

# RUSH

# BACKSTAGE CLUB

AUGUST 1982

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

## ANOTHER RUSH NEWSLETTER

from Neil Peart

Hi folks! I somehow happened to come up with four minutes and seventeen seconds of spare time so I thought I'd drop you a line and tell you the news.

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Well, my four minutes and seventeen seconds are up, I must get on to something else. I hope you enjoy the new album, and I'll see you from the stage.

### *Notes on the Making of "Moving Pictures"*

Part I: from "The Drummer's Diary" by Neil Peart

Having been a regular reader of MD for the last couple of years, I've noticed most of the studio information has been for the "session" drummer. This is very good and valuable, but there are many drummers who will be (or hope to be) making records as part of a more-or-less permanent group, who will want to know how to make the studio work for *them*, rather than learn how *they* can work for the studio. I hope I can offer a few useful observations.

As difficult as it is to please someone else *on demand*, it may be even more difficult to make the decisions and learn the technique to please yourself. The modern studio environment, personnel and language can be overwhelming to the uninitiated. It can be frustrating trying to translate what you hear in your head and onstage to what you hear on tape.

Learning to "see" the shape of a sound is one very important step in the understanding and communication of recording. Sounds are often describe as "round", "pointed", "flat", "tubular", "boxy", "bright", etcetera. This can give you a common language to describe what you like or dislike about a particular sound.

Over the course of seven studio albums with Rush, I've been fortunate enough to be limited only by my ability and imagination in exploring and developing my drumming. This is a very large and rare advantage. One of the nicest things about being a part of Rush *is* that freedom to work "over my head", and to be able to learn by experiment and analysis. Every album is a kind of "final exam" for me. I expect to hear new ideas and significant improvement in my playing after the yearly term of touring, writing, and rehearsing.

In general we all wanted to try some different rhythmic devices for *Moving Pictures*. In the past we've often used many time and tempo changes around a chord sequence we liked. This time we wanted to revolve the note structure around a good, strong pulse. This made for some interesting developments in the style and substance of our writing, and it seems generally to give a more

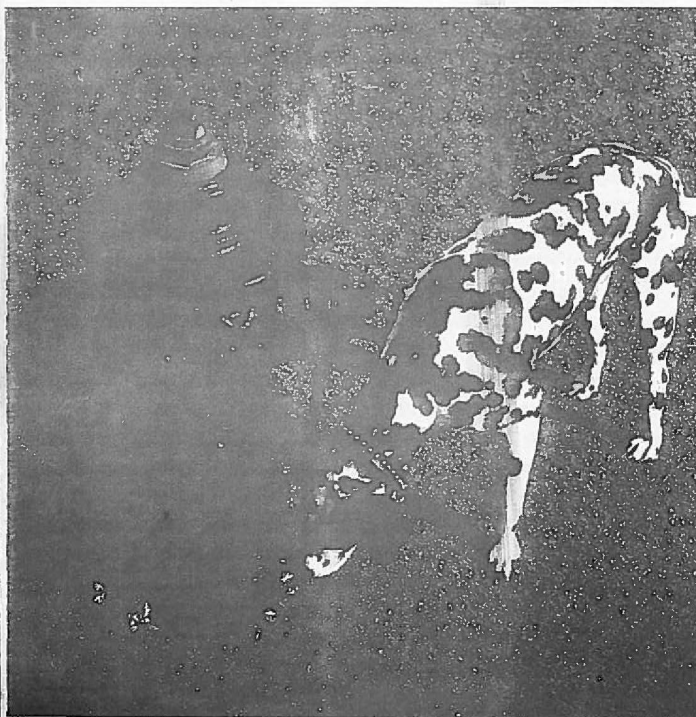
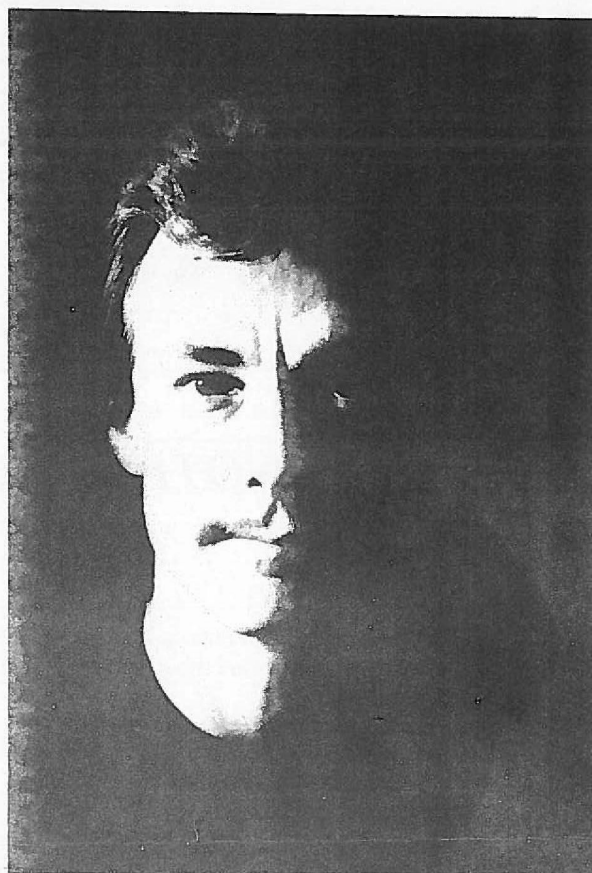
unified thrust to our music.

There have been no real revolutions in my own approach -- just a little growth along a fairly linear path. I find myself playing **harder** all the time. As my tuning gets better and I don't have to worry about the sound "choking", I just want to squeeze out, thrash, hammer, or wallop that extra bit of sound. My smaller 12" and 13" closed toms are tuned quite a bit higher than before, and I find that if I lay the stick almost flat across the head and hit it **very hard** -- the head will stretch to the point of de-tuning, similar to a guitar player bending a string. This athletic and unsubtle approach produces a nice throaty tone and a good strong attack, which allows greater definition and a more percussive effect from a closed tom-tom.

Another device I've been working on is the "left hand emphasis" approach to rolls. This involves beginning a single-stroke roll with a triplet, which shifts the downbeat to the opposite hand. This allows for a nice eighth note "push" in the right hand or, the completion of the roll with the left hand, **or...** you can shift the emphasis **back** to the right hand with another triplet. For the non-ambidextrous drummer this type of "opposite-hand" thinking and playing can be very difficult to master, but it does open up infinite areas of rhythmic variations that were formerly awkward or impossible.

Another sensitive area of recording is **editing**. For those who haven't experienced the studio first-hand, editing involves the cutting and splicing together of the best parts of two or more separate performances to form one perfect performance.

Editing is an art form for the engineer, but for the drummer it can be demoralizing and of questionable ethics. Why not just keep trying until you get it the way you want it? There are a few valid reasons that I would like to try to clarify.



One reason is **spontaneity**. Sometimes your part will not be firmly arranged. Every time you play the song it will be slightly different. Sometimes it's nice to leave a section wide open, close your eyes, and go for it! Great things **do** happen by accident. Editing is the only way to capture these "accidents".

A good example of the principle of editing is the pair of long fills that introduce each vocal section in the second half of "The Camera Eye". I wanted something really special and exciting there, but I didn't want it to be organized and pre-arranged. The only way to capture that spirit of wild abandon is to **be** that way. Every time we did a take of the song I would close my eyes in those sections, let go, and flail away. This ranged from the ridiculous to be sublime, but I was able to choose the most successful, exciting fills for the finished track. What it really boils down to is that it's always **you** playing. Editing just gives you the opportunity to choose the very best you can do.

A good analogy between playing live and recording in the studio is the difference between **talking** and **writing**. When you're writing, you can cross out unnecessary or inaccurate words, and replace them or shift them around until you arrive at the **essence** of what you wanted to say. They are still **your** words. They're just refined and distilled into their ideal form. In the case of "The Camera Eye", I had to go home and learn how to play the "accident" so I could play it that way live!

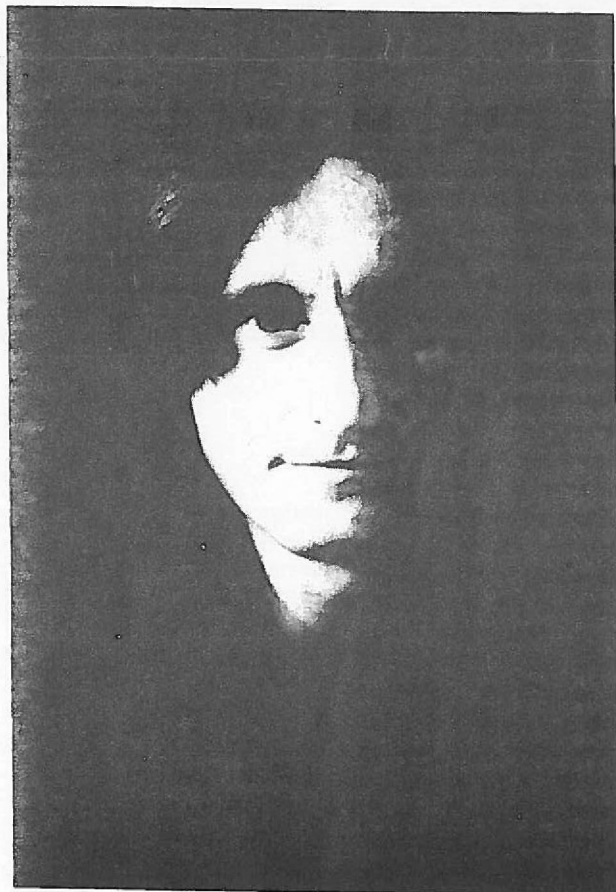
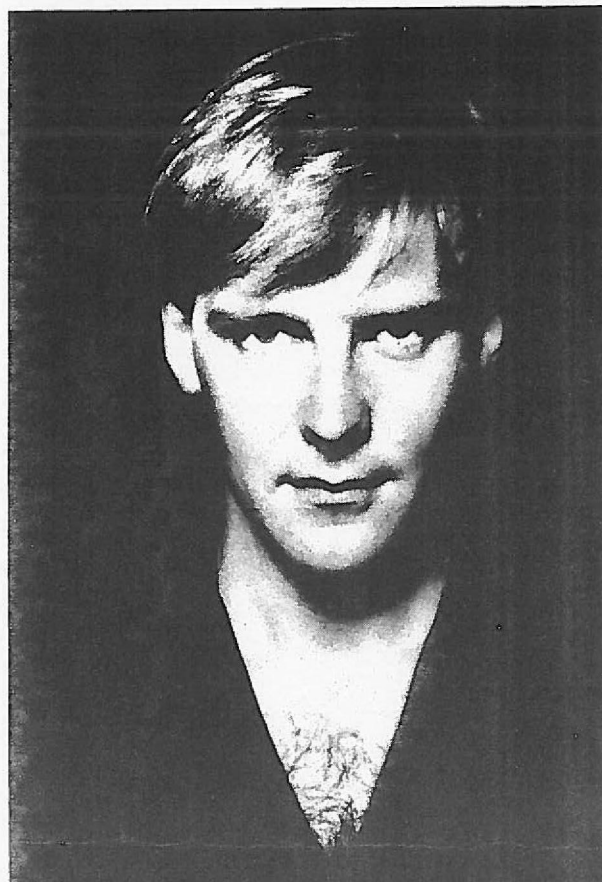
Another good reason for editing is **time**. Studio time is precious

and costly, and the pressure during basic tracks will bear down on **the drummer!** Everybody else can repair a note here or there, but the drummer's part has to be perfect. The number of microphones involved in creating a drum sound preclude the possibility of "dropping in" to fix one bad snare beat or click of the sticks. If a difficult track takes a long time, it's **you** they're waiting for! This can be really frustrating and lead you to over-concentration, and the reproachful looks from the other musicians as you try it "one more time" because of some silly mistake you'd never make before or again in your life. AARRRGH!

This was brought home to me sharply during the recording of "La Villa Strangiato" for our album **Hemispheres**. For four endless days and nights we played that very long and difficult instrumental bastard again and again! We wouldn't give up. Over and over we played it until our fingers were raw and swollen and our minds were drained and dark. We were determined to get the whole thing perfect, but in the end I just couldn't do it, and we ended up putting it together from a few different takes.

Three years and hundreds of performances later, it continues to change and improve tour after tour, and remains very enjoyable, challenging, and satisfying to play. Sometimes it's a case of ambition over the reaching ability.

**Magic** is still another reason for editing. This is always the subject of heated debate. Even if you define magic as "perfect synchronicity of rational factors", the fact remains that



**sometimes** the combination of sounds, feel, and execution is **so** good that it must be kept; even if it's only half a song. Painters, writers, composers, and filmmakers must all know that you take advantage of a good thing when you've got it. You don't hope that it will return later! Somerset Maugham said "Only a mediocre man is always at his best." Amen.

We took a slightly different course in constructing "Witch Hunt". Usually our songs are put together as a three piece, but we sometimes set aside one project to be a studio production number. Being a cinematic type piece, "Witch Hunt" also allowed a lot of atmosphere for unusual percussion effects which I took full advantage of! I emptied my armory, using the gong bass drums, wind chimes, glockenspiel, tubular bells, conga, cowbell, vibraslap, various electronic effects, and in one section I double-tracked the whole drum kit. It was fun.

The "percussion ensemble" in the second verse was very interesting to do. When we recorded the basic track, I left that section largely blank, and went back and overdubbed each drum separately. I used different sounds and perspectives on each drum to create the dramatic effect of things alternately being very distant and very near. I also removed the bottom heads of my toms on this track to get a darker, more primal sound.

July 26, 1982

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Dear Member:

The RUSH Backstage Club might be in the position in the very near future to start a small selection of RUSH merchandise. But, before we can even consider it, again we need your help. We would like to know if you had \$20.00 dollars to spend, what items would you be inclined to purchase. This information will help us to know what sort of RUSH paraphernalia you would be interested in. This will tell us what to order and have made etc..

Here is a list of the present items that could be made available. Please place an "X" beside the items you would want. \*\*NOTE\*\* Please remember that this is not an order form, and you cannot purchase these until further notice!

1. SPECIAL Backstage Club T-shirt printed both sides (available to members only) at \$6.00
2. RUSH "Permanent Waves" T-shirt at \$7.00
3. RUSH "Moving Pictures" T-shirt at \$7.00
4. RUSH "Exit Stage Left" T-Shirt at \$7.00
5. RUSH "Signals" T-Shirt at \$7.00
6. RUSH "World Tour" (Alex, Geddy, Neil on front) T-shirt at \$5.00
7. RUSH "Faces" (Alex, Geddy & Neil) on front at \$9.00
8. RUSH "Moving Pictures" jersey at \$9.00
9. RUSH "Exit Stage Left" jersey at \$9.00
10. RUSH "Signals" jersey at \$9.00
11. SPECIAL Fleece-lined navy blue, long-sleeved sweatshirt with "Man In The Star" logo on front. \$10.00
12. RUSH Black Satin Tour Jacket at \$49.95
13. RUSH Baseball hat with Swiss embroidered logo crest at \$6.00
14. RUSH "Backstage Club" crest at \$2.00
15. "Hemispheres" tourbook at \$3.00
16. "Moving Pictures" tourbook at \$3.00
17. "Permanent Waves" tourbook at \$3.00
18. "Signals" tourbook at \$3.00
19. Songbook. Music & Lyrics for "Hemispheres" at \$8.95
20. Songbook. Music & Lyrics for "Moving Pictures" at \$8.95
21. Songbook. Music & Lyrics for "Permanent Waves" at \$8.95
22. Songbook. Music & Lyrics for "Signals" at \$8.95
23. Beautiful pewter pin with picture of Alex, Geddy & Neil engraved on it at \$5.00
24. RUSH "In Concert" Poster at \$3.00
25. RUSH "Man In The Star" poster in beautiful black velvet at \$4.00
26. RUSH "In Concert" Photo 3x5 laminated sticker at \$1.00
27. Bumper Sticker "Man In The Star" at \$1.50
28. Button "Permanent Waves" at \$2.00
29. 4 Buttons "Rush Logo", "2112", "Man In The Star" & "In Concert" at \$1.25 each or set of four at \$4.50
30. Any suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this to the club as soon as possible. Your help will be appreciated!

RUSH  
FALL 1982 TOUR  
ITINERARY

| <u>DATE</u>      | <u>CITY</u>                     | <u>DISTANCE TO<br/>NEXT ENGAGEMENT</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Aug 17 REHEARSAL |                                 | --                                     |
| Aug 29-Sept 7    | Greenbay, Wisconsin (Rehearsal) | --                                     |
| September 3      | Greenbay, Wisconsin             | 193                                    |
| September 4      | Lacrosse, Wisconsin             | 127                                    |
| September 5      | Dubuque, Iowa                   | 371                                    |
| September 6      | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 7      | Sioux Falls, South Dakota       | 280                                    |
| September 8      | Des Moines, Iowa                | 133                                    |
| September 9      | Omaha, Nebraska                 | 507                                    |
| September 10     | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 11     | Rapid City, South Dakota        | 306                                    |
| September 12     | Bismark, North Dakota           | 418                                    |
| September 13     | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 14     | Billings, Montana               | 277                                    |
| September 15     | Casper, Wyoming                 | 275                                    |
| September 16     | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 17     | Denver, Colorado                | 598                                    |
| September 18     | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 19     | Pocatello, Idaho                | 236                                    |
| September 20     | Boise, Idaho                    | 336                                    |
| September 21     | Salt Lake City, Utah            | 963                                    |
| September 22-29  | Off                             | --                                     |
| September 30     | Vancouver, British Columbia     | 654                                    |
| October 2        | Calgary, Alberta                | 185                                    |
| October 3        | Edmonton, Alberta               | 815                                    |
| October 5        | Winnipeg, Manitoba              | --                                     |

