

# Spirit of Rush

AUTUMN / WINTER '92.

ISSUE No. 20



# Back Issues

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ISSUE 19 Includes - Exclusive interview with Alex Lifeson, a feature on Wal bases, an interview with Hugh Syme, more readers reviews and a board game plus much more... 54 page

# SPIRIT OF RUSH EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to another fun packed issue of 'The Spirit Of Rush', the last issue of 1992. While Neil dosses in Hong Kong it's left to yours truly to get this all together on my lonesome, I hope you enjoy it.

The planned Mike Portnoy interview has been held over until the next issue, (sorry all you Dream Theater fans!) it's worth the wait though. Dream Theater are currently on tour in North America, let's hope they come over here next year, who knows perhaps that their now with Iron Maidens management they may come over to support Maiden when they play in the U.K. next May; how about it guys?.

Rush were awarded the WM. HAROLD MOON award by the society of composer, authors and music publishers of Canada on October 28th. The award is given annually to members who attract the international spotlight in Canada through their music. Alex and Geddy accepted the award in person, unfortunately Neil could not attend as he was on a bike tour of Africa at the time.

Geddy recently played on the album 'Women' by Mendelsan Joe. He used his real name of Weinrib, but I think the G.L. gave it away Ged. It's a pretty good album why not check it out. Details elsewhere.

Talking of Mr Lee I would guess that he's just about one of the happiest Canadians alive right now, and why is this you may ask? because the 'Blue Jays' won the base ball world series of course! Geddy was spotted at several of the final games by our sharp eyed North American friends; we would assume that Ged attended them all.

This issue we have a transcription of an interview which Geddy did whilst in the U.K last April. This was the only interview done in the U.K. (apart from our exclusive interview with Alex last issue) with any member of the band. Thanks to Adam Fitch for the transcription.

The band are reported to be getting back together to begin writing new material for another album in early 1993. Let's hope all goes well for them and the album is in the stores before 1993 draws to a close. Make it quick guys we can't wait!

## RUSH BACKSTAGE CLUB

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## WOMEN .....

### Side One

Temporary Love  
Same Old Song  
Photos in the Mall  
Hot Meal  
I Nominatate Dr. David

### Side Two

Not Safe  
Some Dumb Machine  
Canary in the Coalmine  
Women are the Only Hope  
I Value You

All songs written, composed & arranged by Mendelson Joe.  
All songs published by Mendelsonster Publishing, copyright 1992.  
Produced by Mendelson Joe. Mixed by Ben Mink and Brock Fricker.  
Engineered by Brock Fricker at Brock Sound, Toronto.

### Musicians

Mendelson Joe - vocals, guitar, harmonica & more  
Ben Mink - violins, mandolin & electric guitar  
Scott Irvine - tubas  
Bob Wiseman - accordion  
G.L. Weinrib - bass  
Colette Baron - vocals  
Dianne Heatherington - vocals  
Anne Hansen - burp & typeset  
All musicians arranged their parts.

Special very special thanks to Ben Mink

We better write our elected  
politicians daily if we want action  
instead of bogus studies and  
bogus smiles.

## COLLECTORS                      CORNER

For those of us that are ardent Rush collectors, be it promo's, posters, magazine articles, rare records or just basically want to collect the lot, it becomes increasingly difficult to acquire these sometimes rare, sometimes not so rare items, as you have to know A) What has been released or is available in the first place and B) Where to find it!

Now and again you see, or hear of something that crops up that you never knew existed. This could be a promo cassette, bootleg album or CD (of which many more are now starting to appear), test pressing, acetate, magazine article or some other oddment, such as a counter display.

The purpose of Collectors Corner is to identify these items, not necessarily just the rare items, and let people know what is available, should you be fortunate enough to find them on offer.

There are things like the mispressing of Hemispheres, which has side 2 on both sides of the vinyl! Advanced promo cassettes of the albums, for instance HYF and Chronichles tapes 1 & 2 from Phonogram and a U.S. copy of Presto. Also a U.K. promo cassette of the Time Stand Still single, a black vinyl copy of the 10" Body Electric, which must rate as one of the rarest oddities? The copy of the Prime Mover 7" with the wrong label that has a song by Miles Jaye mentioned on it, or the Dreamline U.S. promo CD that has no black print on the disc at all.

The above are just a few of the things that definitely exist out there. There are many, many more that are well known, and also no doubt, many more that are not generally known about.

So what we would like you to do is, write in and let us know what you have that might be an oddity, rarity or just plain unusual, or something that people might not know of. Don't feel reluctant to write in because you have something you are not sure of, or whether it is generally known or not, let us know as it may be of news to another collector or even unique! We will then publish a list of things that people have that are not necessarily of the ordinary.

Alternatively, if you have heard of something rumoured to exist, but are not 100% sure whether it does, again let us know what it is and we will try to answer your query, or we will ask other readers to confirm, or deny its existence.

Write to:- Jim Wright at 29, Ferry Road, Renfrew, PA4.8SA.Scotland.or Chris Jones at Flat 13, Stirling Court, 6, Argyle Road, Ealing, London W13.8AB.England, both Jim and Chris are currently working together on a collectors magazine devoted exclusively to Rush. Articles will be written in the same style that Record Collector magazine does eg; exhaustive insights into all areas of collecting. If all goes well the first issue should see print early next year with between 30 or 40 pages in each quarterly issue. We trust all our loyal readers/collectors will give you their support, good luck from all at 'Spirit' with the magazine.

# GEDDY LEE

GEDDY IN CONVERSATION WITH BRIAN PITHERS ON HIS SATURDAY ROCK SHOW

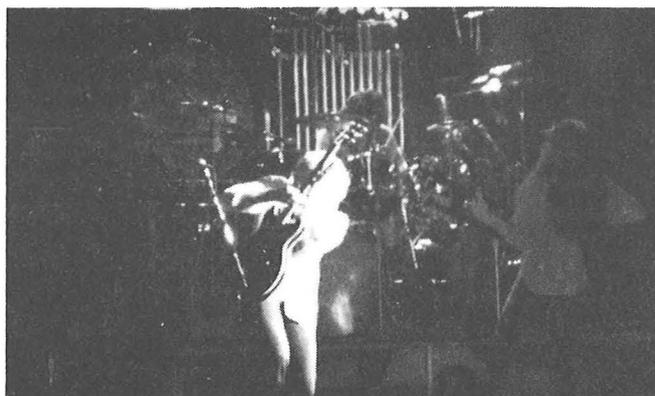
ON RADIO READING 210.

PLAY XANADU.

- B.P. It's been nearly four years since we last saw you, but having talked to Alex not so long ago, I gather in a sense it was a resurgence you suddenly found, well perhaps suddenly is wrong, you definitely wanted to continue touring in the way you always toured before.
- G.L. Well, I can't say exactly the same way we've toured before, we're still moving at a snails pace compared to a lot of bands, but we really enjoyed the last tour, the 'Presto' tour, and it was a very short tour, and we weren't sure if we'd enjoy it at all, and the whole process of the album was a very positive one, so I think we just felt a little bolder this time and said well, we seem to be on a good roll here so o.k. let's just stretch it out here and keep stretching it 'till the tour starts getting old and we'll end real quick and just be done with it, but fortunately it's been very enjoyable.
- B.P. There's a lot of people who will be glad you said that. I'll use the word problem loosely because problem can mean a lot of things. Was it the continuous years of touring and making albums and perhaps getting slightly bored with what you were doing that made it difficult to carry on?
- G.L. Well, I think it's a combination of things. Boredom is maybe one aspect, I don't think we were ever bored of performing, I think we were bored with; and bored is only an appropriate word, the strain of the routine, I think it starts to get to you a little bit. You start to feel restricted like the priorities in your life have always been the band - band projects and then the rest of your life. I think that it starts to show signs of wear after a while and you find it difficult to become an adult, with adult priorities, you still put the band thing in front of everything you do. I think what we went through was a very healthy, natural kind of rebellion, individually to demand more time and sort out those things in our lives that need to be sorted out, and I think as a result it's taken a lot of the pressure off, and it's really allowed us to have a more relaxed view of what we do now, and appreciate the good job we have, and the good things that come along with it rather than resenting them.

PLAY ROLL THE BONES

- B.P. When some of us heard this 'Roll The Bones' we said Hey what is this 'word rap', and I think there was this sort of Oh Heck well they've always been innovative but what have they done, and then I've got to say when we actually heard it, it was hang on that is pretty good. So what I mean is, what made you do something like that?



G.L. Well, we don't really consider it to be an authentic rap!

B.P. It's fun.

G.L. Yeah, Neil wrote these lyrics for it that were just great, very well written and I think the rhythm was kind of infectious. The rhythm of the lyrics, so we just had some fun with it, and we didn't really think about what everyone else would think until it was already written, so we just had a bit of fun, and it suited what we were after. That song has just about every style under the sun in it anyway.

B.P. In a sense the whole album and a lot of the songs draw from a lot of previous albums in a sense that you say "hang on, I heard that on!!!!".

G.L. Yeah, in a sense we're stealing from ourselves.

B.P. How interesting was it doing the album in England with Rupert Hine?

G.L. Well, we only did part of it here, most of it was done in Toronto and Quebec, but we mixed the album here and it was kind of a nice place to work and everything went smoothly. Rupert is always fun to work with, a real gentleman, so no problems.

B.P. Talking of personal set ups, I noticed Alex has changed, I think obviously of 'Signature' going bust. He's now using a Paul Reed Smith, and I've been reading that your now using a Wal bass.

G.L. Yeah.

B.P. For many years you used a Rickenbacker and a headless Steinbach, is it a lot to do with your producer, because I seem to remember reading that

he had one and you wanted to try it.

- G.L. Yeah; I started using a Wal bass on 'Power Windows' and Pete Collins had one and I had my three or four that I'd brought along, and just for fun he said why don't you play with this and see how you like the sound, because I'd always admired Percy Jones who always used one from Brand X years ago. So I plugged it in and got a great sound out of it straight away. We just kept trying it song after song, it seemed to suit the sound of the song and I liked the fact that it sounded a little different.
- B.P. I also gather, not being musical so I'm not being too technical as well, that you play three fingered, which is quite unusual for a start.
- G.L. Is it unusual? I didn't know.
- B.L. A lot of the bass players use four, but, I've read that you can generate so much power, although if you break a nail it's more difficult.
- G.L. What you're talking about, the three fingers on this hand, my plucking hand.
- B.P. Yeah, sorry.
- G.L. Well, I don't know.
- B.P. I suppose it's just the way you've always played.
- G.L. Yeah, that's how I always play, I've never thought of it any other way.

#### PLAY SUBDIVISIONS

- B.P. You play bass and you have got a lot of pedals and keyboards, but they are three totally different sounds and disciplines, how do you manage to combine them, on stage especially?
- G.L. Well it's just rehearsal really. You can do anything if you practice long enough. I don't know it just developed over time, I've just gotten used to dividing myself up, part to the instrument, part to my hand and part to my throat, like I say if you practice something long enough you work it out.
- B.P. I should imagine, using the word concentration, you can't concentrate on one because the other will suffer, you just I presume, take it as it comes.
- G.L. Yeah, it's equal, a kind of Zen thing. It's like sports, you kind of Zen into the right point of concentration. I actually spend most of my presence of mind on stage in concentrating on singing, which is the more difficult of the two things to do, the bass I've been playing so long, it comes second nature to me, most of my concentration is staying in key or trying to stay in key anyway.
- B.P. On the other hand, because technology I think quite justifiably and quite fairly, it can be said, you've always been at the forefront of technology and Howe always used it if it's been available, but the intriguing thing to me is the way you get the monitor sound. You have an ear piece, although I think you've got a couple of very small monitors

in case the ear piece goes. That must be in my point of view, a really weird thing to have an ear piece.

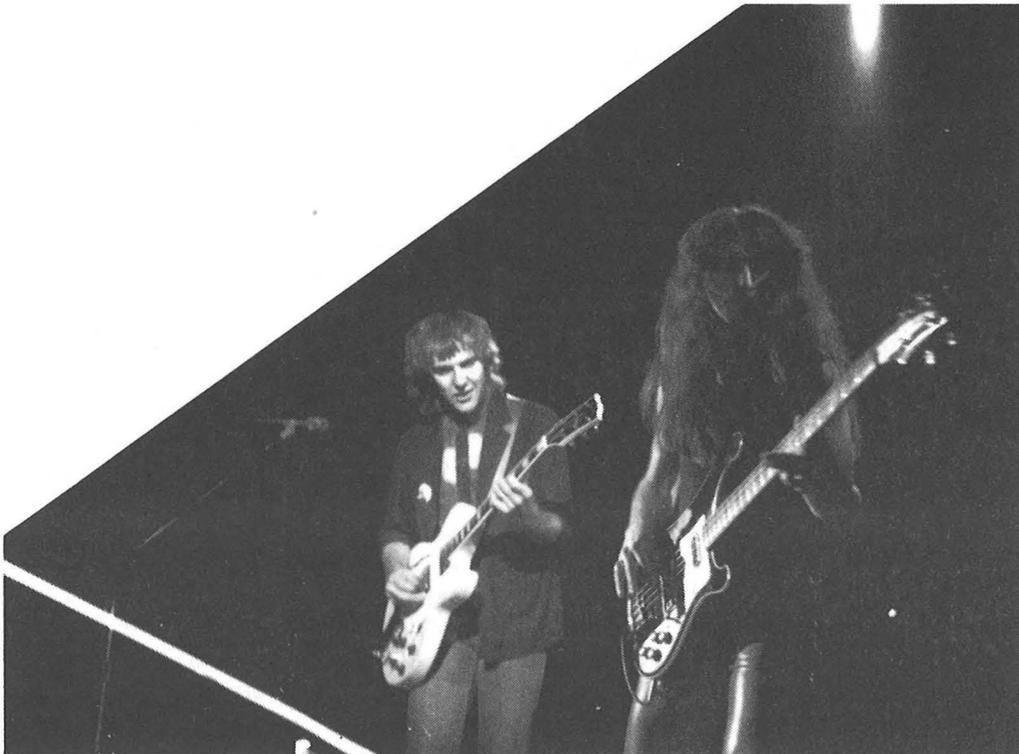
G.L. Yeah, it takes a bit of adjustment, but basically I have two ear pieces one for each ear, and I have a stereo mix sent to me and when it works well, which it does most of the time, we still are kind of trouble shooting the system. We've used a few different systems on this tour and we're still experimenting with it, but when it works it's just marvelous because everything sounds so crystal clear and you can have ultimate control on all the individual instruments and you have a kind of monitoring that I never thought possible because usually most singers out there on stages, people don't realise how little of their own sound they're getting. They're hearing a kind of impression of their voice, but it's hard to be very precise and a lot of what the guys are doing on stage we're trying to hear, so this system makes it much easier.

B.P. The set you're doing now, it must be difficult for you to choose a set.

G.L. Yeah.

B.P. I wouldn't complain if you never had a support band, because that was a wonderful tour and what ever, but how do you actually choose what your going to play. Obviously bands have to premier a new album, you can play two tracks you can play all the tracks, fine you're playing five or six, but then how do you define what you're going to do because it's, you've done this before, you've done that before, we haven't done this in years.

G.L. Yeah, it's very difficult because you want to play all of the favourites that everyones come to hear, and you want to play all the songs that you like to play and try to avoid all the ones that are driving you crazy. So you try to juggle between all those things, and inevitably you dissappoint somebody out there who's not going to hear a song that they want, you just have to try to squeeze in as much as you can.



- B.P. I think, like you, we all have favourites, and it's are they going to play it, but then you play this and you play that.
- G.L. You want to play different songs every time and you want to save songs, because you want to trow in a few surprises, and you hope that maybe next time you'll throw in that song that you left out last time.
- B.P. Also over the years, just changing the arrangements is also a way of making a song fresh again.
- G.L. Yeah, changing arrangements, doing medleys, compiling a few different things, and we found on some of the newer material that we've been stretching them out a little and jamming a bit, so there's a bit of something different every night which we started to become very fond of. It's a little bit out of character for us 'cause we're such strict and tightly orientated, and on this tour I know we've been jamming on about five or six numbers a little bit.

#### PLAY WITCH HUNT

- B.P. I won't go into favourite songs but what is your personal favourite album?
- G.L. Of ours?
- B.P. Yes.
- G.L. Oh gee! I don't know - if I had a favourite really, but I'd say it's a toss up between '2112' and 'Moving Pictures'.
- B.P. Good, 'Moving Pictures' is my favourite album. How long have you been out on the road for this tour?
- G.L. The tour officially started at the end of October on and off, we go home every three weeks for a week and then come back on.
- B.P. So how do you feel now, now that you're actually back out there doing what you like doing.
- G.L. I feel pretty good. I think touch wood it's been a good tour and I hope we survive the end of it.
- B.P. I'M not quite sure how to phrase this question, because there was a time, I think, when it maybe felt that this was going to be Rush's last tour. When you toured last time it seemed like that, but now your saying you feel really good. When will you know, without putting a hex on it, when the end is coming, 'cause you may find you feel at the end of the tour like giving up then six months off and then you say hey guys let's get back on the road.
- G.L. Yeah, I don't know. I think it's already a question answered, when the end comes for us it will just come, I don't think it will be a gradual thing. I think someone will just say Guys I've had enough, and I think we've come pretty close to that a couple of times, but we're still here.
- B.P. Yeah, to quote a line from 'RTB' "Why are we here, because we're here".
- G.L. Yeah, 'cause we're STILL here!

B.P. Interestingly enough a new record company over here as well.

G.L. Yeah.

B.P. How much was it a wrench, if it was such a thing, was that? a company you've been with for so long to a new one, is that again part of the new start someplace else and it seems to have worked out.

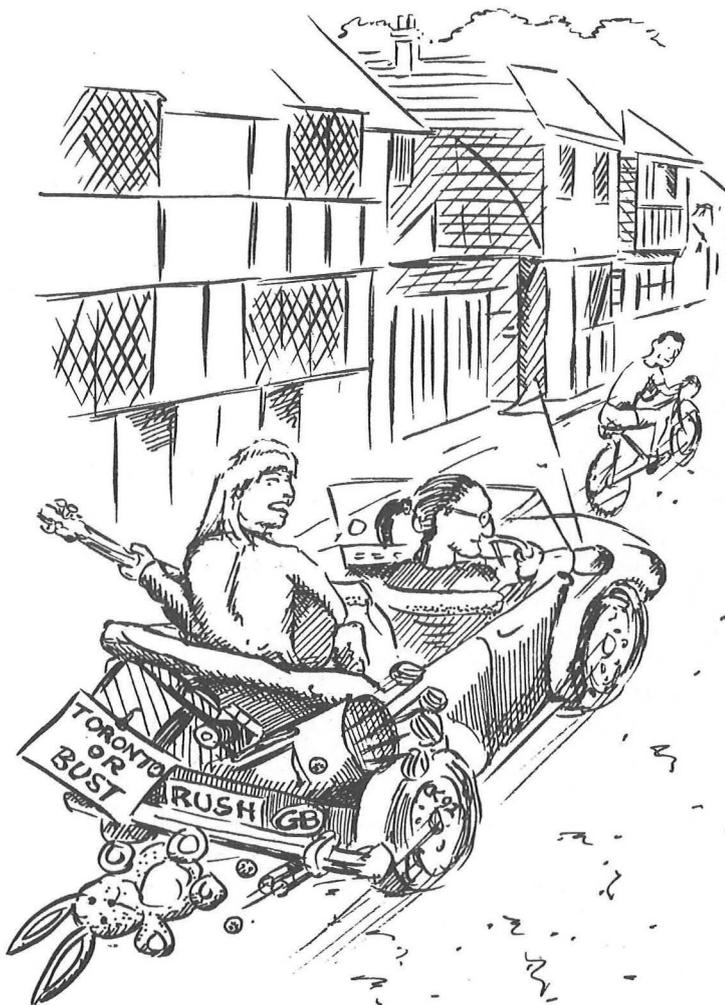
G.L. Well I don't know, before 'Presto' we thought it was time to change something, try to go someplace new, and it seems to have worked out.

B.P. I know you're very short of time Geddy and I've said this to Alex as well. Long may you carry on rolling the bones and your always welcome in England.

G.L. Thank you very much, I appreciate that.

PLAY TOM SAWYER.

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# *Presto Interview*

102.1 FM San Diego

3/3/90

Geddy: There are some definite things we tried to do differently on this record, which I guess were successful in the fact that we went in with a kind of a definitive picture of losing a lot of the high-tech kind of synthesizer arrangements in favour of focusing three-piece bass, drums, and guitar a bit more clearly. We definitely wanted to make a more 'rock' record and I think that was successful and a little bit of a change. I think there's more energy on this record than the last couple.

Alex: Geddy and I talked about what sort of musical direction we wanted to write in; we just grab to bass, grab to guitar and start it like we used to in the old days, rather than sitting down at the computer and starting to program things. I mean, all that stuff comes later but all the emotion and the real power comes from the acoustic approach.

Announcer: Here's RUSH lyricist and drummer Neil Peart on "Chain Lightning."

Neil: I'm a weather fanatic; I really love weather and I watch the weather and look for good weather men and one night I was watching it and there are two incidents in that song that are synchronicity to one weather report where the weather man showed a picture of sun dogs and described them. They're just two little points of light that appear at sunset, often in the winter when the sky's clear and crystal, and they're like little prisms, and they sit I think about ten degrees north and south of the setting sun and they're just beautiful little diamonds of light and oftentimes there's a circle of light, one line that connects them. So they're really beautiful natural phenomenon and I love the name too. Sundogs just has a great sound to it. And in that same weather forecast the weather man announced a meteor shower that night and so my daughter and I went out in the lake in the middle of the night and watched this meteor shower. So the whole idea of the song was response, and how people respond to things and it's a thing I've found a lot in travelling around the world too. It's not enough just to travel and see things, you have to respond to them, you have to feel them and a lot of the thrust of that song is how things are transferred like chain lightning - how enthusiasm or energy or love are things that are contagious and if someone feels them they're easily transferable to another person, or in the case of watching a meteor shower, it's made more special if there's someone else there — you know, reflected in another pair of eyes is the idea that it's a wonderful thing already; just you and the meteor shower. But if there's someone else there with you to share it then

it multiplies; it becomes exponentially a bigger experience.

Announcer: That is nice — "Chain Lightning" from *Presto*. That distinctive sound was not always the sound of the band known as RUSH. Let's go back to the dawn of RUSH history, and how far back might that be Geddy?

Geddy: We've been RUSH for longer than we'll ever admit to. We had a keyboard player when we were sort of a garage band, you know, like a blue-based; we were pretty blues-based back then. It's funny — we did a lot of bands, songs by English blues bands which were just American blues songs done in an English blues way, so here you have Canadians playing English blues which is playing American blues. I mean, if that's not perverted I don't know what is. You couldn't get farther away from the real blues.

Announcer: Success in rock and roll often means being ready when the right time crosses paths with the right place. For RUSH, the right place was Toronto, Ontario, and the right time — here's Geddy Lee.

Geddy: As soon as they lowered the drinking age, that was a big help. We got a lot of work. We couldn't work in bars cause we were all under the drinking age so they wouldn't let us play, so our gigs were limited to high schools, you know, it was Pre-Teen World we were playing in. As soon as they lowered the drinking age, that's the time when rock bars really started happening in our area. So all of a sudden we got into all these bars and we could actually bring record companies out to see you.

Announcer: RUSH proves it is more than a fly by night outfit by scoring top ten albums throughout the eighties. RUSH recorded their first album in 1974 and for want of a better name, called it *RUSH*.

Geddy Lee: We'd done this record on our own label, called Moon Records, and it was very low-budget record we did in the evenings after we got out — in the mornings actually after we got out of the bars, we'd move the equipment down to studio and record, you know, typical struggling kind of stuff. And the album was done and it was okay; Canada was pretty much ignoring it and a friend of ours who worked for a record company, to help us out, sent a few records to some American radio stations that he knew some people. And I started getting phenomenal response, you know, they started all these requests and pretty soon we're getting requests

for gigs to come down there. And all of a sudden record companies were sniffing it out going "I smell some money here," a Bachman-Turner-Overdrive†. It just clicked in America, so it was like if there's Bachman-Turner-Overdrive maybe there's more up there. Let's put on our parkas and go look! They were sniffing the big money, and we got a call from a couple of record companies and one was Mercury, and they made us an offer we couldn't refuse. So we didn't.

Announcer: After two albums which didn't even break into the top 100, RUSH recorded *Caress of Steel* and hit the road. Here's Neil Peart.

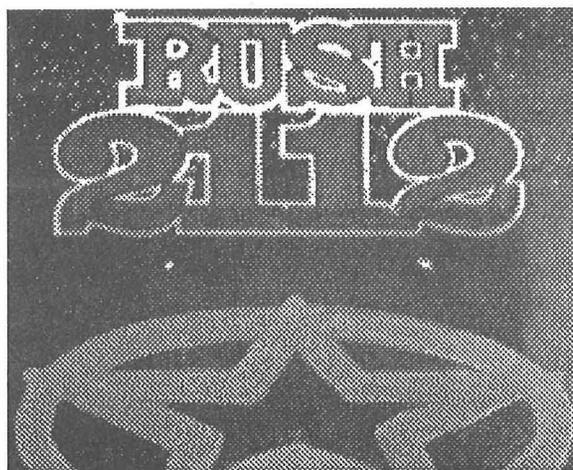
Neil: We always refer to that tour as the "Down the tubes tour" because we were opening for Hawkwind's last tour and we were playing to half-full small halls and we were going to all the little clubs and bars, like in the suburbs around Chicago for instance, we couldn't get a gig in Chicago so we played Elgion, Illinois and Niles, Illinois and all these little suburbs all around the city, and it was a very depressing tour. I mean, we had nothing going for us.

Announcer: Before long, RUSH had a lot going for them. The band's constant touring paid off. Their fourth album, *2112*, hit number 61. Their next two releases cracked the top 40 - first came *All the World's a Stage*, a live album, followed by *A Farewell to Kings*, which spun off the single "Closer to the Heart." RUSH's excursions into long musical pieces began with *Caress of Steel* and culminated on *Hemispheres*.

Neil: I'm really satisfied with what we did on *Hemispheres* as far as creating a long, continuous piece of music. So when it came to that album being finished, it took a lot out of us. That was a really difficult album to make and at the end of it we were like... finished. So in discussing amongst ourselves what direction we wanted to go in the future, we realized that there was no point in getting into that grind again because we had really taken it as far as we could either compositionally or as musicians. We really decided to put aside considerations of length.

Announcer: The band's new approach helped their next album, *Permanent Waves*, rocket to number four on the charts, spearheaded by the single "The Spirit of Radio."

Geddy: There's a station called CFNY in Toronto and their motto was "The spirit of radio" and they



were totally free-formed at the time when all these big programmers were coming in, and consultants were telling all these stations and station managers how to keep their jobs - "If you play these records, you'll keep your job." So there was this one station that was playing anything, and you'd hear very abstract things, or you'd hear very hard things, or classical. It sorta reminded us of what it used to be like when FM just started, and guys like Murray the K were on the air, and it was really great and everybody was so into it and you'd live by the FM radio. I mean, you'd just always have it on, so it reminded us of that and we started thinking about "well what happened to those kind of ideals for radio?" And you know, it was like radio was great until people realized they could make money out of it and then it all changes, and that's what that song is about.

Announcer: Just how does a successful songwriting team work? Here's Alex Lifeson with RUSH's way.

Alex: Typically, Geddy and I work together from before noon, eleven-ish, until close to dinner-time, then Neil would come in, quite often with some lyrics or with a cassette that we may have given him of some musical ideas. He'll comment on that, we'll comment on the lyrics, we'll spend an hour with this kind of interchange and then afterwards we'll get together after dinner as a unit, and either work on the song as a band or else work on different aspects of the song, again the lyrics and music, and it works out great for us. You know, Neil can concentrate on what he's doing without interruption, and the same for us, and things just flow. We get better and better at it I think; more efficient.

Announcer: The offstage antics of a lot of rock bands insures them plenty of ink in the gossip columns. By contrast, the members of RUSH have

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† Bachman-Turner-Overdrive: The point Geddy was making is that after B.T.O. began hitting it big in the States, all of the record labels started looking to cash in on this surge of interest in Canadian hard rock. Rush just happened to fit the right mould at the right time.

kept their private lives, well, private. Geddy Lee discusses RUSH's stand.

Geddy: We went through a period where we were very, you know, almost militant about our privacy. It's like if you leave yourself open in this line of work, your whole self gets picked apart and you can give everything away and you have no time and you don't feel like you own any private sense of yourself, and it's very difficult. In order to do that, we got very hostile, and put up some very obvious walls just to say "No, this is the line you will not cross. We're not prepared to sell this part of ourselves just to promote what we do for a living." We do what we do, we owe our audience a performance and we owe our audience the best possible performance and the best possible records right down the line. But there comes a line that we're not prepared to cross for that, and we don't feel that we are obligated to our audience to cross that line.

Neil: Well, I think we were trying to bridge a gap, though. At that time we saw ourselves very strongly in between the late 60's progressive bands and the mid-70's. We didn't want to be like the English bands in the sense of the way Genesis and Yes were at that time. We didn't want to get that elevated and that sterile and introspective, but at the same time we did want our music to be interesting and we wanted to get involved in different kinds of arrangements and different forms of music, and so on. What happened in the late 60's, all of a sudden that all degenerated; all those bands came out with a second generation of copies like Grand Funk Railroad and Black Sabbath and all these bands, so consequently all the integrity built up in the late 60's was lost, and all of a sudden hard rock was once again a 'dirty thing.' So I think we wanted to bridge that gap again and try to capture what was beautiful about the late 60's music, in the freedom and the spirit like the music of The Who and the music of Jimi Hendrix and so on, and try to get away from its darker side, what it had become.

Alex: I think "New World Man" was the first single that we ever had that had quite a wide appeal, especially on radio, where it wasn't only those kind of stations that played harder stuff. It was a departure for us; it was something a little more different, a little poppier I think.

Geddy: We had like four minutes to fill on the record, we needed a song so 'boom' out it popped. And that was really a lot of fun, I have to tell you. So there is definitely a time and a space for spontaneity; you know, that was a real opposite way of doing things. Sometimes you end up with something very fresh.

Announcer: "Up Close" returns with Alex Lifeson,

and RUSH: the thinking man's rock band.

Alex: We've always been that way. When Neil started writing lyrics, he felt it was a lot more important to write about something that had some kind of depth to it, that you don't listen to once and that's it, something that you have to sort of digest a bit. And certainly his lyrics are like that; I mean I have a tough time understanding his lyrics and getting the full meaning of his imagery out of those lyrics. But in the long run I think it's more valuable.

Geddy: I have to understand them, and I have to feel something for them, and I have to decide whether my role is one of relating to these lyrics personally, or one of just having respect for them and being able to interpret them and deliver them properly. So both are fine with me; if I agree with the lyrics all the better because it gets me more emotionally involved in what they're saying, which is what I like to strive for. Sometimes I just like the way they sound and sometimes I appreciate what they're saying.

Announcer: In 1983, RUSH began work on *Grace Under Pressure*. Here's Alex.

Alex: We were writing the record over the summer. The area we were writing in is just north of Toronto; it's a ski resort, and in the summer they have a golf course but they close the ski lodge, which was ideal for us cause we could go over there and work and no one would bother us and we wouldn't bother anyone else. We had the paper delivered every morning, so Neil would sit in his apartment reading the paper and having breakfast, and then he'd sit down and write. So he was getting a lot of input - daily input - from the newspaper, and it was a real tough time; there was lots of tension, the breakdown in the arms talks, the Korean airline murders; there was plenty of stuff going on. That's really where it came from; that's where most of this record came from I think.

Geddy: I don't think there's a person on the planet that wasn't so surprised at how well that thing did [*The Great White North*], especially them.

Neil: Sometimes we've been misread as being too dark or sometimes apocalyptic, but they usually represented shifts of style and *Grace Under Pressure* was an album of ours that was perceived as being dark. But it was a transitional album for me especially as a lyricist and introduced a whole new note of real world compassion, where suddenly I was looking around at friends of mine and strangers too, and seeing their lives and feeling that — my life was fine at the time. A lot of people read these things "Oh he must have been having a rough time" and quite the contrary. My life was fine but I was seeing a lot of trouble in my friends' lives, and the mid-80's were difficult times economically and people were losing jobs, having trouble getting

work, having relationship problems, and all that. So those things do go down into your writing and sometimes you feel that you have to address them even if they're not tearing you apart.

Neil: There was one song previously called "Manhattan Project" where I wanted to write about the birth of the nuclear age. Well, easier said than done, especially when lyrics you've got a couple of hundred words to say what you want to say, so each word counts and each word had better be accurate. So I found in the case of the "Manhattan Project" I was having to go back and read histories of the time, histories of the place, biographies of all the people involved, and that's not without its own rewards but it's a lot of work to go through to write a song, you know, having to read a dozen books and collate all your knowledge and experience just so you can write if the scientists were in the desert sand, well make sure they were and why.

Geddy: The song "Manhattan Project" is not really so much a song about the bomb, but it's a song more about what was going on, people that were dealing with it. The angle was more of the fact that the whole world was in a race for this device and nobody knew that and nobody really at the time had any awareness of what was going on.

Alex: We've always been very close friends, we've always been more like family and it goes as far as our crew. We've always been very close to the crew and to the people we work with and I think speaks well of the fact that we've lasted for — well, Geddy and I have been together 21 years in this band, and with Neil it's been 15 years, and we're still doing it so we've done something right. I don't think we'd ever really want to give that up so long as everything else around it worked well. The friendship is important, the fact that we like the music, and it's a vehicle for Geddy and myself creatively as well as for Neil lyrically, so it's got everything right going for it.

Geddy: We kinda grew up in an arena setting, and I think we're very comfortable in that setting. It's kind of odd to feel that you could be intimate with 15,000 people. I don't know if you ever really can. Once you get past 3,000 there's a different kind of excitement in the air in that kind of a concert. We kind of grew up in that and I think we're comfortable with it and it feels very much home, that kind of performing environment, whereas from time to time if we go overseas we get the opportunity to play on a smaller scale, it's always an adjustment. I can't see us at the same time going to like the big dome stadium-type of shows. Stadium shows seem very abstract to me; they seem to have that kind of detachment that maybe some people



think arena shows have. So to me, I remember on this Rolling Stones tour I saw them in Toronto at the Skydome - Mick Jagger was about three inches tall. I thought that was really kind of weird. It was a real kind of detachment; it was really a show of technology.

Announcer: On RUSH's newest album *Presto*, Neil Peart uses the song "The Pass" to address the subject of teen suicide.

Neil: The facet that I most wanted to write about was to demythologize it, taking the nobility out of it, saying that "Yes it's sad; it's a horrible tragic thing if someone takes their own lives, but let's not pretend that it's a hero's end." It's not a triumph, it's not a heroic epic, it's a tragedy. It's a personal tragedy form them but much more so for the people left behind, and I really decided to get offended by the Samuri kind of values that were attached to it, like here's a warrior that just felt it was better to die with honour. All of that kind of offended me.

Announcer: A writer's inspiration comes from a variety of unusual sources. The inspiration for "Show Don't Tell" comes from, well, let's let Neil tell it.

Neil: It comes from an editorial advised to a writer and I'm sort of a sophomore writer and one of the great laws is you don't tell your reader something you show it. It started to matter in lyrics too and in other prose writing things I've done, where S.D.T. is the editor's code that say, you know, don't tell this thing, show it; you don't say that your character is a jerk, you show that. You just describe your character and his actions in such a way that it's apparent that that is so. So I've kind of had that little phrase stuck in my mind as a kid.

Geddy: Even though our story is kind of unconventional, and our music is unusual for a rock band, I never felt completely outside because I think there's just so many strong, fundamental rock things about what we do.

# LEGENDS OF ROCK

## 1988

Hi, I'm Ray White (R.W.). Welcome to another edition of Legends of Rock. This time it's Rush.

Geddy The relationship between a listener and a song is a personal thing and I think you can talk away a lot of the mystery of it, and a lot of the nice things that, how a song hits you. I mean, there are certain songs that are about certain definite things and yeah, you can talk about those all you want, but the more you talk about it, the less interesting it is I think.

R.W. Why is it, do you think, that Rush have remained so popular?

Geddy I don't know why we were popular in the first place, so I can't really tell you why we're still popular. I can say that, because our music is constantly evolved, and because we've always looked to do something different, that's what's kept us creatively alive and that's what's kept the band together, that's what's kept us wanting to make records together, and, obviously some of that has to rub off in the music we make together. And I would like to think that those kind of convictions come out to the person listening to the records, but, I don't know. I mean what it has to really boil down to is, there's something in the style of music that we play that appeals to people. Regardless of how much we've changed, there's been some sort of essential element of us that has remained the same and I think that is why our audience has stayed with us for so long.

R.W. You recorded Hold Your Fire in so many different places. Why?

Geddy I think moving around keeps you from getting bored really, that's the main reason. I mean, Grace Under Pressure was the last record we recorded in one spot; and we spent four months recording it, and by the time we were finished, we just couldn't wait to get out of there. And we were so frustrated with being in that place for as long as we were, that I think it was dangerous to get to the end of a very long project and to be too anxious to get out of there; because you might overlook something, and you might compromise something, that you've worked very hard not to compromise, just because you've got cabin fever. So, I think it's much better for the record and much better for your state of mind, to keep changing locale. Now you don't have to go as exotic as we have, but I think that's a luxury we can afford at this stage in our career, and that's a lot more fun for us, that we can

move around every three weeks, changing studio. I'd rather change country too and just keep it really interesting, so, it's a lot of fun recording that way and I don't think the record suffers for it, in fact, I think it's helped by it.

R.W. Upon first listen, much of the bands appeal lay with the ambition of their music, which is intricate, yet high powered. But the more you get into Neil Peart's lyrics, you find that Rush has as much to say as they do to play. Neil says that even with a pen in his hand, he's always thinking how his words will be adapted once the band picks up their instruments.

Geddy Sometimes it's something that Neil's laboured on his own, and he presents it to us and we go great! Sometimes he'll work on something on his own, present it to us, and we're uncomfortable with it - we'll talk about it and then it'll take a different shape after our conversations together. Sometimes Neil and I'll have a conversation on a particular topic; you talk about things you wanna say in a song, and we'll all feel strongly about it, and he'll go away and he'll put it down on paper and you go: "Yeah, that's great".

R.W. Alex Lifeson thinks that 'Hemispheres' set the stage for Rush's explosion onto the radio and into the concert halls.

Alex At the time we were all quite happy with it. We felt all of the blood, sweat and tears were worth it and again, it was another album that was a transitional album for us, it was an important album, for us to do. I think it really set us up well for what was to come next.

R.W. What would come next would be the start of the 80's, the release of 'Permanent Waves' and a slew of sold out arenas. Part of the Rush success story has to do with what happens when they perform their music for their fans. The relationship between the stage and the stands has been the fulcrum of Rush's coming of age. They've already recorded concert material and given it back to their fans, and Geddy Lee says that there may be plans for more of that in the bands future.

Geddy We don't break up you know, that's the problem you see, we keep going and we keep making all these records, and every once in a while you have this desire, as much as I dislike making live records, every once in a while you sort of need to update, almost for historical purposes, update your live sound and how the band has changed. So, since our last live album, I don't know how many records we have out, but it's a lot, a whole wealth of material that I think should be recorded.

R.W. In 1982, Geddy was a special guest on a recording that went top ten in the United States. The song was 'Take Off' written and recorded by the immortal Bob and Doug McKenzie.

Geddy Well, my singing of the past was always sort of a bi-product of the kind of material that we were writing and I never took any consideration in what key I was singing in, or what was the best one for my voice or how I could be the most expressive. It was like, oh god the songs already written, it's already on tape, now I have to sing in this key, which is really, really top of my range. So it was always an afterthought, vocal melodies were an afterthought, it was just another instrument in the arsenal. Where now we're very much songwriters I think, and, our lyrics have more to say, and there's more room for me to be more personally expressive as a vocalist, and I also have a desire to use my voice as a singer and as an interpreter of lyrics and all of those things combined have made me want to bring my range down, and concentrate more in a more classical sense of singing and to control my singing, and I enjoy singing more, and the more melody I have, the better it is for me as a singer.

R.W. Bill Banasiewicz can probably be called the ultimate Rush fan. A New Jersey native, the 'B-Man' has followed the band all over the country and the world and in time has gotten to be a close associate of their entourage. Now with the bands blessing, Bill has written the official biography of Rush entitled 'Visions'. 'B-Man' filled us in on one the book, and some of Rush's plans for the future.

B-Man The name of the book is 'Visions'. I got the title directly from one of their songs on the 'Hold Your Fire' album. The band is currently in the studio in Canada finishing off overdubs for a forthcoming two record live album. They just recorded four studio albums, so, as Rush history will note, it is time for another two record live album and that should be out sometime at the end of August. (As you all well know, it didn't arrive until January '89 - Ed.). They did shoot a full concert in Birmingham, England and the NEC and that's going out for home video consumption, shortly after the release of the album.

R.W. I'm Ray White, glad you could join us on The Legends of Rock.



# Rolling Stone Magazine Album Reviews

## Hemispheres

March 22, 1979

Fans will doubtless find *Hemispheres* another good, solid Rush album. And it's time to apprise the non-fans as well, because this power trio uniquely bridges the gap between heavy metal and sterile technology (sort of where Blue Oyster Cult used to work before going soft rock). The spine of Rush's sound is Alex Lifeson's broad, ringing guitar playing. Drummer Neil Peart is fluent at a large double kit, also adding colorations on various bells and blocks. Geddy Lee plays bass figures that fall just short of melodies, but his extremely high voice — either a triumphant cry or a grating yowl — is still a bone of contention. Though Lee can control his singing, he's often unnecessarily strident.

The pick to click here is "Circumstances," whose chorus reworks the tidal stresses of "Something for Nothing" in sprung rhythm and whose lyrics are the most personable, least didactic on the record. "Hemispheres," the obligatory space opera, was meant to expand on "Cygnus X-1" from *A Farewell to Kings*, but the musical and thematic references are only tangential; on the new LP, the words belabour the bejesus out of the heart/mind dichotomy and skimp on the science fiction. "The Trees" is an attractively droll political fable with a gorgeously rendered classical-guitar intro (one of Lifeson's arcane strengths). But the real new ground is Rush's first stab at an instrumental: "La Villa Strangiato" boasts taut riffing, acute tempos, flawless phrasing, the discipline to sound effortless and enough energy to flow in torrents.

Overall, especially in "La Villa Strangiato," Lifeson, Peart and Lee prove themselves masters of every power-trio convention. In fact, these guys have the chops and drive to break out of the largely artificial bounds of the format, and they constantly threaten to do so but never quite manage. If they don't succeed soon, complacency may set in. Already the lyrics are approaching a singsong regularity of meter, and the melodies are beginning to lean too heavily on mere chording. I affirm this band's ability to rock out, but I really want to give Rush a hard shove in the direction it's already heading.

— Michael Bloom

## Permanent Waves

May 1, 1980

It's easy to criticize what you don't understand, which at least partly explains why Canadian power trio Rush have suffered so much at the hands of rock journalists since the band's debut album in 1974. Critics find bassist-lead singer Geddy Lee's stratospheric wails and drummer Neil Peart's lyrical excursions into philosophy, science fiction and fantasy easy targets, and usually dismiss Rush as a head-banger's Genesis.

True, earlier LPs like *Fly By Night* and *Careless of Steel* bear the scars of the group's naivete. but now, within the scope of six short (for them) songs, Rush demonstrate a maturity that even their detractors may have to admire. On *Permanent Waves*, these guys appropriate the crippling riffs and sonic blasts of heavy metal, model their tortuous instrumental changes on Yes-style British art rock and fuse the two together with lyrics that — despite their occasional overreach — are still several refreshing steps above the moronic machismo and half-baked mysticism of many hard-rock airs.

Fortunately, Rush lead off with their trump card, a frantic, time-changing romp called "The Spirit of Radio." Not only is the sentiment right on, but the tune is packed with insistent hooks, including a playful reggae break that suddenly explodes into a Led Zeppelin-like bash. Guitarist Alex Lifeson makes the most of these hooks with harmonic inversions and aggressive solo breaks, taking off in "Freewill" and "Jacob's Ladder" with a theatrical agility that could give Jimmy Page pause for thought. Other surprises are a straight-ahead rocker with an artfully segued acoustic chorus ("Entre Nous"), a dramatic Genesis-style ballad ("Different Strings") and an overall sanding down of the abrasive edges of Geddy Lee's voice, revealing a far more competent, expressive singer than his original Robert Plant-like shriek might have suggested.

Rush's problem has rarely been competence, however. They simply don't play fashionable music. If they couldn't cut it on their own terms, that's be different. But this band is among the very best in its genre. And if the Top Five status of *Permanent Waves* is any example, it's a genre wherein critics don't count at all.

# Exit...Stage Left

February 4, 1982

Rush have been unfairly maligned as just another barnstorming heavy-metal act, fit only to vibrate arena walls. Actually, the group is a lot more interesting than cock-rockers like Van Halen or AC/DC, and far less compromised than Journey or Styx. "We didn't change, everybody else did!" proclaim the liner notes to their second live set, *Exit...Stage Left*, and, in a way, they're right. Rush represent the last profitable gasp of high-minded "progressive" rock, the province of virtuosic, storytelling, philosophizing bands that attracted huge audiences in the early Seventies.

Now that Yes have been shaken up, Genesis have gotten hip and even Kansas are in limbo, Rush have the underground-FM, "oh, wow"- profound market to themselves. True, Rush are a comedown from the early Yes they ravage, but at least they never mush out like Genesis. Their power-trio lineup keeps them hard-edged, despite the occasional synthesizer whoosh. And they're more single-mindedly propulsive than their forebears. Rush's ingenuity is channelled into complicated riffs below triumphant major chords, with Alex Lifeson's guitar serving largely as reinforcement for Geddy Lee's mammoth bass tones. Both live and in the studios, Rush's mixes make everything above the midrange sound like an afterthought — and that's just as well. Though Lee's falsetto isn't a shriek anymore, drummer Neil Peart's lyrics can still irritate. Taking individualism to Ayn Rand-inspired extremes, Peart's most pessimistic screeds suggest that in the upcoming apocalypse, every-man-for-himself will turn into a jump-the-other-guy.

There's not much propaganda on *Exit...Stage Left* — only "The Trees" (the maples unionize and, in the name of equality, destroy the taller oaks), "Free Will" (the group is for it) and "Tom Sawyer" (hardly the fun-loving guy Mark Twain invented). The rest of the record includes pessimistic fables ("Red Barchetta"), travelogues ("A Passage To Bangkok"), hippie-isms ("The Spirit Of Radio") and instrumentals ("YYZ" and "La Villa Strangiato," minus its original subtitle). Except for a singalong in "Closer to the Heart" and a jokey intro to "Jacob's Ladder," the versions here are virtually identical to the studio renditions, so Rush fans may

find the set redundant. Others might get a kick out of the big, surging E chords the band keeps pumping out and perhaps appreciate Peart's fine-tuned percussion, but one Rush album (preferably *Moving Pictures*) should be enough for almost anybody.

Just about everything Rush do can be found, more compactly, in Yes' "Roundabout," with the remainder in Genesis' "Watcher of the Skies." Everything except the philosophy — and stage left is, of course, to the audiences's far right.

2 and a half stars out of 5 — Jon Pareles

# Signals

October 28, 1982

On their twelfth album, Rush makes a strong argument for the view that advanced technology is not necessarily the same thing as progress. Unfortunately, they do so largely by screwing up. Although *Signals* is chockablock with state-of-the-studio gadgetry, ranging from the requisite banks of synthesizers to the latest in digital recording and mixing, none of these electronic add-ons enhances the group's music. If anything, Rush emerges from this jungle of wires and gizmos sounding duller than ever.

The band's chief error seems to have been emphasizing synthesizers at the expense of Alex Lifeson's guitar. Because Rush's concept of synthesized sound is so narrow — consisting mainly of the vague whooshing sounds that are the aural equivalent of dry-ice fog — the band tends to sound like it is trapped in wads of lint. With no edge to work against, Geddy Lee's congested vocals float through the songs like swamp gas. Ultimately, it's up to drummer Neil Peart's hyperkinetic thrashing to hold the performances together.

Ironically, Rush falls into this technological morass on an album that is otherwise their most poppish yet. By and large, the songs on *Signals* are tuneful and unencumbered by the sort of gratuitous flash that made previous albums seem like clearing-houses for worn-out art-rock licks. Even so, it's mostly a wasted effort, and nearly all of Rush's *Signals* come across as static.

2 starts out of 5 — J.D. Considine



## Grace Under Pressure

June 21, 1984

This album needs no critical assistance: If you like Rush, you'll love it; if not, then *Grace Under Pressure* is unlikely to alter your assessment of the band as a lumbering metal anachronism.

For the record, though, Rush has managed to incorporate a number of modern elements into its sound (note the almost danceable rhythms in "Afterimage" and "Red Sector A," and the swelling synthesizers and electropercussion throughout). Geddy Lee, the group's bassist and vocalist, has also gotten his dog-calling falsetto shriek under control.

But these signs of incipient hipness are not what sets young pulses racing throughout the North American heartland. Rush is a band with a message. Briefly put, it's "Be free, and don't let the grown-up world grind you down." Thus, on "The Enemy Within," Lee sings, "I'm not giving in/To security under pressure/I'm not missing out/On the promise of adventure." And the hero of drummer-lyricist Neil Peart's sci-fi allegory, "The Body Electric," is an "android on the run, seeking freedom."

The problem, though, is musical. On record, the lack of melody and any but the most rudimentary harmonic development soon becomes oppressive. In addition, Alex Lifeson is not a particularly interesting lead guitarist, and the strictures of the trio format still result in more splattery drum bashing than you'll ever care to hear. Rush delivers the goods, all right: strong social statements enveloped in a massive, pounding sound. But it's old news, and old music, too.

3 stars out of 5 — Kurt Loder

## Power Windows

While critics routinely dismissed Rush as pretentious operatic heavy-metal bozos, this indefatigable Canadian trio was actually busy becoming the Police of power rock. On their recent studio LPs, leading up to 1984's appropriately titled *Grace Under Pressure*, they tightened up their sidelong suites and rhythmic abstractions into balled-up song fists, art-pop blasts of angular, slashing guitar, spatial keyboards and hyperpercussion, all resolved with forthright melodic sense.

"The Big Money," the first hot FM focus track from *Power Windows*, may be the best of Rush's Cool Wave experiment to date. Neil Peart whips up a Molotov drum cocktail that is half Stewart Copeland psycho-ska and half "Blitzkrieg Bop"; from deep within his Edge-like echo pit, guitarist Alex Lifeson opens fire with a metallic descending chord sequence that rips through the song's chrome-finish production like grapeshot. In "Territories," a simple disco-style pulse becomes a Lifeson-spurred gallop, his Chinese guitar chatter alternating with the telegraphic synth patterns and sheet-metal keyboards played by singer-bassist Geddy Lee.

To most U2 and Simple Minds fans, these may not seem like major advances. There are moments when *Power Windows* sounds too much like the sum of its Eighties inspirations — that ghostly U2 resonance, the Police-like mesh of multi-rhythms and ping-pong dub effects. Yet Rush, no doubt responding to familiar impulses, revs up these songs with brute metal force. Lifeson's solo in "Grand Designs" teeters on white noise, his demon strokes dissolving into feedback howls and strangled vibrato, while Peart and Lee subdivide the beat into frenzied algebra.



This is not a case of old Seventies arena-rock dogs fudging new tricks. Rush remains faithful to vintage progressive aesthetics but has accepted the challenge of the postpunk upheaval and made notable adjustments. "Manhattan Project" is the first song about the A-bomb that successfully combines Genesis-like grandeur, real strings and a breakaway middle à la Siouxsie and the Banshees at full throttle. Lee has also toned down his keening shriek to a more accessible tenor; Peart, the group's uncompromising lyricist, has streamlined his verse to pithy effect.

None of this is likely to impress the New Wave in crowd, which is their loss. Because *Power Windows* may well be the missing link between Yes and the Sex Pistols.

— David Fricke

## A Show Of Hands

April 20, 1989

Although their fans treat the three members of Rush as if they were the Holy Trinity, the band chose the theme of another threesome — the Three Stooges — as the opening fanfare for its third live set. It's a bit of self-effacement to be found nowhere else on this album.

Most of the material on *A Show of Hands* is from *Power Windows* (1985) and *Hold Your Fire* (1987). Many of the performances stick closely to the studio versions, even down to having 'til Tuesday's Aimee Mann repeat her backing-vocal stint for "Time Stand Still." The sensation of a studio recording is heightened by the remarkable sound quality of the recording (even the crowd recorded well).

Rush's prodigious chops are proven crowd pleasers, but this collection is a morass of muscle-bound technique, quasi-profound lyrics and bassist-keyboardist Geddy Lee's shrill screech. Even the drum solo by the awe-inspiring Neil Peart ("The Rhythm Method"), complete with obligatory gong crash, is not nearly as good as what he throws into the regular songs. In spite of (or perhaps because of) all the pyrotechnics, the music has the emotional emptiness of bad jazz fusion. "Nothing can survive in a vacuum," as Lee squeals in "Turn the Page."

The last four numbers begin to redeem the album, but it's too little too late for this seventy-five minute, double-LP endurance test.

1 and a half out of 5 — Michael Azerrad

## Presto

January 25, 1990

When critic Lionel Trilling said, "Immature artists imitate. Mature artists steal," he wasn't talking about Rush, but he might as well have been. For the past sixteen years, as the group has gone from mimicking Led Zeppelin and Yes to approximating the Police, Rush has been too immaturely concerned with originality to just go ahead and rip off a riff or two from the greats. Consequently, there has always been something missing from the band's immaculately played techno metal. The band members admitted as much on "Mission," a song from their last studio LP, *Hold Your Fire*: "I hear their passionate music/Read the words/That touch my heart/I gaze at their feverish pictures/The secrets that set them apart."

With *Presto*, Rush makes a stab at greatness that rivals its one landmark LP, 1981's *Moving Pictures*. This has a lot to do with Rupert Hine's deft production, which camouflages Geddy Lee's typically shrill vocals to great advantage. But it's also because "Red Tide" doesn't imitate the Police, it simply steals the melody from "Message in a Bottle." Similarly, "Anagram (for Mongo)" doesn't recall Foreigner, it wisely just pilfers the epic chords from "Long, Long Way From Home."

Of course, *Presto* features lots of classic Rush (the fancy drum-bass interplay of "Show Don't Tell," the triumphant guitar solo on "The Pass"), as well as all the foibles — like overarrangement — that make the band's style so unpalatable. Although Rush-bashers still have plenty to bitch about, *Presto* is undeniably loose — evident in ballsy excursions into dance grooves ("Scars") and virtual folk rock (the title track) — by the band's standard.

Most surprisingly, it's not Alex Lifeson's beyond-Steve-Vai guitar work but Lee's infectious choruses that stand out on *Presto*. The album's only dōg, "War Paint," contains a truly great sing-along finale: "Boys and girls together/Let's paint the mirror black." To be sure, ever since "Subdivisions" ("In the high school halls/In the shopping malls/Conform or be cast out"), Rush has been the only band that mattered to lone-wolf suburban kids. Lyricist Neil Peart has typically been too much of a sourpuss to address that constituency intimately and effectively. Until now.

3 out of 5 — Bob Mack

Many thanks to the combination of Jimmy Lang and Meg Jahnke for these transcriptions, and David Arnold for The National Midnight Star.

# SLIPPERY JOBS

PART 2 OF A LONG (SHORT) STORY. BY A. JENNESS

The story so far..... Our three intrepid travellers, after being left stranded by the road crew, are desperately trying to get back to London. After hitch-hiking and being picked up by a couple of villains, the three men of Willowdale get dumped at a service station. While Geddy takes a leak, Alex and Neil hitch a ride in a camper van filled with nice friendly girls! Geddy is left behind with an old lady, a Police car appears and.....

Meanwhile:

Geddy abandoned by his chums wept, rent his garments and tore his hair, causing several observant young ladies to eye him in a predatory fashion.

Abandoned! Cast off like an old shirt! Forgot! He wailed not caring who witnessed his hour of grief.

There was a tap on his shoulder and he whirled round to look down...and down into the reproachful and unblinking gaze of a little old lady.

Well young man!? She snapped.

(Young? A voice inside his head questioned).

I hope you've got an explanation for this unseemly behaviour?

I'm lost, he sniffed.

Lost is as lost does, she replied, the lower fourth never cried when I took them on school trips.

(She's a school teacher! Said his brain, Flee!).

That was before I retired she went on, clasping her handbag to her chest, but a friend in need... she fished a pair of spectacles out of her cardigan pocket. Putting them on she eyed him up and down. Hum, well, I don't as a rule pick up strange young men especially ones in tights, but on this occasion...she turned and called out, follow me! As she marched off.

(That word again! Registered in his inner voice, and they're leggings not tights!).

Dumbly, he followed her to her car. It was a very clean, very shiny and very small Skoda. If a car could have had a personality this one would have had braces on its teeth, an anorak, an unhealthy interest in stamp collecting and he would be called Nigel. He got in and at a sedate twenty miles an hour they crawled off.



Can't this thing go any faster? Enquired Geddy as they meandered along the road and caused a pile up of irate drivers behind them.

Young man, I don't believe in speeding, it's bad for the digestion, and there's no-where on earth that can't be reached eventually.

Yes but in this lifetime? He questioned under his breath, but aloud said, Well, this is urgent, I have a plane to catch!

There's more than one plane you know, now then, deep breaths and relax, tension is bad for the digestion. So is a nervous breakdown.

Here, have a mint humbug but suck it slowly, bolting your food is...

I know, I know, bad for the digestion.

\* \* \* \* \*

C'mon P.C. Cribbins, step lively now otherwise our men will be putting on the suntan oil before we're through customs.

Do you think these really are the right men Sarge?

Well that's what they said on the radio Cribbins. Two men in a pair of tights fleeing from the scene of the crime and meeting up with their accomplices later on. Doubtless the ones that masterminded the whole operation, and a more seedy and disreputable bunch I have yet to see. I must admit they've been pretty clever splitting up like that to try and put us off the scent but they can't pull the wool over my eyes!

Really Sarge?

\* \* \* \* \*

The Policemen watched them go and then Sergeant Mold turned to P.C. Cribbins:

Well, that's all them answering the descriptions on the Police radio. We'll follow them.

Visions of Magnum P.I. and Hill Street Blues filled his head. There was plenty of room. 'Start the 'woo-woo's' constable'. And with that they sped off, lights flashing and siren on, going 'woo-woo' 'woo-woo' as Police sirens do.

And thus it was that a rather battered Ford Escort tried to shake off the shackles of law and order on the motorway, followed by a camper-van, a small Skoda and a Police car. The occupants of which were hysterical with excitement.

The sight that met their eyes on entering the van was quite something. A bevy of gorgeous luvlies graced the interior in varying states of undress like something from a James Bond film.

My goodness me, said Alex only in not so many words.

The lady from the drivers seat reappeared,

Well make yourselves comfortable, its going to be a very long ride.  
Har tragic, murmured Neil.

The girls all smiled seductively, some of them even looked round.

But I'm forgetting my manners, the lady continued, my card, and she handed it to Alex who read:  
"The Ms Whiplash Sensual Massage and Body Tanning Emporium - you'll be amazed at what we can do for you!"  
I bet we will, he muttered and passed it to Neil who read it and caught once or twice and then remained very quiet.

All these girls are in my employ, she went on, we're on our way to Westminster for their debate on tighter controls over soft drink bottle and can manufacture. Eh? Well, won't it just be full of old, rich and dirty minded politicians? Asked Alex innocently.  
Exactly! Now then girls, I want you to make these gentlemen comfortable.  
I'm sure they will, said Alex brightly, plonking himself down on a pile of discarded and impossibly lacy underwear. Now, would anyone like me to improve their handicap?

In no time at all (I'm running out of ideas!) drinks were uncorked, life stories swapped, discussions on the nature of the cosmos entered into and someone put the radio on.

Ah, The Spirit Of... began Neil.  
Shut up, said Alex.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now then girls, not all at once, there's plenty to go round, admonished Alex playfully.  
You should diet more, murmured Neil from the pile of scented silk cushions he reclined in.

Several skimpily clad beauties massaged his temples and shoulders while he read aloud from Ovids 'Metamorphoses.'

Do you really think they're interested in that stuff?  
Alex reached for another peeled grape.  
Alex, if you were lying here, the centre of attention for some of the worlds most beautiful women, would you really give a damn?  
Um... Yes well, point taken!  
Thank you! Oooh... a bit lower down please.

At that point dramatic licence insisted that someone turn the radio up half-way through the news bulletin.

"... and Police are still on the lookout for a gang of five men known to have robbed a bank in Birmingham. The descriptions of two of the men are not yet available but the other three have been sighted on the M1, two in a camper van, one blonde, one practically bald, the other is in a Skoda believed to be hijacked with the hostage still inside, he is said to have long dark hair, with a youthful appearance and a desperate air. All three have American accents and are said to be armed and dangerous."

The radio was turned off and in the silence that followed all eyes turned to Alex and Neil.

What a load of lies, spluttered Neil.  
Yes! A youthful appearance? How much did he pay them to say that?  
Practically bald! American! Neil continued to choke on his champagne, someone will suffer for this!

Alex suddenly noticed the shocked and worried looks being directed their way and muttered those immortal words:

I can explain everything.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Skoda trundled on while the little old lady explained the value of cold showers in public schools causing Geddy to be heartily glad that he was reared by The Bouncing Nuns of St. Beryl The Jezebel.

\* \* \* \* \*

After some ten minutes of gifted eloquence the travelling Emporium relaxed.





Well, we must get you boys back home, said Ms Whiplash, it's the least we can do.

How? Asked Alex, there are Police everywhere.

You'll have to be disguised otherwise they'll stop you to ask a lot of impertinent questions.

You mean like why we were doing 180 miles an hour in a stolen car with two burglars.

At a guess, yes.

What sort of disguise did you have in mind, asked Neil cautiously.

Girls! Called out Ms Whiplash, grab those wigs and your spare dresses and bring that make-up over here.

\* \* \* \* \*

And still the Skoda trundled on while the little old lady explained how to get the lumps out of school custard and just what to do with them afterwards.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometime later another two ladies had been added to the Ms Whiplash entourage. One rather sturdy blonde in a skintight black leather mini dress and with rather unbecoming hairy legs, the other a thin redhead in green sequins and feathers with thigh length P.V.C. boots.

Darling, squeaked Alex in jest.

Oh god, said Neil.

Better red hair than no hair! Laughed Alex.

You should know Neil glared.

At long last the strange convoy reached its destination. With a screech of brakes the mobile 'love-shack' pulled up in the airport car park. Behind it the Police car scrunched to a halt in a flurry of 'woo-woos' and its occupants leapt out and ran over to the camper. (In the melee the Ford Escort appeared, stopped and disembarked its passengers who caught the next flight to South America unmolested.)

We've got 'em now Cribbins, cried Sergeant Mold excitedly as he grabbed his truncheon and flexed it, cor I've always wanted to do this.

As the girls alighted in a slow crocodile of mind-boggling femininity he cried out.

'ello, 'ello, 'ello, what have we 'ere then?

Oh good grief, do they really say things like that?

Whispered Alex to Neil under the pretence of fixing his earrings.

No, it's just the author using a recognised stereotype.

Ah. I see.



The Madam came bustling over.

What seems to be the trouble officer?

Sergeant Mold pulled himself up to his full height of five foot nothing and intoned:

I've reason to believe madam, that you are harbouring dangerous criminals in your vehicle and I must ask you to stand aside while I search it....

Fine, go ahead then.

...protesting' is useless, I have my duty to and..pardon?

I said yes.

Erm... you did?

Go ahead and we'll all wait outside.

You don't mind?

No, just be quick will you? Some of us have a plane to catch.

Slightly non-plussed Sergeant Mold clasped his weapon and entered the van. P.C. Cribbins dutifully followed. Ten fruitless minutes later they emerged in puzzled bewilderment.

Found anything? Asked Ms Whiplash.

Erm... well...

Right then, we'll be off.

The entourage moved off with a click of high heels and a waft of unbelievably expensive perfume.

I could've sworn... muttered Mold.

'Ere Sarge, why's that big ugly one got such hairy legs?

Just then a rather dusty white Skoda wheezed to a halt next to the camper. A little old lady climbed out slowly and was followed by a distraught Geddy.

Yes, yes, I'm wearing a vest, he gabbled in answer to some probing question, no I won't forget to wash behind my ears.

And keep clear of loose women, she continued as she walked with him past the two officers, they only want one thing!

I should be so lucky, he mumbled.

Hairy legs... hairy legs, said Sergeant Mold to himself as they passed by.

And don't forget to write, she continued.

Hairy legs, Mold suddenly yelled.

I beg your pardon, the little old lady stopped and poked him in the chest with her umbrella.

Stop! Criminals! Yelled Mold and made a grab for Geddy who yelped and ran off.

Ahead of him the gaggle of girls suddenly scattered while two of them swore in a very unladylike fashion and legged it towards 'Departures' with Geddy in hot pursuit. As he drew level with them he caught a glimpse of their painted faces.

Ye gods! He cried.

We wondered if we'd run into you again, puffed Alex.

Have you two been keeping a secret all these years? His eyes moved suspiciously.

Don't be ridiculous! Hissed Neil between wheezes, we're in disguise.

Shut up and just keep running. Ordered Alex as they all did a sharp turn at 'Duty Free' From behind them came the sound of someone being whacked soundly with an umbrella and Mold's enraged howls of...

Stop! Stop! I say in the name of the... WILL YOU STOP HITTING ME MADAM!

Go on Sarge, you tell 'em, cried Cribbins entering into the spirit of things.

They passed a startled flock of tourists and skidded to a halt in front of a blank wall.

Uh oh! Dead end, groaned Geddy

Quick barricades, cried Alex, grab those soft chairs!

Ooh, said Neil, just like Paris in the 1848 revolutions.

Oh shut up!

This isn't going to work you know, Geddy abandoned himself to his despair and tried to hide himself behind a rather straggly potted palm.

Well they won't take me alive, Alex gritted his teeth. Go ahead, make my day, Neil growled as he slowly turned to face their approaching pursuers and moved the cigar to the other side of his mouth. His poncho rippled in a light breeze... sorry where was I?

Good evening and here is the news at 9 o'clock. After a desperate car chase today, Police have finally apprehended several known criminals believed to be part of an international crime syndicate. The men were arrested at Heathrow airport after being cornered for five hours behind a row of soft chairs and cleaning mops. The men had originally refused to surrender but gave in after Police promised them strong coffee and some make-up remover. As they were led away one of them is alleged to have whimpered:

No, no, it's all been a horrible nightmare! I want to go home!

Later on:

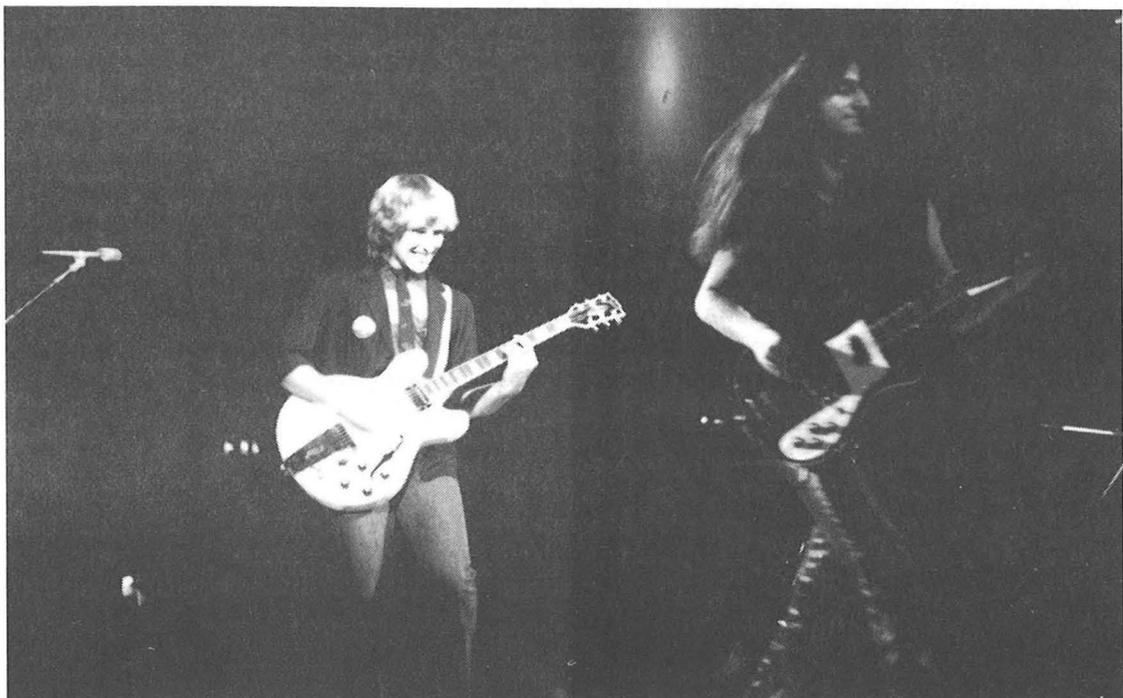
A plane winged its way in slow and stately grandeur across darkening skies. From the baggage hold came the sound of hysterical voices.

Honestly, they could've done better than this!  
At least we're going home Geddy!  
Yes but like a load of parcels?  
For gods sake we're mega-stars!!  
Well now, a man in adversity is likened by Aristotle to..  
SHUT UP NEIL!

\* \* \* \* \*

POSTSCRIPT:

The author would like it known that any resemblance to any person living is the result of much hard work and is purely intentional. It should be taken in the spirit with which it was intended. Furthermore, the author would like to stress that she is often alone at weekends and can be reached on... (That's enough of that! - Ed).



# AFTERIMAGES

This time around we look at another article from Circus magazine, following the release of ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE.

# AFTERIMAGES

"Ooooh-yeah!" It's Rush on the rampage, a screaming hard rock band from Canada. Drummer Neil Peart is in back, flailing away in the heavy, ornamental style required of drummers in power trios. Golden-haired Alex Lifeson's guitar whines, and up front, bassist Geddy Lee gives forth with the shrill, screeching vocals that have given Rush its reputation as "Led Zeppelin junior."

That's a first impression, but have you looked and listened lately? Neil Peart, who's the band's lyricist and is full of articulate, well-conceived explanations for every aspect of Rush's existence suggests optimistically, "The connection with Led Zeppelin doesn't come quickly anymore. 'Screaming hard rock band' is a limited assessment of our group."

And indeed it is. But first impressions die hard, and it takes a second look to realise how far the band has come so since the release of its first album, Rush, back in 1974.

Now, the band is giving everyone an opportunity to see at a glance where it's come from and where it has arrived, via a newly released live set, All The World's A Stage, on Mercury. The two record set presents the band's current hour-and-a-half headlining show in its entirety, a show that comprises material from all four of its Mercury albums Rush, Fly By Night, Caress Of Steel and 2112. All The World's A Stage was recorded during a three day stand from June 11-13 at Massey Hall in the band's native Toronto.

Why a live album now?

"With 2112, we felt we had reached a first plateau. We had realised the goals we set for ourselves before the second album when Peart replaced the band's former drummer John Rutsey. Musically, it looked like a logical place to do a live album. We had four albums worth of material honed down into a live show. And the record company was hot for a live album."

Peart feels that the live album will help present a more accurate picture of where the band is currently at.

"When we play a piece live, we add all our little quirks to it. It grows; our older material shows a remarkable progression. Some of the old songs have developed until they're superior to the

originals. This gives us a chance to bring them up to date. We always felt there was something happening live that didn't come across on record. Now we have the opportunity to capture that essence of the band.

"Also, All The World's A Stage presents our material to people who may have heard or liked a couple of our songs, but never got into all our albums. Now they can have those songs together on one album without our having to put out a Best Of Rush package."

The Canadian trio acquired their sticky label as just another screaming hard rock band back in 1974 when they leapt feet first into recording. That debut album emerged after five years of gigging around high schools and bars in southern Ontario. Finally, Lifeson, Leé and Rutsey decided it was time to move on and they entered a local studio to put down an album. Recording was done late at night and in short spurts due to lack of finances. Rutsey was on the verge of leaving. He had been the band's prime lyricist, and shortly the band was left in the lurch with an album's worth of music without words. Lee leapt into the void, hastily supplying lyrics, a task he didn't take to and which later fell to Peart.

The resulting product was turned down by every record company in Canada and put out independently by the band's management on their own label, Moon Records.

By lucky accident, an import copy fell into the hands of Cleveland's trendsetting WMMS, where music director Donna Halper was instrumental in bringing the band to the attention of both Mercury Records and their American agency, ATI. Mercury released the Canadian album in the U.S. By that time, Peart had joined the band and the group had, for the first time, defined what it was attempting musically. The album was no longer truly representative of them, yet it was on that album that they first toured the U.S. and got shoved in a pigeon-hole.

Peart explains what happened to Rush at that point: "The first time the three of us got together there seemed to be an understanding. We wanted to achieve the same goals. Up until that time, there wasn't that seriousness. We realised that there are a lot of issues contingent to being a musician, a lot of choices to be made. That was when everything became professional. There was money in five figures involved.

"Most of the material on the first album had existed for five years the band had played it around bars and high schools in Ontario. But with the second album, we wrote the material specifically for the album."

As the band discussed the territory it wanted to explore musically, the members found that, despite broad musical tastes, they shared an admiration of English progressive music groups such as Yes, Genesis, Pink Floyd, the Moody Blues and Supertramp.

"All of us are admirers of the English progressive wave. We looked at the roots we had, which was hard rock music. But we decided that what we wanted to do was a combination of progressive music and hard rock. I think we finally achieved that with the last album

[2112]. The softer things and the harder things seem to have more continuity. Caress Of Steel and Fly By Night were more experimental. So now it's time for us to set more goals."

Which are?

"Well, we've tossed around some formats and concepts. The last two albums had one side devoted to a theme piece. I think our next album will have more space, giving us more room to spread out.

"We're expanding our individual sounds. Alex just got a doubleneck guitar, and Geddy's been experimenting with Moog bass pedals. He's getting a doubleneck too. I'll be using keyboard percussion, things like tubular bells."

Peart's lyrics especially show a debt to English cosmic/rock groups, with their sweeping range and grand ambitions. "2112," for instance, is the saga of an individual grasping for freedom in a highly regimented future society.

"I'd never thought seriously about writing lyrics until I joined this band," Peart admits, "and it became a necessity because no one else was doing it. I'm an avid reader though." Among his literary tastes are Tolkein, Ayn Rand, 18th century novelists like Hardy, science fiction and mysteries. "Actually, I'm a high school dropout, but I've educated myself."

Rush's ability to emulate the musical approach of the keyboard dominated English cosmic groups without duplicating their sound is one of the advantages Rush finds in remaining a guitar/bass/drums trio, a format that has fallen out of favour in the 70's.

It's a format that Rush is still enthusiastic about, and Peart's got a handful of good reasons for that too.

'It's a nice extra challenge to us. I don't think we've taken it as far as it can go. It puts more responsibility on each of us. Trios were split in two waves. There were the progressive trios like Hendrix and Cream, and the garbage trios that gave them a bad name. Trios did a lot of beautiful things.

"This band has almost always been a trio. Back before I joined, it had a keyboard player or rhythm guitarist for brief periods. And we're always re-evaluating whether to add a fourth member. But we have such good interpersonal chemistry that we're afraid to upset it. I went from band to band before I joined this group and I've seen a lot of ego problems. This band is blessedly free from that."

Now that the band has defined its goals and, to its mind, achieved them in its blend of progressive sounds and conceptual lyrics with hard rock music, former doubters, the ones who tagged them "heavy metal screamers," have gone to hear them and come out surprised.

But the band isn't that worried about its unjustly shallow reputation. Peart insists sincerely, "The music we're playing is the music we honestly want to play. I like playing hard rock; it gives me a lot of scope. There have been inferior hard rock bands and people have used it to disguise a lack of talent.

"Our strongest point is our mentality, I think. The thing I love about this band is that we're honest. We're not in it purely as a matter of economics. It's fun and enjoyable. We would like to become rich, but that's not our sole objective. We don't see the point of trying to get a hit single by appealing to the lowest common denominator."

But the band considers itself lucky that so far it hasn't had to make any concessions.

"We've justified ourselves in the eyes of scoffers the people in the music business who, when we'd outline what we wanted to do, would sigh and roll their eyes toward heaven, taking a "word to the wise" attitude. They encouraged us to repeat what we'd already done. But we've encountered no undue opposition.

"We thought 2112 was an ambitious project. It's progressive and it takes more than a casual listen to appreciate it. But it outsold the other three albums by twice. The others were way back around the 100,000 mark. So far, 2112 is up to 260,000. Just when it was crucially important, we pulled through."

Touring has been critical to Rush's mounting popularity, so a live album is especially appropriate. "There are only two ways to be successful," Peart feels. "One is to have a hit single or a string of them. The other is to be around so much, to always be touring, so that you'll have to be noticed."

And Rush has been around a lot. In the past 20 months, they have toured around the U.S. almost constantly. A number of acts that took that route to success Bob Seger, Kiss, Peter Frampton broke out really big with a live album that showcased what they were best known for. Could the same thing happen to Rush?

"I'm very curious," says Peart. "But that's the record company's problem. We've got honest motives for putting out a live album now.

"I just re-read Ayn Rand's novel 'The Fountainhead' for the first time in years, and I'm relating it to the music business. It deals with the corruption of the spirit. A lot of people outside music have no idea how much corruption there is under the shell. I like to feel we're doing our part to change that through our music. And so far, we've managed to justify our ideals to the people in the music business and they're the ones that count, because they're the ones in a position to hurt us."

**THAT WAS THE YEAR**  
**2 1 1 2**

# S I G N A L S

Dear Ed,

Firstly thankyou to the lady who handed me the 'Spirit Of Rush' card outside Wembley on Friday 17th April.

Secondly, a special thankyou to David Morrison for taking me to see the fantastic trio in action, hope I get a chance to see them again; (and for introducing me to their music). Mind you, I wish I could have gone with David's friend Peter in Scotland as he had seats down the front, (joke David!).

Wembley was an experience I wouldn't have missed for the world. To be with so many people who all share the same feelings was undescrivable. The first time I heard Rush was October 91, '2112', I thought this was good. After that I then borrowed 'Grace Under Pressure' this was fantastic. After that I listened to all the others, 'Hold Your Fire', 'Power Windows', 'Presto', 'RTB' etc..

It's like going to a sweet shop and trying to decide which one is your favourite, I love them all, - Talking of love, I'm in love with Geddy. His voice is great; Neil and Alex aren't that far behind though. I don't think my husband minds much!.

Rush have two other fans, my daughters Gemma (7) and Kirsty (5), Kirsty can sing along to a lot of the songs, I've even caught her playing 'air guitar', haven't they got good taste.

Well, I'm looking forward to reading more of 'SOR'.

MARION HALE (ESSEX)

Dear Ed,

A short while back, I was at one of our local record and CD sales. I run a table, and as the show was just about to start I thought I would look around before the crowds were upon us.

I noticed on a table across the aisle a box of 45's about two feet long. I started flipping through them, but I didn't have much time and I don't care much for looking through piles of 45's and finding nothing, I asked the guy at the table if he had any Rush singles in the box. His first answer was "No", then he thought for a minute and said "I think there might be one in there", he started looking himself near the rear of the box. I was expecting him to pull out a U.S. Mercury or one of the usual Anthem singles that are still around. I



was very wrong.

As he pulled up a few more I couldn't believe what I saw. - There it was; the unmistakable blue label with the Moon Records logo, 'Not Fade Away', the first single, I almost fell off the floor! How much for that I asked, one dollar he replied. I fumbled in my pocket and handed him a two dollar bill, keep the change I said, I've been looking for this for a while.

I have had many opportunities to pay hundreds of dollars for this, but I always said to myself that I would find it in the manner that I did, as the old saying goes "good things come to he who waits".

I hope there are others who will find this or any other item as I did; it sure feels great!.

DAVE 'O'

A PATIENT AND DESERVING FAN (CANADA)

Dear Ed,

I have been very moved lately by the number of people who have spoken freely about the importance of Rush in their lives. I would just like to take this opportunity to say that for the past four years I have lived and breathed Rush. If they ceased to exist it would be a major bereavement.

As a self confessed idealist and escapist I can truly say that Rush came to my rescue in 1989 when I was going through a difficult stage in my life. The greatly inspirational 'Presto' album gave me hopes when I was in the depths

of despair. Therefore it is hardly surprising that Wednesday 15th April at the SECC was the most important day of my life.

The concert left me on cloud nine (not to mention pictures of Alex in the tour book). Now I know the true meaning of the word elation. As I am a poet and a writer myself, I find real inspiration in Neil's deep, meaningful lyrics, he must surely be the best lyricist in Rock music today.

There's so much more I could say, but I really want to thank Geddy, Neil and Alex for putting on a fantastic show. (thanks also to my friend George, for putting up with me). Here's to many more albums in the future, I'll be with you guys all the way.

There is one small problem however, all I need is an Alex look alike in my life and my happiness will be complete. Do I have a ghost of a chance?, you bet your life.....

KATE LE PAGE (GLASGOW)

Dear Ed,

Thanks very much for the latest edition, the best yet and I'm sure there are many more to come.

I would like to say that I was at the Glasgow gig in April, and that Rush have got to be THE loudest band that I have seen in a long time. It was the first time that I had seen them, although I've been a fan since 'Moving Pictures' it's strange though 'cos I've felt with some bands that have a similar cult following, that once you see them live they destroy a lot of the mystery and grandness that you feel.

Rush, however are still as intriguing and fascinating as ever. I must say though that normally I hate the new Rush album when it first comes out, 'cos the last one has always been so good that you come to expect more of the same, this time was no different, but after a while all of 'RTB' is excellent, unlike side two of 'Presto' which I thought was a bit weak, and this is no slander to the band, just my own thoughts. 'The Pass' more than makes up.

Back to business, I handed out all my 'Spirit Of Rush' cards and, I would be very interested to know if you had a influx of subscribers. Does this explain the excellent colour cover of issue 18, come on let us know!

ED'S NOTE:- WE HAVE INCREASED OUR READERSHIP THANKS TO EVERYONES EFFORTS.  
KEEP SPREADING THE WORD THOUGH, CHEERS.....

Folks, if you haven't gotten stuck into those back issues do so NOW before they all go. Keep rolling and remember readers, don't disengage just turn the page, and the next and so on.

PS:- I think that 'Lover Of The Leroxst King' (see issue 18 page 25) should have signed off as 'Alex Lifeson's G String'.....

COLIN HENDERSON (SCOTLAND)

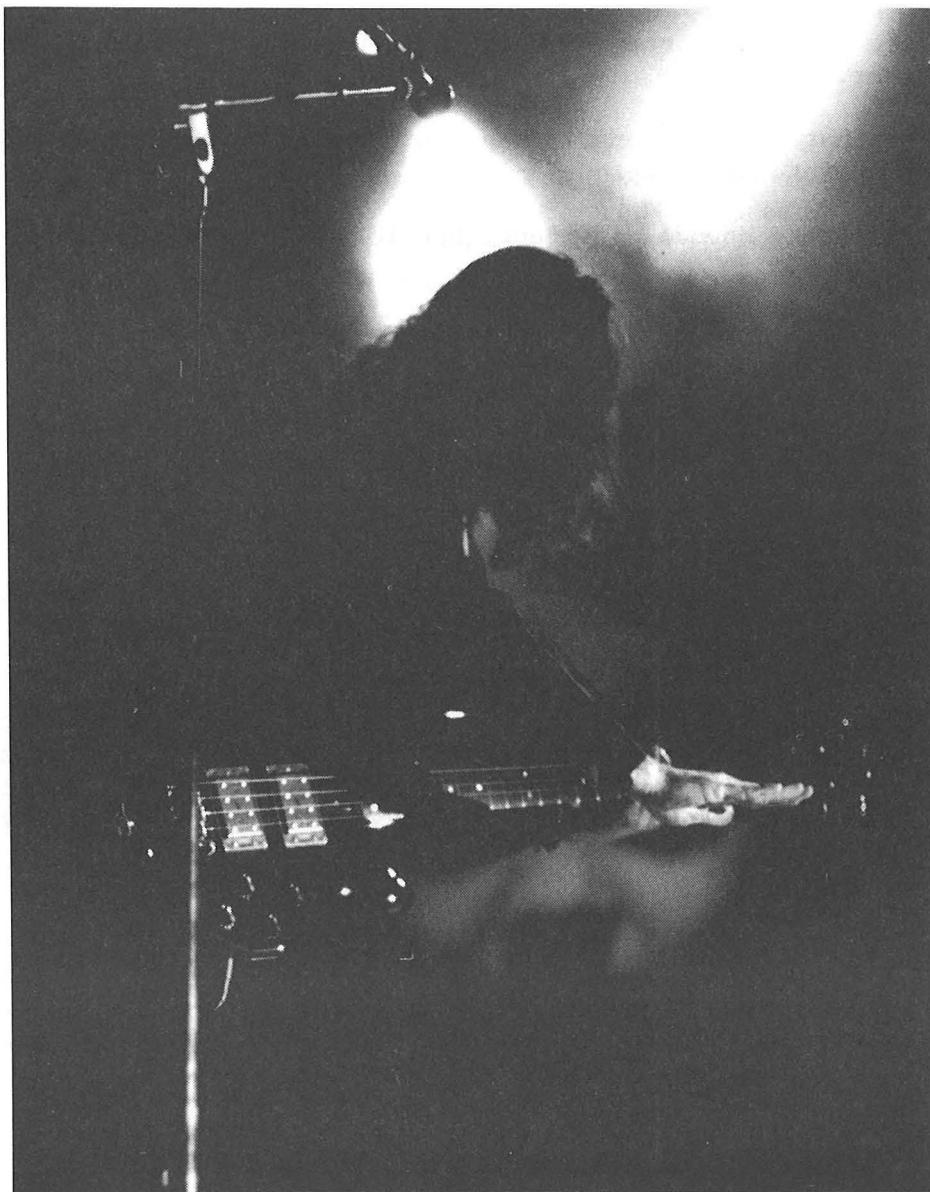
Dear Ed,

I recently compiled my own 'best of' tapes covering each of Rush's different periods. I had always assumed that the period between 'A Farewell To Kings' and 'Moving Pictures' was my favourite because, in my opinion, they'd got the balance just right, i.e. the introduction of keyboards giving more depth to the music, but still maintaining a 'hard rock' sound.

However, now I'm not so sure. I know not everybody will agree with what I'm about to write but I think that the actual musical content was at it's peak at this time. Don't get me wrong, I still think that they write great songs, but, I think that they, using the technology of today it is possible to make it sound a million times better using different guitar sounds and keyboard textures and high quality productions ( eg. Hysteria by Def Leppard).

As I say, this is just my opinion and it would be very interesting to see what other readers thoughts are on the subject. This letter is dedicated to the 'Emotion Detector' (personal message).

ANDY PARSONS (DUDLEY)



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE SMITH

# ***GUP** RADIO SPECIAL*

- Geddy We all feel like we've got so much great music in us which has never come out.
- Neil As songwriters we have wanted to take a mirrored kind or progression.
- Alex Went into the studio feeling really good about it, knowing exactly what we were going to do.
- Neil It was basically looking at things with a lot of compassion, but at the same time with anger.
- Geddy We admit number one, we don't want to stop working with each other.
- Alex Not that it was wrong in the past, but it's just again growth and something different.
- Geddy The record sounds different, but it still sounds like us to me.
- Neil It reflects my reading and reflects my progression of knowledge about words and how to say things.
- Geddy When we first start getting into lyrics like this and we read them over to ourselves and we talk about subject matter - you know it opens up a lot in you.
- Alex We are basically a hard rock band but if we can bring in elements of contemporary music that's happening, it can only be a healthy thing. A change is important and growth is important.
- Inter-viewer After 10 years of working and performing together, Rush still enjoy their constant progression, moving on to a new musical boundaries, images, messages and lyrical frontiers. In this radio special we'll hear from Geddy, Neil and Alex as they talk about their newest album, "Grace Under Pressure".

## **DISTANT EARLY WARNING**

- Inter-viewer One of the biggest changes for Rush in the making of "Grace Under Pressure" was using British producer Peter Henderson. After having Terry Brown as the director in the studio since their first album it was quite a different experience for them, but was a needed change as Neil, Alex and Geddy explain.

Neil It's very much a catalytic relationship with us. We don't hire a producer to dig tape but we hire someone to work with, and of course this is the first time we've ever worked with anyone other than Terry Brown. So it was a very, very different experience for us just working with someone who didn't know either in a personal or a working technical sense. So there was just a constant interplay of his opinions and his methods with what we had grown accustomed to and us trying to be just as open minded as possible to anything he would suggest, - because our whole purpose of working with someone else was to find out what it was like to work with someone else. We tried very hard to be as open as we could. There was a chemistry that had to develop and did develop between us, that was very good.

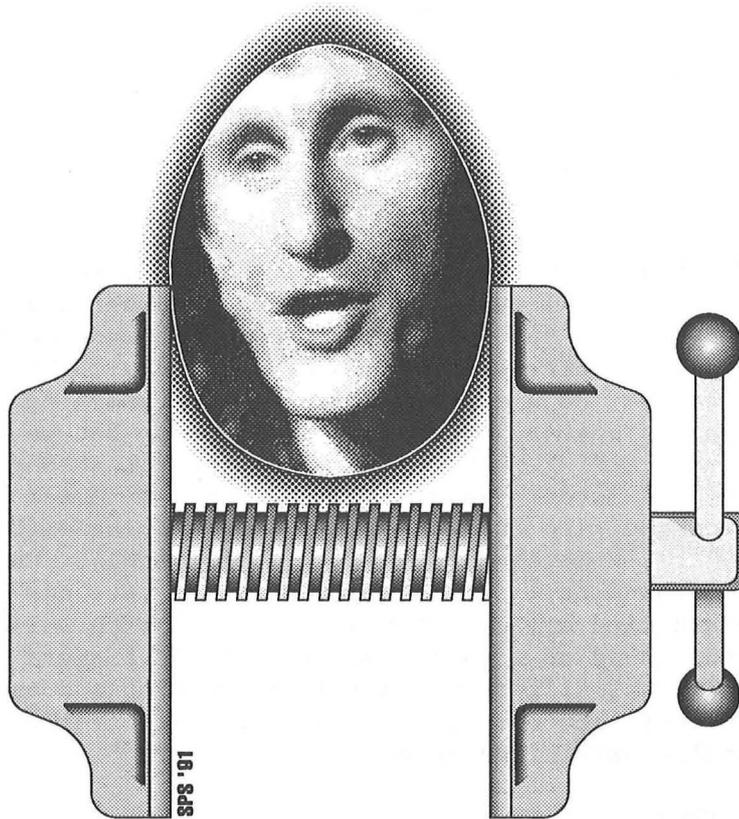
Alex I think we as a band worked a lot harder on the production than we have in the past and that was part of the reason for making the switch. We gotten to know each other so well with Terry it was so predictable, and we wanted that element of surprise and uncertainly, and I think we got it with this record.

Geddy After every album you always feel like, OK, well that sounds pretty good but I still feel I have it in here, it still hasn't come out yet. So we figured we've made so many records with Terry - and we enjoy working with Terry tremendously, he's a great friend, and a great person and a very good producer, nothing to take away. But we realise we're not getting younger and we have a lot to say musically and we have never - we admit number one, we don't want to stop working with each other, we like working with each other, it's something we don't want to change. So we have to change around us. It was time to go out into the big bad world and find some other people to work with. I realise that the sound of a band comes from their fingers and you can put them in 5 different studios and it almost doesn't matter what guitar they use or who's behind the board, somehow their personality will come through.

#### **AFTERTIMAGE**

Inter- Alex Lifeson tells how Rush have developed their songwriting  
viewer and playing over the past years.

Alex I think it's grown. I suppose we first started thinking like that with Permanent Waves. The idea was to write songs that were a bit shorter, a little more condensed with again the feel you can really grab onto it. I guess that you go through a period where you really want to show off your dexterity and well we can play in this bizarre key, do all these crazy things. We went as far as we could with that, I think, and it's getting a little self indulgent at times. We just turned around and went for the song, for a really good song.



Inter- As Neil Peart explains the questioning feelings that permeate  
the record lyrically.

Neil It was basically looking at things with a lot of compassion but at the same time with anger. There's no denying that I've taken a kind of different lyrical tone this time. I don't think it is a permanent change but it is a phase that reflects my reading and reflects my progression of knowledge about words and how to say things. There's more current events on this album, certainly, which is a sensitivity to what's happened to the lives of people around me. Basically I've looked at my friends and watched the trouble they have gone through in the last year or two and the difficulties that life has presented for the whole world. But also in a microcosm from myself I used the second person singular a lot on this album, where as Signals was a lot of the third person singular. I used 'he' all through that album and I might have been talking about me, I might have been talking about you, I might have been talking about them, but I used he as my device. And this album my device was the second person singular which is a very important thing that no one has mentioned yet, the fact that it's always about you. It's about the singular you and that the point of view I was writing from. I felt this tremendous reaction to what was going on, this tremendous pathos, compassion for the tragedy I saw in peoples lives, being unemployed and peoples lives being ill and reading the paper every day while working on the new material, those things that were happening in the news couldn't help but creep into the lyrics also. So if it seems a bit darker, perhaps it is, but it doesn't reject anything I've said in the past. So the optimism and idealism that I've still expressed is still true. But it's tempered now with an essence of understanding, what is as opposed to what ought to be, and also a feeling for what is opposed to what ought to be, which is important. It is a common mistake, I think, to cut yourself off from the reality what people are dealing with. Because it's easy to say "Well they should be doing your thing". I read a great quote the other day that kind of applies here. My brother sent it to me, it's a quote from Oscar Wilde saying "Selfishness is not living as you wish to live, it's wishing others to live as you wish to live". That's an essential truth that I think really applies to some of the things I've said in this album to.

#### **RED SECTOR A**

Inter- From Grace Under Pressure, the new album by Rush, Red Sector  
viewer A. Geddy Lee tells how the song came about.

Geddy The music for that came out of a jam we were having. What we did on the last two tours is every time we go in for a sound-check we tried to get in a little early so we can play for half an hour, just play, without structure, without anything. Jon, our soundman, tapes all of these. At the end

of every tour I take all these tapes home and I listen through them, and it's really interesting. Sometimes it's rambling garbage but sometimes there's moments which are so spontaneous and they just move you. Part of that song came from a moment such as that.

Inter-     Such as Neil tells us how the word red became such a used  
viewer     word in the album.

Neil       The use of red is more whimsical than authentic because I just happened in the last couple of years to get a strong feeling for the colour red. Red anything is really an exciting, vibrant colour and bespeaks excitement, it's a brash colour. Really as the Red Sector A title comes from a whimsical way from the area that we sat in when we watched the launch of the space shuttle Columbia. The visitors area in which we were was called Red Sector A. Well I've had it in my note book as being a great sounding thing for a long time, so when I needed a name that was non political, and non geographical and also non temperal for that song (because I didn't want it to be set in any particular historial time and if possible I wanted it to slightly suggest the future) so it was a perfect title. The fact it had red in it was coincidental, that was the name of the place, and Rockets Red Glare was a nod to the star spangled banner and Red Lenses is of course a play on words of rose coloured lenses and of anger and bloodshot eyes, and to me I love the sound of the word lenses and they had to be red. That was kind of accidental and Red Alert is a phrase, the kind of little phrase I write down all the time because I like them. I like the way they hit me and I like the sound of the words. To some extent it's coincidental all those reds and once I started to see that pattern I just played on it because I liked it, I like the colour, I like the word also, it's a great little word, "RED".

#### **ENEMY WITHIN**

Inter-     Geddy explains how he feels about putting music to lyrics  
viewer     such as the Enemy Within.

Geddy     I'm of the belief that whenever you're talking that's hard and tough to take, that the music should be diametrically opposed to that. Every once in a while you could take something that's on a downer, on a blue lyric for example, and if the music is blue, you've got one big blue (which sometimes for its own sake is nice to do). I'm of the opposite belief. I believe that if you're talking about something heavy that the music shouldn't reflect that heaviness. In that way I like to go to the opposite, I like to bounce in the other. I like to sing heavy lyrics but really be snappy when I'm singing them because it seems to make better communication somehow. Instead of people going "this is like a pillow of darkness", I like to intrigue people by these lyrics and saying "We're talking about

something here, I'd rather hold out a hand instead of having this dark cloud sitting there".

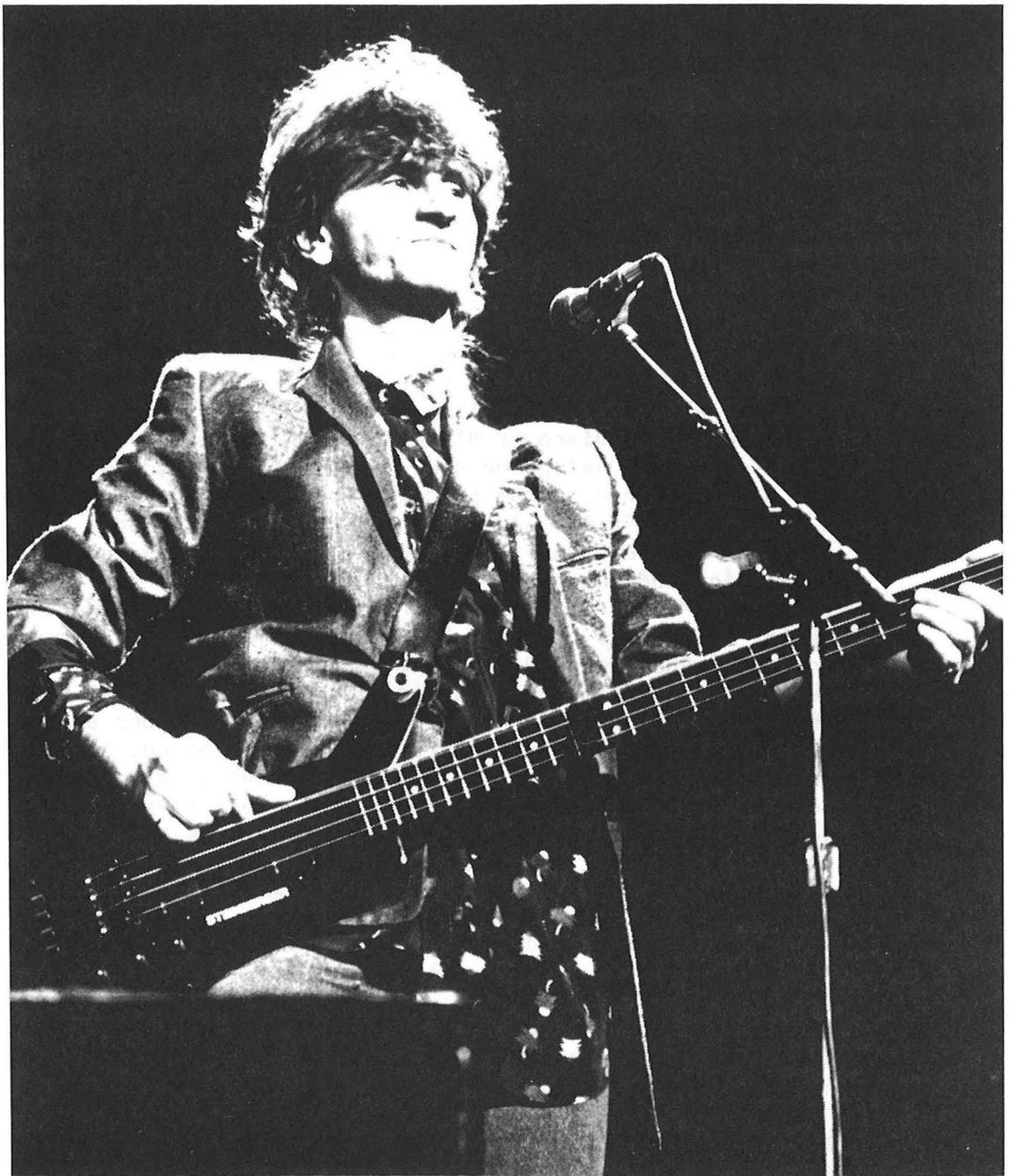
Inter- Band lyricist Neil Peart gives us his thoughts on the track  
viewer The Body Electric, a certain nod to previous science fiction material that Rush has done in the past.

Neil It has always been a great vehicle and it's a thing I said around the time when I was writing more using that background, is that it's not important to me, the fact of technology or vision of the future and all that, but if you want to express something it's the perfect way to do it because there are no preconceived parameters to it. Your imagination, or the idea that you want to present is given free reign and you can paint things as black or white as you chose, to illustrate your point. On this case it was again another way of expressing a kind of compassion and it growing out of a machine thing. Great writers like Rod Serling and John Windham have explored that before and have given machines thoughts and feelings and of course I was subsequently to discover Blade Runner also, was a very excellent story using the same premise that I had used for The Body Electric. I am glad that the song came first before I had seen the film. As soon as I showed it to Geddy and Alex who had seen the film, they both immediately drew the connection and suggested I see the film. It was the same idea and I think you can feel compassion for a machine that feels. There was no deep underlying theme to it but it was something that touched me, that idea. It grabbed me that here should be a human metaphor also of an individual trying to escape something and drawing to that grace under pressure again, and also an angle of religion I brought out in it to which Blade Runner made use of. And I have read in other science fiction books to as machines because they develop sentence; they also develop religion and to me the image of the android bowing and praying to this mystical figure, which was the mother of all machines, and to me I find that very effective. It gives me a chill somehow.

#### **THE BODY ELECTRIC**

Inter- The Body Electric from Grace Under Pressure, Alex's guitar  
viewer sound and his approach to the material is different on this album. Here he tells how it came about.

Alex In the past we used a different mixing technique, a little further away from the amps, a little bit more of the room. Different types of mics where the sound was a little brighter, not quite as worn. With this record I have been listening to a lot of the live tapes Jon Erickson our sound engineer, had been making during the last tour. The sound on these tapes was really good and I thought why don't we approach it like that. Mic it like we do live and see what we get and if it does not work out we can just toss it out. And we set up the mics, close micing, using dynamic mics and



it sounded great, right off the bat. It needed a little bit of work but it sounded really quite good. It didn't take too much EQ and it took a bit of compression, the sort of things you do in studios to enhance sounds. But it wasn't a chore that maybe it was in the past finding a really good guitar sound. As a result of that the guitar is warmer, it's more abrasive without being brittle. I think it's definitely what I wanted as far as a guitar sound. There are a few solos on this record where I approached it from more a rhythmic type solo rather than a flurry of notes. I have really gone off that now, I want to make the most out of the fewest number of notes.

### **KID GLOVES**

Inter-     Geddy talks about today's music and lyrics and the different  
viewer     slant Rush has to this.

Geddy     There's some really nice music being made but it's music that  
           doesn't really push you. But it's an era of love, it's an  
           era of romance, it's an era of discussing break ups between  
           two people, it's an era of discussing all that goes along  
           with that. I don't know if that's emotion or sentimentality  
           or what's the fine line that divides emotion and something  
           that's just sentimentality, I don't know. It feels to me  
           that a lot of the music today is just sentimentality even  
           though it's very good and sometimes you need to cut through  
           that.

Inter-     One of the most unusual pieces for Rush to do on the album  
viewer     was the track Red Lenses. Here Alex tells how it developed.

Alex       Well Neil had worked on a drum pattern that he had wanted to  
           use. That was the drum pattern for the chorus and we started  
           writing around that. It was such a crazy drum pattern that  
           we thought let's go really crazy and make it real funky, and  
           that was the approach to it. And the red sections, which if  
           you want to call them the versus, they have more a fusion  
           kind of feel to them or a jazzy rock kind of feel in the use  
           of the chords and in the way the patterns are. It was really  
           a lot of fun, when we started doing it - it was something  
           that was really un-typical for us.

### **RED LENSES**

Inter-     Red Lenses from Grace Under Pressure and talking of lenses,  
viewer     how did the great master photographer Yousuf Karsh get to  
           take the picture of them on the back sleeve. Geddy Lee  
           explains.

Geddy     We've never had, I don't think, since 2112 we've ever had  
           picture of the three of us together, let alone on the back of  
           an album cover. We've always stayed away from it. We were  
           going through a weird hiding from reality of what we do for a  
           living kind of thing. But the last year was so difficult for

a lot of reasons. And as a result we wanted a picture of the three of us together instead of individual portraits. Neil said let's get a Karsh like photo, that was his way of describing it, and I said lets get Karsh. Somebody in our office called him up and he was thrilled to bits to do it. He'd never taken a photo of a rock band before. I think he was a little disappointed in us to tell you the truth. I think he wanted us to be a little more extravagant, crazy guys with make-up and wild hair, whatever. So I think we were a little conservative for him.

Inter-  
viewer     A track on the new album which seems to sum up the feelings of this new work is Between The Wheels, Geddy Lee.

Geddy     We're so bombarded by so many aspects of this. Every day you pick up, - I heard a little while ago how many wars there were going on at the present time in the world, it was mindboggling. When we first start getting into lyrics like this and we read them over to ourselves, and we talk about the subject matter, you know it opens up a lot in you. It opens your emotions up and you start feeling a lot of things. One side of you says well this is pretty heavy stuff, do I really want to get into it, but the other side of you is saying but you have to get into this. This is what life is about. My stomach is churning over this now so how can you get into it. But the thing we tried to add is that you don't get a feeling that is hopeless, and Red Alert is the best way to describe this. It's like, OK, this is the world we live in, look around and lets recognise how do we cope with it, we're trying to cope. I think that's what we're saying in a way, we're trying to have some grace under all this pressure.

#### **BETWEEN THE WHEELS**

Inter-  
viewer     And as a final note Neil gives us an indication of the spirit that moves him and the band into new areas and directions.

Neil     I cannot stand still listening to music and I might love an album passionately for a month but the next month it'll be something else. And because of that hunger as a listener it drives me always to be looking for new kinds of music and new artists and so on. It keeps me growing stylistically and in terms of influences it's changing so rapidly because of that in me as an individual. When you apply that to music it gives you so much else to draw from and no-one pretends that they aren't influenced by other music but a lot of people are influenced by the same music all the time. Whereas we as a group, and myself as a person are influenced by different people all the time. So that keeps us changing. But the fact that we are true to something that is Rush that's true but it's such an undelineated thing. We have never drawn out margins of what Rush was supposed to be. So consequently there are no preconcieved things where we never look at a song and say it doesn't suit what Rush is supposed to be. That's never been a thing we've had to do, is put a song aside. The only reasons we've put ideas aside is because there's something better that we are more interested in doing. But otherwise everything has it's place.



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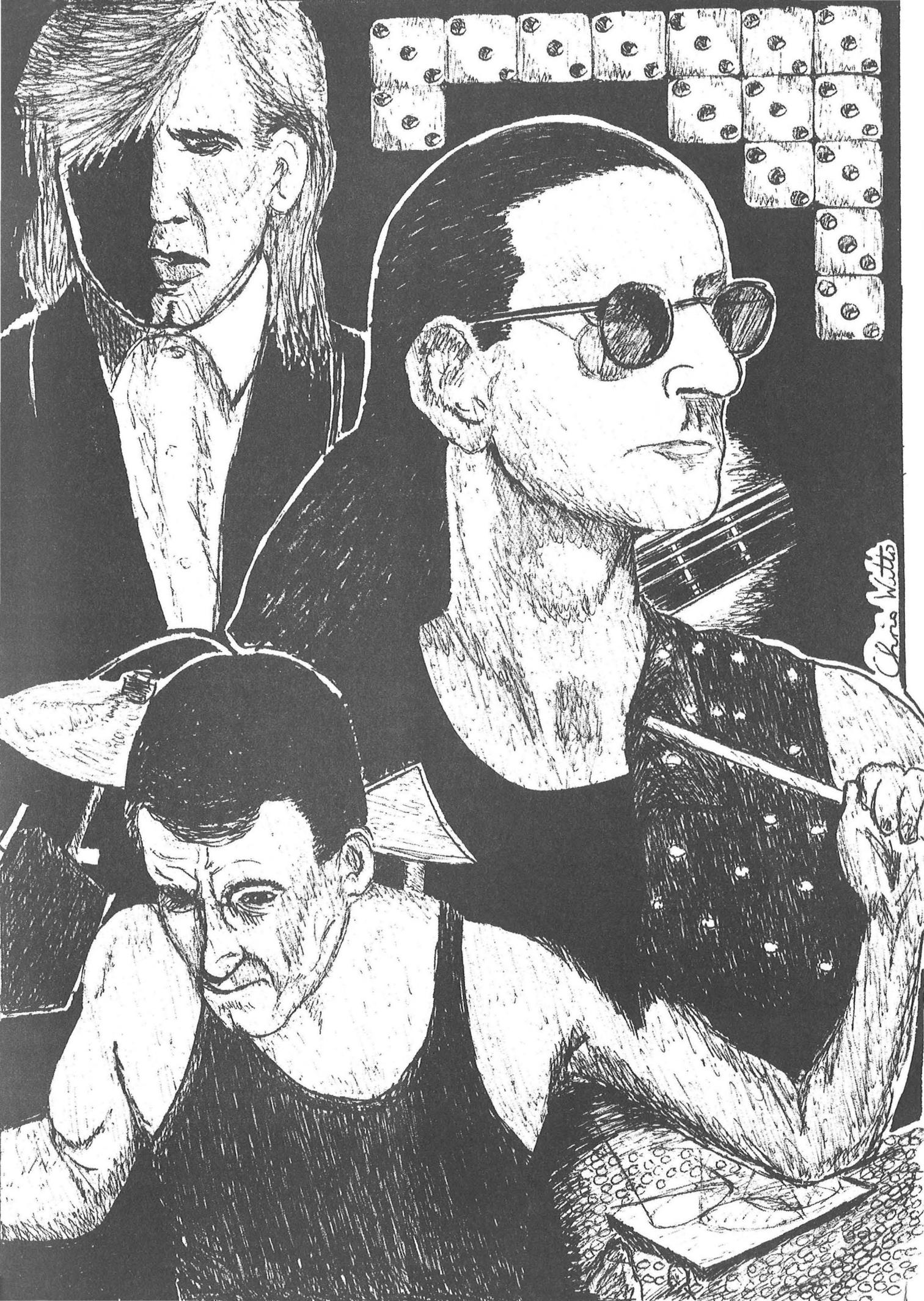
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