

# SPIRIT OF RUSH

February 1996

ISSUE 32



# Spirit of Rush

## EDITORIAL

Here we are with SoR No. 32. It's a late night here at SoR towers as we put this latest issue to bed. In recent months we've been slightly starved of things Rush, well now we seem to have a deluge.

We have part 1 of our exclusive interview with Alex. I talked with Alex for over an hour back in November, we talked about Victor and the things he's been up to since we spoke last.

As usual if you have a subscription reminder in with this issue please send it back asap, BUT if you are a North American subscriber then please pay close attention to the dedicated North American subscription form enclosed.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new North American distributor, Dave Milcoff, Dave welcome.

In this issue you will also find a whole page dedicated to the convention, so if you want to read more then turn to page 5. Please photocopy the page and hand it out to as many people as you can, after all the more the merrier.

There is quite a bit of news this time, Alex's album will have just hit the shelves on Monday the 29th of January. Some of you may have noticed that it isn't titled as being an *Alex Lifeson* album, but as a band called *Victor*.

This is due to Alex deciding that it was more of a band project than an "Alex Lifeson solo album". For the next issue can you please send in your reviews of the album.

On January the 8th Rush entered the studio to record their 16th studio album, recording and final mixing should be finished by early to mid April.

Peter Collins is behind the console with the recording taking place in an unnamed studio in Toronto. The latest news is that the drums and bass have been recorded.

The album is penciled in for release mid to late summer.

It looks like there is going to be a Rush tribute album out this year, featuring people like Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater drummer) and Billy Sheehan. Release is due in the spring, more on that next issue.

If anyone has any articles they would like to submit to us, please if you can send them in to us no later than the 9th of March.

Stewart. 22 Jan '96.

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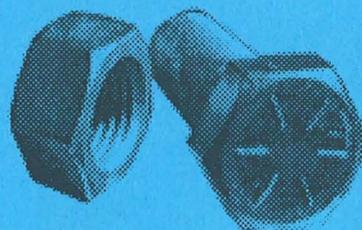
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Rush



# TO ATLANTIC'S VICTOR GO SPOILS OF ALEX LIFESON'S RUSH ROOTS

by *Paul Verna*.

Rush fans scanning the FM dial starting December 4 will experience a sense of *deja vu* when they hear "Promise" by a new band called Victor.

That's because the song's distinctly Rush-like guitar track is the work of Rush axeman Alex Lifeson, and Victor is his first major project outside the band he co-founded in 1969 with bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee. Although Victor bears Lifeson's unmistakable sonic imprint, it is more a collaboration than a solo outing. Among the featured musicians on the group's self-titled debut—due out January 9—are bassist Les Claypool from Bay Area alternative rock act Primus and I Mother Earth singer Edwin (both self-professed Rush freaks); acclaimed Canadian vocalist/songwriter Dalbello; local session players Bill Bell (guitar), Peter Cardinali (bass), and Blake Manning (drums); and Lifeson's wife, Charlene, and 18-year old son, Adrian.

For the world outside of Canada, the album will be on Atlantic Records. In Canada, it will be released on Anthem/MCA Canada.

"As Victor developed, it became a band project rather than an all-star wank-fest," says the self-effacing Lifeson. Victor became a vehicle for Lifeson's edgiest, more aggressive side, which does not manifest itself in Rush to the degree that it does in this new band.

"What most people would have expected from me would be a little different," says Lifeson, who is managed by Toronto-based SRO Management. "I wanted to get variety on the record. I wanted to make a record that was a little dark. People probably expected something more instrumental."

Musically, Victor is closer to alternative bands, such as Soundgarden and Alice In Chains, than to Rush's progressive rock sound. Accordingly, Atlantic plans to target the modern rock audience in addition to Rush's core album rock and musician fan base.

"The sound of the record lends itself to [modern rock]," says Atlantic senior VP Vicki Germaise.

"Plus, so many alternative bands—major bands—in the last couple of years have cited Rush as a great influence that this might open people's minds," she says, adding that the project might add to the number of future Rush tracks considered for airplay.

"Promise"—one of the Victor cuts most reminiscent of Rush—will also go to album rock radio, according to Germaise. Furthermore, Atlantic will work the hard-hitting track "Don't Care" to heavy metal outlets. The label plans to take advantage of Rush's considerable fan base in promoting Victor in North America and overseas.

Touring is out of the question for Victor because most of its members have other commitments, not the least of which is Lifeson's responsibility to Rush. Lifeson, Lee, and Rush drummer/lyricist Neil Peart are currently writing material for their next album, which they plan to record early next year. Germaise says Atlantic will probably release the Rush project in the fourth quarter of 1996.

Nevertheless, Lifeson says he will try to pull together at least some of the members of Victor and perform limited engagements.

To make up for Victor's absence from the touring circuit, Lifeson will undertake a wide-ranging media campaign that will include features in *Musician*, *Guitar Player*, *Guitar World*, and *Huh* magazines, and a battery of fanzines, according to John Raso, Atlantic's product manager for Victor and Rush.

Germaise says, "Rush has always been rather rigid about who they will and won't talk to, but Alex is so loose and friendly that I think a lot of people are going to get to talk to a member of Rush that they have wanted to talk to for a long time."

She adds that Atlantic will exploit Rush's huge online presence—which she ranks as second only to that of Depeche Mode.

“On the last Rush record, when we were all getting into online services, the first time we pulled up Rush's bulletin board, we found 59 pages of frequently asked questions,” says Germaise. “That's more than 2,000 questions!”

Atlantic will post an interview with Lifeson on its Internet World Wide Web site and could possibly create a Victor screen saver based on the album's photo/collage motif cover.

“There's also a bunch of grass-roots stuff that we're going to do, like in-store mailings to instrument stores,” says Germaise, noting that Peart's recent Atlantic outing, “Burning For Buddy,” a tribute to Buddy Rich, sold remarkably well in music-instrument stores.

“There are probably a lot of Alex fans in those stores,” she says. “We already opened up many of these places for the Neil album. We've done a lot of cross-referencing with Rush material, alerting people that if you're a Rush fan, you'll probably like this, too.”

While solo projects tend to raise questions about the stability of a band, Germaise says that Victor “is only going to help Rush's profile. It tends to be such a long time between Rush records, it's great to have something out there that tastes of it.”

Lifeson says that Victor only endeared his Rush bandmates more to him. “When we got back to work, we got closer than we've been in a long time,” he says of Lee and Peart. “We've reached a new level of maturity in the way we work. It's a brotherhood that goes beyond family.”

Although Lifeson composed all the music and words for “Victor,” he has no ambitions of competing with Peart for the job of Rush lyricist or of altering the group's democratic writing dynamic.

“I don't feel this great desire to be a lyricist,” says Lifeson. “I enjoy doing it, and it was a big challenge for me, because I wanted to get these ideas across. But with Rush, it's a different thing. We work from a different area, and Neil's lyrics are integral.”

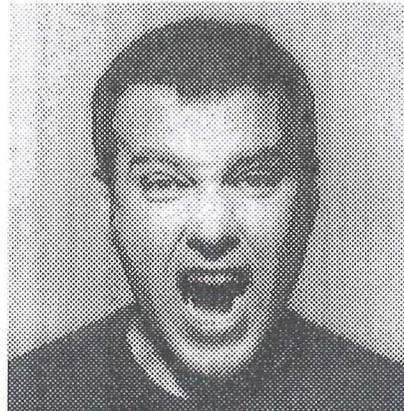
Lifeson's music is published through Lerxst Music, which is administered through Core Music.

One thing the 42-year-old Lifeson *does* plan to change as he embarks on the third decade in the business is the extent of his work outside of Rush.

“I'm sure I'll do more of it,” he says. “I really enjoyed it a lot; it did good things for me. I came to realize that

I'm a musician, a guitarist, and a songwriter. These are the things I do, and I should do them. I'm a lazy person by nature, but this [project] required me to work very hard.”

In addition to making other albums of his own, Lifeson says, he is interested in producing other people's recordings.



The following article is from an American magazine called R&R:

#### “Rush Guitarist's ‘Promising’ New Single”

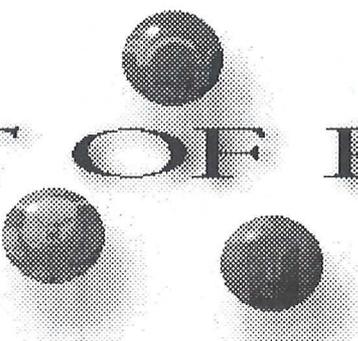
Alternative is the flavor of the year at radio. But the success shown by band Victor's lead single, “promise”, shows how enduring and popular the Canadian power rock trio RUSH remains at Rock-based radio. “Promise” last week surged 45-25 on the rock chart and debuts at no. 31 on the active rock chart.

Victor, the first non-tribute solo project from a rush member (guitarist Alex Lifeson), has seen public demand build well before the airplay release date.

Lea Pisacane, Atlantic Records Director/National Album promotion, says, “Rush is probably one of the most “internetted” bands around. Their fans heard about the project and started calling us as early as May and June. That helped us a lot in setting up the band at radio. It showed the fan base exists, and that it's both young and old.”

It also helped temper Active Rock and Rock radio's anxiety about playing Victor, since many stations over the past few years had either purged or dramatically cut back on Rush product in their libraries. Another plus, Pisacane says, is that “[Lifeson] stayed true to his style of music.”, “He wails on this album. The forcefulness of the record helped eradicate a lot of concerns about how it would fit in on the radio.”

With no real need to introduce the band to radio because of its heritage, Atlantic opted to work the rock media. “We did a lot of pre-release press,” Pisacane says. “Any rock magazine knows that this is an event, so we capitalized on that.”



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# STARTING OVER

by Neil Peart.

During the recording sessions for 'Burning For Buddy', it was a pleasure to work with so many great drummers, most of whom I hadn't met before. As many of us have long suspected, the drumming community is indeed a special one, with bonds of shared understanding, and nearly all of these great drummers were also great human beings. Some of them I will feel close to all my life, even if we never see each other again.

It was equally wonderful to work with the drummers I did already know, like Rod Morgenstein and Steve Smith. Rod and the sensational Steve Morse band had been the opening act on a Rush tour around '86, and we became good friends and have kept in touch. Steve Smith and I had worked together on a Jeff Berlin record eight or nine years before, then met again for the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship concert back in 1991.

This time though, I noticed something different about Steve's playing. He had always been a fine drummer, but suddenly it seemed he had become a master. My eyes and ears were amazed and delighted by the overall excellence of his playing - not only technically, but musically. His drumming was simply beautiful. *So I had his arms broken.*

No, really, I asked him, "What's your secret?" and Steve replied, "Freddie".

In the days to follow I was able to meet "Freddie", the legendary teacher Freddie Gruber, and over dinner one night he and I had a wonderful conversation about drumming, music and life. Freddie is sixty-eight years young, and has lived a life worthy of an epic novel. A native New Yorker, he began playing

the "after-hours joints" around the late '40s and early '50s - a time when New York was uniquely the vortex of contemporary art, the cutting edge of modern painting, theater, and, of course, American jazz.

During those tumultuous years, it seemed as if Freddie had crossed paths with everybody, from the most beloved drummers of the time, like Papa Jo Jones and the enigmatic Dave Tough, to the poet Allen Ginsberg, the abstract-expressionist painter Larry Rivers, and a cast of walk-ons that ranged from Gil Evans to a young Miles Davis.

For Freddie himself, a highlight of this time was working with an up-and-coming big band that included Charlie Parker, Red Rodney and Zoot Sims. Unfortunately, the *up-and-coming* went *down-and-gone*: The project never got beyond the rehearsal room, and only photographs survive.

Freddie was also a close friend to Buddy Rich for most of his life, and like anyone who knew that complex, driven man, Freddie has a great fund of "Buddy stories" too. Basically, Freddie's got stories, period, and he loves to tell them. (He wouldn't let me repeat the really good ones!)

Circumstances took Freddie to the "left coast" and led him into teaching, and after thirty-five years the list of people he has worked with is a veritable Who's Who of great drummers: Jim Keltner, Peter Erskine, Dave Weckl, Anton Fig, John Guerin, Mitch Mitchell, Steve Smith, Ian Wallace, Jeff Hamilton, Clayton Cameron, Richie Garcia, Mike Baird, Adam Nussbaum, Kenny Aronoff, John Riley, and many more.

Meanwhile, back in New York, Freddie dropped into the Power Station once again while I was recording my own tracks, and when I mentioned to him later that I was fighting the “War Of The Grips” in that style of music - unable to get the power I wanted from the traditional grip, or the finesse I wanted from matched grip - Freddie said: “Yeah, I noticed that, I could fix that in half an hour”.

During the summer months all of those things stayed in my mind, and before I knew it, they coalesced into one of those decisions that seem to “make themselves” in the subconscious mind - the kind of thing Carl Jung wrote about. Anyway, suddenly I just “knew” what I had to do, and I gave Freddie a call. We arranged to spend a week together in New York City.

For myself, I figure it was worth the shot. After working in my own “idiom” for so long, I had begun to feel that I had pushed my envelope as far as I could. I knew I needed...something... I just didn’t know what. There was no way of knowing if Freddie was that “something”, but it seemed better to find out than wonder about it.

A lesson with Freddie Gruber is not about notes, beats, or “chops”. It’s about the fingers, the wrists, the ankles, the feet - about the way the body moves naturally. In the same way there is no Freddie Gruber “method” - he changes his approach to suit each individual, adapting his knowledge and experience to help accentuate your strengths and correct the weaknesses. Freddie’s only goal, in his own words, is “to make the best possible you”.

John Riley described Freddie to me as a “conceptual teacher”, but that seems too dry for a character like Freddie, or for the roller coaster ride of studying with him. Whenever Freddie got excited about what he was trying to impart, he became a ball of pure energy - intensely earnest and physically animated - and my own energy level had to keep up with his. It wasn’t easy.

To demonstrate the point he was making, Freddie did a little music hall dance for me, and I realized what he was showing me: It isn’t about the steps, for most of the “dance” takes place in the air. He gave other examples: a piano player’s fingering, a cellist’s bowing motion, a boxer’s stance, and - he took a deep breath - “playing the drums”.

And then I saw it clearly for the first time - when we strike a drum with a stick or a pedal-beater, the result is a note being sounded. But if you think about it, almost the whole motion is “non-note” - which is to say, it is the movement that accomplishes that note. So Freddie’s unspoken method says, why not concentrate a little on the “non-note”, since that is the major part of what we do?

Freddie drew another vivid analogy - between hitting a drum and playing with one of those paddles attached to a rubber ball with an elastic string. He mimed the motion of it and said, “If you just try to hit the ball, it won’t work, will it? Your motion in the air has to be circular, fluid and responsive, or else the ‘thing’ won’t happen. Am I right?” I had to admit he was, and it was a revelation to me.

Freddie started me off with a list of simple exercises to take home with me, some of them to be done at the drum kit, others with just a stick and a couple of fingers. “These are just options”, he stressed. “Keep playing the way you do, and work on these things separately”.

Though I was inspired by all this, secretly I was a little worried - would I find the discipline to work on these exercises, to get into a practice routine once again? I hadn’t practiced every day since I was in my teens, and I sure wasn’t a teenager anymore! My life had become much fuller and more complicated, with an awful lot of distractions - both willing and otherwise.

But I needn’t have worried. I was possessed with the spirit of “starting over”, and I approached it that way. Every day I found at least one hour to spend at the drums (four drums, two cymbals, and a hi-hat), and at

night I found myself reading or watching TV with the sticks in my hands, doing the little exercises. If my wife and daughter weren't around to be annoyed by it, I would often have the practice pad out, too. (A drummer's curse - all your life no one wants to hear you practice!)

After six months of this, I was starting to "get somewhere", and I felt it was time for another session with Freddie. This time he came to my house in Toronto, and we spent another few days together. He left me with another list of exercises to work on, to "take this thing a little further".

Sensibly, he had begun with the foundation - the left hand and the right foot - along with some broader exercises, which would help to make my approach more fluid, more circular. Now he began to move those things up a level, as well as to introduce some new approaches for the right hand (As proof of Freddie's "one-limb-at-a-time" approach, as of this writing

we still haven't started on my left foot!) So once again, I'm back to practising every day and sitting around at night with a pair of sticks and a practice pad - starting over. My bandmates have been getting a little restless to start a new Rush project, but since I'm in the process of "reinventing" myself, I want to give it a bit more time. It's hard for me to explain, and the band meetings have been a bit awkward:

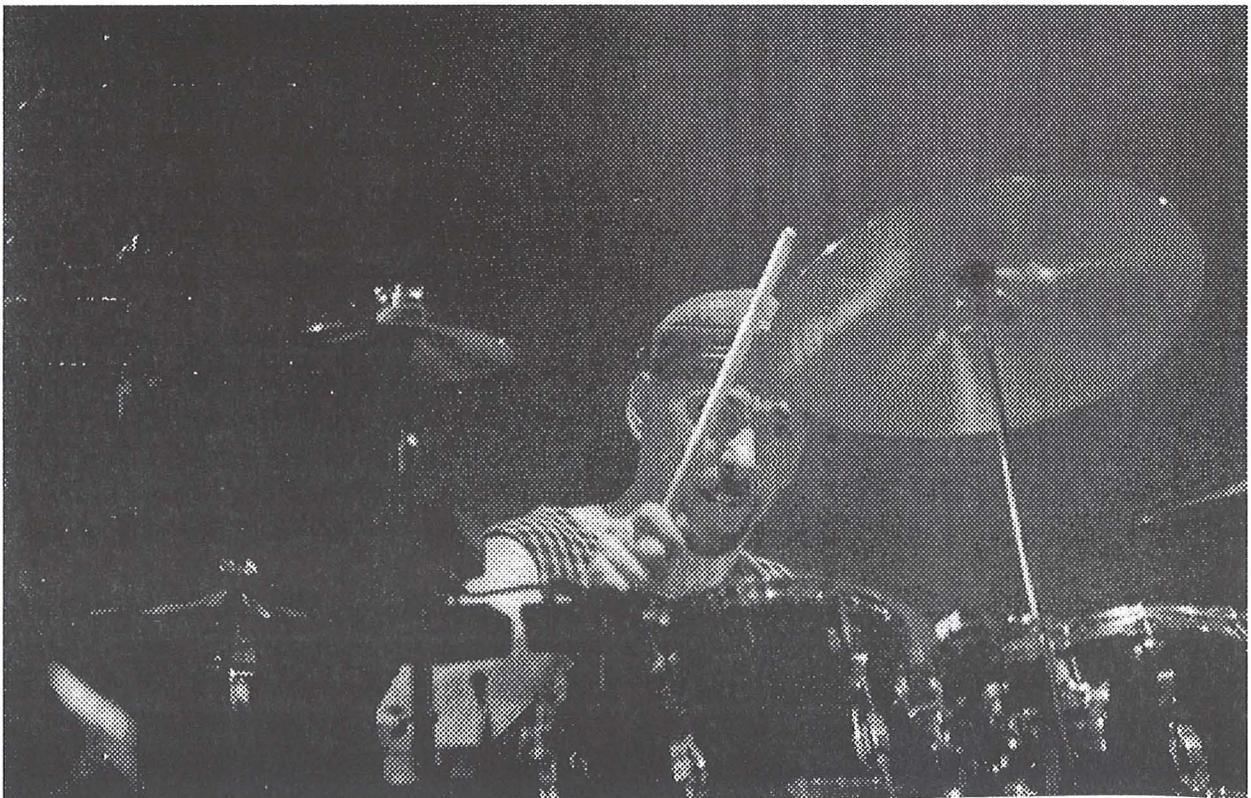
"When will you be ready then?"

"I'm not sure - maybe after a year."

"A year?"

And even then, I'm not entirely sure I'll end up playing Rush music all that differently. Over the past twenty years my style of playing has evolved to suit me and our music - and vice versa - and that chemistry may not be changed so easily. But still, I ask you, as fellow drummers, is it worth it or not?

You know it.



# RUSH ON THE .net

In recent years the craving for anything *Rush* and also the due to the huge *Rush* fan base that seems to thrive on technology, has probably made Rush one of the most popular on-line bands in the world, second only to *Depeche Mode*.

Not only are there various newsnet conferences about our Canadian buddies but there are now countless webpages for the band, and also various mailing lists, at the forefront of the mailing lists is *The National Midnight Star*. *TNMS* has been around now for a number of years.

It was setup by Jimmy Lang some years ago. Now it being run by Jimmy and his girlfriend Meg.

Thanks to Jimmy and Meg your editorial team at *SoR* have our own personal Email accounts (All listed below). And a *Spirit of Rush* Website (You will find the URL for it below).

Another of the popular mailing lists is simply called Rush Info.

Rush Info is run by our US distributor Dave Milcoff, and is in fact sponsored by us.

Unlike *TNMS*, Rush Info only prints news or various articles for magazines and newspapers, basically as the name suggests Rushinfo.

Now that *Victor* has been released there are a couple of Websites for it turning up. *Atlantic* have a section on their site for *Victor* and there is an independantly run one.

There are various internet providers around that world that have dedicated *Rush* conferences. EG. AOL (America OnLine) has a section as does the UK's leading provider CIX.

All these services can only help the band in the long run, by bringing awareness to the public, suffice to say it is doing more for *Rush's* public stance than East/West do.

Stewart.

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In Conversation with:

# *Alex Lifeson.*



by Stewart Gilray.

**I last spoke to Alex back in May '94. Since then Alex has been busy, playing at two Kumbaya festivals in Toronto for Aids awareness, working on Tom Cochranes album as well as writing and producing *VICTOR*.**

**When I talked to him it was like catching up with an old acquaintance.**

So whats been happening in the last 18months.

**Oh, not much, I mean the last tour ended in May and Ged and Nancy had a baby girl a week later, he wanted to take a year off. We've all sacrificed time with our kids when they were young and he didn't want to do that again.**

I kind of got the impression that that was the reasoning behind such a long break you (rush) were taking.

**There was certainly no resistance from Neil or me, in 20 years we'd never taken a break like that, and that kind of stretched out to 18 months and Neil had some things on his**

**agenda that he wanted to do.**

He did the Burning for Buddy album(s).

**Yeah, well he completed that fairly early, it was done by September of 94. He'd gotten into some other things and he wanted the summer off so, it had stretched out to 18 months, and I didn't want to sit around for that period of time.**

When I spoke to you last you said you had to do something for 3 months, and as you say those 3 months became 18.

**As it was it took me about 10 months to do the record.**

That's pretty good.

**Yeah.**

As it was on your own effectively.

**Well, yeah(laugh), on my own.**

I'll start with the obvious question, the title track

*Victor*, a Poem by W.H. Auden, why that?

Well as the record evolved, this is the first time I've written lyrics in 18 years, and it was, it was a prospect filled with anxiety, because I wasn't sure if I could do it, I wanted, thematically something to run through the whole record, I have to take a couple steps back here, I didn't want to make a record that was what I felt would have been typically expected from me, coming from a band like Rush, being the guitar player in a band, a solo record would tend to be perceived as a self indulgent guitar thing that would be mostly instrumental, and I didn't want to make that kind of record, I wanted to do something that would stand up on its own. Once I sort of settled on a theme, that was something as unoriginal as love, I wanted to approach it from a darker side, the things that people can go through, the pain and misery and frustration and anger, that can evolve in a relationship that started out as one of beauty and love, that with *Victor* I was fiddling around with the musical part of it, playing with rhythms and a melody, and I thought it would kind of cool to just narrate a poem over the music in sort of a pseudo beatnik kind of a way. and I had a book of collective poems from Auden there were a couple of poems that my wife really liked in the book, and I found a first edition for her sometime back, anyway I was sitting down at the console in my studio here at home and I opened the book to *Victor*, and I read through the poem which is quite a bit longer than what I'd done on the record, and I thought, this fits perfectly. Of taking it too an extreme, where the one you love is the one you kill. And it just seemed to fit the mood of the music, and it became a really nice backdrop for the narrative.

I must admit when I heard the name of the album, I thought it was called *Victor* in the context that, you'd finished that record and last, you know you'd beaten, it you were the victor.

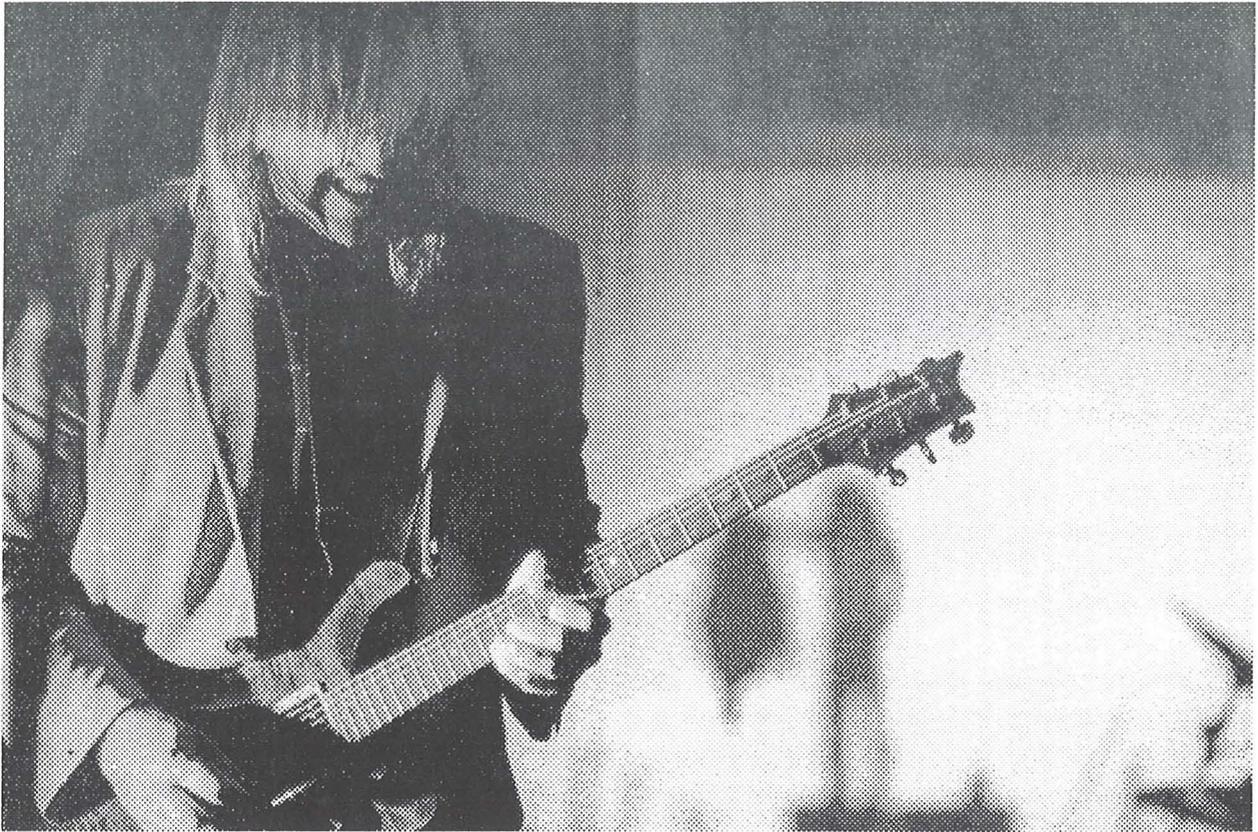
Well I suppose in some ways, at the end I felt like that, I felt at times I should have called

the record survive, cos it seemed that way, I worked really hard on that record, the last few months I worked on it almost every day and mixing was such a chore, I only had myself to really get any feedback from. So I was caught many times just sitting there mumbling to myself. But, it was extremely satisfy for me and very fulfilling, it was the sort of thing I really needed to do at this point in my life, I needed a project that I could really focus my energies on and something that I could really take charge of, and responsible for any mistakes I made.

Saying that, did that kind of come out of some past experiences with *Rush*, you know, you only being 1 third of a group and you only get to have a part of your input put in.

Certainly there is compromise I think if you ask both the other guys the same question, they'd would also say that there is a compromise and that's why Rush works the way it works, individually we do have different approaches and different expectations and desires in terms of where we want our music to go individually, and as a band we temper that by accepting each others ideas and influences, and so far after so many years I think for the most part it's been a successful partnership, and will continue to be, we've been in the studio now for about 5 weeks I guess and almost all the material is written for the next record there is just one other thing that we want to do, that we want to have fun with I think at this early stage it is always hard to say and it's always hard to be objective about it, because it is such an emotional stage in the whole process, but the stuff that we've written is really satisfying, and we're probably closer than we've ever been, or certainly in many many years and we seem to be really really in tune with each other in terms of what we're writing and where we're going, and really looking forward to the next Rush record.

I must admit I was going to come that anyway, but not quite yet.



**Yeah, but this one I think has something really special to it. The fact that we took this time off and I don't really want to get in to a whole bunch of *Rush* stuff, but the fact that we've had this time off, we've come back in and with some renewed energy and whole new level of maturity in our writing and it's great, it feels really really good.**

All I was actually going to ask was, what are we going to expect this time next year? I'm guessing it will be next October when the album comes out.

**Oh no, it'll probably be earlier than that, we're kind of aiming for completion by mid April, so I would guess mid-summer release.**

The reason I said October is, in the past you've always taken the summer off.

**Which we will do again, but we've usually finished records in June with an October release, this'll be finished a little earlier, you know it is so hard to say at this point, what**

**exactly is going to happen with that. I would guess sometime in the mid summer for release.**

One last question about *Rush*, do you think you'll be touring across here (UK) next tour?

**Impossible to say at this time. Certainly we have talked about starting the tour in Europe or finishing it in Europe, but nothing is written in stone. We will be talking about it in the New Year, but I don't want to really comment on anything at this time in fear of disappointing anyone.**

On Victor you have various musicians, Les Claypool (*primus*), Bill Bell, I'm assuming Bill is guitarist who was along side you at the Kumbaya gigs.

(See if you can spot Alex's subtle name dropping.)

**Yeah, I met Bill the first year I played Kumbaya, we. I can't remember if you or I talked about this last year, but Bill and I met at Tom Cochranes place, we were rehearsing**

there for Kumbaya, we were doing one of Toms songs, Life is a Highway. So we were all over at Toms, we'd had a couple beers and we were in his studio and it was real tight and there were 5 or 6 of us, we had little amps, and it was really a lot of fun, as a matter of fact Lee Jansen, I don't know if you're a golfer, he won the US open a couple of years ago, Lee was there, he was in town, and he's a huge *Rush* fan and we've sort of gotten to know each other over the previous couple of years, he was down there opening beers for us, but it was just like a basement jam, you know I felt like a 13 year old kid again, and after we'd run through highway a couple of times, we just jammed for a while, and Bill and I would play stuff and just make eye contact at those very special moments that only guitarists have. And I knew right away that I had a connection with this guy, and we tried to get together over the period of a year, but I was really busy touring and the recording schedule of all things we kept missing each other, then finally we did connect we got together and we just played again just the two of us sitting around the living room with a couple of guitars and I hadn't done that in a long long time and I really felt good about it, I really became close to Bill, he, is quite a bit younger than me, he comes from a different background playing, stylistically he is very different from me and is very raw and but a real soulful player, he has technique and spends time with it but he really plays from his heart, he is such a beautiful slide player, one of the best I've ever heard, so anyways we became very close friends, so when this project came up, I asked Bill if he'd be interested working with me, co-writing some songs and playing on the record, playing on some stuff that I'd written and just sort of working together on it. We started out together, he ended up having to work on Toms record, *Ragged Ass Road*, which I play on a couple of bits also, but Bill did most of the work on that record and some other projects he had to do here in Toronto for some other artist, so after a while, we didn't quite get to see each other quite as much, we were working on a daily basis, and when it came to

actually recording the guitars, I decided that I wanted to do the guitar recording myself, anyways, as I felt I wanted to have my signature on the record as it is meant to be a quote solo unquote record. But Bill appears in a few places here and there where I thought his parts were important and parts he'd written himself. and he was, there you know he popped in, for, during mixing a couple of days a week, he used to lend moral support, and to open some more beers. So we've become very very close, we fell like we shared a very special relationship.

Primarily you have Edwin from *I mother Earth* on Vocals. It seems to me that that was a brave choice to make, when we saw *Rush* in Toronto when *I mother Earth* were supporting you guys. We got the impression that they didn't feel too comfortable being up there, they didn't seem to come across too well, Perhaps it was because they were supporting *Rush* in such a large venue? saying all that though, Edwins singing on Victor is excellent.

Well, I think the guys were very very nervous that night, everything you've said is true to a degree, a really big venue to them, they hadn't done that many big gigs, they were all on edge anyways, you know what it's like, for a support act to survive a *Rush* gig, you have to have something to lock in on, Our audiences are very true to us. I've seen some bands, I've felt very sorry for them, because they just didn't stand a chance. There were some other bands that perhaps didn't have that much musical merit, and there were other bands that I thought were just great but it's a tough audience (laughs). With *I mother Earth*, they've worked a lot in that two year period, they've toured, they've matured, I actually went in last weekend and recorded some guitar for their new record which should be out in February, you know they are sounding really really good, they've toured Europe, there are lots of plans for them over here and in America as well, So I think at that time they were quite young and quite nervous, They are developing into a band that really wants to play, and they really want to develop as a musical unit, and

they are very serious about that, and I really respect them for that 'cause, there are many many bands that really don't care about that very much anymore.

Saying that they kind of remind of you guys in the beginning, you know you did your thing and not what you were told to do, they appear to be doing the same.

I think if we've influenced this generation of bands in anyway it is probably that more than anything else, in that if you want to do something, in your way, then just stick to it and persevere. It's not always easy but ultimately it is the most satisfying way. A lot of bands today, it doesn't matter how you play it is an attitude thing. We're not in that place, we've always prided ourselves on being better musicians and better song writers and we're always learning even to this day, we're always learning that we can do things better or differently or progress in some way, and I sense that from I mother Earth as well.

Well, I called Edwin up when we got to that stage of doing vocals, I had some local people come in and do some vocals for some demo songs, so that I could get a sense of what the vocals would be like and how things worked. When I finally got around to getting serious about it I called Edwin, they were in rehearsals, he came over and had a listen to the material and read the lyrics and we chatted for a whole afternoon he smoked most of my cigarettes

I thought you'd stopped?

(laughs) When I got into the studio there was no stopping me(laughs). And he said, I tell you what we'll get started, I'll come up and we'll get started next week, around May this was, he said "I'll come up next week, but I'm in rehearsals everyday from about noon 'til seven, I'll come at 8 and we can work 'til 2, 3 in the morning. SO we did that for a week. I have to say he really, really put a lot in, it was long days for him, a lot of singing, but you know the project became as important to him

as it did to me or to Bill, and that was the great thing about the people who worked on the record, at least the core, everybody was very very into it, Blake Manning who did the drums, worked really hard on getting what I wanted to get on the record and to find a balance of he thought it should be and what I thought it should be. And I think he felt as close to it as I think I did. I was really proud for that.

With Edwin, you get the impression that he is REALLY into it, the way he carries the emotion across in the lyrics

Yeah, well he had a REAL sentence, he had a lot of direction. We sat down and talked about character development and things like that, and how we wanted the character in each song portrayed. And I think he caught pretty early that I wanted a visual representation, if you closed your eyes you could imagine this person, or you could imagine the anger and frustration, or the deadliness of what the character is supposed to be, and he managed it pretty well, especially from song to song.

You can tell what especially when he goes from *Don't Care* to *Promise*. *Promise* is not only different lyrically, but also musically.

It is a more passionate and lively, compared to *Don't Care*, raw, angry and frustrated.

This may offend you slightly, but it isn't meant to be, I found *Promise* to be, dare a say Commercial kind of a track.

*Promise*, is a lot more like that, but that is the kind of mood, I wanted to capture from that. In fact *Promise* is going to be the first direct to radio single off of the album, then probably *Don't Care*. You know here radio is so different compared to what it used to be, for instance there are now different segments of radio. But *Promise* will be the first release off of the album.

When will that be?

That'll be around the beginning of December, before the album is release on the 9th of January.

Are you looking forward to that date?

Well I'm looking forward to the 8th of January cos that's when we start to record the *Rush* record. I lived and breathed the *Victor* record everyday, and when I'd finished the mastering, a friend of mine has a plane, I flew down to Portland Maine, where I had the mastering done. I flew back on a beautiful clear night at about 6000 feet, so you get a really surreal sense of the city lights and the landscape, It was great and the following day I thought, ahhh I'm done. I can move onto some other things, I could play some golf, I could crash (laughs) my motorcycle, I could do what every I wanted (laughs). for a few weeks before I started with the new *Rush* record, so then I could become re-focused on the *Rush* record. So *Victor* is sort of. I mean I'm beginning to get juiced up on it again as I'm doing some press, and the release is getting closer. You kind of sort of move on to something else.

Moving on, *Start Today*, Lisa Dalbello. When I first heard this song, I thought, hey this kicks, you've really gone for it hear, you know pulling out all the stops, and Lisa's voice, I don't know if Ged will like me saying this but, in some parts Lisa sounds a bit like Ged did in the 70's.

Well, I suppose in some places. I didn't really notice it at first, 'til some people started mentioning it. and I can see the comparison now in certain spots. But I really wanted a contrast, a heavy rocky sounding, very masculine sounding musical song, just opposed with a woman singing. I thought it would make a really nice combination and she was just spectacular to work with, she was so professional. I don't I've ever met someone as professional as her, she listened to a monitor mix that I had done and I had given her some lyrics, we talked briefly about it, she was just finishing up her record when I was mixing mine and she said I'll be back in town the

following week I'd be glad to do it then, she came in and got all set up, and said, ok what do you want me to do? You have a fabulous voice just sing the song, you know I said I'm going to happy with whatever you do, she said no no, I need much more specific direction, do you want me to back phrase on this line? do you want me to emphasise the first syllable of this word? What is the character here? is she plaintive? is she angry? and I just got charged up. well if that's the way you want to be about it, then this is what I want and whole day was spent like that, her lyric sheet was covered in red ink from her chart notes, and I kept those lyrics, cos they're just great to look at, you can't see any of the words that I'd written, it is just all her stuff with little symbolism all over it, and she would give me 2 or 3 different takes on each line or stanza, so I could choose from for what ever would fit emotionally. She was just fabulous, I fell in Love with her.

Don't tell Charlene(laugh).

Yeah, I did, I think Charlene would fall in love with her too. (laugh). She is just a fabulous person, really full of energy, really really intelligent, and bright and witty, and really well rounded, it was a real joy to work with her.

I must admit this is the first time I've heard her sing, I know that *Queensryche* used one of her songs. but that is it, I've not heard any of her other work.

She has a few records out, she has a new record coming out very soon. The last 5 years I believe she's been in LA. She again wanted to leave Toronto, and get in too a whole different thing. She co-wrote with a lot of big pop writers as well as working on her own, she is a very very active person musically, she's just brilliant.

On the album there 2 complete instrumentals, *Strip and go naked*, and *Mr. X*. *Mr X* is very short coming it at about 2 and half minutes. Was it a case of just sitting down in the studio one evening

and having a mess around?

Pretty well, I had a basic idea, and Peter Cardinelli, is a local session player, he plays in a band called the *Boomers*, I mean he has been around for ages, he IS THE funk Master. and he used to play on all that early *Rick James* stuff and *Funkadelic* in the late 60's. Pete also plays in the *Dexters*, the house band at the club. I asked Pete if he'd like to come up and play on a few songs that had a funkier slant to them, I thought he would do justice to, and *Mr X.* was one of them, he did ONE take on that song. He listened to it once, then went back to the top and did his little walking bass line, and it just fit so perfectly. So once that was on and we fiddled around with the drum sound a little bit to make it a little more explosive I spent an evening putting a bunch of guitars on, it makes me smile when I listen to that song, it is very up kinda song.

Next is my favourite track on the album, *At the End.* Now you do all the lead vocals on this track?

It is yeah.

Excellent.

Why thank you.

I can remember listening to it the first time, saying, it sounds like Alex, but, It's good singing.

(Laughs a lot)

The whole song is, well what can I say excellent, the singing is very emotive, emotional, dare I say sensual. You bring across the guys sorrow of his loss. The music also is amazing, the guitar is very emotive also, kinda bluesy, in a way it is like Dave Gilmour (*Pink Floyd*) What can I say it's just WOW.

Oh that's great, yeah that's a really special song for me, I co-wrote that with my son Adrian. He put together some keyboard pads, and some drums patterns, then I developed the middle section, and with the guitar and that. I thought about the sadness that was

inherent in the song. You know I'm at a certain age now, and a lot of my friends are, where our parents are getting a lot older and we are confronting the prospect of death, of loosing them, a friend of mines father died just last week after being ill for quite a long time, a couple of other people I know parents are in a hospital, and it made me think about being with someone, be it your husband or wife, being with someone for so many years and sharing every aspect of that together and suddenly they're not there, and the intense loneliness that must ensue and feeling of not wanting to carry on anymore without them. Also I don't play that kind of guitar stuff with *Rush*, there's never been an opportunity to play that sort of bluesier, emotional playing that is so naked and exposed, you know it isn't a think guitar sound, it has tons of sustain, you can do a lot of things with, your fingers can really speak with that kind of sound setup, and the song just developed. I remember the night I did all those guitar parts, I'd had a really rough day, a million things, nothing was going right I got home Bill cam over we were going to work in the evening, he was going to tape op, I wanted to set up a particular guitar sound, my gear wasn't working right, I called Jimmy (Johnson), Jimmy wasn't well, he was on medication, (laughs) he wasn't coherent on the phone, I was just so pissed off, I was just in a complete knot. Started working on the song, we did a few of passes, though this was going no where, I wasn't in the right frame of mind I have to relax. So I came upstairs, I got a half bottle of Jack Daniels and a 6 pack of beer, came back down stairs Bill and I had a few drinks (laughs) and started to relax and started to work on that whole guitar part and I don't know I think it is maybe some of the best playing I've done in a certain style. I'm really proud of that song, I'm glad you like it.

Next up is *Sending out a Warning*, complete different kettle of fish, a complete change in direction from *At the End.* There's something about it that doesn't grip me, it is a good song, but it just doesn't grab me.

We knew that, and that is what I love about

that song, cos I thought when people hear this song they're going to go **WHAT THE HELL IS THIS**, it is a very unusual song, musically it sounds unusual, lyrically it deals with a breakdown in a relationship, where one side of the relationship takes constant advantage of the other and keeps twisting that knife, and it is important to be careful not to twist that knife too much or too far otherwise there is no point of return, and I wanted the music to be quirky and unsettling in some way, and again give a good backdrop to those lyrics.

Now to me it sounds like there is a lot of harmoniser effect in there, causing this, almost violent reaction, that fits with the lyrics. Would I be right there?

**No there are no effects there at all, it just the**

guitars straight in. There is a second quieter guitar in the background playing a counterpoint to the main line, that along with the fact we plucked the strings and didn't use picks, so the sound of the strings whacking against the neck, again to cause a little bit of extra tension, and when it comes to the chorus, it is kinda of heavy and over bearing I wanted to get that dynamics in there, it is an unusual song, and I think it is going to catch a lot of people off guard, they probably won't know what to think about it, to me it is one of my favourite on the record, just because of that reason, being a bit unusual.

Then comes the almost controversial "*Shut up Shuttin' Up*" Charlene and her friend Esther doing the vocals. Was there a script for the song or was a case of sticking a mike in between them and getting them to talk?



We spent about 6 or 7 hours doing that, Again, Bill and I had laid down a basic arrangement for it, I'm not even sure if Blake had come in and played drums on it yet, I think he did, that was as far as we'd gone, I'd just put a guide bass on it and we had guide guitars on, so we got the girls in, it was one of the earlier songs that was done, the idea was just to have a little fun with it, we just wanted the girls to start to put them into a position where they could, you know nagging about guys and these silly things that people get themselves all wound up about. And we went through 10 or 15 different takes of different sort of things they were nagging about, and we finally settled on the ones we did, as they sounded the most natural and they also kinda made you smile and they were a little bit funny.

The ones that you settled on, it did sound like the girls were having fun.

Well yeah they did have a riot, of course it was a couple of bottle of wine later. They were really nervous they'd never sat in front of a mike before, they didn't know what to do, so we had to make things as comfortable as possible for them. You know the first few takes were a little slow, but once they started there was no stopping them. They had a lot of fun doing, and we had a lot of fun doing it. And I think on a record that is rather dark and unsettling it adds a little bit of levity but still keeps an edge to it.

Next up is "*Strip and go Naked*", there is a hell of a lot of guitar on there.

That was originally done for the magazine *Guitar World*, they have some compilations, called *Great Guitar*, something or other. But we liked it so much it grew to be apart of the record. And we really did strip it down as much as we could, it just acoustics for the most part, we had the electrics come in a bit later on, in the little, whatever you want to call them chord sections. Bill and I really had a great time doing that track.

How many guitars are there on there, it sounds about 8.

You know there are not as much as you think, there are, three tracks of mandola, two that are playing the same thing and one that is slightly different places with a little bit of a different sound to it, there's one 12 string electric, two acoustics and two 12 string acoustics, so I guess yeah probably about 8 tracks. But we wanted to create something that felt immediate and personal like a bunch of people were sitting around playing, and hopefully that is what I managed to capture, at least when I listen to it, I can almost picture, these guys sitting, or girls sitting on stools and playing.

*The Big Dance*, follows on, this again is a different kettle of fish. It gives a similar reaction to *Strip* as *Sending out a warning* does to *At the End*. Was inspired by *Nine Inch Nails* by any chance?

Again that was a song I wrote with Adrian, and Adrian is into lots of different type of music, and *NIN* is one of the bands he does enjoy, I like them too, I thought *Downward Spiral* especially was a really good record, I like Trent's work and I suppose it was influenced by *NIN* and *Ministry* that sort of thing, but I wanted to take slightly different slant on it, have it slightly more guitar orientated, but still have that same kind of edge to it.

I haven't seen a lyric sheet yet for the album, and with this song being the way it is I've not really been able to get a grasp on the them, what is the song about?

Yeah they do go by kind of quickly, It is about a particular type of person that's an opportunist who moves in with the sense of a shark for the kill for those that are weak, perhaps in a situation where they don't have all their strength together and just taking advantage of it, in a particular scenario.

It is a very loud in your face.

Yeah, that's the way I wanted that song to be, I wanted it to be overbearing and to be very

nasty lyrically, and again I think Edwin did a great job portraying that type of character.

You've mentioned Adrian a couple of times now, does he actually play on the record?

Well he did the keyboard programming on both those songs, and of course Les (Claypool) played on that one. I had initially spoke to Les in the spring about playing on the whole record, they were just finishing up their record, they were going to go on tour, he said if schedule permits I'd more than happy to. I started playing bass, just doing guides, I thought hey this is fun I think I'll play bass (laughs) I saved, of course I kept the three tracks that Pete played on, but I saved *Big Dance* for Les because I thought Les would take it outside, and he did exactly that, he came up, they were playing here in town, I organised golf for the other guys, because they made the trip up overnight instead of during the day as they normally would, and Les came up here, we ran through the song a couple of times, so we spent the rest of the day just talking and hanging out then I went down to the show, but he just added his particular flavour and slant to it, both rhythmically and musically.

Les is not the most, well isn't not really your typical bass player, he goes everywhere, he just isn't afraid of that fret board at all, he does what he wants to do.

Exactly, it doesn't necessarily have to be in key, there are just no rules when it comes to his playing.

We've already mentioned *Victor*, so next is *I am the Spirit*. This is an unusually little number if you don't mind me saying. There is even a riff in there that resembles the main line in *The Spirit of Radio*.

Well it is slightly different, again I just wanted to get activity in that part, those parts musically; at the end of the day I felt were a little straight forward, so I just filled them with what I guess is a bit if a trademark of

mine. I've done that sort of thing on a few songs, *The Weapon*, *Spirit of Radio* that sort of thing. I thought I'd just slide it in there. I think over a period of time I might get not to like that sort of thing too much, but for the time being it works(laughs).

In general was the lyric writing style, theme, based on past events, people, friends you know about and so on at all?

Yeah, really by both, you know you live with someone for a long time, or your married or you have a deep relationship with someone, there are many peaks and valleys you go through and many transformations in a relationship and it seems that at this point in my life I became very sensitive to a lot of my friends and their relationships, some have broken down, some of them have become stronger so of them have just carried on in the same complacent way that they have for a long time, some people I thought were rock solid have just fallen apart. It got me to thinking about the value of a relationship and what are the important things are in a relationship, the understanding the sensitivity to each other the communication they are all such important things that can me taken for granted, where you suddenly reach a point that there is a breakdown in that, and you perhaps didn't pay enough attention to it and just let it go, and the importance of hanging on to it or just moving away from it.

I think the album covers every aspect of the human emotion regarding the bad side of love.

Well I tried to achieve that with the record, and it was foremost in my mind when I was writing lyrics for it; I wanted to create minuets. I looked at it as a screenplay almost and that the music was the actual film and I wanted to create characters and scenarios that felt very real, that is why I wanted to use *I am the spirit* as the closing song on the record, because it is a song about self esteem and about being all the things that are everything, and having the knowledge that you do everything



**for yourself and that you have to be strong for yourself before you can be strong for anyone else.**

Did you just write the eleven songs or are there anymore lying around?

**There was one more song.**

Is that the one with Sebastian Bach?

**No actually Sebastian sang on the demo of *Promise*. When it was all said he did a great job on the demo, and he's great enthusiastic, and I know he was really disappointed when I had to call him and tell him that I would be using Edwin, he was really looking forward to it, he was also really looking forward to working on more songs as well, but I really felt that Edwin's voice was really what I wanted. The other song, it just didn't hold up musically, it was too ordinary. I actually wanted to get Tom Jones to sing on the song (laughs), the guy who had done the demo had a little bit of Tom Jones in his voice and I thought this would be soo cool to have Tom Jones on my record, even the whole thought of having him at my house, it was too much I**

**just had to do it, but as the other material developed I felt that the song would not stand up with the rest of it, and I decided before I had even got to recording the guitar, I'd already done drum tracks on it and bass tracks it was set for the guitar and vocals then I decided to not include it.**

Is *Victor* a one off contract or will you have to do more, sometimes you hear of musicians having to sign an X album contract to get even just one record out, EG. Sammy Hagar.

**Well because there are still a couple months lead in time before release, I haven't spoken to anybody, about any kind of obligations in that way, I did this record for myself, I paid for it, I recorded it at home, I played on it, I mixed it, you know this was MY project, and really when it was all done, if no one had wanted it, I would have been a little disappointed but it wouldn't have bothered me, it would have been worth it, I proved something to myself. I would definitely like to do something like this again and I intend to, whether I'll have the time to do it in the next year, two years, five years I don't know, it really depends on what *Rush* does, *Rush* is my**

priority. But this came at the right time in my life, I really enjoyed it, and I'd love to do it again, as I would love to work with other people again, The day that I spent with *Dalbello*, was really special, and I felt that I could really work in that situation as a producer and reap some benefit, that's something I'd like to do, but right now the *Rush* record is going to take us right through to the middle of next year and the touring and whatever happens with that and goes beyond that.

You've said that you do want to it again, are you sort of thinking now that *Rush* IS your job and not just that hobby type lifestyle as it used to be, I guess what I mean is, do you feel that *Rush* is now an obligation.

**No it's not an obligation, you know I might have felt a little that way then we started working together again, but Ged and I spent the first week discussing the different aspects of recording, the band and our futures and the growing we've done, we've all done so much growing up in the last year and a half, we are different people than we were. I wasn't really sure if I was still happy doing what we were doing in *Rush*, that little voice inside of me saying, is this the time, is your heart really in it, and we've always said that if the day comes and we're not in it 100% that's the day that we stop and to do a record for the money is just poison to me.**

By the end of that first week we had so much stuff on tape, great little riffs and melodies, and the following week it was like a revelation, I'd fallen so completely in love with what I was doing, it is more important to me that it ever was. After so many years, it is not easy to tour for any of us, we've put a lot of time on the road we've put a lot of time in away from having a so called normal life, where you have a routine where you're with the people that you love or you are with the people that are most important to you, and you look at it as a job in a sense, because this is what you need to do, you have to get out, you have to play and of course there is a thing inside of

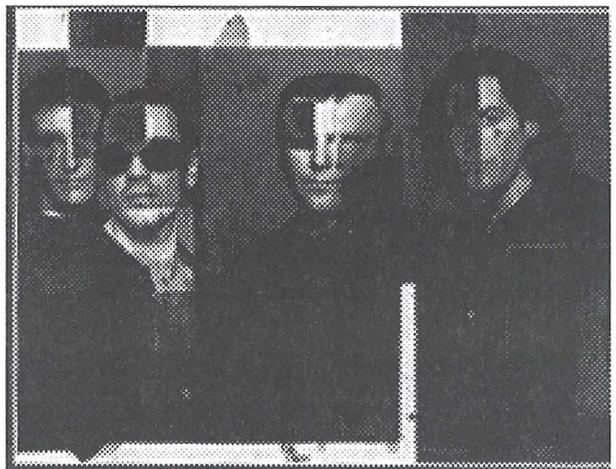
**ALL of us that wants us to get on a stage and play, those 2 hours on stage are totally unrelated to the rest of the 22 hours we have to wait for those 2 hours on a daily basis while we're on the road. Touring is a difficult thing for us after so many years, when you are young and it's new and you're fresh there is no better experience, it is life. but at this point the touring aspect is difficult, we still WILL tour but we really will have to have a hard look at it, so that we can do it in such a way that we are still happy and we are still energised by it, otherwise we're short changing ourselves as well as our audience and those things have always been very very important things to us and we don't want to jeopardise that or compromise things.**

Well there you have it, part one of a two part interview. Part two will be in the next issue of *Spirit*, March/April time.

I tried to stay pretty much with *Victor* and very little of *Rush*, but the obvious "What does the future hold for you" topic came up.

Let's see what the spring/summer brings us.

Stewart Gilray.



Blake, Edwin, Alex and Bill.

# ALEX LIFESON

*GUITAR PLAYER FEB 1996*

The best way to approach Alex Lifeson's new solo record *Victor* is to completely disregard the identity of its creator. That persona - the shaggy, blond-haired, heavy-prog riff guru of Rush - is barely recognizable in this scathing, screaming-to-brooding post-grunge anyway. These days you probably wouldn't recognize Lifeson if he were sitting next to you on a Toronto bus. Dressed in black with short-cropped hair, smoking cigarettes as he discusses songs about spousal homicide, the man behind *Victor* is pleased that the album in no way points to his tenure in one of rock's most enduring and challenging power trios.

"Rush has a strong work ethic," says Lifeson with some understatement about the gig he's had since age 15.

The band recently took an uncharacteristic sabbatical after touring behind 1993's *Counterparts*, leaving bassist Geddy Lee, drummer Neil Peart, and Lifeson to their own devices for the first time in decades.

"To have a year and a half off was totally alien," the guitarist smiles. "I was fine for a month, but then I got itchy, so I wanted to do something that would push me-I had no idea that it would be so big a challenge. In Rush we share responsibilities, and that's fine. But I got to do this record however I wanted, and though there were some overwhelming moments, I stuck with it."

"I wanted it to be different from what people expected," Lifeson continues, "and I wanted it

to have a theme."

That theme is the deterioration of love, and the music reflects that sentiment, though it's anything but sentimental. Lifeson's arrangements are deliciously unsettling, with deep flourishes that underscore the human drama of tunes like "I Am The Spirit", "Start Today", and "Promise".

Lifeson says he witnessed close friends going through crises in relationships that he'd always thought were solid. "I wondered if there was a virus in the air that caused couples to have difficult times. I hadn't written lyrics in a long time, and I was anxious. But they came easily once I came up with a visual idea of how to characterize the songs. I also bounced ideas off my 18-year-old son who cowrote a few of the songs. It's a great feeling to work with your kid on a record."

The Lifeson's combination of youthfulness and maturity blended to create an intense feel, though the sessions at Alex's house were surprisingly methodical for such energetic music.

He composed with a ProTools digital recording system, then transferred the tracks to a 32-track ADAT setup augmented by a Macintosh computer with Audiologic software.

"It was an efficient environment to get arrangements down," Lifeson says. "Once I had the structures, I re-recorded all the

instruments off the floor, and that's when it came to life. Our drummer Blake Manning has a good feel and can move around over the click, so it wasn't the usual pull-you-hair-out situation that it can often be when you work that way."

The guitar sounds on Victor are a combination of direct recorded Digitech 2101 preamp through a Palmer speaker simulator and miked Bassmans and Marshalls. Lifeson applied his long-standing technique of building rhythm tracks by doubling a Les Paul and a Telecaster. While his ES-335 and Stratocaster make cameo appearances, most of the soloing was done Paul Reed Smiths.

"On a few solos I used the Tele," Lifeson admits, "because I'm concerned that I've come to rely so much on the PRS's vibrato arm. On a couple of songs I actually removed it from the guitar."

Lifeson insists that his startling rebirth through Victor won't deliberately affect Rush's chemistry, but it may already have: The band just finished writing their new record in less than half the ten weeks they'd set aside for composing and pre-production. "Taking this time off was the best thing we could have done," Lifeson enthuses.

"For the first time in 20 years, we got to live other lives, and now that we're back together we're enjoying it immensely. The results really show."



Neil, Alex and Geddy attending the Artist of the Millenium presentation at Harvard.

# LATE BLOOMER

From Guitar School, Feb 96.

ALEX LIFESON was in no, uh, rush to put out a solo project. The guitarist waited 20 years and 19 albums before heading into the studio without Rush.

When the band planned a year off to accommodate the birth of Geddy Lee's child, Lifeson decided it was time to head into the studio on his own — to deviate from Rush's established patterns. The result, *Victor* (Atlantic), is a strikingly brooding work focused on the theme of love, its darker facets in particular.

Lifeson played most of the parts himself, later bringing in other musicians, notably Primus' Les Claypool, to add finishing touches. But *Victor* isn't the guitar-fest one might expect. "I didn't want to make a record that would

typically be made by someone like me from a band like Rush, where you'd expect 50 minutes of all this textural guitar stuff and wailing away," Lifeson says. "I really wanted to downplay that."

While the recording shows that Lifeson's got chops to burn, that's not what this project is about. "This wasn't meant to be a showcase for my abilities as a guitarist. The challenge I was looking for was writing songs." Though he hadn't penned lyrics since "Making Memories" on Rush's second release, "Fly By Night," 10 years ago, Lifeson found the words flowing out of him once he began. *Victor* covers a wide range stylistically, from Rush-like tunes like "Promise" and "Start Today," to the Zappa-ish "Shut Up Shuttin' Up," with just enough dazzling guitar to satisfy his longtime fans.

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## Permanent Trades

### Wants List

1. "Rush Through Time" - Picture Disk
2. "All the World's a Stage" - re-issue September 1984 Mercury **PRID 1**.
3. "Chroniles". - Triple LP Vertigo **CBTV 1**.
4. "Universal Juveniles" - Max Webster LP Mercury **6337 144**.

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## Auction List

Large collection of around 200 Rush items for sale. Includes LP's, 12", 7", CD's, Tour Programme's, Posters, Cassette's, Polish Postcards, Badges, Patches, Press-Kits, Stickers, Banners, Passes, Promo Items, Radio Station Releases, etc. Some items are very rare, some not so. For a copy of this extensive list, send a large SAE or overseas send 2 IRC's to:  
**RUSH AUCTION, 8 RYELANDS CLOSE, CATERHAM, SURREY CR3 5HY ENGLAND**

## For Sale

Any reasonable offer considered for an item, as a quick sale is preferred.

### LP's

Rush - 1st LP - 9100 011 (Spine a bit tatty)  
2112 - 9100 039 (Moderate)  
ATWAS - 6672 015 (Good)  
A Farewell To Kings - 9100 042 (Moderate)  
Through Time - Dutch - 6337 171 (Excellent)  
Max Webster - Hangover - SRM-1-1131 Canadian - Lyric sheet - (Moderate)  
Living Legends - Various compilation includes Overture/Temples & What You're Doing

### 12"

Closer To The Heart - Rush 12 (Excellent)  
Spirit Of Radio - Radio 12 - No P/S  
Vital Signs - Vital 12 (Good)  
Live - Exit 12 (Good)  
New World Man - Rush 812  
The Big Money - Rush 1212 (Excellent)  
Interview Picture-disc - BAK 2083 (Excellent)

### 7"

Spirit Of Radio - Radio 7 - No P/S  
Live - Exit 7 (Excellent)  
The Big Money - Rush 12 (Excellent)  
Prime Mover - Rush 14 - White Vinyl (Excellent)  
The Spirit Of Radio - OG 9767  
Roll The Bones - 7567-87524-7 - Promo sticker on sleeve (Excellent)  
Ghost Of A Chance - 7567-87491-7 - Promo sticker on sleeve (Excellent)  
Max Webster - Let Go The Line - CL 16088 (Very Good)  
Max Webster - Paradise Skies - CLP 16079 - Picture-disc

## Tour Books

Permanent Waves Tour 1980  
Moving Pictures Tour 1981  
New World Tour 1983 (Pen mark on cover)  
Roll The Bones Tour 1991-92

Send offers to:

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## Auction

A list of Rush items, some rare, are for sale by postal bid. For a copy of the list, please send a SAE or overseas send 2 IRC's to: **LES SPEARING, 17 FALKLAND HOUSE, BROMLEY, CATFORD, LONDON SE6.**

# “...I never was a Rush fan...”

Plenty of bits and pieces this time so cut the bullshit and straight into it. A couple of months back I interviewed Aimee Mann about the release of her (disappointing) second solo LP *I'm With Stupid*, and briefly managed to steer the conversation onto a certain Canadian trio she sang with back in 1987. Was she still an admirer of the band?

“Well I never was a Rush fan, I think they're very nice guys and it was nice that they asked me to sing on one of their records, but believe me I don't own a Rush record. I think they're very sweet but y'know, it's not my kind of thing.”

No, I hadn't thought so. But it's fascinating how far back it now goes into Aimee's past and how much has happened in her career since then...

“Yeah, but I think musicians are a lot less concerned with their categories and tribes than maybe the press is or the fans are. For me they're fellow musicians and they don't play the kind of music that I play certainly – or even the kind of music I like – but they were very nice people, and they also paid me incidentally which didn't hurt! But y'know I have a

respect for them; they're excellent musicians and they do things that I could never do and I have a lot of respect for that. So I think as time goes by I'm much less concerned with adhering only to certain categories of music or certain types of people.”

I can't imagine it did Aimee's career any harm any way. Infact the last time I saw her play live someone called out for *Time Stand Still* in the encore...

“There's always one rogue Rush fan at every show! Rush fans are very devoted, it's so funny...”

Er... yes, Aimee.

## ■ You can't write that!

The latest old album review again comes from Rolling Stone, and again it's a positive one. Unfortunately no byline was recorded by the transcriber who put it on the NMS, nor the usual score out of five, so we'll consider it a 5-star pat on the back, run away and not tell anyone.

### ● *Permanent Waves* album review, Rolling Stone, May 1, 1980

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

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

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

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

Y

Y

Z

O'Neills,  
Birmingham  
9/11/95

And so it came to pass that I got to see my first Rush cover band. And what a night it was.

The first surprise was the female vocallist, which I didn't object to – until she started singing. And giving it some Joan Jett/Pat Benatar-style theatrics. I'm sure she was on the verge of holding a steering wheel during Red Barchetta... So not a great start. And speaking of which, why would a five-piece band take the stage to the Three Stooges theme? Whatever, a summary sponsored by the letter 'A': the young-Lifeson look-a-like guitarist was Adequate, the drummer Accurate the bass player Average. Arsehole sums the keyboard player and apparent band leader, who might have got away with the OTT behaviour if only he hadn't been a dead ringer for Neil Peart (bandana and all), and A bad night out sums up the gig. Forget the interview guys.

■ For the record the set list went as follows: Tom Sawyer, Freewill, The Analog Kid, Mission, Red Barchetta, Closer To The Heart, In The End, Spirit Of Radio, Limelight, Stick It Out, YYY, Medley: Finding My Way / Anthem / Overture / Temples Of Syrinx / Grand Finale / Xanadu  
Encore: Tom Sawyer (again)

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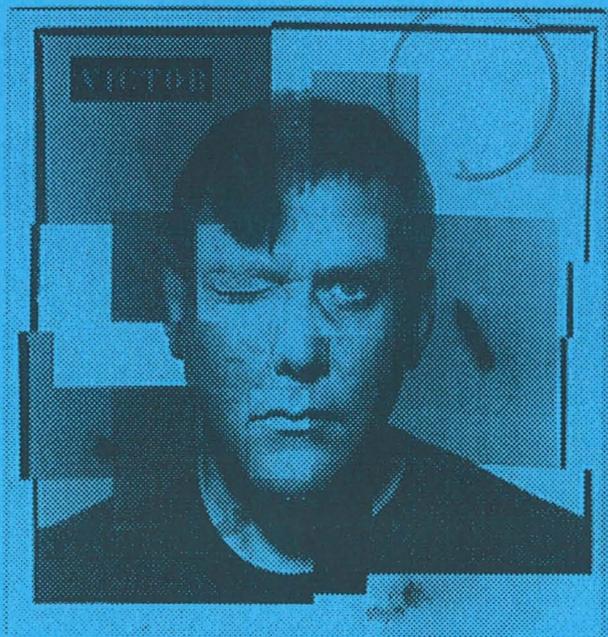
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