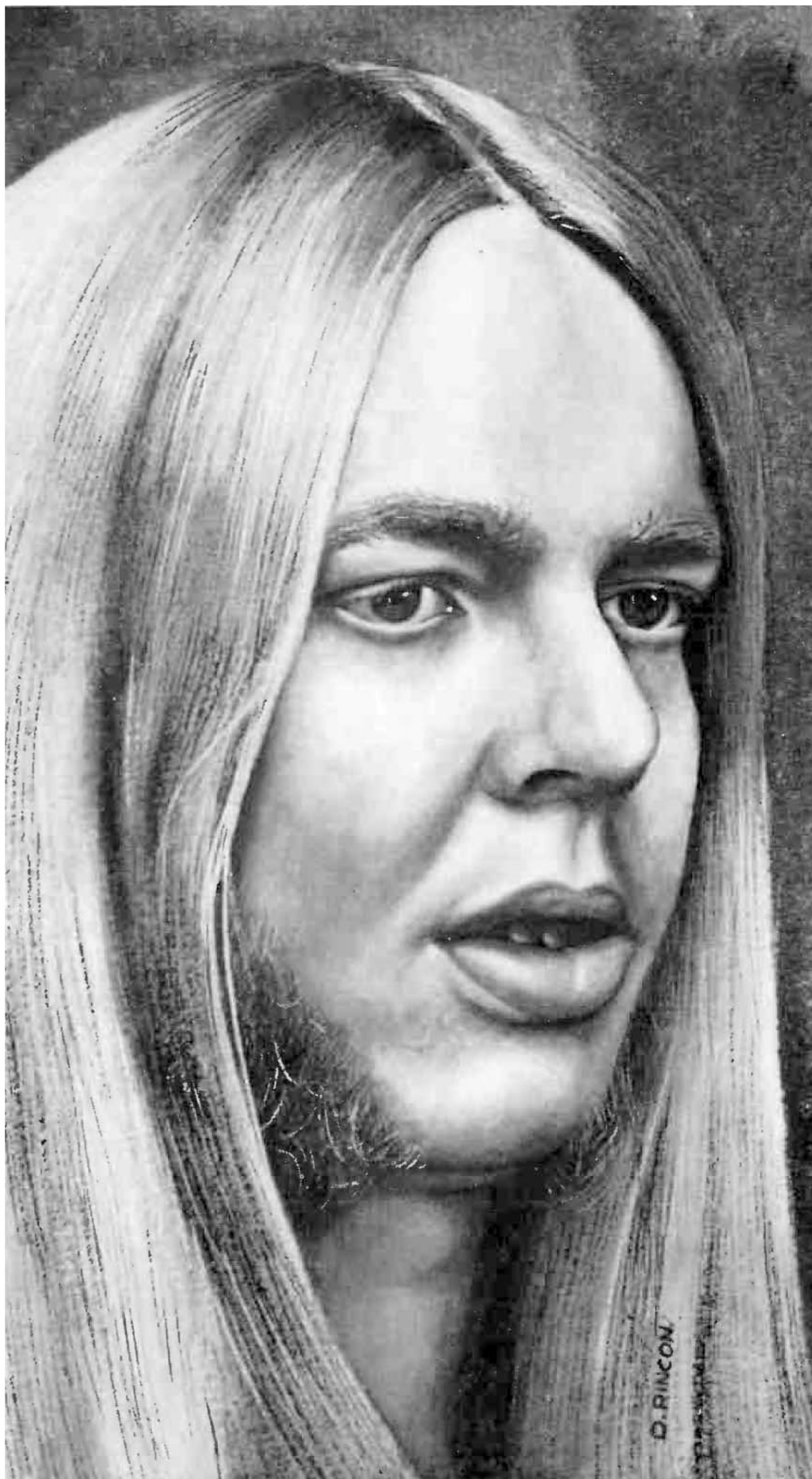
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**RICK  
WAKEMAN:  
THINKS IN  
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**ALVIN  
LEE:  
TEN YEARS AFTER  
IS A MONEY MACHINE  
HOW TO FORM  
A BAND!  
HANK MARVIN:  
ON THE COLD-BLOODED HYPE!**

# Wake



**B**ORN to be a superstar, trained to use the piano as his vehicle, Rick Wakeman has belied all the traditional beliefs that you have to 'pay your dues' before you make it.

He made it with absurd ease and looks like he's now going on to eclipse his fellow members of Yes as his solo career snowballs. Who is this demon of ambition, what drives him onwards at such a pace and does it give him time for living outside of his work?

'I just love being on the road. I've been touring for four years now and I'm still not tired of it. Some members of the band have been on the road for eight years and I can understand why they're not quite so keen as I am, but I feel that music only really exists when it's being played to an audience. I live from performance to performance.'

The most important performance of Rick's meteoric career was at the Festival Hall a couple of months ago when he previewed and recorded his recently-released album *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth*.

## CONCERT

That performance had echoes of an earlier gig, when Rick played his first major concert with a band called the Strawbs. That was at the Queen Elizabeth II Hall (a few yards from the Festival Hall), and the band took the courageous step of recording their *Antiques And Curios* suite live at the concert. Then it was an incredible strain, none of the band were used to live recording and nobody was sure just how the concert would go. The gamble A&M took in financing a mobile was considerable, but their faith paid off and not only was the concert a huge success, but the album was to come to be generally regarded as a milestone for the band.

## PRAISE

As a typical example of the pattern that was to develop around him, Wakeman was singled out of that concert for ecstatic praise and from then on his keyboard playing seemed somehow to dominate the Press lineage about the Strawbs. While Wakeman was with the band they found high, critical praise and they were followed by a comparatively small, but intense group of ethnic enthusiasts. It is, perhaps, ironic that they didn't

# man's Solo Journey

BY RAY HAMMOND

find mass success until after he had left to find his own brand of fame with Yes.

On stage at the Festival Hall for the performance and recording of his 'Journey Album' Rick had the advantage of several years' experience with one of the world's top bands. In recent months Yes have taken to recording all dates so the agony of a live recording he experienced on *Antiques* had been dulled by the years and the miles into insignificance. Root cause of the adrenalin this time was sheer terror!

## SCARED

'I have never, ever, been so scared as I was about that concert. I have played before nearly 100,000 people in the States, but never have I been so terrified. It actually hit me halfway through Yes' British tour. Someone asked me if the arrangements were finished and with the concert three weeks away I realised that I hadn't even begun to think about them. The whole orchestra had been hired, too!

'From then on the whole thing developed into a nightmare – literally. I didn't sleep at all for three nights before the gig. In fact all the arrangements for the concert were messed up. The tickets went on sale while I was on tour with Yes and when I got back I found that I couldn't even get seats for my mum and dad. In the end I had to buy some tickets for £15 each from a ticket tout.'

## MUSICAL

Yes have undoubtedly been one of the most musical bands to break through the transatlantic barrier and make it big in the land of the dollar. Has enormous wealth conflicted with Rick's intense interest in music?

'I'm still as musical as I ever was. I still play as much as I can in my spare time, but I do find that my head gets terribly involved with the business.'

'I mean I only got back from the States last week and I've spent hours with my accountants, that's a real drag. The budget was a real killer for me. I've got five mortgages and, of course, there's no tax relief now on any but the first mortgage. It's costing me about £500 a week until I manage to get rid of some of the property.'

When I first met Rick he had just joined the Strawbs and was

absolutely flat broke. The man's no different to talk to now, he doesn't look any different (except for a Tiffany wristwatch) and meeting him is just the same as it ever was (except he arrives in a Rolls).

'When Yes asked me if I'd like to join I must admit my first question was about money, not even what sort of music I'd be playing. I said, "How much?". They said, "£50 a week", and I said "Yes".

'With the Strawbs I'd been on £30 a week and they always paid a week in arrears. Yes paid a week in advance so that change over was the first time I really had any money in my pocket. I had a £70 overdraft at my bank and they were about to throw me out of my flat for not paying the rent and that meant I could pay them off and have a few quid in my pocket. I just remember that I went out and blew it. That was the first time I consciously remember having any money.'

Rick now has a £70,000 overdraft – which means he's rich enough to be heavily in debt.

'I think it's absolutely lunatic that I can have £60,000 or £70,000 in Jersey, £200,000 in the States, £400,000 worth of property and £100,000 worth of cars and I can't afford to decorate my front room. My accountants are telling me that whatever I do I mustn't spend money here. And it's serious enough to stop me

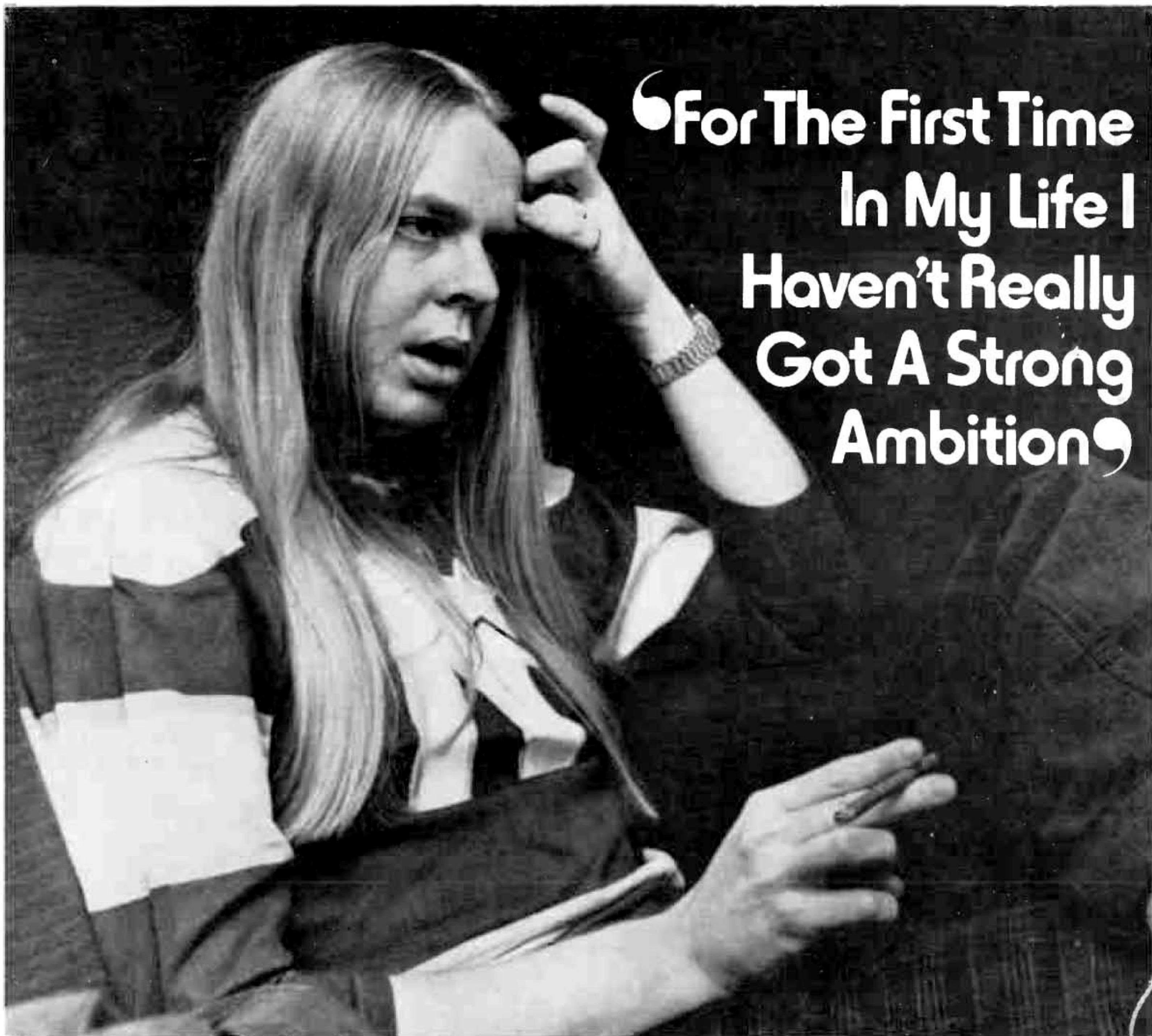
going out and buying clothes or something like that.'

Mind-boggling amounts trip from Rick's tongue with the ease of long association. But what were the first signs that he was becoming rich instead of merely wealthy?

'I think it was the property thing that really brought it home. After a

‘ My First Question Was About Money ’





‘For The First Time  
In My Life I  
Haven’t Really  
Got A Strong  
Ambition’

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while it started to get silly for us just to take wages and the accountants said we should just ring up whenever we wanted anything and they would send a cheque. In fact we went bloody mad and we overspent terribly in the beginning:

## PROPERTY

‘Our manager called me in one day and told me to go and look for a new house, around £30,000. I thought he was having a joke with me and at first I didn’t take it in. He kept insisting though and although I liked the house I already had in Harrow, I had to start thinking about bigger things.

‘I bought my house in Gerrard’s Cross and then I started to buy more property and that is what really brought home our success. Another thing that made me

realise the situation was my hobby. I’m a car nut and I’ve been able to buy the most amazing cars. In one case I was able to find the actual coachbuilder who made an old Bentley that I’ve got and there were tears in his eyes when he saw it.’

One of the most indicative points in Rick’s lifestyle is that he now thinks in Dollars. Continued exposure in the US coupled with huge US earnings have re-educated him to work in Dollars and view sterling as a foreign currency. Despite that, Rick doesn’t like the States.

‘Every time I go there I get sick. I suppose that’s because I’m only there to work hard, but nevertheless, I associate America with bad-feelings. I could never live there, having a refuge like England to come home to is very important.’

Despite the fact that Rick didn’t

have to endure the slog that most musicians endure before reaching the top, he pre-paid for success throughout his childhood.

## MUSCLES

He’s stated he believes that his keyboard ability is entirely due to starting the piano before he went to school and learned to write. He believes that his hand muscles developed for the piano before any other precision skill (like writing or drawing) and thus he has had a considerable advantage. During the years when most youths are concerned with football and dating Rick was at his piano and his heart was set on being a concert pianist. He extended his studies right through to a course at the Royal Academy when he was daunted by the almost fanatical dedication of some of the overseas students arriving to study. He

saw an opening in rock and he was gone, a dropout with years of study and practice behind him.

For Rick now there is little left to achieve as a group member.

‘For the first time in my life I haven’t really got a strong ambition. There’s lots of things I’d like to do, but it’s no stronger than that. I’d like to develop my solo career because I enjoyed doing the *Henry VIII* album and the *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth* so much. I got the idea for “Journey” from reading the book. The film isn’t really accurate so I based the music on the book.

‘Originally I was planning to do a solo tour in this country to promote the record, but things have got so expensive that a tour would lose so much money that it’s not possible. Eventually, I’d like to tour but there’s no firm plans at the moment.’