

Rock 'n' roll Rush

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forms, opening up instrument cases, boxes of patch cords and microphone cables, and enormous yellow-and-silver custom-made crates, all stencilled "Rush Productions, Toronto", full of speakers and amplifiers. They'll be here for a couple of hours yet, before it's all loaded on a rented truck, and shipped off to the next gig.

In the deserted arrivals hall there are hugs and kisses. They leave quickly—time is short; *Lifeson, Lee* and *Peart* have just two days off. And then it's back on the road again.

Rush is not the best-known band in Canada by a long way. For a start, they play the sort of music that the local critics, without exception, hate: Heavy metal rock. Canadian radio stations play very little of it, writers off-handedly compare *Rush* to *Led Zeppelin* or *Black Sabbath* or *Uriah Heep* (three British groups pre-eminent in the idiom) and go on to write about "noise bands", "lack of subtlety", "primitive instrumental techniques", "screech-

ing vocals".

Most critics and most disc jockeys and radio programme directors are in their early thirties, of course—and nowhere does a generation gap evolve so quickly as it does in the world of rock. But whatever the critics say, whatever they play on the radio, the word gets out—by word-of-mouth, rumour, osmosis, or whatever—and the heavy metal bands are incredibly popular.

The *Rush* story is simple enough—and probably common enough. Three friends from suburban Willowdale at the north end of Toronto get together in high school, and drive their parents nuts with the noises they make down in the basement. After a while, they play a few gigs at the school, and all their friends say they're far out. Then they get ambitious, and join the union. Soon, they're deep in debt to the instrument store, and there's a battered truck to take the band and the gear to one-nighters in Oshawa, and Peterborough, and Delhi, and Midland; small-town Ontario where the kids are dying of boredom and where a band at the high school is the social event of the season.

By now, this particular trio has a

name—*Rush*, with its connotations of high-style good times, speedy energy, and sheer sassyness, seemed to be a good name for a band like that. No one knows who came up with it, now—and the only annoyance has been the discovery of another Canadian band (this one from Montreal) that's on the road calling itself Mahogany Rush. By now it's too late for either band to change; both groups live with the inevitable confusion.

Rather before the legal age, the band is playing Toronto bars as well as those one-nighters—the pubs that teenagers with their older sisters' ID cards can get into, where the local critics wouldn't be seen dead, and where the kids might tell you that the local critics *are* dead.

Eighteen and over (or faking it), these kids are breaking away from home and school and family ties, growing up and away—and this band and this music are just right. It's rough and ready, loud and proud, and simple to the point of thundering repetition.

Rush plays this circuit for three years, fully professional, and with the publicity photographs and the invoices from the instrument store

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