

HONEYMOON SUITE KASHTIN PSYCHEDELIC FURS

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# NETWORK

## *The Eye Of The Storm*

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There's an unpredictable, intangible phenomenon called longevity that sets

apart groups such as The Who, Allman Brothers, NRBQ, XTC and the

Ramones from a sea of others. In the long run, these bands have managed

## WHY THIS BAND IS STILL AROUND

to sustain their careers so that they've become

BY DAVE BIDINI

virtually evergreen in the land of popular music.

Similarly, Canadian rock band Rush has remained a CanRock constant. After 17 years of countless albums, videos and tours, it has long surpassed The Guess Who, BTO, The Band and Max Webster as the frozen tundra's reigning king. The band has proven itself to be an integral part of two generations' record collections, outlasting hundreds of others.

"The key is adaptation," says drummer and lyricist Neil Peart, over the phone from the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City, which he says is one of his favorite places in Canada. "There is a hull of artificiality in success, and unless you remain self-aware, self-effacing and wary of its trappings, chances are you'll create strife and tension among band members that just gets in the way of advancing musically. You've got to try and stay as mentally well-balanced as possible. I'm thankful that our success has been a gradual climb and I think that we've been able to maintain an even keel better than others because of it. I often wonder what would have happened to me had Rush become an overnight success like Guns N' Roses. There's a good chance we might not still be together.

"Fame, you see, is an empty state of being," he continues. "You have to protect your privacy to a certain extent, and I do, sometimes just to stay sane. For instance, if I have to go to Africa and ride my bike to be alone, I will. I just finished a bike trip to Istanbul before we started this tour. If I don't do these things, I find myself trapped in this bubble in the public's eye and, who knows, maybe I'll end up writing only about alienation, like Roger Waters. Although he does it quite eloquently, it's pretty

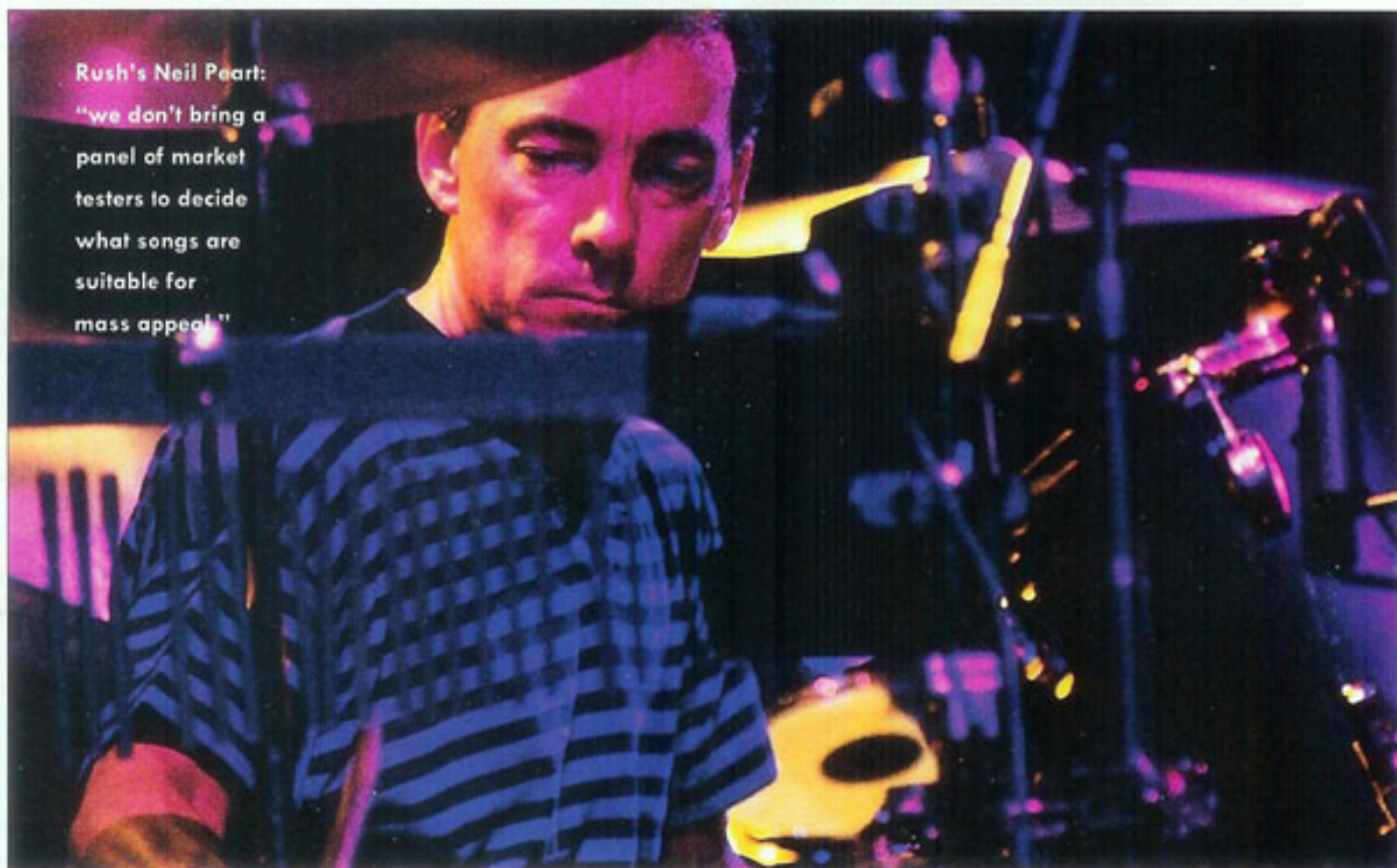
depressing stuff. For Rush, the pursuit of happiness is very important. I find it a very underrated activity."

Rush's new album, *Roll The Bones*, revolves around Peart's notion of chance. He recalls sitting in his cottage in the Laurentians with his notes from the past few years gathered around him when he suddenly realized how fate had couched the group's enormous career. "Chance is a very serious thing," he says. "I mean, we've accomplished a lot of this through discipline and hard work, yet at the same time our endurance has

band members? Why has our success not jaded us? Why am I here?" I realized that there are no answers. The key, however, is in not asking what we can't do about it — fate and chance — but what we *can* do about it.

"A skeleton of good intentions has always been in place for us: doing things our own way, trying to grow musically, not growing pompous and self-satisfied. But a lot of bands have lived by these truths and not many of them have become half as successful as us. Great bands, too. We'd bring Max Webster and FM on the road with us in the States, but for some reason, they just never took off. Why? I mean, we're not like Bon Jovi — we don't bring a panel of market testers to decide what songs are suitable for mass appeal — we just write the music that we like and for some

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to be directly related to good luck — to successfully rolling the bones. That day in my cottage, I found myself asking very important questions: 'Why has there been this perfect chemistry among

**"For Rush, the pursuit of happiness is very important."**

reason millions of people listen to it. I'm flummoxed by this. To me, it's what *Roll The Bones* is about. If any listener can figure out more than what I've already laid down in the words, let me know. It's a never-ending search, but frankly, it's one that I wouldn't give up for anything." ■