

RUSH . . . Continued

Rush have appeared with some of the top names in the music business today both from the U.S. and Great Britain. Rounding out the Fall season Rush have performed on most of the Canadian dates with Nazareth, to sell out crowds. They have also spent a week at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in Los Angeles.

Christmas for the group was spent at home in Toronto, but come the New Year they wasted no time in getting back to the business at hand. Recording sessions of the latest album took place in January, and then it was back out on the road again touring the U.S.

Rush have released their first album in England where it is expected to be a big hit among British audiences due to its heavy loud British rock feel in the music. The group have also had record releases in Germany, which is to be followed at some point by Holland, Europe, and ultimately Japan and the countries of the Far East. No doubt in time they will have full worldwide record distribution as each country begins to feel the rush. As deals are completed for album releases throughout the various countries, promotional tours are a natural follow-up for the band.

Rush were enthralled over their recent sold out Toronto Massey Hall performance, opening the show for Scotland's Nazareth. To Geddy this was the culmination of seven years of hard work and paying dues. All members of the group were pleased with the audience acceptance, being a home town crowd.

Future plans call for the group to perhaps record a live album and Massey Hall would be the ideal setting for such a venture. Two special aspects of their concert performances include a superb drum solo by Neil using a phaser, and panning the sound back and forth across the stage through the stereo speakers. Alex is not left out and does an excellent shrieking high energy guitar solo with all intensity and volume imaginable to the point where the audience is totally engulfed in sound. Geddy's mike is hooked up to an echoplex unit turned up to full echo and the high volume causes the echo to repeat and move at various speeds making the time between echos a lot shorter thus achieving the shrieking travelling affect. These would be excellent source materials for a future live recording.

In the recording and sound quality of a studio Rush like to have an excellent monitor and play back system. Perfect clarity is of vital importance to the group allowing them to have a clear crisp beat, or a punchy bass line combined with a thin or fat guitar sound dictated by the tune. The new album will also contain more background vocal work from Alex, although he and John did some of this on the first album with Geddy doing a great deal of double tracking.

All three members of Rush plan to remain in Toronto, as their homes are in Canada and they are proud of it, and have no intention of leaving this country. They have proven that Canadian artists do not have to leave Canada to become successful. Rush are already successful, and they did it virtually on their own.

MICHAL HASEK



by Grant McIntyre

Michal Hasek released his first album by himself. One might assume that this was because no record companies wanted to sign him on, but actually, offers have been made to Hasek in the past by established companies with contracts which held little or no promise, over a long period. Releasing his own album was perhaps the only thing he could have done at the time in order to get the album he wanted out, and the songs published adequately.

"Bernie Finkelstein once told me that the only person you should sign your publishing over to is your manager, or somebody who has some direct interest and enthusiasm toward you and your songs."

A good piece of advice. This way, the songs will be in the hands of someone who will be working with you to promote you and your music. Any publisher can make a lot of money from a song even if he isn't responsible for its success. He receives fifty percent of a song's performing rights royalties, which is the same as what the writer is entitled to. Many writers find themselves paying this royalty to someone who did nothing for the artist after signing his name to a lead-sheet.

Michal signed his publishing over to himself; someone who wasn't going to skip town on him. Now he is working through Daffodil Records, a company that finally offered what Michal feels is a reasonable proposition. Daffodil handles Michal's promotion. His second album, which I anxiously await, will be on this label.

But Michal still likes to handle some affairs on his own. Still publishing his own music, Michal's company is called Five Sun. Despite the positive results of his own management ventures which succeeded in getting the first album off the ground, it is apparent that a responsible record company was needed to handle the business end of undertakings. The pressure was too great, too much time, energy and money was being drained from him when his first company, NAJA was operating as a one-man record company. Now Daffodil handles promotion, while Michal is able to spend his time as an artist.

The first album, called *Michal Hasek* has a simple, earthy quality to it, with a folksy bluesy feel in many of the tunes. All of the songs are Hasek's except for "More Often Than Not" which was written by David

Wiffen and "Horses" by Ron Nigrini. Featured on the disc are some of his favourite Canadian musicians. With Tony Kosinec on tablas, Ron Nigrini playing guitar and strings by Ian Guenther (of Lighthouse) the instrumentation is excellent. Michal also shines as a brilliant soloist with his fine dobro playing, as well as the graceful fluence of "Naja" which is entirely an acoustic guitar solo. Adding Michal's vocals are Mitchell Lewis, Jessi Boraski, Gairey Richardson, Caryne Chanman, Tony Kosinec, Nancy Simmonds and Ron Nigrini.

A full acoustic guitar sound prevails throughout the album, and the vocals are often very crisp and clear, yet the general sound is only clean enough. A pleasant degree of dirt leaks through, so that the meanings and feelings are believable and real. This is a fine record, one which brings about thought and involvement on the part of the listener. There is a genre of personal experience and human expression. Rather than call these love songs, one would be more correct in referring to them as love songs; stories, feelings, expressions that define people and relationships, touching upon love with poetic elegance. For example Michal will say, "You lighten my load," whereas Bearfoot deals with love lines such as, "Baby let's get it on."

The comfortable, experiential style of writing which Michal has found for himself is due to his own artistic maturity. First of all, he didn't rush into the album, even though he may have appeared ready five or six years ago, and he's been singing and playing since 1960. He was playing in Yorkville when it was referred to by the local beatniks as The Village. He had a steady gig at the Mynah Bird and remembers the tiny upstairs room where he worked; "I used to look out the window and see the police beating people up. Michal is no johnny-come-lately."

The first album is his own undertaking. This includes everything from writing the songs to production to distribution of the discs, so he didn't have to be commercial or overly fancy or slick to impress bigshot into giving him a contract.

The final product is honesty without schmaltz. Art without pretension.