

Double Agents of

a show of fans?

A RUSH FANZINE
FOR AND BY
RUSH FANS

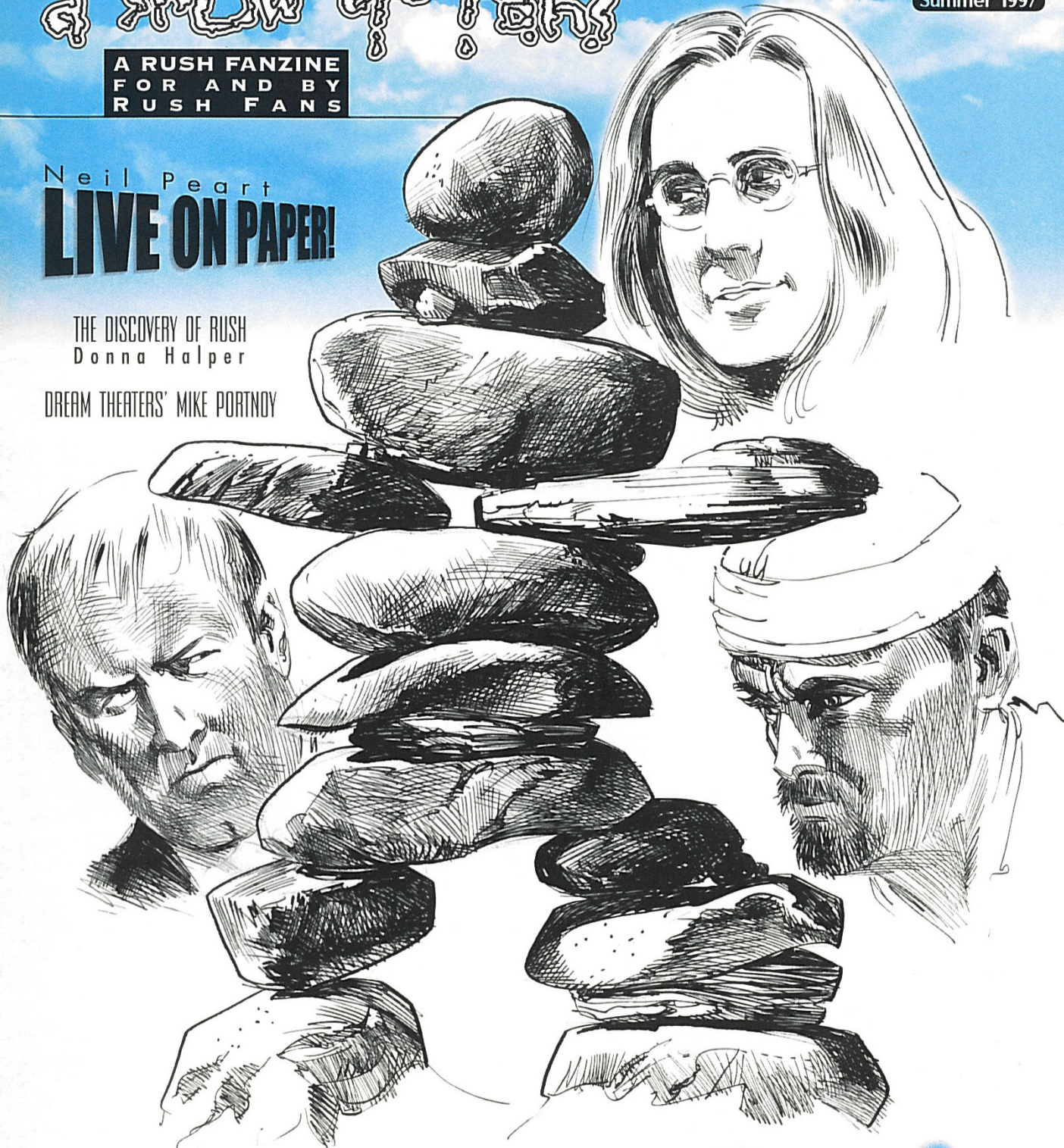
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NO. 17
Summer 1997

Neil Peart
LIVE ON PAPER!

THE DISCOVERY OF RUSH
Donna Halper

DREAM THEATERS' MIKE PORTNOY



FOR STEVE STREETER

FRANK
SPRINGER
2/14/97

Rush

the FOUNTAIN

Steve Streeter

Welcome to another edition of **ASOF**. We're pretty proud of this one, especially with the three main interviews we have for your reading pleasure. First off is the Professor himself, yes, **LIVE** on paper! So could this be the beginning of **MORE** Neil columns? *Quite possibly.* We'll keep you posted.

Mike Portnoy of **Dream Theater** chats with **ASOF** on various topics – and we know there are **MANY DT** fans in our readership. We also received an interview with **Bill Bell**, who worked with Alex on **Victor**, which I think you will find very interesting. Last but not least Chad Hutchinson and I had a lengthy talk with **Donna Halper**. Part One is presented in this issue, with Part Two to follow in **ASOF #18!** That was a lot of fun! It really got us thinking on those old tour stories and new ones too! If you have one, why not get it down on paper and send it in, eh?

Whew - if that isn't enough, I also spoke with Howard "**Herns**" Ungerleider right before he flew out for the first show and this is what he had to say:

Steve: Have there been any changes for the upcoming second leg?

Herns: Yeah, we're not going to use the front projection screen. We're going to use a Jumbotron. What that does is when you're playing the outdoor venues and the sun hasn't quite set, you can see these in the daylight, which is great. And when it gets dark, you can also use it as a light box as well.

S: Do you like doing outdoor shows better?

H: I like indoor shows and outdoor shows, they're just different vibes. The outdoor shows are really great. I love doing outdoor shows but indoor shows are great too. The Jumbotrons look quite nice. I think Rush is probably one of the first bands ever to take the Jumbotron to a shed.

S: Have you gotten any feedback from the first leg of the tour?

H: Everybody loved it! People thought it was great, which is excellent. I like to hear that.

S: Without asking specific set list changes, can you tell me about any lighting changes?

H: There'll be some new stuff added. I'm putting up a

black shark's tooth scrim, which is a piece of black material that's porous and you can see through it when it's lit from behind. So because I don't have my big screen there anymore, I'll put this scrim in front of the Jumbotron so when the Jumbotron is in use it'll come through the screen. When it's not in use, it goes out and I can use that as a projection surface for a lot of the Roll the Bones pieces.

S: Neat. I see. That reminds me of Scars. Was that kind of the same thing?

H: Yeah, that was a scrim. I use scrim a lot. I used them on Queensryche for Silent Lucidity.

S: Well, that's about it. I just wanted to touch base on what's up.

H: That's cool. We're really staying busy here. We did the lighting of the Skydome roof which was pretty much of a wild scenario. I'm trying to do a sale for the Skydome to show them that you can advertise on their roof and that you can light the dome up very nicely. I actually turned it into a rainbow and we had some sequences run. I got some great shots of it.

S: There's some interesting venues coming up for you. The Gorge out in Washington...

H: Yeah, I've been there before. It's a hard place to make a show look good. It's wide open and you're on the Columbia River so there's no smoke cause the winds are so serious there. I did Queensryche there. It was very hard to have the show look good. There's no smoke in the air so you don't see the beams you don't see the shapes. But it's a different kind of vibe. People just see the band play, and the Jumbotron. And a lot of nice colors on the floor. I don't know, maybe it'll be a muggy night or the wind conditions will change...but I'm looking forward to doing those shows.

S: Well, we'll probably see you at some of the midwestern shows. But hey, have a great tour! Hope everything goes smoothly.

H: Until next time..

We also have some tremendous photo and artwork submissions this time around. John Vinson went hog wild in Denver and shot some unbelievable pictures some of which

grace these pages and if you want to see some of the full color shots, check out the new Gallery on www.ASOF.com where you can find those along with others as well. Some of you may recognize this issues cover artist Frank Springer. Frank was one of the original **Marvel Comics** Bullpin artists with Stan Lee and company! I about flipped when I found out that long-time subscriber Chris Springer was related! I have always been a big fan of the original Marvel Bullpin. So we have the "superhero" rendition of Rush - cool huh? Many thanks to Chris for setting it all up.

As if there aren't enough things to buy, now we have the Rush remasters out. **Retrospective** volumes One and Two are "best of" collections and the entire Polygram issued library has been reissued in remastered form along with original artwork intact. *Gotta love it.* Still like the records better though for artwork. The sheer size of the old records makes the artwork and lyrics so much more readable and attractive. Vinyl hasn't died in our house and never will!! If you're lucky, you might be able to find the posters that have been issued to promote the remasters.

Now that you have the **Test for Echo** shows inside your mind, don't forget to gather your thoughts and clippings and send them in to **ASOF**. You may also designate your submission to be used on the web site too - we're constantly building on asof.com - the growth is unbelievable! You will also find **The Rush Backstage Club** on line. There's a banner link on our home page up top. *Check it out.*

One thing I need to bring up is the fact that we do not plan on duplicating our magazine items and graphics to the Web site. The idea was brought up to create an on-line magazine, but after some serious thought, we have decided that **ASOF** will **stay in ink**. (I am not a big fan of on-line magazines.) On the other side of the coin, **ASOF HQ** (The Web site) will remain unique, with many items and features that will **NOT** be overlapped in the magazine. This way we keep as much originality and as little overlap **as possible**.

Just as we are all indeed individuals - "planets to each other" one and all - I think that Mike Portnoy summed it all up in his statement: "can't we all just get along?"

Continued on page 39

Officer Lee ~ Officer Peart ~ Officer Lifeson The Order of Canada is presented to Rush.



Photo by Andrew MacNaughtan ©1997 SRO/Anthem, Used by permission.

OF PIXELLATED SPACE

Update from ASOF HQ - <http://www.ASOF.com>
by Chad Hutchinson (Ghost) - ASOF HQ Web Manager

Well, things have been quite active since we've been in print. Between the first leg of the T4E Tour ending and second leg beginning and all the remasters...wow. ASOF HQ is alive and well in CyberSpace as many new items have been added.

Speaking of the tour, we set up a Tour Hook-Up section to give fans going to shows a list of fellow Rush-heads that they could contact for possible social gatherings. In tandem with the Hook-Up, a ticket trader was added. If you end up with extra tickets or are looking for a few yourself, this is the place to visit. Currently, many shows are listed and all entries are accompanied with e-mail addresses. It should be noted that scalping will not be tolerated.

At this point, I'd like to thank those at SRO/Anthem that sent us vital information about the tour and later about the remasters. It is much appreciated by the ASOF CyberStaff!

Our most recent addition is the ASOF HQ Trading Post. This is a section where visitors can look for hard-to-find Rush items that other Rush fans would like to sell or trade. You can also post items that you're seaching for to enhance your collection. The direct URL is: <http://www.ASOF.com/trader/trader.html>.

We have also been lucky enough to speak with Donna Halper online as well as off-line about her discovery of Rush. Donna has been very generous with her time between e-mails, phone calls, and web monitoring as she helped us post an accurate account of the story. The section on Donna is called "In the Beginning." Thanks also to www.r-u-s-h.com for allowing us to reprint Donna's story. See the extensive interview with Donna in this issue!

One other new section is Gallery 5. This fifth installment is a selection of photographs by John Vinson from the May 22, 1997 show at Fiddler's Green. John consistently gets super pictures and is always kind enough to share them with us. Be sure to take a look.

Finally, the ASOF HQ News Archive was started earlier this year. The "What's New" page was getting overloaded, but we didn't want to ditch all that great info, so we started a separate page. This page will be expanded into volumes (probably divided into quarters) as more news is archived. So if you miss anything, visit the News Archive for what's been going on.

Our next projects for the 'net include a vast expansion of the Discography pages to include singles, promos, cassettes, and vinyl and the results of the 1997 ASOF HQ Fan Survey. The votes are in, but the consolidation will be a chore. Steve and Mandy may seriously lose their sanity on this one.

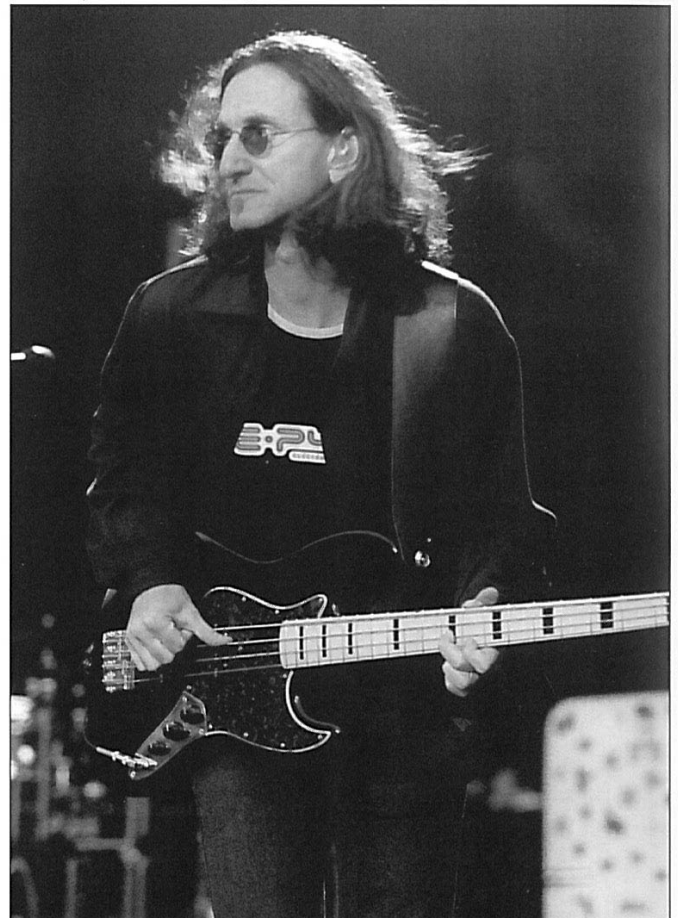
Well, that's about it from the Internet. If you have any ideas or would like to give us some feedback on the website, please feel free to e-mail me at qghost@ptd.net.

On May 6, Mercury/PolyGram and Anthem Entertainment released the first batch of remastered Rush albums. The first seven

studio albums (Rush through Permanent Waves) have been 20-bit digitally remastered from the original master tapes by Bob Ludwig, utilizing the Apogee UV22 Super CD Encoding process. Additionally, the original artwork of each album has been restored. An added bonus is the mini-poster with Hemispheres which was previously available only with the gatefold LP of the Anthem vinyl release. The sound quality of each album is noticeably better. Fly By Night may have enjoyed the largest improvement. Accompanying the remasters was a new one CD compilation entitled Retrospective I. This album is comprised of remastered tracks from the 1974 to 1980. The tracklisting is thankfully different from the first disc of Chronicles (1990).

1. The Spirit of Radio (4:56)
2. The Trees (4:42)
3. Something for Nothing (3:58)
4. Freewill (5:22)
5. Xanadu (11:05)
6. Bastille Day (4:37)
7. By-Tor and the Snow Dog (8:37)
8. Anthem (4:21)
9. Closer to the Heart (2:52)
10. 2112 Overture (4:33)
11. The Temples of Syrinx (2:12)
12. La Villa Strangiato (9:34)
13. Fly By Night (3:21)
14. Finding My Way (5:08)

Photo by John Vinson, Englewood, CO



This, along with the improved sound quality, makes it a worthwhile purchase for Rush fans.

A month later, on June 3, remastered versions of Moving Pictures through Hold Your Fire were released along with Retrospective II, 1981-1987. As with the first batch, all artwork was been upgraded. The most noticeable is Grace Under Pressure. This cover is amazingly more vibrant than the original CD release. The sound improvement on these albums is not as apparent as the early albums, but nonetheless welcome. The dynamic range seems to be wider and the instruments are sharper. Like Retrospective I, Retrospective II contains an alternate tracklisting to Chronicles with some welcome surprises.

1. The Big Money (5:35)
2. Red Barchetta (6:09)
3. Subdivisions (5:33)
4. Time Stand Still (5:09)
5. Mystic Rhythms (5:53)
6. The Analog Kid (4:47)
7. Distant Early Warning (4:57)
8. Marathon (6:09)
9. The Body Electric (5:00)
10. Mission (5:16)
11. Limelight (4:19)
12. Red Sector A (5:09)
13. New World Man (3:42)
14. Tom Sawyer (4:33)
15. Force Ten (4:31)

The artwork for both volumes was done by none other than long-time RUSH graphic artist Hugh Syme.

On July 1, plans are to release the three live albums in their original state. This means that All the World's a Stage will contain "What You're Doing" and the voices at the very end and Exit...Stage Left will have "A Passage to Bangkok." At this point, it seems as though A Show of Hands will not receive any added treatment as far as extra tracks. "Lock and Key" anyone? Oh well, it's on the laserdisc.

FINNEUS GAUGE - MORE ONCE MORE

Check out the new album by finneus gauge entitled "more once more." Their unique blend of progressive rock incorporating elements of jazz, fusion, and funk accompanied by soaring vocal harmonies is not to be missed. Hear them today at <http://ghostland.com/finneus.html>.



Rush Readies Another Live Album

Look for a new live album from Rush—the Canadian trio's fourth—when the band comes off the road later this year. Drummer Neil Peart says Rush has been recording nearly every show during its past two tours, and that during a recent break bassist Geddy Lee took the tapes into a studio to ascertain how things were going. "Now we've been able to correct what wasn't working for this leg of the tour," Peart says. "We're really getting some great live stuff." In addition to the recent tapes, Peart says there's also a radio concert recorded in 1979, which documents a period that the band's other live albums haven't covered. Peart says it may be issued as a bonus disc in whatever package is eventually released.

"Definitely on the last two tours we've been playing at a level we've never reached before in terms of musicianship, accuracy, band tightness, excitement, and all those categories," Peart says. "On live albums, it's such a hard balance. Sometimes we make them too polished, sometimes they're too raw. So this time we're really trying to get everything." As for new Rush music, Peart—who releases his Burning for Buddy: A Tribute to the Music of Buddy Rich, Volume II later this month (June 1997)—says he doesn't think the band will take another two-year break like it did before its latest album, Test for Echo. "The last break served us so well, and we've been so fired up and we're so happy about the way we're playing now, that we're already talking about getting into the studio, perhaps later in this year or early next year, and getting back into it," he says. "We don't need that kind of break every time. Just every twenty years!"

Available **NOW** from ERTL Models...

The RUSH semi truck!

We thought we saw it all until we caught wind of this very cool Rush toy! One in a series of three (Van Halen & Cheap Trick being the other two), these Rock 'n Roll Haulers are the brainchild of long-time Rush truck driver Tom Whittaker and Rockford's own Rick Neilson of Cheap Trick! Ertl, maker of fine scale models, took the idea and ran with it. These trucks are very detailed and beautiful for living (Rush) room display. The 1/64 scale Rush semi is all red, ala Hold Your Fire, with the Rush logo on the cab as well. Order your Rush semi from the address below and make sure you tell them **ASOF** referred you!

Order model #T 602 1.64 RUSH SEMI \$28.80 each.

Evers Toy Store

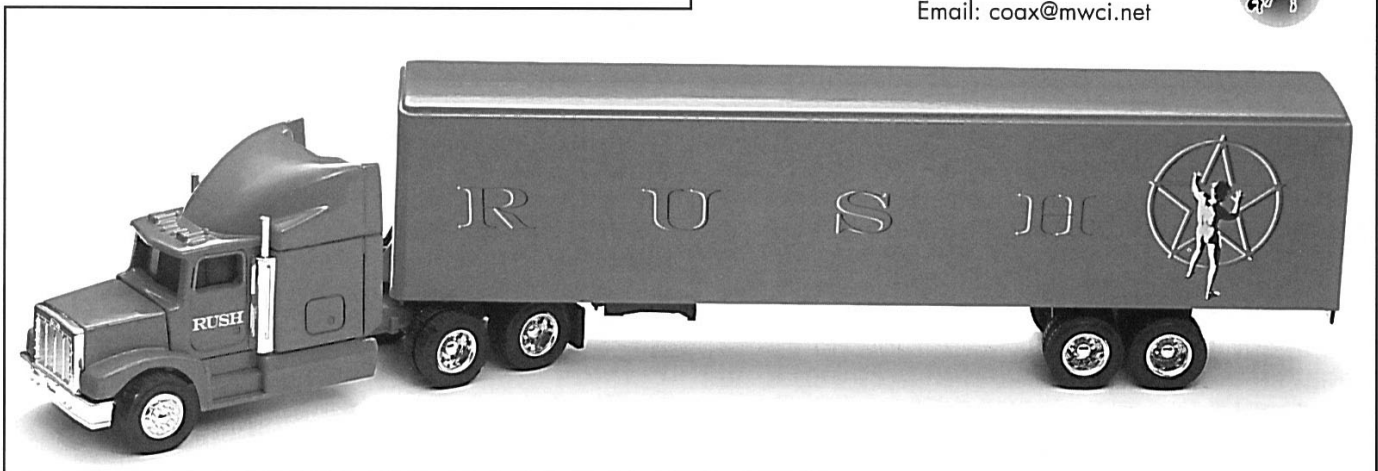
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Toll Free: 1-800-962-9481

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Donna Halper

The Discovery of Rush

ASOF Speaks with Donna on The Beginning!



D: Yeah! I just really want to go on record as saying, I have a life. These are my friends. I love them dearly, I always will. And if I never talk about them that would be fine and if I talk about them, that will be fine. Am I making any sense?

S: You're making perfect sense.

D: I feel like that line in the song by the Animals, "I'm just a soul whose intentions are good, oh

lord, please don't let me be misunderstood...". I got some of the most vicious flames. I'm like, "What did I do?" I answered a question!

S: I don't understand that at all.

D: Somebody asked me how I discovered the band. I told them.

S: I thought it was a great little story that you told.

D: See, mom raised me to be civil, okay? And I find some of the stuff that goes on on the net utterly mystifying. I mean, I don't want people kissing my tushy, but on the other hand, I don't want people saying vicious things to me when *they don't even know me*. So, like I said, before we even got into this, I have visions in my mind of, uh-oh, here come the e-mails about - "Aha! Now you've got another bunch of people that you can talk to about all the great things you've done!"

C: Well, let it be known, we contacted you.

D: Want to know a great thing I've done? I taught a person with autism to talk. That's a great thing.

S: That's a great thing, definitely.

D: He hadn't spoken til he was 25. I taught him how to talk. I teach hundreds of immigrants english. I'm part of a group of volunteer business people and we teach immigrants english. Some people complain about the problem of immigrants and some people do something about it. And then there was this little rock n roll band....and that story really started before 1974. It started even before what I wrote for the internet about how I discovered the band. It started probably when I was a kid. No, I didn't have my Psychic Friend telling me I was going to meet Rush but from the time I was a kid, I knew I was different. Maybe this isn't where you want the interview to go but it really is kind of germane. You know, when I see this stuff on television, Happy Days, and oh, the fifties - they were so wonderful ... no they weren't. Not if you were the only Jew in your neighborhood and not if you were the only feminist. It was grim. I got beat up. I got called a Christ-killer. It was not pleasant, I don't recommend it.

C: So, you didn't have an Arnold's?

D: Nooo ... But I knew from the time I was a kid that I wanted to move to radio. And rock-n-roll was what kept me alive. Rock-n-roll

Steve Streeter: Hello Donna!

Donna Halper: What's goin' on?!

S: Well, actually, we've seen you surface on the web recently and thought we'd touch base. **ASOF** started out just as a publication initially but now we've branched into the world of websites, with the help of Chad. Did you receive the issues of the mag that we sent?

D: Yes, I did and I liked them a lot. I was very impressed with them.

S: Cool. Well, that's kind of where we started.

Chad Hutchinson: Wasn't it right after Hold Your Fire?

S: Ah ... I started sending out surveys at that time but didn't start the actual publication til just before Presto.

D: Well, you guys did a wonderful job. You really did.

S: Hmm ... Going back, I guess I'd like to start where it started!

D: Well, I was born they tell me...but I don't remember.

C: First the dinosaurs came and they got too big and fat and died and turned into oil ... then the Arabs came ...

D: Well I don't know if they *came*, but there they were...

C: Hey!

D: Gentlemen, we've got to stop having fun. This is *serious* business.

C: All right, Steve, start it off.

S: I guess it all started in 1974.

D: Actually, it started before then.

S: Did it? Okay, well, where did you get your start in radio?

D: First of all, I want to say on the record that I'm very uncomfortable doing this interview. And I mean that from the bottom of my heart. For years I did not participate in anything about the band. I didn't participate in fan clubs, or write letters to any of the 'zines. When the internet came along, I had the internet but I never joined alt.music.Rush or NMS or any of those things. Specifically because I've always felt that it's about the band and it's not about me. But I kind of got invited by a couple of people to tell the story of how I discovered the band, which is public knowledge, I've been interviewed in a couple of places about it. And when I did it, I got this really strange reaction, when I first started telling people on the net about it. I got a few people that were, "We bow before you, we are not worthy", which is not quite what I wanted either, but on the other hand, I got this bunch of people like, "Who do you think you are? The band would have made it without you and stop talking about yourself." So, for the people that are reading this and going, "Yeah, Donna probably beat these people up to get them to interview her...all she ever does is talk about what she did for the band..."

C: Yeah, you're trying to cash in now.

was my dream, it was my hope. I wanted to be on the radio. I wanted to play music for people.

C: What bands made you want to do that?

D: Oh God, I just had the fortune of being right at the beginning of Top 40, okay? I just turned fifty the other day. And while most people don't take me for it, it's actually kind of an interesting way to spend your life. I got to hear Elvis right at the beginning. I got to hear Buddy Holly when he was a nobody, do you know what I'm saying? I remember lying in bed with the flu and just waiting for Peggy Sue to cycle around for the umptieth play! I remember switching around to the local Top 40 stations and trying to guess what the rotation of the hits were. They couldn't play them enough times. I knew this was what I wanted to do with my life. There were certain songs that just spoke to me. Not because of the lyrics particularly, but because of the energy. And I didn't know, oh, **girls** aren't supposed to do that! And I didn't know about all of the BS I'd run into later on trying to have a career in radio and being the first one every place I went. I didn't know about any of that. I was just a kid with a dream. And the other kids didn't like me cause I was different from them so I just kind of lost myself in rock n roll. And I got this great record collection and I knew all the dance steps that I saw on American Bandstand, just the whole thing. But instead of dreaming of marrying a rock star, or even dreaming of playing in a rock n roll band, my heroes were the disc jockeys. Because they sounded like they just had such a cool life. Being able to just sit there and play music for people. Back then, the disc jockeys were powerful. This was before payola. This was when the disc jockeys were personalities. We had an announcer in our town, a guy named Arnie Ginsberg, and I loved him. I loved him because he had a horrible voice, he kept his name, he refused to hide his ethnicity. Everybody else has these bland names, you know, "John Smith here on WXXX " with a big deep voice. Arnie had a voice that was kind of like this (*speaking in a high, tiny voice*) and he didn't care. He made jokes about it himself! And I said to myself, you *can* be yourself and be on the radio. I mean, this is a place where I can be different and it'll be okay. Well today the things I want to do are not perceived as different, but this was the fifties! If you were a girl, you were supposed to want to pad your bra and bake cookies! I wanted a career from the time I was four years old. No one, I mean, I don't know where I got it from. I'm the antithesis of everything you read about in the books. I had no mentor, I had no role model. I just knew.

C: Did you have any older brothers or sisters?

D: Nope, nope. In fact, I had a father, God rest his soul, who was vehemently against my having a career. I had a public school that told me I must secretly wish I was a man and I would probably end up a lesbian. Ahhh! Cause that's like the worst thing you can be. No, I'm not one, but this was thrown at me like, "**this will be your punishment in life, no man will want you!**" I'm like, oh! well, okay, nevermind. But it was like that. There were four Jews in my high school and I kept hearing stories about how "all the Jews are rich" but I never saw one. So, geez, maybe I'm adopted. What's the deal here? It was just like the Grateful Dead said, "Lately it occurs

to me, what a long strange trip it's been." So, when I finally got to college, which is a long story better told some other time, I already came with this desire to be a personality dj, and this desire to play great songs and expose new artists and yada yada. Then I found out you had to have a penis. Now I didn't realize that. Had I known, perhaps I would have gone to the Penis Store, or something like that...I mean, it's the early sixties...

S: The Beatles had just come out?

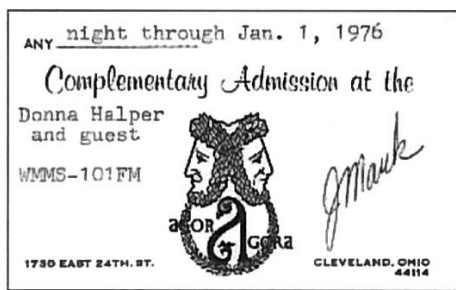
D: No, this is before the Beatles. It was like, this is evidently a bonafide occupational qualification. Imagine my surprise! I went to my college radio station at Northeastern University and I asked them if I could go on the air and they said, "We don't hire women." You could say that in those days. Actually they said, "We don't hire girls." I said, "Why not?" They said, "Well, they don't sound good on the radio." So I said, "Well how many have you hired?" The guy said, "None. They don't sound good on the radio." Which sounded like a catch-22 to me. If you've never had them on the radio how do you know whether they sound good? But this made me embark upon a four year battle that culminated in 1968 with my becoming the first

woman in the history of Northeastern University to ever be on the radio. After that, it was just effort and struggle trying to convince a predominately male industry that it really was okay for me to be there and nothing terrible would happen to them. I wasn't trying to be a man, I was just trying to be Donna. From the time I first went on the air I had an affinity for new music, okay? I felt like I was drawn to the job of music director and I loved listening to all the new records. I

loved trying to find stuff that I thought deserved to be played, either because it had great lyrics or a certain energy. I've always loved to write. I've been writing poetry since I was a kid. I've written some songs, never done anything with them, maybe someday,...but it was kind of a catharsis for me, you know what I'm saying? Like a way to get my emotions out in a world that I felt truly didn't understand who I was. Not like I'm so special, but, no kidding, there were no other females like me back in those days. I couldn't find a one.

S: It was pretty groundbreaking then. Wow.

D: It was horrible. It was the loneliest thing. I wanted to commit suicide. If I hadn't met my best friend, God rest his soul, I probably wouldn't be here having this conversation. The two things that really, actually, the three things that kept me alive, one of them was being a Jew, which really means a lot to me, I became one of those when I was nineteen, which was one of the smartest things I ever did and the other thing was meeting my best friend, who was the first guy to ever encourage me, and the third thing was rock n roll. Those were the three things that really kept me going. So I became a music director in college radio, and funny thing, I don't know if I believe in reincarnation, in fact, I'm sure that I don't, but I know that I've always been drawn to Canada, okay? From the time I was in college it was kind of like I had this sense that Canada was my spiritual home. I learned French by listening to CKAC in Montreal, listening to the hockey games. They would come in real clear. The Montreal stations at night, it was all AM in those days, they came in real clear, you could hear everything. I learned how to say, "He shoots, he scores!"



before I could say anything else.

S: So you're a hockey fan as well?

D: Oh yeah. I love baseball more than anything else. That's another reason everybody said I wanted to be a man. I loved sports. Why not? In the fifties and early sixties it was really defined, what you were supposed to like and I didn't like any of those things.

C: One of my pre-reqs for dating people is that they have to be hockey fans.

D: Geez, does this mean we're gonna date after this article?

C: Don't put that on the record!

S: (laughter) You're quoted Chad!

D: Seriously though, what happened was that I started just gravitating towards Canadian artists. I finally got to go up to Montreal and work out my really bad high school French, but it was kind of fun to do it. I felt like it was kind of home, in a way. When I finally got to Toronto, I had the same feeling. So I'm not surprised that I ended up being the person who got behind Rush. I got such a name for being known as an advocate for Canadian music that by the time I got to Cleveland all the record promoters in Canada were always sending me stuff. They knew that no matter what city I was in, I'd at least give it a fair listen.

S: Really? So, you were probably playing BTO and some earlier...

D: Absolutely. Bachman Turner Overweight.

S: (laughter)

C: (laughter)

D: I had a lot of friends among the record promoters in Canada so when I went to Cleveland it did not surprise me at all that I was still getting records from Canada. In fact, the story of how I discovered Rush is as much Bob Roper's story as it is mine. I always make sure when I tell it that I mention very prominently the fact if Bob Roper, who is still around somewhere in the Canadian music industry, had not been the kind of person he is, we wouldn't be telling this story. His label had passed on Rush. They said, "Thanks, we're not interested." And yet, Roper believed in their music enough that he sent them to me with a note saying, "Hey, my label said, thanks but no thanks, but I hear something in the music, see if you do." And I did. We're all getting by with a little help from our friends.

S: Interesting. So they passed along a Moon copy to you.

D: Yep, absolutely. And I still have it.

S: You still have the original Moon?

D: Still have my original Moon and not only do I have it, but of course when the Mercury version came out in that ghastly shade of fuschia, I couldn't believe, isn't that the ugliest?! The Moon cover was red, it wasn't bad at all. For what it was it worked. They were a bar band in those days. Geddy never made any bones about that. When people dis the first album it gets me really irritated. Like, "Children, you did not start off by being geniuses." Everyone starts off by learning to walk, learning to feed yourself. Rush needed to learn how to evolve from a bar band into what they ultimately became. I'm fascinated by their early stuff. Forget that they're friends of mine. I think it's fascinating just to hear the evolution of a band. I love this stuff. I hear people say it's primitive, but no, it's where they

were at the time.

C: It's the first album, that's all it is.

D: Thank you. That's my point. They never thought that it would be anything else. In fact, Geddy was absolutely shocked when they came to Cleveland and he found that people knew the words to Working Man. They were like, "People in Toronto don't even know the words to Working Man! We can't get arrested on radio in this town. No one will play us!" But the fact is, it was what it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be an energetic catharsis for the masses kind of album because that's who their audience was.

S: What hit you on the album?

D: Working Man. Absolutely.

S: And that was the first song you played.

D: Absolutely. To be honest with you, because I was by that time, in album rock, when you were in AOR in those days you looked for the long cuts. You know, bathroom records, let's get real here, I mean when nature calls, you've got to answer the call and when you're alone at night those 7, 8, and 9 minute records can be very useful.

S: So you were on the late night shift then.

D: Oh, that's what I'd always been on. Female djs in those days were supposed to be sexy overnight jocks. We were like "chick djs".

S: Well, I must have picked it up in Chicago.

D: You may very well have.

S: I know I did. **That's where I first heard it.**

D: I did overnights and I was the music director.

S: I heard it at, like, two in the morning.

D: But to be perfectly frank with you, or to be perfectly Donna with you, the first person to play it wasn't your humble servant. It was Denny Sanders, because Denny was on the air when I was up in my little office listening to music that day. I had this pile of records to listen to and, as I said, in came this thing with Canadian postage on it, and I'm like, "Ooooo, my friends are calling me!" Not my friends Rush, my friends in the Canadian music industry. So I thought, "Cool, something from Roper, I wonder what it is this time?" Like, the last couple of things he had sent me were abysmal, but you know...he's my friend, so let's give it a listen. I took it out of it's packaging and it kind of looked like a loving hands at home thing to me, ah, a home grown album, cool. I noticed that there were a couple of long cuts so I thought I'd give 'em a shot. I dropped the needle down on Working Man and I'm like, "**This is a Cleveland record!**" Thank you very much. That town in those days had one bookstore and lots of bars. It's the Cleveland record. I brought it down to Denny Sanders and he listened in cue to a couple seconds of it and he said, "Yep, Cleveland record." And there it was. Then of course, people heard it and said, "Oooo, the new Led Zeppelin album!" I'm like, "Oh my Gawd!"

S: So you were getting calls immediately.

D: Immediately. It was incredible. I'd love to tell you that fifty thousand people called. They didn't. It was the usual seven actives that call all the time. There's two basic kinds of radio listeners - there's actives and passives. Actives are about five percent of your audience but they're a very noisy five percent. They're the ones that call

immediately to let you know you've made a mistake or they call immediately to let you know that they have tickets to the new whatever and you don't...etc. etc. But they are also a very good barometer for reaction records. And the moment this thing went on the air, the actives called. So, we knew. The next thing we played was Finding My Way and that really went over well. Interestingly enough, In the Mood, which today Geddy is embarrassed by, but hey, it's a bar song, but that wasn't the song that did real well for us at all. The two that always did the best were Working Man and Finding My Way. And interestingly, the ballad, Here Again. It did very nicely for us. People liked power ballads in Cleveland. They always did. After the actives called us they immediately started calling the local record store, The Record Revolution, which carried all the imports. Pretty soon the manager called us saying that he was getting nagged to death and who was this band we were playing? I didn't know diddly about them so I called up Roper and said, "What have you done to me?!" He put me in touch with their management.

S: And that was Vic?

D: Yeah, the first person I talked to was Vic. Then Ray. They were just amazed. They wanted to know how I got a copy. They couldn't figure how the record worked it's way out of Toronto.

S: This was still in '74 when they were still doing the bar circuit.

D: Yeah, nothing but. And Neil had not joined the band yet. I did meet John but he was very much in the background at that point and he did have some health problems. And from what I can gather, creatively they weren't going in the same direction. Now, this is where I get flamed, because people, when I dare to imply that, the guys deep down in their hearts knew they couldn't be a bar band forever. They were looking for someone like Neil. They wanted someone like Neil. If they hadn't found Neil, they'd have invented Neil. You know what I'm saying? It wasn't that Neil took them in a new direction, it was exactly where they wanted to go. When they were seeking another drummer, they wanted someone who could write better lyrics and help them get to the next level. They had this plan. They had this vision.

C: Geddy and Alex have always been the two that wrote the music.

D: Oh, I know. But Geddy at that time did not have a lot of confidence in his ability to write lyrics. Geddy has really come into his own over the years. It's a great thing to see it and I love him dearly. But at the time, he had this role thrust upon him and deep down he knew that there might be someone out there better than he. He wanted to contribute what he could, but he also wanted someone who could challenge him. Am I making any sense? When Neil auditioned he had this British style modeled after Keith Moon. They loved the energy but they also loved his creativity and his ability with words. I remember Geddy saying to me, that Neil was exactly what they had been looking for. They had auditioned various people but really wanted someone who enjoyed writing. Not just someone who was going to do them a favor, you know?

S: Now, didn't Alex have second thoughts though?

D: Interestingly enough, as I may have told you, they both had second thoughts. But for various reasons. Geddy was very intimidated by Neil at the beginning. Which is really funny because they are both high school drop-outs, hell-ooo! But Geddy had this

picture in his mind that Neil was much more articulate than he. And Neil just spoke so much better, and wrote so much better and he was like, "Oh my god, I'll be overshadowed by him!" And Alex, whose always kind of been Geddy's friend was protective of him and was like, "Well if you've got doubts, by god, I've got doubts!" And that's the way the story was told to me, how was it told to you?

S: Pretty much the same way. I heard that Alex just wasn't sure...

D: Neil does not know how to do warm and friendly. If you want warm fuzzies, Neil is not your guy. It's just not his basic nature. Neil doesn't like doing the meet-n-greets and the glad-handing.

S: He never has, has he?

D: No, it's just not him. He will occasionally but only if he feels like it. And, see that doesn't bother me. I mean, it's not in his contract that he must be nice to us. There's no rule about this. And I don't find him rude or nasty. He's just a very private person and he chooses to get up on stage and play his ass off and when he's finished, he wants to leave. Well, terrific.

C: Isn't that kind of how we feel about our jobs?

D: My point exactly. But I must tell you, and I've said this before and people don't believe it, um, I popped in on them without their knowledge one time with my step-daughter, and she will tell you this herself, Neil was wonderful. He couldn't have been friendlier. He wasn't prepared for us. He happened to be there. It was before he could make his get-away! He saw me and he came right over, shook hands, gave me a hug, "How ya doin', what's going on...". This was like in the early 80's, it had been a couple of years. I had gotten married and my step-daughter was a real big Rush fan. He could have been like, so what? But he wasn't. To Neil, loyalty is everything. He believed that I had been a friend to the band and he felt like the least he could do was be friendly in return. And he could not have been nicer to my step-daughter. I never forgot that. When everybody tells me about, oh, Neil this and Neil that...no, Neil wants to do it on his terms, and that's fine. I understand that. But if he feels like you're the kind of person that he respects he will absolutely be there for you. I have no doubt in my mind.

S: I believe that. He's corresponded with us through notes and postcards. Why not?

D: He sent me a postcard once. I still have it. I never washed that postcard...He's got a very good heart. But, as I said before, of all of them, he's the least likely to want to do the prefatory social stuff. His feeling is, that if he's gonna have to be forced to do it, it's going to have no meaning to it.

C: That makes sense to me.

S: Going back to their first show, were you at all involved with that?

D: Oh absolutely. See that's the other thing that's really funny. I don't smoke. I don't drink. I don't do drugs. I was as much of an outcast in Cleveland as I had been growing up in Boston. I mean, here was my rock-n-roll fantasy, I finally get to work at the number one album rock station in the country and I'm too straight for them. I was too straight for the hippies and too hip for the straight people. I felt like I was really in the middle of two worlds. It was interesting that my friendship with Rush was like my entre into their world, if you know what I'm saying. Suddenly people who wouldn't take my phone call,

who looked down on me because I wasn't hip, because I wasn't a dooper or whatever their expectation was, all of a sudden, the fact that I had something they wanted, namely a rock-n-roll band, suddenly people are calling me wanting interviews with Rush, wanting me to get them to sign with their label, etc. It was so bizarre! I literally had record companies that wouldn't take my calls and all of a sudden there they are, like, "We hear you're friends with the band. Would you tell them to sign with us?"

S: Was this before they signed with Mercury then?

D: Absolutely. I had four labels that were all over me like a cheap suit trying to convince me that I should have them sign with their label. I would be lying to say that I made the decision, of course I didn't, but they did ask me what I thought. Back in those days, I was kind of like a big sister to the band. I'm not that anymore. I've never said that I still am. It would be ridiculous to think that I still am. They don't need a big sister. They're multi-millionaires, talented and popular. But back then, they were three shy kids from Toronto. And here was this one city where they were gods. So, of course, they listened to me (laughs). I really believed that Mercury would pay the kind of attention to them. Mercury at that time needed a rock band badly. The selling point to me, for Mercury, was that Cliff Burnstein said to me, "I promise that if you put in a good word for us, we will make them our first priority. We will get behind them 100%. We won't stop or quit. We may not be the best label but we'll be the most dedicated." I believed him. And he was right. They bent over backwards to give Rush artistic freedom. The band will tell you, in the early days, they were not forbidden to do much of anything. They were allowed to just go in the studio and do the things they felt they needed to do. And Mercury basically left them alone. That's exactly what they wanted. They gave the band the support that they said they would give them.

S: What do you recall from the first show?

D: I recall Vic and I standing at the back of the hall and I don't know who was more nervous.

S: Do you recall Rush's reaction?

D: They were nervous too. Geddy was wearing these really bizarre platform heels, he never should have worn them.

S: He was wearing the platforms...

D: Don't get me started.

S: They had their silks...

D: Oh the whole..oh, please! But hey, that's what they thought the fashion was and what's it to me? I look back on some of the music videos from that time and everyone looked goofy. The show itself was a sell-out. Of course not all for Rush, they were opening for Uriah Heep. But the actives were there absolutely for Rush. The band was shocked. You could see that that really helped Geddy relax. I have this very strong memory that has stayed with me for years. I was standing by the railing in the back of the theatre and Vic was standing there with me and he put his hand on top of mine and he said, "Don't worry Donna, we won't let you down." And they never did. They never have. That's God's honest truth. Twenty-five years later, how many people can say that they've maintained a friendship for twenty-five years. Granted, the friendship has changed in many ways, but it's still there.

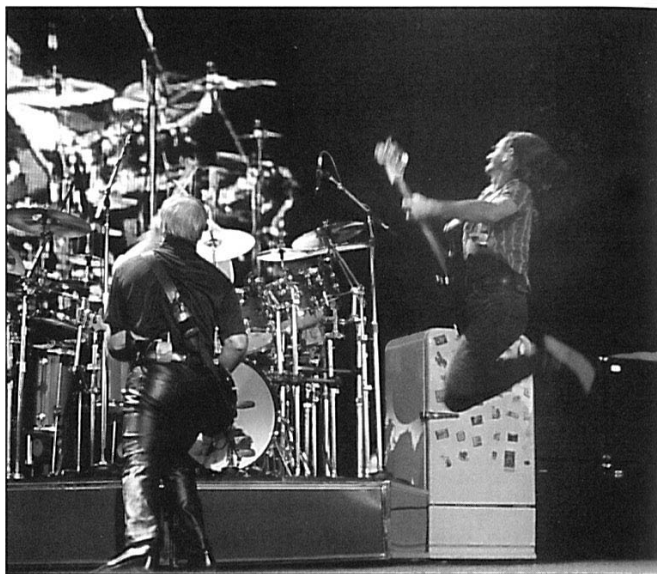
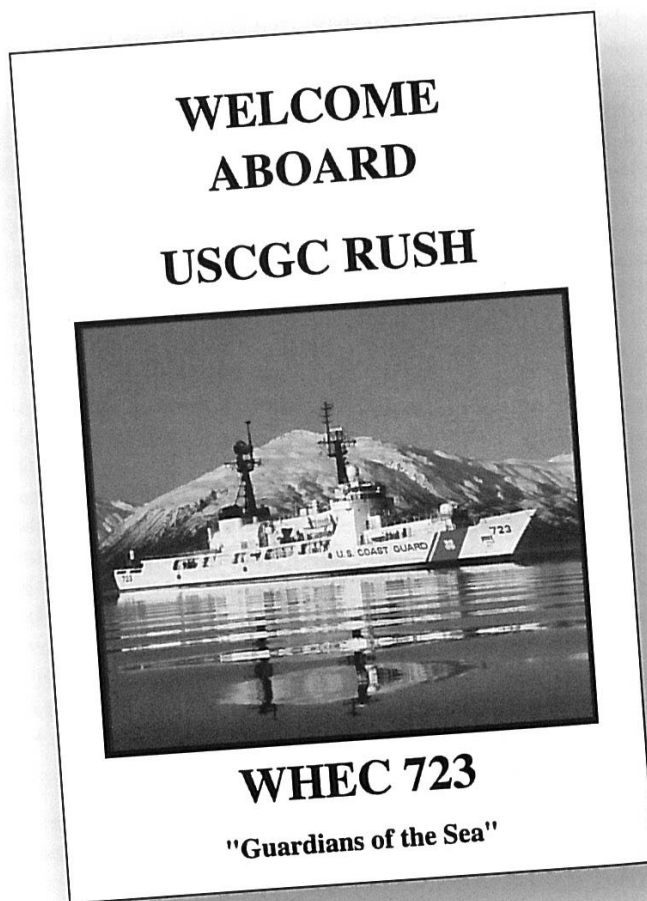


Photo by Mandy Streeter, Chicago, IL

USCGC RUSH (WHEC-723)

by Jerry 'Broon Jr.' Brown
Jacksonville, Florida



CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!





There are literally thousands of ships in the world, but in fact only one vessel in the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy fleet which bears the name of our favorite band! The United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) **RUSH** is the ninth of the Hamilton Class High Endurance Cutters (WHEC). She was launched November 16th, 1968 at New Orleans, LA, at an approximate cost of \$20 million. **RUSH**'s operational duties have varied since her delivery. Originally, she was planned to be an ocean stationed vessel, providing mid-ocean assistance to transiting vessels

and aircraft and gathering meteorological and oceanographic data. In the early 1970's, **RUSH** participated in operations off the coast of Vietnam.

RUSH is well suited for mid-ocean Search and Rescue (SAR) operations and often responds to cases varying from requests for medical assistance to help for a vessel taking on water. **RUSH** responds to each call with the traditional Coast Guard "Can Do" attitude.

Today, Maritime Law Enforcement is her primary employment. From Alaskan waters to the waters off Hawaii, **RUSH** boards foreign and domestic fishing vessels located within the U.S. 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to ensure that they are operating in compliance with U.S. laws.

The **RUSH** and other cutters in her class are the first major United States ships to have a combined diesel and gas turbine propulsion plant. The Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines are a marine version of those used on diesel locomotives at 36,000 horsepower. The Pratt & Whitney gas turbines are similar to those used on Boeing 707 jets at 7,200 horsepower. Controllable pitch propellers of 13 foot diameter can be controlled from the machinery control booth in the engine room, from the pilot house, or from the bridge wings. In addition, a bow propulsion unit (Bow Thrusters) at 350 horsepower are installed to aid in maneuvering at slow speeds.

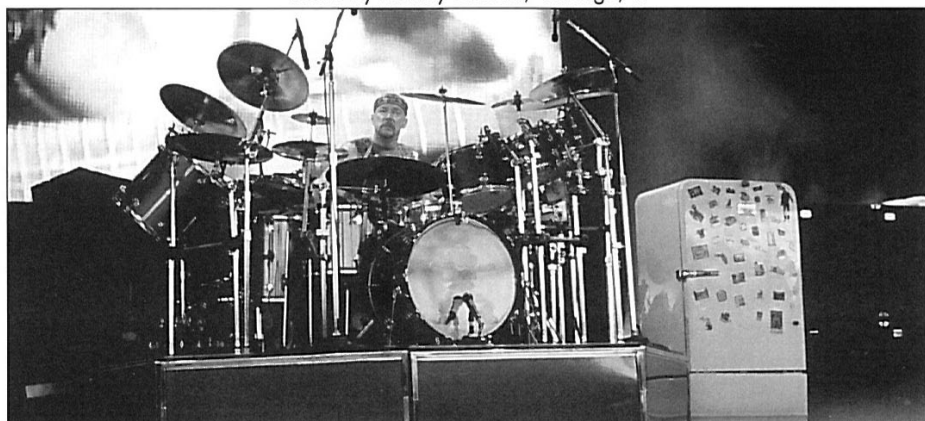
The 378 foot **RUSH** weighs 3,299 tons when fully loaded, carries one HH-65 Dolphin helicopter, and has a maximum sustained speed of 28 knots. Personnel allowance consists of 19 Officers, 15 chief Petty Officers and 133 enlisted men. Weapons systems include a MK75 76mm Gunmount, a 20mm Close In Weapons System (CIWS), MK38 25mm Machine Guns and 50 Caliber Machine Guns.

Under the guidance of her captain and crew, **RUSH** is well equipped to be "Semper Paratus", Always Ready, to complete her various missions. **RUSH**'s vision is taking quality to sea through leadership, teamwork, diversity and respect.

A Show Of Fans would like to personally thank the current Commanding Officer, Captain Thomas D. Yearout; Public Affairs Officer, LT(jg) S.T. Smullin and of course the hard working crew of the greatest of all namesaked ships in the world, **USCGC RUSH** (WHEC-723)! The "Guardians of the Sea" are currently homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii.



Photo by Mandy Streeter, Chicago, IL



Geddy Snippets

"I love the fact that I'm enjoying touring as much as I am. I like how there are never more than a couple of shows in a row, too. It's tough at 40 to put out a 2 1/2-hour show. And it's really tough for me to tell my little girl that I'm not going to be home for 2 months. But this tour is smaller, so it's OK.

We're playing the entire '2112' album, and this is the first time we've ever done that, even when it came out. But we tried it in rehearsals and it worked and it's really fun to play. It's a gratifying album to play because I think it was the first album that our sound, the Rush sound, came together... It was our defining moment, to a certain degree."

from The Salt Lake Tribune, May 16, 1997

"I was brutalized fairly regularly in the early days in terms of my vocal style. The one that's stayed with me is 'the damned howling in Hades' — that's a favorite quote of mine.

But it's a blessing to have the opportunity to make so many records, that you have the ability to grow up in public.

This time my wife and I had a little holiday in Florida before the band started recording, and I was so paranoid that I took a little bass with me — I had to take an hour a day, sit in a room and make sure I wasn't losing a step.

When you're a young band first starting, all you want to do is practice, because gigs are few and far between. Then you're touring, and you're practicing every day. So as you are developing as a musician, you live for practice — that's creating who you want to be.

Then when you achieve a measure of success and you're able to slow down, your practice subsides a bit. And you suddenly find yourself in the unfortunate position of feeling a little detached from your muse. When that happens, you feel the urge to start woodshedding again. What we learned from this album was, all the extra practice we did was actually able to take us to a higher level. Every time you think you've flattened out in your learning curve, you find out that that's not true — there's so much farther to go. Like any craft, you have to work on it your entire life to keep on getting better and better.

We've pulled out all the stops — we're a band that still believes in big production. It's probably the most theatrical tour we've ever done. It seems as we get a little older, we embrace that side of what our songs say."

from The Denver Post, May 21, 1997



The Color of Right



Revealed

by
Dan Domberg



Look at the colors in the room around you; do you see the color of right? How about in a rainbow; can you find it there? If you were to envision the color of right, what would it look like? Is it fathomable or describable? Neil Peart attempts to resolve this quandary in Color of Right off the album Test for Echo. Let's see how he does.

- 1 I don't have an explanation
For another lonely night
I just feel this sense of mission
And the sense of what is right
- 2 Take it easy on me now —
I'd be there if I could
I'm so full of what is right
I can't see what is good
- 3 It's a hopeless situation
Lie awake for half the night
You're not sure what's going on here
But you're sure it isn't right
- 4 Make it easy on yourself
There's nothing more you can do
You're so full of what is right
You can't see what is true
- 5 A quality of justice
A quantity of light
A particle of mercy
Makes the color of right



- 6 Gravity and distance
Change the passage of light
Gravity and distance
Change the color of right

The second time I listened to this song, it moved me enough to bring tears to my eyes, and my soul hasn't honored many songs in such a way. The beautiful melodies carried the message of the song to my heart, where things seldom are allowed. From there, it sent chills down my spine, filling me with indescribable emotion. It amazes me that mere sounds could elicit a response as powerful as any feeling of free-fall that I've ever known. The total must truly be greater than the sum of its parts.

Aside from the strong emotions conjured in me, this song offers a subtle but important message as well. The first two stanzas of the song seem to tell a story. I see a person who has been away from home for a long time. He's away from his family by choice, but he is lonely nonetheless. He asks his family for forgiveness, but he must do what he thinks is right. The problem is, while trying to do his self-righteous task, he neglects what is good for his family (of which he is a part). Situations like this occur often in reality. A person leaves his or her family periodically to do work or charity because he or she thinks that it's the right thing to do. It may be good for the job or the charity; but is it good for his family?

In many cases your perception of a situation dictates whether something is right. Conversely, sometimes your belief in what's right influences your perception of a situation. The next two stanzas portray this. In the middle of the night, a woman lies awake thinking about something that's amiss. However, she contemplates to no avail because her emotions have blinded her to the truth. I see this happen regularly in politics. Politicians have causes that they believe in, and in many instances their beliefs are not based on the truth of the situation. When this occurs, the cause (or what they think is right) blinds them to what is true.

The fifth stanza attempts to quantify the "ingredients" that make up the color of right. "A quality of justice, a quantity of light and a particle of mercy makes the color of right." According to Mr. Peart, justice, light and

mercy will lead us towards what is right. Justice or fairness is of course a quality that makes up what is right; but what about light? Light, in this context, could be revealing the truth of the situation. And, as we have seen before, it is impossible to do what is right if the truth of the situation isn't known. Finally, justice tempered with mercy is necessary because we don't always know the whole truth behind every situation. Mercy attempts to correct for this human flaw.

For me, the final stanza of this song was by far the most intriguing. In it, Neil takes a statement from relativistic physics and uses it in a clever way, giving it a twofold meaning. "Gravity and Distance change the passage of light." Proven by Einstein, gravity bends light. Also, the farther light has to travel, the dimmer it is. Gravity and distance literally do change the passage of light. However, what if gravity and distance were metaphors for severity and closeness? The severity of a situation and our closeness to it determine how we see that situation. I am sure that people living in Grand Forks, North Dakota, see their flooding dilemma in a much different light than people living in Hawaii. Likewise, what is considered right will change with our proximity to, and the seriousness of, a situation. "Gravity and Distance change the color of right." There aren't many people who would argue that stealing is okay. But what if your mother was dying and you didn't have money for the medication that would save her? Would it be acceptable then?

The lyrics of this song illustrate that right and wrong are not as simple as black and white. Right is a color all its own. It's as individual as a fingerprint, but it's also as specific as a recipe. I liken it to any color. We can identify an exact wavelength for any color, but how we see and how we feel about that color is unique for every individual. Some people are even color-blind.

Finally, the music and lyrics of this song complement each other in such a way that I couldn't help but love it. Any music lover will tell you that certain songs make a special connection in this way. And, occasionally, a song can also touch your soul. I'm glad to have another to add to my list.



REMEMBERING THE FIRST TIME

by Andrew D. Deyell

Blackness descended, accompanying the stereo sounds of Soundgarden to the sticky, ashladen floor of the Rochester War Memorial until all was quiet, save the 7,000 screaming voices of mostly white males, ranging from ages 18-45, give or take a generation. Now it was time.

It was a reckoning of sorts; when reality catches up with those trips to your Dad's softball games, or those short rides to church on Sunday mornings. Until now, all I knew was the smell of it: imbibing the sweet odor of the slug-infested leaves on a drizzly fall afternoon, wincing with the pure ammonia-like sharpness attacking your nostrils that is the Buffalo winter. But now it becomes more than smell and sound. Will it still be as delicious?

Or will it become spoiled and ruined? The actual cannot possibly be as real as the imagined. The anticipation almost always makes the realization anti-climactic, even boring. Did you ever want something so bad, but at the last moment, become afraid that you might get what you asked for - that all the hope and emotion you invested would be diluted into skim milk.

"It's just the age. It's just a stage. We disengage. We turn the page."

Tonight I drink 2%.

Arms flail and strum and voices crack horribly in the sea of well-behaved humanity. Controlled chaos. Everyone is living off of each other's energy tonight. Happy, sweaty parasites. The sweet smell is no longer that of fall leaves, but the tangy and thick scent of pot. The Buffalo winter runs through my nostrils and fills my soul. The realization is a high all its own. Laser's pierce, videos link, smoke congests and.... human beings give faces to the sounds I have locked away in my mind's eye.

"I hear their passionate music - read the words that touch my heart."

I sing them actually, along with thousands of other geeks, misfits, jocks, preps, mama's boys, lover boys, businessmen, burnouts and stoners. Tonight we have nothing in common and everything in common. We are united in our quest to not only rock like hell, but to listen, and not only to listen, but to hear, and not only to hear, but to feel, and not only to feel, but to be affected by those feelings.

For about two and a half hours the ritual takes shape. Like in any established religion, sections are borrowed from other religions. Somehow though, the borrowed parts are refined and made into something original and all their own; the drum solo a tribal dance with worshipers circling the fire before the feast; a

ballad here and there concerning time and motion, reminding us that we are mortal, and loved, and hated, and human. Passive and aggressive alternate like X's and O's.

And then it is over. I leave my comrades feeling sated beyond words. Like a child at Christmas who cannot wait to open the gifts, I hurry home with the ringing in my eardrums still fresh, pulling out my CD's and trying to recapture that feeling that is only hours old, yet miles away. It's early in the AM and I'm sitting back in my dorm room, trying to burn the images permanently into my mind. I'm drinking milk.

2% of course.

There are times when we build up our expectations to the point that we can only be disappointed. We set ourselves up to be let down. On the occasion that the realization equals or even surpasses anticipation, we are left with a memory that we are able not only to keep with us forever, but share with others as well. One October night in Rochester, NY gave me a memory that started a string of ten or so rituals just like the first, yet each was so wonderfully unique. Small differences; a different companion, the seemingly insignificant addition or subtraction of a single song, the size of the arena, give each a flavor and texture that allow me to distinguish and remember each event with a certain fondness.

"Although it's just a memory, some memories last forever."

Years later, while living in Washington, DC, my youngest sister calls me and invites me to see Rush with her in Buffalo. She is 17 years old and has been raised on Nirvana and R.E.M. I agree and drive eight hours on a cold October day to Buffalo - an October day much like the one 5 years earlier. This is when I learned what makes Rush so special to me.

I once kept this band between myself and my headphones, getting lost in my own world for awhile. The lyrics were for me and about me.

Not so.

These lyrics and this band were for and about everyone. Seeing Rush live and sharing those words and chords and riffs and beats with someone I cared about blew me away. I studied my sister's reactions to all that was taking place around us as we stood in the arena. I saw that she liked it and was moved. I was moved.

"The spark still flies, reflected in another pair of eyes."

After the show, as we sat at home and feverishly talked about which songs we wished would have made the set list, and the surprising ones that did make it, I saw this look in her eyes. I wondered if I had that same look five years earlier. Somehow, I knew I had. We talked and talked for hours into the night, listening to CD's and drinking milk.

2% of course.



the steve streeter and neil peart interview

LIVE ON PAPER!



Photo by Ellen Moore, Charlotte Coliseum, 1996

1) First off, I think *Test For Echo* is yet another masterwork from you guys. Did you get the inspiration for the *inukshuk* from your trip to see the “midnight sun” as you described in **Cycle Canada** magazine?

2) I know that an *inukshuk* is on a Canadian coin as well. The parallel to the satellite dish is fascinating. What brought you to that connection? (pun intended.)

3) Hugh Syme did a knockout job once again on the artwork. I understand you work closely with Hugh on the conceptualization. How does that process work, specifically with **T4E**? Do you do “thumbnails?”

1, 2, 3.) For a start, thank you for your opening shot of appreciation—it’s always nice to know when someone likes the work. (If they don’t, however, I don’t care to know about it!)

A friend of mine has a small *inukshuk* in his house, and he told me of his experiences hiking on Baffin Island, seeing nothing but rocks and lichen and sky for days on end, and finally encountering a stone figure, *inukshuk*, “likeness of a man,” and how good it felt to see this affirmation of other humans. “Echo.”

My own travels in the Northwest Territories didn’t reach nearly so far north, but I was impressed by an *inukshuk* overlooking the city of Yellowknife, and it evoked another a “echo,” that of the watchful idol. Or a deity that people might pray to, in hopes of an “echo” in return. I bought a postcard of an *inukshuk* in Yellowknife and that postcard became the “starting point” for the cover art.

Perhaps you are aware that we had also intended to use the *inukshuk* in the still photo from 2001, to replace the monolith, but Mr. Turner’s big ol’ company wouldn’t let us. Too bad—it would have been another cool take on that “presence.”

With the satellite dishes, I was thinking particularly of the SETI people (Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence), who are signalling, watching, and listening, and again, they’re simply hoping for an “echo.” Then there are the secondary metaphors of that image, like satellite TV, modems, live camera uplinks, and even “spy satellites.” (Not to mention my personal favorites, the *weather* satellites.)

Starting from those images, Hugh and I began trading ideas. After twenty years of working together on this particular aspect of Rush’s presentation, we have developed a strong level of communication and understanding—much as Geddy and Alex and I have—and even if Hugh and I are thousands of miles apart, we can discuss something clearly enough that I’ll know how it’s going to look before I see it. It takes a few thousand words, perhaps, but thus we make the pictures.

With **Test For Echo** in particular, when I discussed these basic ideas with Geddy and Alex, Geddy suggested that he’d like to make the front cover more *surreal* somehow, and it was Alex who suggested the element to do that—tiny people. The twilight version on the cover of the tour book is actually the alternate shot for the CD cover, for we had made it with two different “moods,” to give us a choice.

Hugh and I together worked out the images to accompany each song, and since most of them are capable of carrying more than one little metaphor, or shade of meaning, I hate to limit them by outright *definition*. For example, in the illustration for “Resist,” I had wanted something which said “no surrender,” and thought of the “No U-Turn” sign as a suitably oblique take on that. The “climbers,” of course, provide another metaphor for personal progress, or in this case *learning*, yet even that is given an ironic twist in the song. For example, what else would you be expected to compromise except your own desires? Another sub-text in the song is about learning to accept your true *limitations*, but not the tiniest bit less.

4) I noticed during the live performance of “Test For Echo,” O.J. Simpson flashed on the projection screen during the verse “don’t do the crime.” What is your take on that whole debacle?

4.) The unstated comment in the song “Test For Echo” is “Does anybody else think this is weird?” That’s pretty much how I felt about the world’s fascination with O.J. Simpson’s alleged homicides. “The showcase trial on TV.” And that’s only part of all that’s weird about the things people *choose* for their entertainment.

Unless we want to pretend they’re *forced* to watch all those top-rated TV shows, the daytime and the night-time time-wasters? Still, the song is not meant to be *snobbish* about TV by any means, for there’s certainly some good stuff on the box (just as there is on the NetWeb), but has anybody else noticed that the good stuff doesn’t tend to be all that *popular*? Does anybody else think this is weird?

“The only sin,” said Oscar Wilde, “is stupidity.” It’s hard not to agree, but what’s to be done? Nothing, really, but though I usually consider myself to be an optimist about human nature, sometimes when I watch the way people behave, especially

toward each *other*, I feel more like Miranda's line in *The Tempest*, with a twist from the old Strawbs album: "O grave new world / That has such people in't."

Continuing in the vein of literary quotations, just today I received by mail-order a witty little book called *The Devil's Dictionary*, by Ambrose Bierce. It is a collection of wry definitions, and this is how he defines the *real* enemies of goodness."

Idiot, n. A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling. The Idiot's activity is not confined to any special field of thought or action, but "pervades and regulates the whole." He has the last word in everything; his decision is unappealable. He sets the fashions of opinions and taste, dictates the limitations of speech and circumscribes conduct with a dead-line.

5) What prompted the vintage refrigerator to be added to the stage set?

5.) The museum-quality refrigerator and appliances on stage left are just a light-hearted response to Alex filling up stage right with giant amps and every electronic effect known to megalomaniacal guitar players.

6) Another interesting addition to the **T4E** packaging is the snapshots of the three of you as youngsters. Also the footage in *A Work In Progress* with J.R. Flood—both portray a reminiscence that seems to go against the stance you have taken in the past. What prompted this? It's a priceless thing that you have chosen to share with us. The fans love it! Now the re-masters are coming up in a month. The past obviously has its place. Do you have a renewed vision of it?

6.) The past definitely has its place: behind me!

But seriously, the only "stance" I have ever taken against the past is to say that *now* is better than *then*, and just as I dislike all delusions, I dislike nostalgia, which is just dressing up the past in sentimentality. (A quality, as Paul Theroux pointed out in *The Happy Isles of Oceania*, which is too often displayed by bullies and boors.) Anybody whose life actually used to be good and now is bad, and they only expect it to get worse, well, they have my sympathy, for there's obviously something seriously wrong.

But just because I think the present is best (*carpe diem* and that) and I hope the future will be even better, that doesn't mean that the past isn't good. In our case, we have certainly never

turned away from playing our old songs in concert, for example, and while I would gladly erase some of our past works from the Great Blackboard of Time if it were possible (no, I won't tell which), there are others which I still think are pretty darn good.

I'm not like Henry Ford ("History is bunk"), but I do believe that the past should be looked at with the clearest eye possible. Like the autobiography of Mel Tormè (the "Velvet Fog"), *It Wasn't All Velvet*.

The teenage pictures in the **T4E** package are another kind of "echo," and of course they have the more important attributes of being *funny* and... kind of cute. That's true of the old shots of me which are shown in *A Work In Progress*; they are historical and hysterical, and represent a part of the whole "progress."

The remasters and reissues don't really have much to do with us, frankly. Phonogram owns all the old stuff, and they have the right to do that kind of thing. We can only try to make sure that it's done well.

For example, the forthcoming **Retrospective** collections were going to be "forthcoming" anyway, whatever we said or did, so I decided to spend a bit of time making them a little better than past efforts of that kind, in terms of material and presentation.

Regarding the re-masters in particular, if

those pieces of work are going to be available anyway, and Phonogram wants to make them better by remastering them, then there's certainly nothing wrong with that.

So it's not that I have a "renewed vision" of the past, it's just a consequence of the passing years. These days we have so *much* past to deal with!

7) I have to ask one question about "Virtuality." While the song's lyrics are not a negative take on the Internet, they do echo a bleak existence for the "net boy" or "net girl" who relies on the Net for "virtually" everything. Is this "thing" out of control? Where do you see the Internet going in the next few years? Even after your letter in **Modern Drummer** explaining the problems you have had with the Net, so-called Rush fans continue to blast you for your decision. I frankly don't understand their motives.

7.) Me too neither. However, like religion, it seems to be a subject which does not permit any infidels, and especially *laughing* infidels. (See *The Name Of The Rose*.)

"Virtuality" has to be understood as *satire* (a species



Photo by Frank White, FX Images

almost as endangered as irony in these times), and thus I have used a certain amount of exaggeration to try to puncture the exaggerations of those who have made a new *religion* out of this thing. Like "Test For Echo," this song has an unspoken commentary on its subject, and a generous whack of irony lurking behind all the miracles it describes. In answer to the narrator's claims in "Virtuality," that tacit comment is: "No you can't."

As far as anybody having a "bleak existence," well, I kind of think they'd be having one anyway, whether they squandered their time on mindless TV, video games, tossing cards against a wall, or burning churches. Such wastrels have probably been around since mankind first earned the luxury of having time to waste. As soon as we had a spare minute from gathering food and hiding from saber-tooth tigers, some of us were painting on cave walls, and some of us were firing slingshots at pterodactyls.

Regarding my "excoriation" in the pages of **Modern Drummer**, I can only say that I was genuinely shocked to be so vilified over an *apology*. And equally surprised and disappointed that an offhand, facetious "heresy" was considered to be more important than, say, that for twenty years I answered all that mail for no other reason than to be *nice*.

Of course there's no one to blame but the changing times, but all the same people shouldn't be blind to the *consequences* which change always entails. I can't think of *anything* that's all good or all bad, and it seems to me that only fanatics would believe it so. (And put a Salman-Rushdie-style *fatwa* on anyone who dared to disagree.) "O grave new world / That has such people in't."

A simple look at my drumkit would show that I'm hardly anti-technology, and I'm obviously staring at a computer screen *now*, as I type these replies. I see by the printer test sheet that over 10,000 pieces of paper have come out of my computer in the past eight or nine years, and *all* of those 10,000 pages were written for the purpose of communicating with other people, on one level or another. It's unfortunate that so many trees had to die for my sins, but on the other hand they were menial pulpwood like poplars, not majestic redwoods and rainforest hardwoods. And I *do* love the power of words on paper.

With all of the technological marvels in today's world, we have not yet been able to synthesize *wood* (thinking of drums and drumsticks), and the same is true of paper.

As far as the future is concerned, I wouldn't dare to predict it. The greatest changes in modern times would never have been foreseen twenty years ago, by anyone—the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of the minivan, and certainly the spread of this particular "bone of contention," the Internet.

On that medium in particular, perhaps it will follow the trajectory of satellite TV (and North America) in gradually being changed from an unfenced wilderness into a safely packaged suburb by a host of profit-driven "service providers."

8) You are now an "Officer," along with your many other distinguishable qualities. Was it exciting to receive the Order Of



Photo by John Vinson, Englewood, CO

Canada? What does it mean to you?

8.) Receiving the Order of Canada was a very nice thing, a true honor, and I perceive it as an award for "good citizenship." Fair enough, for I think we have been good citizens. (We still *live* here, for one thing, which is rare enough among successful Canadians.) The ceremony itself was an unusual and interesting experience, and after all, it made our mothers proud. That can never be bad.

9) In "Half The World" you present a bittersweet view of life (the "haves" & the "have nots") that really hits the gong of reality smack in the face. Having been in Rush and succeeding "your way," how do you feel about the other half? Rush has been stellar in its donations to charity. It seems like you're always "giving back." What was the inspiration for "half the world." Any particular event? Also, the video is outstanding. It looks like you guys had a blast. Do you enjoy doing videos?

9.) Years ago I picked up the line "half the world hates what the other half is doing" (don't remember where), and it hung around in my notebook until it found a "home." There are lots of "other halves," of course—racial, economic, political, sexual, religious, intellectual, linguistic, cultural—and it is so often a weakness of our (all too) human nature to *celebrate* our differences as a reflection of our spurious "group identity." At best I think that's bogus, and at worst, it's murderous.

I have often spoken—or written—against such shallow and divisive distinctions, as in "Territories" and "Alien Shore," and I probably will again, because they bother me. (The usual reason for things getting written about: they thrill me, or they bother me.)

On the subject of charities in general, I believe in *voluntary* help rather than the forcible kind, and try to live by that belief. Apart from what we do as a band, privately I support about a

hundred separate NGOs (non-governmental organizations) which do the kind of helping, teaching, and conserving which seem good to me.

Regarding the "Half The World" video, that was a freezing, blustery day on the shore of Lake Ontario, so it wasn't exactly a picnic, but we've been doing these things for a long time, and certainly know how to make the best of it! As a general thing, given my abovedescribed interest in words-on-paper (and "works on paper" like our covers and tour books), I am not nearly so interested in the "moving image."

Geddy, on the other hand, has always had a love for that field, and consequently he gets more involved in the video-making process. Lately he has worked closely with Dale Heslip in the same way that I do with Hugh Syme. In both circumstances, Alex is responsible for making all the jokes, to keep us from getting too serious, or too frustrated.

Shooting a video is not a *performance* as such, which makes it a little weird, but I have learned to approach as if it were real, and just to play the song as I would onstage. I tell the directors, "I'll play my drums; you take a picture of it!"

It's simpler that way. No "acting."

10) "Totem" is one of my favorite cuts on **T4E**. Both musically and lyrically it glows! It seems to me that you are once again expressing a facet of what "Freewill" suggested—freedom of choice. That means choosing either good or evil. In "Totem," you cover a handful of philosophies, and wind up with the rational, reality-based "I believe in what I see" & "I believe in what I hear" (sensism). But it is as if you are pointing the finger of caution toward many philosophies. "Totem" to me is an analogy for an integration of philosophies and religions. Am I correct in my interpretation? Have you reached a point of integration? It's obvious that to say you are a dyed-in-the-wool "Randian" would be a false statement. Yet the fact is, that core philosophy is **IMPORTANT** as a building block. Yes?

10.) Yes. Again though, "Totem" has an impish, nose-tweaking urge, like "Virtuality," as I "borrow" some of the nice things about different belief-systems and get them all dancing together. But beware the irony—that which is not what it seems. The lines about "I believe in what I see" etc. are directly *contradicted* by the following lines: "I believe that what I'm feeling changes how the world appears." In other words, what I see and hear might change according to my mood or circumstances. (Or at least, I've noticed that it does with a lot of people.)

11) When performing live do you prefer indoor or outdoor venues? Does it make a *difference* to you?

11.) Not really. I love the smell of the night air, but other than that there's really not too much difference. The matter of *size* is relevant, however, in both cases, and that's why we're comfortable in amphitheatres but not in stadiums or open fields (after a few experimental, and ultimately unsatisfying, experiences).

12) Going back a bit to **Roll The Bones**, what's with the elephant butt?

12.) Apart from the Deep Religious Significance (not really), the elephant butt represents the very largest bones rolling along—and, of course, the source for *ivory*, of which our main image, dice, used to be made.

13) It has been revealed that you found a copy of *Anthem* in the tube while in England before you joined Rush, yes? Tell me, is this true? Did you actually read it on the train? And what was your first reaction to it? I read *Atlas Shrugged* for the first time on a train from Houston to Chicago and there could not have been a better setting!

13.) Here's a fine example of how stories get twisted, a little at a time, like that childhood game of "pass the story." Let's catch this one early, before it "mutates" too far! In fact, I *bought* a copy of *The Fountainhead* from a newsstand *beside* the tube station and read it while commuting to work on Carnaby Street every day.

For me that book at that point in my life was exactly the kind of *affirmation* that I've talked about with **Test For Echo**. "Somebody else out there feels the way I do about these things." Of any of the "labels" people try to stick on me, the only one I might accept would be "individualist" as opposed to "collectivist" (an innocent enough preference, I would think). To the individualist, *nothing* is a bible, and nobody's dogma is going to be accepted wholeheartedly. As Mendelson Joe might say, "not in my dogma-pound."

So much modern entertainment, from sitcoms to hit movies, rests on a simplistic moral formula: "Dumb and poor is good. Rich and smart is bad." This might be a self-ennobling reflection of those lines from Ambrose Bierce quoted above, but for myself, I used to get beaten up by poor, dumb kids, and I've known

Photo by John Vinson, Englewood, CO



plenty of fine people who also happened to be smart and well-off. And of course, I know lots of poor smart people, and all too many rich dumb ones. *C'est la vie!*

As one of those halfwit champions of showbiz morality famously said, "Life is like a box of chocolates," but a more thoughtful individual might have figured out that sometimes you *do* know what you're going to get. You read the descriptions beside the little pictures, and then pick out the ones you like! Philosophy is just another box of chocolates.

14.) Many Rush albums are brought to us by the letter (insert letter here). Just like on "Sesame Street." Will you share what these letters mean?

14.) I'm happy to report that they don't mean *anything*, except perhaps in **Power Windows**, and then only because we noticed that we had a lot of songs starting with the letter "M." Otherwise, it's just another silly little joke to amuse our silly little minds (and perhaps others' too).

15) I was both inspired and surprised by your comment in an interview that your skills and performance level as a drummer are more the result of hard work and disciplined practice rather than pure talent. This is a really inspiring concept for any aspiration one might have. Could you elaborate on this philosophy, and comment on how to break through the perceived pain of practice, practice, practice...?

15.) Simple answer: *desire, desire, desire.*

16) What is the role of risk in your writing and performance? How do you balance this with your highly-evolved discipline?

16.) One of my formulas for life in general is: "Danger + Survival = Fun."

Obviously, everyone's got to work out that equation for themselves, especially in deciding how much *risk* is appropriate, needful, or, indeed—*fun*. "How much of a risk can I take and still *survive*, with the expectation that the experience will be *worthwhile*?"

This formula applies equally well to writing, performing, and traipsing around in the African Sahel. It's a "Roll The Bones"



Photo submitted by Jerry "Broon Jr." Brown

kind of theme.

17) During the intermission break on the **T4E** tour there is a "biker-babe B-movie" that runs. What is that film, and who chose it?

17.) I believe it's actually a collection of trailers for biker-movies, which Geddy thought would be funny for the intermission.

18) Who is your favorite comic-book hero?

18.) Alex Lifeson.



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THE MIGHTY

BIG AL



Artwork by Mark Irwin

the Oracle

2/12 Epilogue

By Eric Ross ✪ Charka, MN

*There must be some kind of distant early warning
For those of us who fly by night
To be aware of the cold fire of morning
And to find some beat in the light...*

MEGADON

The rider approached on a great steed of wintry grey coat. It's nostrils flared and with a snort exhaled humid steam into the cold air of morning. Orange and gold tinged the eastern sky with the coming of the dawn. Earlier, the rider, Jon, had heard a death-cry coming from the forest caves. He had been riding several hours on his way to the Temple when he decided to discover what could have made such a sound.

In this time of peace and prosperity, such pain and agony was only a memory. Jon unsheathed his phosphor-glow baton, followed an almost invisible trail leading behind the waterfall and entered the largest of the caves. His horse threw it's head back with loud resistance, but walked ahead slowly, obeying his master.

Father Brown sat in his over-stuffed velvet grey chair scribing the day's news just as he does at this time every day. The plasma screen was flowing with cryptic symbols. Occasionally, he would fish out some interesting graphic and slide it onto the public-view prompter.

Thus, everyone who cared to make the effort could learn of Father Browns interests of the moment. Sadly, the Templevision screens placed in public areas were the only source of information the people were allowed to consider. The Temple Paper was also available in the evening to re-cap the days

events. Of course, no one was ever forced to view the news and info-tainment, but the only alternatives were observation and word of mouth. All learning was achieved through these access nodes, and never was there any doubt about its accuracy.

No one ever understood how, but the Great Computers seemed to know everything. It also seemed to generously share all of it's knowledge, but one had to wait until the Priests decided to display it on those civil-viewers.

Jon wrapped his tanned cloak tighter around his shoulders as he went deeper into the cave. The crashing of the falls could no longer be heard, only his breathing and the sound of hoofs beating into the sandy floor. So long he had travelled, that he must be well under the heart of the Federation city, perhaps under the Temple itself. How is it that he is compelled to follow a cry that now seems as distant and ethereal as some dream? Was he not awake when he heard it? Uncertain of his destination, Jon journeyed on hoping soon to be enlightened.

LIFE-BLOOD

It had been difficult to gloss over the news of the crushed guitar and of the disappearance of Alex, the one who brought Father Brown that ancient relic. But stories of life on the other Solar Federation planets seemed to distract and calm the people for the past month or so. The plasma screen showed him the truth, however. Father Brown was disturbed by news of unrest breaking out all over the city. He was still puzzled by how the word of the guitar and its destruction ever got out. It was never broadcast on the Templevision, he saw to that. He also overestimated the compliance of those he commanded with his info-rule. The people seemed to know, by some sixth sense that the end of an easy era had begun. The Red-Star would soon be set aflame in everyone's mind.

Jon hurriedly dismounted his horse. "Dear God, let this be a dream," he cried. There on the floor of a large cavernous room was his friend, Alex, lying in a pool of deep crimson blood. Clutched in his left arm was the remains of that crushed guitar. It's brilliantly painted wood, now shattered, was mixed with the shining silver strands that were the strings. In his right hand was a long slender golden dagger which was still imbedded in his heart. Jon knelt down and bent over Alex's dead body and wept.

LESSONS

Father Brown quickly called a meeting with the other Priests of the Temple. They gathered around a mammoth stone table to discuss this ensuing unrest. "How could the people know?" "Why are they no longer satisfied with this safe and serene life

we have given them?"

"Have we not shown them the way to happiness?" These and many other questions refused to be answered as the Priests toiled in heated debate. Even now, they could hear the roar of the crowd outside the massive grey Temple walls. They could hear the shouting at the wooden gate. The Priest's prayers became profane while sweat soaked their earthen robes. "We must consult the Great Computer," pleaded Father Brown. Reluctantly, the others agreed, knowing that they knew not where the computer received its knowledge and power. They only revered it's message, and filtered The Words to the obedient masses.

With a bony, slightly shaking finger, Father Brown switched on the Central Terminal and squinted at the vibrant colors that burst forth from the screen. He was accustomed to the orange monotone of his personal working screen, and was alarmed by this machine. Having been dormant for years, he had forgotten the pigmented appeal of this technicolor device. Even the flowers that had been specially selected to bloom in the courtyard in spring could not match this spectacle. Slowly, Father Brown asked the machine, "What shall we do?..." Behind him he heard a loud splintering crack as if the largest oak in the forest was being broken in two. It was the Temple door splitting open.

Fifty meters directly below the stone table and the Priests with their Ultimate Terminal was Jon and Alex in the cavern. Gently, Jon lifted Alex's body and carefully laid him across the back of his horse. Before leaving, Jon wanted a last look around this endlessly large room. Much to his amazement, and only a

few meters away lie riches beyond his imagination. Many more guitars and other musical instruments who's functions and voices could only be conceived of in his wildest dreams. Stacks of books with brilliant covers and golden pages. Much unlike the simple grey-white pages provided by the Temple. Bolts of cloth: There must be hundreds, no, thousands of square meters in every imaginable color. Much of it was sewn into gowns the likes of which he had never seen. He traded his drab cape for a cloak of rich blue and gold. He mounted his horse and trotted towards a different opening than that which brought him into this room. He was curious as to the sound of voices coming from it and not the sound of the waterfall as he expected. In this new tunnel were hundreds of paintings, some stacked on the floor, and some on display, mounted on the cavern walls. He saw the image of a mighty ocean dancing with the moon. A single moon, unlike the two moons he a grown accustomed to seeing in his sky. Where was this place he was seeing?

So strange and yet so familiar. Another image of his own silent forest, but the painting showed it alive with many animals he had never seen. He rubbed his eyes as he passed the statues of people who had a look of love and hope in their eyes. His phosphor-baton light cast a sharp contrast between shadows and light. He wondered if his people were now living in those shadows or in the light as his horse carried him and Alex's body higher and higher towards the sound of those voices.

WE HAVE ASSUMED CONTROL

Father Brown quickly turned away from his view screen to see a boiling mass of people storming into the sacred Temple room. There was no where to run, no where to hide. With blinding speed the people of Megadon vented their years of pent-up rage against the Priests.

With their simple tools, hammers, axes, and saws, they tore the priests apart limb from limb. They chopped down the mighty columns of computer banks. They swarmed through the Temple, destroying every icon and symbol of their oppression. In the end, there was nothing but rubble and a black-red pool of the priests' blood.

Spurred by the urging shouts and screaming of the crowd, the horse and riders emerged into the now quieting room of doom. Jon looked on with horror at the destruction. He had never seen such anger in his fellow-man's eye. Never had he witnessed the blinding hatred he saw before him. For a moment he thought he might be the focus of the crowds attention and he began to turn away. Suddenly, from the Temple doorway entered Neil, the diplomat. Standing atop the remains of the stone table, he addressed his comrades. "Stop! We have been quick to judge, quick to anger, slow to understand. Perhaps we have finally broken the chains of long years, but now we must be open and strong.

Once we loved the flowers, but now we ask the price of the land. I for one am just searching for the world that ought to be.

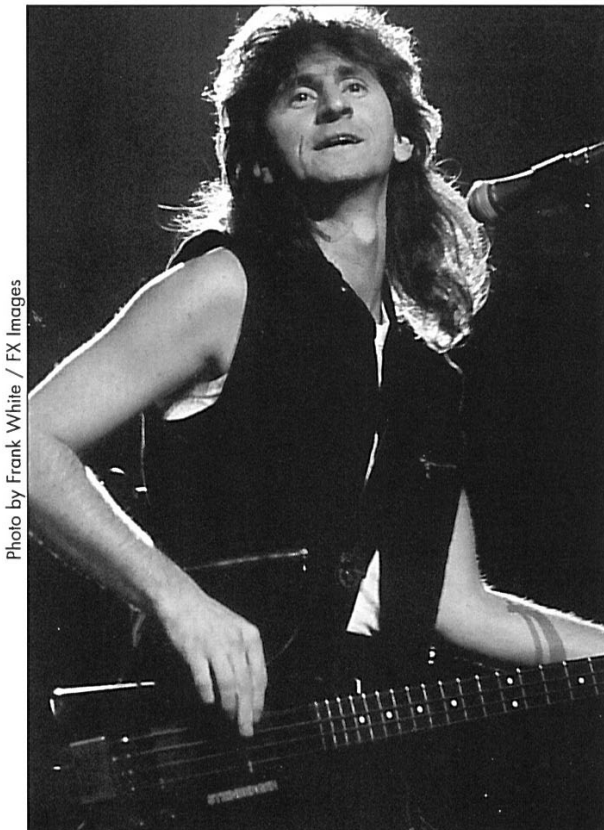


Photo by Frank White / FX Images

Can't we find the minds to lead us closer to the heart? And find a world where we can choose freewill?" With that, Jon and the crowd roared in appreciation. A big splash that would become merely ripples in the pool.

SHARE THE WONDER

Unknown to the angry Megadonians, outside the Temple, a strange storm was burning its way to the city. Fingers of lightning screeched like nails on slate. Clouds low and ominous billowed and boiled in a snake-like pattern into the sky above the courtyard. The once-angry mob slowly and cautiously exited the Temple and joined the rest of the city staring upwards at the mysterious presence. The black-grey clouds began to reveal colors deep within. As the colors flashed and swirled, they grew brighter only to reveal a space-craft within the clouds. The clouds parted and light beams of every imaginable color shown down to the land, making bridges between earth and sky.

Just as Jon emerged from the Temple, the great ship opened and sent forth a beautiful glow of white light. Within the light was a face. Most recognized the face as being that of their spiritual leader, their God. None expected this God to actually exist, much less visit them in this time of need, and even much less, to speak. The weaker souls fainted when their deity spoke, "Behold, I am Geddy, bringer of life, but I am no god. I merely am one of many representatives of the Elder Race, here to guide you on your way. You may feel your spirit resist, but you must open up you fist. Ignorance breeds imitation. It takes a little more persistence to get up and go the distance. Ultimately, good work is the key to good fortune..."

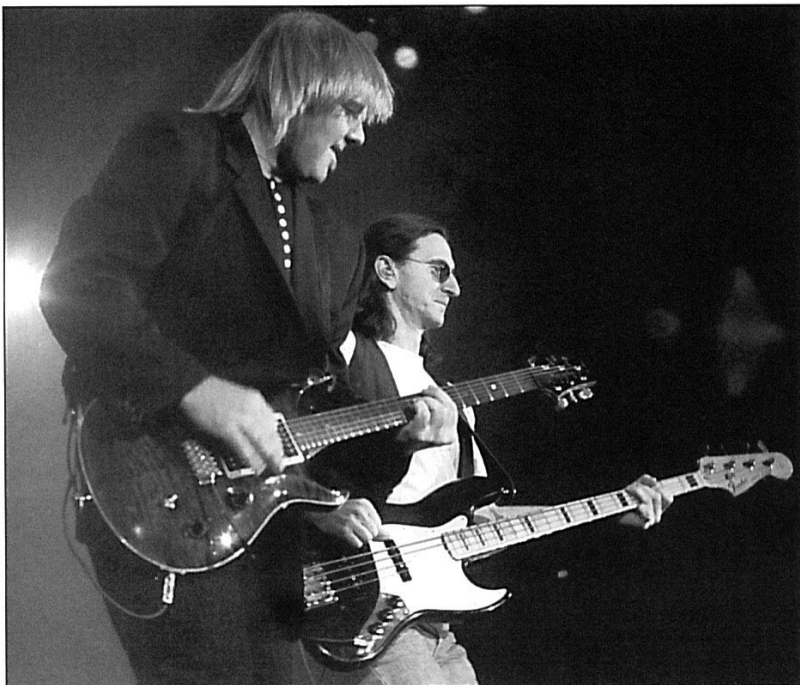
With Geddy's final words, the white light aura grew until no one could see anything else. The image of the face had faded, along with the sight of the temple, and of the city and of each other. At last, each soul seemed to be surrounded in their own personal universe of white. Blinded and isolated, individuals tried to run, tried to speak, but found that they could not. The ground beneath their feet seemed to have vanished as well. In that blinding moment which seemed like an eternity, some thought they might go mad. Many feared that they had died and were on their way to the after-life. But, by the end of that eternal moment a new peace filled every heart. The struggle of carrying the heavy burden of oppression seemed to be lifting. As the white light faded and revealed the world anew, eyes felt clear and purposeful again. The air was as clean and fresh as follows a thunderstorm. The city sparkled as never before. The Temple and all of it's computers were gone. Alex lifted himself from the back of Jon's horse.

Geddy had granted new life to Alex and the priests, who were standing in an empty field that was once a Temple. Geddy also granted the people a Megadon a new life, perhaps if only in perspective. The riches of the cave were no longer a secret and were shared freely by all.

*Waiting for an epiphany, we stare into space
No logic can answer our mind
Peace only comes to that holiest place
Where we seek, not judging the find*



Photo by John Vinson, 1994



ASOF HQ FEEDBACK

Dear **ASOF (HQ)**

Thanks for putting together a tremendous page for Rush. The page contains everything that you would like to know about the group and their music. I thought I was one of the few people in the world who loves the guys of RUSH and their music, but it is nice to see that there are many others out there.

Most of today's music is processed cheese (Cardigans, No Doubt, Smashing Pumpkins, Spice Girls, et al.)

Thank God for RUSH — Lyrics with depth, melodies that stir the soul, and the stamina to still give it their all and keep making new music. No oldtime reunion tours like other 70s and 80s groups who are reduced to playing on the stages at local county fairs. Let's see how many of today's lousy musicians are still on the radio with new tunes in another 20 years.

When I get to the White House, they will be the band performing on the White House lawn. (I'll be there! You've got our vote. CyberSteve)

<lsharonn@colybrand.com>

Francesca, Falls Church, Virginia



VICTOR GUITARIST SUPREME

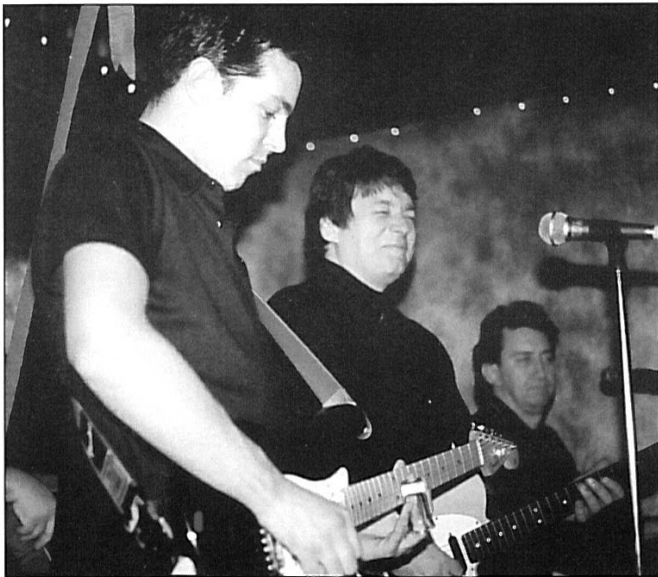
Bill Bell Interview

February 1997

by Joe Osborne

I have been a RUSH fan since 1976 when I was turned onto 2112. I've seen every tour since A Farewell to Kings in 1977, and my favorite thing about RUSH is they never stand still. They take risks with every new album they make. Sure, they could have stuck with remaking 2112 over and over, but redundancy is not what they're about.

My biggest influence as a guitar player is Alex. From his textured rhythms, melodic and intense solos, and his sense of humor, he truly has an overall approach that is most inspirational. Shortly after seeing the boys in Charlotte, North Carolina, I got an inside view on Alex's Victor project from Bill Bell. Bill is a well seasoned and dedicated guitar player appearing on Victor.



Bill Bell (or Dexter!!) playing at **The Orbit Room**. Photo by Steve Streater

Joe Osborne: Tell me about your early influences.

Bill Bell: Jeff Beck's *Blow By Blow* album, and Jimmy Page, especially his acoustic stuff are a couple of influences.

J: Starting out, did you take lessons?

Bell: No. I'm self-taught. One Christmas there was a triangle shaped box under the tree and I knew it was a guitar. The week before Christmas I would open it up and jam on it. Then re-wrap it before my mom got home. I took to playing right off.

J: Did you form your own band?

Bell: No. I focused on playing with others and I quickly realized that playing clubs and hotels was no way to make a living. So I set my sights on bigger things. It was strange when I first saw my name in print as a guest artist. I had this image of some LA studio musicians.

J: Tell me how you met Alex and how that led to the Victor project.

Bell: We were both playing the Kum-ba-ya Festival and we did this open jam on stage. There was such a great vibe happening between

us. We really played well off each other. So we exchanged phone numbers. But with both of our busy schedules it was a year before we finally hooked up.

J: Did you guys start Victor then?

Bell: No. We got together and did this loose jam thing that was so cool. Alex knows every lick off the first three Zeppelin albums to a tee. So we'd jam on that and the Stones. It's always been that even though we both play guitar, we're friends first and the music is secondary. He's become part of the family.

J: What was the writing process like?

Bell: I'd go over to Alex's house about 11 in the morning and he'd be in his studio working by himself or with his son Adrian. So we'd come up with a part. Jam around with that for a while. We laid down a lot of ideas on the computer first, which allowed us to put down parts and such right where we wanted them. In fact, the drums and vocals were added after the guitar tracks.

J: Seeing what a cut-up Alex is on stage with RUSH, he must have been something else in his home studio.

Bell: Oh yeah. He's got a great sense of humor. And whenever he'd get stressed, I'd give him a noogie and say, "Come on, get over it," and we'd laugh it off. I remember one day he was having a problem with his rack and he started throwing stuff around and stormed out of the studio. So I figure we're done for the day. Ten minutes later he comes back in with a half a bottle of Jack Daniels and some beer and says, "Let's have a drink!" Alex hardly ever drinks. I said, "Okay, whatever you want," and we proceeded to drink most of the Jack Daniels and the beer. Alex then gets up, and literally swaying, proceeds to record the solos for the song, *At the End*. We were so smashed I ended up staying over and the next day Alex said, "I don't know if I even want to hear this." But it was so clean and fluid, he kept the tracks.

J: Did you play electric and acoustic?

Bell: Yeah. I also played slide and used some open tunings. An open C tuning on the instrumental *Strip and Go Naked*. I used a twelve string on that and it sounds almost like a keyboard because the tuning is so low. And there's actually no keyboards on that song at all.

J: You mention the instrumental. I wonder what doing the song *Shut Up Shuttln' Up* was like since there's really only talking and yelling on it.

Bell: That was great, too. Charlene, (Alex's wife) and a friend of hers came in and were supposed to complain about men. But it sounded so contrived. So Alex sets up this French Cafe table with candles and a couple of bottles of wine. After they got to the second bottle they really got going. In fact, I think they said more than Alex wanted to hear. We were in the control room just killing ourselves laughing. You should hear the out takes that didn't end up on the song. They're hilarious.

J: Do you and Alex plan to do any other projects in the future?

Bell: Oh yeah. Whether he works on my stuff or he does another record, though he won't do *Victor II*, I'm sure we'll work together again. I don't want to sound corny, but there was so much warmth, fun, and love on that record that it would be great to work together again.

J: And we'll sure look forward to it!



A Show of Fans Speaks with Mike Portnoy of Dream Theater

Speaking on the Working Man Tribute CD, Rush & Rush fanship, and of course Dream Theater!

Steve: Hello Mike! As an introduction, we are A Show of Fans the Rush fanclub/fanzine/website. What I'd like to focus on is the **Working Man** cd.

Mike: The infamous **Working Man** cd...

S: Yes! (thought balloon: "infamous, eh?") So, you're billed as the Creative Consultant on this project. When did the idea for this first begin? I know you've covered Rush songs in the past, but tell me how this started and what exactly your involvement was.

M: Well, it started in December of '95 and I guess I was the first person called. Or at least me and Billy Sheehan together. The whole nucleus started with me and Billy. Originally they asked if I would be interested in doing this with Billy. It definitely interested me on two levels. First, playing with Billy was a really cool opportunity. I've always been a fan of his playing so to do a project with him was exciting for me. And then I figured if there was any band I would want to be part of a tribute to it was Rush. They were always a huge, huge influence for me and also for the rest of the guys in Dream Theater. And if there was any drummer I'd tip my cap to it would be Neil. He was a big influence for me when I was younger. So the idea of that really excited me. How I ended up with the Creative Consultant credit, I guess, once I said 'sure I'd love to be a part of this', it became obvious that I was a big, big Rush fan and actually I guess I sort of had the best grasp of their career out of anybody involved. So I think Magna Carta gave me a certain amount of creative input in terms of picking the songs, maybe gathering some of the musicians, a lot of that kind of stuff. Now obviously, I had limited time available, so I could only be so much involved. I would have loved to have overseen the whole project. In fact, there's things on the cd that I definitely would have done differently if I had more time to be involved. For the most part, it was picking the songs. Right off the bat, Billy and I were playing on six tracks, so that created about half the album in itself. It was fun because the stuff Billy and I did, we actually did together. A lot of the other stuff was FedEx'd, mailing back and forth, people doing their own tracks. A lot of the people didn't even meet each other. Billy and I along with Brendt Allman, who did the rhythm guitar tracks with us, actually had five days to rehearse the stuff and play with the arrangement of it so that much was fun.

S: That's neat. So you were actually in the same studio playing and the rest of it was via FedEx or whatnot.

M: That's why the tracks we did were probably the most fiddled with. Everybody else had to stick close to the arrangements cause they were mailing their stuff in so nobody else could play off each other. But Billy and Brendt and I had a chance to fiddle with the stuff a bit.

S: Interesting. Did you use your Tama kit?

M: No, not at all actually. I mean, I did use a Tama Star Classic kit but it wasn't my kit. At that point in December '95 when we recorded it, I had just switched back to Tama so they were still in the process of building my custom kit. So they just supplied me with drums to do the album. I called up Latin Percussion for some little doo-dads, you know, cowbells, crotales, all that kind of stuff...Basically I put the kit together around what it would require to reproduce some of the Rush parts.

Below: Mike during the Working Man sessions.



S: What were you using before Tama?

M: I switched over to Mapex for two years. I always did play Tama but for two years I switched to Mapex because they were campaigning strongly to establish themselves as a heavy-weight drum company but for various reasons I went back to Tama and am now happily with them again.

S: Now, Dream Theater has done some Rush songs live, right? I'm kicking myself because I haven't seen you guys live yet!

M: Well, back in our early days....

S: Late eighties, '89, '90?...

M: No, we actually performed back in '85 at Berklee College of Music in Boston. So the three original members, myself, John Petrucci, and John Myung, guitarist and bass player, we met at Berklee and pretty much our common bond was Rush at that point. So immediately the three of us found a common influence in Rush and we started playing stuff like, Spirit of Radio, YYZ... I remember even, the year we spent at Berklee, when we put the band together, that was on the Power Windows tour. We slept

out for tickets right in front of the Berklee Performance Center and actually the original name for Dream Theater was Majesty. We came up with the name Majesty while waiting on line for tickets that night. We were listening to all different Rush tapes and we heard Bastille Day and at the ending of Bastille Day we said, 'oh, listen to how majestic this part is...hey, that'd be a great name for the band.' So Rush was definitely a big, big part of the influence in the very early days of the band.

S: Right. Very apparent on your first album.

M: Yeah, I think through the years we really have sort of grown into a different direction and established our own sound, at least hopefully. But back in the early days they were a big-time influence. And since then, to answer your question, as far as covering them, we did a cover show in London about two and a half years ago. A show where we did nothing but cover songs and also some special guests joined us on stage, Steve Howe, a couple guys from Marillion...and obviously, we figured, we've got to throw a Rush song into the set list. We decided to pick the most unobvious choice. Everyone would have expected us to do Cygnus X-1 or something really bizarre, so we ended up going in the opposite direction and chose to do 'Tears' from 2112.

S: Now that appeared on your Christmas album didn't it?

M: Yeah. That version on the Christmas cd is from the cover show and as a result of doing it at the cover show we've done it a couple times since then. We did an acoustic version on a radio broadcast in Holland. So we've done it a couple times since then.

S: Interesting selection. So you opted to pick something people wouldn't expect.

M: Something obscure, atypical. Which, in some respect was my thinking with choosing the tracks for Working Man. When it came time to pick the tracks that Billy and I were going to play on, and also subsequent tracks that I wouldn't play on, I decided to focus on the period of theirs which was the biggest influence for me. Basically, the period between 2112 and Signals. Like '76 to '83. That was the biggest influence for me. So when picking the songs, I naturally chose from that period and I wanted to choose some of the more classics for the older fans and some of the obscure for the newer fans. Stuff like 'Jacob's Ladder' and 'Natural Science', 'By-Tor'. I didn't want to pick the stuff they still currently do in their set list, like 'Tom Sawyer', 'Spirit of Radio', 'YYZ'. I wanted to stay away from some of the more obvious ones.

S: Yeah, I think the most obvious was 'Closer To The Heart'. But that was a nice rendition actually. I really enjoyed that one. So I guess you got a kick out of seeing 'Natural Science' on the first leg of the current tour.

M: Well, actually, that was on my wish list. I knew there were about five or six tracks that Billy and I could do. Beyond that there were other tracks that I wanted to see on the album so I submitted that list for other musicians to grab if they were interested and 'Natural Science' was a big one. One other big

one that I really wanted to be on the album and it ended up not getting done was 'The Camera Eye'. I really wanted to do that too.

S: Mmmm...that would've been wonderful.

M: Yeah.

S: A couple other off the shoe questions... Who designed the Dream Theater logo originally?

M: The symbol?...Well, like I said, we were originally called Majesty so it's a variation of the letter 'M' which was kind of taken from a symbol the Queen Mary of Scots had back in the old days. We were just looking for some sort of symbol based around an 'M' for Majesty and our old singer actually came up with this and since then we've kicked him out of the band as a result...(no, just kidding- that was for different reasons) but in any case, we thought the symbol was kind of cool and I got it tattooed on my arm and we did the first album cover with the symbol and then had to change our name to Dream Theater for trademark and copyright reasons. We decided, well, the artwork's done, the tattoo's on my arm, let's just stick with the symbol anyway. And it's been on every album ever since.

S: Ah, I see...okay. What do you think of the new label they're tagging as Progressive Metal?

M: I have two feelings on it. One being positive and one being negative. Obviously, the positive one would be, well, I guess, if you were to take our two biggest styles or sounds, it would be Progressive Rock and Heavy Metal, so I guess if you put 'em together...then you could call it Progressive Metal. But I really think that our music, and this is such a cliché to say, but I honestly do feel this, that our music really transcends just that category. As soon as you throw that tag on, you're suddenly thrown in with some sort of stereotype. Yes, we do have a lot of twelve minute songs and some of those twelve minute songs, half of them are instrumental, so it has all of those elements, but there's other parts to our music. Yes, you can hear the Rush and Yes influence but you can also, if you really listen, hear just as much Beatles or Billy Joel or Journey or U2 influence if you listen to the other parts that aren't in 9/8. So I think there's a lot more to my band than that. But for lack of a better description, sure, we'll take it.

S: I think another similarity I see, is that you haven't compromised, for instance, and I say this in a positive way, on the length of your songs. I notice that your new album, most of the songs clock in at six to twelve minutes.

M: Well yeah, a big part of our interest in writing is that forum. When we put the band together, we missed the old days of 2112 and Close To The Edge and Supper's Ready, all those classic, side-long epic songs. Nobody was doing that anymore. There was a real void in that style of music so we decided to fill that void and write in that style of music. There were some metal bands doing it. Metallica did it to a certain degree and taking a step backward even Iron Maiden and Deep Purple would write long songs in the metal vein. But we

wanted to do it in the more progressive vein with a metal edge. Another reason that the songs are long is because we all contribute to the writing. We write collaboratively as a band. So when you have all these ideas coming out sometimes they can't be conveyed in three minutes and fifty seconds. So what we do is take the clock off the wall and however long it takes to complete the idea then that's it. Sometimes it's twelve minutes and sometimes it can be done in four or five minutes. We don't really think about it.

S: Is the release still up in the air on the new album?

M: Yeah, we're getting ready to start it. We haven't begun. We've just been writing and demoing for the last year. At this point, we have two and a half hours of music, sixteen songs. We have, literally, two or three cds worth of music at this point. We're going to go out and do some shows in Europe next month just to treat the fans because it's been so long and everyone's waiting and being impatient.

S: Will you be back through the midwest or in the States at all?

M: No, I mean, when the album comes out, absolutely. We'll do another extensive world tour like we always have but right now we have to concentrate on the record and getting that out by the fall or so.

S: You've done a DCI drum video as well, haven't you?

M: That just came out. What it is, it's a video I did for a Japanese company back in '95. DCI just picked it up for release in the States. It's a video that to my ears and eyes is a bit dated but I guess to someone who hasn't seen it, it will be new and fresh.

S: Have you had a chance to see Neil's *A Work In Progress*?

M: Yes!

S: What is your reaction to his Freddie Gruber influence?

M: Well, I think the video is definitely informative. It's definitely a tour-de-force. There's a lot to swallow there. I'm glad to see that he finally did it because I think it's something the fans have wanted to see for many years. I wish he did it fifteen years ago. I would have killed for it back then when he was my god. In any case it's good to see that he finally did it and I'm glad to see that he's re-inventing himself, so to speak, that he's beginning to feel that passion for drumming once again and it's great to see that he's modest enough to want to learn still. After everything he's accomplished it's very easy to start taking those "Neil is god" suggestions to heart, isn't it? It's good to see that he is still modest enough to want to continue to grow as a musician.

S: Oh yeah, I agree. I've been asked to ask you a question about a band - echolyn, that you toured with in '95. What is your take on that band?

M: They're a great band. I think it's unfortunate what happened to them. What happened to them is, I think, the ultimate lesson to be learned in what sometimes may be a pot of gold in disguise, really could be, how should I say, sometimes things really are not what they seem, so what I'm getting at is, here's a great progressive band playing really progressive music and very original and they got a major label deal. Most bands would kill for a major label deal so the point I'm trying to make is that sometimes that really can be the kiss of death, believe it or not. What happened with them was they finally put out an album and of course, since the music is a little more demanding, it would require a little more demanding marketing on behalf of the record company so it's just tough. Doing this kind of music

takes time and nurturing by the label. What happened to them is that once it was thrown out there and the label realized it wasn't the flavor of the month they ended up not selling the records and getting dropped and as a result broke up. It really is a travesty in that sense because they were an incredible talent and a force. The progressive scene can really use all the

leaders it can get, so when one of them gets a major label deal, you really root for them. It's just a shame what happened because they were really talented. It's just a lesson to be learned, that sometimes the dream is not all it's cracked up to be. Just because you sign to a major label doesn't mean that's the best scenario you could have.

S: True enough. I think a lot of the progressive music is on the upswing again. I get a good vibe about it both in cyberspace and through the mail, radio.

M: Well, to give a little plug here, my favorite progressive band to pop out in years now is a band called **Spock's Beard**. I don't know if you or any of the readers are familiar with...

S: Yeah, actually, vaguely...someone mentioned them to me. Tell me about them.

M: I heavily recommend them. They really carry the progressive flag, very proudly. They really remind me a lot of vintage Yes, combined with some Pink Floyd and Kansas. The song-writing is really amazing. A lot of progressive bands are either, a) trying to be so retro or, b) trying to be so virtuosic, (whatever the word!) that they forget about the importance of the song. Spock's Beard are really great song-writers with melodic

Below: Mike, Brendt Allman, and Billy Sheehan



vocals and they really are able to write great music while still capturing great musicianship. So that comes with a heavy recommendation from me.

S: Neat. We'll definitely pass that along. Would that be a band you might tour with?

M: I'd love to take them out with us when we hit the road again. We've always taken bands that have gone against the grain....

S: That sounds like Rush...

M: Well, Rush hasn't taken us so I wouldn't go that far.

S: I suppose that would kind of be, in the back of your head, a dream...

M: Absolutely. We don't know why they haven't asked us yet, but that's beside the point. That's a whole other issue, but in any case, we've always taken bands that we've wanted to support that are maybe not getting the support. That's why we took Echolyn. In the past we've taken Fates Warning, I Mother Earth, Galactic Cowboys. It's always bands that we like, that we know our fans would like, that just aren't getting the support or exposure that they deserve. So Spock's Beard would definitely be at the top of my list.

S: I will check them out. Quite frankly, a couple friends of mine have encouraged me to check 'em out so, okay, I'll do it!

M: They may get a little more exposure too because the drummer, Nick D'Virgilio, just did some recording with Genesis. He's gonna be on the new Genesis album. So he's stepping into at least one of Phil Collins shoes.

S: How interesting! Say, how was it working with Steve Howe?

M: Steve was great! We had this cover gig and we put together a big Yes medley. We did Close to the Edge and Heart of the Sunrise, Siberian Khatru, Machine Messiah, Starship Trooper...this big medley and Steve came down and rehearsed a couple days with us cause it was a pretty involved medley and he was great! It was a dream for us to be playing with him. He's a real super nice guy. It was real exciting. Since then, I've gotten to spend a lot of time with Bill Bruford. We've actually jammed together. There's been various Yes connections through the years so it's been very exciting for us.

S: There is an influence I hear in the *epicness* of your music...

M: And the instrumentation. In fact, I would compare us, a lot of people always use to compare us to Rush, but I really would compare us more to Yes.

S: Yeah, I definitely pick that up on the last couple albums. Well, I've got just a few more questions....

M: We barely covered the Rush tribute album.

S: I'd like to...

M: It could be dangerous territory to ask my opinion...(chuckle).

S: Well, okay, here's a question: All is said and done, what is your feeling on the whole finished piece? And did you get a chance to work with Terry Brown?

M: Actually, no. Terry went and did it himself. Obviously, like I said, my time was limited, I was doing my own thing. I wish I was there because there are things in the mix that I would have changed or at least have suggested. I know Terry though. He did a remix for us back in '89 and he's worked with Fates Warning who are good friends of mine. So I've spent time with him in the studio. I love Terry, I think he did a really good job. As far as the album itself goes, I have a lot of feelings on this, and I know the Rush fans have passionately spoken up against it for the most part. I have to express my disappointment in that and also the three members of Rush. I would be crazy not to bring this up here and be honest about it, but to me, my involvement, before it even came out there were the objections by the members, or their lawyers or their management, whoever it was, and that immediately, I think, got the Rush fans to be against the project. That disappoints me because I think it was a lot of fun and this record was done with nothing but the best intentions. When I was asked to do this, I jumped on it from a creative point of view. To me, it was a way of saying thank you to a band who served as a huge influence for me. And I've seen Neil quoted as saying that it's a bunch of bar bands who did it for the money to cash in on Rush's name, and I'll say from my stand, that it was not that at all. In fact, I did it completely to help pay tribute. That's exactly why it's called a tribute album. I think some of the other musicians involved, I mean, Billy Sheehan, Steve Morse, Jake E. Lee, Sebastian Bach, you know, I don't know which bar bands Neil is seeing in Canada but there were a lot of established musicians who came out to pay tribute here and it really disappointed me and hurt me a bit to see that that's the way it went down with the negative approach to it.

S: Yeah, it caused a lot of stress among us too. We were very unsure how to handle it. For all we knew they could have told us to stop publishing our mag at that point. The whole thing was beyond our understanding. I mean, I like the cd. It's just a fun thing.

M: Well, that's the thing. It was supposed to be fun. It was fun for me. I had a great time doing it. There are moments I would have changed. There are some points where the vocalists or guitar players I think, absolutely went overboard. But for the most part, everybody was doing it with the best intentions. And to take this a step further, I really also thought that it would introduce a new generation of fans to Rush that maybe, I mean, the fact of the matter is that Dream Theater, Mr. Big, Skid Row, we all sell more records in Japan and parts of Europe than Rush does at this point in 1996/97. It's a reality. I was hoping that having some of our names attached to this would introduce some of the younger fans to Rush that maybe weren't always exposed to Rush. I mean, here in America, Rush still has a great name, but over in Europe and Japan they're just not as big. Our names over there are in some cases, bigger. I was hoping that there'd be a new generation of kids that started with Dream

Theater albums and would now go back and dig into the Rush catalog and find out where our influences came from.

S: That's a good point. It's important too. You go to a Rush show now and there's three generations.

M: Also what disappointed me was I did a lot of press for this before it came out. I must have done twenty interviews...

S: Where were they printed?! I don't recall seeing any.

M: It was mostly in Europe actually because everything here in the States got blocked. I did stuff mainly in Europe and Japan. I did a lot of promotion for it. Because I was a big fan and I wanted to speak up on behalf of them and really promote them. Every single interview I did was nothing but praise and pro-Rush and when the album was released and the members of Rush sort of disregarded it or didn't acknowledge it, it really hurt me. Unfortunately, it's jaded me a bit and I have to be honest, I feel a bit bitter about it. It's unfortunate that that happened and I have to go on the record saying that.

S: I'm sorry to hear that. The way it turned out is not the way I would have liked it to from a fan standpoint.

M: And I know the Rush fans stood by them and a lot of them have come down on the album because passionate fans have passionate opinions. Especially when they are given an opinion before they hear it. I know how passionate fans are. I see our fans like that and how much they argue and bicker over little minute things. So I know, I understand why Rush fans would be against this in principle just because the members of Rush were, but I think it wasn't given a fair shake.

The Rush camp had suspected that the tribute was a possible attempt by a small, little label to cash in on the Rush name and fanbase. I must say here that Magna Carta is the only label in existence that signs and gives any exposure to up and coming Progressive music. These bands would have no careers and probably no exposure if it weren't for a label like Magna Carta. They are THE ONLY label in existence that has based their entire roster on music and talent. AND NOT MONEY!!! I don't blame them for wanting to "cash in" (for lack of a better term) on Rush's fanbase, because they seem to be the fanbase that most appreciates quality music and would probably enjoy the bands on the label's roster if given the chance to be exposed to it!!! If anything, Magna Carta needs to be commended. NOT condemned!

S: I agree. Well, I'm glad you got that out there on record

because at this point it's all clear but it was a ridiculous thing to go through. There are some great original bands on Magna Carta. (i.e. Magellan, who I HIGHLY recommend and Enchant also). But from what I hear, Working Man is doing well and people are liking it, based on the calls we get from around the country.

M: Well, that's good.

S: There's actually a lot of people that don't know about the rift that went down. That's on the positive side.

M: People, can't we just all get along? (chuckle) I was hoping we, or any other progressive band would get the support and hopefully be embraced by Rush fans. We all just want to make good music. Me, as a fan and a listener, I just want to hear good progressive music and good musicianship and bands with integrity that are willing to go against the grain. That's what Rush stood for and stands for and that's what there's a new generation of bands doing so I hate to see so much

competition. And I see the Rush fans pitting us against Rush or us against Queensryche or Queensryche against Fates Warning and it's like, we're all in this together.

S: Well, I agree. It's unfortunate. Even on the net we've got ASOF.com, which has just taken off but we're not competing, we're there, we're offering something but some people see it as competition. No, we're just out here to share our fanship for Rush. We do just have to get along!

M: Rush fans are allowed to listen to Dream Theater. It's not a competition.

S: Right! Exactly! And Dream Theatre and other great prog bands deserve the support and exposure. So, what's your favorite cut on the Working Man album? I guess something that stands out is Devin Townsend's vocals on Natural Science. Pretty intense.

M: Well, actually, believe it or not, I really like that, I gotta be honest. That's probably the most controversial moment on the album or at least performance on the album. Either you love it or you hate it. But I like the original approach.

S: I agree. It's got a lot of guts.

M: Yeah, but I think my favorite part of the album, at least that I was involved with, was La Villa Strangiato. I'm real happy with that. Every song, and I can even say this about any Dream Theater song or record, every time I hear it there's a thing here



Photo by John Vinson

or a thing there that I wish was different or that I would change but for the most part, I think La Villa Strangiato really, I mean, that was always one of my favorite Rush songs, or one of my favorite instrumentals of any band of all time, so that was probably the first song I picked when I got on board and to me, it was really cool to play with Billy Sheehan and also Steve Morse playing a solo on that. Steve's always been one of my favorite guitar players, so I was just real happy with that. I think my favorite song that I wasn't a part of was Natural Science.

S: Yeah, that was an excellent song. I thought the Working Man/By-Tor medley was nicely done too.

M: Right. Actually I suggested that because I heard something similar to that on, I guess it's a famous bootleg from Electric Ladyland Studios. So that's where I got the idea to do that.

S: Oh yeah! Exactly. That's what crossed my mind.

M: See, that's the proof in the pudding that there was a Rush fan behind this. I don't think you'll find a bigger Rush fan that also happens to have gold records and **Modern Drummer Magazine** awards of their own on the wall. I don't think you'll find a bigger fan that's out there in an established band.

S: That's great. I know, I can tell you're a big fan from some of the things you're into and some of the things I've heard. You're a big fan in a great band in itself. I think it's really neat. As far as Working Man, there's certain things I wish would have turned out differently but overall I think it was really well done.

M: I have to say, when all was said and done, I'm still happy I was involved. Even with all the controversy involved, I don't care. I still had a great time doing it.

S: What was your first Rush show that you went to?

M: The first time I saw them was on the Signals tour in '83. So I guess I was a late bloomer. Well, late for the most part, I know people that saw them on the Hemispheres tour...

S: Yeah, I saw them on Kings.

M: Yeah, that's amazing. I'm jealous. But I didn't get to see them till Signals. I do have a lot of great bootlegs from back then though.

S: You're considered the archivist. You have quite a collection of things you hold on to.

M: Yeah. I think it stems from me being, first and foremost, a fan of music. So obviously, when I'm in a band that now I can collect...I happen to be in a band that I can collect now as well, so...I do. I just bought a huge house because I needed the space for my library. I'm not joking. I have thousands and thousands of cds and dats and tapes everywhere. Somebody's got to collect the stuff.

S: I completely agree! Hey, I'd like to send you some issues of **ASOF**. You haven't seen it have you?

M: No, I would love if you could put me on the mailing list or

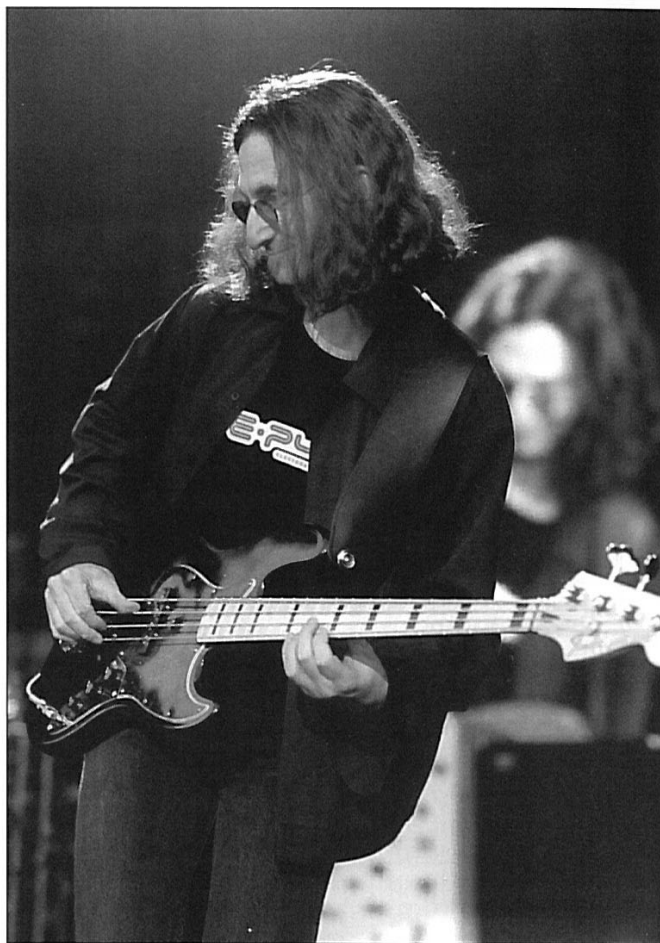


Photo by John Vinson, Englewood, CO

give me a subscription.

S: You got it Mike! It was a pleasure speaking with you. Please do stay in touch, okay?

For those interested, here is the information on DT's Fan Club (you can also check out their official Web site at: <http://www.rsabbs.com/dt/> and tell 'em **ASOF** sent ya, okay?? - CyberSteve):

A yearly membership to the **Dream Theater International Fan Club** for fans in the USA and Canada costs \$15. Payment by check or Money Order in **U.S. funds only**, made payable to: **YTSE JAMS, INC.**

DO NOT make payment to **Dream Theater International Fan Club**, or **Images And Words**, as they will be returned to you unfulfilled! Send payment along with mailing information to: **Dream Theater International Fan Club**, Midtown Station, Box 1188, New York, NY 10018

* Note: The above address is for people in the USA and Canada only! Yearly membership for fans in the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world is £10. Payment by UK cheque, Eurocheque, or International Money order (IMO) in Pounds Sterling (£) ONLY, made payable to: **YTSE JAMS**. Send payment along with mailing information to the Fan Club Headquarters: Dream Theater International Fan Club, PO Box 106, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5ZU, England.



Dateline: October 8, 1996

Dear **ASOF**,

My story begins in May of 1994. I was finishing my sophomore year at The Hartt School of Music in Hartford Connecticut (majoring in music, minoring in English). My friend, Matt Ritter, who I shared a practice room where we kept our drums, left me a note saying that he would be working for Neil over the summer. Now, it's no secret to anyone that I'm a huge Rush fan, my tattoo of the Red Star kind of gives it away, so I thought it was a practical joke of some demented sort, but it turned out that he was to be the intern for the *Burning For Buddy* recording sessions (his face can be seen behind Omar Hakim in the CD booklet). I asked him to try to get me down there, but August came around and I had not heard from him, until one day I received a letter.

The letter was from Matt telling me that Neil had committed to do an instructional video for **DCI**, however Paul Siegel (and his partner Rob Wallis) didn't know a thing about Neil or his work with Rush, so out of the kindness of his heart, Matt mentioned that he had a friend who is a huge Rush fan and had been studying Neil in depth for many years. **DCI** wanted me to submit a letter of what I would like to see in the video. At that time, with the idea of a twentieth anniversary tour being tossed around I thought of a retrospective video. I pulled out all my very old **Modern Drummers** and went into extensive research and formed a very long-winded letter. I asked that Neil talk about how songs originated, how the D,A,G,F#G,A,D,A,G chime part came to be in "Closer To The Heart," and stuff like that. They were very impressed with the letter, thus **DCI** and I kept in contact, but very little was done with the development of the video until April 1996 because of the unusually long hiatus by the band. In the meantime, one day I went to my practice room to practice "Bravado" (I go in stages, that summer I was very into that particular song) and I saw a purple pad that said "Derek, Merry Christmas" I was a bit puzzled so I turned to the next page, and there was a message, "To Derek, happy drumming, Neil Peart." I don't think I took a breath for about fifteen minutes I was so excited. I immediately went to the local frame store to have it framed. When Matt returned to school in September I grilled him. He told me all about Neil's wife and daughter. He also said that he is sort of flaky. That he'd sit Indian style on the table and not say anything for a while, like he was in deep meditation.

Anyhow, I kept in touch with Paul, and one day it paid off. He told me that Neil would be in New York for the BFB concert (November 1994). Of course I went and sought out Paul and Rob, which led to us meeting face to face. We sat in the front row by the camera men and watched Neil give his acceptance speech. I asked him if I could go backstage to have the performers sign my CD booklet (of course I was only interested in meeting Neil). So I went backstage. We stood on the side of the stage and watched them get ready for "Pick Up The Pieces." It was then when I saw Larry Allen running around like a mad man trying to get the stage organized for the number. Then I heard it; a very deep assertive

voice. "Enter the champion. . ." Neil came from around the corner with Kenny Arnoff who he played a percussion accompaniment with. Neil is huge! 6'5" at least, and his voice is very intimidating. All I could do was stare in awe. He panned the stage floor and caught me staring. He really is the last person to look away in a stare down. Paul and I watched Neil play his percussion set up from about 10 feet away (what a great memory).

After the show was over I left Paul's side and went around seeking different drummers to sign my booklet, all the time keeping an eye out for you know who. I eventually made my way down some stairs where I found Neil and a few other drummers getting their pictures taken with the press. He seemed to be in a joking mood, but when I got too close Larry Allen came up to me. He asked who I was, so I said I was with Paul Siegel of DCI, but that didn't do any good and he asked me to leave. He wasn't nice at all. He is very, very, very protective of Neil, but before Larry kicked me out I had him sign my booklet; I figured better the obnoxious roadie than nothing.

I quickly wrote to Paul thanking him for taking me backstage and that I was chased out by Larry. Paul then wrote me back and said that they had lunch with Neil the following day to discuss the video. He said that they presented my ideas to Neil and he liked them. When I read that I screamed (getting everyone's attention in the mailroom at school) and then I didn't breathe for about a week.

Again, nothing went on for a while. Then in **Modern Drummer** there was an update about Neil which mentioned the video (this was around early May). Of course I wrote to Paul asking him for a first hand update. He asked me to send him a copy of the original letter I wrote, and to come down to New York to preview **Test For Echo**. Like I was going to argue, so I went. TFE at that time was a store bought blank tape. "Dog Years" was the second song, and "Driven" was seventh. The songs were written in Neil's hand writing, and he forgot to write down "Carve Away The Stone." Paul told me about the new format of the video (nothing but TFE material). So I listened to the tape twice (bootlegging it for myself, of course). I transcribed some interesting drum fills and wrote down questions I thought Neil should address. And as a bonus not only did they validate my parking, they gave me "Drum Lessons with the Greats" which includes Neil. At this point, I wanted desperately to meet Neil so I asked if I could attend the video shoot in up state NY, but DCI said no. I formed a letter introducing myself to Neil, but I made reference to a fax that Neil sent to DCI where Neil refers to me as the "mysterious third listener," and because I made reference to Neil's mail, which I wasn't supposed to see, I had to resubmit it.

Now mid-July, I visited our post office box. In it I found a letter addressed to me with a Canadian stamp. I held it to the light and saw his signature. I was so excited to receive a reply that I was in my first car accident on the way home from the post office. My '86 Oldsmobile is now preparing for a trip to the scrap pile, and the '95 VW Passant that I hit is already there waiting.

In early August I received a phone call from DCI asking me to come preview the video, and once again, give suggestions. Again, I was in no position to argue, so I went. The video was

amazing! It should be out mid-October, but I won't reveal anything.

And I guess that's it. Now we just sit and wait for the video to arrive in stores. I'm supposed to receive an autographed copy of them in the mail, but I'm still waiting. Do you believe that's the short version. When my girlfriend introduces me to people she warns them to not bring up this subject, or Rush for that matter, because I'll talk your ear off.

I saw Power Windows (the Rush tribute band) the other night (my first tribute band experience). They were amazing! Their set list was: The Spirit of Radio, Kid Gloves, YYZ, Test For Echo, Limelight, Show Don't Tell, New World Man, Driven, Roll The Bones into Heresy into Bravado back into Roll The Bones, La Villa (played to a "T" by a killer guitarist), Circumstances, The Trees, Original drum solo, Red Barchetta, Passage to Bangkok, By Tor and The Snow Dog, Beneath, Between, and Behind, In The Mood, I Think I'm Going Bald, Working Man, Tom Sawyer and Closer To The Heart.

I told them that I'd try to get them gigs up in Connecticut (where there are tons of Rush fans) since I'll be taking up residency there in November. I actually heard of them through **ASOF**, so the advertising works!

Derek Michael Chervenak
Chatham, New Jersey



Below for your enjoyment, is the note I recieved for Neil.

Hello Derek,

Lately I've been getting more mail than I can handle (see message in recent MD), but I figured that since Rob and Paul had enough regard for you to seek your advice on the video, and to forward your letter to me, then out of my regard for *them*, I would make this exception. (Whoopeddoo, huh!)

Regarding the video itself, as perhaps you have learned, I had my own agenda for its content, and as usual, it had nothing to do with what anyone *else* might want. (That's just the kind of selfish creep I am!) However, I hope viewers will still find it interesting, and perhaps even useful to their own drumming odysseys.

Regarding your aspirations in custom drumset building and/or tech work, I can't really help you there. In my own case, my ever-changing setup is conceived according to what I need for a specific record or tour—form follows function—and is then assembled by Larry and the drum company (these days, DW, who have made me a lovely red sparkle outfit).

There is no "intern" program on a big-time concert tour (you usually have to start at the *bottom* rather than the top!), and in the area of customizing, I can only suggest that you apply to drum companies or larger shops which could use your talents. I don't know enough about the business to recommend anything in particular, but I wish you luck in the quest, and hope it is rewarded.

All the best,
Neil Peart

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Peart'.

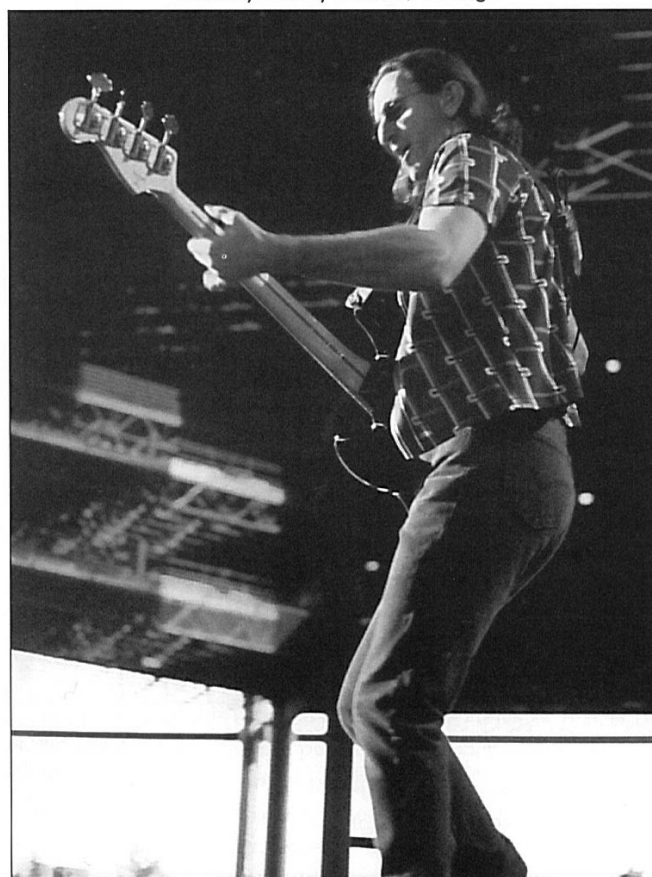
Photo by Frank White, FX Images



"I know that some of the fans love to live in the past, but we can't exist in the past."

Geddy, May 16, 1997, Salt Lake City, UT

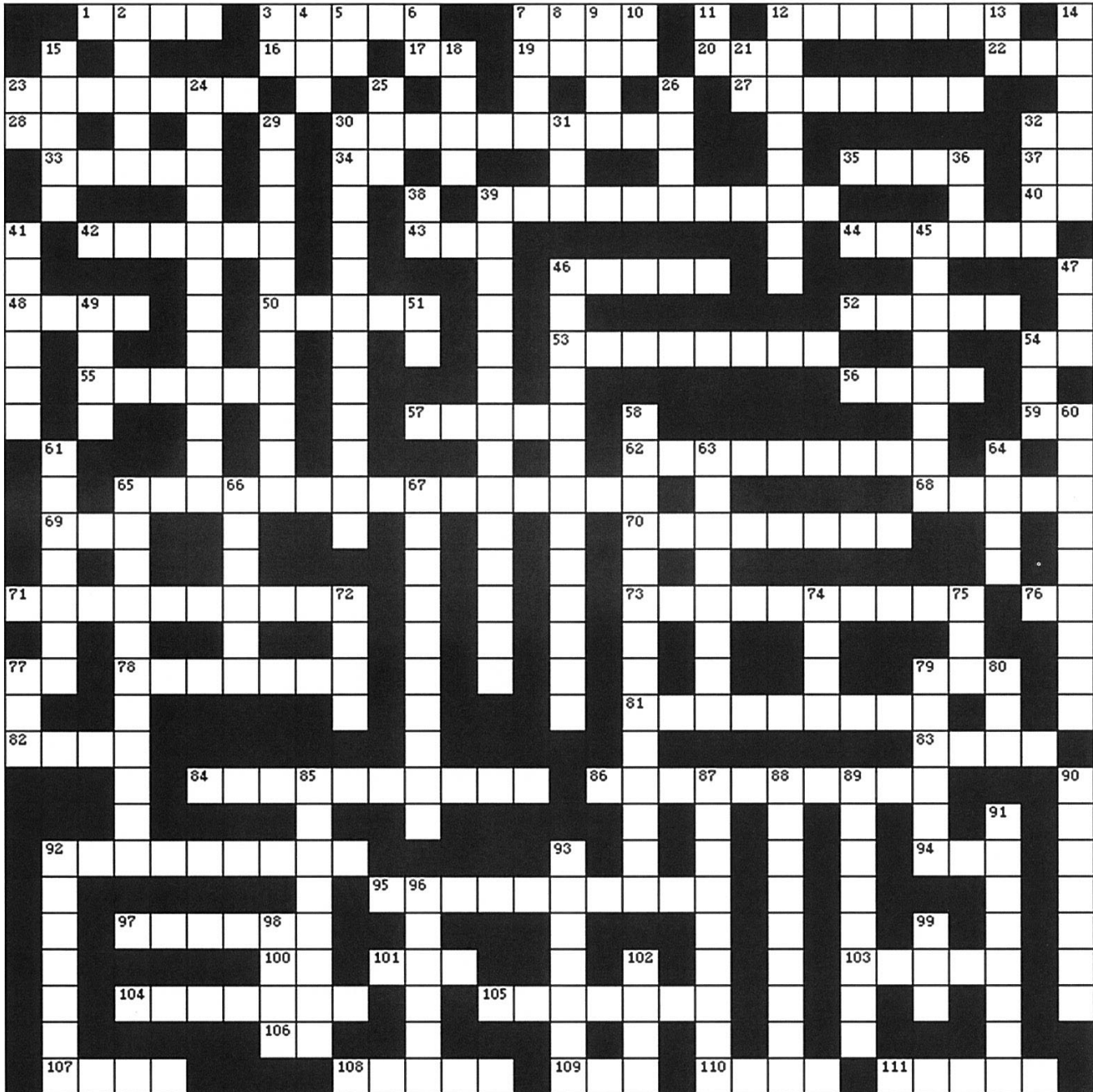
Photo by Mandy Streeter, Chicago



HERE WE GO . . . AGAIN!

ASOF RUSH CROSSWORD #3

By Will Kovacs



ACROSS

- 1. A first rate piece of work.
- 3. "AAARRGGGHHH!!! MASH GUUUUD!"
- 7. The 'other' guitarist on Victor (last name)
- 12. A 'bleak' city
- 16. Until a couple years ago, according to Lerxst, this song was played live at "just about every show we've done since it's been written." (acronym)
- 17. _____ TV
- 19. Buenos Nachos, _____ Froinds!
- 20. The place from which they watched Columbia. (acronym)
- 22. "Begin the day with a friendly voice" (acronym)
- 23. House band at The Orbit Room.
- 27. '56 Across' on Fly by Night
- 28. "The boy walks with his best friend" (acronym)

30. '82 Across' gets 'Jazzy' on this tune.
32. Initially, 'Mister Big'
33. The light The God of Balance flew into.
34. "The things that we're concealing" (acronym)
35. "Behind my beloved '88 down", in the little room that was hidden beneath the _____"
37. The 15th studio album was brought to us by the Olde English version of these letters.
39. A 'duet' of bands resulted in this song.
40. "_____ let the pain remain behind you"
42. What the Rocinante could not do to the force of the black hole.
43. Gary _____ Weinrib
44. Digital's counterpart
46. Victor Vocalist
48. All songs published by _____ music.
50. Of course, The _____ concern
52. '15 down' on Fly By Night
53. "One, two, buckle my shoe..."
54. "In a driving rain of redemption" (acronym)
55. Although no one is quite sure exactly what one is, Neil says it's someone who does "stuff"
56. '27 Across' on Fly by Night
57. Lyrics by Lee
59. Before Compact Discs, all my Rush albums were in this format.
62. "On top of the world, forever turning"
65. Geddy adds lyrics to this section of La Villa Strangiato on Exit...Stage Left.
68. The _____ 'til you die tour.
69. "You might be too dizzy to do the right thing." (acronym)
70. By definition, a short poem, or song.
71. Almost blew the band's big chance, just before their first big tour. (Actually turned out to be a huge blessing in disguise!)
73. Hockey player mentioned in the liner notes of at least 3 albums.
76. This is a song about a car, this is called _____" (acronym)
77. "Here's a clue to some real motivation" (acronym)
78. The name the band used after they kicked '15 Down' out.
79. Chronologically, the 4th studio album to have three words in the title. (acronym)
81. "Left behind in the heartland."
82. Pratt
83. Inspired early Peartian writings. (last name)
84. In the early 70's, he was the 4th member of the band. Now-a-days, he just '15 Down' 's brother -in-law.
86. The Producer ORIGINALLY hired by the band to replace Terry Brown for Grace Under Pressure. (He back out at the last minute.) (last name)
92. _____ Mall
94. "For _____ and me..."
95. Nickname of a long time crew member, and second baseman.
97. The last name of the person who gave the band it's name.
100. _____ Technician; '111 Across' 's title
101. On the Signals tour, Geddy often updated the words to this song, singing, "One likes to believe in the freedom of baseball" (acronym)
103. Nickname of another long time crew member.
104. First word in song title of Part V of Track Five of the third studio album.
105. The name of '15 Down' 's band after '71 Across' convinced '56 Across' to kick him out of Rush.
106. "I lie awake with my secrets" (acronym)
107. The name of '82 Across' 's band before joining Rush.
108. One of the Priests in 2112, who was probably named for this long time Rush confidant. (last)
109. What Analog is and Digital was.
110. Willow _____
111. Removes varnish from the gripping area (last name)
9. If you spelled this word with a 'Y' (and not an 'I' like I errantly did) it would be the place Rocinante's course was set to travel just east of. (sorry)
10. The place to look for a lot of answers to this puzzle. (acronym)
11. Neil's book about cycling (acronym)
12. A modest man comes from this place.
13. Along with 2112, this epic made a welcomed return to the live set on the Test for Echo Tour. (acronym)
14. Neil's mentor for the last few years. (last)
15. '52 Across' on Fly by Night
18. "If you could just move yours, I could get working on my own. (acronym)
21. Initials of '73 Across'
23. "Constant change is here to stay." (acronym)
24. For whom Afterimage was written.
25. Where the plumbers fix the sinks, with their 'great wrenches' (acronym)
26. _____ Dirk Road
29. This album was brought to you by the letter "R-r-r-r"
30. WINE & DINE RISE & SHINE
31. The only song to feature a female guest vocalist. (acronym)
32. Geddy started playing a 'little' one of these on A Farewell to Kings.
36. This album's cover has a graphic image from every previous album, up to Moving Pictures. (acronym)
38. A big Dexter
39. "Well, the time is right, and it is today." (acronym)
41. The W.H. Auden poem which inspired King Lerxst
45. "Nothing was all that was left to him"
46. "Countdown" is foreshadowed in this albums liner notes.
47. The way 'netboy' would say, "Oh, while I'm on the subject...", or an acronym for the song that contains the line, "A dizzying lifetime."
49. The one word which has come to mean so much to all of us.
51. "Some half-forgotten stranger, doesn't mean that much to me." (acronym.)
54. A "character" from one of the band's favorite movie's.
58. Neil's travel log
60. Max Webster's lyricist, and occasional Peart collaborator.
61. Lyrics by Lifeson
63. If track 7 from the 10th studio album were singular. (Sorry another one that couldn't fit any other way!)
64. The number of Studio albums co-produced by Terry Brown.
65. We all owe a LOT to this person.
66. The author who inspired Neil to write Red Barchetta. (last name)
67. The battle of the Heart and Mind
72. Yin's Counterpart
74. Beware the thorns of the black rose of love, lest your _____ they prick
75. "_____ as they might..."
77. Brother of '82 Across'; and a frequent cycling partner.
79. "Bombs and basement fallout shelters"
80. According to '7 Down' the name of this album was derived from a missed plane. (acronym)
85. Bringer of Love
87. Where T.C. Broonsie plays
88. "Behind my beloved _____, in the little room that was hidden beneath the '35 Across"
89. The "Stone guy"
90. '56 Across' 's 'other' profession. They also fix leaky sinks up at the Temple.
91. Cover art and 'keys', too
92. "Now at last I fall before the _____ (3rd word only)
93. He makes '3 Down' "special".
96. The one who can make you all aware.
98. _____, we are listening for it. (The translation of the runes on the TFE cover.)
99. Alex's instrumental, that's way too short.
102. The type of fan you are if you solve this puzzle without consulting any help!

DOWN

2. Neil vehemently opposes anyone who claims that he worships this being.
3. "Some are born to move the world -" (acronym)
4. "You can take me, you can make me smile..." (acronym)
5. "Behind us you will only see our dust." (acronym)
6. "Maybe some things are instinctive" (acronym)
7. Nickname of 'Visions' Author.
8. For those who wish to s-_-_-m (Sorry, it's the only thing that fits.)

Thanks Will, for this fine crossword puzzle! Pretty challenging, eh? ASOF loves to feature puzzles of ALL sorts. If you have a puzzle please send it in for possible inclusion in ASOF. We also want to start a puzzle section on ASOF HQ. Send us your Rush puzzles, eh? - CyberSteve



FEEDBACK

Send letters of comment to:

ASOF — FEEDBACK

5411 E. State St., Suite 309, Rockford, IL 61108

Right to the heart of the matter...

Steve and Mandy Streeter:

Issue #16 is the best yet! CONGRATULATIONS! Thanks for the information on tour dates, it looks like Kansas City, KS at the Sandstone for me this time, a venue never ventured before; how is that for a partial 'ANAGRAM (for Mongo)'? This will be my fifth Rush concert to see. The others were HYF in January '88 at the Myriad in OKC, RTB in February '92 at the Summit in Houston (my own personal favorite), RTB in May '92 at the Myriad in OKC, and Counterparts in January '94 at the Summit in Houston. All shows were fantastic, with no parallel in any respect! It would be 'HERESY' to deem otherwise! A few humorous sidelines to some of these shows to share:

1) HYF - I had just had nasal surgery three weeks prior, and was told it may not be advisable to see the show; but this was Rush, right? No stopping me now! Three of my friends prepared to make the small trek to OKC from Stillwater. My roommate was a huge Genesis fan, but beginning to convert to Rush as well. All I ever heard about was the drumming of Phil Collins. Now, while Phil is an exceptional drummer, when we left the show, it was obvious to my roommate that Neil had shattered his lifelong perception of drumming in a positive sense, of course. This was also my first Rush concert, and all future events would be judged accordingly!

2) RTB (HOU) - I had flown to Houston to see my sister and brother-in-law for a few days for a needed break and also the Rush show. What a concert, my personal favorite! It also showed my hosts, that there was more to life than Van Halen! What was even more funny, was the next night. During my stay, we decided to visit the Astrodome to see the Houston rodeo - I know what you are thinking, but not all Oklahomans and Texans are cowboys! But the main reason was to see some of the sights. While there, it just so happened that Huey Lewis and The News were performing (gag)! In the middle of their 'show', my brother-in-law turned to me and said, "It just doesn't have the thump that the Rush show had, does it? No comparison at all. " Not that we expected any, but we left right then, with the 'AFTERIMAGE' of Rush still as vivid as ever.

3) RTB (OKC) - I had 'DRIVEN' to OKC to see my mother, and other sister and brother-in-law for the weekend, as well as the

Rush show. The night before the concert, we all went to a small club to see the Guess Who (a great show in its own right)! Prior to the Guess Who, the DJ was playing various songs for the crowd. Well, after the usual Led Zeppelin, Queen, etc., along came 'Ghost Of A Chance'. It was great! It really did reach the 'ALIEN SHORE', flooring everyone there. Don't let anyone say that you can't dance to Rush, because my mother who was in her fifties was having a great time with that one. Another great concert the following night, as well.

For my experiences, 'Roll The Bones' was an album that brought many people in the Rush fold who had never ventured past Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin or Van Halen. This is a good thing. I am most interested in the 'Test For Echo' concert in Kansas City, not only for myself in seeing the band after a long delay, but more importantly, for my girlfriend. Before we became involved, she was totally unfamiliar with Rush. And her last rock concert was Boston in the late '70s. She absolutely despised that show. So now it will be time to take her to a real concert, wouldn't you say? 'YOU BET YOUR LIFE'! This will also mark the first time I will have seen an outdoor Rush concert.



As a relatively long-time reader of "Billboard" magazine, it has been my personal abhorrence to see the direction our society has been taking and continues to do so in the music field. To think that Rush has never had a number one album is LUDICROUS! Even more appalling is the acts who have prevented this from occurring, or have had number one albums period! If it wasn't for Rush, there would be no Metallica, Nirvana, or Pearl Jam; at least not in the commercially-successful form they are in today. It is more than evident that Rush has paved the way for bands such as these and many more. And who knows how long these upstarts will endure? I guess we know about Nirvana already. What about REO Speedwagon and Styx who stymied "Moving Pictures" from reaching the top back in 1981? Granted, those two albums ("Hi Infidelity" and "Paradise Theater") are classics, but where are these bands now? The answer is nowhere; quite possibly this same answer will apply to Metallica and Pearl Jam in the next few years let alone such acts as Bush, Stone Temple Pilots, and various other would-be rock bands with truncated futures! Not to mention the various chart-topping rap acts who undoubtedly are in cahoots with that once-revered, but now trash channel MTV! While all Rush fans would love for them to have a number one album, in my mind this is not the most meaningful gauge for success. In my opinion, longevity and album sales are the true measures of success for any band. It is hard to believe, but Rush is in their 24th year of their commercial career. This in itself is fantastic, but also consider they have produced 21 albums in that time, each having gone gold, platinum, or multi-platinum. No other group with as many albums can boast of this 100% perfect ratio of certifications to albums produced! Very few can attest to having a perfect certification record with far fewer releases. Speaking of certifications, somebody needs to get on the ball at Mercury and Atlantic to present more platinum and multi-platinum awards to

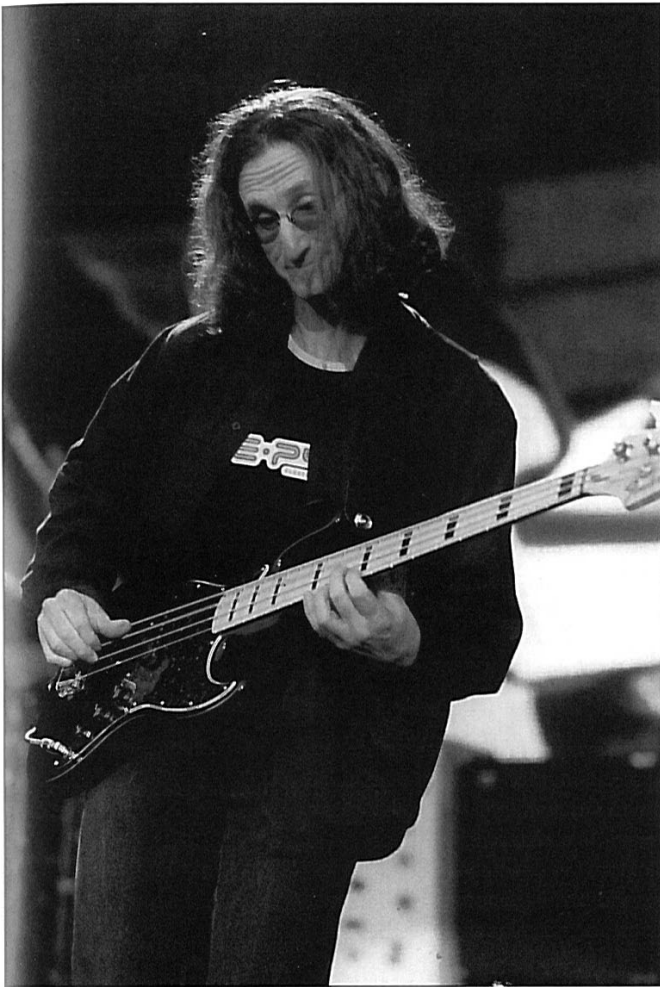


Photo by John Vinson, Englewood, CO

this great band.

Consider these examples:

1) "Signals" - release date of 9/82 - certified platinum 11/82; 1.4 million copies were sold within two months of this release date. Are you going to tell me that another 600,000 copies have not sold in the last 14 1/2 years? I know several college friends and I did not purchase this album until much later than 1982.

2) "Grace Under Pressure" - release date of 4/84 - certified platinum 6/84; Again, 1.4 million copies were sold within two months of this release date. Another 600,000 have surely sold over the last 13 years. I had not purchased the album until 1987!

3) "Roll The Bones" - release date of 9/91 - certified gold 11/91; What is the deal?! This album was incredibly popular debuting at number 3 and remaining on the Billboard 200 for 43 weeks! I know of several people who have purchased this album only recently. Purely on the longevity of the chart success alone, this great album has sold over 1 million if not 2 million copies to date! The same could be said for many other albums, most notably "Permanent Waves" and "Hold Your Fire." Even "Moving Pictures" last certification was for the month of December, 1994 at 4 million copies sold. These are all in need of updating! I will stop here, because with 21 albums, this sequence could begin to

get monotonous. I guess my biggest problem is that other less-inspiring (aren't they all), flash-in-the-pan groups are continually hailed as gods in the music industry with x - million albums sold, and x - dollar amount in concert grosses.

In a perfect, unbiased world, it is evident that Rush would dominate the music industry. This would be clear through their album and ticket sales, talent, undying fan loyalty, and most importantly, their humanitarian attitudes and class!

Thanks for reading! Wishing you continued success with "A Show Of Fans"!

Wade White, Tulsa, OK



Dear Steve,

I have read with interest letters from RUSH fans in your publications. If you would allow me I'd like to speak to an aspect of RUSH's music which I haven't seen previous comment on—even though everywhere I look I see Neil's lyrics (with input possibly from Geddy and Alex) discussed in great detail. One thing which shouts to me from their music is the inclusion of one aspect of humanity which in today's world is often unheard of. That is the characteristic of grace. Grace is a trait which I have long admired when I see it applied in everyday life. Grace that is not just in movement or appearance, but the graceful way in which some people choose to live their life and deal with life's darker moments. That's not to say they blindly accept the way things are, but even fighting back they maintain an air of grace which sets them apart from others. It is unheard of to hear this ideal in mainstream rock music, yet Rush music is filled with lyrical exemplification of grace. The title "Grace Under Pressure" speaks volumes, but go farther into songs such as Animate, Force Ten, and Ghost of a Chance to see grace shown. "Reborn and baptized in a moment of grace/We just need a break - From the headlong race," from Between Sun and Moon (with Pye Dubois) are among my favorite lyrics of all time. Even songs which do not speak directly to grace still exemplify it to me—songs like Bravado, Heresy, even back to Hemispheres and Cinderella Man.

This, among other reasons, is why I am such a RUSH devotee. While I will not attempt to address the male/female fan situation which so many people have tried to in the past, I see their music on a different plane. What difference does it make? I see it as human to human. Possibly I am more sensitive to these lyrics since I do happen to be very female, but Neil is not and he handles these lyrics with ease and beauty, just as Geddy sings them. Among the other reasons I am a RUSH fan—they ROCK! Hmmm, is that my male side, I wonder?

Just a few of my thoughts. I'm quite new at this as I have never written an elaboration such as this and actually mailed it. Let me close with a thank you to Neil, Geddy, and Alex for doing what they do with the style, expertise, and grace with which they do it.

Thanks,
Nancy Salmon, Woodville, Alabama



A Show of Fans:

I'm enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope and \$5 cash and would like to subscribe to your fanzine "A Show of Fans." I used to be a member of the Rush Backstage Club when I was 12, but lost contact, and just recently got their new mailing address and wrote to them, which is where I got your address and info about your organization. I've been listening to Rush since I was 12 years old, and I'm now 33, so I am truly a long-time, die-hard Rush fan! Please send me any information you have about Rush memorabilia, et cetera.

I just saw Rush here in Tampa, Florida at the Ice Palace on December 9, 1996, and it was the best show I've ever seen! My husband and I got seats right up front, in the third row right in front of Alex Lifeson, and it was an experience I'll never forget! Alex and Geddy were looking right at us and making gestures back and forth with us. I'm 5'11", but I wore four-inch heels so nothing would obstruct my view. We even made a banner and held it up for them to read. We stood on top of the chairs and held it up so they could see it, and of course, security told us to get down off the chairs, but at least Rush definitely saw it. It said, "Rush, We love you!" We could see Geddy Lee come over to check the banner out.

I hope they're not planning on retiring after the tour for this new CD Test for Echo is over. I've heard rumors that they are going to, but I hope not! I hope they just take a break, and maybe they'll feel rejuvenated enough after the break to make more music. It seems such a shame for them to stop making music when they are so incredibly talented, however, I'm sure Geddy wants to spend time with his new daughter and his family.

Sorry, but I don't have any stories of "brushes with greatness," unfortunately. I wanted to get their autographs when they were here in concert, but I didn't really know how to go about getting them. I didn't want to miss the show by hanging out in back of the Ice Palace, and I'm not even sure they would have signed anything for me anyway. If you have any good ideas about how to get their autographs, let me know.

There are several Rush fans at the gym where I work out, and I'm going to pass along the info I have about your organization to them. So maybe you'll be hearing from them.

Thank you!

Kim Rippetoe, Palm Harbor, FL



Dear Steve, Mandy and Friends,

"Our" fan magazine is great! I say "our" because I have recently discovered this forum, was extremely impressed, and ordered **all** back issues immediately. As long as you stay true, I will stay a member.

I guess I first became addicted to Rush when I was about nine years old. I had just moved from Pittsburgh to Detroit. I was hanging around with older kids (much older!) and they decided we should ditch school and go bowling. I remember it vividly! We hopped a huge fence, careful not to touch the electric wires (that would've been a Rush I *could* live without!) and received strange looks from all the adults (probably wondering why they

sent their kids to school if it was some holiday).

As soon as we were settled in, it hit me, and I will never be the same again. It was Tom Sawyer. The way it began with those laser sounds ripping across the speakers, I couldn't talk, I just had to **listen**. When the two-dimensional "music" came back on, I had to know **who** made that **music**. (I refer to most music as two-dimensional. I believe Rush, as well as King's X, Yes, and Ozric Tentacles make fourth-dimensional music.) My friend told me it was a band called Rush and that his sister, who was out of high school, had a lot of their albums. She was what I am still looking for. Needless to say, I left my friends and ran all the way to her house. Heaven - she showed me all of the albums and told me all she knew about them. I was in love...with Rush (and probably her too!) I didn't even own a record or any type of player, but I begged my parents. Soon, I had every album up to their new one, Moving Pictures. Looking back now, I think the reasons I liked Rush then still hold true today, but even more reasons keep coming clear. At first it was the ear-piercing shrieks of Geddy (cool to any kid) and the thunderous rhythms. The man-in-the-star was such a powerful image, even when I really didn't know what it meant. Then, as I grew and experienced all types of music, I realized how intelligent their compositions are. Rush truly can "chug along like a freight train, yet change directions like a hummingbird". I learned to appreciate the subtle background sounds and effects, and their individual talents.

In high school, Rush offered me not only great music but a philosophy which helped to shape who I am. I dared to "deviate from the norm." I did not need to conform. On the football field, Rush possessed me and my teammates. 2112 and By-Tor and the Snowdog was all we needed before a game - we then walked out to the field and proceeded to DESTROY anything in our path.

In college, I discovered philosophy classes and researched Ayn Rand, as well as many others. In football at the college level, Rush never let me down. I **was** the Snowdog, those sounds on the song must have been from a football game!

From blowing off school in 1981, to becoming a teacher and a coach, there has only been Rush. I never had a favorite before them and we have never outgrown each other. Somehow we find each other. I've never met them, nor do I need to. I don't know them and they don't know me. We're all connected on a higher level. Their's is the music of my life!

On a personal level, anyone in the Chicago area, feel free to write me (or call when in town for shows) I would love to hook up. If you might be my Dagny, Roll the Bones.



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BRUSH with Greatness

"A Spirit with a Vision
is a Dream with a Mission"

By Paige Primak

As I begin to write, only 3 days have passed since I experienced my "brush with greatness." Needless to say, I've had a chance to calm down quite a bit. I did have a dream, and recently, I turned that dream into a mission. Ever since I heard my first Rush song when I was about 14 years old, I've been hooked. I'm now 32 and still very much into the band. My dream was to meet Geddy, Alex, and Neil. After hearing Alex imply that Test for Echo could be the band's last tour, my mission began. (Don't believe it for a New York second!!! - CyberSteve) This could possibly be my only chance to ever meet them.

I sent letters to their post office box, their manager, their record company, to them personally, and even called a record company PR rep. I asked everyone I knew with connections in the music industry or to the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View, California (the site of my upcoming concert date) for help in getting backstage passes. Nothing happened.... Then, the night before the concert, I won backstage passes at a radio-sponsored event. After about 18 years of dreaming, I was actually going to meet Rush.

After the concert, I nervously waited with a small group of people. I was like a bowl of jello experiencing a California earthquake. And then it happened.... First Alex walked in, then Geddy. There are no words to describe how I felt. I was shaking because I was so excited and nervous. After Alex and Geddy shook my hand, they jokingly asked if I was cold or needed to use the ladies' room! At this point, I was crying and could barely speak. "No," I replied. "I'm just nervous. I've been waiting over 18 years for this!"

I have read articles in past issues of ASOF, where people have written about critical reviews of the band - those reviews infuriate me. However, after I saw the first leg of the Test for Echo tour at the end of 1996 at the San Jose Arena in California, I read one such review. The critic was assuming that he would not like the concert because he didn't particularly care for Rush. I was happy to read on and learn that the critic was himself surprised! He had nice things to say. The most important articles I have read in ASOF recently were about the impact of Rush on our lives. I agree. Rush has been my favorite band for all these years. There's a Rush song for any mood I'm in. If I'm ever sad or angry, I immediately listen to a Rush CD, and I feel better. Even if I don't understand the lyrics, I still love to listen to Geddy's singing and all of the music. At the risk of sound corny - their music is breathtaking!

I'm sure that some of you that are reading this can relate to what I'm about to say. Over the years, especially within the last

few months, I've had to put up with a lot of crap from friends and relatives about Rush. I've been told that I'm acting like I'm still in high school because I like Rush and was trying to meet them. Age should have nothing to do with it. I have always listened to music, and I have always loved Rush. Why should that change because I'm 32 rather than a teenager? Rush hasn't stopped writing songs or playing live because they have gotten older, so why should their fans? In fact, their music continues to amaze me, and I grow to like them even more!

Enough of that. What I'm sure the rest of you ASOF readers want to hear about is my "brush with greatness." As I said, I could barely speak, so there wasn't a great exchange of dialog. Geddy and Alex shook my hand and gave me their autographs. Alex was smiling, and I think he got a kick out of my hysterics. Geddy seemed more reserved, and maybe even a bit taken aback at the reception he received from me. I wish I could have pulled myself together and talked with them a bit. But, I guess I shouldn't complain. In my wildest dreams, I never thought that I would be standing in the middle of Geddy and Alex with our arms around each other. But, it really happened. Thanks to Tim Jeffreys and Dan DiLullo of 92.3 KSJO Solid Rock in San Jose. As Steve Streeter recently told me, "anything can happen."

Yes indeed. It may be hard to make out in print, but that IS a ASOF t-shirt! Didn't take long "to be seen."



From www.ASOF.com:
Thank you Alex, Geddy & Neil!

I absolutely love the new album "Test For Echo" and I saw all three Michigan shows. I'm so happy you continue to include Michigan on your touring schedule. I sure hope you always include Detroit on your touring schedule. Last October, The Palace of Auburn Hills was completely sold out (and that's one huge building), then at the Pine Knob Show—there were 30 million people there! I saw RUSH banners and a sign that said, "Drum Class Starts Here". Hey, you guys don't have to "test," because there's a huge "Echo" out there for the band!

Just a few notes:

I absolutely loved the set-list, all the TFE songs, The Trees, Red Sector A, Roll The Bones, Natural Science and Animate!

Also the stage props & lighting effects get lots of "applause". However the best part of the show was Neil's drum solo! I've seen every tour since Presto, and Neil has never looked better or performed better, I admire his dedication to drumming and craftsmanship! You just keep getting better, Neil!

And Alex continues to be the top comic on stage (I love his facial expressions), and hey Geddy, I loved your quote, "We have 4 million songs to play for you tonight... I hope you can take it" Heck yeah! So that's the story here, Keep up the good work guys, you are the best band ever and I look forward to more of Neil's lyrics, Alex's heavy "riffs", and Geddy's funky bass & high notes.

Once again thanks for hitting Michigan 3 times on this tour. And from the results you are guaranteed a sell-out full of RUSH enthusiasm when you guys play here next time!

Good luck and hope to see you soon!

BTW, a huge thanks to Steve & Mandy @ ASOF for making this feedback possible!

"Put your message in a modem!"

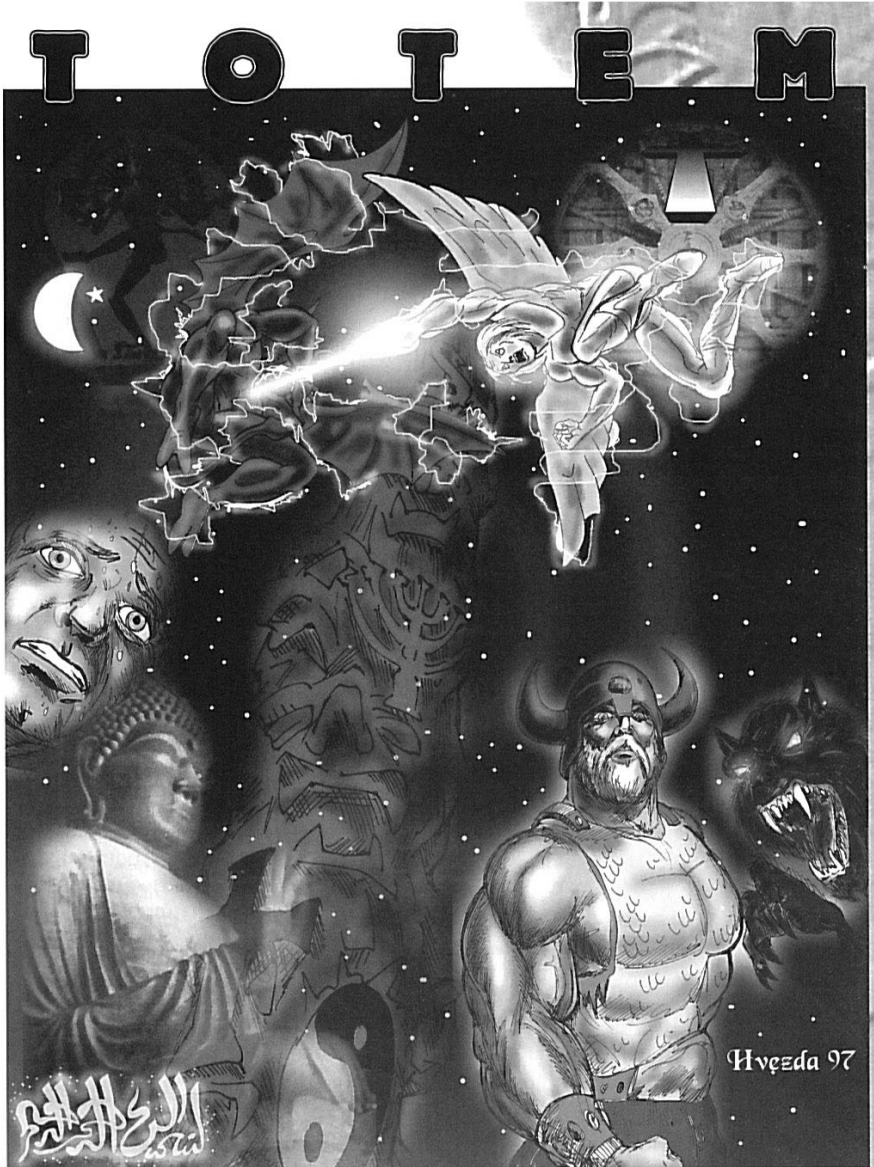
[— good idea Neil :=)

Craig



Artwork by Chris Hvezda

*Angels and demons inside of me
Saviors and Satans all around me*



MAGELLAN
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A FEW GEMS
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This is a very addictive platter. Rush fans should fall in love with this progressive band. Full of kinetic energy. CyberSteve.

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Terry Bozzio - Drums and Electronic Tape Loops

Steve Stevens - All Guitars
Tony Levin - Bases and Stick

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Test of Wills and **Black Light Syndrome** are available at progressive CD stores everywhere or send \$15.98 for each CD to: Magna Carta, 208 E. 51st Street, #1820, New York, NY 10022

Outside the USA, add \$5 per CD. Payment should be sent in U.S. funds only.

Continued from Page 2

Our goals are essentially all the same - let us come together. Send your contributions for the next issue - we're looking forward to hearing from all of you! Doing the best we can.

There was another trio on stage with Rush for most of the second leg **T4E** tour. Along with Rush were Big Godzilla, Little Godzilla, and Gigan. Toting a sign reading, "They're not the only dinosaur trio out here!" - which was flashed on the big back screen. From show to show the crew would customize an additional sign that one of the monsters would hold

to be projected for everyone to see during Tom Sawyer, the "crack-up" song. Along with these fine monstrous additions were a dinosaur puppet behind Big Al and in St. Louis someone dressed up in a dinosaur suit, gloves and all lurked behind Al. Laughs were dished out by all.

Geddy's vintage Frigidaire was absolutely covered with magnets. I was fortunate enough to be able to give Rush two additions to the 'fridge. One being a mini poster from Forbidden Planet and the other an original piece of artwork of Marilyn Monroe I did some years back. I felt it would go nicely with Elvis and his guitar up his rear! (Elvis kept changing night after night) Also noteworthy was an Eraserhead magnet. Hens informed me that the actor that played Henry in Eraserhead (Jack Nance; he was a regular in all of

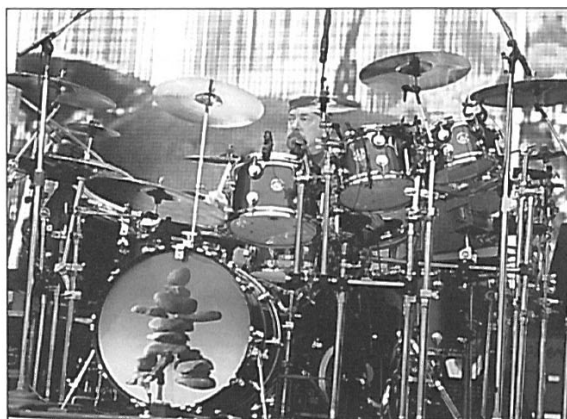


Photo by John Vinson

David Lynch's films including Twin Peaks where he played Pete Martell, the fish-loving husband of actress Piper Laurie) died a little while back. That was sad news to hear as I was wearing my Eraserhead t-shirt. It was the first I had heard of his tragic death. Nance was only 53. We will miss him. In Heaven, everything is fine. Remember death.

The slight changes in the set list were a nice touch. Sure, it would have been nice to see an oldie brought back, but we did get a slight shuffle as well as Limelight and Stick It Out. Subdivisions

and The Big Money were dropped. Rush's energy level was very high during each show that we saw and reports that have come in on other shows say the same thing. Rush is **ENERGIZED** beyond belief! This is very heartwarming to see, indeed. And it looks as though this ENERGY will travel into another studio album - *perhaps?* Sure does look that way. I get the distinct feeling of a new beginning for Rush - a **renewed** vision, with so much more to come! Fear not younger Rush fans, there is a lot more in store for **YOU** and even us old Rush fans who just won't shed that Kings t-shirt!

ASOF HQ: The Web Site is still looking for a few banners ads. The site is doing well, but we must generate some income to defray bandwidth/hosting costs. Please help how you can. Remember: you don't get something for nothing. We are planning next issue to be an all-out tour issue with **YOUR** stories and photos to be featured, so start sending in your material for that.

Be seeing you!



IN THE END



The "Thank you very much" list: Cynthia, Pegi, Bob and all at SRO/Anthem; Neil Peart, Hens, Mike Portnoy, Donna Halper, Atlantic Records, Frank White, John Vinson, The Dexters, The Orbit Room, Mark Irwin, Chris Springer, Frank Springer, Chris Hvezda, Will Mullaney, Jill Maryonovich (who's on the top of my "cool people" list, right next to Geddy!), Chris Heffley (for awesome seats in Indy!), Joe Osborne and Ellen Moore, Chad, Kevin McA, Dan D, Broon Jr. (keeping CyberSteve stocked in **Hulk** stuff), Chester, Jay & Dan, Brian Syer, Will Kovacs, all those who have contributed articles, photos, artwork, kind words, stamps and monetary donations to the cause. And of course thanks to those who passed out flyers at the shows!

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