

Rockers caution Idols against losing their roots

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While Roger Hodgson comes off as a mellow philosopher and Dennis DeYoung a rambunctious joker, the 1970s rock figureheads share a similar outlook on what it takes to become a rock star, and to last in such a cutthroat business.

Hodgson, formerly of Supertramp, and DeYoung, a founding member of the group Styx, couldn't be more different as far as first impressions are concerned. However, as they prepared to impart musical wisdom on *Canadian Idol's* Top 7, their message was one and the same: don't forget where you started.

The key, said the humble rockers -- in Toronto helping the competitors prepare for Monday's classic rock performance show -- is to never lose the person you were before you hit the big time.

"It's on the inside that you've got to stay intact," Hodgson told *Eye on Idol* before beginning his day of workshops. "Stay connected to your heart, your soul, your drive. You can get addicted to the outside, to the audience's reaction. I know quite a few artists who can't get away from it, it's like a drug and they're addicted."

DeYoung, wearing a polka-dot dress shirt under a white blazer matching his short, curly hair, said his advice to the Idols would stress a point he has been making since 1977 on the title track of the album *Grand Illusion*.

"It's my job to create an illusion," said the easygoing rock star. "My song said clearly 'don't buy into the illusion. Don't trust us, we don't know more than you. We just have these guitars and these lights.' And it's true."

But that said, he was quick to add how much he's enjoyed the chance to be part of the lights and mirrors show of an era focused around rock and roll pageantry.

"It's a good gig, you know. Laying concrete: not so much. Cleaning septic tanks, not so good," DeYoung said.

Hodgson, too, was thankful for everything that's come his way throughout his long career with Supertramp, and more recently, working on his solo concert DVD, *Take the Long Way Home -- Live in Montréal*.

The long-haired, floral shirted sage said he hoped his time with the show's aspiring pop stars would be enough to ensure they know just how unique their situation is, and to impart a sense of connection between each singer and their fan base.

When a singer loses their drive to serve their audience, Hodgson said, they will soon begin to wonder what happened to their success.

"Life has given me so much and I think for these Idols, life has given them a lot too," he said. "I think if you just take it and don't give back then you block anything else coming in and it's a closed circle. There's so much room in this world for goodness, for joy, for love. If you can impart that in concert, through your songs, it gives them a sense of greater purpose."

The hardworking DeYoung said even after decades in the business, he never forgets to chase down any opportunity for which he might have a living chance.

"It's not just showing up, it's showing up and being prepared," he said. "If you need to knock on 50 doors to get an answer and you stop at 49, too bad for you."

And ever the jokester, DeYoung saved his most critical piece of advice for last.

"For the good ones," he told *Eye on Idol*, "I am going to encourage them to quit the business to decrease the competition for me."