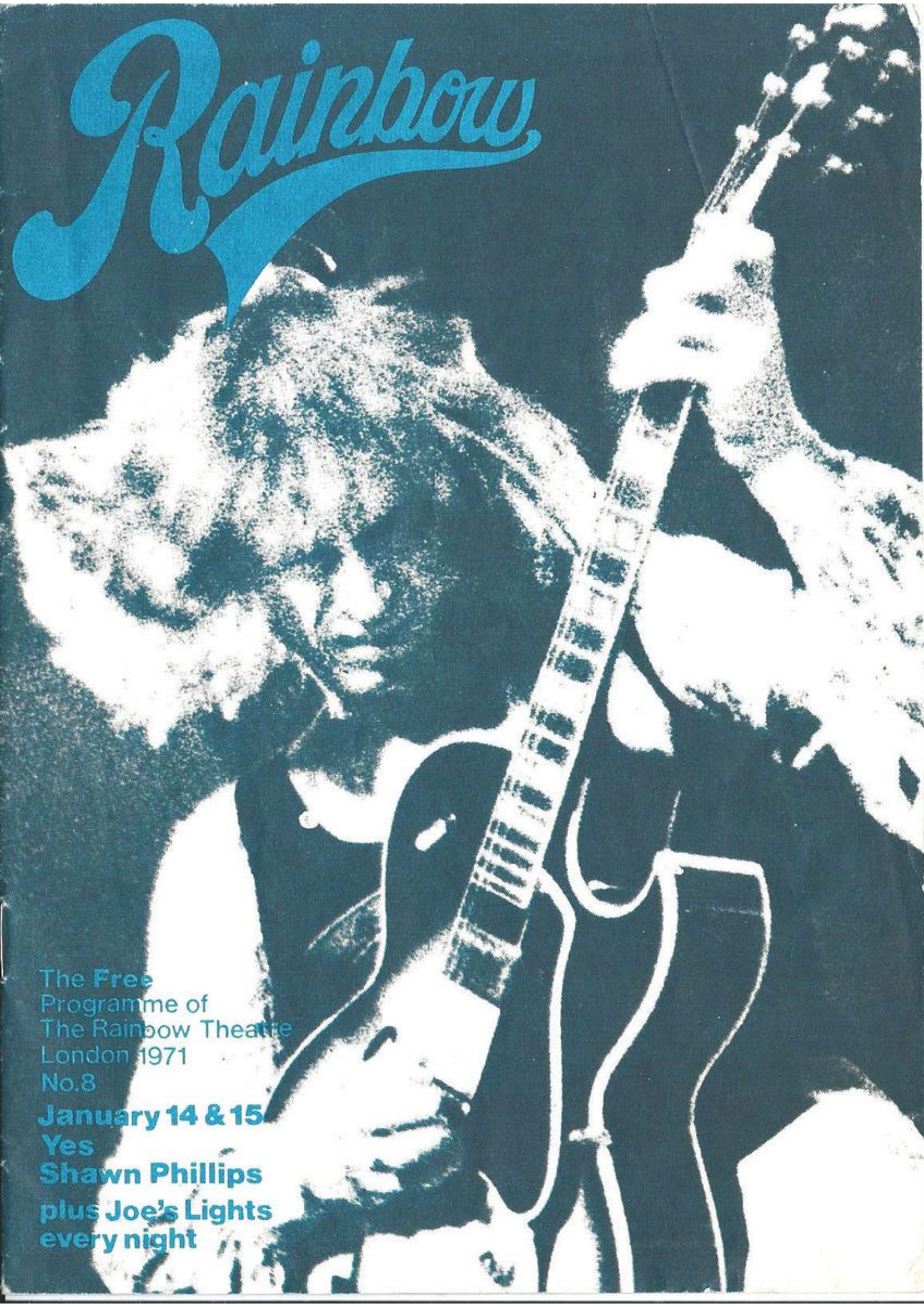


Rainbow



The **Free**
Programme of
The Rainbow Theatre
London 1971

No.8

January 14 & 15

Yes

Shawn Phillips

plus Joe's Lights
every night



WE HAVE NO BANANAS

Mark Williams

Summer '69. John Mayall and Fleetwood Mac were loyally leading a musical revolution that dictated that any band worth its 6-wheel Transit must bash out twelve bar blues accompanied by gross facial contortions that suitably reflected years of paying dues in such unlikely ghettos as Grimsby, Notting Hill Gate and, ultimately, Regent Sound Studio 'A'.

That summer you could walk into any Bloos Club or festival compound and watch tricky guitarists sporting three day beards and fashionable faded Levi shirts, strangling their axes and generally telling it like it was before rushing home to the wife and kids in their Cortina and Zodiacs.

Few bands escaped the short-lived economic attractions of the blues boom. Those who did, unless they were called the Tremeloes, usually faded into obscurity. But on Tuesday nights that year you could walk into the Marquee and stamp around to a bustin' version of Lennon and McCartney's 'Every Little Thing' played by a band who hadn't even paused to consider whether white men could sing de blues or not. They were playing upfront, commercial pop music that was as complex and carefully constructed as it was underrated. And they're still playing it, only now people are listening: Yes, of course.

So when even our large-charge teen idols have regularly taken embarrassingly large side-steps toward the fashionable during their flight to the great gold record factory in the sky, it's rather odd to come across a group that have developed their game along logical and honest lines in apparent ignorance of major trends.

'Twas over four years ago when Jon Anderson left his native Accrington and a band called The Warriors to find the streets of London weren't paved with gold. Jack Barrie, host of music biz boozorama, La Chasse Club, (and later the manager of the Marquee), introduced Anderson to an affable giant name of Chris Squire whose band, Syn, had just packed up. The two decided the thing to do was form a band and after a little trouble with young Bill Bruford who at one stage was torn between Leeds University and Yes' drum chair, they started getting together some tight arrangements of Anderson & Squire originals and some especially neat material by Byrds, Beatles and Rogers & Hammerstein. Remainder of the band comprised organist Tony Kaye and another ex Syn-er, Pete Banks, on guitar.

Their music has certainly developed and flowered over the years but stylistically it has changed very little, despite two personnel changes. Don't believe a word of it? Okay fella, check out the first track of their earliest Atlantic album (580 190), 'Beyond and Before'. Then listen to the opener on their newest LP, (Atlantic 2401 019), and get your brain scrambled by 'Roundabout'. Different songs, yes, but that same tightness, that same razor sharp counterpoint, contrasting weighty, intricate fabrics of sound with choppy, small band funk.

Yes have *style*, of that there's no doubts, but it's no fortunate accident discovered by Jon Anderson after he'd finished gargling one morning, or chanced upon the moment their current guitar picker, Steve Howe, picked up a ukelele for the boy scout jamboree.

No, Yes though they're sure 'nuff shit hot musicians, stamp their indelible mark on the super-star wracked youth of our nation by means of two cunning devices: (1) Good Original Material; (2) Brilliant Arrangements. Simple as that.

Well not exactly simple. Rehearsal is a serious business for these lads and team captain J Anderson paces purposefully around mentally muttering ideas to himself before throwing them out to the group to elaborate on, reject, or whatever.

Bill Bruford, a spunky little drummer who knows his licks, can match traps with the greats, yet runs himself down something terrible, well he just sits there with his head in his hands listening to beanpole bassist, Chris Squire swop notes with Steve Howe, the king of the wah-wah pedal whose guitar acrobatics with Tomorrow all but razed UFO to the ground.

Latest recruit to the ranks is Rick Wakeman, a man with a penchant for the classical stuff who came from the Strawbs last year to occupy the organist's stool vacated by Tony Kaye.

Together they work through each number, carefully creating their own musical components which they slot together with painstaking effort and not a little humour. It's a forum situation with each member of the band contributing to the arrangements that in the past have so often been condemned as 'too complicated'. In fact, an appreciation of Yes has largely been the self-indulgence of but a few pop critics and radio producers—everybody's tip for the top who nearly didn't make it. But the thing is that they *have* and all those years of

living on the borderline between oblivion and international recognition, chart bustin' albums, fast cars and head waiters who know you by name.

Not only are the group playing really beautifully, having reached and sustained a creative zenith since their last waxing, but individual members of the ensemble are reaching out and establishing themselves as individuals within the band's distinctive aegis. Why, on their 'Fragile' album, Bill Bruford has a tune arranged for the instruments from his percussion line, 'Five Percent Of Nothing', Rick Wakeman throws in a bit of Brahms, and for good measure, Steve Howe's guitar solo, 'Mood For A Day' makes it quite clear he can still wrench minds.

But these excursions into individualism are about as far as Yes are likely to wander away from the band's constantly developing overall direction. Indeed Bill Bruford asserted in a recent interview that because improvisation within a group is such a skilled art that so rarely comes off, Yes stuck to composing and arranging.

If you're a recent convert to the Yes fan club, you'll just be glad they're playing good music. If you've followed their career since the days when they drew polite applause from Albert Hall audiences at Cream and Janis Joplin concerts as a support band, you'll be pleased to know they're going places fast, and still sounding as good as ever.

Jon Anderson vocals
Bill Bruford drums/
percussion
Steve Howe electric and
acoustic guitars/vocals
Chris Squire bass guitar/
vocals
Rick Wakeman keyboards