

# Ten Years After tours 20 years later

## ROCK ON



ETHLIE ANN VARE

In this summer of celebrating Woodstock, it's hard to forget the highlight of the Woodstock movie and album: Ten Years After's 10-minute version of "I'm Goin' Home," with a blistering guitar solo by Alvin Lee that — well, coined the term "blistering guitar solo." Twenty years after, the news is that Ten Years After is back.

With a new album ("About Time") and single ("Shake It Up"), Britain's seminal blues-rock band, which, as it

happens, never officially broke up, returns to the boards after a 14-year hiatus. Original bandmates Alvin Lee, Ric Lee (no relation), Chick Churchill and Leo Lyons will hit the road in October for a U.S. tour, and their music is still as energetic as the no-holds-barred, down 'n' dirty rasp that first brought them stardom. A kind of music that is, once again, right in style.

"Five years ago we were boring (and) old..." laughs Alvin Lee. "Now, we're living legends."

Ten Years After had reunited once in the interim, at the 25th anniversary of London's famed Marquee Club. The response was underwhelming. Then, last summer, a German concert promoter asked to book Ten Years After for a series of European festivals.

"It was easy," says Lee. "I just

the label. Chrysalis has been making a nice few bob these past decades by selling Ten Years After's existing records, like the FM radio staple "I'd Love to Change the World" (a song Alvin Lee never wanted to release; he thought it was too political. And while we're on a trivia roll: Ten Years After was originally going to be named "Life Without Mother.")

The band went to Memphis and recorded with ZZ Top's producer, and now Lee is itching to get back on the road.

"I'm a rock 'n' roll gypsy," he smiles. "I love the road. I love the gigs. I love the Hyatt Houses. The longest I've ever been off the road was six months, and I started to go crazy."

Currently, Lee is touring in Australia with up-and-coming blues-rockers Johnny Diesel. They're one of many groups who credit him as an inspiration, something he's never adverse to hearing. While there, he'll continue with press interviews, usually getting the same question over and over again:

"What was it really like at Woodstock? They all ask that one. What do they think, that I've been lying all along and now they want the real truth?"

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Ten Years After

called the guys up and asked them if they wanted to do it. We rehearsed for two days and then did the gigs. There were 30,000 people at each show, with banners outside reading 'Welcome Back, Ten Years After.' It was too good to let go."

Lyons had to put aside a job as a record producer; Churchill had to relinquish a position in song publishing; Ric Lee had to leave a career as a band manager. Alvin Lee, however, had spent the past 14 years playing in one configuration or another — Alvin Lee & Co., the Alvin Lee Band, even one called Ten Years Later — to remarkably small notice for a genuine guitar hero. He had little to let go of.

"I did my first gig when I was 13," says Lee, now 44. "I turned professional when I left school at 16. It's all I've ever done, all I can do, really."

Getting signed to Chrysalis Records was no great feat for Ten Years After — their former manager owns

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Top 10 people targeted in jokes on TV between January 20 and July 20, 1989

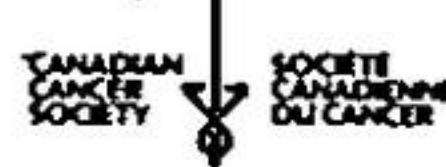
	Number of jokes
George Bush	83
Dan Quayle	78
John Tower	58
Ayatollah Khomeini	49
Jim Wright	33
Ronald Reagan	28
Oliver North	24
Joseph Hazelwood	18
Rob Lowe	17
Manuel Noriega	14



Source: Center for Media and Public Affairs NEA GRAPHICS

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