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OH, YES!

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OH, YES!



The Yes in concert.

JOHN FRIEDLANDER DAILY NEWS

NO!



Keyboarder Rick Wakeman has "gone solo."



NO!

Yes co-founder John Anderson is gone, too.

By BILL CARLTON

ARE YOU READY for the fresh new Yes? The British supergroup, which opened a three-night stint at the Garden Thursday, has been reconstituted. It's now three parts Yes (Chris Squire, bass; Steve Howe, guitar and Alan White, drums) and two parts Buggles (Trevor Horn, vocals and bass and Geoff Downes, keyboards).

The rock world was shaken up a few months ago when Chris Squire, who founded the band with Jon Anderson a dozen years ago, announced that Anderson and keyboarder Rick Wakeman left "to pursue solo careers," as they say.

Scores of local fans are furious over the mind-boggling lineup, but apparently they did not know that Anderson and especially the flamboyant Wakeman would be among the missing at the Garden until they had already bought their tickets. They demanded their \$12.50 back—but aren't getting it.

A spokesman for promoter Ron Delsener says the fans have a point but that technically Delsener is not obligated to give refunds. The spokesman blames the Yes management for the brouhaha, noting that ads for previous Yes concerts always listed the boys in the band. "It should have been explained but it wasn't," the spokesman said. "We had many angry calls. They said they didn't pay to see this band."

Chris Squire, the highly respected bass player with Yes, didn't know anything about the ticket uproar when I spoke with him last week, but admits that the breakup was bound to disconcert many among the band's huge following: "It was shocking but it had to be done. With five creative personalities in the band it has always been hard to contain Yes. When you play with the same people for so long you tend to take things for granted. We needed to expand as people. The split was done in the name of music. Steve and I had a high-energy approach in mind, music that wakes up the radio."

"But Jon was aiming at more mellow sounds and Rick was too airy, sort of floating around. He'd rather put icing on the cake than be part of the mix. There was no aggravation. We're still friends though I haven't spoken to them. I wish them success and they probably will have it."

Remember the Beatles, I mean the



Yes:(l-r)Steve Howe, Geoff Downes, Alan White, Chris Squire, Trevor Horn.

It 'Buggles' the mind, but this hybrid band just won't take no for an answer

Buggles? They didn't do much over here but the pop duo from England was doing great at home and on the Continent with records like "Video Killed the Radio Star." They were looking for a manager and came to Brian Lane, who manages Yes.

"It was fate," Squire says. "Just when our band was breaking up we bumped into the Buggles in the office. We had never met them before and got into some interesting discussions." Lane ended up signing the Buggles, but before the ink was dry on the contract Trevor and Geoff decided to nix their group and become Yes-men.

Ardent admirers of the old Yes were up in arms: "No! No! No!" they moaned. "How dare these two hack purveyors of ear candy defile a band of Yes' legendary status?"

But Squire felt differently: "It's refreshing to work with them." From a technical standpoint, he thinks the newcomers are every bit as good as the departed musicians. Downes, for instance. He doesn't tickle the ivories as much as Wakeman did, Squire says, "but Geoff's power lies in understatement."

Despite the controversy, Yes tickets are selling briskly. Still, there are plenty of seats available for all three

nights. Yes has a dandy new album to spring on the fans, and it seems that in today's concert world that is a *sine qua non*. Not even an established superstar like Chicago or Alice Cooper can play the Garden any more without it. The superstars coming into town on the heels of hit albums—the Commodores, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Bob Seger or Queen, all of whom are playing the Garden soon—all are expected to go SRO.

In their new album, "Drama," Yes didn't take any chances alienating the faithful with a new wave or punk posture—they sound more like Yes than Yes. It's full of their tried-and-true brew of orchestral, dramatic, art-rock extrapolations. Their 11 previous records (which garnered 16 gold and four platinum plaques) established a heady style of rock variously described as "pagan grandeur," "heathen magnificence," "Vesuvius erupting" or simply "the utter annihilation of the universe as we know it." Now that's dramatic.

"Drama" is just as daring and fanciful; it's exploding with brilliant and elaborately crafted symphonic rock tunes. With the aid of weird, evocative, mythical (dare I say psychedelic?) lyrics that would strain the interpretive abilities of a James Joyce scholar,

Yes takes you on a fantastic voyage every time out. The choicest cut is "Tempus Fugit," a blistering, complex rock/reggae song with more layers than a wedding cake. It's a bass player's romp and gives Squire a workout.

Diehard fans are calling "Drama" a return to Yes-terday. "But going back isn't the right term," Squire says. "Reawakening is. And don't call it new wave because new wave is very similar to our earlier albums. We were going back that way anyway and the new members helped reawaken our original sounds. I much prefer 'Drama' to 'Tomato' (their most recent album). It has more work on a group level."

Squire says they haven't changed their improvisational approach to composition, either. They still go into the studio with a few themes in mind, blow on them together and see what happens. "The new Yes is more concentrated," Squire says. "More detailed, more integrated. We're all equals in the band; it's a form of democratic communism. No one sound predominates. A whole structure is what we're after."

"We don't stick to formulas like disco or new wave. We like to surprise the listener. Everybody had a hand in writing the new album. Trevor Horn helped with the lyrics. He's a very strong lyricist (and if you think these lyrics are obscure, compare them to "Tales From Topographic Oceans"). It's a cinematic approach. The lyrics are meant to create some kind of picture, a strong one."

"There was a sense of urgency about the album. We had to get it out before we went on the road so the fans would know what to expect. We're trying for the same sound in concert that we get in the studio. We always do."

With their famous revolving stage, pop-art logo and four tractor-trailers crammed with gear, Yes took off on their grand tour. They opened in Toronto, came here, are crisscrossing the country and wrapping up in late October with two shows at the Nassau Coliseum.

Has the fresh Yes soured the faithful and cost them their superstar status? "I don't think so," Squire says. "But if they start throwing rotten eggs we'll know for sure."



Chris Squire on bass.



Alan White on drums.



Steve Howe on guitar.

RICHARD CORKERY DAILY NEWS