

# RUSH BACKSTAGE CLUB

DECEMBER, 1985

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

**CONCERT ITINERARY INCLUDED**

## **RUSH BACKSTAGE CLUB**

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# TWENTY-FIVE QUESTIONS

## An Interview with Neil Peart by You

Hello there ladies and gentlemen, it's time for another exciting episode of "Twenty-Five Questions", in which I try to answer the questions which you, the members, have submitted to the "Rush Backstage Club" over the past year or two. And so, without further ado, let's get on with the game!

**Q.** Can you tell me if there are any plans to release more RUSH albums on Compact Discs?

Dan Coughlin  
Lancs, England

**A.** With the ever-growing popularity of CDs, I'm sure more and more albums will be appearing on them. As always, it will be a matter of demand.

**Q.** I've tried finding information on By-Tor and the Snowdog, are they existing or fictional?

J. D. Calhoun  
Gaithersburg, MD

**Q.** On caress of Steel, By-Tor is the good guy, but on Fly by Night, he is the bad guy. Why is this?

Robert Shaaon,  
Norwich, Conn.

**Q.** What do By-Tor and the Snowdog stand for?

Jesse Flint,  
Johnson City, TN

**Q.** Why in "The Return of the Prince" does By-Tor defeat evil yet in "By-Tor and the Snowdog" he loses?

Michael Kardos,  
Jericho, NY

**A.** Well gee, guys, we just invented those characters to have a bit of fun with — as a lyrical vehicle for some musical meandering. They're really not all that important, and the fact of whether By-Tor should be a good guy or a bad guy just never mattered to me. I guess he's like all of us — sometimes he's good, and sometimes he's bad!

**Q.** Will there ever be another full-side song like "The Fountain of Lamneth", "2112", "Hemispheres"?

J. D. Calhoun

**A.** I wouldn't discount the possibility of another long piece, but lately we have been more intrigued musically with taking the experience that we learned by doing those pieces, and applying it to different forms. We felt that "Hemispheres" was as far as we could take that form, and were compelled to move on. Lyrically, once I had already established all those "big ideas" — the larger abstract themes, it came time to apply them in concrete ways to more concise considerations. Thus our more recent albums represent the real life applications of those same ideas.

**Q.** In "Free Will" which lyrics are correct (the ones on the album sleeve or the ones Geddy sings)?

James Gill  
Islip, NY

**A.** That's a funny question. I've had a few lately from people who are so sure that what they hear is correct, that they disbelieve what I've put in the lyric sheets! Imagine! People have quoted me whole verses of what they hear, as opposed to what's printed, sure that they are right and the cover (me) is wrong. Scary stuff, these ego-centric individuals. I assure you, other than perhaps dropping an "and" or a "but", we take great care to make the lyric sheets accurate.

**Q.** How do you play plywood?

James Gill

**A.** Well you wear gloves so as not to get splinters, you take a piece of 1/4" plywood, and smack it down hard on the top of a wooden stool. Very demanding, technically — took years of practice.

**Q.** What is a Mini-Moog

James Gill

**A.** The Mini-Moog was one of the first synthesizers to be developed by the Moog Company. It is small, monophonic, and not particularly sophisticated, but has a good fundamental sound that is hard to duplicate otherwise.

**Q.** Is it true that Geddy Lee played with Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock?

Paul Hunt,  
Stillwell, KS

**Q.** Is Geddy doing some work with Chaka Khan? Will this affect his work with the band?

Sanjeev Dhawan,  
Spring Valley, NY

**A.** HA-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha !!!!!!! (You're joking, right?)

**Q.** How did Donna Halper of WMMS in Cleveland help get the ball rolling for Rush?

**A.** When the first album was released on a small independent label in Canada, she got hold of an import copy and played it a lot on her show. Consequently a lot of interest developed, and the attention of record companies and agencies was attracted.

**Q.** In the introduction to the songs "The Necromancer" and "Cygnus X-1" and the ending of "Grand Finale", who recites the lyrics and how are the special voices created?

Robert Shaaon

**A.** The voices in "The Necromancer" and "Grand Finale" were done by yours truly, while Terry Brown did "Cygnus". The effects were created using digital delays, flanging, and who knows what all!

**Q.** What does "Terminat hora diem, terminat auctor opus" mean?

Gary Simpson,  
Odessa, TX

**A.** It means something like: "as the hour ends the day, the author ends his work".

**Q.** Who is Jacob from the song "Jacob's Ladder"?

Steve Adolph,  
Bowling Green, OH

**Q.** What is "Jacob's Ladder" about?

Sterling Clark,  
Friendswood, TX

**A.** This song simply describes the phenomenon of the sun breaking through the clouds in visible rays, as it sometimes does after a rain or on a cloudy day. The actual name seems to be one of those traditional names for natural things which has probably been around for ages. I think Geddy actually suggested the idea to me, after hearing his mother-in-law use the name. It had a nice sound to it, and of course the event itself is a beautiful and inspiring one.

Q. I would like to know was Alex involved with the "Northern Lights" for Africa with Geddy? May I have details on the solo album Neil is doing with the drummer from Journey? I would like all personal details about the ages of the members of the band, children (names, ages) wives, hobbies, etc.

Nellie Aidakas,  
Garden Grove, CA

A. No, Alex was not involved in "Northern Lights". I am not involved in doing a solo album with Steve Smith, although we both appear on the "Champions" album by Jeff Berlin. Our private lives, especially our families, are jealously protected, and are something we generally keep to ourselves. Sorry!

Q. On Rush's album "Caress of Steel" after each song there is a city mentioned in small lettering. Do these places have any significance to the songs?

Paul Boyko,  
Nazareth, PA

A. Ah yes. This goes back to the "bad old days" when all we did was tour, and consequently had to do most of our song-writing on the road, with acoustic guitars and notebooks in hotel rooms. Not the best method of composition, you may imagine, but the only one available to us at the time. Those cities represent the places in which those songs were written.

Q. Why don't you play "Free Will", "Limelight", "Working Man" or any of your great old stuff?

Egicio Lequizamón,  
Flushing, NY

A. That's kind of a complicated question to answer. Of course we have played those songs on many tours, and people who have seen us a few times have seen and heard those songs performed. Sometimes we grow tired of playing older songs, and can no longer give them the commitment necessary to perform them excitingly and honestly. to give our audience (and ourselves) new songs to enjoy, and naturally we think that our newer songs are better, otherwise we'd stop working at all. Often we choose a song that we haven't played for a while to resurrect for a tour, and "Limelight" has been brought back for the "Power Windows" tour.

Q. Would you please give me the name of the publishing company that published the book "A Nice Morning Drive"?

Jeff Karp,  
Grand Rapids, MI

A. This story, which inspired "Red Barchetta", appeared many years ago in "Road and Track" magazine, and as far as I know, that is the only place it has been published.

Q. Did you film a video for "Afterimage"?

John Jeuer,  
Bramalea, Ont.

A. Yes, we did. It's on the "Through the Camera Eye" video anthology.

Q. Can you please try to write me a short explanation of the theme or ideas behind the lyrics of "Tom Sawyer"?

John Mallory,  
Richmond, VA

A. Well John, I've been avoiding most of the questions that ask for explanations for different songs, as really the song is meant to do the explaining for me! But since you ask so nicely... "Tom Sawyer" was a collaboration between myself and Pye Dubois, an excellent lyricist who wrote the lyrics for Max Webster. His original lyrics were kind of a portrait of a modern day rebel, a free-spirited individualist striding through the world wide-eyed and purposeful. I added the themes of reconciling the boy and man in myself, and the difference between what people are and what others perceive them to be — namely me I guess.

Q. What does the man descending to hell, and the dogs playing cards on the cover of "Moving Pictures" signify?

John Mallory

A. When Hugh Symes was developing the multitude of puns for the cover, he wanted the guys "moving pictures" to have some "moving pictures" to be moving past the people who were "moved" by the "pictures" — get it? So he asked us to think of some ideas for these pictures. The "man descending to hell" is actually a woman — Joan of Arc — being burned at the stake (as per "Witch Hunt") and the card-playing dogs are there because it was a funny, silly idea — one of the most cliché'd pictures we could think of — a different kind of "moving picture".

Q. What is "Lotus Land"?

Jack Rudroff,  
Willingboro, NJ

A. Lotus land as it appears in "Free Will" is simply a metaphor for an idealized background, a "land of milk and honey". It is sometimes also used as a pejorative name for Los Angeles, though that was not in my mind when I wrote it.

Q. How does Absalom, son of David tie in with "Distant Early Warning"?

Jack Rudroff,

A. That's a good question Jack! Before I ever knew who or what Absalom was, I always loved the sound of it. I had thought perhaps it was an ancient prayer or something. There is a book by William Faulkner called "Absalom, Absalom", which, again, I loved the sound of. I wanted to put it in the song, as a play on words with "absolute" and "obsolete", but I thought I'd better find out for sure what it meant. So I called my wife and asked her to look it up in the encyclopedia. When I learned the real story, and its Biblical roots, I decided that it was still appropriate, as it was the ultimate expression of compassion, which is what the song was really about. "Absalom, Absalom. My son, my son. Would God I had died for thee". (Now don't anyone go reading any religion into that!)

And that's it for this year folks. I enjoy these opportunities to clarify things that people are wondering about, it's one of the big reasons to carry on doing interviews, as well as the reason why I continue to write things for the concert program. I hope those whose questions didn't reach me, or weren't answered, will understand that it is difficult to find time at all for things like this, and I tried to pick the ones of wider interest or more thoughtful origin.

I wish you all the best in the upcoming New Year, and hope that each of you will find a way to communicate your own thoughts and feelings, as writing has been for me.

We are presently in rehearsals for our upcoming "Power Windows" tour, which begins next week in Portland, Maine, and I hope to be seeing many of you from the stage of your nearest arena!

Bye for now —



Dec. 6/85

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R U S H

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# RUSH

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( Subject To Change )

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18th . . . . . Austin, TX  
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31st . . . . . Oakland, CA

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4th . . . . . Phoenix, AZ  
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