

# a show of hands

NUMBER 15

FALL 1996

A Rush Fanzine For and By Rush Fans

\$5.00

## *Rush*

test for echo



### I N S I D E

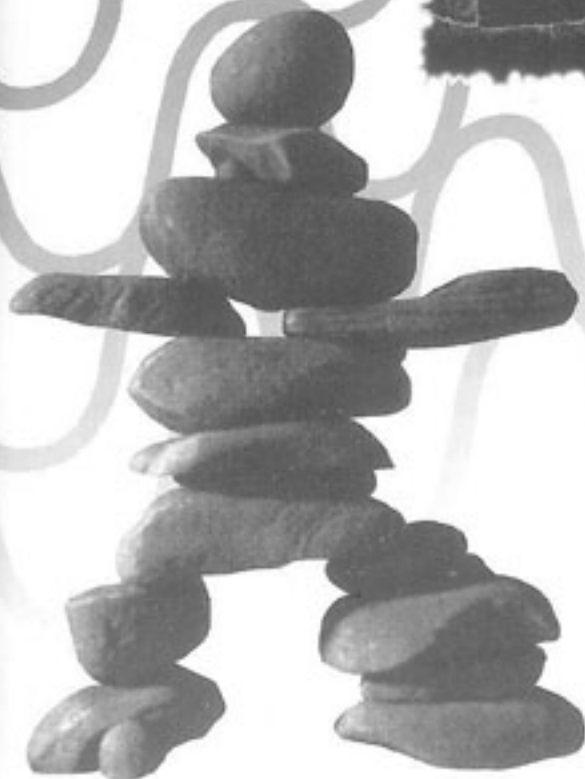
Test For Echo: Full Coverage

ASOF Interviews Geddy Lee

Neil's "Work in Progress"

The Tour Gears Up!

Rush in the Classroom





# a show of *hands* speaks with... **GEDDY LEE**

Interview by Steve Streeter

**Steve:** Hallo-o-o-o-oo!

**Geddy:** Steve? Hi, it's Geddy.

**S:** Hi Geddy!

**G:** How are ya?

**S:** Oh very good. Good to speak to you. Hope Big Al didn't bug you too much. We asked him to give you a nudge...

**G:** Nooo.

**S:** Got a few questions for ya...

**G:** Sure.

**S:** First of all, I want to say that the buzz with this new album is great. We love it! It's just incredible. I know you'll be hearing this a lot but it's a **gem!**

**G:** Well, good, thanks very much.

**S:** What is your overall feeling about this album? You must be proud...

**G:** Ah, yeah, I'm pretty proud of it. It was a great record to make. The writing sessions were great from my point of view. They were very creative, very energetic and really a joy. It was a great record to write.

**S:** Between you and Alex, working on the musical parts initially...?

**G:** Yeah, I mean the whole process. There were so many ideas floating around and things were coming very fast and furious. It was nice to be back at it after the break that we had.

**S:** Indeed.

**G:** As good as the break was, and there was a lot of tentativeness. I don't know... I don't think anybody was really 100% convinced what would happen when we got back together after the break. So it was nice to know that we could get back together and get to writing.

**S:** Absolutely!

**G:** I didn't know writing could be so positive.

**S:** It's an aggressive album. I know the title track, **Test For Echo**, has such a typical lead-off aggressive feel to it. Was that the first song that Neil gave you?

**G:** **Test** wasn't the first song we wrote. I

think it was somewhere in the middle of the pack...

**S:** Pye Dubois was involved in that as well...

**G:** Yeah, (heh) He's kind of this shadowy figure who sends us lyrics from time to time. I love his lyrics and I love what happens when he and Neil collaborate. I think it's great.

**S:** Oh, it is. It's a little magical thing...

**G:** He's got this way of looking at things that throws a little curve into our music and I like that.

**S:** Does that curve ultimately affect the songwriting since you're used to receiving lyrics just from Neil?

**G:** I just think he's got a very unique perspective on the world. There's something interesting and cryptic about the way he writes. I think that combination with Neil's penchant for making sense often combines to make some magic. And that's from a writer, from my point of view, as a writer of music. I'd like to have lyrics that have that kind of magic and imagery.

**S:** **Absolutely.** You know, the whole album really contains so many catchy melodies and layers. What inspired this?

**G:** Oh God, who knows? Maybe watching Barney everyday, I don't know... (laughs) I don't know where melodies come from....

**S:** There's so many catchy ones that are, dare I say, danceable?

**G:** Well, I don't know about that. It would be hard for us to dance to...(laughs)

**S:** (laughing) You'd be surprised!

**G:** I don't know. Melody writing is a rare...how do I explain it? Melody writing is a thing that keeps a writer coming back to his drawing board. You're always in search of that great

melody. Whether it's inspired by a riff or whether it's inspired by lyrics or whether it's just you being kind of imbued at the moment with some lucky bit of spontaneity, it's really hard to determine where it came from. It's definitely the most magical part of writing. And as a singer, of course, it's the most satisfying result.

**S:** Correct. Ah, **Test For Echo**, the title track seems to be very topical. It seems to be saying that all this crime on the airwaves is feeding the crime on the streets. What is your take on the theme of that song?

**G:** Well, to me it's kind of a pastiche, a montage of contemporary life. Contemporary life viewed in the most common way that we view life through our video screens and our computers. That's how we get our information unfortunately, that's how the majority of the world gets its

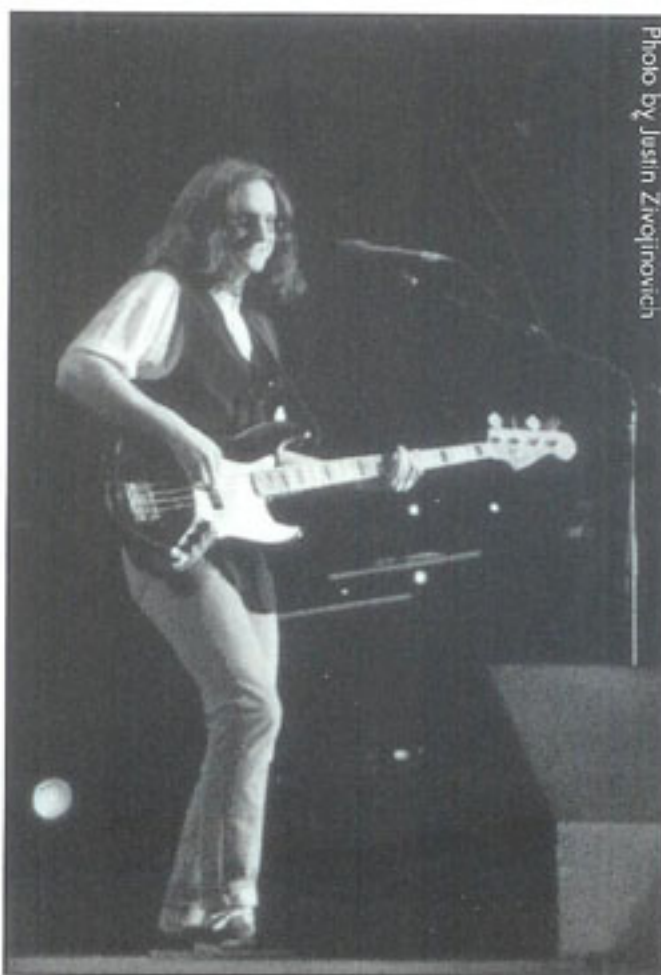


Photo by Justin Zivonovich



pictures of life. That whole process begs the question, "Does anyone else think this is normal?" Is this normal to be bombarded with these ultra-violent images one minute and these inane comedies another minute and on and on. You're left not knowing whether you're supposed to laugh or cry at anything. I think that's really the issue of that song, you know, "Does anyone else think this is weird?"

**S:** I think the answer is yes.

**G:** That's what that song kind of represents.

**S:** Interesting. It seems that Neil's lyrics have gotten incredibly concise. Does this help or hinder your songwriting?

**G:** It depends, good question actually, because there are times when you've got to go with the flow. You work with what you've got and for me, the more poetic it is the easier it is to write, the more easily I become inspired, the more easily I can write music that is more poetic. So in some instances it's tougher to write to something that is more concise and direct and less flowery. But sometimes that directness means that the song you're going to end up with is more heartfelt because obviously, it's more to the point. I prefer to have some ethereal package that surrounds the lyrics from time to time in order for me to be inspired to put something around it that's more colorful. You kind of go with the flow. Nothing really stands still. I prefer a high degree of poetry in the lyrics that I'm singing.

**S:** I think that Neil's gone that direction more so, especially with this new release. How did you go about picking Peter Collins this time? I know you've worked with him four times now.

**G:** Yeah, I think this is the fourth album.

**S:** What does he bring to the Rush mix?

**G:** Well, Peter's great. I have an incredible amount of respect for Peter in terms of his ability to handle an album project responsibly, advise us in terms of engineer and so forth, objectively. I know that his motivation is always to make the best possible record. More importantly, he's a song guy. He's not an engineer. He's a song guy. He's always sitting at the back of the room listening to the song. Any decision that you might need or any idea that you might need to bounce off of him, you know whatever his answer is going to be it will be based in the interest of making the best possible song. That is invaluable, I think. Even when, and this happens quite often, especially with this record, there are a number of songs where he said, "Guys, quite frankly, these songs are finished." This was in the demo stage. "There's really nothing I can bring to these songs. They're great. Let's not touch them." Even just hearing that, is worth it's weight in gold from someone you respect. It gives you the confidence to carry on. Now, there are other songs, like **Resist**, for example, and a number of others on the record, where he'll roll up his sleeves and say, "These songs need some work. Let's get right at it." And you'll tear the song apart and he'll force kind of change it. I think

**Resist** and **Totem** are two songs he had probably the biggest impact on.

**S:** Oh really? Interesting. What was the one that came together fastest?

**G:** Um, what do you mean?

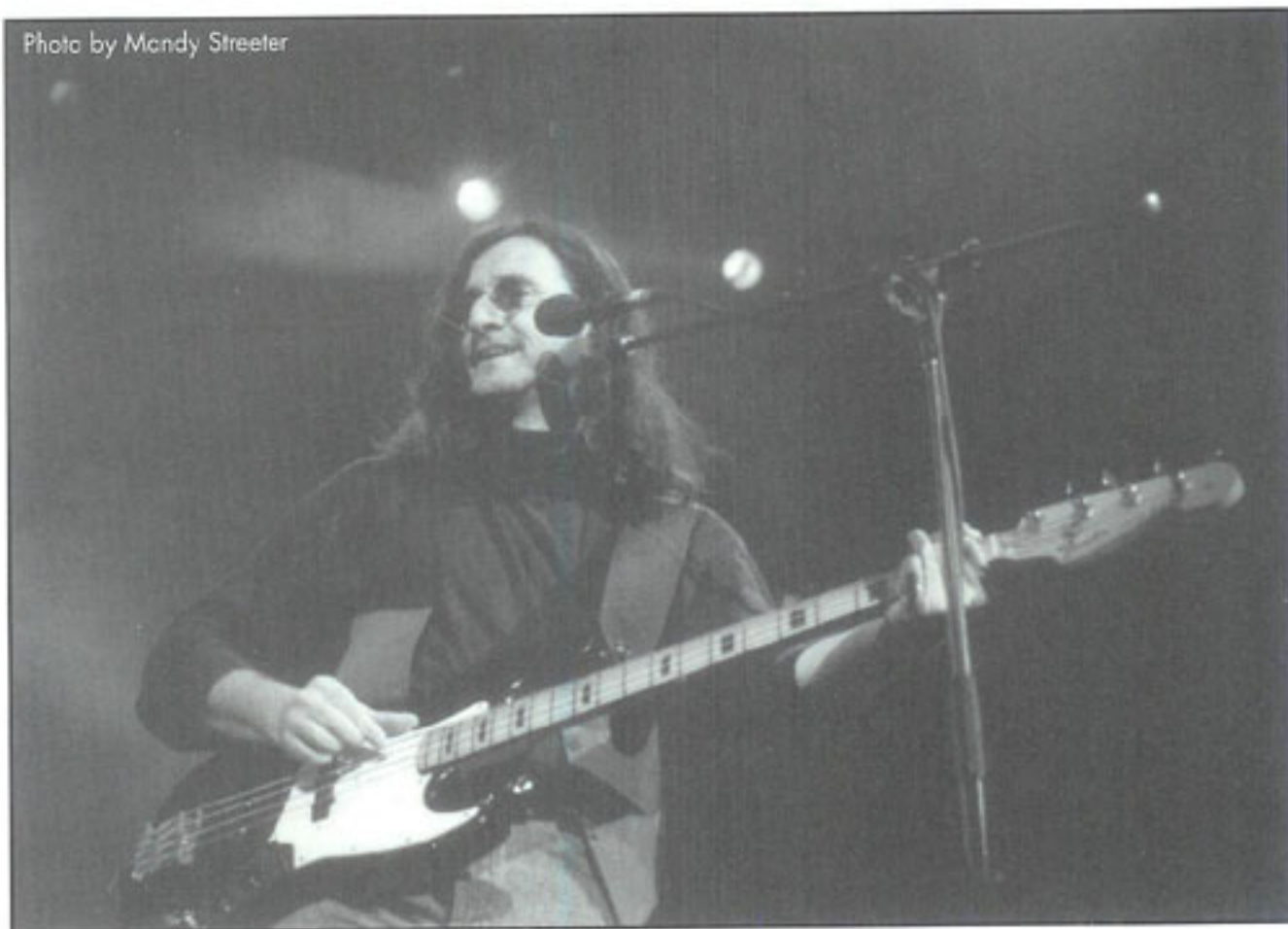
**S:** The one, two take kind of thing...

**G:** Of those two songs?

**S:** No, on the whole album. You mentioned that he, after hearing some songs, after one take would say basically, "That's a wrap."

**G:** No, no. You misunderstood me. What I was saying was that when we do the demos for the songs before we play them for Peter this is in the initial stages of writing. The way we work is that we write our songs, we do demos of them. Which basically means, we make the record on a kind of lesser scale, with drum parts and guitar parts and vocal parts and usually they are engineered by Alex. So we basically have a tape of say, ten songs that we'll play for Peter Collins. He'll listen to those songs then he'll comment on what songs he thinks need work and what songs don't need work. There were many songs on the record that he didn't feel the need to change anything with. He'd say, "those songs are fine as they are." So when it comes to record them we're not changing the arrangement. But there are

Photo by Mandy Streeter



a number of other songs, like **Resist** and **Totem**, for example, that he wasn't happy with the arrangement and he would roll up his sleeves and we would get in there and re-arrange the song. This is all before recording the songs. To paint the correct picture, basically, we go up to the farm to write and during that writing stage we're literally putting an album together. Kind of a sketch version of the album. You've still got all the guitars, basses, vocals and everything but it's done in kind of rough form. You're not taking too much care with recording. You're just using any old sound. Whatever sound gets the song idea across. Then you play it for your producer and he tells you whether it's



any damn good or not! (Laughter) He tells you whether you've been wasting your time or whether you're on track.

**S:** Well, Alex is very up front and forward throughout the mix of the album. Do you think his recent songwriting performance in Victor influenced that?

**G:** I don't think so. I think he certainly came in with a high degree of confidence. That's very valuable. The fact that there was a decision not to use many keyboards and to try to get a particular dry, up front sound, I think that was the motivation. I really think that a lot of the guitar presence and a lot of the final feel of the record was resolved by Andy Wallace in the mixing.

**S:** I was going to mention Andy. How was he to work with? I heard that he brought a lot of interesting observation to the record as well.

**G:** Yeah, he was great. He's very professional. A very well-schooled engineer. It was nice to work with somebody who is even older than us. (Laughs)

**S:** (Laughs) Interesting...

**G:** But, he's great. I think he helped Alex's sound tremendously on this record.

**S:** Really?

**G:** 'Cause just the way he works sets up the stereo perspective. I think he was able to create some air around Alex's guitar so he didn't seem so much like a wall of sound. There was more character. He brought out the character of Alex's playing, which was very valuable at that stage.

**S:** That's neat. **Driven** is one of my favorite songs on the album. It seems also very topical. One line in it, "It's my turn to drive"... always strikes me that, geez, it's been Rush's turn to drive since **2112** basically. What is the feeling of that song?

**G:** It's a song that talks about ambition. In a certain way it's about reckless ambition and the need, good or bad, to be in control of your own destiny.

**S:** Did you have to adjust the style of your playing to mesh with Neil's rebirth as a drummer?

**G:** Not really. It wasn't really a big adjustment. It's funny, the way we write, a lot of the direction of the bass parts and rhythm parts are kind of inferred before Neil puts his drums down. When he gets the drum parts on there some of the dynamics will change dramatically. Then I'll have to go back and fine tune my parts and shift them back into the direction his drumming has taken. But I didn't find that particularly difficult or that different than normally. I think what's changed about his drumming style is that it's kind of a sonic thing in the way that his drums are speaking now. The way he's hitting his drums. The way they speak. You can notice it in his relationship, all his hardware, his hi-hat, cymbals, the kind of swing that his hi-hat has now. The relationship between hi-hat and snare drum. I think that even though it was an exhausting re-invention for him, I think the end result impacted his drumming in a more subtle way than you would think. I still think he sounds like Neil Peart.

**S:** Oh yeah!

**G:** His fills and things are as mental as they ever were.

**S:** Shhewww! I'll say! True. I've heard that Limbo is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Rush Limbaugh. Is that true?

**G:** (Laughs) I think just the title itself is a bit of a joke. Let's put it that way. It had nothing to do with the song. I don't think we could resist the pun of having Limbo and Rush in the same line.

**S:** And what is this Transylvania Twist? Alex seems to be speaking up as the Count Floyd in this song.

**G:** Welllll, I don't know,...it's not him.

**S:** It's not him?

**G:** Nah.

**S:** Ha-ha...

**G:** That's all I'll say.

**S:** Then say no more! You've answered my question. Okay, so is Dog Years just about a dog or what?

**G:** (Laughter) A good question...I don't know. You have to kind of answer for yourself. Obviously it's a metaphor for the pace of life.

**S:** That's exactly the way I read it...

**G:** But it's also about a dog.

**S:** (Laughs)

**G:** It's about a dog's brain. (Laugh)

**S:** Your vocals on this record are some of your best, if not your best.

**G:** Well, thank you.

**S:** My favorite album right now is **Test For Echo**, which is the way it should be. With such a long break how did you keep in shape vocally? Did you jump right into it?

**G:** Yeah, I didn't do anything. I think the best thing for my voice was having a break. It enabled my voice to kind of heal itself a little bit and for me to get healthy. I was just in very good physical shape when I started writing the record and I think the healthier lifestyle and the lack of gigs was very good for my throat. But I did notice during recording, and I anticipate this will happen during rehearsal too, that my voice would be in peak form and then it would tire. That's what you lose by not singing every day. The clarity in your voice is great because your voice is rested but it tires more easily. Because of the fact that the upcoming tour is going to be so long, there's going to be so much Rush music in each show, I'm really curious to see how my voice holds out on this one.

**S:** The endurance...

**G:** Yeah, because we'll probably be doing at least two and a half hours worth of music.

**S:** Ah, I guess that kind of jumps me to a question on the upcoming tour. Are you going to have an opening act or are you thinking of doing "An Evening with Rush..." with no opener?

**G:** We're thinking of that at the moment. Maybe not having an opening act. It all remains to be seen. If we can work it out so that we are happy with it, we'll just do two sets probably.

**S:** With so much material, it would be a joy!

**G:** But, I can't say it's 100% sure right now.

**S:** Okay. **Time & Motion**. I hear a lot of **Natural Science**, maybe **Cygnus**... It's a very elemental song. I think it's going to take a lot of fans back.

**G:** Yeah, I love that song. It's one of my favorites on the record.



**S:** Is it? Can you elaborate on what that song means to you? It's one of my favorites too.

**G:** Ah, I can't really be that specific about it. There's just something about that song to me . . . there's something organic about it. There's something satisfying musically about the way it plays through.

**S:** What time signature is **Time & Motion** in?

**G:** Which part? (Laughs) It kind of goes back and forth through a couple of different time signatures.

**S:** What is meant by **Superman in Supernature**? Is that Neil referring to some philosophy there? Am I reading too much into it?

**G:** No, I don't think you can read too much into that line. It's a pretty weighty line.

**S:** I was looking into a lot of Nietzsche and books along that line.

**G:** Exactly. It's a contemporary, . . . almost like a super-conflict. I mean the whole song is really about conflict. And life. And contact with others. It's like a contemporary vision of modern man in context with what is supposedly still Nature. But it's like man to the power of ten in context with Nature to the power of ten.

**S:** Right, exactly...

**G:** That's my take on it. It may be different than Neil's.

**S:** This is true. So much Rush material is open to interpretation. That's one of the very neat things about it all. Ah, **Virtuality**. I know you may not be the biggest Internet fan and I know Neil isn't either. But **Virtuality** is a tremendous composition. It has so much vigor and explosive qualities to it.

**G:** I don't have a problem with the Internet. I use it quite often to get my baseball scores. (Chuckles) I mean, I think if you have a reason to use the Internet, it's fantastic.

**S:** Oh, it's a great tool, yeah!

**G:** So, I don't share Neil's cynical view of the Internet. I think what bothers Neil about the Internet is how it's kind of used as a gossip network. I think that kind of bugs him from time to time. As far as I'm concerned, it's a great form for communication and I use it quite often.

**S:** I'm sure there's a lot of Blue Jay web pages too...

**G:** (Chuckles) Yeah. There's a lot of stuff out there that you can get at your fingertips that's very useful.

**S:** Indeed. I must compliment you on your performance on **Resist**. In a way it reminds me of **Bravado**, in the feel of it. Very emotional. What a beautiful song.

**G:** Thanks very much. I love that song myself.

**S:** I really hope you do that live.

**G:** I'm a sucker for those softer, well, I guess it's not even soft, but more ethereal. I like the more ethereal ones.

**S:** Yeah, and Alex's guitar is super atmospheric. It's excellent.

**G:** He did some really nice playing on that track.

**S:** Beautiful stuff. I want to talk about **Totem** for a moment. That was the initial track that hooked me upon my first listen. I think lyrically it's such a puzzle of a song. It seems to be, again, a commentary on modern culture's searching for something, icons.

**G:** Sure, it's a comment on contemporary and not so contemporary search for spirituality. And the need for spirituality. It's take is that spirituality is internal as opposed to being based on a constructed organization.

**S:** Exactly. Ah, keyboards are virtually non-existent on this album. I know Alex had mentioned that he was happy about that. Are you happy as well? Is it going to make your live performance on this tour much easier?

**G:** No, it won't make my life easier because the parts are really hard. (Laughs) The bass parts are more complicated and the vocal parts are far more intricate. So I will have my hands full with or without the keyboards.

**S:** Once again...

**G:** I think the keyboards have opened up some air for Alex and that's made him a lot happier and that's fine with me.

**S:** The artwork is great! The Stoneman, I guess, for lack of a better....

**G:** Inukshuk, is the proper...

**S:** Inukshuk.

**G:** Inukshuk. It's an Inuit word. That's what that sculpture is.

**S:** Ahhhh, and that's a Hugh Syme composition?

**G:** Hugh Syme and Neil together kind of came up with that.

**S:** Hugh's been doing stuff since *Caress of Steel*. It's amazing. He's almost a member of the family. How involved are you with the graphics? Or is that something that Neil's pretty much in charge of?

**G:** The covers are usually Neil's baby. He brings us ideas and we very often have comments early on and he listens to our comments. After we go through our initial conversations and we either like or dislike the direction, Neil kind of runs with it. Certainly if there's something going on that we don't like he pays heed to that. Increasingly there are certain areas in the operation of the band that we trust each other more on.

**S:** Mmmm, and it's worked out so beautifully. Have you discussed the set for the upcoming tour? Do you plan any surprises? Like maybe bringing back **By-tor**, hint, hint.

**G:** (Laughs) We're working on the set list now so nothing's been decided yet.

**S:** Okay! Well, **By-Tor** has come up before so I had to put in the obligatory plug.

**G:** We'll put that in the suggestion box.

**S:** Alright Geddy, thank you.

**G:** There is something I'd like to address actually. And that's this Tribute album thing. Ah, it's come to my attention that there's all these weird comments floating around. I'd just like to clarify something to our fans. I think our view of this whole thing has been portrayed as totally distorted. When we were asked, well, when we were told basically that there was a tribute album being done, this was only brought up to us one time. And one time only, when they were making this album. We were asked what our feelings were about it and there's really not much you can say when someone decides



to do a tribute album. That's nice if it's a sincere tribute. That's very nice. But, we were then told that the record label that was releasing this tribute was kind of in the business of doing tribute albums. Then we had concerns that this wasn't really going to be a tribute but rather an exploitation of our fans. **That** was our concern. There was never any question of the musicians involved. We didn't really know who was involved. For some reason, that concern over our fans exploitation has been blown way out of proportion. Even to the fact that there was some quote from our office that was totally erroneous about tribute albums. It was basically out of control. So

I'd just like to clarify that to our fans, because I know there's a lot of weird opinions floating around about what our attitude on this thing was. Our attitude was very low key. We never had any intention of trying to stop this record. We never had any intention of suing anybody. Those things were all attributable to either over zealous representatives of our band or over zealous gossip. You know what I mean? I just wanted to clarify that. It's come up in a lot of interviews.

**S:** I'm glad you brought it up Geddy, I had it on my list to cover, time permitting.

**G:** Well, I wanted to deal with that because from what I've read, it makes us sound totally unappreciative for the musicians that have been involved in this record. And we are not unappreciative of them in any way. It's not about their involvement. It's not about the producers of this record. It was strictly a concern that this was a record company that was looking out to make a few bucks off the loyalty of our fans.

**S:** Okay. Good. I guess I'm going to just throw a few rapid fire questions at ya here. What is "the Death of Hope"?

**G:** (Laughs) Well, mixing is the Death of Hope. When you're making a song, it lives in your mind in a magnificent way and in mixing, you have to settle for what you have, not what's in your head. So to me, it's always a little bit of a compromise when you finally have to stop making the record.

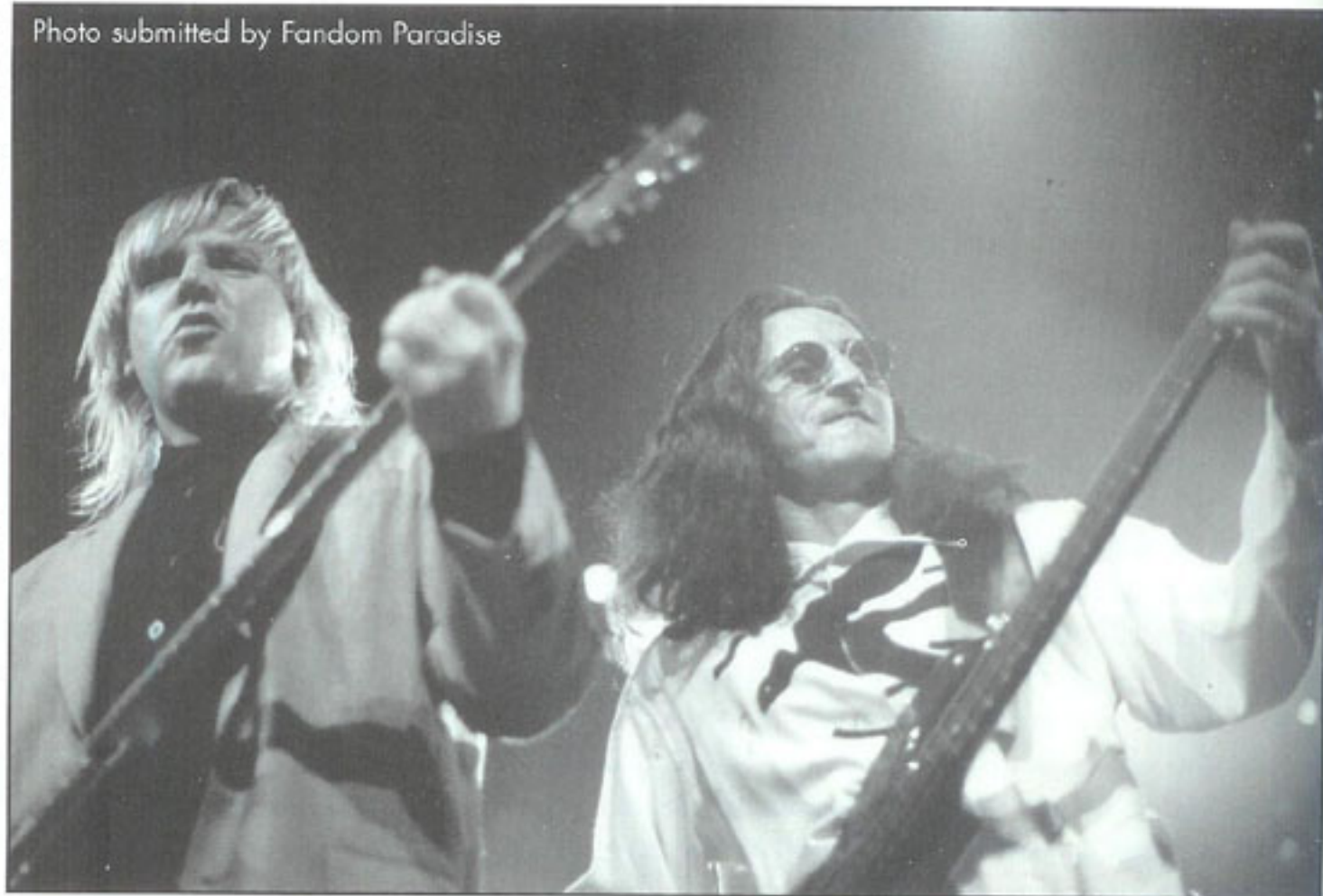
**S:** Right. Is there going to be some CD-ROM on the Test For Echo release?

**G:** We're working on a CD-ROM right now that is probably going to take another year to complete.

**S:** Perhaps with the live album?

**G:** Ahh, I don't know if it will coincide with the live album or not. It probably will be around the same time period. But this is a very big project that we've been working on for awhile and will continue to work on. A total retrospective

Photo submitted by Fandom Paradise



CD-ROM.

**S:** Would like to let you know that we are still running our petition to get Rush to Rockford here. I know you played here, what, not since '79. We gathered 3000 that we handed off and we've got more coming. If not this leg, perhaps the next.

**G:** Well, that's great. I appreciate that.

**S:** There is a big hot-bed of fans here...

**G:** Well thank them for me. I appreciate that.

**S:** I'll pass that along to everybody. Well thanks, Geddy, for your time. Say, you do get our issues do you not?

**G:** Yes, I do.

**S:** Excellent. Do you get to read them?

**G:** I do. Keep it up.

**S:** Well, this ones going to be the best yet. We're proud of it. And we can't wait to see you on tour.

**G:** Thanks for your support.

**S:** Tell Neil he's next on our hit list.

**G:** (Chuckle) Alright.

**S:** Thanks! Bye!

**G:** Bye-bye!





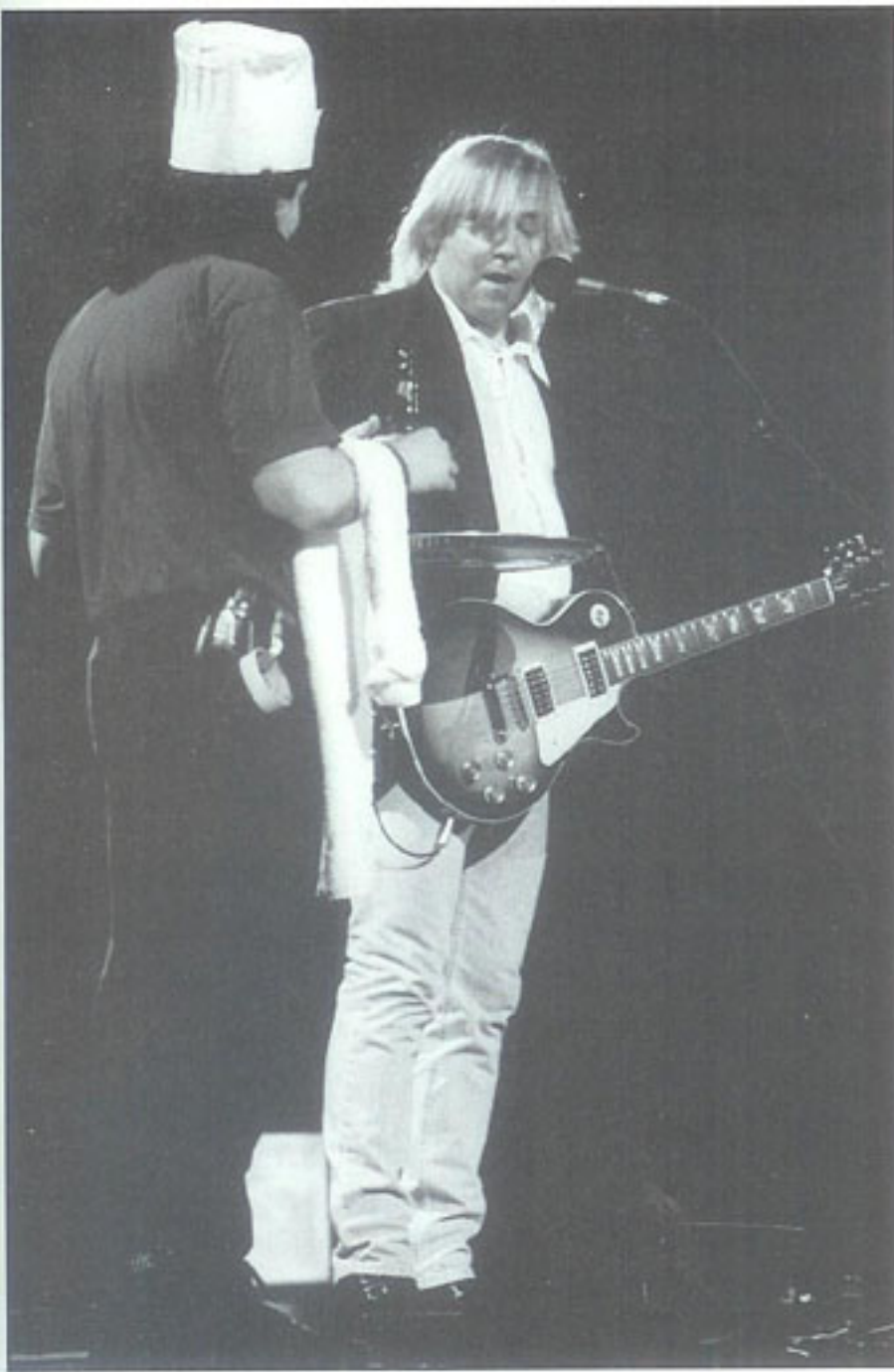


Photo by Justin Zivojinovich

# ASK BIG AL

*Saturday Night Live? Would you guys do it?*

Rick Iwanicki, Coldwater, MI

We were requested to play on the last tour, but it seemed a bit of a problem in terms of scheduling.

*4) Assuming you make another solo album someday, will you have any tracks with YOU on lead vocals? Any chance of doing any Victor songs on tour with Rush?*

Mark Wick, Fond Du Lac, WI

Rush only plays Rush songs on tour, and if I learn to sing like Geddy or Edwin, then MAYBE I'll try singing lead.

*6) I have heard rumors that some or all of the band members made cameo appearances in the movie "Strange Brew." Is there any truth to this or were you offered roles? Or is this just wishful thinking?!*

No. We did not appear, nor were we asked.

*8) Will we see the return of the vacuum the next tour?*

Perhaps a blender or small espresso machine.

*9) Have you ever played Hamer guitars in concert? What is your criteria for selecting an instrument first and foremost?*

No. I choose an instrument based on the quality of workmanship and sound. Some, like the Signature, sound great but the workmanship requires a compromise. Others, like the PRS, require no compromise at all.

*1) Back in the early 80's, what was the bands infatuation with the David Lynch movie "Eraserhead." (i.e. wearing buttons, shirts and posters in the recording studio?) You even went as far as putting "Henry Spencer and Baby" in the liner notes of the "Permanent Waves" LP.*

Jerry Brown, Jacksonville, FL

"Eraserhead" was the current flavour of the month motion picture we were watching at the time. Henry's bizarre world was one that we could relate to, and he, as well as baby, became our mascots for the record as well as the tour.

*2) a) Will Rush release any more live video tapes and/or "collections?" b) Will we ever see the return in concert of the Howard Roberts guitars, or the Hentor 355? c) Are you making it to Seattle this time??*

Duane Rubinwits, Seattle, WA

a) Yes. No. Well probably. b) Unlikely. c) Yes. Seattle is scheduled for the latter part of the tour due to unavailability of the venue this fall.

*3) Has Rush ever been asked to be the musical guest on*

WRITE TO:  
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