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Pat Benatar, INXS,  
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**MOTLEY CRUE'S VINCE NEIL**



Alex Lifeson of Rush. The guitarist got a pilot's license and enjoys buzzing the skies in his spare time.

ROSS MARINO

## Rush/"The Manhattan Project"

Imagine a time / when it all began, /  
in the dying days of a war. / A  
weapon—that would settle the score. /  
Whoever found it first / would be sure  
to do their worst. / They always had  
before.

Imagine a man / where it all began. /  
A scientist pacing the floor / in each  
nation—always eager to explore. / To  
build the best big stick, / to turn the  
winning trick, / but this was something  
more. . . .

The big bang—took and shook the  
world, / shot down the rising sun. / The

end was begun—it would hit  
everyone / when the chain reaction  
was done. / The big shots—try to hold  
it back. / The fools try to wish it away. /  
The hopeful depend on a world without  
end / whatever the hopeless may say.

Imagine a place / where it all  
began. / They gathered from across  
the land / to work in the secrecy of the  
desert sand. / All of the brightest boys /  
to play with the biggest toys, / more  
than they bargained for.

Imagine a man / when it all began. /  
The pilot of *Enola Gay* / flying out of  
the shockwave. / On that August day, /  
all the powers that be / and the course  
of history / would be changed for

evermore. . . .

From *Power Windows* by Rush (Mercury).  
Lyrics by Peart. Music by Lee and Lifeson.  
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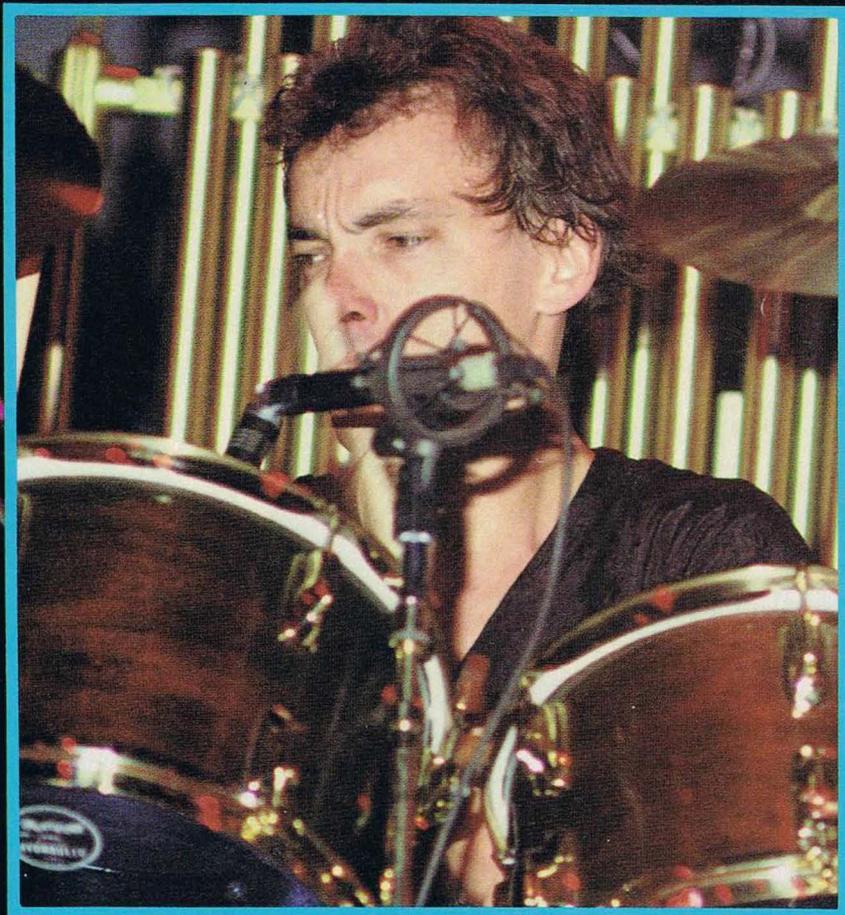
### FAST FACTS

**Personal**—Rush is the first band to  
have an entire Laserium show devoted  
to its music. The Laserium shows have  
had successful runs in New York,  
Seattle, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh,  
Louisville, Denver, St. Louis and  
Toronto.

*Power Windows* is Rush's 14th  
album.



# Rush: a power rock tradition



by Dan Daley

**T**he week of the United Nations' 40th anniversary, New York City was wall to wall with Secret Service types nervously catering to premiers, princes and presidents. But at a certain hotel in Manhattan, one of Canada's most distinguished musical ambassadors came down to the lobby himself to greet visitors.

Up in his hotel room, his thin frame draped in oversized green pants and a black T-shirt, Geddy Lee plopped wearily down on a couch, keeping the blinds drawn against the morning light as he squinted through green-tinted glasses. The vocalist-bassist was in New York to promote Rush's latest Mercury LP, *Power Windows*.

"The album has a sort of thread running through every song, having to do with the nature of power," explained Lee. Throughout the Canadian trio's career, drummer Neil Peart has developed a style of writing socially aware lyrics, and it's much in evidence on *Power Windows*. Among the powerful topics Peart has explored are big-time finance (the first single, "The Big Money"), private hopes ("Middletown Dreams") and nuclear weapons ("Manhattan Project.")

*Power Windows* represents some subtle changes for this durable unit. Officially starting out 11 years ago—although Lee and Lifeson have actually played together since Lee was 15 years old—Rush has carved out a substantial career with an eclectic repertoire whose main characteristics are abrupt, sophisticated rhythmic changes and cerebral lyrics.

*Power Windows* carries on the Rush tradition but, according to Lee, the focus has shifted from musical experimentation to a greater emphasis on song structure. That change was achieved by a self-induced shake-up of the band's work habits.

"As you know, we used Terry Brown for about ten years as our co-producer," said Lee pensively. "It was a great production team but it got to the point with him that we were able to pre-guess what was coming. We knew each other too well."

So Rush's first move this time out was "to put ourselves in a different environment to learn new techniques and different ways of recording," Lee

*Lee and Peart (inset) remain close friends, but off-the-road they now spend time with their families.*

LAYNE MURDOCH/CIRCUS INSET: MARK WEISS/CIRCUS

explained. They also wanted someone with a better song sense, and so began an exhaustive search for a new producer. They found one in Peter Collins, whom Lee described as "a left field choice. He hadn't done anything vaguely resembling our music—Nik Kershaw, Musical Youth. . . . But he also had done Gary Moore, who was on tour with us at the time, and I remember Gary raving about how good Peter was."

There was a change in recording venues as well. Long-time tenants of Toronto's Le Studio, Rush felt a new environment was called for. After the five-month marathon of recording *Grace Under Pressure*, "We said we wouldn't stay in any studio for more than five weeks, max," recalled Lee. The trio spent a period writing material for the record in Ontario, then shuttled between the Manor in England, Air Studios in Montserrat and back to London's Sarm East. "The change in environment helped," said Lee reflectively. "Nobody was dragging his ass around the studio."

*Power Windows* features Rush's most ambitious use of synthesizers to date; Collins brought in pinch hitter Andy Richards to assist the group. "The last few records have had a lot of synthesizer on them," opined Lee, "but we didn't feel the stuff we were doing on the synths was fresh and innovative enough. That was the reason for (bringing in) Andy; we wanted some help. . . . It opened up so many things for us. I was no longer limited by my ability. I'm a synthesizer player, not a keyboard player; Andy is both."

Richards helped realize synth parts that were beyond Lee's technical prowess, and at the same time, the give and take between Richards and the band enhanced the creative atmosphere in the studio. "Before, you'd never see Alex Lifeson hanging around every minute of a session," said Lee. "We were happy to have a new personality giving us ideas."

Geddy Lee's long, thin arms taper down to sensitive, dexterous fingers, but as talented as they are, there are only ten of them. How then to re-create live songs that are increasingly dependent upon synthesizer sounds? "Well, it's going to be a cute trick," said Lee with a muted laugh. "I'm setting up a rather complicated keyboard arrangement in order to play live." The only thing I'm going to need is some-

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*Lifeson (r.), Lee and Peart have sold millions of albums without a hit. "New World Man" came closest at #21.*

LAYNE MURDOCH/CIRCUS





Geddy Lee, who plays bass, keyboards and sings lead for Rush, calls his trio's complete artistic control "a dream come true."

ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

time we got a very satisfying balance."

After so many years together, the three members of Rush are trying to spend more time on their personal lives. All three have families to whom they'd like to be more than just rock & roll rumors. "I have a child, and when I'm off the road I try to spend as much time with him as I can," Lee said. "I want to settle my home life, which is hard to do when you're out on the road for four months."

As their familial obligations grow, Rush becomes less and less the center of their social universe. "We don't go out of our way to see each other because we spend so much time working together," said Lee. "We talk about it but we don't get together that much off the road and I think it's better that way . . . We need a break. We have a very close relationship, and the kind of friendship between us that we'll probably never have again in our lives because of the things we've gone through together."

In an era in which top recording artists sometimes seem required to have three, four or even five singles per album, Rush has historically been an anomaly; they've never had a Top 10 single. "I don't believe there's ever singles on Rush records," Lee stated with a terse laugh. "We have a very simple attitude [about singles]: Release whatever you want to! Release them *all* as singles!" But in a more sober tone he added, "I don't think we'd be so bold if we hadn't gotten so far without them. We can exist without them. The powers that be always say something like, 'You guys know how big you'd be if you had a hit single?'"

"Before *2112* we had a lot of pressure on us. But since then our record company's left us alone because people buy the records. We couldn't ask for a better situation—we make the records the way we like. We have total artistic control."

When reminded of his participation on the parody album, *Great White North*, by SCTV's resident Canadian philosophers, Bob and Doug MacKenzie, and the novelty single from that record, "Take Off," Lee retorted with mock triumph, "That was my hit! See, I had a hit single!" But settling back into the couch, he added, "Sure, I'd love to sell a zillion singles, but I don't know if we know how. To sit down at this stage and calculate how to make a single, it would take such balls."

"It's just not a natural part of us. [But] I think about it occasionally. Every time we finish a record I think there are singles on it. It just goes to show you I don't have a clue." ●

one sitting at the side of the stage loading computer discs, because I won't have time to do that during a show. We thought about taking a keyboard player on the road, but if we can do it ourselves, it would really be more fun. In rehearsals, the naked truths about it will come out, but I think I've got it pretty well organized."

**"R**uthlessly organized" is how Lee kiddingly describes Rush's drummer and lyricist, Neil Peart. Night after night on stage, Lee gives voice to Peart's images. Has he ever had feelings that differ from those expressed in the lyrics? "I never sang lyrics by Neil that I couldn't get behind, because before then I would have to speak up," said Lee. "The lyrics have to have some meaning for me, and Neil and I discuss

them and work on them till they do."

This give and take in the words also occurs in the music, and has become easier of late, as Lee explained. "Before, there was a little tension whenever we criticized each other and we always looked to Terry as the intermediary. Now there's even more communication about things like lyrics, because we didn't have anyone else to rely on, so we go to each other more."

Lee believes that Alex Lifeson has benefited from the band's new studio approach. "There were a lot of guitar ideas coming from places they never came from before," he said. "On *Signals* there was a lot of synth; the guitar sort of disappeared. On *Grace Under Pressure* it was almost the opposite—the guitar came roaring back to the forefront, but it crushed all the dynamics out of the synthesizers. This

## RUSH

Behind The Making Of 'Power Windows'—A Candid Talk With Lead Singer Geddy Lee

## 50 Rush

"We make records the way we like," says Geddy Lee. Discover how the Canadian trio achieved success without musical compromise. Plus, the making of *Power Windows*.