



# Trick or Treat?

Looking at it one way, Cheap Trick are masters of the sales pitch. Take Rick Nielsen, for example. In different circumstances he might have sold advertising, sox, holidays in Rome. But no. From his cardigan with the knitted-in listing of tracks on *Dream Police* to the famed 'personalised' plectrums tossed to the audience, Rick Nielsen sells Cheap Trick.

The press is just an example. *Rip It Up*'s time with three of the four tricksters (Tom Petersson was detained in the US, nursing an ill wife) was at the end of a long day of interviews.

Regardless, the welcome was positively effusive. From the burly tour manager to the frail, pale Robin Zander, they were all so pleased to meet us.

Now, it wouldn't be imprudent, nor overly-cynical, to imagine that such 'friendliness' was as phoney as a lie. Cheap Trick tour constantly; they are always being interviewed.

There's the rub. There's only so much one can say in answer to any particular question. By the same token, there's only so many questions. For all the heartiness, it's just those same old replies marched out again.

They all know that, so each seems to have his own method for taking our minds off the matter.

Robin Zander's approach is more visual than vocal. He smiles often, but sits very quietly. He looks shockingly thin but the beautiful little face is tanned and square-jawed.

We'd read that he wrote songs in a Neil Young vein: would he like to see the band perform his songs? No, "he doesn't think they'd suit Cheap Trick".



But, like the others, he'll continue writing. Come recording time the choice of songs is a group decision; so far, Rick Nielsen wins most of the time.

Bun E. Carlos is a little more chatty. On album covers and in the eyes of vast hordes, he has been separated from Zander and Petersson and consciously placed beside Nielsen. They all acknowledge that this pretty/zany division has gone too far. For one thing, Carlos has lost a lot of weight recently. He's not about to blow the pretty pair out of the beauty stakes, but that's because he's an ordinary-looking bloke, and that's a marketable commodity.

It is Rick Nielsen who dominates the conversation and the room. More than any of the others, he's said it all before. Short of lying — and Cheap Trick used to fabricate extraordinary tales for the press — he's just got to regurgitate it all. So he jazzes it up with an outrageous barrage of tomfoolery and soft soap, until we're totally flummoxed.

Cheap Trick played three shows in Auckland. Their tour comes smack in the middle of a local

body controversy over dancing in the Auckland Town Hall. Signs at all entrances warned that the show would be stopped if any members of the audience left his or her seat during the performance. There to enforce the ruling were a battery of security men posted in front of the stage and down all the aisles.

On the second night the audience were kept down until the encores. On the third night they were on their feet almost the entire evening. The hall's management turned up the house lights as soon as the set had finished; ten minutes of clapping and calling for an encore followed.

The trouble, says Rick Nielsen, is that the audience blames the band, not the management, if they're calling for an encore and don't get one.

It must be ear ache to a band like Cheap Trick. With some fast-talking and a spot of pacification, they're back on stage again, if only for an encore of one song. After more than a decade Nielsen knows that every bit helps.

Louise Chunn

## Cheap Trick Christchurch Town Hall — Oct 22

It was the one and only Cheap Trick night in these parts as openers Citizen Band leapt on the surge generated by a highly charged Christchurch audience and proceeded to slam out the perfect warming-up bracket of brash Americanised rock'n'roll. Fitting.

CBS must be chuffed at the current Cheap Trick phenomenon. Last year they were one of the bands to name-drop but now everyone you meet (especially the kids) asks you if you've heard *Live at Budokan* or *Dream Police*.

Anyway, the show, as evidenced on the aforementioned live album, leaned on *In Colour* more so than on their other albums to provide the required danceable solution — "I Want You to Want Me", "Big Eyes", "Hello There", "Clock Strikes Ten" and "Come On Come On"; were all hammered home as well as selected cuts from their other albums, in particular a lengthy "Need Your Love." Nielsen gyrated and tramped around the stage flicking guitar picks and sweat into the stalls when he wasn't jumping from his rostrum. Robin Zander and Tom Petersson's conventional cool proved to be the perfect foils for the assumed squareness of Nielsen and Carlos.

More than brief flashes of the Who and the Move were apparent in their music, but who cared where it came from, it was here and rockin' and that was all that mattered. They concluded with "Surrender" and a shower of plectrums then zapped back for three encores.

Nielsen and his buddies dished out G-certificate heavy metal pop and fun for all the family. Treat.

Say, what's a Cheap Trick guitar pick worth these days anyway?

George Kay

# LED ZEP



# COMP

The first five correct entries opened Nov 29 win IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR and a full colour poster of the band. The next five win a poster

1. What is the name of the large UK gig Led Zeppelin played this year?

.....

Name two tracks on IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR?

2. ....

3. ....

4. What is your name

..... and address)?

.....  
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