

By now everyone knows about Rush, so we can probably skip the preliminaries, except to say that their second British tour sold out as completely as the first did last summer. The release of "A Farewell To Kings" increased and strengthened their already fanatical following. It brought from them a gentler and more lyrical side than their previous albums had displayed, and although their live performance is as decisively heavy as ever, it does at least indicate the direction which the music is now taking.

As Geddy Lee and Neil Peart entered Alex Lifeson's hotel room, still visibly suffering from the after-effects of a late-night visit from Lizzy's Brian Robertson, the best method was obviously to pounce straight away before they all assumed a horizontal posture and started snoring. Geddy, however, was quite happy to talk, though whether he was actually asleep behind his large dark-tint glasses is a matter for conjecture.

For the information of those who still don't know, Geddy plays bass and sings in a high, eerie voice, quite belied by his normal speaking voice. In addition he has a set of Moog Taurus bass pedals and a Mini-Moog. Rush as a band seem to load themselves with work: on stage they all play several instruments, and when they're not on stage they are travelling to the next gig or recovering

from the last. Wouldn't it at least be easier musically if they recruited a fourth member to handle keyboards?

"Well yeah," said Geddy, "but we have fun with just the three of us and we really like the way we work together. We don't want anybody else. It's a question of music too. What's going to happen? Is our music going to continue growing as a three-piece or shall we get

another member? We say No, let's try to pull it off ourselves, put the work-load on ourselves, try to bring these extra textures in somehow, as well as bettering ourselves as musicians. We're just hoping to create a more original trio sound."

And so to the Taurus pedals. How do they fit in? "Those bass pedals are great — they've got four pre-set bass sounds and one variable high-end syn-

thesizer sound, which is great for a bass-player. You can play a bass run and you can co-ordinate a high-end run to go along with it. It's like having another person." Although he doesn't class himself as a proper keyboard player — yet — he has recently acquired an Oberheim 8-voice polyphonic synthesizer. It isn't being used on stage so far, but Geddy sets it up in a side-room at every gig and finds time to practice on it for a couple of hours every day.

"I was going to pick up a Polymoog, but there were certain things about it I didn't like. First of all it feels very percussive. I think it's made more for a real keyboard player — the keys are pressure-sensitive, which is not really necessary for me because I'm not piano-trained. And although you have an unlimited amount of notes that you can play on, eight notes is fine for me. And there's the fact that on the Oberheim each voice, each note, goes to its own module, its own oscillators. It has a really rich sound, and I didn't think the Polymoog could compare in the richness of tone. I've had nightmares with my Mini-Moog, keeping it in tune, stabilizing it on the road, and I thought wow! if I get this Polymoog and it starts doing the same thing I'll go crazy! So far I've had this Oberheim in three different countries and I barely ever have to tune it. . . .

"But the number one feature of the Oberheim is the computer memory. You can pre-set sixteen sounds in the programme, and at the touch of a button you can recall that sound. I'm busy working on some really bizarre noises. There are all kinds of things you can add to it. There's a cassette you can interface with it, or you can programme the complete sixteen-oscillator sound into the cassette and play it back through the machine." — He has also been busy on the bass guitar front — in particular a new weapon to swell his armoury of Rickenbackers.

"It's a new model of the Ricky bass they've just put out this year called the 4002. I don't know if it's available in England, but it's like their competition with the new wave of basses (I told you not to mention the new wave in this issue . . . Ed.). It's got an ebony fretboard, a natural wood finish, low impedance pick-ups differently positioned, and an added input: it's got one normal socket, one for the Rick-O-Sound, plus one for putting the bridge pick-up straight through. It's their expensive model. It does sound

RUSH'N AROUND

Peter Douglas brings the equipment roll up to date . . . and all without waking up the boys



quite different from the 4001. . . ."

It was time for Geddy to retire gracefully and to slap Alex into wakefulness in preparation for more axe-related questions. A strong cup of black coffee later he began to explain why he has changed from Marshall to Hiwatt, though as before with a stack of four 100 watt heads.

"It's more controllable. That's mainly what I like about it. I tried using the Hiwatt heads with the Marshall cabinets but it wasn't a very good match, I didn't think, so I went over to the Hiwatt cabinets, and it's a much richer, fatter, thicker sound than the Marshalls. Anyway I find that the tonal response on the Hiwatt is a little more accurate than it is on the Marshall. On the Marshall some of the things didn't work: from volume 1 to 9 nothing happened, then when you hit 10 it all kicked out. And the bass wasn't there. It may have been the heads that I had — and I did have them for a long time. But the difference between the two is radical."

Alex has also ditched most of his effects units since we last spoke with him. . . . "I've only got a Roland Chorus and a Roland Space Echo now. I got rid of the Electric Mistress. It was too noisy, too unreliable, and I got rid of the MXR analogue delay that I had. . . . I just got rid of all that little stuff. I find that you can be fairly versatile with the Chorus. You can get a nice combination of sounds. With the two Echoplexes and the Maestro unit and all the other stuff on the floor there was so much hiss and so much noise that I got really bugged by it. I thought that if I was getting new amplification I may as well get rid of those things. The Roland Echo is much cleaner than the Echoplex and there's no power loss. It does have one thing that I don't like: the motor goes in and out when you turn it on and off. And you get a *woooooaaaeeee* noise when you turn it on. You could avoid it by putting in a relay between the echo and normal settings. There's a little toggle switch on it, and I imagine you could put in a relay there and just leave the echo on all the time. But so far it hasn't really been a problem for me."

Alex too has been out shopping for guitars. His original Gibson double-neck was smashed in transit to New York, and he now sports a bright new white version of the guitar. His beloved 335, which he has owned since the beginning of the band in 1968, was damaged in the same accident, which is

why Alex was playing his 355 instead for most of the tour. For one song — "Closer To The Heart" — he uses a brand new Strat.

"I'm just getting used to it. It has DiMarzio pick-ups on it and it sounds pretty good. It doesn't sound like a Strat! . . . The new Gibson double-neck is much lighter. I don't know why — I don't think they've used different wood, or less of it, but it's a lot lighter and that makes a big difference. There's much better balancing on this one."

So far the large, amiable frame of drummer Neil Peart had been slumped peacefully in a corner. I prodded him with the Beat microphone, and he began: "Right now I'm getting a set of tympani. . . ." But where are you gonna put them, Neil? Is there room? You already seem to have more percussion than the entire London Symphony Orchestra.

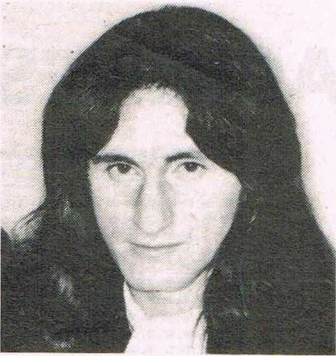
"I figured it out somehow — I hope it'll work! I'll get the tape measure out. I figure I've got room for them. I'm also using a Roto-tom and a timbale. You see, I don't go in too much for those because I've got all the things that Roto-toms are meant to replace. I have the Concert toms. Friends of mine that have the normal kit with a few Roto-toms find that they take the place of the Concert toms very well, but I *have* those things already, so when I hit the Roto-toms they disappoint me, because I'm expecting the same kind of sound that the real thing gives."

Does that mean that he now has everything that a percussionist could want — apart from tympani, of course? "Well it'll never be perfect, because I'd be bored then, I think. Things like bell-trees are pretty simple because they don't take any time to learn how to play — they're just a sound that I can stick in when the right place arrives. But the glockenspiel and the tubular bells are very much an on-going thing, and the longer we work with them the more we know about them."

Neil is in no way the typical let-them-damn-skins-have-it rock and roll drummer. As one third of a hard working outfit he could never get away with just playing the drums. "It changes the aspect for me when I go and play the bells because I'm dealing with melody instead of just rhythm."

Well, rock on, Quasimodo! But how about the lyrics? Neil writes most of them, and his voracious reading habits undoubtedly aid him in this. His tastes are extremely broad, and

RUSH EQUIPMENT LIST — EUROPEAN TOUR 1978



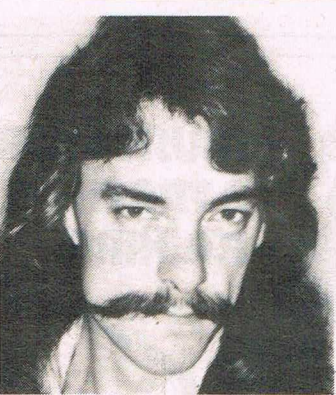
GEDDY LEE

1969 Fender Precision bass, 1974 Rickenbacker bass, 1978 Rickenbacker custom double-neck 4/12 string, Moog Taurus bass pedals, Mini-Moog, Oberheim synthesizer, 2 Sunn 2 x 15" cabinets, 2 Ampeg V4B bass cabinets, 2 Ampeg 250 watt SVT amplifier heads.



ALEX LIFESON

Gibson Les Paul, Gibson Custom double-neck 6/12-string, Gibson 355, Fender Stratocaster, Gibson Dove acoustic, Epiphone C060 classic, Gibson B45 acoustic, 3 Barcus Berry studio pre-amps, 4 Hiwatt 100 watt amplifiers and cabinets, 2 Fender Twin Reverbs, Roland Boss Chorus, Roland Space Echo, Maestro Phase Shifter, 3 Cry-Baby wah-wah pedals, 2 Morley volume pedals, 2 Maestro parametric filters, Electro-Harmonix power boost, Moog Taurus bass pedals, Tapco graphic equalizer, Tapco reverb unit.



NEIL PEART

Slingerland drum kit comprising 8" x 12", 9" x 13", 12" x 15", 16" x 18" tom-toms, 6", 8", 10", 12" Concert toms, 12" Roto-tom, 13" and 14" timbales, 3 14" snare drums, 2 24" x 14" bass drums, 12 cymbals, 1 set of temple blocks, 6 sets of wind chimes, 2 triangles, 1 set of tubular bells, 1 bell tree, 1 Slingerland glockenspiel, 2 drummer's thrones.

Operated from mixer

Mutron Phase III, MXR Phase 100, Roland RE-101 Space Echo, Eventide Harmonizer, Eventide phaser, Eventide digital delay.

a little coaxing persuaded him to tell me what they include. "I read a lot of non-fiction, and a lot of fiction, right from the bottom up — I like Agatha Christie novels, right up to Voltaire or Rousseau or Plato (*I said no new wave!* . . . Ed.). There's something to be gotten from all of those. Why people think the way they do — that's basically my big question."

Deep waters indeed. But then, Rush do take their work very seriously. They take it seriously enough for them to devote almost their whole time either touring or recording.

They've been on the road for virtually the last two years, and there's no sign of any rest on the immediate horizon.

"We figured things would get a little easier," sighed Alex, "and that we could afford to go at an easier pace — and it's been just the opposite. There's so much more to do, so many more people to worry about. It grows to the point where there's a lot to take care of, and travelling in the States you don't get that much sleep. . . ."

I tiptoed out of the door, switching off the light on my way.