

Rational Youth's Rick Joudrey talks about the Canadian music scene

By PETER GEORGE

Rick Joudrey, bassist and supporting vocalist for Toronto-based Rational Youth, is in the midst of an interesting and varied career. Formerly the bassist of the recently defunct "international band-in-waiting" Blue Peter, Joudrey is still reluctant to talk about the band's demise. Blue Peter aside, he spoke candidly and optimistically about his career during this interview done at his home in Markham.

Q. How long have you played professionally and what was your first band like?

A. I was playing in public school at eight years old. At 10 I did a set with a couple of friends including the minister's son. Later I got into a weird folk syndrome with some folkies called A Far Cry who were about 10 years older than me; I was about 17 then, I guess. We played heavy folk renaissance stuff.

Q. Was this a paying gig?

A. Oh, yeah, for money. You always have to have a gig for money even though it is art. Money is art; art is money. It eventually comes to that because you can't do two things, you can't work at McDonalds and have a gig at the same time. You have to devote every hour of every day to what you want to do.

Q. In Blue Peter, you proved yourself as a solid player. How do you look back on those years?

A. I look back on them as mostly fun. Blue Peter was one of the best bands ever, I think. We had the best front man that will ever be; Paul Humphries, and I will play with Paul again. We already have at something no one knows about which is Igstock.

Q. Where did Igstock take place?

A. In Denby, Ontario. This guy has 400 acres of forest and lakes. Local musicians get together and go to this place.

Q. What career advantages did being in Blue Peter give you?

A. Via the direction of Blue Peter I got an awful lot of status. Afterwards I could go out with Owen as a rhythm section and get any gig that anyone's ever wanted.

Q. Your performance at the '83 Police Picnic must have been a huge thrill. What were your impressions of the crowd and the Police?

A. It was a lot of fun. Stink (Sting) really stunk; he was the biggest asshole I ever met in my whole life and the rest of the guys were just about as bad. The back-up singers were great people and they wanted to sing with us. At the CNE there were 25,000-plus people when we went on stage. These people knew the words to every song of the seven or eight we played. I had one friend right in front to concentrate on, it was beyond concep-

tion. You go on stage thinking you're going to do the same old thing but when you get out there you can hardly play because there is so much adrenalin in your body. The feeling is so awesome, which is not a nice word but accurate.

Q. Your and Owen Tennyson's arrival to Rational Youth this past year has caused a major sound revolution in that band, hasn't it?

A. It's definitely caused some commotion in the electronic beat syndrome. Tracey did all the last record with Fairlight computer system which is very important here. A Fairlight does everything for real; the drummer programs the beats and it's the drummer as the finished product. There is no difference.

Q. You don't have the "natural rhythm section is best" conceit?

A. No, the creative element for percussion is still there. The latest album, *Heredity*, was done totally on the Fairlight with help from various players which did an awful lot for the sound of the band.

Q. When can we expect a new album from Rational Youth, in fact your first recorded effort with the group since you and Owen joined after the release of *Heredity*?



A. Yes, that came out in January '85 and we joined in February. We have November recordings set for the new one.

Q. Are there any video projects planned?

A. There are no video "products" planned because we hate video "products."

Q. You don't like the artificial packaging of them?

A. No, I think video costs \$40,000 in Canada and \$100,000 in America to be paid back by the artist. It might sell some records but probably not.

Q. You seem to point to a flaw in the record promotion system.

A. Okay, let's get on to record companies and how they don't respect you in America. Videos are part of promotion but they make the artists pay for it out of the royalties before you collect and you get paid after everything is re-couped.

Q. Don't you think video helps record sales?

A. Maybe they do a bit but it still costs the artist and the artist shouldn't pay for it.

Q. How did you like working with Strange Advance at the York concert?

A. They were very fine fellows, Tracey had known them from before. The production of their show was really good.

Q. The Canadian music scene of the early 1980s has produced many great bands that have stood on fame's doorstep but never really achieved international recognition. Do you see this changing?

A. No, I see nothing at all changing just because it is run by Americans and there is no way for a Canadian to get ahead because of that reason. What we do here doesn't fit in there.

Q. Do you mean a cultural difference?

A. I guess so. From experience with Blue Peter there is no market; it's not commercial there. There's a big difference between us and John Cougar. It is hard to sell a record there. It's just disgusting.

Q. What will the new album be like?

A. The new songs that we've all written together are an awful lot different. It's gone off like a Blue Peter/Simple Minds sort of bare sound with heavy bass, drums and vocals. The synthesizers are used more as an effect; texture.

Q. What does the future hold for you and Rational Youth? What do you want from the band?

A. An art form and a living, that's basically it. You do what you want and it pays you. I try to stay away from everyone I know in Platinum Blond; it doesn't help my career at all.



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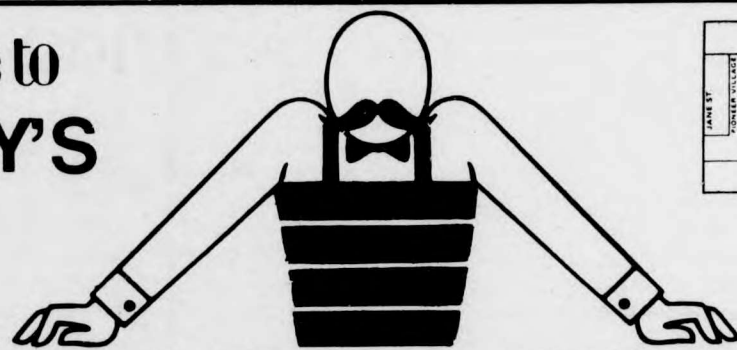
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