

ALVIN LEE

His magic moment was with Ten Years After, the time of the great rock gatherings, the cutting and gritty guitar that seemed like it was about to explode a moment later, rock mixed with blues, with energetic charge, the long solos played at full speed. Then silence. Just as the threatening and at the same time enchanting appearance of a meteor, Alvin Lee disappeared.

From time to time news of him, sporadic, useless, falsely pretentious, perhaps united by intelligent but unsuitable press campaigns. The name that resurfaces only to be swallowed by the current again.

Why? The reasons can be many, one is explained to us by the guitarist himself: "When it's your moment, everyone seems fascinated by you, but you haven't changed and you still feel like anyone else, just with a little more money; then, as soon as the wind changes, you're dead to everyone and there are even those who pretend not to know you. I have been through these moments and they have been equally useful: today I have a certain experience, and not only musical experience and of the international music world, mine is above all a human experience. I am much more cautious, more careful. Perhaps harder."

And yes, the world of music is not all flowers and candy, there are other little gifts hidden somewhere. But isn't it also perhaps the fault of changing times?

"The fact that I was no longer liked wasn't really true. It wasn't decided by the kids who came to my concerts or who bought my records, it was decided by the industry, it was decided by the new names who, in order to make their way, cut off the road to anyone who stands in their way. However, my criticisms are positive: I am sure that everything is useful, even the most terrible thing in the world."

However, Alvin Lee doesn't cry much about himself. Today he has found an exceptional godfather, that Robert Stigwood who turns everything he touches into gold, see the Bee Gees or the latest Eric Clapton. With him Alvin Lee has made a new album that intends to return to past successes. The album is titled "Ride On", and the title is already in itself explanatory of the intentions and contents. The first side contains new songs with solid rock bases (always in the style of Ten Years After) and the second offers old

successes recorded live, with the participation of an enthusiastic audience, just what is needed for the guitarist who has always been able to give his best in front of thousands of people.

The music is compact, flows sincere, even if it is obvious that some record game of forced rehabilitation comes to mind, but the game is well masked and the probable listeners will be able to declare themselves satisfied: in fact the record works quite well both for the old fans of the group (who will shed a few tears for the years passed and the lost youth) and for the new enthusiasts looking for a rock not totally darkened by hard and glacial atmospheres. Alvin, in fact, knows his stuff and his experience is more than decennial, so he has been able to create an impeccable product.

The contents? And what else if not the passion of the sixties and the first disturbances of the young seventies?

Furthermore, there is the guitar technique. That has not disappeared, on the contrary, it almost seems that all the impetuosity (often gratuitous) of his early years has disappeared to make way for excellent concreteness and clarity of sounds. Alvin Lee is back, but not for a few minutes, to keep us company perhaps for just one summer, he is back to stay and now it is up to him to give proof of the sincerity of the operation.

Meanwhile, Operation X has started, namely America and the concerts. From May to July the guitarist does not have a free date, he will tour all over America, touching even the smallest points. And then you know, once the great musical map of the United States has been tested, it will be Europe's turn. Here in our country the palate is finer, so pay attention to the dishes and their flavor.

However, Alvin Lee has on his side the long-nurtured desire to be liked again and this makes him work his brain a lot. For its part, Stigwood's RSO spares no expense and invited journalists from all over the world to a science fiction party: in the background you could hear "I'm comin' home" and so Alvin Lee seemed to rejuvenate, the memories of Woodstock and the gatherings made of "peace love and freedom" came to the surface, the breathtaking solos and the rock that ran fast. In short, times change, but not everyone seems to notice. Time will tell.

M.L.G.G.

Back to stay

IT SEEMED THAT VERY LITTLE REMAINED OF ALVIN LEE AND HIS TEN YEARS AFTER. THEN ROBERT STIGWOOD REMEMBERS HIM AND GOES TO FISH HIM OUT OF WHO KNOWS WHAT LOST PLACE IN THE WORLD. HERE, PERHAPS, IS HOW "RIDE ON" WAS BORN, A BRAND NEW RECORD, HALF STUDIO AND HALF LIVE.

