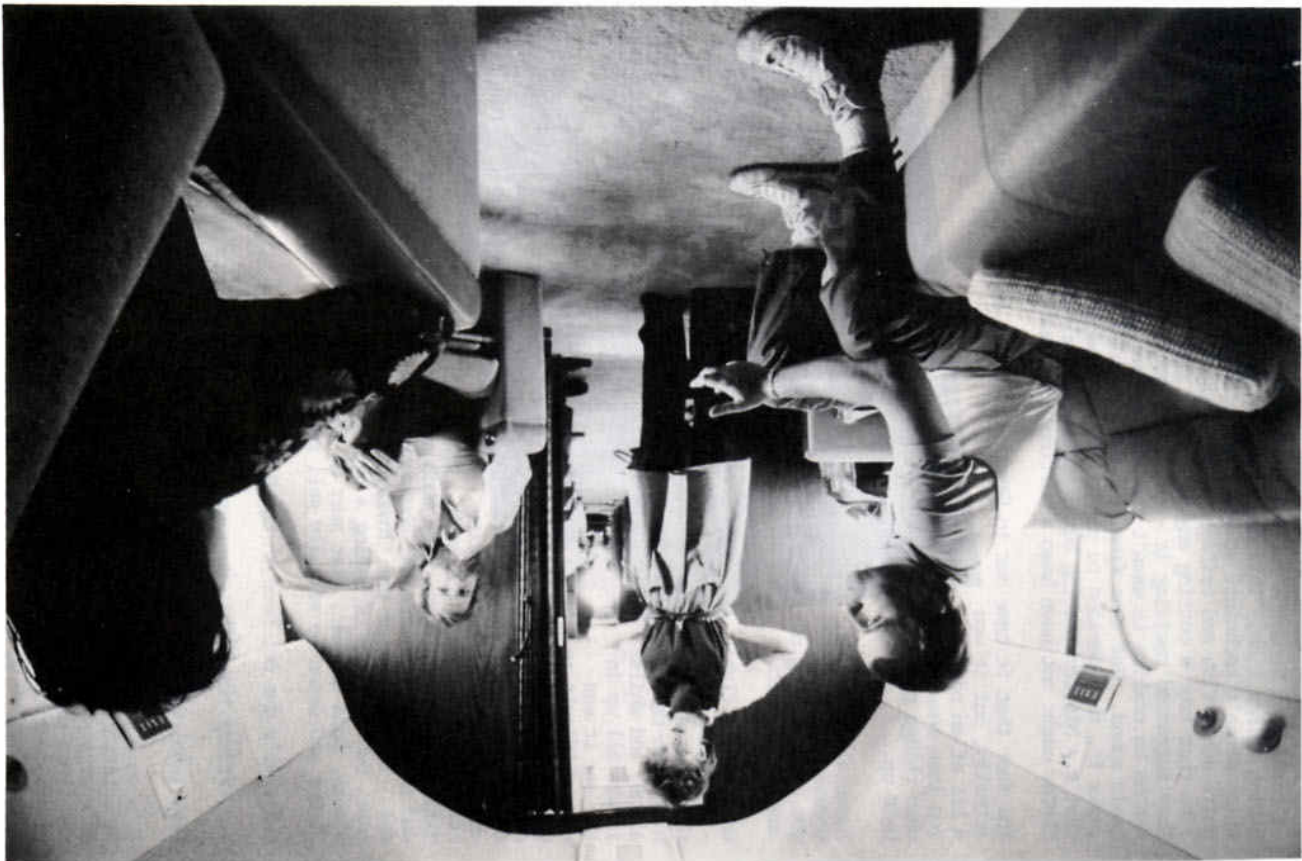


(Photo: Robert Ellis)



Mike backstage at Madison Square Gdns with promoter Ron Delsener and Mick Jones from Foreigner.

make it a bit more radical. He didn't feel it should be presented in a conventional style. The characters from Alice are there in some form or another interpreted in our own way, and it's quite fun sitting in the musical and hearing some of the erudite people saying "There's the caterpillar" - they can obviously log it. It's not that obvious, though, and we've written in a love affair as well, and the overthrow of the evil queen, which I thought was a good idea.

I think 'Alice In Wonderland' as it stands, which is just a series of random adventures, a kind of dream world, it's a bit difficult as in a sense there's no end, except for waking up from a dream. I think in musical theatre musicals are all about very simple ideas. Richard became interested in the relationship that Lewis Carroll had supposedly had with Alice, and his aim was to try initially to have a two-tier world, (1) to develop the relationship between the two of them, and (2) was the dream world. It's not as divided as that in the musical though, the two just interperse, but there is a character written in who gradually leads Alice out of her super-technical, stereotyped, synthetic world, back into the past, where she is then emancipated from these 1984 'shackles' if you like - and she meets all these reprobrates who lead her astray and into a land of passion and dreams and love in the end.

So it's fairly simple, but I think that gives it more of a theme, a continuity, and the feeling of something developing and building to a climax that I don't think is there in the original story. We haven't copied any of the 'prostitution of Lewis Carroll's marvellous work', which we could have done.

I: Will there be an album from this?

AP: Well, I hope so. It's too early to know yet. I don't feel anyone would do an album unless the musical gets to London. It's not out of question, though. Somebody might think that the music is great, and think that the rest of it is not right. You just can't say.

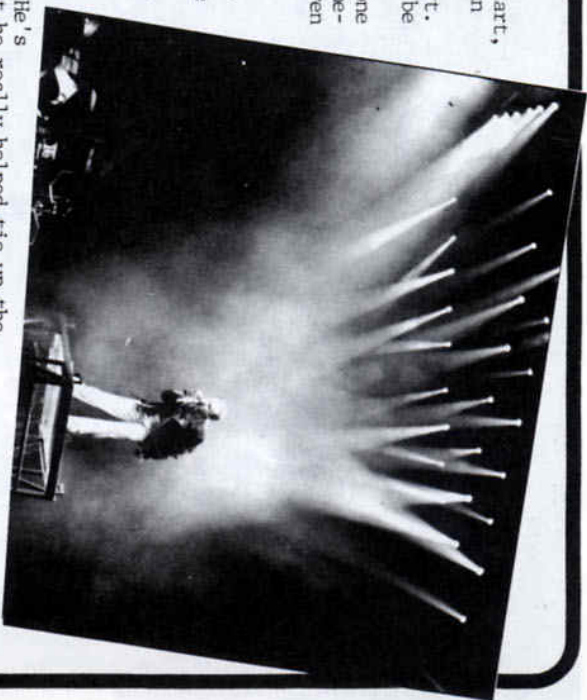
I: If you take 'Jesus Christ Superstar' that was merely an album to start with, and the stage show was only picked up on later.

AP: Yes, and a lot of people had grave doubts about that to start with, didn't they. A lot of people didn't take royalties - they just took session fees. If this gets to London we can be relatively assured of a record. Beyond that I think it would be a lot of keenness from one of the record companies to do it because it would cost a fair amount of money for a cast album as you're paying all these extra session fees for lots of people. I suppose it could be prohibitive as you'd be looking at £30-40,000, but I do hope it happens!

There are good melodies, and we definitely worked with a very different style of writing and I learnt so much. You can only have a few moments where the action freezes, where you have your normal song, the rest of



shaping it at the start, but from my M.D. John Owen Edwards in the middle and later part. John didn't want to be co-credited, but we've track - there is something that I was given the words for - yet another pastiche, there's a lot of pastiches in 'Alice' - a very distinctive start, a bluesy cabaret soul singer. John came up with some rough things that were just so good, and I'd never written anything in that style before. He's credited on that, but he really helped tie up the loose ends, used all his technical know-how for all the linking, the keys, the vocalist - just things you don't think about if you're writing for yourself.



I: Were you working to a set storyline?
 AP: Some of the songs came from writing 'Masquerade'. Richard Scott said to me, "You can't waste these songs", so we had another crack at them. It was Tony Smith's idea, which was to do something based around 'Alice In Wonderland'. We did a demo tape with three or four from 'Masquerade' and some new ones, but it was quite a loose idea. At that point there wasn't a proper storyline, or a 'book' as they call it.

Initial interest came from David Putnam, and he thought it was great, but after a few months there wasn't any follow through. Then we heard Carl Davis and Alan Wells were doing an 'Alice', so we were a little dispirited. Then an 'Alice' in the States lost \$2 million on Broadway, so we were a bit 'schtrumm'. 'Don't mention ze war'.

How it came about was by chance really. I had singing lessons from the same guy that Mike Rutherford from Genesis had, John Owen Edwards. During the time I had singing lessons we were always chatting about things - it was always hard to stay on the work really. He was very involved in classical things, and he's an arranger, and I found I was getting dragged into classical composers. At some stage through all this rambling, the idea of the musical came up - I mentioned this idea and theme - and he remembered it when he was up in Leeds working on things. He mentioned it to them, and they were looking for a musical.

I: How does the storyline differ from the original?
 AP: Well, John Harrison, the director, came down from Leeds and quizzed Richard and I, and we had the bare bones of a story but neither of us had written any plays before, so he got John Heightener, the young blue-eyed boy of the operatic world, to take it to theatre, to guide Richard along and shape the story. Originally it was a wild idea involving trips to Venice - there was going to be a love affair in Venice - and I do love Venice as well!

But this got phased out, and Nick is a bit of a radical, his effective contribution was to get a lot of the stuff that was playing safe out of it, and to

ally think it's a hit.

I: Which track is that?

AP: It's 'Sally', which the Americans picked up on and changed the order of the album so it was stuck on first. I thought there were others which were much more obvious.

I: The one I actually like best is 'Going For Broke'.

AP: Really? Well that's a powerful track. I suppose the fact that everyone disagrees means that there isn't one sure-fire single - if everyone starts agreeing and says 'That's definitely it', then I suppose you've got a good chance. I don't think there's anything that obvious or clear-cut, so we're one to make it I think it would be a bit of luck. There are two or three that were thought of very visually in terms of video, and one has to do that really.



I: You could do a good video for 'Golden Bodies', couldn't you?
 AP: Well, 'Golden Bodies', 'Love In A Hot Air Balloon', and another one - all full of very visual interpretations. A good video will make or break something at the moment.

I: Unfortunately it seems you don't get a fair hearing now without a video ready to promote it.

AP: I think that's sad in a way. On the other hand some very good videos are done, and it creates a whole new art form. There are a lot of clichés already creeping in, but some of them are superb - and I'm as much a sucker for them as anyone else, I must admit! I've always liked films, odd images and stuff. I just hope to get an opportunity, because some of the tracks are funny, witty and not too serious - like 'Love In A Hot Air Balloon' and 'Golden Bodies' are really very tongue-in-cheek.

We recorded so many songs and whittled it down, spent far too long on the album, and by the time we got to the end some of the 'poppy' ones were just palling so badly - from palling to appalling! - that is the difficulty. As you know I like to work in all different styles and to keep the freshness going, but that album went on too long and the 'poppy' stuff was great fun to do initially, but by the time I'd been at it for six months and we were going through the overdub stage, then the vocal stage, then the mixing stage, some of it just died a death for me. That's where people like Phil Collins are so good - a quick turnover with no time to get bored with anything. If you can get that momentum going, I think it's tremendous. I hope in the future that's something I'll be doing - and 'Alice' has been good because there's been no time to get stale or bored about that!

I: 'Alice' is your new musical that's just opened in Leeds...
 AP: Yes, and we had to move quite quickly - the whole thing was done in three or four months.
 I: Have you written all the music for it?
 AP: Yes, I had a fair amount of help from Richard Scott in



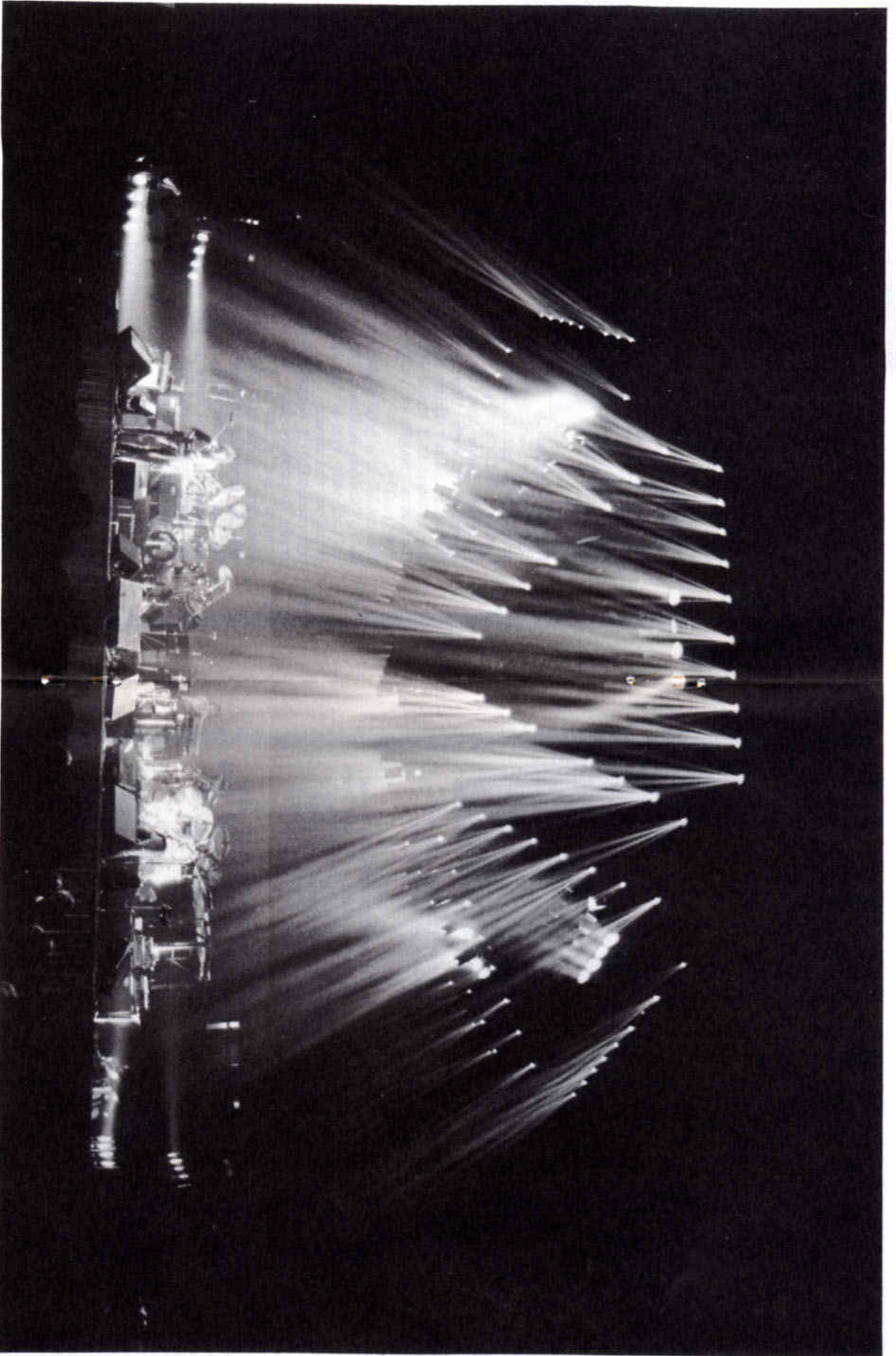


Photo: Robert Ellis

Genesis