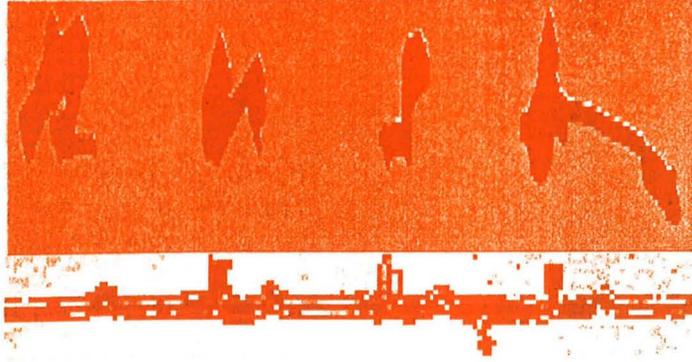


The Spirit of



Issue 42
Spring
1998

TAKE THE LEAD. DESIGNATE.

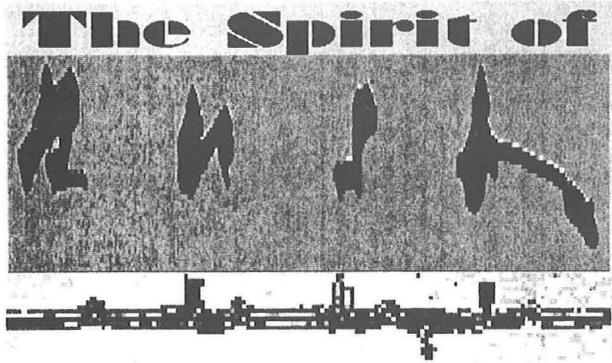


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Editorial

Hi and welcome to issue no. 42 of 'Spirit of Rush'. Very little to report on the Rush front I'm afraid. Alex and Geddy are reported to still be in the studio with Paul Northfield working on the live album which will be a double (and quite possibly a triple if they decide to use the old recorded-for-radio stuff from the late '70s).

Now the news you have all been waiting for - the third Rush convention will once again take place at Leicester University on Saturday 19th of September. We have chosen the later date of mid-Sept to facilitate those of you who could not make it last year because of school holiday problems etc. (amazing how many of us have children). 'Tom Sawyer' will be our live band this year (last year's support act). If you saw them last time, you know you're in for a treat. They hope to have a full-time vocalist by convention time and will do a full two hour set as well as the karaoke spot. We have once again managed to keep the price at a mere £12.00 per ticket for 10 hours of Rush camaraderie. It's a 2pm start, until midnight this year since some people (most of you) thought a 2am finish was too late and I must agree with you on that score. To order your tickets send a cheque or postal order to the usual address payable to 'Spirit of Rush' together with a stamped self addressed envelope for me to return your tickets. This is very important because we cannot afford the postage costs, ok!

As you may be aware, we here at 'Spirit' have always championed the American band 'Dream Theater' since their debut release way back in 1989. I know many 'Spirit' readers are also big fans of theirs and do not mind when we feature them in our pages (as in this very issue). If you have not heard their music you really should go out right now and purchase their latest album 'Falling Into Infinity'. As with many Rush albums it improves with every listen and does not contain a single weak/filler track - 75 minutes of pure inspiration. The band have been touring Europe extensively recently and played four shows here in the UK over the Easter weekend blizzard period. You would not have known about it though as promotion for the tour was non-existent. I thought that was what 'SJM', the promoters were supposed to do - promote the shows - didn't do much of a job did they? When the band had to cancel the final show in Nottingham due to James LaBrie's illness, the other band members wanted to do an instrumental show taking on some vocals themselves, but the 'promoter' would not let them. Thanks - what would have turned into a unique band performance was ruined by these so-called 'promoters'. Dream Theater are returning to these shores for a show (hopefully not the last) in London on Tuesday 23rd June at the Forum, 9/17 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, NW5. Tickets cost just £15.00 and are available by credit card now on 0171-344-0044. The price includes booking fee. I strongly recommend you go and see them before it's too late. Live in concert this band are second only to Rush in the music/performance stakes. The show will be a sell-out by word of mouth alone so, do not hesitate. It will be the best £15.00 investment that you will make this year, believe me. Janet and I will see you there. You might also like to know that Mike Portnoy and John Petrucci, along with Jordan Rudess (keyboards - Dixie Dregs) and Tony Levin (bass - King Crimson) have

[cont. inside back page]

Signals

Dear Mick,

Whilst renewing my subscription into my third year, I would like to take this opportunity to write to 'Spirit' for the first time.

I have attended both the conventions at Leicester and would have to say that a great time was had by all (Hi Tom, Eve, Pete and Iona). The first was superb, the second, even better.

Long may you continue to give us this fantastic fanzine and long live the greatest ROCK BAND in the world.

STEVE ALDCROFT
'THE WIRRAL'

Dear All at SOR,

Apologies for writing yet another of these "please can you...." letters,

I need to know how I could get hold of Bill Basnasiewicz's biography of RUSH, 'VISIONS'.

Also, I am keen to get hold of RUSH photographs, either of individuals or of the group itself. Along with a collection of concert recordings, interviews and bootlegs (yet another request I fear), this would be another dimension to my RUSH 'shrine-making'.

If you could help with any of the above, you would make a 34 year old frustrated groupie very, very happy indeed.

With innumerable thanks and the highest regards,

Yours sincerely,

CHRIS (KITT) EADIE
98, Knighton Fields Road East
LEICESTER LE2 6DQ

(Can anyone out there help Chris out!?? - Mick)

Dear Mick et al,

Let me just say thank you for Issue 41 which was a surprisingly good read in a quiet period for news.

Signals

I, like many others, was disappointed to hear that no live video is forthcoming. My copy of ASOH is getting fairly knackered after so many plays. I haven't been able to see the band since the RTB tour so a video of the T4E tour would be heaven for me.

And as for The Presto Debate.....I can totally understand both sides. For a very long time after its release I was hugely disappointed with it. The grey of the packaging after the red of Hold Your Fire said it all. The rich production of Pete Collins replaced by the cold, bright, harsh production of Rupert Hine. And all those dodgy tunes. Cringe at the nursery rhyme chorus of Hand Over Fist. Shudder at the oh-so-clever (not) lyrics of Anagram. But.....

Nearly a decade later, its on my CD player far, far more often than Hold Your Fire. I still don't like the production much but there is so much that is excellent on there. Show Don't Tell stands out as one of the 3 best tracks the guys have ever cut. Complex, powerful and Geddy's bass! Just "WOW!" Aside from stupid lyrics about donkeys, Superconductor just rocks, if played really loud. So does, surprisingly, Hand Over Fist, if you block out the chorus bit - it's not the lyric, it's the vocal melody and keyboards that grates.

No, it's a great album, worthy of a second chance by those who dismiss it. I'm glad I gave it that chance.

Yours sincerely,

JON BAKER
OLD MARSTON, OXFORD

To all at Spirit,

Having just read SOR 41 I felt the need to comment on a few things.

First up the Presto debate. This is just the sort of thing I find interesting when it crops up from time to time. I really enjoyed Andrew Field's piece and his well considered thoughts on the

subject. It is this kind of intelligent criticism which is the strength of a "real" publication such as Spirit when compared to the tedious and banal exchanges on the NMS which quite frankly bore the shit out of me most of the time.

As far as my own opinion on Presto goes I think I'll probably "choose not to decide". I've always been able to see both sides of the argument. The disparity of views on this album is due, I think, to its uniqueness. To me the transition from Hold Your Fire to Presto marks the biggest stylistic change the band have ever achieved in the space of one studio album - more so even than Hemispheres to Permanent Waves. Hold Your Fire was such a defining moment (apologies to those to those who don't see it as such) that the band really had reached the end of the road in terms of being able to develop further in the same direction. As we all know, the chosen direction was to return to the "organic" sound of straight guitar/bass/drums three piece. Such a jump required a settling down period which only reached true fruition with Bones and Counterparts. Presto was truly an experiment, but an experiment which was crucial in determining the form of the three albums since.

Having said that, I also think the transition through Presto to Roll the Bones is not a particularly clear one either. It is more a transition of attitude and approach rather than the type of clear musical progression which is evident through other consecutive albums in the past. Rush realised they could still exist as a straight three piece and on Bones they really got their teeth into this approach - especially Alex who, for want of a better word, returned to a more "rock" kind of playing. The reason that we didn't see any Presto tunes on the Echo tour is not because they are bad songs but because they just don't sit comfortably alongside the other material in recent live sets.

As for the sound, this is more a reflection of the requirements of the songs rather than a failing of the production. They have that bouncy pop quality which needs to be clean and punchy. This album is probably the peak of Geddy's quest to be "a funky white Canadian"! - just listen to Show Don't Tell, Scars and Hand Over Fist. I can accept that many hear the sound as thin and trebly but it was an important step

forward towards the perfect sonic balance which was so nearly achieved on Bones and Counterparts (actual perfection lies somewhere in between I reckon!). As an aside, I think this album more than others needs some really decent playback gear. There is plenty of bass on there, it is just fast extended bass rather than the kind of boomy low mids which cheap mini systems seem to love so much. A subtle touch of bass boost sorts it out for me.

Anyway, Andrew at least achieved his aim of making me listen to the bloody thing and as one of my less visited Rush albums I did enjoy it a lot. Which way shall I swing? It depends what day it is!

The other issue I wanted to comment on was also provoked by Andrew Field in his letter about seeing the band live (you really got me thinking this month mate!). Basically I want to come out in support of what he had to say. I was fortunate enough to see the band twice last summer while on a working holiday to the States. While in retrospect it was only a small part of a fantastic three months away there's no point denying that it was one of the major motivating factors which made me go in the first place. To some of us, the sacrifices mentioned by Andrew are worth making to see our favourite band. Also I think he is right about his article "The Best Week Of Our Lives". I enjoyed it immensely and saw it in no way to be a brag about being there. Surely these kind of articles are the reason we all subscribe to Spirit - to hear about a band which gains no mass media coverage at all. Those who aren't fortunate enough to be there themselves at least hear about it through others who genuinely wish to share their experiences. I myself have always appreciated this in the past, on tours which I wasn't lucky enough to see.

As for whether Rush have an obligation to play in Europe, I clearly support the view that they owe us NOTHING. If they do ever come here again we should all be eternally grateful - not bitter about missing out on other tours. I have always felt that everything since A Show of Hands is really a bonus. These days, when Alex, Geddy and Neil get together it is for the joy of making music together, not to live up to anyone's expectations of what they should or

shouldn't do. If they don't want to do a big tour or much press or whatever, that is their right. Anyhow that is pretty much all I have to say this month! Hope I haven't bored anyone too much. Thanks to everyone involved in the magazine for their work. I know that a very large majority of us DO appreciate it.

**DAVE BRENCHLEY
MANCHESTER**

Dear SOR,

While I took no pleasure in reading the majority of Paul Humphries' letter in issue 40 of this mag, I was equally disappointed with some of the things that Andrew Field had to say in response. I know the tired old issue of Rush not coming to this country has long been written about in these pages, but the fact remains that the band's policy of only sporadically touring Europe began after the release of Grace Under Pressure in 1984 and that means that since the end of the Signals tour in May 1983, Rush have been to Europe to tour just twice. Not one of the reasons put forward by Andrew or any other reader in order to try and justify the no tour policy holds weight when measured against the length of time that this has been going on. Fifteen years, eight albums and two record companies have come along with only two short tours in between. With Andrew's Canadian trip still only a very recent memory the frustration of not seeing the band live has vanished for him, while for others like me it remains very real.

How it can be seen as selfish to want the band to come over to Europe is frankly beyond me. It would almost be easier to swallow if the band didn't tour at all, that way we would all know where we stand, but this way the hope and expectation is there with every release only to be dashed yet again when the bad news filters down. It has now been nearly six years since the Roll The Bones tour came our way and I have more or less given up hope that they will be back, particularly in the wake of Neil's tragic loss. Feeling this way doesn't make me any less of a fan; I can't see any way that will happen and I still love the band's music dearly, but when defending the band's decisions please don't

forget just how often Europe has been overlooked on the touring front.

On a lighter note, with reference to the request for feedback on the remastered collection, I have to say that, on the whole I am delighted with the results. With some frantic saving and some not so subtle Christmas hints, I have managed to get all 12 studio CDs and listening to them has rekindled my interest in the older albums. The only one where there isn't a great improvement is Hold Your Fire, perhaps not surprisingly when you consider that HYF was the most recent release to go through the remastered process. Across the CDs, the highlights for me are The Camera Eye, Countdown and particularly Marathon which bursts from the speakers with such glorious clarity, it was like hearing it for the first time. Like Steve Pledger said in his letter in Issue 40 "It's like taking the cotton wool out of your ears". Marvellous!

Best wishes,

**DAVE LACK
ROMFORD, ESSEX**

Oh Dear,

Mr Humphreys, you really did upset Andrew Field with your letter. If you are still receiving SOR I thought I would put my tuppence in as well.

I'm sorry you didn't like T4E, personally I think it's a really good album - not one of the best, but more accessible to others. The lyrics aren't as personal to me as other albums - hey "net boy" - I've never used a computer so the song doesn't involve me, however Resist is a deeply personal song that I derive pleasure from. So, lyrically not their best album for me, but some of the riffs are killer ie; Driven, Virtuality etc.

Strangely enough, it's a live type of album with tracks that come into their own in a live setting. For instance, I never really liked Animate from Counterparts but it is awesome live, however my fave c/parts song Cold Fire is apparently crap live. I've not heard it live but I have it on good authority that this is the case.

So, perhaps if you had been as fortunate as myself and Andy Field to hear and see these songs in a live setting you could/would change your mind.

Oh god, down to being a "hybrid" (I've been called plenty of things in my time but that's a first). I do not know your situation. I do know mine. For 12 or 15 years it had been my ambition to see Rush in Toronto. For a number of years I worked in jobs paying £3 and hour - believe me. I thought it would never happen. Once before, I had the chance financially but I was engaged, saving for a mortgage and decided it would not be fair to not spend most of our savings (by me going to Toronto) on my fiance (prat!).

In the meantime I always liked hearing about gigs over there (albeit with a tinge of jealousy). You may condemn us this year but who knows next time (year?). "It could be you". If that is the case please tell us all about it to share in your joy and excitement. Personally that's what I wrote my piece for, to share, to stimulate and perhaps encourage others to give it a go.

You also felt Rush don't care about us over here because they don't tour very often. To be honest it's probably not the most rewarding financially to tour here.

Before you get excited - "play music for fun" etc. can I mention something John Petrucci from Dream Theater said a few days ago: he pointed out that playing was his job. He has a wife and kids to support so it doesn't make sense to do large tours over here. He admitted he loves playing but there is more to think about than that. When we spoke, it was obvious he missed his family thousands of miles away at home.

Let us not condemn but understand why N. American bands don't tour here often. Rush have families (as we know, Neil sadly lost his daughter last year) - this is a long way from home and lets face it, Britain doesn't make them that much money.

Remember, in this country they have no promotion - no radio, no TV (apart from Tommy Vance on the Friday Rock Show) and no press. Even in rock clubs it's a drag to get anyone to play them and when they do it's either "Spirit of Radio" or "Tom Sawyer". There is a big latent interest in Rush - I know in the club I work in now people get up to all sorts of Rush (including "Witch Hunt" on Halloween). Dream Theater also go down well. When people realise it's worth asking for a band like Rush they do. There are even young lassies of about 20/21 who

are keen to hear and dance to Rush, not just old farts like me.

Support those who care to keep the dream alive (a British tour) by encouraging those who have been to speak up. My trip stirred a fair bit of interest in the band round here (Edinburgh) so when (?) they do tour there will be an audience.

One thing we all did when in Toronto was to leave messages for Alex in his pub, to plead with them to come over here - so who knows, that might be the kickstart needed to get them here. Oh, you won't even need to thank us if this happens!

So don't knock the band or the people who have been able to go and see them recently but rejoice in the knowledge that you are a lucky man to be into a band that has got us all through good times/bad times, that has educated and stimulated us, given us some fun and helped us make some good friends along the way.

And Andy - calm down son - a man of your age and position (father to be) needs to be careful. You don't want to end up a grumpy old man.

One other thing, a wee comment about Presto. When I first heard it I thought it weak, with a crap production. Then I heard it on CD and it blew me away. There is some clever stuff on the album especially the lyrics (to Paul H - re-read Chain Lightening - "enthusiasm spreads... sparks ignite spread new information". That's what we all try to do in our letters and articles).

The Pass is one of the finest lyrics Neil has ever written - I mean who hasn't felt that they are "standing on a rocky ledge staring down into a lifeless sea.....nothing's (IS EVER) what you thought it would be"? The 'will to fight' theme recurs for me in Resist on T4E.

War Paint draws a lovely parallel between the way paint was used in the past (BRAVEHEART anyone?) and the way it is now. The battle to score by putting on a façade - a vain sort of a life that does not bring true happiness. Presto has a love or a lost love theme at one point - the dream of paradise to find out "what a fool I was for you".

Neil for me becomes more human by mentioning relationships of a physical/romantic or sexual nature. It's not in your face but it's there and it's very bittersweet.

Anagram again - "lonely things like nights I find, end finer with a friend". "He and she are in the house, but there is only ME at home".

For me it's clever and witty. The lyrics almost seem throwaway but they are not. You have to read below the surface. So for me PRESTO is an excellent album - musically covered in the last issue by Andy Field, and lyrically too!

I would be interested to hear what others think. What are your favourite lyrics and why? You could open my eyes (and ears) to something I hadn't thought about. Yours in Rush,

**THE MAD JOCK
EDINBURGH**

Dear Spirit,

THE PRESTO DEBATE

I read with interest, Andy Field's piece on the said album. My own personal view is that it is one of the bands more inferior overall albums, but with some great songs on it! Logical? Show Don't Tell and The Pass have long been included in the Hall of Fame, so go without saying. Superconductor I can personally do without, especially in the live show. The title track is not one of the best and War Paint again is not really up there either. But for me, what must rank as one of the bands poorest ever offerings - Hand Over Fist; it is just so limp and a non-entity, and nothing more than an album filler.

On the more positive side of things, a couple of songs that really do not get as much attention and credit that they deserve are Red Tide and Available Light, a couple of gems in what is a generally murky album.

Chain Lightning would have been a better bet to hear live than say Scars, but there you go. The distinct general dissatisfaction with the album, and subsequent live show, is partially highlighted in the general lack of live CDs available from this tour. The only one I know of which is of very good quality and worth tracking down, is 'Scissors, Paper, Stone' - a full 2-CD set from Sacramento. For the Presto fan, it contains just the 5 Presto tracks they played on tour, a couple of which they have not played since (reasons why on a postcard!), but it is unlikely

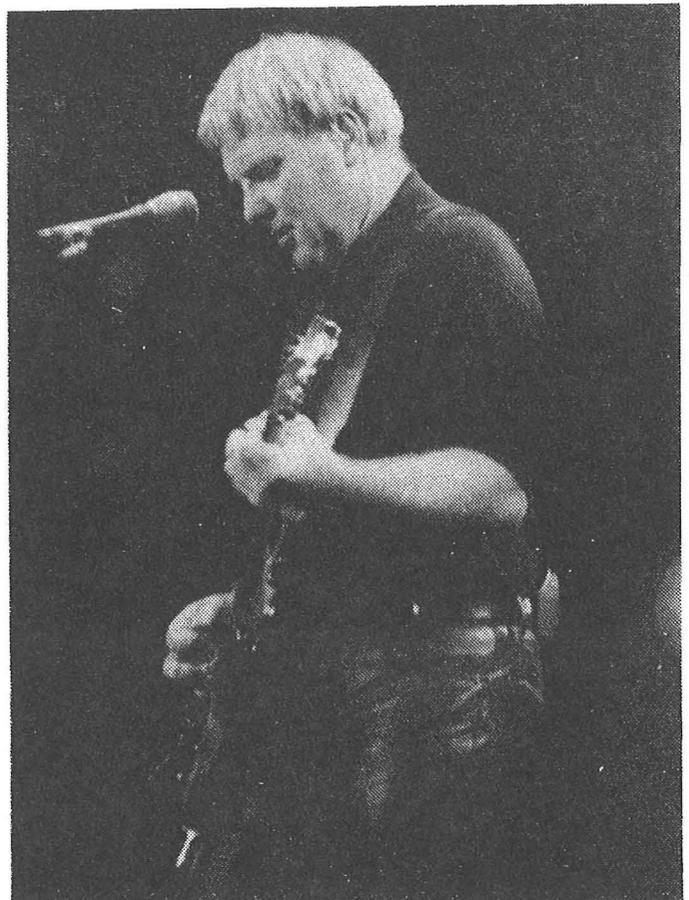
you'll find them elsewhere on disc! There is an additional, totally unrelated Rush thing I think/hope, on the end of disc 2, a very comical smutty duck sounding piece. You need to hear it to understand!!!

Whilst on the subject of live discs, there are a few other notable worthy releases to track down. 'Cygnus X Story' is a top quality 2-cd from Tuscon 1978, same as the 'Cygnus' 1-cd, but of better quality, and longer.

'Hemispheres Performance' is Oslo 1979 - a single disc of average quality, and finally 'Discoveries' - single disc from the band's 1976 US '2112' tour. Bonus material on the end is the Don Kirshner's TV appearance from '74, and 2 tracks from ABC 'In Concert' 1975. Worthy listening indeed. Also due out soon, and I have reserved my copy, is a very good Moving Pictures tour 2-cd called 'Atmospheric Disturbance'.

Keep up the good work, and here's to the next Convention (Any details, Mick?)

**BARRY
PRESTON**





Closer To The Heart

A Rush discography

by John Gill (Kerrang! 1981)

The phenomenal success of Rush and the fanaticism they inspire (remember all those Sounds letters signed 'Priests of Syrinx'? tends to make you put them in the same age range of Zep or Sabbath.

In fact, they're comparatively young in supergroup terms; just over seven years old. The juggernaut got off to a slow start, but achieved breakneck speed after a few years. Reeling up the Seventies, they went through change after change and improvement after improvement, both commercially and creatively.

When you consider how little many HM bands change over the years (for some, decades even) those seven or so years look like a frantic race, from the Zep-influenced debut, through sword 'n' sorcery, sci-fi allegories, arty concept rock and now, some of the hardest highbrow raunch to conquer spineless American radio programming.

Why weren't they told to give up and go back to their day jobs with that first album, 'Rush'? Anyone can transcribe a Page solo and play it themselves, but Rush didn't simply acknowledge a debt to Zep, they improved on the influence.

Even today, when Alex's teasing, spooling guitar moves into the stereo mix and Geddy yelps his debut to the world on 'Finding My Way', it has the same sort of classic feel that makes something like 'Communications Breakdown' still listenable after a decade or more.

It simply rose above mere imitation; the outrageous slow gunfire guitar on 'Need Some Love' could have taught Zep something back then, ditto the powerchord rush on 'What You're Doing'. But behind those pyrotechnics, Alex and Geddy were showing the first signs of an emerging writing talent of considerable ability.

Neil Peart had, in fact, joined Rush just before the release of the debut, and a few weeks before their first tour. Poor health and even poorer financial health had brought about the departure of drummer John Rutsey. Peart had come back to Canada after time spent in London gigging, playing sessions and, in one moment of destitution, selling 'Your Name Here' -type posters in Carnaby St. (I often wonder how many present-day Rush fans bought posters from the man who would one day become their idol).

In mid-July, 1974, they played their first gig, opening for Uriah Heep before 18,000 people in Pittsburgh. By the time they took the material for 'Fly By Night' into Toronto Sound studios in January '75, they were already on the move, accelerating away from that first album. You don't need to be told that the sessions produced such classics as 'By-Tor & The Snow Dog'. This can almost be seen as the first 'proper' Rush album. It saw the establishment of Peart's lyric style - light years from the typical honky blues rip-offs on the debut - and sowed the seeds of their later complex studio productions.

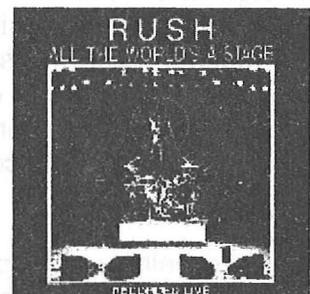
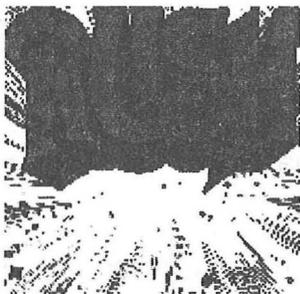
From the horror-movie guitar effects during the fight in 'Snow Dog' to the plaintively fragile 'Rivendell', it showed that this new young band (Geddy was still only 21) wasn't scared of taking risks with a style whose rules had been firmly set by giants like Cream, Zep et al. They could thunder and wail on the likes of

'Anthem' and 'Fly By Night', paint dainty pictures with 'Rivendell' and - nudge nudge - include purely atmospheric sounds on the epic 'By-Tor'.

Neil says that it was here that Canada, and America, started paying grudging attention to them. 'GBN' won the best-new-band Juno Award in Canada and went Gold there too. Alas, the ignorant radio and press still denied the existence of this fast-blooming homegrown talent. As still happens, they built up their following by tours of mindboggling length and energy. There's no need for sympathy, though, Neil swears they loved life on the road.

Confident after the relative success of 'FBN', they were back in Toronto Sound by July (!) recording 'Caress of Steel'. Perhaps this haste was something of a mistake; it certainly gave us the likes of 'Bastille Day', 'Necromancer' and the side-long 'Fountains Of Lamneth', but the album sold poorly, causing them to rename their follow-up-tour 'The Down The Tubes Tour' (only "half-jokingly," Neil recalls) and bringing label pressure down on the band (more of which later).

It was certainly a sophisticated step on from 'FBN'. Interestingly, if you lend an ear to the tricky riff from 'In The Valley', part one of 'Lamneth' it owes more to Genesis' 'Watcher Of The Skies' than something like 'Dazed And Confused'. Peart's lyrics were maturing beyond the comic-strip aspects of 'FBN'. The whole opus was the most ambitious to date; the songs were creating atmospheres for Peart's lyrics as well as doing their darndest to rattle the listener's brains.



Historians might say that this is where Peart's words started going wrong, addressing themselves to grander things than most rock lyrics should, but I'd say that was and is their salvation. The 'Down The Tubes Tour' took them on a depressing trek through smaller venues than before (almost as though the rock biz was punishing them) and Mercury Records were pressing them to produce more commercial music than 'Lamneth'. "A lot of people were wishing we would make the first album over again five or six times in a row," Neil told a Toronto magazine.

Their response to this pressure was the furious, apocalyptic '2112'. "It was us saying, 'Leave me alone!'" Neil told that magazine. Like 'Anthem' off 'Fly By Night', it was inspired by the plot to Ayn Rand's novel, 'Anthem'. '2112's' theme of individual revolt against corrupt authority (of any political shade) was to become a recurring theme in Neil's writing, but the fact that '2112' had been inspired by the "genius" of Ayn Rand got them into hot water.

The album came out in 1976, amid the first rumbles of punk, Rock Against racism and so on. Media 'radicals' here pronounced them crypto-facists (even the most casual look at at the lyrics shows that the hero is rebelling against the regime).

Rand promoted an ideal of benign capitalism, now seen as a contradiction in terms, and is said to have lost her marbles later on. Neil currently thinks she went over the top politically. If he was a Brit, he'd probably join the SD. Still, the storyline to 'Anthem' was a valid source, and it gave us one of Rush's most awesome concussive operas to date. If your spine doesn't turn to rubber at the raging, blasting climax, see a doctor.

After the lauded live double, 'All The World's A Stage' (including a full-length version of '2112'), they came to Britain - well, Wales - to record 'A Farewell To Kings' at Rockfield. The title is almost a message to their fans, leaving the sword 'n' sorcery behind and moving on to the sci-fi allegories, philosophical musings and inner space adventures realised on 'Hemispheres'.

Musically, it noted the arrival of Geddy's synthesizers and Neil's use of orchestral percussion. Oddly 'Kings' seems to see them cutting loose from the blues-fathered rock of their earlier albums, or at least refining it beyond those early albums. It has a distinctly contemporary feel, owing as much to the symphonic rock of Yes and others as to their heavy metal godfathers. It can rock with a vengeance (check 'Xanadu' or the spacey 'Cygnus X-1'), but has a very grand, epic air.



A further sign of their eagerness to experiment was the lengthy opening to 'Cygnus' a whizzing synth intro'ing HM rifferama is nothing new but this goes on so long it could be Stockhausen - yet they think nothing of mating it with the swingeing monster riffing that ensues. 1978's 'Hemispheres' was hailed by someone not too far from the editor's chair of this esteemed journal as either a masterpiece or a mistake. This was Rush making a stand for their eclecticism - the purposely bizarre exoticism of 'Strangiato', the '2001' drones of 'Cygnus' (accompanied, live, by an animate space movie), the marching semi-acoustic 'Trees'.

Perhaps it was their 'Topographic Oceans' - like the Yes album acclaimed as brilliant by some, dismissed as pretentious garbage by others. It certainly had more than enough of that classic stratospheric Rush riffing. Like Neil's remarks about the pressure which produced '2112', it divided Rush fans into two camps; those who wanted them to keep re-writing '2112', and those who were prepared to go exploring with the band. It also marked the end of yet another era for Rush.

Up until then, Neil had used science fantasy, space opera, social sci-fi and classical mythology to convey his ideas. With 1980's 'Permanent Waves' (a little poetic contradiction there) he was writing straight from the here and now. Only the moody, gothic 'Jacob's Ladder' referred back to their earlier styles; lyrically, it just paints a static picture. The lengthy 'Natural Science' uses ideas from science and nature, but to talk about present day, real-life things.

Its musical style is sophisticated and modern, and gave them their first transatlantic hit with 'Spirit of Radio'. To an outsider, much hard rock is obviously linked to the early Seventies, but this was modern day music, high-class headbanging for the Eighties.

Yet the raw energy of their music wasn't sacrificed in favour of sophistication; the whooshing, giddy riff that bridges 'Tide Pools' and 'Hyperspace' can proudly stand next to any of the famous licks from their HM days. That line was continued on this year's 'Moving Pictures', with its brilliant, elaborate riddle of a sleeve. Even more than on 'Permanent Waves', Neil's lyrics are talking about topical concerns. 'Red Barchetta' is set in the future, but is talking about obstructive bureaucracy.

'Witch Hunt' reads like a description of a Medieval occult painting, but is about modern-day bigotry (the US's KKK/moral Majority?). The album's highlight, 'Camera eye' is a look at society in the manner of the late American novelist, John Dos Passos (if you wanna check him out, the hefty 'USA' trilogy in Penguin is

his most famous work). Dos Passos' style was to record everything with his 'camera eye'; street signs, strange characters, newspaper headlines, radio announcements, snippets of conversation heard from passers-by and the like to build a complete image of what was being written about. That's to explain the collage of noises at the beginning of this look at two cities; London and New York.

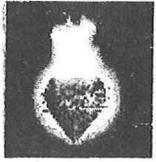
While 'Permanent Waves' was a drastic diversion from the style of 'Hemispheres' (which many thought was leading them towards indulgent art-rock), it also sounded lighter (or should that be brighter?); this was very much its heavier relative. Maybe they conspired with long-time producer Terry Brown, for the whole album has a very hard, raunchy edge to it. The gritty 'Tom Sawyer', 'Red Barchetta's headlong swerves and the HM riffola gallery 'YYZ' (the lettering on Toronto Airport luggage tags) all have a dark power driving them along. And just to remind you that the last thing they intend doing is standing still, they end the album with 'Vital Signs', a bopping reggae-rock crossover.

No news of another studio album has yet crossed the Atlantic, although a live double is to be released to coincide with their October dates here. And print freaks will like to know that after Deaf Barton's long essay, 'The Rush Story', Omnibus Books should be publishing a full-length Rush biography, by journalist Brian Harrigan, around that time.

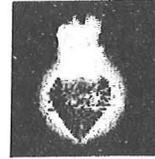
This has been no blow-by-blow life-story - the book should give you that in greater detail when it comes out. But hopefully it gives pointers and explanations of what (might) lie at the heart of the Rush phenomenon. They're no straightforward hard rock band, nor should they ever be. Too much rock gives it all to you on a plate, which is a pretty boring and lazy way of making and listening to music. Rush make an effort, and expect you to make an effort too, so anyone who whinges about "intellectual" lyrics or arty ambitions in the music might as well go back to 'Paranoid'.

Rush are saying that there's much more to enjoy in the music and lyrics than what's already there. If you can't appreciate that, you might as well go deaf, dumb and blind. Their adventurousness is what makes Rush such an important and inspiring band.





Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of.....



On the road with Dream Theater for
the UK leg of their 'Falling Into Infinity' tour by Janet Balmer

It's Good Friday. We're in Wolverhampton and there's a blizzard outside (never fails on a bank holiday does it?). Having just spent a gruelling morning driving in circles around Birmingham then finding that our hotel is somewhat less than desirable (you know the sort.....1970's caravan cum-brothel-style decor, Ozzy Osbourne's sister to greet us at the door) Mick and I both agreed that we must be losing our minds.

We were here to see Dream Theater - the first of their tour of 4 dates in the UK. For years, Mick and Neil (Elliott - ex co-editor of SOR and current custodian of the DT fan club, Images & Words) had been bombarding me with tapes of this band and dragging me to their concerts. Whilst always enjoying their music, I somehow never really got into them. Until, last September when I heard their latest CD, the excellent 'Falling Into Infinity' and then in November when they played an unbelievable gig at the Forum, London. I was converted, I had to see them again.

Dressed like Michelin men, Mick and I headed out through the sleet for the venue, the Wulfrun Hall, where we bumped into Neil. After far too long eating, drinking and reminiscing we finally got there too late to see the support band (The Rudess Morgenstein Project - Jordan Rudess and Rod Morgenstein). Luckily, I still managed to get into a reasonable spot near the front where I could pretty much see most of the band most of the time. Soon after, DT hit the stage amidst a backdrop of dry ice, lava lamps and the music from A Clockwork Orange. As the opening bars to Lines In The Sand curled across the hall, I just knew this was going to be good.

After some initial mushiness during the first half of the song the sound engineers got it sorted and the clarity of the sound (even at the front) was up to DT's usual high standard - each element distinct yet the overall picture perfectly balanced. We had been informed by Neil that the band were alternating two different sets on this tour- tonight it was 'Set A'. All the new

songs sounded great live and it was not easy choosing my favourites. What follows is my recollection of the set list and my personal highlights:

Set List: Lines In The Sand, Burning My Soul, Voices, Under A Glass Moon, Hollow Years, Anna Lee, Instrumental (Crack In The Mirror/Puppies On Acid), Just Let Me Breathe, Lie, Peruvian Skies, Pull Me Under, The Darkest Of Winters (Change Of Seasons), Ytse Jam, New Millennium.

Encore: Metropolis, Learning To Live, The Crimson Sunset (Change of Seasons).

Highlights:

Lines In The Sand - A natural opener for the show, given the epic proportions of this song. The opening was impressive - deep sweeping moog-type keyboards overlaid by brighter keyboards and 'drowning' guitar (à la Pink Floyd) followed by a crunching chord section. The wall of sound literally made your hair stand on end. A long song which nevertheless, never failed to keep the attention of the audience. The backing vocals performed on the record by Doug Pinnick of King's X, were very ably sung by Mike Portnoy.

Voices - Another epic track that impresses live. Given the intricacies of this song and the fact that it was placed early on in the set, this one was perfectly delivered, especially the powerful and emotive chorus section.

Hollow Years - This song actually made me cry. A poignant ballad which got the crowd singing along for the chorus. John Petrucci played a strange looking electric guitar that sounded like an acoustic (that's about as technical as it gets folks) with Mike doing a great job of the harmonies.

Anna Lee - Another very moving song, during which Mike moved onto a smaller kit at the side of the stage (as indeed was the case for Hollow Years). Beautifully sung by James and complemented by a very rich, controlled guitar solo.

Just Let Me Breathe - Probably my favourite from the new album and live this really rocked! A bouncy funky bassline and chunky "in your face" guitar that struck a real groove. Fantastic drumming and megaphone vocals - to match the studio album. The crowd loved this one.

Peruvian Skies - Although this song originally didn't make my list of highlights (I had to leave something out!) I put it back in again simply because of the 'heavy' section which was f*@^ing unbelievable live. All I remember is Mike's drum beats cutting through the air accentuating THAT riff.

Pull Me Under - As ever, the strongest crowd rouser of their old material. A majestic opening - great heavy riffs and sung powerfully and passionately by James. DT always seem to have a lot of fun playing this one.

New Millenium - A perfect execution of another atmospheric intro' - shimmering guitar floating across the various bass, drum and keyboards parts, then switching into a more pacey partnership of bass/phased guitar. The clarity and fidelity of the sound was superb. Later during the 'heavy' section the parallel guitar and bass riffs really growled and kicked - yet the quality of the overall sound did not suffer as a result. John Myung's 12 string Chapman Stick sound was superb on this track.

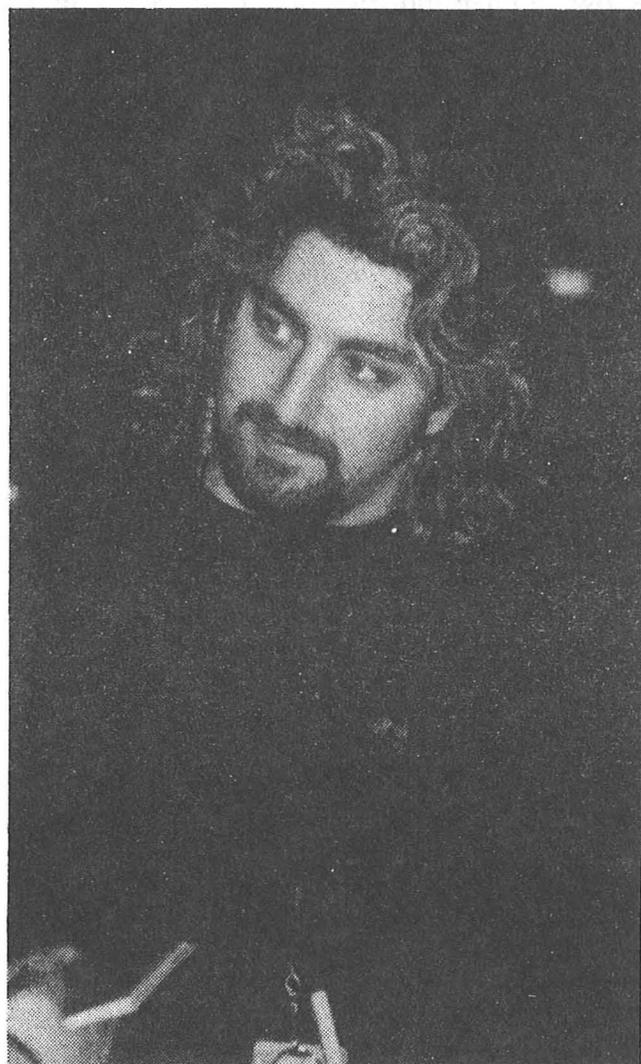
Solo Bits: *Derek Sherinian's* main solo developed out of the latter part of *Hollow Years*. At times his playing was unusually heavy for keyboards, at times honky tonk, but never tedious. Tonight he confirmed the feeling I took away from the Forum gig - that he has added another dimension to the sound of the band. And, of course, he wears funky clothes!

John Petrucci - As a confirmed guitar freak, it's hard for me to put this into (sensible) words. All I can say is that when JP played his main solo (during *Peruvian Skies*) everyone around me just stood and gaped. It's not just the fact that he's fast/technically brilliant (which, of course, he is) it's that he has this unique ability to make his solos more interesting by incorporating different strands - jazz fusion grooves, thrash riffs etc. in among the usual fast fingerwork stuff. And by including little melodies every now and then, there's a real 'feel' to his solos too.

Mike Portnoy's solo formed part of *Ytse Jam*. Still flashy as ever, his playing tonight however, was both more mature and subtle. Live he's a real entertainer too - how many drum solos do

you witness where no-one leaves to go to the bar/bog? Tonight he leaps off his kit and brings a drum (don't ask me which one) down to the front of the stage where he invites a guy in the crowd to drum with him. We are told that this guy, Matheus, is DT's "biggest fan" and that it's his birthday. What a nice gesture.....

After more than 2 hours of music, Dream Theater finally left the stage after having teased the audience right at the end by playing a fragment of the intro' to *A Fortune In Lies*.



Afterwards, Mick and I were fortunate enough to meet some of the band members and some of their more enthusiastic fans, namely Matheus (whom henceforth affectionately became known as 'Hoffmeister') and two Japanese girls who had travelled from Japan to see DT in Europe (whom Mick affectionately renamed 'Yin' and 'Yang')

due to our inability to pronounce their real names). I talked a while with John P and Mike about Rush (whom DT have always cited as an important influence) and they expressed their condolences for Neil. They also mentioned that DT will be supporting Black Sabbath, then Van Halen at some of the European festivals this summer.... as well as Deep Purple/ELP in the States.

Later, fighting our way through the worsening snowstorm, Mick and I retired along with Mattheus and Micky (DT's merchandiser and a fellow Sunderland supporter) to Neil's hotel. The idea was to get as drunk as possible so that my sensory perceptions would be numbed to the point that I would be oblivious to the horrors of our "hotel" and the prospect of sharing a room with Mick. It worked.

Next day, after breakfast in our orange plastic dining room, we hit Manchester. Amazingly, it was sunny.... but stayed especially cold, just for us. We met up with Andrew Field and after satisfying Mick's constant whinings for American food (Starvin' Marvin's) we headed for the nearest decent pub we could find to the venue (Manchester Uni' Main Debating Hall). It was here that we met Lawrence and Ted, two of the DT crew who amused us with tales of flashing lights, beer and days on the road. We were lucky enough to be allowed into the hall with them for part of the soundcheck. For me, this was a unique experience, since Manchester University was where I (mis)spent my youth and the MDH holds many memories for me. Now, here I was again all these years later watching DT jam. As the sun came pouring through the windows, I sat and listened to the mesmerising music. It was very special.

The MDH is even smaller than the Wulfrun Hall and as a consequence, Lawrence on lights, had very little to set up - precisely 10 lights on the stage and about half a dozen out front, with a great choice of 4 colours! Still, who needs lights when the music's this good..... Since the stage was very small it was not possible to set up the 'little' drum kit so Anna Lee was to be dropped for tonight's show. We introduced ourselves to James who told us that he had really enjoyed being involved in the 'Working Man' Rush tribute album. He said he had been approached by Sebastian Bach to do a couple of songs and was pleased that he got to sing on By Tor and Red Barchetta since he loved both those songs

(especially the latter). He also said he was a little worried about his sore throat (have to say, we hadn't noticed last night).

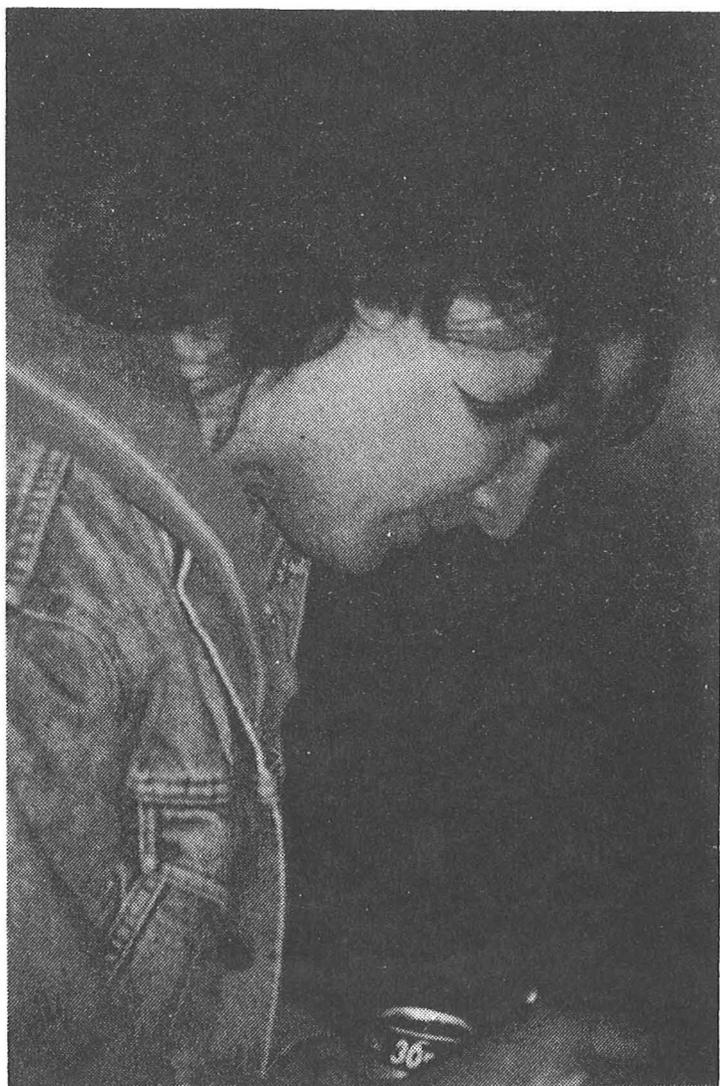
Tonight I managed to get into a position where I had a better view of the stage - albeit from the right-hand side again, where a group of other short people happened to be gathered. Mick, to my surprise, braved the centre stage area. The Rudess Morgenstein Project did their short set first. Whilst I could appreciate that both were very accomplished musicians I found their music a little too unstructured for my taste, but others in the crowd obviously enjoyed them. During the interval before DT came on, there appeared to be a few technical hitches, for the sound men were running around like crazy - unfortunately they were not helped by some drunken tossers in the crowd who shouted abuse at them.

And so for 'Set B'. This included The Crimson Sunrise and Innocence (from A Change of Seasons), Trial Of Tears and Take The Time instead of Lines In The Sand, Voices and Under a Glass Moon. Tonight Dream Theater were so fired up that the atmosphere was electric. The crowd were noisy and the band were obviously having a lot of fun too - Mike and Derek throwing drumsticks at each other and James having to physically drag Petrucci out of his never-ending solo break.

For me, Take The Time was the best of the new additions to the set. A great melody for the crowd to sing and rock along to (as was the chorus section of Lies tonight) and a guitar solo which suddenly switched into Lynyrd Skynyrd's Freebird. This sent the crowd wild, especially when the band went on to perform excerpts from The Rover, The Trooper and finally.....YYZI I looked across at Mick and he was going apeshit. Deep In Heaven (second part of Trial Of Tears from FII) also came across well. This is DT at their instrumental best. Heavy jazz influences and a great interplay of light creamy guitar and keyboard sounds over eclectic bass and drums.

The encore was the same as the previous night but followed by none other than the 'legendary' Nicky Lemons (aka Derek) with his band The Migraine Brothers (Mikey and Johnny) singing his "hit" 'I Don't Like You'. Resplendent in platform heels, see-through lurex shirt, yellow shades and lemon yellow boaand with a bottle of Jack Daniels in one hand he glammed it up around the stage. I'd heard tales of his,

seldom seen, alter ego and it was nice to actually see that DT could be silly too (shades of their 'Nightmare Cinema' performance at the Forum where they all swapped instruments) after the professionalism of the show I had just witnessed. Afterwards, as the PA tinkled out the 'Frank Sinatra' version of Under A Glass Moon (www.mediuvision.com/kosaku/YIKaudio) I reflected on what to my mind, had been the perfect gig. I have to say that I'm not one of these people who notices every little mistake/nuance in a show so I couldn't really say whether there was much in the way of mistakes tonight. I was there to experience the vibe, to have fun and be entertained. From this perspective, I couldn't have wished for more.



Speaking briefly to James again after the show, he explained how this tour had had virtually no

promotion in the UK and that the band weren't used to playing such small venues. He said it was frustrating for them but that they were, nonetheless, pleased that the halls had been full, given that people had found out about the shows by word of mouth only. We assured him that it was also frustrating for us rock fans - even Rush aren't promoted in this country any more - because there is still plenty of interest in rock (prog rock/whatever...) in the UK (isn't there folks!).

We left James signing autographs outside in the freezing cold and took Yin and Yang for some food. Somehow we ended up in a Chinese restaurant which also prided itself on being a jazz bar. What a mistake. We were subjected to 'Huggy Bear' on piano and vocals banging out renditions of Beatles and Simon And Garfunkel songs - in the style of Fats Domino. In tune, it was not. After the show we'd just witnessed, this was total brain damage. The next day was a spare day and we planned to spend it getting up to Scotland and checking out Edinburgh. We persuaded Yin and Yang it would be more fun for them to travel with us, then subjected them to a variety of local 'delights' that they would have otherwise missed - the 'driving in a blizzard experience', a traditional English Sunday roast, a rip-off Indian curry and a ghosts and ghouls tour of Edinburgh in the bitter cold. Luckily for them, the constraints of language and accent meant they were spared Mick's cursing and graphic descriptions of certain interesting videos he has in his collection, throughout the long drive. Our Edinburgh visit was hosted by Tom (mad Jock) Cornell of Toronto fame. I shall never forgive him and Mick for dragging me out to a goth/glam club 'til 3am when I felt like shit (bad food, booze, no sleep). The DJ of this place (whom we assumed was called 'Fucker' since this was emblazoned across his chest) bombarded us with the most turgid selection of '80's trash 'b'-side rock ever. Another painful contrast to the previous two nights.

After a nice and greasy Scottish breakfast, the five of us headed for Glasgow. Thankfully, it was a bit warmer here and thankfully we found a hotel right behind the venue (The Garage). Over in yet another pub we met Richard, the house lighting 'geezer', only to discover that he was an ex-SOR subscriber. It was here that I was introduced to 'Blob', a local, very alcoholic,

hot toddy which proved to be the perfect antidote to the cold.....

The Garage is also a club, and as such, is decked out with arty lights, tinfoil/purple walls, and androids bursting out of the walls of the main hall. This time the stage was even smaller and so again there was to be no Anna Lee. The stage was also uneven, which meant problems for Derek's keyboards which seemed to be teetering somewhat precariously. The general state of the facilities prompted Mike to comment something along the lines of 'Hey, they missed out the 'b' after the 'r' when referring to the huge 'Garage' sign hanging over the stage. Tonight Mick and I actually got right to the front in the middle (first time for me EVER) along with a group of our Scottish chums.

The Rudess Morgenstein Project went down better tonight - both to the crowd and in my head. When DT hit the stage, I was woke up by the weight of the throng of people slamming into my back. Pain, however, is insignificant when you're having fun. It was 'Set A' once more tonight and again - despite it being a different venue with some unique technical 'hurdles' to be overcome - the sound was very clear (all credit to Vinnie Kowalski, DT's chief sound engineer). The crowd was even louder than Manchester, the atmosphere was electric and Mick and I had the time of our lives. The band also seemed to be having a lot of fun, so much so that in some of the songs (most noticeably, Metropolis, which was longer tonight) there were even a couple of fuck-ups. We noticed that James spared his voice a little tonight with Mike (and sometimes John P) taking on more of the vocals (have to say I'm not so sure about JP's). Overall, the gig really kicked, as DT and the crowd seemed to be trading on energy. Once again, Petrucci got carried away during his main solo and James ended up literally almost carrying him away when he wouldn't stop.

For the encore there was another surprise. Right at the end, JP led the band into more snippets of covers - Freebird, The Rover, One, YYY and The Trooper - and he looked as if he was going to go on forever. Each time the others just jumped into the appropriate groove along with him. This 'telepathic' ability is one of the most fascinating things about Dream Theater in a live situation. By my side Mick was, by this time, screaming for more. Derek obliged with Smoke On The Water and then the band finally

ended with..... War Pigs! It felt like the Garage was erupting since the whole place was singing along. By the time the show eventually wound up with a series of long endings, Mick had just about lost it. Sure, we were bruised to hell but we were happy.

The next day was the final haul - the long drive to Nottingham (Rock City). And it was not pleasant. More blizzards, huge traffic jams, little visibility, no time to stop to eat. Then, just outside Derby, we got a phone call. It was Chris (SOR's one-time printer) telling us that the show was off, but no details as to why. Mick was convinced it was a practical joke "It's a wind up, I'll kill that Elliott when I get my hands on him". However on arriving, we found it to be true. James had finally succumbed to the cold and had developed laryngitis.

We bumped into Mike on the street. He was pretty animated having spent most of the morning trying to convince the promoters and the venue that DT could play instrumental without James, or instead play a DT/Liquid Tension/Platypus-type collaboration with Jordan and Rod. The promoters, however, wouldn't have it, so Mike had set about trying to find another venue where maybe they could put on a 'free' ad hoc show. The crew and the band were up for it so why not? Unfortunately there was nowhere to be found at such short notice.

We caught a brief 'hello' with James who looked white as a sheet and also John P who, despite also feeling unwell had been prepared to go for it. He expressed his apologies for the cancellation and had the grace to give a short interview to Neil for the DT fanzine (check out Images and Words). For Mick and I it was moving to witness a band who so obviously cared about, and who were so clearly gutted at, having 'let down' their fans (1992 was the last time they cancelled a concert). In our turn, we felt sorry for them since they had tried everything they could think of to get around the situation yet it would still look bad to the fans. The promoter/venue weren't much help - they didn't even put up a notice about the cancellation until 7pm, when the doors were due to open. I suppose all they cared about was the fact that they got their money back on the insurance....

It seems the Burnett curse had finally hit with a vengeance. Ever since the beginning of the tour, I had been trying to reason with Mick, who is

convinced he is cursed. For a time it had actually seemed like he'd begun to stop his 'catastrophic' thoughts (we're gonna crash/get lost/miss the gig/not get tickets etc. etc.). Looking back now however, both Mick and I agree that one lost show couldn't dent a weekend of the good stuff. Witnessing Dream Theater on this tour was like watching an

orchestra. This band were made to be on stage. If I've gone on too much for you Rush fans, I am sorry. It's not that Dream Theater sound like Rush (they don't)..... All I can say is that if you get yourselves to The Forum on June 23rd, I hope you'll see, as I did, that this is a band that has more than just a hint of the 'spirit' of Rush.....



DREAM THEATER - A SHORT REVIEW

by Tom (Mad Jock) Cornell

With an excellent new album to support, DT did their first "tour" in 5 years (sounds familiar to Rush fans). One of the stops was in the Glasgow Garage.

About 600 expectant people were delighted when they stormed into action.

"Lines In Sand" opened the proceedings after which they blasted us with "Burning My Soul". Heads were banging all around and fists flying in the air (and one hell of a chorus section from the crowd).

The stuff from the new album in particular sounded great with (on the night) "Peruvian Skies" building from a quiet opening into a barnstorming riff.

At one point during (I think) "Lie" we were even treated to a drum-stick throwing competition between Mike (drummer) and Derek (keyboards). At one point they nearly lost it but they were having a ball with Derek in permanent happy frame of mind - well he did keep laughing at Portnoy's actions and faces.

Musically tight, great songs (especially the new songs), riffs to rip your head off and a sense of humour - one day all music will sound this good.

With oldie "Pull Me Under" getting the 'Glasgow chorus' going yet again, thinking they couldn't top it - **THEY DID.**

With Mike doing vocals/drums and jamming like mad we heard "The Trooper" (Maiden), "YYZ" (Rush - causing The Mission disco the next Friday night to be full of requests for it) and "War Pigs" (Sabbath). Great Show.

Dinosaur-Rock Band RUSH Has Evolved With The Times

The power trio, the simple guitar, bass, drums lineup that was pioneered by Cream in the late sixties, was a concept that was doomed to the lifespan of a fruit fly. Cream came and went in under three years, and virtually every other similarly styled outfit discovered the limitations of the three-person structure with one notable exemption. Rush, the Toronto-based band that adopted the form in 1969, is still going strong. Monday night, the local outfit drew more than 15,000 fans young and old to the first show of it's two night stand at the Molson Amphitheatre.

Even considering the favourite-son status, it's a remarkable achievement. For more that a quarter of a century, Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart have been building and maintaining a career and a fan base that refuses to go away. While other local favourites have blossomed and withered, Rush has soldiered on. And Monday night's performance, actually a stop on the band's current North American tour, fully illustrated why.

First off, the band has never treaded water. This is a band that from it's beginning has continued to evolve. And Monday's marathon (almost three hour) performance showed this to a greater extent than any other local Rush appearance ever has. During the course of its performance, Rush surveyed its career all the way back to its 1976 breakthrough album 2112, dipping into almost every release since then, and naturally topping off with selections from it's current Test For Echo.

Closing off the first half with the entire 2112 suite, and juxtaposing that with such bookends as Nobody's Hero and Test For Echo, showed just how much the band has grown. 2112, typifying the band's early years, was a sprawling, multifaceted work that owed much to the sonic diddling of such seventies English progressive rockers as Yes, containing abrupt and often inexplicable changes in rhythm and tempo, 2112 was and is the kind of lengthy and pretentious work that was responsible for driving music fans into the love'em or hate'em camps. Based on writing of Ayn Rand, it combined the band's sci-fi leanings with the themes of free will and individualism. Performing it Monday night was a risky undertaking for the band, using as it did a large chunk of stage time for a number that many of the band's younger fans weren't familiar with.

But performing 2112 did show how sophisticated musically, lyrically and thematically the band has become since then. Numbers such as Nobody's Hero, Half the World, Roll the Bones, Resist and Virtuality, all performed Monday, push the borders of the rock-trio approach far beyond what anyone might have imagined 20 years ago. Simply put, the band survives because it is still interesting.

Like all Rush performances, this was padded out with a plethora of intriguing video images, projected on a Jumbotron that had been installed behind the trio. These cutting-edge images have always presented a visual focus for the band, given that each of the three members has always been more interesting in making music than creating personal images.

Granted, not every concert favourite was performed Monday night, but then the band has released about 20 discs in it's career, so a few popular numbers had to go missing. But with YYZ, and Tom Sawyer and the Spirit Of Radio among two dozen numbers performed, no true Rush fan went away unhappy. All Told this was yet again, a triumphant homecoming.

The Toronto Globe & Mail
July 2, 1997



Neil Peart's Answer To Satanism

Rock Groups Hardly Satanistic



Editor's note: The following column was submitted by a member of the rock group Rush in response to Jim Hankins' July 19 coverage in The Daily Texan of a seminar entitled "No One Here Gets Out Alive." The seminar was sponsored by the Longhorn Christian Fellowship and centered on the theme that many popular rock music songs are trying to turn American youth against Christianity toward Satanism or other religions. The group contended that either blatantly or through subliminal means, musicians convey satanic messages in their songs.

I am writing in response to an article which was written by your reporter Jim Hankins in your issue of July 19, "Group seeks to show rock 'n roll Satanic." It was awhile ago, but the article was sent to me through several intermediary steps. Besides, it's never too late to discuss a matter like this, and as I happen to be a member of one of the groups mentioned, perhaps I can interject a little rationality and truth into such a hysterical exercise in propaganda.

Satanism. Now here is a word that should be kept away from some people the way you should keep matches from children and guns from jealous husbands!

There is a certain trait evident in human nature which some people seem to possess in greater degrees. It derives from a state of insecurity and low self-esteem and shows itself in the actions of those who wish to make themselves look good by making others look bad. You see it everywhere once you start to look for it. People who can't gain respect for their own merits feel obliged to try and tear down those who do. We see it in the failures who try to prove their aloofness by criticizing the actions of those who actually do something, or in cases like this one where the weak and pusillanimous prove their righteousness by trying to punish the "less-righteous."

A big advantage to such an attitude is that it keeps them so involved in other peoples' lives that they need not examine their own.

So these are the grim-faced hypocrites who are stirring around in the dark places of life hoping to find something - anything - dirtier than their own reflection. And if they can't find anything - no problem - they'll just make something up!

And here they are accusing rock musicians of being sincere and dedicated satanists attempting to poison the souls of America's youth with subliminal messages of devil-worship. You know that's almost a very good joke! Almost.

As one who knows many of these "demonic figures" personally, especially some of those mentioned in the article, the idea of some of these sold-out, burnt-out, cynical, strutting peacocks being so deeply and religiously committed to anything (save their "image" and chart numbers) is also a bit of a joke. And a pretty lame one at that!

These nameless mercenaries don't even demonstrate that kind of commitment in their music why on earth would they be bothered to go to all that trouble to put anything else into it? All they need (and care) to do is find a kind of lowest common denominator of commercial "acceptability." Yes, you Christian crypto-fascists, it is a joke! The only problem is - you're not laughing.

I'm not laughing anymore, either. I've started to receive too many questions and letters from confused and impressionable young people wanting to know if it's true that we worship the devil. Who is it that is corrupting the minds of young Americans?

Let us not for one minute forget that this is the same self-righteous mentality that has put itself to work persecuting witches, Christians, Jews, Quakers, Indians, Catholics, Negroes, Communists, hippies and capitalists down through the ages. There's always somebody to kick you when you're down. It seems like every group has taken its turn at one end of the stick or the other. From the bitter oppressed to the righteous oppressor is a very short step.

Speaking for myself, as lyricist and drummer for "Rush", and one of those accused of this heinous crime, I must object, Your Honors. Far from being a closet Satanist, I confess crudely, I don't even believe in the old bastard! I wonder if that's better or worse in your eyes, Grand Inquisitor?

I can certainly assure you that my lyrics contain no "demonic" secret messages or cleverly concealed mystical commercials. Nothing like that, I'm afraid. It is not only absurd and pathetic, but it is also totally incompatible with my philosophy, my work and my beliefs.

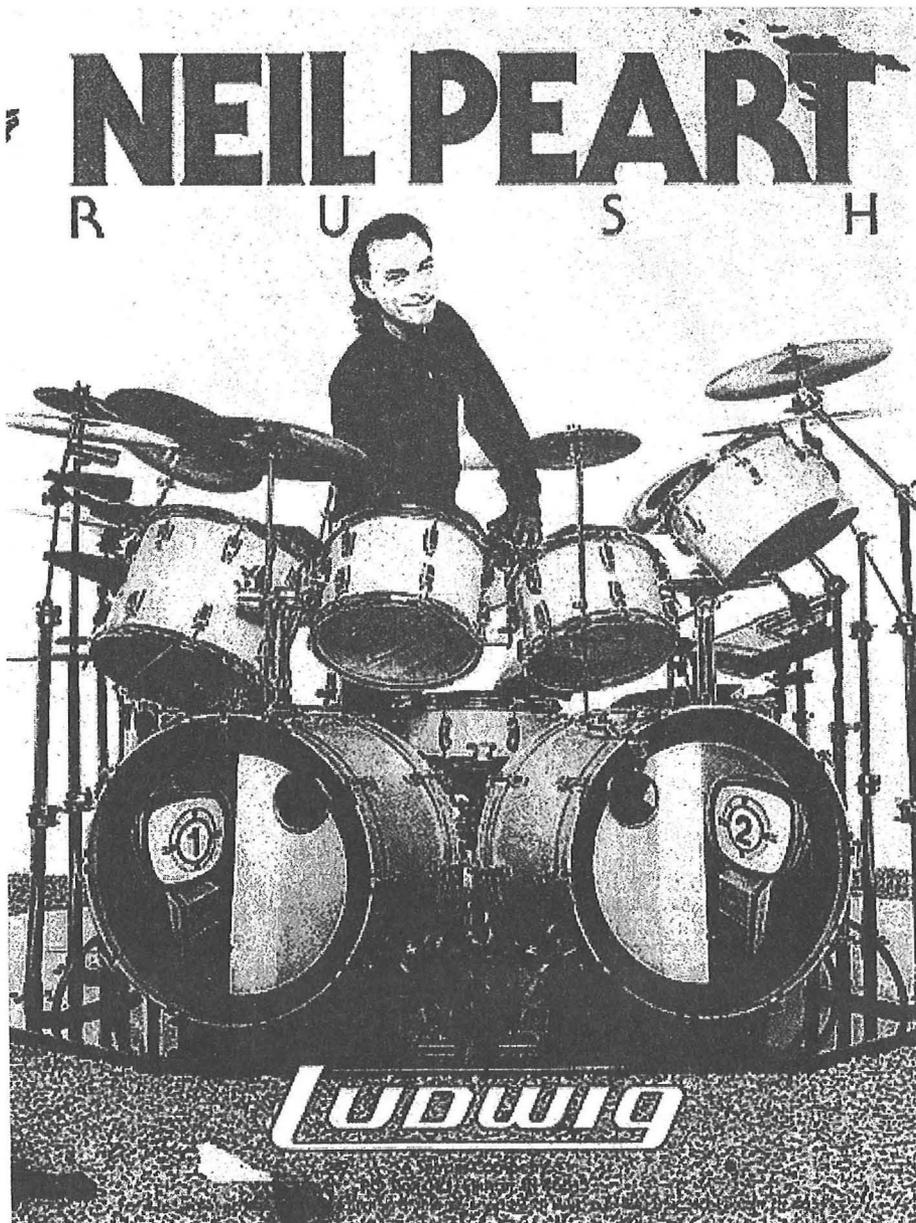
I get all kinds of letters from people like this whose perceptions are narrowed and distorted by pre-set values and ideas, telling me the most fantastic things that they have somehow "discovered" in my words! As is ever true - they find what they want to find. Fair enough. I know what I put in there. It isn't that, and it isn't this either. Period.

I don't wish to offend anyone's genuine beliefs, as it is a fundamental tenet in my philosophy that people should believe what they choose to believe. It must be stated, though, that when you've "got" religion, like Siddhartha, you find it everywhere you look. And when you've got evil, you'll find it everywhere you look, too.

Ah! It's the old "recorded backwards" trick again, is it Watson? Ha! I'm sure you could play "The Star Spangled Banner" backwards and find a secret message there too. Wouldn't Francis Scott Key be surprised at your cleverness! How do you suppose he knew what it said in 1812?

Don't you think something as vague as this is rather like a Rorschach ink-blot, or cloud shapes? Interpretation is based on the perceiver's state of mind - not on any objective reality. An ink-blot is a cloud is a song - frontwards or backwards. One finds what one wishes to find.

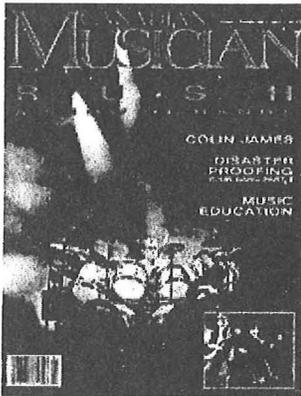
Yes, there's something subliminal at work here all right. The subliminal and poisonous sickness that dwells in the minds of these fearful and pompous so-called Christians. And they even call themselves a "Fellowship." Think about that for a minute. Then think about what this paper and others have accomplished by giving innocent ink and paper over to this kind of drivel. You readers don't know that I would never even use the kind of grammar that these people have attributed to me, let alone the insipid and valueless supposed message. Listen to this: "Oh Satan, you, you are the one who is shining. Walls of Satan, walls of sacrifice; I know it's you are the one I love." That's disgusting. I mean really You just know these people have to be sick. If you don't believe me, ask my Mom!



RUSH

A Show of Hands.....by Bill Reynolds

Taken from Canadian Musician -- February 1989



Rush is the band with the attitude, 'I've got licks and I'm gonna use 'em!' From their early days as an extreme hard rock trio to their pre-eminence at the top of the heap in the eighties, they've always delivered to their loyal fans music that will never bow to top 40 tastes. Their albums have become increasingly melodic, but they reserve their right as players to 'strut their stuff' as often as possible.

Rush's mastering of technology over the years, along with the desire to overcome the pretentious stigma of being 'composers' has resulted in a series of more sophisticated and melodic recordings, culminating with *Hold Your Fire* in 1987. As is their custom, every fifth LP is live, and *A Show of Hands*, the third such release of their career, is out this month.

Bassist, singer and reluctant keyboardist Geddy Lee, who has never spent so much continuous time at home as he has these last six months, stopped by the Anthem record offices to discuss where the band has been, the making of both the film and the record of the last two tours, and to hypothesize on the future prospects of a band that has worked hard to deserve the respect and success it has received, a band that shows absolutely no signs of flagging in the stretch.

Lee is a quiet and thoughtful kind of guy. He peruses questions carefully before providing articulate answers that usually get to the root of his, and his band's, mindset at any given point in their musical life. If it seems slightly indulgent to release a third double live album, Lee points out that it's a formula which has served to provide a spell of rejuvenation for the creative juices of the band.

"It makes sense to us because it buys time from the rigours of touring, and it's a historical update. It's appropriate every once in a while to record how your sound has changed and evolved over the years. It's also very instructional, because it can be very painful listening to live tapes. All musicians are infinitely more hypercritical of themselves than would be the general public. But eventually you get past that stage of noticing the little mistakes and start thinking about the stuff you're really proud of. It's like taking stock of your abilities as a player."

Rush completed their *Hold Your Fire* tour last winter, but work on the record hadn't even begun. They had 40 hours of tape to sift through, and what began in the minds of the Anthem people as a quick two-week exercise quickly ballooned to six. The live recordings were spread over the last two tours, including *Power Windows* in 1985. The band made the decision to tape as many shows because of their experiences with the last two, *All The World's A Stage* (1976) and *Exit... Stage Left* (1981).

Lee says of the first live recording, "It was very raw. Our sound was like that in those days anyway, and we did very little fixing up or knob twiddling. We were growing so fast that by the time it came out we thought we could have done better. As a consequence it was very difficult for us to listen to, even though it was immensely popular."

Onward to 1981: when they decided to redress the balance for *Exit... Stage Left*, they convinced themselves that it would be appropriate to eliminate the ambience of the crowd in favour of technical accuracy. The lack of audience involvement made it too sterile for the effect intended. Lee says, "We were trying to keep every hair in place. We were being naive and missed the point."

With *A Show Of Hands*, Rush feels it has achieved the happy medium -- a live document that is technically impressive to listen to, but at the same time retains the buzz of the crowd. To achieve the vibrancy they were so badly searching for, they reasoned that if they recorded dozens of shows, they would find a few moments that transcended the uptightness of having the tape machine on. "We were trying to find those comfortable takes. We were splitting ourselves into two, playing for the tape and the audience. If you make a tiny mistake, in your mind you feel you've blown it, and you get uptight. It's a very psychological thing."

Ironically, after hours and hours of taping, the loosest gig was on the last night of the Hold Your Fire tour. They played three nights running in Birmingham, England, the second of which was being filmed for a simultaneous release. Lee explains, "We had 10 cameras around the stage, big cranes, guys all trying to be discreet, but in no way being discreet. Talk about being uptight! Worried about the recording? Forget it! You got cameras stuck in your face."

The next night the whole band was completely relaxed, because the camera crews were doing only longshots, and they couldn't even see them. The tape was running, but they were just happy to be without pots in their face. In the end they went with their instincts in choosing final versions, reasoning that any serious mistake could easily be corrected in the studio, whereas essence was a more difficult quality to come by.

SRO-Anthem V.P. Val Azzoli says the band was very concerned about paying attention to CD technology with this LP. They wanted to give fans a break because it's a live recording, so they put the double LP on a single CD, filling all but 12 seconds of the 74-minute physical restriction. He says, "everybody was freakin' out about that. 'You can't do this!' Why not? 'Well, it's never been done before.' So what? They wanted two CDs so they could charge \$40 instead of \$20. They were just being greedy. It was like, 'Stop already! It's a live record! Let's give 'em more for their money.' that would have been pure profit for the record company and the retailers, profit which we wouldn't have seen, but we won that battle."

With the LP mixed and ready to go, Lee figured it would be a breeze to finish the movie soundtrack, but instead he was slaving away for another four weeks getting that second night in Birmingham up to snuff. "I naively thought we could use the same takes from the LP, but as consistent and automatic as we sometimes are, it wouldn't work." Azzoli wants to see the concert film released in conjunction with the record to selected repertory cinemas in North America for a limited run. It will eventually find its home on the video racks, like the other films.

Rush's shows are usually 130 minutes, but the film gives a slightly condensed version at 95. While the LP draws mostly from material on the last couple of records, the film is a real concert with a definite beginning and end. Howard Ungerleider. Rush's wizard lighting director, used a few tricks, like adding a couple of white spotlights, to provide more clarity with background silhouettes. Because there is so much trouble with transferring the colour red from live to film, and especially video, special precautions had to be taken. Lee thinks Rush finally has been captured in its essence onstage. "It's a new experience for me because I've never really seen the show, but we tried very hard to get the atmosphere and wonderful moods Howard creates."

The incredibly complex procedures required to execute Rush's stage show have developed because the band heartily embraced technology many years ago. It all began innocently enough, with their desire to have Lee play rhythm guitar while guitarist Alex Lifeson performed solos. They introduced the bass pedals in the seventies to facilitate Lee playing two instruments simultaneously, and since then have never looked back. As Lee says, "It's like the little thing that grew. We became addicted to the idea of having an extra member in the band without having an extra member. Now almost every limb I have is connected to something."

Lee says at times he feels very constrained by the banks of keyboards, sequencers, sampling devices and MIDI control devices, mainly because he'll always consider himself a bassist first, a singer second, and a keyboard player a distant third. "I consider myself, if anything, a synthesizer arranger, almost a choreographer. I do a lot of writing on the keyboard, and then I use the Performer software with the Macintosh computer. Before any other instruments are put down on tape, the keyboard arrangements, except for the subtleties, are final. But with live performances it's a whole different story."

Jim Burgess of Saved By Technology convinced Lee that the complexities of a Rush studio recording could indeed be recreated live. Offstage someone will set up the samples for the songs, but Lee triggers them himself. "It's very important for me to do that. and not someone else. It's a fine line, but I still have to be in the right place at the right time. If I hit a sequencer late, it's my fault. That way, I'm still in control, and my organization and rhythm have to be impeccable."

For Lee, the restricting aspect of being in charge of so many split-second decisions is that it takes him away from his natural role as 'the player'. He is pleased to still be able to write aggressive tunes like "Force Ten" on the bass guitar and know they couldn't possibly have been written on his keyboard. It's then that he realizes the true usefulness of the keyboard as an arranging device. "That technology is amazing because it's like having 30 extra colours to work with, but at the same time we maintain a central idea of what we want at all times. Rush is a constantly evolving concept of what a hard rock band is how many people we can pretend to be at the same time."



With the ever-present use of keyboards comes texture and the inevitable richness that accompanies it. Lee is surprised when the word mellow is used to describe Rush's music now in comparison to a few years ago, mainly because he can't see working with Lifeson, whom he describes as a ferocious guitar player, in a mellow band. But he does allow that Rush has become preoccupied with melody over the years.

He considers the first stage of Rush to be raw and energetic. "The temperament was 'I've got licks to play that I want people to hear.' It was a cocky, strut-your-stuff attitude, and my singing was extreme too because I had to cut through that. But I don't have a desire to belt it out like I used to. The older you get as a person, the more you get to know yourself, and you want to use those things. And so here we are, the same band 15 years down the road -- a rarity in itself -- and we're not opposed to letting our growth as people and the new music that's around influence us.

It's important for Lee to make sure he writes a good melody for his voice now, one which can highlight the various moods and effects of which he's capable. It may be a sign of maturity, or it may simply mean the band has the luxury to stretch out and spend more time on each project. In the early days Rush never recorded demos.

Whenever they had three weeks off between tours they'd get in there and see how much they could lay down before heading out again. The band now works as hard as ever, but more energy goes into the process of recording rather than busting their asses to break the American market.

Azzoli says the band doesn't necessarily agree with him, but he thinks the change in the group over the last few albums is radical. He says, "The lyrical content and the music reflect their lifestyle. They used to grind it out doing 200 dates a year. Now their families have grown a little, and they've become more reflective of their surroundings.

Lee says the original impetus was to 'cement' a pile of riffs together and get out in front of people. They considered themselves players and wouldn't be caught dead calling themselves anything so pretentious as 'composers'. But with more experience (and more success) they can now afford the time to indulge in something they weren't nearly as concerned with originally, the art of songwriting. Lee says, "It's something we want to excel at. It has really shifted our focus, spending more time doing sketches before the final painting."

Of course, this is Rush we're talking about here, and Lee is at pains to remind everyone that they are still a trio, with all that extra room to get all the licks in. "That's our biggest connection with our hardcore fans, and why we never make top 40 radio. We can write a conventional song, but inevitably there comes that weird part in a strange time signature, or what Andrew Jackson, the respected English arranger who worked on our last album, calls 'the nutty bit'."

What goes around may come back again, surmises Azzoli, because apparently Rush is getting antsy from hanging around the house for so long. They've discovered they don't much like what they're hearing on the radio in their spare time. Azzoli says, "This is the first time Ged's been home for six months straight in 20 years. That's a long time. I dunno what this new album, which will be due out at the end of the year, will be like, but Ged's saying stuff like, 'God is this radio now? Come on! No one's kicking ass anymore!'"

With Lee getting his frustrations pent-up by not touring them out of his system, and Lifeson experiencing a flashback to his past through producing another Anthem act, Clean Slate, the time may be ripe for Rush to shed some of that orchestral skin, now that they've wrapped up the last five years with A Show Of Hands.

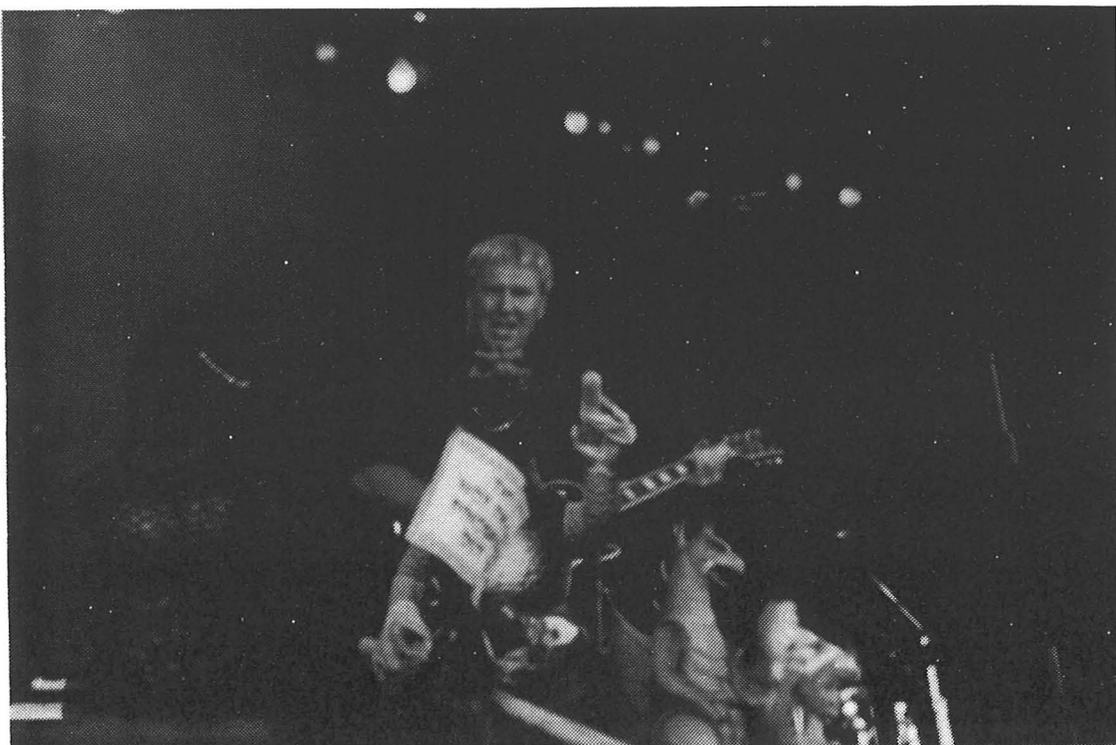
Azzoli explains Lifeson's producing role this way: "I wanted him to get back to, 'Hey listen, we got eight dollars to make this record. We can't record in Monserrat and Paris and Istanbul. We got a dingy little studio at 40 dollars an hour. Ya got three weeks. You're not gonna sleep... Remember this?' By doing that he realizes all he's got is a guitar, an amp and a lotta coffee, just like the old days in between tours."

Azzoli says Lifeson got really pumped up with the streamlining of the production process. "He's now in the mood of, 'Hey I got an idea, fuck the outboard gear, I'm back to guitar and fingers!' And Ged's in that mode too, because he's gone back to writing on bass which is, by definition, brasher."

Whichever direction Rush decides to take when they return to recording late this winter, it won't be toward the snoozerama of so much of today's radio. Putting on his fast-talking, record company gunslinger persona, Azzoli moans, "Right now we're in this homogenous zone of the most boring fucking music I've heard in my life. Radio is not listening to the kids, which is a fundamental mistake society is making as well. A 35-year old mother dresses the same way and listens to the same music as her 15-year-old daughter, and that's not right. It's just one big happy consumer group, all sitting around in Polo looking hip."

It's not all doom and gloom, however, because Azzoli figures that the archetypal guitar-bass-drums rock 'n' roll band will never leave the spotlight. He says that this particular concept of music has stood the test of time. "Three guys playing their instruments and expressing their discontent with society will never die, because those three instruments have always been perfect for that emotional and physical release."

Over the years Rush has pretty much become an institution, or least a paragon, of the ideal power trio format. Looking back, Lee, says it never even occurred to him that he had a career until a friend pointed it out to him as recently as a couple of years ago. "We always looked upon it as a long term thin, but I never connected that with the idea of 'career' then my friend said, 'You know, you do have a career. A lot of bands break up after a while.' But I guess we're like Sammy Davis Jr. (laughs). He didn't get into it to make couple of records either. That's not to say we'll always be in the public eye, or always be a touring band, but as long as the collaboration between the three people is rewarding, we'll keep at it."



Bread Lenses
by The Breadman
March 14, 1996

I see Fred
he's gettin' outta bed
could he have smelled somethin'
like fresh-baked bread?

Should I have crushed rye or whole wheat
or just a burger bun
these bagels weigh a ton

the baker's oven
the blueberry muffin
I want bread! uh-oh here comes Fred.

Couldn't he get some without using mine
instead?

I said bread bread,
Chewin' around the crust now
and puttin it on my head
Shouldn't we toast it first is what Fred said.

We've got rye on the mind's-eye now
says the passionate midnight snack(er)
(with Jam!)
what you spread on comes from a jar
a loaf left to confuse, baguettes are just the ruse
for Fred. He's eatin' my bread.

cursing at him; thoughtless. bread ahead!

And the yeast it is a-rising
the bread it starts to fall
oh no i ruined it all!
The bread it is burning
and me I am learning
to bake bread! Inside my homestead.

You see black and burnt
but I see bread. Bread!
not for you

i'm thinkin about the recipe
that I just read

Said I want bread bread
I'm thinkin of shootin that darn Fred
Always, always, out of bread

Dominate
by Rat & Dan
November 11, 1993

Terrorize me
Tenderize me
Pulverize me
Circumcise me...

Lacerate me
Dominate me
Penetrate me
Flagellate me...

Mistress of my pleasure
Treat me like a slave
Hit me with your forty lashes
Force me to behave

Priestess of the leather hip-boots
Goddess of the shining chains
Keeper of the Iron Maiden
Sole provider of my pains

(chorus)

Handcuffs in the morning
Tie me to the bed
No need to give me pleasure
I want pain instead!

Dark bewitching dominatrix
Crush me with stiletto heels
Whip me, beat me, make me grovel
You can't know how good it makes me feel!

(chorus)

My evil queen, my love machine
Show me how you like to treat me mean.
Sadistic fire, my dark desire
Punish me, control me with your ire.
Spike-studded style, black widow smile
My joy is in submission to your wiles
A shining ring...Hey, where's my thing?
Exquisite pain to make my hormones sing.

(chorus)

Castigate me
Masturbate me!

collaborated to produce a new album 'Liquid Tension Experiment' available now on Magna Carta Records - MAXX-9023-2.

Not to be outdone, John Myung and Derek Sherinian have a project due out soon called 'Platypus' with Rod Morgenstein (Dixie Dregs) and Ty Tabor (King's X). Their CD is titled 'When Pus Comes To Shove' - released by Koch International Records. James LaBrie will be appearing on the 'Explorers Club - Age Of Impact' CD with other guest vocalists later this summer - Mike Portnoy and John Petrucci also participated with James on this project. To join the excellent Dream Theater fanzine 'Images And Words' which is run by our one-time assistant editor Neil Elliott, write to: PO Box 1067, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5ZU, enclosing an SAE or IRC and you will receive full details by return post.

Extra special thanks to the following people for making my Easter weekend more than a bit special - Janet (what a navigator), Tom (the pappadom) Cornell, Andrew and Jules (congrats on your marriage), Neil Elliott (shame you missed the shows), Chris Loydall (ditto), Hitomi and Yumiko (Yin and Yang), Matthias and his German lady friends Anya (nice Jeans!) and Vanessa, Mick the merchandiser, Lol (Magic Fingers) Dyer, Ted (the driver/drinker), Billy Fletcher, Graeme Seaman, Richard (ex-subscriber) Wilson (no, not that one!), Nikki Brooks, All Dream Theater's road crew, Rod Morgenstein and

Jordan Rudess (the best support I've seen in years) who incidentally have an album out at the moment on Domo Records called 'The Rudess Morgenstein Project' (well worth a listen). Final thanks to Bill Barclay and Messrs. LaBrie, Mying, Petrucci, Portnoy and Sherinian for some of the most enjoyable nights of music that I've witnessed. Arenas on the horizon chaps! See you all in London on 23rd June, It'll be a blast.

Lastly, I must mention the great new album by ex-Marillion drummer, Mike Pointer. His new band are called 'Arena' (pictured below) and their CD 'The Visitors' cover was done by none other than Hugh Syme. Mr Syme is currently hard at work on projects for 'Gentle Giant' and 'Uriah Heep' before starting work on the Rush live album. Busy man indeed.

Don't forget to order your convention tickets right away using the enclosed order form.

Regards,

Mick

Editorial Address:
23 Garden Close
Chinbrook Road, Grove Park
London SE12 9TG
ENGLAND

Please e-mail letters etc. to: ITCAT@btinternet.com

Editor: Mick Burnett, Co-editor /typist: Janet Balmer

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Contributors: Tom Cornell, Janet Balmer

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Geddy Lee and the Those Darn Fish Baseball Team (credited in the HoldYour Fire liner notes)

Photo courtesey of Ray Wawryzniak