

The Jagger Edge

MICK JAGGER: ROLL AWAY THE STONES

Exclusive *Rip It Up* Interview by George Kay

Mick Jagger didn't want to do this interview. He was in the middle of an Australian tour and he was tired, but with a date in Auckland next month he relented to give *Rip It Up* one exclusive shot from his Sydney hotel.

Two weeks earlier Keith Richards had entertained us with some colourful answers that included some Jagger taunting and put-downs that were designed to get Mick to re-appraise himself and his current standing in rock 'n' roll. So one of the main aims in this interview was to get Jagger to answer Richards, or at least justify why a man in his mid-forties who has made two solo albums is touring with a band cranking out Stones classics.

"Hello George."

Hello Mick. How's the tour been going?

"Very good. I can't tell you how good it's been. Brisbane was kinda nervous on the first night, audience was very good, the second night better and Sydney's been very good. Every show's different. I feel as if I've been in Sydney so long I'm living there."

One of the star attractions of your band is Joe Satriani who has been making a splash with his instrumental album *Surfing With The Alien*.

"He's very much part of the band and everyone seems to like him — he's a great player. We have a lot of very good players but they work well together as a band."

How did you get Joe into the band?

"I went to see him at the Bottom Live in New York and I went on stage and sang a blues song with him and I thought he was a great player. I asked him if he'd do the show in Japan and since then he's had his instrumental hit *Surfing With The Alien*."

His style is not unlike Jeff Beck's. "Yeah, he's a similar sort of player in some ways. A similar style but he doesn't use the whammy bar as much as Jeff but he gets a lot of different sounds from the instrument."

Why isn't Jeff touring since he was the one who played on both of your solo albums?

"He doesn't like touring, he's permanently off the road under his hot rod cars. He's also a very shy person, he finds touring tough."

Earlier this year you toured Japan, the first appearance there by any member of the Stones since your scheduled tour there in 1973 was cancelled because of drug visa problems. How did it go?

"Very, very good. Everybody told me that before I went there that they would be a very appreciative audience and that at the end of the show they'd go bananas but they

actually went bananas from song one so I enjoyed it thoroughly."

I read that in Tokyo you played only six songs from your solo album. Do you try for a fifty-fifty split usually of Stones/solo stuff?

"I change it around — it depends on the size of the audience. On this tour I don't quite know what the breakdown is. I change the show quite a lot. We've done five or six shows in Sydney and I changed it every night. I don't know what show we'll do in New Zealand but it will be a mixed bag of everything."

How did the Japanese respond to your stuff?

"I dunno, they just yelled all the way through — there wasn't a lot of different reactions."

There's a massive market there.

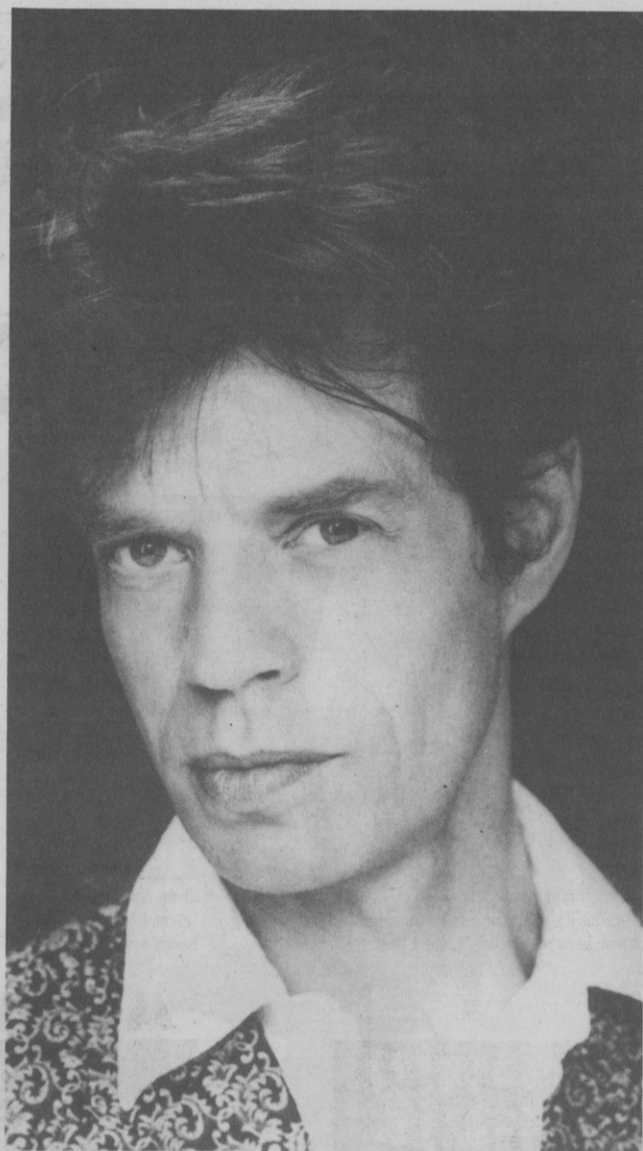
There's a lot of people and money there and not a lot to do there — a bit like the 60s in America and Europe where young people are getting their first taste of consumer goods. But they've been very conservative until recently and now they've got a tremendous amount of money and they spend it on cars, records and clothes."

A couple of weeks ago RIU talked to Keith Richards and he's been giving you a bit of flak in the press recently.

"Really? Well I don't read his press very much. I'm not interested in his problems." Cold.

He was saying that he was disappointed that you were playing his songs on his solo tour.

"I'm not interested in talking about Keith."



But is that criticism of his fair?

"I don't want to talk about Keith."

OK. Around *Dirty Work* did the Stones split up or what?

"I don't quite get you. It was quite a difficult album to make. It was a reasonable rock album. I quite like some of the tracks on it. It was difficult to make..."

In what way?

"Sometimes life's not easy..."

That's right. But in what way was it difficult?

"It took a long time."

Yeah?

"Yeah."

Both in writing the songs and recording?

"Both in the songs and the recording. It took way too long. It's nice when albums come really, really easy and you know you've got some

good songs to start off with and things come out great and sometimes things don't work out like that and you've got to work for it."

Why didn't the band tour live around that time?

"The band weren't getting on that well. I don't really wanna talk anymore about the Rolling Stones because you're not gonna see the Rolling Stones in New Zealand."

There's a rumour going round that the band could be getting together next year?

"That's a maybe at the moment."

Mmm?

"Mmm mm."

Keith's keen to get the band together again, yourself included.

"Yeah, oh well, yeah, we talked about it last year and we're hoping to do it next year."

And you'll be in favour?

"Yeah, if everyone's getting on. I don't wanna tour if everyone's fighting, it's pointless."

Has it been a while since you and Keith worked together?

"Two years ago, on *Dirty Work*."

That recently. (Surprised they worked "together" on it.)

"I don't know when it came out. The year before last."

Which was around the time of *She's The Boss*.

"No, a year after. (annoyed) 1986 it came out." Misunderstanding.

So you haven't missed working with him?

"Not really."

So what do you think of his solo album?

"I don't want to talk about Keith and if you do I think we might as well end this interview."

No, no, we're about to get onto your solo albums. Why are you still playing live?

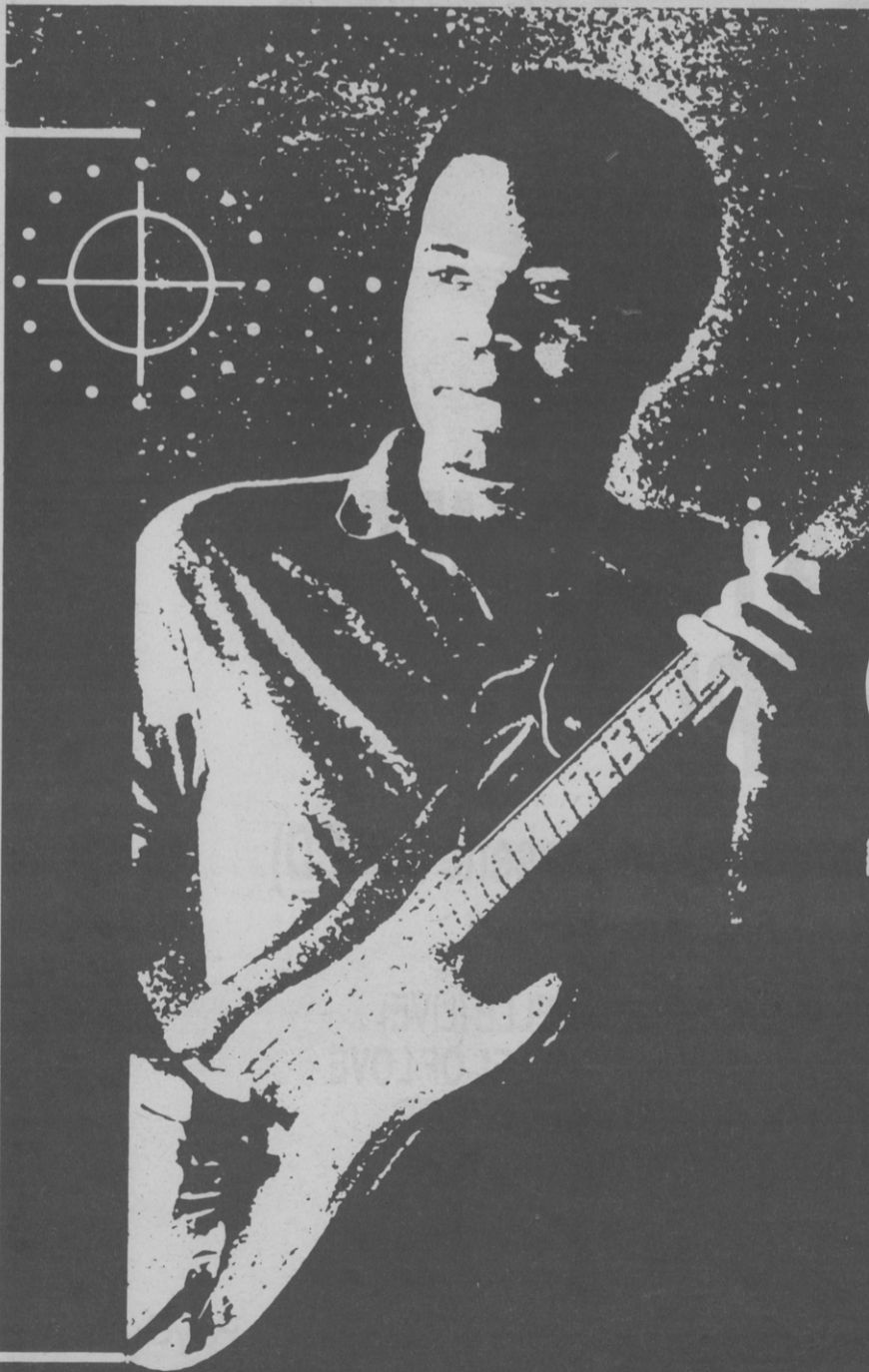
"I haven't played live for six years so I thought it was time I got back to it and, um, I'm quite enjoying it."

In what ways? You're so old...

"It's great fun on stage. See ya, I've gotta go now, thanks very much."

Click.

Thank you, Mick.



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