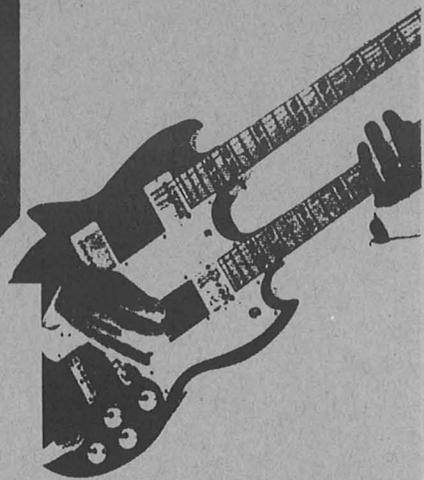
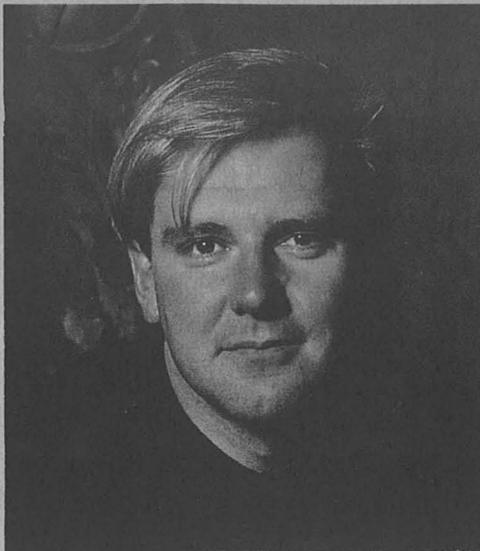
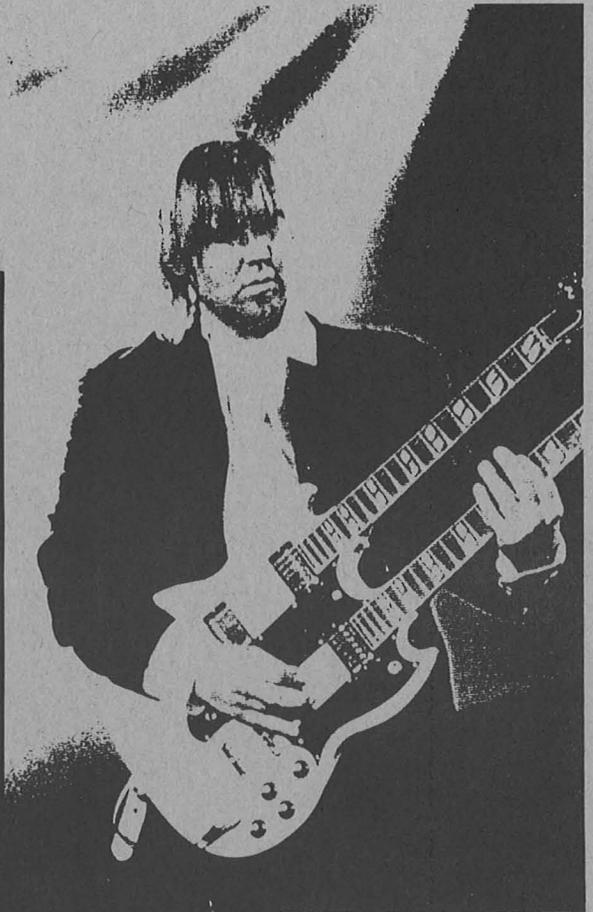


Spirit of Rush

SEPT 95

ISSUE No. 30



SPIRIT OF RUSH EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest issue of 'Spirit'. From this issue we are reverting to quarterly publication, hopefully next year we will go back to bi-monthly, once the band are active again. Please join me in welcoming Stewart Gilray aboard as assistant editor. Good luck to Neil Elliott with the Dream Theater fanzine he is currently producing, Neil's address can be found in the permanent trades section if you are interested.

Alex will be appearing at this year's Kumbaya Festival in Toronto on the 2nd September, as with previous years this Aids benefit show will feature the cream of Canadian talent, giving their all for a good cause. Ray our North American correspondent will be attending the show (lucky bastard) he will be filing a full report (with pictures) for the next issue, won't you Ray?

Alex should have his solo album (see interview beginning page 3) in the shops by October. If all goes well the album should be released in Europe at the same time as North America. Next issue of 'Spirit' should have an exclusive interview with Alex telling us all about the album.

The band should be getting back together to begin work writing the new album in September. Recording to commence Jan/Feb of next year with Peter Collins once more at the helm. The album should see release late Summer early Fall of next year. A world? tour would then commence in October '96 with the band arriving in Europe at their usual time Spring '97. This would tie in nicely with the band's first visit to Europe 20 years before, quite an anniversary!!! All of the above is speculative and subject to change.

You can 'E' mail 'Spirit' on the following "spirit_of_rush@cix.compulink.co.uk"

The gathering looks likely now to be taking place. Plans are still at an early stage, but the good news is we have the full backing of Anthem Records and the band themselves. Anthem are going to supply various items, such as gold/silver discs, drum sticks/plectrums and a host of other items to be given away as prizes etc on the night. We also hope to bring you pro shot film from the 'Presto', 'Roll The Bones' and 'Counterparts' tours. Your help is needed! if you can help with a venue, preferably licenced to sell



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alcohol in the Midlands within easy reach of public transport, and with accomodation, but above all CHEAP! then please write and let me know. We are also on the look out for a video/projection system with as large a screen as possible to show the aforementioned concert footage. Once again if you can help write with details. We would like to keep the cost down to about £10.00 per head for admission. To break even we would need approx 200/300 people to attend, but we hope for double that amount (so bring a partner). So if you would be interested in attending the event send me an S.A.E at the editorial address stating how many tickets you would require. Pen pal section begins next ish, send your details to Stewart

ATTENTION ALL PLANETS OF THE SOLAR FEDERATION...

...Alex Lifeson has assumed control!

Guitarist May 1995

Gareth Smith steps into the limelight for a meeting with Canada's finest export.

Twenty-one years ago, Rush released their eponymous debut album; in hindsight a somewhat straight ahead rock affair compared to the material that was to follow. Original drummer John Rutsey quit the band soon after its release, unhappy with bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson's experimental and increasingly more progressive musical direction. The empty drum stool was soon filled by skinsman Neil Peart, whose arrival brought the band not only powerful and complex drum parts, but also a much needed boost to the lyrical content of the songs. With the burden of lyric writing lifted from their shoulders, Lee and Lifeson concentrated on complex, catchy and sometimes very intense music compositions, always progressing and altering the direction of their music along the way.

In recent years Rush have returned to a more guitar dominated sound after the heavily keyboard influence period during the mid 80s, something for which many of their fans have been patiently waiting.

Once again the Rush recording wheels are beginning to turn alongside this is a long awaited solo project from Alex Lifeson.

"I guess we started in late October," he begins in his softly spoken Canadian accent. "Geddy and his wife had a baby in May at the end of the tour; perfectly time, it was a week after we finished. We took the summer off and he really wanted to have a long break to spend time with his daughter and I can't say that I didn't mind being home. Then I got a little edgy after a while and I just mucked around a little bit. There was a friend of mine who was another guitarist. We'd been playing on and off with each other for quite some time, so we thought it would be nice to get together and mess around in the studio and this project turned into something from there.

"We are about eight songs into it so far but I'd like to have about 10 or 11 tracks on the final version. Most of it is written and arranged, we'll probably start laying down tracks in the next couple of weeks. Where it goes from there I don't know"

Will the solo project feature any other well known artists?

"There are a number of people I have thought about working with," he confesses, "but the only other person who has committed is Les Claypool from Primus; he's going to play bass on a few things. Although his schedule is beginning to get quite busy and in the last few days I thought that if this is a solo album, then let's make it a solo

album and I'll play everything myself. I love working on my own; I enjoy working with other people, but there is something else that happens when I'm working on my own. I come out of the studio at the end of the day kind of shaky, nervous and spaced out, but I sort of like it. I feel like I'm alive."

Always one to experiment with style and direction, Alex's album will feature a wide variety of musical moods.

"It's different from Rush. I've been fooling around with programming and even getting more of an industrial feel with loud guitar and so the while thing moves around all over the place. Until we get about 12 or 13 songs down, I'm not really sure about the overall direction, but I'd like to keep it fairly varied. I don't want to get locked into one particular style of music and I don't want to be perceived as jumping on a band wagon. I certainly wouldn't want to sound like a Seattle band, which is currently the only thing that record companies in America look at at the moment. I'd like to have something that reflects my experiences."

Is the album going to be an instrumental affair or will Alex be braving the vocal duties?

"Maybe, if I'm really, really drunk," he laughs. "I don't have a great deal of confidence in my vocals. I might try some specialised vocals, through the amps and a distortion unit, but I haven't given that much thought to it yet. I hope to have the album done by June. Part of the problem is that the songs get better and better and I go back to the earlier stuff and I'm not happy with it. I've already dropped a couple of the early songs that I originally felt really, really good about. That is the other thing about doing it on my own, there is a greater responsibility; you only have yourself to throw ideas off and judge what you have created."

With all this time spent on his solo project and Neil Peart having just released his own record, it is a wonder that they can find any time to pen a new Rush album.

"Well the last time we spoke we were going to get started around now. Neil had a couple of things that he was doing and he wanted to push it back a bit a Ged really wasn't ready. He loves being at home with his daughter so he wanted to push it back to May. Ged and I have been getting together weekly - sort of hanging around together, talking non-stop. We shall probably begin writing new stuff though

April and May, at least trying to get half the album written. Neil will write lyrics over the summer, so when we get together in September we'll be half way there.

"we are starting go get really, really excited about it. We wanted to take a long break, because we haven't ever done that. It's been really important and good for our collective souls to do this. because we are a lot more enthusiastic about getting back to work. I think we want to try different things for this record, although until we actually do it I don't know how different it will be. That's how our records are, we have no idea about what we are going to do until we start writing.

"I'd like to see a change of direction next time. Personally, I'd like to hear it much heavier and maybe a little darker. I think there is room for the guitars to be up front even more. I listened to Counterparts' the other night for the first time in almost a year and there were a lot of holes in it for me. There were many places where I thought the songwriting could have been stronger. I wasn't very happy with that record, but I was glad to hear the guitar up front, rather than have that mix of keyboard and guitar. I just want to stand out a bit more, not only in the mix and the overall feel of the record, but in my playing as well. I think I need to work harder."

That may come as something of a surprise to Rush fans who revere Mr Lifeson's playing.

"I just think that there are parts in a song where I take a step back settle for something that is okay, rather than pushing myself and coming up with guitar parts that are very unique and very active. I'm talking here about lead work in a rhythmic sense. Eric Johnson and Tom Morello from Rage Against the Machine are great players with what they do and the interest that they create; melodies, harmonies and just little guitar items that come in and out. I just think that there is room for me to make the guitar sound more interesting."

Rush's music is very complex, with key and time signature changes in abundance. But after years as a writing partnership, the band has its own formula.

"I like to work a lot on my own in my studio at home, so I'll come in with a tape full of butts and pieces and occasionally complete songs. So for the first few days Geddy and I will listen to those ideas, then we'll say, Okay let's start writing. We'll just jam together and maybe 20% of the original material will be used and everything else will be written together.

"Most of the complex timing seems to happen right at the start. I naturally gravitate to that style - even if it's a simple time shift it does something to the song. It also pushes the player to come up with more interesting parts. A little movement here and there, dropping a beat every now and then, to me is more interesting to listen to."

For the past few years Alex has been rarely seen without a PRS at his side.

"Yes, I'm still using PRS guitars. On 'Counterparts' I used my Les Paul a lot and I always use my Tele; I love the combination of the thickness of the Les Paul and the edge of the Telecaster. I also used a Strat and the PRS and whole bunch of things."

What about the trusty old' Gibson semi-acoustics?

"I've recently go my 355 out again; I did a whole restoration job on it. I spent ages trying to get the parts for it that had gone missing and I

finally got it all together - it sounds amazing! With the 335 It's the same thing; it has a particular tone and touch to it played through the Marshalls that I had forgotten about, having not used Marshalls for a couple of years."

Alex has experienced some bad luck with his guitars. Take this horror story surrounding his fabled white double neck Gibson, for instance.

[This was actually Alex's red Gibson 1275]

"Well, we were on tour with Blue Oyster Cult and we were doing a show at the Nassau Coliseum, Long Island, New York. One of the horns in the PA had vibrated off the rack and fallen onto the stage right onto the 12 string, taking the 335 out with it. The 335 got chips in it, but it was basically okay, but I took that as a sign to retire that guitar for fear of something happening to it. That is when I start to use the Strat. Unfortunately the double neck didn't fair so well; it had all the strings sheared off and had one neck broken, a pick had gone and the body was gouged. I had the neck repaired and gave it to Eric Johnson. I talked to him about six months later and someone had stolen it; I guess that guitar had bad karma about it or something."

If he has tried his 335 through the Marshalls, does this mean that...

"Yeah I'm using Marshall amps again," he confirms. "I just wanted to get back to the tube sound. The Gallien-Krueger I was using satisfied me for a while, but when I went into the studio for 'Counterparts' I brought in a bunch of Marshalls. I have a couple of Marshall combos that I take in with me and I always get in a couple of old heads and cabinets and use those for recording. Then I thought, if I use them for recording why don't I use them live? It seemed to make sense to me all of a sudden. I wanted something compact and the GKs did that for me; I had a very compact setup. It was stereo and incredibly variable, but it was still a solid state sound. It never quite made it. With the last record, using a 5150 and Marshall, I thought, Yeah, I'm going to have to go back to tubes. So I got three stacks to use during rehearsals and I said, it looks almost right, but I think we need another stack!"

That said, the volume on stage must be very loud.

"As a matter of fact it is quite quiet on stage. I have two celestion closed back cabinets in a bit isolated box which we call the 'doghouse'. There are mikes on each of them and I run off a tap from the Marshall head and that's what's in the house. I don't need the monitor through that, because I wear monitor inserts and I don't really hear them. I get a level on stage that complements Ged's level on his side, which is not very loud, and we sort of bring that up to Neil's acoustic level on stage. So the stage is quite manageable, but it allows for much cleaner, tighter sound through the PA."

Known for his use of guitar effects, he reportedly ousted many of them in an attempt to get back to basics. Is he using and effects now?

"I've always been a very great supporter of guitar effects and I've always used them to produce interesting guitar sounds. A little less so on 'Counterparts' because I wanted to strip things down a little more. Most of the writing I'm doing here on my own is done in the same way; I'd rather get a sound that's unique whether it's a dull, flat sound or a distorted edgy kind of sound.

"I use TC Electronics 1210s for chorus, a DOD Super Harmony, but I do have a fair amount of stuff which I don't use that much, I guess I

rely on delays and the choruses mostly, but you can get some interesting effects from the harmoniser.”

So is he finally happy with his sound?

“I’m happier with my sound,” he confesses. “‘Counterparts’ was a pure sound to me. Basically I just plugged in and played in the room and I hadn’t done that in years. I had recorded all my guitars in the control room and I thought that was the most sensible way of doing it, because the input was immediate, everybody is in the room and you can talk about ideas. But the last record I recorded everything in the studio in front of the amps which were screaming lid just like the old days! There is something about the guitar picking up the sound through the pickups and feeling it. It’s tough to hear in the cans. It felt like a very useful approach after we had become quite technical about the way we record. On the next record I’d like all there off us to record on the floor - something we haven’t done since ‘Moving Pictures’.

“We never allow ourselves the luxury of taking time to learn the songs together as a band off the floor like we used to. We spend a lot of time in pre-production working on our parts, but then we go in and record individually with a guide tack. I’m not so sure that’s really the best way. The guide track itself is not Neil’s drums, but usually to a drum programming guide. He works on his parts to the track, puts in his little feel things, moves it around the beat a bit, but the guitars, bass and vocals are not really to that groove. So it might make more sense to spend a little more time and work on the songs as we would in rehearsal for a tour and then start to record them. I really get off on playing together as a band.”

How does he cope with playing the music and triggering MIDI, bass and effects pedals?

“You get used to whatever you’re using. When we are in rehearsals it’s usually a bit of a joke - Geddy and are dancing around on pedals, we’ve got bass pedals going as well as midi triggers, he’s got the keyboards and he’s singing and he’s got everything going over there... It takes a while to get settled in with all the synchronisation of all these parts and pieces. Once we’re on tour it’s all deep in our memories and I think we could probably read a newspaper while doing all those things at the same time. I’d love to have the freedom of not having to worry about those things, but I think it has become an integral part of the Rush sound and ultimately we would miss it. It is very dynamic to have all those parts come in and out. I pushes us and makes us work harder and keeps our interest going throughout the course of the tour. I think also that the audiences appreciates it.”

With a multitude of material to choose from, it is very much a group decision on what songs they play live.

“Choosing what we play live is always a tough job,” Alex admits. “We all have different opinions; I’d like to do a little more of the older material, Neil tends to lean towards doing more current stuff and Ged is somewhere in the middle.

“Ged and I went into the studio a couple of weeks ago and there is some material that we have from 1978 at the Hammersmith Odeon. We played a five nighter there and recorded the shows. We didn’t have a very good memory of it; I think Ged thought that he’d had flu during that period and there was some problem with the recording, which of course we did discover when we got the tapes out, but there were not as severe as we had thought. On this particular night we

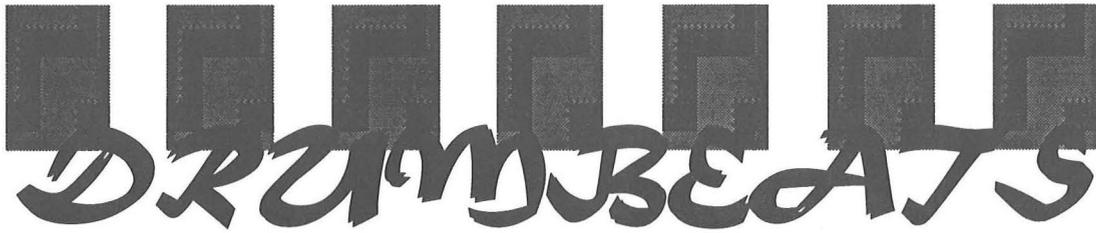
were doing stuff like Cygnus X-1 and A Farewell to Kings which was the most current stuff at the time and I thought it would be great to do songs like that again - we haven’t played them in years. They have quite an impact and they are a very important art of the Rush history and having not heard them for so long it would be great to do those songs again. They’re the kind of songs that I’d like to brick back in, songs that we haven’t played since 1980. I think with a 1995 approach to them they would be really quite powerful, certainly more powerful than they were back then. Those are the sort of things that I’d like to bring back in especially for some of our older listeners who were around back then.”

Does he have a favourite Rush era?

“I don’t think so. I mean, all the periods that we have gone through have had their highs and lows for me and I can’t say that there is any one particular favourite. The whole period during the early 80s around the time of ‘Moving Pictures’ was a very exciting time for us. We were really working a lot and doing major headline tours by that point all across America, spending a lot of time in Europe and it was a really great time for us. I have to say that over the last few tours that touring has become a whole different proposition. It’s not as exciting as it was when we were younger, but of course that is going to happen after 20 years of doing it, it does get tougher. It is the travelling more than anything. It just wears on you, you feel the drag on your life when there is perhaps something else that you might like to accomplish or at least try. When you’re stuck on the bus or in a hotel room for 22 hours of your day and it’s all focused on to the two hours that you are on stage... There is no problem with that whatsoever, because you go on stage and feel like you are in your element and this is your role, this is what you do and this is what you know and that feels great! Even the last tour, which was a very difficult for me; I was having some personal problems and I found being away so much was making it more difficult. But I always forgot about it when I was on stage playing and it was great. I came to realise that for as long as we could do this I’ll always cherish those two hours or whatever on stage and I will definitely miss it when the time comes.

“When I get my solo album done, that’s when I’ll start thinking about touring again. I’d love to go out on the road, even if it is a short tour and play smaller theatres. As far as Rush is concerned we we will go out on tour after we have finished the new record. How long that tour will be I’m not really sure. I think I would like a longer tour, but I don’t know how the other guys feel. I know Ged would maybe like to be home more, but we’ll work around it. I know that he wants to go back on the road eventually and everybody misses it in their own way.

“I’m not sure if we’ll make it to Britain. The last tour we did there was the ‘Roll the Bones’ tour and that was a really enjoyable tour for us; probably one of the most enjoyable we have ever done. But it’s difficult for us to go across the ocean; we have concentrated on North America for so long, quite frankly there is not as great as support from the record company in Europe as we’d like. Perhaps that’s because we don’t come as often as we need to. So It’s a little bit difficult to come over and work really hard and not get the support with all the promotions, especially when the tour is so short. With an eight month tour that’s no problem, but it’s been a lot of fun coming over. And I know that there are a lot of die-hard Rush fans in Britain especially. to be honest with you, I feel very guilty about not coming over and playing more often.”



DRUMBEATS

Kevin J. Anderson and Neil Peart **Part II**

The withered sorcier picked up one of the drums at his side, and Danny recognized it as the small drum the old man had been finishing in the dim hut that afternoon. He fixed his deep gaze on Danny for a moment, then handed it to him.

Anatole sat up, alarmed, but bit off a comment he had intended to make. Danny nodded in reassurance and in delight as he took the new drum. He held it to his chest and inclined his head deeply to show his appreciation. "Merci!"

Anatole took Danny's hand to lead him away from the walled courtyard. The chief clapped his hands and barked something to the other boys, who looked at Anatole with glee before they got up and scurried to the huts, apparently to sleep. Anatole stared nervously at Danny, but Danny didn't understand what had just occurred. He repeated his thanks, bowing again to the chief and the sorcier, but the two of them just stared at him. He was reminded of an East African scene: a pair of lions sizing up their prey. He shook his head to clear the morbid thought, and followed Anatole.

In the village proper, one of the round thatched huts had been swept for Danny to sleep in. Outside, his bicycle leaned against a tree, no doubt guarded during the day by the little man with the enormous cutlass. Anatole seemed uneasy, wanting to say something, but afraid.

Trying to comfort him, Danny opened his pack and withdrew a stick of chewing gum for the boy. Anatole spoke rapidly, gushing his thanks. Suddenly, other boys materialized from the shadows with childish murder in their eyes. They tried to take the gum from Anatole, but he popped it in his mouth and ran off. "Hey!" Danny shouted, but Anatole bolted into the night with the boys chasing after.

Wondering if Anatole was in any real danger, Danny removed the blanket and sleeping bag from his bike, then carried them inside the guest hut. He decided the boy could take care of himself, that he must have spent his life as the whipping boy for the other sons of the chief. The thought drained some of the exhilaration from the memory of the evening's performance.

His legs ached after the torturous ride upland from Garoua, and he fantasized briefly about sitting in the Jacuzzi in the capital suite of some five-star hotel. He considered how wonderful it would be to sip some cold champagne, or a scotch on the rocks.

Instead, he lifted the gift drum, inspecting it. He would find some way to use it on the next album, add a rich African tone to the music. Paul Simon and Peter Gabriel had done it, thought the style of Blitzkrieg's music was a bit more . . . aggressive.

He would not tell anyone about the human skin, especially not the customs officials. He tried without success to decipher the mystical swirling patterns carved into the wood, the interwoven curves, circles, and knots. It made him dizzy.

Danny closed his eyes and began to play the drum, quietly so as not to disturb the other villagers. But as the sound reached his ears, he snapped his eyes open. The tone from the drum was flat and weak, like a cheap tourist tom-tom, plastic over a coffee can.

He frowned at the gift drum. Where was the rich reverberation, the primal pulse of the earth? He tapped again, but heard only an empty ad hollow sound, soulless. Danny scowled, wondering if the sorcier had ruined the drum by accident, then decided to get rid of it by giving it to the unsuspecting White Man who wouldn't know the difference.

Angry and uneasy, Danny set the African drum next to him; he would try it again in the morning. He could play it for the chief, show him its flat tone. Perhaps they would exchange it. Maybe he would have to buy another one. He hoped Anatole was alright.

Danny sat down to pull the thorns and prickles from his clothes. The village women had provided him with two plastic basins of water for bathing, one for soaping and scrubbing, the other for rinsing. The warm water felt refreshing on his face, his neck. After stripping off his pungent socks, he rinsed his toes and soles.

The night stillness was hypnotic, and as he spread his sleeping bag and stretched out on it, he felt as if the were seeping into the cloth, into the ground, swallowed up in sleep. . . .

Anatole woke him up only a few moments later, shaking him and whispering harshly in his ear. Dirt, blood, and bruises covered the

boy's wiry body, and his clothes had been torn in a scuffle. He didn't seem to care. He kept shaking Danny.

But it was already too late.

Danny sat up, blinking his eyes. Sharp pains like the gash of a bear trap ripped through his chest. A giant hand seemed to have wrapped around his torso: it would squeeze until his ribs popped free of his spine.

He gasped, opening and closing his mouth, but could not give voice to his agony. He grabbed Anatole's withered arm, but the boy struggled away, searching for something. Black spots swam in Danny's eyes. He tried to breathe, but his chest wouldn't let him. He began slipping, sliding down an endless cliff into blackness.

Anatole finally found an object on the floor of the hut. He snatched it up with his good hand, tucked it firmly under his withered arm, and began to thump on it.

The drum!

As the boy rapped out a slow, steady beat, Danny felt the iron band loosen around his heart. Blood rushed into his head again, and he drew a deep breath. Dizziness continued to swim around him, but the impossible pain receded. He clutched his chest, rubbing his sternum. He uttered a breathy thanks to Anatole.

Had he just suffered a heart attack? Good God, all the fast living had decided to catch up to him while he was out in the middle of nowhere, far from any hope of medical attention!

Then he realized with a chill that the sounds from the gift drum were now rich and echoey, with the unearthly depth he remembered from the other drums. Anatole continued his slow rhythm, and suddenly Danny recognized it. A heartbeat.

What was it the boy had told him inside the sorcier's hut _ that the magical drums could steal a man's heartbeat?

"Ton coeur c'est dans ici," Anatole said, continuing his drumming. Your heartbeat lives in here now.

Danny remembered the gaunt, shambling man in the marketplace of Garoua, obsessively tapping the drum from Kabas as if his life depended on it, until his hide-wrapped fingers were bloodied. Had that man also escaped his fate in the village, and fled south?

"You had the spirit of a drummer," Anatole said in his pidgin French, "and now the drum has your spirit." As if to emphasize his statement, as if he knew a White Man would be skeptical of such magic, Anatole ceased his rhythm on the drum.

The claws returned to Danny's heart, and the vise in his chest clamped back down. His heart had stopped beating. Heartbeats, drumbeats _

The boy stopped only long enough to convince Danny, then started the beat again. Anatole looked at him with pleading eyes in the shadowy light of the hut. "Je vais avec toi!" I go with you. Let me be your heartbeat. From now on.

Leaving his sleeping bag behind, Danny staggered out of the guest hut to his bicycle resting against an acacia tree. The rest of the village was dark and silent, and the next morning they would expect to find him dead and cold on his blankets; and the new drum would have the same resonant quality, the same throbbing of a captured spirit, to add to their collection. The sound of White Man's music for Kabas.

"Allez!" Anatole whispered as Danny climbed aboard his bike. Go! What was he supposed to do now? The boy ran in front of him along the narrow track. Danny did not fear navigating the rugged trail by moonlight, with snakes

and who-knew-what abroad in the grass, as much as he feared staying in Kabas and being there when the chief and the sorcier came to look at his body in the morning, and no doubt to appraise their pale new drum skin.

But how long could Anatole continue his drumming? If the beat stopped for only a moment, Danny would seize up. They would have to take turns sleeping. Would this nightmare continue after he had left the vicinity of the village? Distance had not helped the shambling man in the marketplace in Garoua.

Would this be the rest of his life?

Stricken with panic, Danny nodded to the boy, just wanting to be out of there and not knowing what else to do. Yes, I'll take you with me. What other choice do I have? He pedaled his bike away from Kabas, crunching on the rough dirt path. Anatole jogged in front of him, tapping on the drum.

And tapping

And tapping.



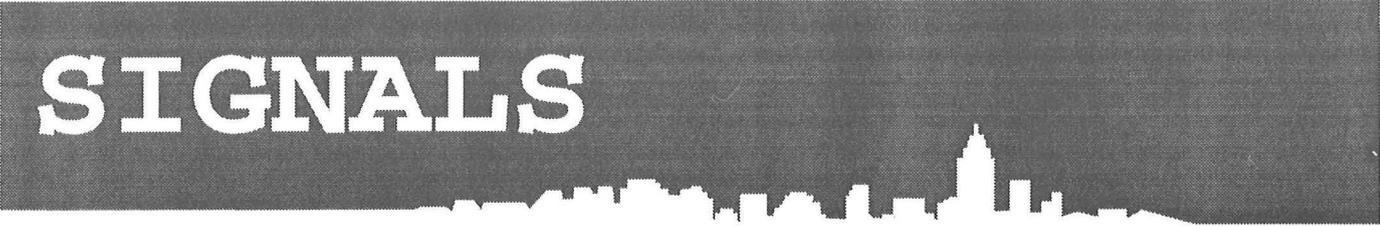
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SIGNALS



Dear 'Spirit',

Concerning the Editorial in the latest issue. I'm sorry to hear about the drop in readership and subsequent drop in size of the magazine. This is a pity as the last 15 or so issues have been absolutely excellent. We can only hope the band come up with something good next time round to rekindle some public interest.

Anyway, keep up the good work - you can be assured of my support! I shall continue to plug 'Spirit' to the few Rush fans I know!

**David Brenchley
Norwich**

Dear 'Spirit',

I'm sorry to hear membership is dropping so fast, my husband and I really look forward to each copy of 'Spirit', since we started getting the magazine (from Issue 5) we haven't bought any other music papers, so we rely on you for any tour or record info' on our favourite 'group'.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for all the Rush/Toronto information on the back cover of Issue 29. We are going on an escorted holiday to Eastern USA and Canada and we have 1½ days in Toronto. We'll have to try and visit as many places as possible (wearing our his and hers "Roll The Bones" t-shirts - of course).

We'll let you know if we spot any of the combo in the crowds. We are also looking forward to "The Gathering" - hope it gets off the ground!

**Karen & Howard Gildert
Preston**

Dear Mick,

I was saddened to read of the problems facing the 'Spirit'. The magazine has been a trusty companion over the years, and one of the few nice things to come through the letterbox. Long may it continue. Hopefully the band will be churning out something new to write about in the near future (or at least Alex's solo album!).

Anyway the good news is that I'm renewing my subscription, as I try to satisfy my never-ending interest in Rush. I'm very excited about the prospect of a new, even heavier, album. I can't imagine how that will sound.

Until then, the best of fortunes to you.

**Niall
Kilmarnock**

Dear Mick,

First off, I have to say this is not a complaint letter. If it seems to come across as such, I apologise in advance. Having eagerly awaited Issue #29 for almost six months, I was bitterly disappointed. I fully understand why you have had to make cuts, my frustration is with the so-called 'fans' who have deserted 'Spirit'.

All of the guys in the band have been quoted in interviews as saying how amazed they were at the loyalty and commitment of their fans Well where are they now?

I've been listening to the band for 19 years and I've been with you since Issue #1 (must be 8 years this summer). 'Spirit' is the only lifeline I have with the band (having kicked the self-indulgent British musical press into touch long ago). It's up to us readers and true fans that are left to rally round and get things moving a bit.

To this end, I've enclosed a list of ideas, which you've undoubtedly already considered, but what the hell. Perhaps even cramming this letter into a corner of the next issue will jolt a few people into action.

I've never quoted 'Peart' before and I know it's a really twee thing to do but I couldn't resist this one. "When the future's looking dark, we're the ones who have to shine". Any takers? Well done all at 'Spirit', keep your chins up. Let's hope there's some album/tour news to brighten the horizon and the next issue. Best wishes.

Paul Humphreys
Daventry

IDEAS LIST

1. I can remember handing out some cars at the NEC on the 'Bones' tour (I think), how about a few more (photocopied) with the next issue so we can spread the word. **Next year when the band tour here - Ed.**
2. 2nd class post instead of first - only saves 6p per copy but I don't mind waiting an extra day. **We do send them out 2nd class already - Ed.**
3. How about a cash injection from the boys at East West seeing as they don't spend anything on promoting the band (bit tongue in cheek, that one - but true!!). **Dante/Geoff, over to you! - Ed.**
4. Revert to table top publishing instead of professional printers - it's the info' that's important not the way it looks. **Janet our typist and Chris our printer work wonders on a shoestring to make 'Spirit' look as good as it does - Ed.**
5. The 'get-together' - with a covers band playing (or has it already been and gone?). I'd be more than happy to part with a few quid for a ticket - **See editorial, this is on the horizon - Ed.**
6. If all else fails - we'll all get together in a pub, get 'rat arsed' pull up a few sand bags and swap spiffing yarns until we disappear into the black hole of Cygnus X-1 - **Sound good to me - Ed.**

Dear Mick,

Many thanks for the back issues of the Spirit of Rush. I read them over four days and what an excellent and interesting read. I must admit though that I was looking forward to arriving at the last issue as it was taking up all of my time and was quite exhausting. I love the look, feel, typeface and the different colours of the magazines.

Although Rush are not my favourite band (equal second with Springsteen, John Barry and Yes - Queen are first) they are a band I admire so much for their brilliant musicianship, meaningful lyrics and basically great songs.

It seems that Rush are getting better with age. I thought that Roll The Bones was excellent, but what can you say about Counterparts - an amazing album. Animate, Nobody's hero and Leave that Thing Alone are some of the best tracks that they have ever recorded.

I know that many people in the previous issues have explained how they got into Rush, well here is my story It was 1980 and I was trying on a pair of jeans and the shop was playing some background music which I thought was brilliant - I thought that the guitar riffs were incredible. I took the jeans to the till to pay and asked what the record was. "It's the latest Rush LP Permanent Waves", I was informed. I popped next door to Bradleys Records and bought it.

For the next few months I played it constantly. A week later I bought Hemispheres and being into classical literature I thought the lyrics to Cygnus X1 were amazing and I still rate the album as being brilliant. The following week it was the turn of Caress of Steel to be bought and again what a great and underrated album. In the next few months I bought all the albums and loved 2112, Working Man, Bastille Day, By Tor, Xanadu and In the End.

I saw them at the Stafford Bingley Hall on the Moving Pictures tour (a dreadful venue) and at the Sheffield Arena on the Roll The Bones tour. The latter was an absolutely amazing show - it could not be faulted. I missed the Signals and Hold Your Fire shows due to being unemployed and being penniless. I would love to have seen one of the Counterpart shows as the material on the album is perfect to be played live.

My favourite Rush album is probably Permanent Waves though Moving Pictures gives it a run for its money. It was the first album of theirs that I heard and the combination of music, lyrics, production and mixture of guitar/synthesizer riffs is still awe-inspiring. I hope that on the next tour they play Entre Nous as it is a magnificent track and having not played it would be a good opportunity to play live a track never aired before.

Having read the poll it seems that many of my favourite tracks are those that did not do very well in the poll. Anagram, Tai Shan, Witch Hunt, Body Electric, Countdown and The Fountain of Lamneth are excellent. It would be interesting if they were to record the latter track now, say a 15 minute version, how different it would sound.

Reading his interviews I am constantly impressed at his talent Neil Peart has for articulating himself. I wish that I could express my thoughts the way that Neil does. His command of the English language is astounding.

Can I suggest that for those wanting binders for the Spirit of Rush that they purchase them from W H Smith. They do an excellent magazine binder which is a perfect fit for the magazines and will hold about ten issues. They come in black, blue and red and the bar code number is 200219.

**Kevin Henry
Sheffield**

Dear Mick,

Having read through Spirit of Rush No.29 I am extremely distressed at the comments in your editorial revealing an apparent crisis in readership.

I missed the first few years of publication and was not aware of Spirit of Rush until someone handed me a card at the concerts the 1st time Rush toured in the UK and since then I have really looked forward to every issue both for historical articles and of course, for up to date news on the guys' activities.

I have quite a wide range of types of music I like listening to but for me Rush really do stand out as that one special band above all others and to lose the supply line of information on Rush in the form of your magazine would be a real disaster!!

Just thought I would drop you a note to say that certainly, for me, and I'm sure the others who are still subscribing, Spirit of Rush is highly valued and I hope you can get over the current problems and keep enough subscribers together to keep the magazine going for some time to come. Keep pushing for subs!!!

Tony Goldingay
Lichfield

Dear SOR,

Thanks for the recent edition of 'Spirit' and once again, its my main . . . or rather my 'only' source of information on my favourite band. I'm sorry to hear about the dwindling readership and it must be a choker for you guys who put a lot of effort into bringing out these editions of SOR, but I am sure that members, like myself, are 100% behind you and appreciate what a tremendous job you do. So please carry on, for when things start picking up again on the 'Rush' front you're gonna get inundated with fresh enquiries - what about a message to the guys about printing our address on their credit list when the next album arrives, as I don't think they've had a greetings from the letter 'S' yet. I know how hard the band strive for their privacy, and that this is an unofficial fanzine, but you do more PR for them over here than any record executive has ever done, and not being a profit making business either I would have thought that the band could at least give us exclusive interviews for each edition - like take it in turns. I mean, it's not as if we want to know what loo paper they use, we'd just like an update on the musical front - one interview from each band member, and say a producer, isn't much to ask a year. I think you guys deserve that at least! Not to mention us readers - mind you, as Neil says, 'We haven't changed . . . everybody else has', obviously meaning that we aren't forced to listen to 'Rush' (so true of the media over here - Hello Mr. Branson), so why should they be forced to listen to us!

While readership has died down, then it's up to us readers to contribute, because SOR can only survive on feedback, I mean I was so worried when reading the last edition of SOR that even I put pen to paper for only the 2nd time in my long membership. Feedback, that's what you need. As I said earlier Rush PR here in Britain is useless, the last time I heard anything said about Rush was during GLRs Saturday sports programme, back in January when during a very boring FA Cup match between QPR and West Ham, Garth Crooks the presenter set a question to the poor unfortunate sod reporting on the game, to name the 3 members of the Canadian band 'Rush'. The guy had 20 minutes to think about it before they came back to him, and I hasten to add that he couldn't name 1 - and they didn't even play 'Spirit' in-between either.

What I did think was, that perhaps you could print on one of your pages, a full page plea addressed to Richard Skinner of Virgin (only decent DJ left) stating the 'zero' rating airplay that the band get, a plea to play a tune other than 'Spirit', a mention of your address and a blank space for each member to fill in their name and post off - thus getting Rush airplay, and hopefully more new members.

Before I finally come down off my soap-box (thank God), I'd just like to add my opinion on whether to include new bands/Rush-related in the fanzine. I think it's fine just to mention their names . . . for instance 'Summer Indoors', 'Pendragon', 'Jadis' etc. but that's all, as there are other fanzines like 'Wondrous Stories' that can give you all the

information about them that you need, they even do the same about Rush I should know because I'm a member too, and have written to them countless times flying the 'Rush' banner, and they whole-heartedly agree with everything I say (probably just so I'd shut-up). SOR should remain just a Rush fanzine, after all that's why we subscribe to it, so lets make the most of them here in SOR. Once again thanks for all the time and effort that goes into producing Spirit of Rush and keep up the great work.

**Paul Bluett
London**

Dear Mick,

Hello!! How are you? I believe in our most recent phone conversation I told you that I was going to be going up to Toronto soon for a day. Well, indeed that day turned out to be this past Saturday (March 11th), and I thought I'd share a brief excerpt of my trip with you . . .

Well, I found The Orbit Room. I'll admit I was feeling pretty nervous about going inside (actually, upstairs); I found myself actually hoping that the much-beloved owner wasn't there!! Imagine that - thousands of fans would go there just hoping to meet Alex, where I went in hoping that he wasn't there to be met!! Anyway, the place is not located in the best part of town, to say the least. It's located about three or four miles away from Maple Leaf Gardens right in downtown Toronto. If I would have blinked, I would have missed it. It's located in a plaza-type setting, with only a small, sidewalk, easel-type marquee to promote it (saying 'the Orbit Room', upstairs), looking rather unprofessional. In addition, there is an 'Orbit Room' sign upstairs as well. I did take pictures of these two marquees, but those haven't been developed yet.

Anyway, I gulped a few hundred times, and went upstairs (accompanied by the love of my life, who just wasn't understanding my nervousness . . .). the place has a long, narrow stairwell that leads upstairs into a rather dark, unassuming bar. When I got upstairs, there was absolutely no one there (as far as patrons go . . .), and moreso, much to my disappointment, there was nothing on the walls that said 'Rush', or made reference to Rush. When I say nothing, I mean nothing. Anyway, I asked the gentleman working behind the counter (named Tim, approximately 40ish) if this was indeed the place that Alex Lifeson from Rush owned, and he answered affirmatively. He immediately asked if I had learned this through the Rush Internet, but just said "no". I really was working hard not to act, like, well, act the way I normally act when I'm in such a pursuit. I did, however, ask him for anything that said 'the Orbit Room' on it, such as menus, napkins, matchbooks, t-shirts, etc. However, he said there was none of the above, but did offer me a business card. I ended up with three of them, one of which you are now the proud owner of. (Isn't it the coolest thing you've ever seen?!?! Can you print it in the fanzine??)

As the conversation between myself and Tim went on, he informed me that he has been a friend of Alex's for almost 25 years now, ever since, as he put it, "they were playing in places like this". I did question the equipment set up in the corner of the still-empty bar (a small drumkit, a couple small amps), which Tim responded to by saying that it (the equipment) belonged to the house band ('The Dexters'), with whom Alex sits in quite frequently! (suffice it to say, when he said that, I was holding back no more!! It was a full-scale attack on poor Timmy!!). It seemed to me like Alex coming there was not an exception, but rather the rule, and him playing with the band was nothing big (of course I disagreed!!) either. Also Tim did make mention of the frequency of appearances of those other two guys (what are their names again?), mentioning that they are in more than just token appearances as well. (At this point, I was sweating profusely at the sheer thought of all this, which my fiancee Lisa just wasn't getting; hey, she'll learn . . .)

Well, I think that's as best a review as I can give you in written form. I'm sorry to have to share this story with you in letter-form, but being engaged means cost-cutting measures, and long-distance phone calls are obviously at the

top of my list!! So, I hope this was thorough enough for you. I'll try to send those two pictures of the marquees that I made mention of earlier as soon as possible (that's a euphemism for 'as soon as the fiancee gets them developed'!!)

**Ray W
Buffalo, USA**



THE ORBIT ROOM
580A COLLEGE STREET
TORONTO ONTARIO
(UPSTAIRS) M6G 1B3
TEL: (416) 535-0613

ALEX LIFESON

Dear Mick,

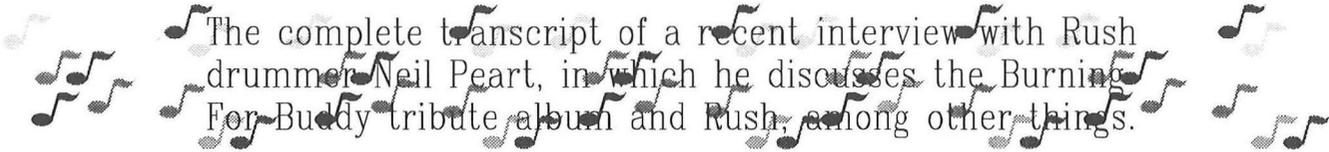
Thanks for the latest issue of 'Spirit', and indeed for the previous 28! We were sorry to hear that readership is falling, presumably due to lack of any recent activity by our Canuck friends. It certainly can't be any reflection on you - you do a terrific job which is much appreciated.

Anyway, we thought it might cheer you up a bit to see a photo of what surely must be our youngest reader - our 8 month old daughter Iona. (She seems to prefer chewing the pages to reading, but we're working on that!) Unfortunately her pocket money doesn't quite stretch to taking out her own subscription, so you'll have to settle for her moral support.

Finally, has anyone had any thoughts recently on organising some sort of get-together for all us poor Rush fans? It would be just lovely to meet people who've actually heard of the guys, instead of getting that same old blank response every time I mention my heroes. Thanks again for all your hard work.

**Eve Gartshore & Peter Robinson
Ilford**



The complete transcript of a recent interview with Rush drummer Neil Peart, in which he discusses the Burning For Buddy tribute album and Rush, among other things.

The image shows a decorative header with musical notes and a central text block. The text block is surrounded by a cloud of musical notes and stems, with some notes appearing to float around the text. The text itself is centered and reads: "The complete transcript of a recent interview with Rush drummer Neil Peart, in which he discusses the Burning For Buddy tribute album and Rush, among other things."

By Gerry Galipault (October 18)

Pause & Play: The album's very enjoyable, it's very upbeat.

Peart: That's the thing about big-band music, by its own nature it's a happy, celebratory music.

P&P: I think the reason I'm a big fan of big-band music is that I like old movies from the '30s and '40s. They would build a big-band sound around a theme for the movie.

Peart: Oh, yeah, all the big-band guys appeared in so many movies. I just watched a biography, actually, of Gene Krupa, and he was such a natural for the movies because he was so handsome. Buddy was a great dancer, too, given his background with the vaudeville. He was the consummate entertainer. He could sing, dance, tell jokes.

P&P: Having talked with Buddy's daughter, Cathy, what did you learn about Buddy Rich the man?

Peart: Nearly everything, really, things I didn't know about before. Consequently, being around his family and friends and those who worked with him, they gave me so much insight into the person himself. I had read all the biographies, the anthologies. It gave me a sense of what he was, not only as an entertainer, but as a person. There are certain touchstones I feel we have in common but also a lot of differences. We are very different people in many ways, certainly in terms of temperament and behavior, but at the same time, we're both uncompromising and both strong-willed and get what we want. It's the strength of will that made Buddy Rich possible, in terms of a career and a lifetime of music. That's certainly been my own autobiography too.

P&P: No one's ever accused you of being hard to get along with.

Peart: That's what I mean by behavior. I'm a lot more restrained. Buddy was funnier than me, but he was meaner than me too. (laughs) Also, his level of frustration was intense and not to be slighted, the fact that he did force-feed a big band into the world from 1966 really up until his death, and the world from 1966 on, who could have cared really (about big-band music)? As a consequence, he was not able to hire the best musicians in the world that he should have been able to work with, given his own standing and his own ability. So he was having to hire guys fresh out of college who thought they knew everything; that's all he could afford. And he did very much revere youth and wished to celebrate young musicians and work with them, but the frustrations are easily imagined. I listened to those famous bus tapes of Buddy chewing out the band, even long before I had an association with Buddy's family. When I first heard these tapes, my immediate feeling was sympathy for Buddy. I thought, "the poor guy has to put up with so much stuff that makes him this mad." Most people's response is, "Gee, what a jerk the guy was." It's way more complicated than that. Again, throughout this project, meeting people who knew him and worked alongside him for a span of decades, someone like Ed Shaughnessy, people like that are offended that by the existence of these tapes because as far as they're concerned, this is a beautiful and a very large person that's being talked about and have their idea of him warped or completely deformed by this small slice of the man. This was just one little facet of the complicated jewel that was Buddy Rich.

P&P: You must be satisfying a lot of them by putting this record out.

Peart: Absolutely so. They're excited to see it done, and those a part of it are really proud to be a part of it. It has been just such a positive experience, even though the recording wasn't the greatest two weeks of my life. As difficult and stressful as it was, and being the leader and the diplomat and sometimes I felt like I was going to have a heart attack or a stroke, still the people I came in contact with and the magic that we created I will enjoy, I'm sure, forever. All that makes it seem so worthwhile and makes it such a glowing memory behind me now.

P&P: I read somewhere, I think it was in Musician magazine, you were talking about your old drum teacher and how it was probably his duty to play you the battle of the drums between Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa. Was that your introduction into those players?

Peart: What made me want to play drums was that movie "The Gene Krupa Story." That was certainly the spark that made me think, "Gee, being a drummer would be cool," as a 12-year-old kid. Then I'd be beating around the furniture with chopsticks and pencils and stuff . . . that's when my parents decided I ought to have drum lessons or therapy. That era and the personality like Gene Krupa, that whole thing was my inspiration. It's actually illustrative to look at the drummers of my generation and there are some of them who will tell you that they wanted to be a drummer when they saw Ringo Starr on "The

Ed Sullivan Show.” And it’s borne out in the whole approach to drumming from then on. For myself, when I think about that first seed being planted by Gene Krupa, even though it was Sal Mineo playing Gene Krupa - Gene Krupa was playing the drums, not him - that was so formidable for me because my idea of the entry level of being a great drummer was Gene Krupa. For other less ambitious souls, their idea of the entry level was Ringo Starr.

P&P: I’m sure you’re aware of your own standing, especially among young people. You’re laying down that seed for them.

Peart: Or passing the torch. that’s one of the reasons why I chose the title “Burning For Buddy,” because I feel like the torch in the art of drumming and its progress. It’s a community thing, and one person doesn’t pass the torch to another like a relay, it’s like a whole another generation of drummers comes forward like a wave and adds something to the evolution and language of rhythm and then passes it on to the next generation. I felt that we all, the drummers on this, as prominent and successful players, represented the passing of the next spark in that torch. In my case, I know where I’ve learned everything, so I’m properly humble about it . . . I just know that I’m a product of all that I’ve learned and that I stand on the shoulders of giants. I love that quote just because it’s so real . . . anything anyone might admire about what I do, I can pretty much tell them where I learned it, adapted it or was inspired by it. They all come from somewhere.

P&P: That must be a weighty feeling, though, to know you affect so many people.

Peart: It depends truly on how you adapt to it - it can be very artificial because these people are making you an object, and that’s not nice. You have to adapt to it one way or the other and say, “Yes, they’re right I’m great,” which a lot of musicians do and I’m sure you’ve encountered them and they chose to believe, “All these people can’t be wrong, I am great.” Or you can reject it and say, “Well, I know when I do something well or when I don’t, and Buddy had a great quote about that which I put in the liner notes - “You don’t achieve greatness, you aim to be good.” And it’s true, every night on stage or when I’m working on drum parts for a record, I’m really just trying to be good.

P&P: Considering how people do regard you so highly in the rock world, why were you initially scared about performing with this band?

Peart (referring to his participation in the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert, organized by Rich’s daughter, Cathy, in 1991): Oh, because it’s a totally alien feeling for me, physically and stylistically, and because I knew the kind of risk I was taking that this was not only a live show in front of several thousand people, but it was also going to be recorded and videoed for posterity’s sake. It was an absolutely irrevocable move, It wasn’t like I was going to a basement to play some different music with different musicians. This was a very public ordeal by fire; I was going to be baptized naked in front of everyone. And like I said about Buddy and his pride in the work, the idea of just achieving goodness, that’s all I wanted to do too was do a good job. That was very demanding. I spent a lot of time preparing for it and rehearsing for it and trying to learn as much about the styles and the figures used in the music as I could and getting advice from drummers I knew. Hence, the disappointment, of course . . . my expectations were so high and I worked so hard to make it perfect that when situations beyond my control made it come off less than perfect, I was at first disappointed. But being a logical positivist, I turned it around and said, “Hey, we’ve just got to do it again and do it right and then I’ll be happy.” Sure enough that was the panacea, and that’s been in my mind over the past several years. Making this record, for me, put that ghost to rest, playing big-band music under controlled circumstances.

P&P: This guy was really the last of a breed; I can’t think of too many bands built around one drummer.

Peart: Well, Buddy was “the” breed. As all the other drummers of his age have remarked about him, you can’t compare him with anybody. Krupa, perhaps his only rival, said it the best: “Buddy’s outside of it.” There’s all these great drummers and then there’s Buddy. And when I was growing up, I assigned him that role . . . I just knew Buddy was the absolute greatest, and just took that for granted and sort of measured myself by more attainable goals.

P&P: On the rock side of it, who gave you that same kind of feeling?

Peart: Those who inspired me, in the true sense, and getting me excited about drumming in the mid-’60s, there was Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell with Jimi Hendrix, and when Michael Giles came out on the first King Crimson album, he was certainly an eye-opener for me, because he had a very complex and technically advanced style of drumming within a progressive rock framework.

P&P: Is there any comparison with the excitement of making this record with things you’ve done with Rush?

Peart: No, they’re so different in so many ways. Rush is such a self-contained cottage industry in the truest sense that we make ourselves happy all the time. It’s not a democracy where two guys vote for their ideas and the other guy’s left out. Everybody has to be happy. The thing we do have in common with big-band music is that we really like a well-arranged structure within which to be free. And all of us, individually, are free within that structure to create our parts and develop them any way we want. All of us like to have a framework established beforehand, which is a hallmark of a big-band arrangement.

I had to be the leader in ;this case, which is totally alien to me, because I'm usually a third of a collective. In this case, I had to step in and be the boss, and it was a totally fresh role for me. Also, all the music was already written, already arranged, already existed in recording form, so all those mysteries were already clear. Those problems were already solved. The creative end of it was already taken care of. It was just a matter of making it easy for everybody to work in the studio, making sure their headphones were right, making sure the players had a break between takes, making sure the drummer had a towel, all those things. As motivator, I had to get everybody in there when the time was right and get the job done because we had so much to do and so little time to do it.

P&P: This sounds like a totally different type of tribute album, compared to all the ones out there now, where people would record off by themselves and then hand over the tapes to the person in charge, making it a really sterile process.

Peart: In the spirit of the thing, we wanted to have most of Buddy's band in there as we could and then bring in the most prominent drummers of today. If those chose to play one of Buddy's arrangements, fine . . . some people, like Bill Bruford, brought in an original as well as recording one of Buddy's; Steve Ferrone recorded one of Buddy's and brought in "Pick Up the Pieces," which he happened to have a big-band arrangement for it. All the things that did happen were fine. We didn't have any hard and fast rules. The basic context was to have Buddy's band there and play these great arrangements in a fresh context with other drummers.

P&P: My only exposure to Buddy Rich was on "The Tonight Show." It seemed like he was there every week.

Peart: Seventy times he was on it, imagine it. He was (Johnny) Carson's perfect foil. He could come out and do an amazing performance with the band and a stunning drum solo and then come up and trade wisecracks with him. People have a misconception that I'm a longtime hero worshipper of Buddy Rich, that this fulfills some long, frustrating ambition - it's really not like that. Like you, I only saw him play on "The Tonight Show". I didn't buy his records. I never saw him play. I never knew him. He was just the greatest drummer in ;the world, an that was that, and I was a rock fan and rock drummer. He was outside my generation and outside my interests when I was younger. Only as my horizons got broader, through maturity, I got interested in big-band music through Duke Ellington and then Count Basie. I got interested in the style first, and then the opportunity came along to do the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert. That was an accident, none of this was by design.

P&P: Who knows, 30 years from now, there'll be a "Burning For Neil".

Peart: I can't imagine it, and there's no need to. But in this case, this music deserved to be refreshed and re-presented and a lot of it was recorded under very low budget circumstances. They made it live because the record company would say "we won't pay you to make a record, Buddy, but we'll come and record your show one night." So a lot of the things weren't recorded as well as they might have been under all those restraints. This was an opportunity to present something fresh and that has a cohesiveness in terms of being the same musicians and the same sound and same studio.

P&P: This is Rush's 20th year . . . are there any special plans for the remainder of the year?

Peart: We were touring most of the year and it was a particularly gruelling tour that left us pretty drained and disenchanted for a time. Geddy (Lee) went off to have a baby and he's been busy with that, and I've been having my own baby with this project. It's almost been a full-time job. I certainly don't feel like I've been lying around; in fact, I feel quite gainfully employed.

P&P: Two last harmless questions, what was the first album you ever bought?

Peart: Probably "Happy Jack" by The Who or "Are You Experienced" by Jimi Hendrix. My drum teacher recommended "Are You Experienced" - he said, "You gotta hear this, this changes everything." And he was right.

P&P: And what was the first concert you ever attended?

Peart: That would be The Who, for sure. In Toronto in '68 or '69. I was such a Who fan, I had all their records. Pete Townshend still remains one of my all-time role models. I had a great love for them back then that has matured into great respect. I saw them about four times live.



SMART ALEX

ALEX LIFESON'S MERCEDES-BENZ 380SEC.

While your erstwhile editorial team were in the States for the start of the Counterparts tour (over a year ago now). We came across a car magazine which had an article about a certain guitarists car hi-fi. Well we completely forgot about it until I dug it out in December. On the following pages you will find said article. By the time you've finish reading it you'll realise just how nutty Alex really is.

Stewart Gilray.

"Whose disc is this?" Alon Gat and Lahav Reznik were puzzled. Carmine Malatesta, the owner of Stereo Den in Richmond Hill, Ontario, had empowered his installation tech managers to overhaul the system in Alex Lifeson's sleek, black '83 Mercedes 380SEC. Despite the puzzlement, the dynamic duo were tickled: Lifeson the guitarist for Rush, the veteran Canadian power trio. And there, throbbing in the Merc's Pioneer CDX-M30 changer, was Alice in Chains' '92 bludgeonfest, DIRT. But whose disc was it? Did it belong to A) The 40-year-old Lifeson, an avowed fan of Seattle grunge bands or B) One of Alex's MTV-generation sons? Actually, the real answer is C) None of the above or, more accurately, C as in Charlene, Alex's wife. No, Really. "Yeah, it's her copy." Lifeson chuckles, "My copy disappeared; I think the kids took it. Her tastes run more to Black Box and Sade, but she likes DIRT" As it turns out, digging in the DIRT was a very important clue for the installers. "Alex was generally busy working on Rush's new album [Counterparts, their 19th] Reznik explains, "so seeing the different CDs in the cartridge each time the car came into the shop was sometimes the only way we'd get feedback about the system and how it's used." "WHEN DO I GET IT BACK?" Lifeson politely asks Gat and Lahav during a break at our photoshoot in a warehouse studio about an hour outside Toronto. Stereo Den had been tweaking the black beauty for a few extra weeks, so the axeman's itchiness to take the mighty Merc out for some serious spin time is understandable As Rush takes to the road in late January for a lengthy tour to jointly celebrate the bands 20th anniversary and to support

Counterparts, Lifeson only has about 2 months of driving privileges before he's gone border hoping. Scheduling hassles aside, one thing's certain: Stereo Den game Lifeson everything he wanted. He's owned the Merc since it rolled off the line in January 1983 and has taken great measures to keep its look brand-spankin' new. Recent touches include eight repriming coats of acrylic lacquer (courtesy of Toronto's Concept Cars), customised wheels, a lowered suspension, and other precision detailing (performed by Tom Toomey, of Richmond Hill's Dynamic Auto Detailing). "It's a fantastic car," Lifeson marvels. "There's a lot of weight to it and it's very solid. It has less than 100,000 kilometres[about 60,000 miles] on it, and it's not driven much in winter. It's terrific for long-distance drives-I've taken it to Le Studio in Quebec[a 5-hour plus haul] a few times. Until recently we were using the stock stereo system, but it was high time to update it." Lifeson's highest priority was that the system maintain the integrity of the Merc-"as if Germany had designed it that year with those equipment choices as deliberate options," this according to Edison Bozo, service manager and technical director for Canadian distributor Jester International, who assisted Stereo Den with various aspects of the install. "His request for the trunk was the he would be able to access the space and put his gold clubs in there without being crowded out by a lot of equipment." As Bozo remembers it, Lifeson told him, "I don't want to have to rent a U-Haul just to go golfing." THE SYSTEM'S BONES get a-rolling up front with Pioneer's Premier Series KEH-M900 detachable-face cassette tuner. "It's Pioneer's best piece," Gat beams. The M900 was chosen in lieu of an in-dash CD head to accommodate Lifeson's desire to play promo cassette, demo tapes, and rough mixes at will. "I find the car environment to be a good reference tool." Lifeson explains. "It's just like listening to a playback in a recording studio control room." Lifeson's favourite CD- which include the aforementioned Dirt, Pearl Jam's TEN and Vs., Eric Johnson's Ah Via Musicom, Metallica and Queensryche's Empire-get plenty of airplay, too, as the M900 lets Lifeson command a six-disc CDX-M30 changer that's been relegated to the driver's side of the trunk. The first dose of processing is provided by Pioneer's DEQ-7550 DSP-driven

equaliser/ambience processor/active crossover, whose DIN-size controller is framed by leather trim and located flat on the console a few inches beneath the M900. (The 7550's subchassis brain is stashed under the back seat on the driver's side) "That unit was chosen for its flexibility and ease of adjustment," Gat explains. "Rather than controlling equaliser and crossover points from solely from the [trunk], we wanted to have four different memory presets available up front for the different types of music Alex listens to, or for whatever ever mood he's in. Plus, it has a bar better DSP chip than the head unit." After 10 hours straight of in-shop curve fiddling, Gat drove the Merc to Lifeson's remote Ontario homestead to gain approval. They listened to the various program EQ curves for about 2 hours, tweaked some more, and whoomp-there it was. The installer had 'em nailed. "I call the first curve, which is Alex's favourite, the Competition Curve," Gat says. "It results in flat sound, and Alex uses it when he listens to tape. The second curve is a hard-rock setting, which is mid-range-heavy and works best with stuff like Alice in Chains. The third setting is for laid-back, soft-bass easy-listening music, like Sade. The fourth one is the Fun Curve, a bass-heavy, low-mid setting geared toward serious, long-range cruising." Pioneer is also responsible for processor number two, a trunkmounted CD1000 crossover/EQ used primarily for overall system equalisation and filtering. GAT says it was picked for its flexibility and sound quality. The 1000 is bolted to the back trunk wall behind the uniquely "slotted" Plexiglas panels. The slots were precisely calculated to fix the internal volume of the trunk, which functions as the sub box; a solid Plexiglas window showing off the 1000 would have a limited the trunk volume. Gat readily admits that this visually striking arrangement "isn't very user-friendly." But system settings aren't supposed to be monkeyed with. In Gat's words, "It's purposely meant to be a 'professionally adjustable piece." For Gat, EQ isn't all that important anyway. "The system was designed to play just about anything," he intones. "Besides, the sound should come from the design of the system itself. I like to think of an EQ not as something that drastically changes the sound but as something used for finite adjustments. The way I see it, the more EQ you use, the more phasing and noise problems you'll have." A trio of HiFonics amplifiers sits on a board in the trunk below a rear-decked-out pair of Pyle New Wave DW1240/4 12s, whose bottom ends can be seen through a Plexiglas shield- if you lean into the trunk far enough, that is. The first amp, a 200-watt mono Hercules, sits flat on a ledge above and behind Pioneer's CD1000 and juices the 1240/4s, which are custom fitted with chrome baskets. The rear-deck positioning of the 1240/4s, by the way,

was directly influenced by the location of the Merc's gas tank, which sits vertically against the back seat. "Because of that, we couldn't quite fire the woofers straight through the back seat, as we normally might have," Gat laments. Oh, yes-the entire trunk is padded with black leather, including installation parts like the amp board. The other two amps, HiFonics Geminis, flank the CD1000; each runs at 50 watts x 4. Gemini I assigns two channels to opposing pairs of Pyle DW5216/4 5.25-inch Pyle Drivers, housed in individual, ported half-cubic-foot cavities within each door. "They port at the front of the door near where your feet rest." Gat describes. "Rather than going with four or five mids per side, we felt that we only needed two each-as long as they were in the proper cabi-net and tuned to the proper frequency." Alon, what is the frequency? After a bout with overt boominess, he notes, the port was eventually tuned to 80Hz. Gemini I's other two channels goose a pair of Pioneer TS-T31 1 inch neodymium-magnet tweeters also join the rear-deck party, and all are kept in place by custom brackets and panels built by Reznik and Bozo. Gemini II uses two channels to exclusively supervise an in-dash pair of Pyle 5216/4s; its remaining two channels juicer-cize dual dash-mounted T31s. All of the dash drivers sit in stock holes. In case you've gotten confused as to which feeds which, Gat reiterates: "The difference is that the door and rear woofs and tweets share channels on Gemini I, whereas the dash speakers have their own dedicated channels on Gemini II." Removing the factory grilles on the dash speakers, he adds, reveals a sharp leather finish-another royal Reznik touch. When they first started positioning speakers, Gat and Reznik encountered some phasing faux pas. "We ran into a number of phasing problems because of all the materials in the car and the shape of the interior." Gat explains. "So we had to take the dash apart a couple of times. And then there were a lot of rattles to overcome in the doors, since the door woofers seemed to punch a lot harder than we first thought, even with only fifty watts per side." Gat also decided to forego using a centre channel. "We specifically decided against a centre channel for two reasons. One, we didn't want to modify the dash, and we didn't feel there was enough space in the [central climate] vents to put, say, a 3-inch midrange. Two, we wanted to prove that every car doesn't need a centre channel to deliver proper staging." The design team, respectful of Lifeson's stock-look and openspace desires, also felt the free-air trunk design was a natural. But it wasn't perfect: "We knew there'd be some Q loss since we couldn't exactly weld the trunk shut to mimic a totally sealed, infinitely baffled box." Jestar's Bozo relates. "So we sealed all the corners and filled in the rest with as much sound-deadening material as possible."

The trunk saga didn't stop there. "A lot of people figure that if you use a free-air speaker, then you can just throw it in any size trunk and it doesn't matter," Gat claims. "But the fact is, every free-air woofer will work best with a certain enclosure volume." After careful consideration, the installers found 7.2 cubic feet to be the ideal volume—"just right for the New Wave 120s, because they work best in large enclosures," Bozo notes. Here the 1240s deliver a sturdy 134dB SPL. Total system Q was pegged at 1.1. "We picked that figure—which is deliberately in between an audiophile-grade 0.5 and a full-blown rocker's 1.3—to appease the fluctuation between Alex's classical, jazz and hard-rock preferences," Bozo says, closing the book on this subwoofer saga. The front-right trunk corner has been dubbed "The Power Centre" for obvious reasons; It contains a supplementary Genesis HD Series battery, a Monster Cable MonsterCap MCAP-1FD 20-volt capacitor, and a Monster Cable Powersplit Plus power-and fuse distribution block (another Powersplit Plus is tucked away under the hood). The Power Centre is accessed by lifting a hinged and illuminated cover that's swaddled in carpet and the now obligatory leather. (The custom carpeting was hard to come by until the Densters discovered Auto's International, a shop in Glendale, California that specialises in accessories for German cars.) The driver's side of the trunk houses the brain of an Avital AviStar Mark II security system. The Mark II system locks and unlocks the doors and sports two external sirens, one interior siren, a 12-volt battery backup, and pinswitches in the front and rear. (Yes you can Avital.) Also part of

the security picture is Autopage's The Shadow AP4000 Plus, whose resonance mics reside in each door. Thirteen rolls of Sound Quest Deadbeat sound-deadening material, weighing in at a whopping 250 pounds, took over 70 hours to affix. "There's no question it was worth it," Gat states. High density fibreglass and Dacron filler were also implanted to cut down feisty resonances. All \$8,500 worth of wiring is from Monster Cable and every terminal and clip are gold-plated; Reznik also notes that every patch cord was individually soldered with high-content silver solder. Gat reveals that there was one surprise lurking under the hood: "The Mercedes has a deficient ground strap, so we used 4 gauge Monster Cable wire to make our grounds to run from the battery to the chassis." Total install time clocked in at 360 hours and was spread out over a month's time, which rings up to about \$33,000 Canadian, including labour (that translates to \$26,000 US and £16,500), on the Stereo Den register. LIFESON GIVES THE install job the big thumb's-up. "This system has great response, from the low end right through to the top end," he observes. "The impression I have is that it's a difficult job to get in car sounds to a homogeneous level—that is, in terms of wherever you move your head or the different places you may sit. But this system sounds great everywhere. I can hear everything clearly—the bottom end is really right and punchy, the top end sits right on top of it, and the mids are very clear." With his seal of approval in tow, Lifeson's already handed Gat and friends their next assignment: his family's "daily car," a '91 Mercedes-Benz 300TE wagon. "It'll be fun." It better be—as Stereo Den well knows, Rush never sleeps.

DIFFERENT STRINGS

Good news for those of you who collect Rush guitar tablature books. A new book, 'Selections From Counterparts' has just been released by Warner Bros (Cat No. GF0631). Unlike the other tab books released so far three tracks have been left out - 'Stick It Out', 'Double Agent' and 'Between Sun And Moon'. This appears to be due to a limit on the number of pages - with the above tracks left out the book is still over 100 pages! As usual all of the solos are included and the vast majority of the tablature is accurate. Staying with the subject of tablature; following my requests for someone to have a go at bass tab Matty Kassell has volunteered for the job. Matty is studying music in Bradford and is a huge Geddy fan, so much so that he, a) claims to be the spitting image of his hero (presumably after extensive surgery) and b) plays a Wal bass! Matty's first offering is 'Bravado'. This issues guitar tablature on offer is 'The Trees' - Instrumental. I've done this one in response to requests from readers who wanted the solo in particular. As usual 2 first class stamps for copying and postage to Matty or myself. If anyone has any questions regarding Rush music, gear or techniques, write to, or e-mail Stewart, Matty or myself.

Guitar Tab:
Andy Piercy,
27 Nelson Street,
Bury,
Lancs
BL9 9BL.

Bass Tab:
Matty Kassell,
2 Western Street,
Barnsley,
S.Yorks
S70 2BP.

Give me back my summer

With temperatures high and the constant sunshine of a thoroughly – and unnervingly – glorious English summer lingering on into the early evening, I have to admit this Trivia nonsense struggles along somewhere near the bottom of my imaginary “things to do” list, whether the voice of our illustrious editor is on the answer phone moaning or not. Tennis; *The Observer* and a glass of squash in the garden; maybe a stroll through the pastures of southern Warwickshire are all primary options, the ironing and washing up necessities, but this Trivia thing...

And so it is with some disdain that I find myself at the keyboard, curtain drawn to prevent the sun shining in my eyes while the world outside

revels in it. With the rest of the country enjoying its first trip to the pub on a Sunday afternoon I remain a sabbath-afternoon-beer virgin.

And for what ?

Well, the big news I have to tell you is that the pattern of skulls and bones inside the front cover of the RTB tour programme is morse code for “Remember Death”, and that the words shouted at the start of *Alien Shore* could well be “Man Overboard”.

Is it really worth keeping me from the benefits of global warming to relate this stuff to you?

Do you really want to know that the boy on the RTB album cover is Michael Vander Veldt (according to *The New Music magazine*, 11/11/91), or that Neil Peart was

voted best rock drummer in *Modern Drummer* every year from 1980-85? He also won best multi-percussionist every year between 1983-86, best percussion instrumentalist in 1982, most promising new (!) drummer in 1980, best all round drummer in 1986, and has won best recorded performance awards for every Rush album from *Moving Pictures* through to *Roll The Bones*. (Somehow the live albums got into different year categories each time). Neil was inducted into the magazine’s Hall of Fame in 1983, and has been a member of the Honor Roll: Rock Drummer, Multi-percussionist since 1986, meaning he is no longer eligible to win the yearly awards. I suppose someone else had to get a chance sooner or later. No doubt Cozy Powell has cleaned up ever since.

Official recognition of Alex and Geddy’s playing pales into insignificance alongside the professor’s, but Ged has won *Guitar Player* bass player of the year awards more than five times, giving him Hall of Fame status, while Alex is in *Guitar for the Practising Musician’s* HoF. There’s a few other awards knocking about on the trio’s mantle shelves but you’ll have to ask them about those. If the *NMS* doesn’t care then neither do I.

However, this awards theme looks like it could just take me a few column inches nearer the bottom of the page, so here goes on the major prizes the band have scooped in North America’s top two music award showcases:

■ JUNO AWARDS

1974 Most promising New Group
1977 Group of the Year
1978 Group of the Year
1991 Best Heavy Metal Album
1991 Best Album Cover (*Presto*)
1992 Best Hard Rock Album
1992 Best Album Cover (RTB)

■ GRAMMY AWARDS

1982 Runner-up in best Rock Instrumental (YYZ). Beaten by The Police’s “Behind My Camel”.
1992 Runner-up in best Rock Instrumental (*Where’s My Thing*). Beaten by Eric Johnson’s “Cliffs Of Dover”.

Finally on this exhaustive subject, the band also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Musician’s Institute in Hollywood on Jan 23, 1992.

More nonsense next issue.

■ You can’t write that!

Another idea to fill these wretched pages. A regularly occasional look back at reviews from the major (music) press over the years. A number of *Rolling Stone* articles and reviews were transcribed onto the NMS a couple of years back, so that’s as good a starting point as any, and I’m also going to start with the only good one I could find...

● Power Windows album review, *Rolling Stone*, 1985

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 GUP, they tightened up their side-long 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.

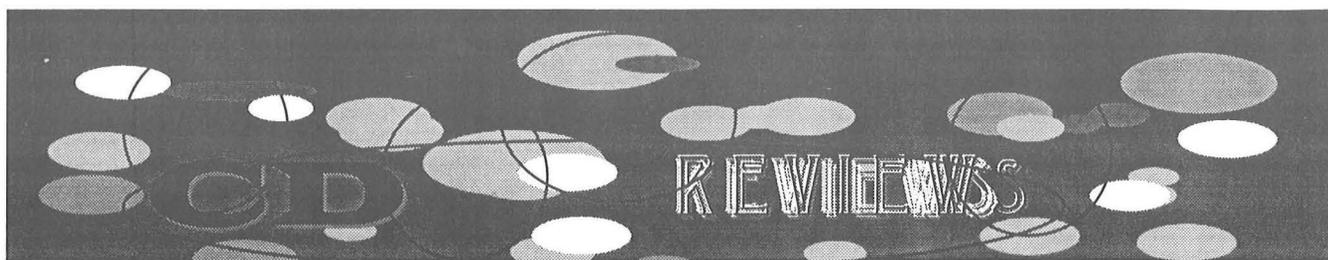
The Big Money, the first hot FM focus track from PW, may be the best of Rush’s Cool Wave experiment to date. Neil Peart whips up a Molotov drum cocktail that is half Stewart Copeland and psycho ska and half Blitzkrieg Bop; from deep within his Edge-like guitar pit Alex Lifeson opens fire with a metallic 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 PW sounds too much like the sum of its Eighties inspirations – that ghostly U2 resonance, the Police-like mesh of multirhythms 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 post-punk 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 a 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 PW may well be the missing link between Yes and the Sex Pistols.

David Fricke



ALBUMS REVIEWED BY UNCLE TEL

Hi music lovers here's your uncle Tel with a new reviews section to our ongoing "Spirit Mag". Wherein each issue I'll try and bring an honest opinion of some new and not so new CD releases from Mick's deep dark cellar. I thought, if that's OK with you guys, I'll try and give them a 1-5 star rating, bearing in mind I'm not trying to promote, demote, over-praise, hype, or persuade any of you in any way whatsoever to part with any hard-earned cash. So having said all that gibberish, on with **the reviews: * POOR, ** GOOD, *** V. GOOD, **** EXCELLENT, ***** BUY IT OR LIVE TO REGRET IT.** First up is our old friend Robert Palmer.

ROBERT PALMER - "HONEY" (EMI 7243-8-3031-25)

The first thing that hits you about this CD is the superb artwork on the platter itself. Resplendent with dolphin, bumble bee and sail boat and theatrical mask. But what of the music contained therein, I hear you say? Well it firstly has to be said that none other than a certain Mr Nuno Bettencourt plays guitar, and boy does it show. Most tracks differ from the one previous, which gives it a really fresh approach. There's a bit of everything on this album from rap to rock, Accapella to acoustic. I'm sure it'll be a huge success for Bob Palmer, as this album has so much happening. As an overall summing up this album is more rockier than usual, due to Nuno B. or not, this album is a must for Robert Palmer fans and/or anyone who wants to see just what a good recording artist our Mr Palmer is. ****

DILLON FENCE - "LIVING ROOM SCENE" (MAMMOTH RECORDS 7567-92434-2)

This is a fine album, guitars wailing, right from the start, puts me in a really good mood, a bit like the Black Crowes, a bit harmonious like the Beach Boys, but totally their own style, if you know what I mean. Greg Humphreys and Kent Alphin play some really together guitar work here held up nicely by Chris Goode on bass and one Scott Carle on drums. Again this album conjures up visions of really good indie rock bordering on "Buffalo Tom" but much more melodic than most indie bands. If you think you'd like to break into indie rock with melody and purpose, then I guess you could do no better than Dillon Fence, 'cause this really is a great album for getting you on your feet and singing. ****

SCHUBERT - "TOILET SONGS" (MAUSOLEUM 904-154-2)

No, no, no, not that Schubert, but a Mr Klaus Schubert. A very talented guitar slinger indeed. Ably assisted by Nik P. Opperer on keys, Lem Enzinger: vocals (sounding sometimes like Bruce Dickenson), Rob Muehlegger: bass, Mike Rinner: drums. Very odd music here though folks, very industrial rock, all bound together with humour as you might expect by the name of the album. But apart from the mechanical noises in the foreground, there's an underlying feel of melody and power combined with competent playing even if some of their songs get lost in a guttural growl her and there. I hate to make comparisons but, in places it all sounds vaguely like something you've heard before but can't quite put your finger on. Nonetheless it is a very refreshing change from what you'd hear on MTV or anywhere for that matter. So if you like a challenge (with sound effects) then this is for you. ***

WICKED MARAYA - "CYCLES" (MAUSOLEUM 904-0212)

The thing that strikes you about this band is the obvious similarity between Lou Falco's vocals and James Hetfield of Metallica. Some very fine axe wielding by Michael Adevaio and Dan Malsch while brother John Adevaio keeps rhythm on bass while Mike Nack has got the knack on drums. These guys are very good at that they do, which is sound like Metallica meets Queensryche in an atomic fusion reactor. It also has to be said that the songs are of course all penned by the band, so that makes them individual in their own right no matter who they sound like. ***

MOTHER STATION - "BRAND NEW BAG" (EASTWEST 7567-92366-2)

I just hope my words can do justice to this very, very exceptional band and album. With Sue Marshall's voice like a meld between Maggie Bell, Janis Joplin and Tina Turner then you get the foundation for the picture I'm trying to paint. This gals voice is dynamite. What with all the thundering guitar, swirling hammond organ and drumming this really is the '90's revisiting the late '60's soul of America, except these hombre's are all white. But you'd be forgiven for thinking they're all Motown or Atlantic Soul Stars. Having said that though these dudes deserve to be recognised for in their own superb style in delivering what by now you've already guessed is good down-to-earth gutsy soul/blues/rock. Yes there are a few guest musicians on the album but I still think the basic and overall sound must be what they always produce, (and I bet they're really ball bustin' live) with twelve tracks and an average 5-6 minutes in length. This is a real good quality for wonga buy. Top marks. *****

DADA - "AMERICAN HIGHWAY FLOWER" (IRS 7243-8-27986-20)

Dada are Joie Calio: vocals-bass, Phil Leavitt: drums-voice, Michael Gurley: guitars-vocal-harp. this band could be very big indeed. The songs on this release are all very powerful, there isn't much to choose between any track as they're all brilliant. Any band that says "In my green chair, watching Rush and drinking a beer" is fine by my standards. But that aside these lads play fine rock music by anyone's standards. Well constructed songs played with gusto. Very melodic, harmonies everywhere, great guitar-work and rythmns to bop 'til you drop and lyrics to shock your granny to boot. I'm positive we're going to hear a lot more of this band "American Highway Flower" is a gem of an album and should be sought after with your hard-earned cash as I'm sure you won't be disappointed. *****

AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB - "SAN FRANCISCO" (VIRGIN CISCO 1)

This sadly is only a four track sampler of an album due out by now I should think. This is very much indie rock in the Dinosaur Jr, Flaming Lips area of music. Perhaps not enough here to make an in-depth comment at this stage, except that it all sounds worthy of a more detailed review than these four tracks allow. With all tracks being so different from each other I'll play safe and give this sampler 3 stars. ***

TILES - "TILES" (SPR-94001)

This is a band that's going places I'm sure, but where remains to be seen. They consist of Mark Evans - drums, Chris Herin - guitars/keyboards, Paul Rarick - vocals, and, according to the CD insert, guesting on bass and the production side - Kevin Chown. Well all that said and done down to the music. What hits you first is the likeness to "Dream Theater" and "Asia", not to forget early "Rush" circa the John Rutsey era. Without sounding too off-putting to anyone out there, these chaps still maintain a strong sound all of their own. And on the 2nd an 3rd playing you come to appreciate some mighty fine musicianship and some dastardly harmonising which makes it all so easily accessible. This album should appeal to almost any rock affettuosos as it has some of the best rythmn changes I've heard in many years, with almost as many mood changes. So seek out this standing pavement recording now and you won't be disappointed. *****

WALL OF SLEEP - "WALL OF SLEEP" (WOO 24 CD)

This album was long overdue from Woronzow records even if I say so myself. These guys are homegrown and from the West Midlands, and boy do they inflict some cranium busting songs or what? With twin guitars from Simon Baker and Rich Wall with Ian Lee on bas and Paul Johnson - drums. this is real power trip stuff, Monster Magnet meets Nirvana and totally outdoing both. More bludgeoning and yet more melodic than those other bands, this band deserve to go all the way to the top of anyone's top bands list.

All the songs are self-penned and really do possess some intricate musical change-overs, thrashing rythmns and dark, brooding, menacing, hard playing that remind you of Black Sabbath in places.

If this is the debut album (which it most certainly is) then all I can say is stroll on album number 2 because when the music stops on this the most powerful debut I've heard in ages, then it just makes you want more, and more is certain to come. Keep your eyes skinned for this band on tour as I'm sure they'll blow us all away.

***** **PICK OF THE CROP**

ALEX LIFESON RATES THE PRODUCERS OF RUSH. AS TOLD TO JON CHAPPEL

For much of the last decade, Rush albums--from *Power Windows* to their recent return to guitar rock, *Counterparts*--have been produced by either Peter Collins or Rupert Hine, both of whom have impressive credentials in the recording world. In the following soliloquy, Alex Lifeson waxes philosophic on the differences between this pair of production experts and how their individual approaches have influenced that epic sound that has long been Rush's musical calling card.

"Some might find it interesting to note that *Counterparts* -- a real guitar album--was produced by Peter Collins, since the earlier records we did with him were more keyboard-oriented. Peter was great to work with back when we did those two records with him, *Power Windows* [1985] and *Hold Your Fire* [1987]. Back then, Peter had just come out of working with people like Tracy Ullman and a young reggae band, so he came from a very pop background. So when he worked with us it was really the first rock band he worked with. Around '85, we were at a point where we wanted to experiment with keyboards and he worked a little differently than we had, and it was a really good experience for all involved. We talked about doing a third record together at that time, before *Presto*. And Peter said, 'I love you guys, but I don't want to make another record with you right now 'cause I need to do other things and expand a little bit. And I think it's probably better if you do the same thing.' And he was absolutely right.

There is a real danger of working with one producer too long, especially with Rush, since we get very comfortable working with certain people and want to continue working with them. That's what happened with Rupert Hine. Rupert was great to work with, actually both Rupert and the engineer, Stephen Tayler. We did *Presto* [1989] and enjoyed working on that record together. But really after that, we should've gone on and worked with someone else. But we really based our decision on the fact that we were very comfortable with them, the first record went very smoothly, and it was a fairly quick to make--it didn't feel like we were in the studio forever. So then we did *Roll The Bones* [1991] with them. By that time, however, we felt like the relationship had become a little bit stale--certainly by the time we got to the mixing stage. So when we talked about who we wanted to work with on *Counterparts*, we tossed around a few names. In fact, we met with Bob Rock [Metallica, Motley Crue], who seemed very interested at the time and then suddenly he wasn't very interested at all! I don't know what happened with that. No phone calls returned or anything like that. I know he had his commitments to all the other bands that he's worked with many times over, and I guess they need him to come back and work with them.

With that the case, when we started talking about other producers, we brought up Peter's name and thought, 'Well, we worked with him before. Maybe it's not such a wise idea to work with him again.' Then when it all came to a head, we decided to go with him. He had worked with Queensryche and their *Empire* is a great sounding record. It's a well-produced record, the songs are very good, and Peter is great with that kind of influence on musical direction. He's also done quite a few very diverse things lately, the Indigo Girls to a reggae group called Youth. So you're looking at a true producer, a man who loves music and who's really moved by music no matter what it is. He's worked with Alice Cooper as well. And I met Alice last year--we played in a golf tournament together actually. He said he loved working with Peter, too. And I certainly remembered the good times we'd had, his strong musical ideas, and the fact that he'd worked with some fairly hard bands. So we decided to work with him again, and it was the best decision we could have made.

The bottom line is that Peter is so organized, reliable, and dependable that you don't worry about anything. All you have to do is be a musician. And it's great, because it takes all that pressure off you. Peter's contribution at the arrangement stage is very important. By the time he comes in, or by the time a producer comes in, it's usually the last week of your writing and you sort of go over last minute things. With Rupert, we would spend a couple of days on that. He'd come in and say, "Well, it sounds pretty good, I'd just leave that as it is" or "Well, that sounds pretty good, too." Whereas Peter comes in and suggests specific ideas. He puts little ideas in your head that make you start re-evaluating and reanalyzing the songs that you've just written. It makes you think about them. Can we actually bring more out of this? Is this really the best direction for this chorus? What if we change the key? He won't say, "I think you should move that key up to this, and I think you should play so many bars of that, blah blah blah." But he instills this quest for something greater. It's a great motivator for us. He comes in three or four weeks ahead and spends a week with us. And when he leaves and we're pumped! We're rewriting everything. We find in a lot of cases that because we have this new energy that they really develop a lot more. And he's in the studio all day, every day. He brought a lot out, I think, in us.

In the end, Counterparts would probably have been a different record had someone else been producing--at least a number of the songs would've been quite different than they are now. It's a very difficult thing to nail down, but I know that he does push us to at least look in different directions, and that's what he did with Power Windows and Hold Your Fire. Although those are quite laden with keyboards and he did push us to that extreme. We wanted to make those records a little stronger in the keyboard department. He took that and really pushed it to the extreme. And I think that was because of the artists that he'd worked with. Now Peter's moved out of Britain and gotten away from that whole '80s keyboard-influenced scene. And he's working with younger, more youthful bands. He's working with very diverse musicians, artists. He really wants to have a very complete spectrum of music that he works with. And that's the key of a great producer, I think. You can stick him in any situation--whether it's a pop band or Rush--and they'll do a fantastic job.

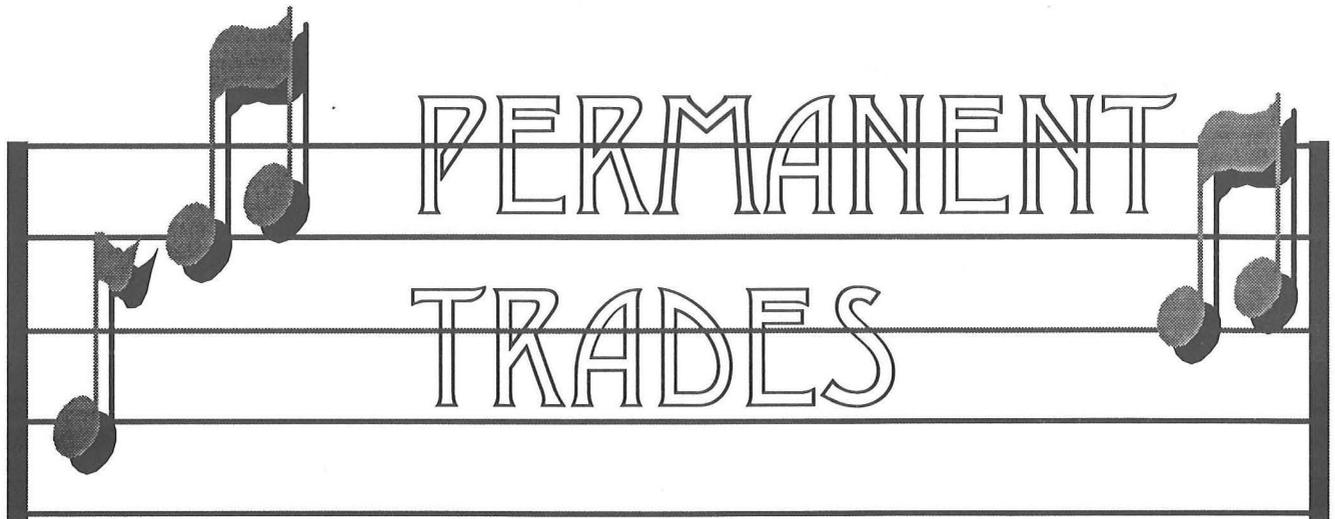
Alex's Army

For the recording of Counterparts, Alex primarily used Paul Reed Smith guitars, a Les Paul, and Telecaster. For acoustics, there were a combination of Washburn and Gibson Dove six-strings, as well as a Gibson J-55 in "Nashville tuning" (the lower four strings are replaced by the octave-higher equivalents from a 12-string set, thereby creating a "high-string" effect). Amp-wise, he played through a Marshall 100-watt head with one 4x12" cabinet, as well as a Peavey 5150 head into another 4x12" cab. The guitarist also dabbled with the solid-state Gallien-Krueger set-up that appeared on the last few Rush tours for a few sections. Engineer Kevin Shirley used both close and ambient miking techniques on the guitar cabinets, using AKG 421's and Shure SM-57's for the close work. Alex also recorded the solo to "Cut To The Chase" on his own via Alesis ADAT, which he later flew it into the mix.

PLUS

Alex on Home demos:

"I had a 24-track analog studio for about 12 years, but I get rid of everything and got a few ADATs, so now I have 16 tracks of digital. It's very functional and mobile and I have it in a rack. I have an old Lexicon 224 and another rack full of effects, but it all packs up pretty easily. We went to do Counterparts, I took it along to make our demos. We worked on QBASE audio and then dumped it onto a master ADAT reel. Then I did guitar slaves and vocal slaves and then mixed it down, so it gave use a very good idea where the songs and arrangements were going. So at the end of our pre-production period, we'd bump it up to 24-track and Neil would work on his drum tracks."



PERMANENT TRADES

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The following items are up for auction. Each has a minimum bid (MB) set against it. Send offers in writing with a SAE, (DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY UNTIL ASKED TO DO SO), TO : **PERMANENT TRADES, 8 RYELANDS CLOSE, CATERHAM, SURREY CR3 5HY.** Trades are welcome, let me know what you have first. If you need information on an item, write enclosing a SAE or 2 IRC's. Items are UK unless noted. Don't be afraid to put in a bid, as sometimes items do not receive an offer, or not much above the MB. But remember, some of them are quite rare, and they will therefore attract firm bids to secure. Postage & packing extra. Closing date for bids is 31st October 1995.

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