

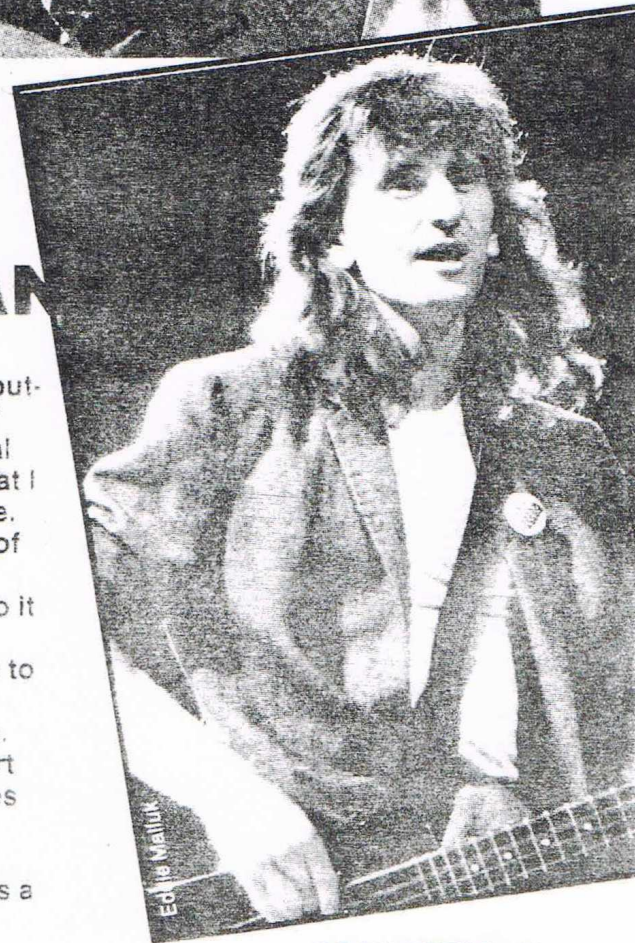


## RUSH'S GEDDY LEE: A WORD WITH THE MAN

by Christine Natanael

**I**magine my surprise to hear that Rush was going to be putting out a new double live record. I mean, here is one of the bands that I cut my teeth on still putting out material simply to please themselves. I think that's probably what I always liked best about them. They dare to be excessive, those guys from over the Canadian border that are just the epitome of musicians, man—They're COOL. So when I first heard their newest release on Polygram Records entitled *A SHOW OF HANDS*, I was into it from the get-go.

After little sleep and too much coffee, I find myself trudging down to the Carlyle Hotel in New York City at 10 am to have even more coffee and some interesting conversation with the man himself, Geddy Lee. What I learned is that he is a closely guarded and very intelligent sort of subdued kind of guy. He doesn't often do interviews for magazines such as the one you are reading. Mainly he and Alex and Neil do technical interviews for the "musician's" magazines and not much more. But, I was interested to find out what the dude was like. He has a few opinions, and here is where his head is at!







## ON HIS CHILDHOOD

I was quite quiet unless I was in a situation of confidence, and then I was quite goofy. I know a lot of children are like that. When I see home movies of myself as a child, I was always goofing it up for the camera. I was quite a ham when I was a kid, but I was introverted except in very comfortable surroundings, and I think I was a little nerdy.

## ON EARLY RUSH—

The early Rush albums were born out of three guys basically living in a cocoon, travelling around the United States in a van most of the time, with a lot of time to read. Through that par-

ticular point, science fiction is what we were reading, so it comes out. What goes in must come out. I'd say right now, that seems like a very long time ago, from a reality point of view. I think the three of us have gone to quite different places, individually, as people since that time, and it would stand to reason that we would be writing about things very different from "*The Black Hole of Cygnus X-1*."

## ON LONGEVITY—

When you start a group, you say, 'we're gonna be together forever and we're gonna be huge,' but you don't really believe it, and you don't even know what you're talking about. The longer you're together, you suddenly

look at yourself and go, 'boy, we're still together and we're still doing well. That's amazing.' You're more surprised, I think later on, that you're still together and I don't think you really know what your expectations are.

## ON LIVE ALBUMS AND VIDEOS—

When we do an album, the role of that live album is to update and to showcase material of the last part of our career—to record songs that we haven't put on record before, to basically preserve them from a historical point of view, and at the same time update our stage sound—that kind of thing. As far as the live video goes, it's an entirely different



thing. An album is a collection of performances over a three or four year span, the video is one evening, so you can't just put a quarter of an evening on film, it doesn't make any sense. You have to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It has to be a complete show.

We put out live albums because of the fact that we are a touring band and we have a lot of records out. We have 12 or 13 records out there and some songs have to go, eventually, because we have new music coming in. We can't sit up there for four hours and play. Before songs disappear, we like to record them. We like to get live versions of them because I think it's interesting to fans to have that historical sort of memento of those



songs and at the same time it's interesting for us to go through the painful process of listening to all those performances, see what kind of band we've grown into, see how we're playing and gauge it. It's like a test, you know?

### ON TECHNOLOGY—

I think it's very difficult to stay on top of the technology because it has grown so quickly. Thank god I have someone who can stay on top of it for me to show me the stuff I'm supposed to know. I recently bought a Japanese unit and it didn't come with an English manual, so it was like, "good luck—figure it out."

### ON FAVORITE MUSICIANS—

It's increasingly more difficult for me to find favorite musicians. I relate to old ones a little bit more easily. On an individual basis, my favorite bass player is Jeff Berlin—from a band

point of view, I don't think I have a favorite band, anymore. I enjoy Talking Heads a lot. I like Peter Gabriel's music. I like some of Talk Talk's records and the old things here and there with a good dose of metal from time to time as well, but I wouldn't say I have a favorite band anymore. I think I just wait for a good song to come out. I listen to a little bit of jazz, although I'm not a big jazz fan. I've been listening to a couple Billie Holiday records lately that I think are pretty good—but really my record collection is pretty diverse and a lot of it wouldn't appeal to your average rock fan.

### ON THE LABEL 'PROGRESSIVE'—



I think the term progressive is accurate. I think that's what we try to do—progress. Not everyone does. Some people don't ever change, really. Probably most artists are very changeless. If they're actually successful with one particular album, then they get into the mode of imitating themselves, where they become some sort of a self-parody. Most people don't realize that. I think that even to a degree we've probably become a self-parody. Hopefully there's enough movement in what we are writing—progression in what we are writing, so that we are still, somehow, active. That's the thing to look for. We've never made two records the same, and everytime we make a record, people expect the next one to be just like it, which it won't be. It is impossible for us to stand still, and I think when we get to the point where we are standing still, that's probably the point that we would break up, if we recognize it at the time.

### ON POLITICS

People say, 'are you political?' but what does that mean? Do I get upset about the state of the environment in my country? Yeah. I get very upset. Do I speak out about it? When I have the opportunity, I do, but I don't think that makes me very political. Do I have opinions on free trade between Canada and the United States? Yeah, I have opinions, but I don't think that particularly makes me political, that just makes me an active member of my society that reads the newspaper.

You're not political unless you run for public office, unless you have a platform that you can stand up on the corner. I'd say that I have an interest in some things that are political or some things that are considered



political. I have an interest in the world that I'm living in, and the older I get, the more interested I become in my environment and in making sure that the kind of world that I'm living in; that my children will live in, will be a better world. So, I think it's not any different than most people who are a little concerned about their environment, whether it be actual ecological environment or social environment.

**So, what will be next for the men in Rush? As I finished asking all sorts of different questions and we got into our discussion on the differences between Canadians and Americans and finished our coffee, Geddy told me of the plans for the next year or so of their time. They are currently in the studio working on the new album, and should be finished by December. Until then, we'll just have to content ourselves with reliving the best moments of the last four years with A SHOW OF HANDS. □**