

RUSH

BACKSTAGE CLUB

SEPTEMBER 1983

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

ANOTHER RUSH NEWSLETTER

by Neil Peart

Notes on the Making of "Moving Pictures"

Part 3: from "The Drummer's Diary" by Neil Peart

I'd like to say a few words about the dreaded "click track". With a purist's pride, I resisted using this electronic metronome for many years, although the pursuit of really good time has been a constant trial for me. It wasn't until the sessions for *Permanent Waves* that I finally relented and agreed to give it a reluctant try.

Imagine my surprise—I liked it! It was much less difficult to work with than I had anticipated, because I could ignore it except at crucial "pivot points" when one "click" would insure accuracy. As another musician pointed out to me—"If you can't hear it (the click track), you know your (timing is) right." If you're locked into the tempo, your good timekeeping covers up the sound of the click.

The results in listening back are very satisfying. With all there is to keep in mind while recording a basic track, doubts about meter can be set aside in favor of concentrating on execution, dynamics, and *feel*. I am certain that my confidence and smooth rhythmic flow are only enhanced by it, and recording with the click has definitely improved my overall "sense of time" which pays off in live performance as well.

Anyone who has ever tried to accompany a digital sequencer will know that it's just like the electronic metronome: It won't follow you, you've got to follow it. In "Vital Signs" the sequencer is playing a sixteenth note pattern for most of the song, while the bass plays eighth notes along with it, and the guitar and drums play alternate staccato rhythms.

There have been many interesting things done with drum machines lately. As a thing apart—the artificial drum sounds are very good. Not better. Not worse. But, a completely different thing. I have a temperamental aversion to dealing with wires and electronics (my technical relationship to drums is hitting them with a stick!) but, I wanted to use that sound. So, we set about making real drums sound like artificial ones.

I suppose that's akin to making wood look like plastic, but it seemed like the right thing to do! We used it for the short bridge which introduces the first chorus of "Vital Signs", and in contrast to all the other stylistic influences used in this song, I think it worked quite, quite well.

Conceptually this song was an attempt to bridge the gap between the primal appeal of the rhythmic reggae "bounce" and the electronic energy of high technology modern music. As a drummer, this gave me the opportunity to begin as a simple "groove" player, and then grow through various developments into the "overplaying show-off type" towards the end! I drew on many influences throughout this progression; notably the work of Creme and Godley, Ultravox, The Police, the great things that Michael Giles did with early King Crimson, a healthy dose of good old hard rock, and a little Caribbean influence.

One thing I have come to learn about influences is that although copying one style can never be original—copying many styles often *is* original. Over the years I have learned from big band drummers, progressive jazz drummers, R&B drummers, jazz/rock drummers, pop drummers, reggae drummers, session drummers, rock drummers, and even some pretty lousy drummers. I know that when I add them all together I am none of them, but I am all of them. Some drummers provide instruction, some influence, and the rare great ones provide inspiration. The important thing is that if you listen to good honest music, you are attending the greatest school of music there is. I'm certainly not going to knock the systematic pursuit of academic knowledge, but it's often the emotional response of *wanting* to learn how to play something you enjoy *listening* to that will teach you the most.

The best advice for someone who wants to develop an original style is: Don't copy one drummer. Copy *twenty!* I copied a hundred!!!

Neil Pert's Answer to Satanism!

Hi folks! I've got another little goodie for you this month. Personally I fail to understand why this subject needs to be addressed at all, but there has been such a prevalence of questions about this silly "Satanism" business directed at our friends and ourselves, that I felt it was time to clear it up *once and for all!*

This little editorial was written in response to a very vicious and untrue story which a newspaper (The Daily Texan) had printed about all of these rock bands (including ourselves) who were supposed to be concealing Satanist and other anti-social messages in their songs by (get this!) recording them *backwards!* A real "ha ha" don't you think? Well, *they* didn't think so, and consequently if you find my reply a little on the *strong* side you will understand; they made me *mad!*

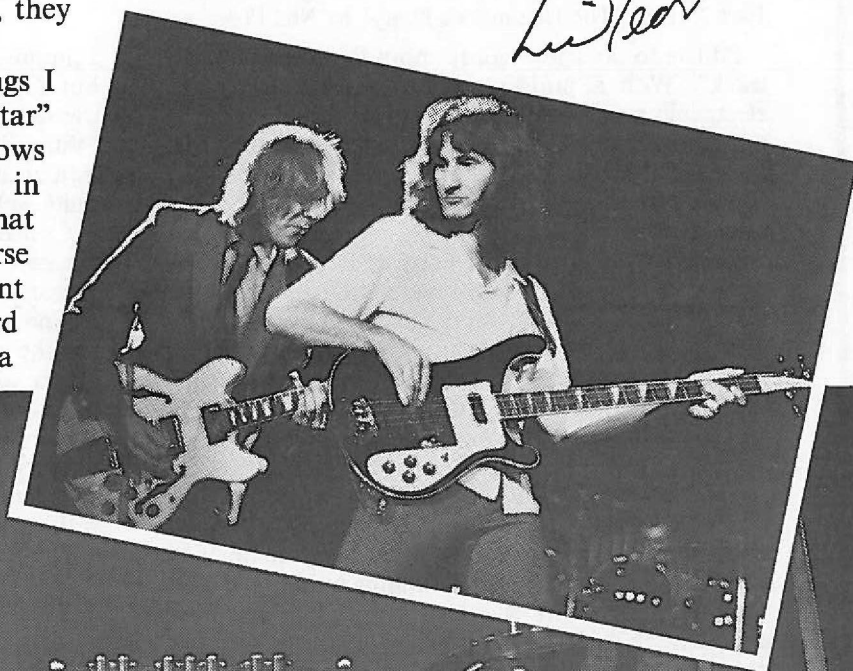
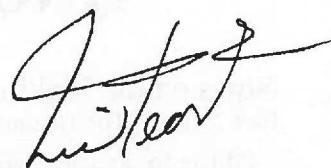
As to some of the ridiculous meanings I have heard attached to the "Man and Star" logo by some sick units, one hardly knows what to say! Those who are interested in such things should surely have noticed that the star is *not* a pentagram, it is of course an open star, which is quite a different geometric and symbolic thing. I even heard recently that there was supposed to be a

subliminal "devil's face" worked into the naked man's back! Now *really!*

I'll tell you what. If you don't understand or care about such things, (good for you!), then just ignore the whole thing. If you are one of those who find "secret" things all over the place, do us a favour: *keep* it a secret—don't tell *anyone!* Especially not me.

All seriousness aside, I hope this finds you all well and happy. If you are one of those who attended our concerts on this tour, I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Until next time—



Rock groups hardly satanistic

neil peart

guest column

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 a while 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 mu-

sicians 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 "daemoniac 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 to find a kind of lowest common denominator of commercial "acceptability." Yes, you Christian crypto-fascists, it is a joke! The only trouble 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 "daemoniac" secret messages or cleverly concealed mysti-

cal 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. Your 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!

Peart is a drummer and lyricist for the rock group Rush.

COMING SOON! **Video Cassette Tapes** **and** **Video Discs**

For FREE Catalogue of RUSH Concert
memorabilia and collectables write:

RUSH BACKSTAGE CLUB

5030 Paradise Road, C-116
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

Watch for major
U.S. tour beginning
February, 1984!

Experience RUSH live in concert!
September 18, 19, 21, 22, & 23, 1983
Radio City Music Hall
New York City

RUSH BACKSTAGE CLUB

Showtime Marketing Authorized Concert Merchandisers