



# RUSH

***Fifteen years of rocking—and they can still bring a “rush” of excitement to the crowds!***

**W**hen Geddy Lee walks down the street, he's rarely swarmed by screaming fans. His face isn't a household icon, and few actually recognize him off stage. But when that voice of his comes over the radio—that voice—few listeners don't instantly identify the distinctive singing/screaming of Rush's celebrated frontman. It's almost enough to make you forget that he's one of the finest bassists alive.

When Geddy, guitarist Alex Lifeson

and drummer John Rutsey formed Rush, they played high schools because they were too young for the drinking clubs. But after building a loyal Toronto following, they were signed to Polygram in 1974. Weeks before their first U.S. tour, Rutsey quit, but the cavalry arrived in the form of Neil Peart. Now, 15 years later, the trio is still hailed as the finest progressive combination going. As their double-live LP, *A Show Of Hands*, climbs the charts, (No. 22 on the Billboard charts at presstime) their newest home video is about to be unveiled.

I found Geddy to be relaxed, unassuming, and very down to earth. Quite a feat for a fella many call the greatest bass player in the world.

**ROCK:** In 15 years, how has the industry changed?

**GEDDY:** It seems that it keeps going in circles, in a way. When we were first looking for a recording deal, it was very hard to get an album deal. We kept getting offers for single deals: “Do two or three singles and if they do well, you’ll get an album out of it.” But it wasn’t really the way we wanted to go. So we ended up making our



own record on an independent label. But from what I can see around me now, from friends I have in the music business and in new bands starting up, they get the same kind of offers now, and this is 15 years later. I think it's gone through a lot more open and more patient times with new rock bands, but it seems to have come right back to a much more conservative time in singing artists right now, and, once again, a much more singles-oriented world.

**ROCK:** Who were your early influences?

**GEDDY:** Early, early?

**ROCK:** Yeah. To whom did you first start out listening?

**GEDDY:** I first started listening to the Yardbirds and Cream and the Who.

**ROCK:** Did early Rush cover these bands?

**GEDDY:** Oh yeah. Very early on we played the Yardbirds and John Mayall & The Blues Breakers and those kind of bands.

**ROCK:** Rush has been compared with Yes, Genesis, Zeppelin . . . When you first started out, who were the strongest influences? Was there a band or bands you were modeling yourselves after?

**GEDDY:** When we first started, we modeled ourselves after Cream. Later, there was some very heavy Led Zeppelin influence.

**ROCK:** Lyrically, Rush has always been several steps ahead of the mainstream. How would you sum up the message of Rush music?

**GEDDY:** I don't really know . . . That's a tough question, really. I'm not conscious of our having one lyrical message. (long pause) I guess, if there's any sort of common thing that comes back more often than not, it's sort of a confirmation of something.

**ROCK:** What comes first when you write, the music or the lyrics?

**GEDDY:** Half and half.

**ROCK:** Do the three of you write together in the same room?

**GEDDY:** Alex and I write together. Neal writes lyrics apart, but when we come together at the end of the day we usually all work together and finish the song.

**ROCK:** Is it like a job? Do you have certain hours where you're almost required to be together?

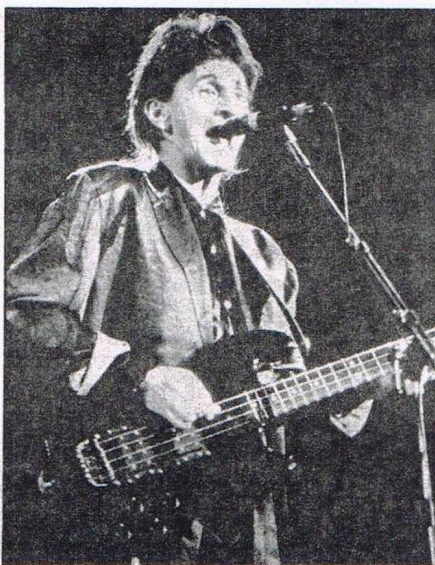
**GEDDY:** There are times when it's very much like a job and there are times when it's not like a job at all. Once you start getting yourself very scheduled, it does become like a job.

**ROCK:** Are you guys a small fraternity?

**GEDDY:** Uhm . . . I think we're tight in a musical sense.

**ROCK:** That goes without question. I'm talking about personally.

**GEDDY:** Alex and I are very close. We've known each other for much longer than either of us have known Neil. But when we're off the road, for example, we don't see each other a lot. I see Alex once a week or every other week and we play tennis together. We



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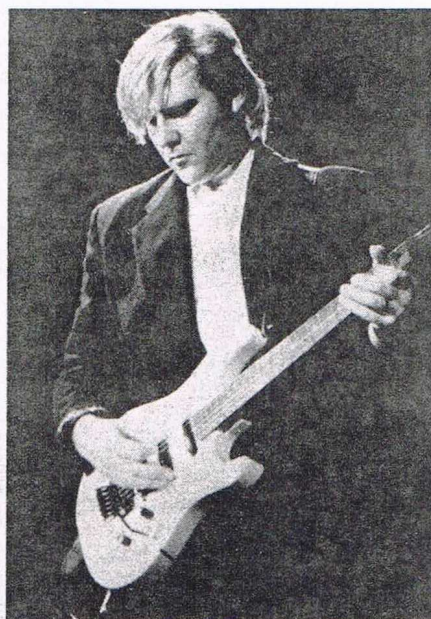
have that in common. I usually won't see Neil . . . I'll see him maybe once or twice in the entire time of a break and then we get back together and work. I guess it sort of feels kind of fraternal when we get back together.

**ROCK:** If you were stuck on a desert island with only 10 LPs, what would you bring?

**GEDDY:** Great question! *Relayer* (Yes), *Thick As A Brick* (Jethro Tull), *Led Zeppelin I*, *Remain In Light* (Talking Heads), *Feels Good To Me* (Bill Bruford), *One Of A Kind* (Bill Bruford), *The Color Of Spring* (Talk Talk), *Live In Moscow* (Vladimir Horowitz), a recording of Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue*, a collection of Billie Holiday's best songs, Patsy Cline's *Greatest Hits* . . . I think that's 11.

**ROCK:** What's your favorite Rush LP?

**GEDDY:** Ooo! That's a nasty



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question . . . (long pause) 2112.

**ROCK:** Now assemble the perfect rock band.

**GEDDY:** I don't think there is such a thing. The problem is that most of the bands you assemble as perfect rock bands are usually terrible.

**ROCK:** I won't let you slip out of this question.

**GEDDY:** (laughing). On bass, Jeff Berlin who is an amazing bass player—an immensely talented guy; on drums, Rod Morgenstein of the Dixie Dreggs (now with Winger); on lead guitar, Jeff Beck; vocals, Peter Gabriel; and on keyboards, Larry Fast.

**ROCK:** How about advice to young musicians trying to come up in the business right now?

**GEDDY:** Always keep your wallet on stage with you.

**ROCK:** Did you get robbed once?

**GEDDY:** No. I just heard George Burns give that advice once and I thought it was very good (laughs)!

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By Clifford Meth



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