

HIT ALBUM DIFFERENT FROM LIVE SHOWS

say TEN YEARS AFTER

By RICHARD GREEN

TEN minutes after Ten Years After had gone off stage, a thousand-strong crowd of Swedish fans were still on their feet stamping, clapping and yelling for more. This was my first introduction to the group that looks like developing into a major force this year and already has its first album in the LP charts.

Braving the bitter cold of a Gothenburg night, I left the warmth of Ten Years After's hotel to see them in action before a full concert hall. What I was to see dispersed for all time my slight feeling of cynicism about all the eulogies I had heard directed towards them.

They over-ran by about twenty minutes or so on each forty-five minute set and came off stage wringing wet and exhausted — especially drummer Ric Lee who had delivered a fantastic 20-minute solo of "Summertime".

Surprised

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there is more to the group than seeing how fast Alvin Lee can play his lead guitar.

Back in London, I invited Ric to come along for a drink and talk about the group's new album, "Stonedhenge," which entered the chart last week.

"It's a complete trip on its own," he began. "It's an album of numbers that we put on a record as opposed to numbers we do on stage. Each track is individual and people



have said they like it because each track is so different."

Thus, "Stonedhenge" is not typical of what Ten Years After do on stage and people like myself who had previously only witnessed a "live" performance are surprised when hearing the album.

Keeping the two things separate helps you to show your parents and widen your audience," Ric explained.

"The first album was a display to get over to people, the second was done in a rush and 'live'. This one was taken more slowly.

Inner self

"It's Alvin's inner self and we've come into it. We all worked on the arrangements and contributed bits. We started recording it before we went to the States in July and finished it sometime in August."

Ric pointed out that Ten Years After are trying to lose their blues tag and to this end have rehearsed a new set for their American tour which began last Friday.

TEN YEARS AFTER (l to r)
RIC LEE, ALVIN LEE, CHIC
CHURCHILL and LEO LYONS

"There's a lot of stuff on the album we can't do on stage," he went on. "I hope we haven't gone over people's heads. A lot of our numbers start, then develop into a jam session and people throw in ideas.

"For example, 'Sometimes I Can't Keep From Crying' once started off as a five minute thing and ended up as a 20-minute set. We always end up playing longer than we're due to do."

In the two years of its formation, the group has, according to Ric, become less mild in its musical attitudes.

"There's a lot more freedom now but a lot more affinity with one another. Alvin's only got to drop the hint of a riff and we're off."

As one of the fast-rising groups, Ten Years After have noticed a change in the way bands are playing.

"The majority of up and coming

groups are more concerned with something to say," Ric commented. "People didn't use to think like that. They used to put this bit and that bit on a record and get a hit with the formula.

"It's sad that some groups used to do that, get a hit and disappear from the face of the earth."

Hit single?

How about a hit single for Ten Years After who are, essentially, an album group?

"A hit would be nice," Ric agreed. "It wouldn't make much difference to us money-wise but it would establish us as a national name, rather than an underground group."

Then he left to rehearse the new act in preparation for two long American tours within the space of a few months. Ric is quite pleased about the visits, but Pete Townshend, who was sitting with us, just shook his head and muttered: "Oh, my God."

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