**“I’m Anne. Fly me.”**

by John Krout

**The Six Wives of Henry VIII — Rick Wakeman (A&M)**

Rick Wakeman is that extraordinarily able keyboard artist in Yes. I don’t have to tell you how extraordinary Yes is.

Rick is fascinating to see in concert. He’s surrounded by serious instruments — two moggs, two mellotrons, an organ, an electric harpsichord, and a 9 foot grand piano that must be a headache to move around — and he fashions about wistfully, intently, putting every last note in place precisely. He doesn’t climb all over his equipment like Keith Emerson, but that’s not part of his act. Besides, he wouldn’t have room.

Yes snatched Rick away from another British group called Strawbs. The only things I know of Strawbs are that they record on A&M and that Rick, when a Strawb, was very much in demand as a sessions artist. That’s him floating away on the mellotron in David Bowie’s “Space Oddity.”

Now, here’s what’s odd. Naturally, Yes is such hot stuff. Sideways, A&M won’t admit to let Rick out of his contract. Hence, on the last two Yes albums, there’s some fine print in the bios of the Big Six on the back. Mistake one is this Henry bit; Rick’s “conceptions” must be pretty complex, because they don’t even come close to the bios of the Big Six on the back.

Mistake two is the failure to find a strong beat, which usually brings out his best jamming (in “Roundabout”). Mistake three is using themes which felt like limp legs, but not as atrocious as his “Mind Gardens” (Asylum), which might have been a factor in the band’s original break-up. Because the band had free rein to do as they wished. The result was an album in which Rick’s Deep Y, a possible conglomeration of individual efforts, lacking in cooperation and unity.

Here are four songwriting Byrds each filled its quota of original compositions for the album. Mitchell’s “Sweet Mary” was written as a joint effort with Jacques Levy, with whom he has written such other gems as “Just A Season” and “Chaste Mare.” “Sweet Mary” is another example of the Byrds’ comic-inspired, collaboration, and the lyric is so tonal and eerie tone similar to “Jack Tar the Sailor” from Ballads of Easy Rider. His “Ski Face” and “N” Roll’ is, all right, but has a dullish title, thing that it hasn’t changed. Behind it to be saying something. Though I hadn’t heard Gene Clark-Hillman-Crosby-Clarke line-up, probably the best of the Six Wives... any of those albums, I admired the manner in which he had managed to make Rick sound so different from Neil’s somber renditions. Mistake five is unforgivable — the recording speed waviers worse than any since the first three Motown albums. The Six Wives of Henry VIII...