



INSIDE:
the
BIG AL
Special!

VICTOR



**The Alex Lifeson
Interview**



**Bernie Dexter
Interview**

**the
DexTERS**





the Alex Lifeson INTERVIEW

The Snowdog Raps with CyberSteve

Steve: Hello?

Alex: Hi Steve, Hi it's Alex.

S: Hi Alex!

A: How ya doing? I know I'm a little early is that okay?

S: Oh, that's alright.

A: I have to get out and do my Christmas shopping.

(laughter) We just finished working last night at about midnight. I'm trying to catch up on the last ten weeks of missed opportunities to get my Christmas shopping done.

S: You've been so busy in the studio now working on the new project...

A: Yeah.

S: Well, so good to hear from you. I have a bunch of questions for you and I want to focus on **Victor**. It's a great album. **We love it!**

A: Oh great! Thanks!

S: After all these years, how does it feel to have such a great solo project under your belt? We've been hearing rumors since **Signals**...

A: Yeah, well it's great to have finally done it. It's been difficult. You know what it's been like for us, on the road or in the studio almost constantly for the last twenty years. And to have a couple months, or a few months off or even a long break like we did after **A Show of Hands** - I think we had about seven months off before we started working on **Presto**. That was the longest break we'd ever had and it still wasn't long enough to do a solo project, as I've learned. I spent ten months working on **Victor** and I worked on it almost every day of that period, certainly the last three months I did work on it every day. So that was the kind of time requirement involved.

S: Did you lay down all the guitars, bass, keys and drums also for the demos?

A: For the demos I did, yeah. I just used the drum machine,

programming, etc. and completed the record that way. I had somebody local come in and do some vocals on a few of the songs just to get an idea of how they'd work. But other than that I did demos of everything and once I completed the record in demo stage I started re-recording everything.

S: Neat. Were you using your PRS on this album?

A: I used a lot of guitars, but primarily the PRS.

S: Cool. **Bernie Dexter** told me you really cranked it up at the listening party ... *(laughter from Alex)* ... did you break any eardrums?

A: Well, those guys all came by the studio one night after they finished work and I was mixing at the time, coming to the end of the mixing stage. They dropped by with some Tequila and some beer and we sat around just gabbing for awhile. Then I played for them what I had the pre-mastered mixes for. We went into one of the other studios at McClear and cranked it. I mean it was **WAY** too loud.

S: Bernie said it was eleven...*(more laughter)*

A: Now, it was on like, 14... It was **too** loud. It wasn't even enjoyable to listen to but we were kind of vibed up and we had fun anyway.

S: Sounds like the first Rush show I saw back in '78, that loud...

A: Yeah, close to that!

S: I hear a lot of influences, **Soundgarden**, even some distant **Cure** to **Ultravox** especially on **Mr. X** and **Victor**...

A: Yeah..

S: What was your inspiration for **Victor**? It's a very dark, gloomy story. What is that based on?

A: Well, first of all, I thought it would be fun to do a song where I actually didn't play guitar. I was in the studio just



messing around with some keyboard stuff, in a groove, and musically wrote the song fairly quickly. I thought it would be interesting to do spoken word over it and perhaps read a poem. I have a book of **W. H. Auden's** collected poems and I opened the book to Victor just by accident. I read through the poem, which is actually quite long, I've condensed it for the song. I thought that it suited the record perfectly. It really took what I was talking about lyrically to an extreme. That of, having fallen in love and having this deep wonderful feeling and turning it into something that brings you to murder.

S: *At the End* had a very similar feel to it...

A: *At the End* deals more with the loss of wanting to live because of loneliness. It just occurred to me with *At the End*, you know I'm at an age now where my parents are getting older, certainly, obviously, and a lot of my friends, their parents are dying, and I just thought that you're with a person your whole life and you make such a deep connection with that person and suddenly they're gone, how do you deal with that? Some people move on and others never really get out of it and it painted such a sad picture to me. The music, which actually my son and I co-wrote...

S: Really?...

A: Yeah, Adrian had already written the basic melody of that song or at least the chordal progression...

S: Was he playing on any of it?

A: Yeah, oh yeah, it's his programming on it. Then I just added some more keyboards and obviously guitars. But there was a really sad, haunting quality to that song musically and I thought that dealing with the issue of loneliness really suited that sound.

S: Interesting. Dalbello's vocals on *Start Today* are just phenomenal, please comment on that...

A: Oh she's *fantastic*! When I had just started mixing, I had earmarked *Start Today* for a female's voice and she was in the studio finishing up her record and we bumped into each other and I asked her if she'd come in and have a listen to a track and consider singing on it. She came in, had a listen, we went over lyrics, and said "Well, yeah, sure I'll do it. I'll be back next week, I've got a couple things to do here and I'll come in and do it then." She came in and said, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" I said, "Just sing, you've got a great voice, just sing!" She said, "No, no, I want more specific direction. Do you want me to put the emphasis on this word, do you want me to backphrase this syllable, what is the character saying? Is she angry, plaintive, what is it exactly that you want?" Of course then I said, "Okay, well, this *IS* what I want." We went through every line and she gave me a couple of variables to choose from. But her performance on that is great and she really translated the essence of that song...

S: She certainly did, and I can't help but say and we've heard this from various people that have heard the advance that there's this striking similarity in a couple of lines to early

Geddy circa 1975...

A: Yeah, well, I never really noticed that...

S: Is it something that maybe as a fan, or out here in the public hearing it, is it something we're noticing more...

A: Well, I make the connection of her face singing those words so every time I hear it I can picture Lisa in the studio. That's my connection. Afterwards, a lot of people did mention that there are certain lines that she delivers in the same range that Ged used to years ago. Of course I do hear that similarity now. It certainly wasn't something... I mean I didn't say "Oh, try to sing like Ged" I would never do something like that. But I do see that *similarity* now.

S: Obviously, most of the album is aggressive and has this gothic, moodiness throughout, until you get to *Shut Up Shuttin' Up*... then it's just this crazy tune! Did Charlene write the lines to that song?

A: Well, Charlene and her friend Esther. Esther, ahhh, like any conversation you have with Esther, takes the dominant stance. I wanted the record to be dark right from the beginning before there were even any lyrics. I wanted to create a dark, moody record. I just thought at some point I needed to lighten it up a little bit. The song itself is very quirky, that funky sort of feel to it and quirkiness with the parts that are in it. Then I got the girls to come down and start blabbing away about silly little things about men and really what the song ends up doing is, we had fun with it, but it's important to the whole album in that it highlights the silly little arguments and resentments and little stupid things that go on in a relationship that add up and culminate into a big problem and cause tension and stress even though they seem so obtuse. But it was tough getting them to do that. They were very, very nervous. I had to crack open a couple bottles of wine and get them a little lubricated before they could really let it flow and we spent about seven hours on that song with them going through just tossing ideas out and trying to come up with something that worked...

S: Yeah, it's hilarious!

A: Yeah, by the end of seven hours I *couldn't* get them to shut up!

S: You were **REALLY** yelling...

A: Yeah, I **MEANT** it! (laughter)

S: I think my favorite track is the single *Promise*, it's the perfect single and I hear a lot of the *Rush blend* in there. How did that track come about?

A: Bill Bell and I, both worked on that track. We co-wrote that track. Like anything, you just start playing and it starts to take shape and develops into something. Of course in the middle section, yes, it is structurally quite Rush-like and even some of the melodies are quite Rush-like, but those are elements that I bring to Rush so I think when you listen to a song like *Promise*, I think that's more me than it is Rush.

S: *Right*. This album is really going to show to a lot of

people what you do bring to Rush, as if they don't already know, obviously. But it's a great track, a shining tune on the album, I love it. Has this album created more excitement for the eminent return to the Rush collective?

A: I'm not sure. The record doesn't come out for a few more weeks, the single was released to radio a couple weeks ago. It was the most added track to radio in America in the last two weeks. So it's taken off in a way that I never, ever, ever expected. I was hoping to get a decent response to it and that it would provide a good lead in to the album. But I didn't expect this kind of response. It's been very strong and very positive.

S: It's gotten quite a bit of airplay, so I've heard...

A: Yeah, we haven't had anything from **Rush** in awhile because of this long break and the relative shortness of the last tour perhaps it does fill a void in some ways for that but I hadn't really considered that.

S: What were Geddy and Neil's reactions to **Victor**?

A: Ummmm, also very positive. You know we talked a little bit about it. They gave me a pat on the back and said "Well done." But we've moved on to the current project, which is the new Rush record. So we didn't get into it much, probably about as much as I talked to Neil about his **Burning For Buddy** experience.

S: Right.

A: I did this for myself, I didn't feel a dissatisfaction with what was happening in **Rush**. This was just an opportunity for me to do something to set a goal and a challenge for myself and to see it through.

S: And you had the time, which is great...

A: I had the time and you know, that is important but, not solely. I tend to be a bit of a lazy person. I start a lot of projects and I don't finish them. With this I thought that if I start this, I'm going to have to finish it. I was probably most proud when I did complete it. I knew I had achieved this goal that I set for myself. It was a lot harder than I expected it to be. There were a lot of responsibilities that I didn't experience before. You know with Rush we all share certain aspects of making a record. For instance, Neil will work on the cover and get that all together and Ged will work on the videos. He likes doing that sort of thing. So we all take on different jobs. But with **Victor**, I did everything. I recorded it, I mixed it, I flew down to Portland for the mastering. I flew down myself. I worked on the cover...

S: So this is a baby for you...

A: Yeah, very much so. It was very good for me. It was a maturing experience and I'm really proud of it.

S: It's been a long time coming.

A: If I finished the record and didn't get a deal and it wasn't going to be released, it wouldn't have bothered me. I paid for the whole thing. I paid all the guys that played on it. I paid for everything. It was **ALL MINE!** And I did it. So if it

wasn't released and no one heard it, it wouldn't have bothered me.

S: It wouldn't have changed anything.

A: No, it wouldn't have.

S: That's neat. Did you purposely intend to make each song different? I noticed that it goes in and out of *different styles*...

A: I suppose subconsciously I did. With this record, and with the way I do things generally, I'm not a good planner in the long term. I knew that I wanted to have eleven or twelve songs on the record and I knew I wanted them to be good. So that was really my criteria there. Depending on the day or the mood, things happened.

S: How was it working with **Les Claypool**?

A: Well, I called Les because I thought when I started the project that I would like to have people come in and do whole sections of the record. So I talked to Les about coming in to play bass on the whole record. I was going to send him tapes. They had just finished their record and were going on the road, off to Australia, then back to America. He said he'd love to do it if we could organize the scheduling. He could come up for four or five days if he had it and we could go through the songs. I said "Great!" and we left it at that. Once I started recording and got the drums on, I redid the guide bass guitar parts and I had fun playing bass. I thought, "Well, I'm going to play bass! It's my record, I'm gonna do whatever I want. Nyah!" So I ended up playing bass on a lot of the record but I had earmarked **Big Dance** for Les, definitely. I knew that he would take it outside of where the song was going. My bass parts were pretty pedestrian. They were only guides and I knew he'd come in and do something totally different. And he did just that. He really did take the song outside, melodically and rhythmically.

S: Yeah, it's a phenomenal song.

A: We basically ran through the song three times and he said, "Well, that's good for me!" (Alex mimics Les) And that was it. But we'd gotten what I wanted to get. He's a very spontaneous player and it's those early ideas for him that I think really shine.

S: **Primus** was a great opening band for as many shows as we saw them. They do a great version of **YYZ** that was really kind of neat seeing them do.

A: Well, it was them that got us to bring back parts from **Hemispheres**.

S: Is that so?

A: Yeah, they would jam at soundcheck with all this stuff and we'd stand at the side of the stage and laugh. We got very close with them and hung out a lot and they said, "You know, you should bring some of that stuff back, it was so cool, it's what we grew up with..." So we figured, "Yeah, ok!" We started messing around in sound check with bits and pieces from **Hemispheres** and then brought it back on the last tour.

S: So that was it...

A: It was from them.

S: That was the little mouse that started it..

A: They talked us into it.

S: That's neat. Hey, the **Orbit Room**, how did all that come about? That's been quite a little attraction as far as the buzz among Rush fans. It's become almost a must stop for everybody that visits Toronto.

A: (chuckle) Well, I've known Tim for about 25 years. We go way back to when the band was playing bars in Toronto. Tim and I always had this dream about getting together and opening a place and doing something with it. He's been in that end of that industry for a long time. Probably as long as Rush has been going. At the end of the last tour I had, for my own friends, a little end of tour party at Tim's place. His place was real small, capacity about 35 people. We had it packed in there. We had a really good time and I didn't get out of there until about six in the morning. I came back the next day to help out with some of the mess we left. (Laughter) We started talking about looking for a place and doing something. He had another club for a couple of years and was quite happy with it but I kind of talked him into expanding. We started looking at some properties and found a restaurant that was closing down in what we felt was a really good location. We opened up, renovated, did a bunch of stuff and we just celebrated our first anniversary about three or four weeks ago.

S: Yeah, our friend Kevin up in Toronto told us about that.

A: Yeah, he's there all the time.

S: He's our connection there. He tries to keep us in touch with all the late breaking news.

A: Well then you know that I was playing with the **Dexters** primarily on Thursday nights when I had the time.

S: Correct.

A: When things got really busy in the summer with my record I didn't go down to the club for a couple of months probably...

S: Oh really? Well you were all consumed...

A: I was, absolutely. Every waking moment of the day had something to do with my record. So I sort of got out of that habit until I finished in September, then went down and played a few more Thursdays and then we started this new Rush record. But it's really a great thing. I love going down there. The vibe in the club is really good. We have live music every night. Actually, we just changed Mondays to a DJ, just for some variety for awhile. But other than that it's live music and there aren't too many places here where you can hear live music every night. The **Dexters** are a fabulous band. They're all great players and they have a lot of fun. They're all brilliant musicians in their own right. They go down and play at the **Orbit** because they want to and they like to. So it's a real fun thing and I never get up and jam or do that sort of thing and with the **Dexters**, I can't wait to do it.

S: That is really neat. Oh, and by the way, we're going to

try to distribute the **Dexter** CD that's coming out.

A: Oh great!

S: Yeah, we've been talking to Bernie about that. You know, in the press release it says you do a version of the **Jackie Gleason Show** song? Do you play on that?

A: I don't play on it, Bernie plays on it and it's one of the best songs that Bernie does.

S: I love that song!

A: Bernie,... Bernie is my hero. Bernie is a great, great guitarist. He's so variable in his playing. He can play anything and he loves playing. He's such a wonderful person to be around. There's such a great energy to that guy.

S: He's really been helpful. Like I said, we want to help distribute it here and he's been a great help.

A: Yeah, he's wonderful. He's one of my favorite people.

S: The song selection on the CD is really neat. I mean, **Green Onions**,...

A: It's a lot of fun stuff.

S: There's some really fun songs on there, I can't wait to see it. There's also some CD-ROM on there I hear...

A: Yeah, um hmm, my little contribution to it is we do a tour of the **Orbit Room** and talk a little bit about it.

S: We're looking forward to it.

A: Yeah, me too. Actually I think they finished it last week and it's all ready to go.

S: Hey, **Edwin** is quite the talent. His voice almost reminds me of a **Metallica** type voice. I'm not that familiar with **I Mother Earth** but now that I've heard Victor I want to go check it out. How did you end up picking Edwin? Is he a friend?

A: **I Mother Earth** opened the Toronto show, which was the last show of the last tour. As I was working on the project, at a certain point, I began thinking of people I wanted to get on the record. I had a listen to **I Mother Earth's** last record and I thought that his voice would really suit it well. Actually, Bill brought it up. He said, "You know, what about Edwin?" I thought that it would work out great and I knew that Edwin was a fan of the band and he'd grown up with Rush's music. I know that they enjoyed playing with us as nervous as they were that night. They were writing their new record so Edwin was working all day till about 7:00 at night then he'd come up here about 8:00, and we'd work till 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. Then he'd be back with **I Mother Earth** the next day. So he really put in a great effort for the week and a half that we were together. We've become actually quite close since then. He's a very interesting person. I sense a particular moodiness to him but at the same time, a very definite sense of direction. When he came in he was open to ideas and suggestions. I think he was a little bit nervous when we started the project. I think he was afraid he couldn't live up to what my demands would be. But I'm a very easy going person and I think I made him feel quite relaxed early on. We ended up having a lot of fun. His takes varied from as many as three to as little as one.

Big Dance he sang through once and I was happy with it.

S: That's it, one take? Wow.

A: **Don't Care** was the same thing. A couple of takes and he got all the nastiness that I wanted in that song.

S: That's a very strong song. For the first song on the album it's great and has that 'nastiness' as you say. I've heard rumors that you're picking up the doubleneck again. Is this true?

A: I think I might have picked it up to put it in it's case. (Laughter) Ummm, no not really.

S: Okay, okay...

A: I brought it out for the last tour...

S: Okay, I won't pursue that. Can we expect the next Rush album to carry over some of this more aggressive energy? It seems there's been a progression since **Presto** to go in that direction. In interviews throughout the past five years you've stated that's been kind of what you've been wanting to do and you keep on taking it further and further. Do you anticipate it going even further? More guitar to the forefront?

A: Well yeah. I'd like to. We've experimented a lot with keyboards, since they were first available, but over the last couple of records, certainly the last one, the guitar has come back to the forefront. Not only the guitar but there's more of a three piece feel to what we're writing.

S: Correct.

A: With the material we've written now, with this new record, to me, it's hard to tell because it's very subjective. I'm so inside these songs right now it's hard for me to separate them and think of them individually. There are some very, very strong melodies and there are some very, very strong, heavy, riffy parts. I also think we've locked in on a particular feel. There's a swing to this record and a groove to the stuff that we've written. I shouldn't say record, it's not recorded yet. It's very promising at this point. I hope that we're going to be very happy and I think that we will be happy. I sound tentative only because it's the safe thing to do. In a lot of ways I think we have some of the best material we've ever written.

S: Oh that sounds great! I hear you're going back to the way you used to do it. Are you recording out of your home? Are you doing a lot of things there?

A: Well, no. I did my stuff out of the home but the Rush stuff wouldn't work out of my home. We're not going back to the way we did things so much as just looking at a different approach to putting it together. I don't really see the point in going back to something we did before, whether it's a musical thing or a technique of recording. We still set ourselves up for recording the same way we have over the last few records which is a technique that I think we're developing and making more efficient.. With two Virgos in the band we can't help that. We have to be organized and always try to be more organized. (Laughter) But we're looking at working at it a little bit differently and putting the emphasis more on certain aspects. You know over the years we've tended to be quite surgical

about the way we put records together. We would spend hours, and hours, and hours on very short 15-20 second parts making sure every note was dead on the beat and everything was very, very tight and that became a trademark of Rush's music. We're a lot more relaxed now. I think there's a new maturity in our writing and the way we approach working. Especially after taking this long break with everyone having the opportunity to go out and do other things and to live life outside of Rush for a short period of time. It was very good for us. We came back with a great enthusiasm for this record we're working on now. I think it's really going to show. We're not so concerned with that tightness that we've always strived for in the past. I think the record's going to be a lot looser. Consequently, it's going to feel like it's got a better groove and swing to it.

S: That leads me to this next question. I've always known that you've had this **phenomenal** sense of humor before it was apparent or even visible in your performance. One thing I've noticed that didn't really start until **Presto**, well, actually **Signals**, with some of the multimedia, but it seems that you're always the ice breaker on stage as far as some of your antics. Where did all of this start? Suddenly there's a vacuum on stage, or arrows flying about....

A: I guess you get older and you feel a little more confident, a little looser and you take things less seriously in some ways. Other things, more seriously. I've always been an outgoing person. I like to have fun. I like to laugh and I like to make other people laugh. Geddy and Neil both have great senses of humor as well. Together, we spend most of our time laughing. That's the key I think to our longevity. We like to be together because we have fun together. Perhaps more recently those things have come out on stage because after years of looking at it very seriously and projecting a particular kind of image, not that I think Rush has an image, but being serious on stage....

S: That is a perception, I think, among some sections of your fandom and admirers that I sense....

A: Yeah, well, in a lot of cases most of the audience is too far away to see what really goes on on stage.

S: This is true.

A: Every night we have a good time and we have fun in sometimes quite subtle ways that maybe the audience doesn't pick up on. Over the years you just feel more relaxed with it and you want to just spice it up a little bit. Our music is restrictive in a lot of ways. We set a standard for ourselves and we try to aim for that level with each show. That can make things kind of stiff and stale after awhile, in some respects. We like to think that a bad night for us is a good night for most other bands. That's what we strive for and we really want to put on a great performance. We want to keep it true to our records. We want to keep it consistent from one night to the next. But you've got to mix it up a little bit and have some fun with it oth-

erwise you become very, very bored with the whole thing. Increasingly, on the road it's more and more difficult. It's boring as hell. In the early years it was the most exciting thing I could imagine but later on you're away from the people you want to be with most, for most of your life. You have this terrific release of energy for 2 hours and the other 22 hours are spent waiting for those 2 hours. So it's as good or as bad as you make it.

S: So it helps to loosen up on stage. I did notice on the **Counterparts** tour that a lot of songs did vary from show to show. A little more solo here, or Neil would go on a couple more rolls...

A: That's right..

S: The reaction I got was that it made everybody more happy. It was fun and the nuances made every show different.

A: It makes it more interesting and therefore you enjoy it more and the audience feels that. If you're up there and you're bored, people are going to notice that right away. Then you come off the stage feeling guilty that you didn't put on the kind of performance you should have. People are paying good money to come and see you and if you're not putting out 100% then you've disappointed them and in turn disappointed yourself. We've always been aware of that and been very careful not to do that. We really put full effort in every show that we do. Even if you're not feeling good or for whatever reason, physically or emotionally, you get on stage and you still do your best, always.

S: This is true. As a matter of fact, I recall when I guess all three of you had colds, was it **Roll the Bones**? Out on the East Coast. You were all troopers. You just went through it...

A: Oh, I remember some shows where we had the flu! Both Neil and I threw up during the course of the set.

S: Oh geez...

A: We were so sick. I mean, I could barely stand.

S: You had to cancel one of the shows on that swing because of it, as I recall. It was amazing. It was apparent from my vantage point that you were going over and blowing your nose, agghhh!

A: Ahh, that's nothin'.

S: But the show didn't suffer.

A: No, lots of people work when they're sick. Yeah, the only time it's going to put us down is if you can't actually stand up or if it affects Geddy's throat. That's the only time we've cancelled shows is when he physically can't sing. Where he's got laryngitis...He went through a bout a number of years ago when he had a lot of throat problems. He had an infection that he just couldn't shake. You stay in one hotel room that's too humid, the next hotel room is too dry, it's cold outside, it's hot inside. It's tough on you physically sometimes.

S: You know, on the **Counterparts** tour, I noticed a lot more families. It's a very interesting new phase. I guess it's a phenomenon that's ultimately going to happen. What do you

think of that? It's neat that the Gen Xers are into Rush just as much as the Baby Boomers.

A: It's very gratifying. To look out at the audience and see kids in their early teens as well as adults in their early or mid forties. A Rush audience is a very broad audience. We've been very lucky in that our audience has really been inside the band. We've done stuff on records that wasn't right. But we've learned from it and that's the important thing. There are songs that I cringe when I hear them. The great thing is that our audience let's us know that too. People listen to our, when I say people, I mean Rush fans, listen to our records and dissect them and they'll say, "Yeah, this is great, this is good, this sucks. But I'm gonna get the next record and see where you guys go." And that's the way it's always been with us. I think there are very few, if any, other bands that have that kind of relationship with their audience.

S: True. As a collective I think Rush is the longest running band with the same line-up in history.

A: Yeah...

S: It's so phenomenal because as Neil has said, it's been the soundtrack to our lives, for a lot of us. Definitely an inspiration. Ahhh, I do have a question here which is a little off the track...You know Neil has been answering a lot of questions for the backstage club for many years and we've been working with them for awhile. I was wondering if we could start an "Ask Big Al" column in **A Show of Fans**?

A: (pause) Ummm...

S: Basically what we want to do is ask four or five questions an issue.

A: Yeah sure, I could do that.

S: We'll send it to **Anthem** of course.

A: Yeah.

S: I don't know how you feel about it. We don't want to impose and obviously we want to exist by the fans and for the fans, independently. That's been our whole motivation. But I think it would be kind of neat to have a little thing like that in there. How would you feel about that?

A: Yeah, I don't mind the idea of it. I don't want to say that I'm too busy to do something like that because it probably won't take too much time. *Let's give it a whirl and see how it goes.*

S: Well, we will. Obviously I'm not going to send you fifty questions but okay I'll send that with the next issue.

A: Okay.

S: Excellent. I don't have too many more questions. I'm about ready to wrap it up. I really appreciate all this time you're giving me.

A: Oh sure...

S: Did you get the new issue of **A Show of Fans**?

A: I haven't seen the new one, no.

S: You can either get it at the **Orbit Room** or at **Anthem**.

A: When it comes to the office I always get them.

S: Oh excellent...

A: It's just a busy time of year so maybe they just didn't get around to it. Do they have the issue there?

S: Yes. Kim has them.

A: Okay, well I'm stopping by the office today so maybe I'll pop in and have a look.

S: Hey, kind of a similar question, it's going to be twenty years since **2112**. I'm predicting that the next Rush album is going to be this explosion type of thing...

A: Wow, I hope you're right. (Laughter)

S: I'm really looking forward to that. Hey, we're also starting a petition drive to get you guys to come to Rockford. I don't think you've been to Rockford since...

A: Rockford, Illinois?

S: Yeah--for a long time..

A: A **long**, long time.

S: So we've got a petition going so hopefully the powers that be can schedule it in.

A: Well we haven't discussed touring yet. We want to get this record done...

S: It is eminent though, is it not?

A: Well, yeah, I think it's a given. We just haven't talked about how we want to do it or when. I think the days of us going on the road for eight or ten months are gone.

S: Were you pleased with the way the **Counterparts Tour** schedule was segmented?

A: In terms of scheduling, yeah, it was easy. I thought that we were just getting on a roll by the time the tour ended. We were playing our best by the end of that tour. That's usually the case. I think it takes us a couple months where we feel the band is playing at it's peak. We'll run on that peak for a few months and then the curve starts to go down after that as you get tired and worn out from the rigors of touring. Four months, I think is too short. I think we need to do a longer tour than that. We can't get to enough places in four months. But I'd like to think that, and we haven't discussed anything, but I'd like to think that we'll do the next tour in segments where we'll go out for a few months and maybe take a month or two off, go out for a couple more months, take a month or two off, go out for a couple more months and do it that way. The last tour we recorded, I don't know, forty shows or something. Our intention is to go out on the next tour and record that tour as well, then follow up this next studio album with a live album.

S: Oh excellent!

A: That's again, that's not written in stone. That's just a tentative plan.

S: Tentative, yes. Would there be a video in store possibly?

A: Quite possibly, sure. We haven't really discussed these things and I really want you to **underline** that it's tentative. I made the mistake of saying that we were thinking about doing a Twentieth Anniversary Special...

S: Yes, we heard all about that. It was a big, publicized

thing.

A: I shouldn't have said that cause then I started hearing it all over the place. When is this thing coming out? What are you doing exactly? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.... And after we discussed where we were going, we decided, why play up this nostalgia? Rush is not a band that's finished and wants to mark a chronological period by something. We're still an active band. We're still working. We're still planning for the future. So until we decide to pack it in, I don't think we would do anything like that.

S: That's so great to hear because I know on the **Counterparts** tour you were so active on stage that it seemed like a flashback to ten years ago. You had so much energy.

A: Well, I had fun. It was the first time I said anything on stage in twenty years.

S: Yes, Mr. Fabio...

A: Yeah, I just felt a lot more relaxed. Knowing that the tour was as short as it was and we were going to survive it in pretty good shape it made everything more fun really.

S: It was a great tour and we're really looking forward to the next. That's about it. I guess I'll wrap it up. I appreciate all your time. I really enjoyed speaking with you, Alex.

A: Thanks, Steve.

S: We'll be plugging **Victor** here, and we look forward to the **Dexter's CD**.

A: Great!

S: And of course, the next Rush...Hey, say "Hi" to Ged and Neil and tell them they're **next** on our hit list!

A: Okay, have a merry Christmas!

S: Have a great holiday!

A: Thanks!

S: Bye, bye!

A: Bye.



**No, that's not Jay Leno . . .
it's Mr. Brain Al!**

2001