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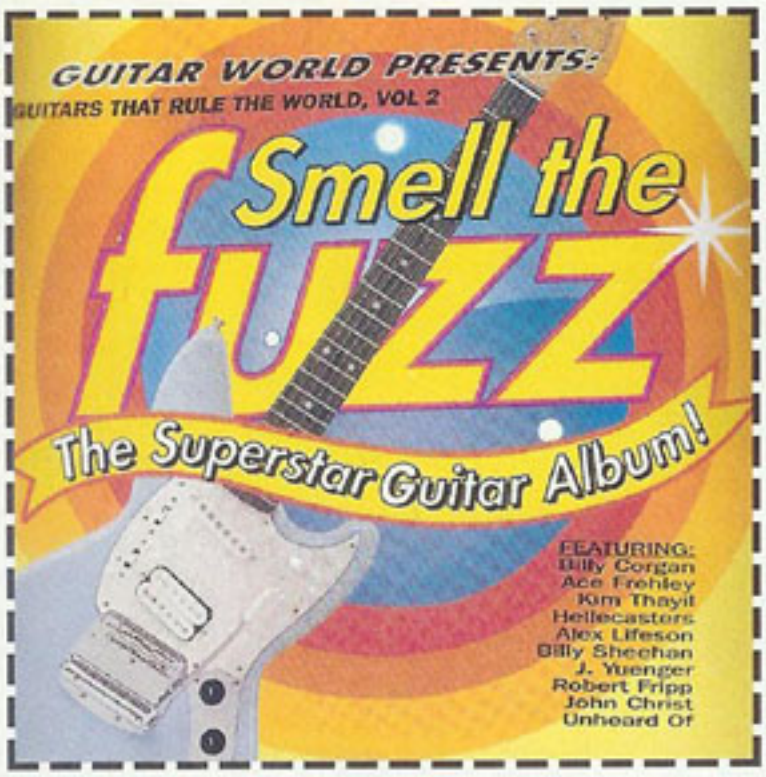


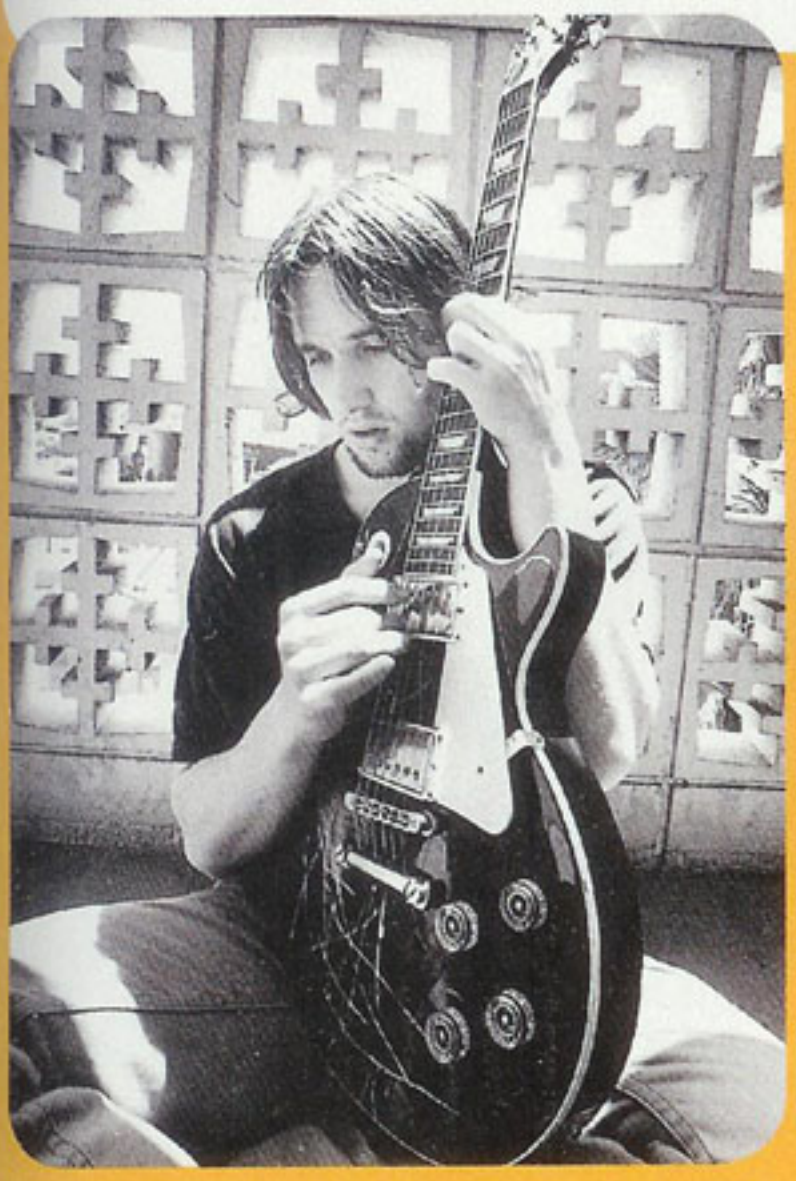
AND NOW THIS important announcement: *Smell the Fuzz: The Superstar Guitar Album* rules! Volume 2 of *Guitar World*'s "Guitars that Rule the World" series features instrumental performances from Billy Corgan, J. Yuenger, Ace Frehley, Kim Thayil, Robert Fripp, Alex Lifeson, Billy Sheehan and others, all of which are guaranteed to take listeners on the guitar journey of their lives.

The aromatherapy begins with the Hellecasters' "Disintonation," on which Tele-slingers John Jorgenson, Will Ray and Jerry Donahue tap, bend and slide their way to six-string salvation. Then there's Corgan's excursion, a one-man guitar show from the Smashing Pumpkins frontman that straddles the line between jagged dissonance and passionate, melodic achings.

Moving on, Rush's Alex Lifeson unveils "Victor," a brightly colored, intricately woven aural tapestry; J. Yuenger's "Blues For 2-XL" is a clean blues that's a far cry from the kind of insensate assault customarily administered by White Zombie. Kiss legend Ace Frehley kicks in with a Seventies-style hard rocker, "Cherokee Boogie," which is followed by Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil's brooding side project, Dark Load. Thayil unshackles some ultra-fast riffage on the ale and hearty "Brewicide," which takes off into stratospheric realms that should have swillers and chuggers swaying with ecstasy.

A mass-grave's worth of great players, including Cannibal Corpse's Jack Owen and Six Feet Under's Allen West, comprise the death metal all-star band Unheard. The spooky time and tempo changes make the dead boys burnt offering, "Explosion," sound like the very furnaces of hell, heated to overkill. Billy Sheehan follows with the jazzy, Hammond-inflected jam "Niacin," before former Danzig guitarist John Christ pulls the plug for a bit with the acoustically fueled "One Song." Everything comes to a cosmic close with Robert Fripp's "Sunset Collage 1," an otherworldly meditation on all things sonic.

Smell the fuzz, baby; smell it *good*.



Ash

Irish Fling

By **Meredith Ochs**

NORTHERN IRELAND'S NOISY pop trio Ash is doing its best to uphold the time-honored tradition of rock and roll excess. On its recent worldwide tour, the band left a trail of teenage pranks, kicked-in doors, depleted fire extinguishers and trashed hotel rooms in its wake. More impressively, the group's second album, *1977* (Reprise), ends with "Sick Party," an unlisted track which features the dulcet tones of bassist Mark Hamilton puking his guts out as his bandmates howl with laughter.

"You live a surreal existence on the road," explains 19-year-old guitarist/frontman Tim Wheeler, "You get drunk and smash up stuff out of boredom."

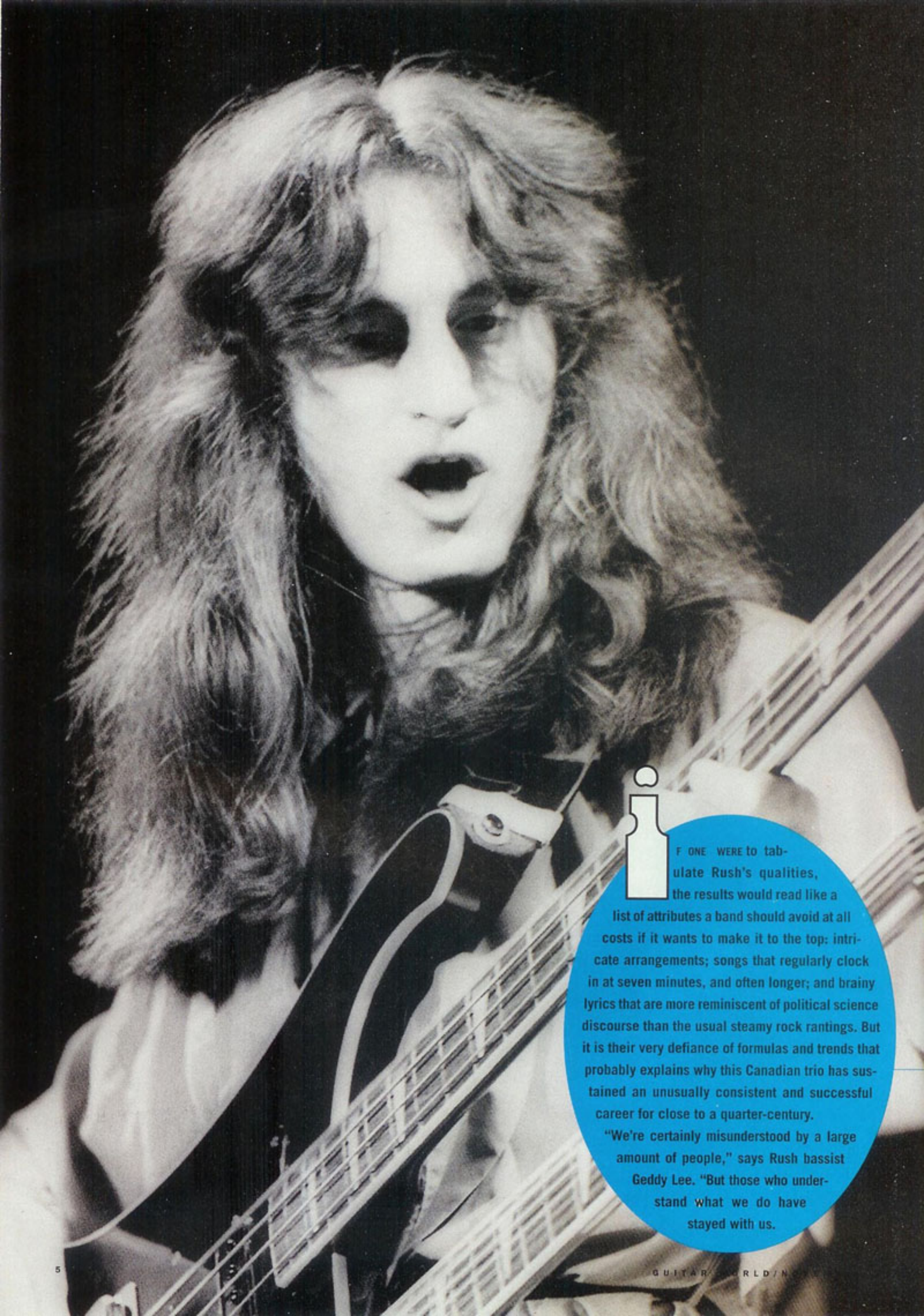
Ash's members were still in high school when the BBC's John Peel got hold of their independently released single, "Jack Names the Planets." Shortly after that, the group turned down an opening slot on a Pearl Jam tour to finish their A-level (college entrance) exams. "We didn't know if the band would take off or not, so we stayed in school," Wheeler says.

The group's caution proved unwarranted as they scored several Top 10 hits in the U.K. But Wheeler wasn't satisfied with the band's recorded output until *1977* was completed. A mix of Crybaby wah wah-drenched distortion and irresistible melodic hooks, *1977* represents the perfect marriage of Wheeler's pop proclivities and his love affair with feedback. "Kung Fu," with a genuine martial arts film soundbite and handclaps, sounds like it was culled from a Phil Spector-era Ramones record, while "I'd Give You Anything" conveys a swaggering Stooges vibe. Wheeler, who cites Nirvana, Thin Lizzy, the Beach Boys and "tacky, B-movie culture" as major influences, confesses that he spent the bulk of Ash's recent U.S tour immersed in the easy-listening pop of Burt Bacharach and Joe Meek, but insists this is no indication of an early onset of maturity. "The U.S. tour was quiet," he acknowledges, "but I'm sure we'll be back in action pretty soon."

whammy bar

NOW DIG THIS! JIMI ON THE MIC: *EVERYONE KNOWS OF Jimi Hendrix's prowess on the guitar, but there was also a less celebrated aspect of his gigantic talent that deserves to be acknowledged: his verbal improvisations on stage, some of which qualify as free verse poetry. Here are some of Hendrix's finest stage raps, which often say as much about the man as his legendary solos:* "Dig this!

[Jimi takes off his fake ostrich-feather boa] I don't want nobody to think I'm a, you know, heh heh...I gotta keep people honest. ...it's really outta sight here...didn't even rain. No buttons to push. We'd like to dedicate this song to everybody here with hearts, any kind of hearts...and ears. Goes something like this here..." *[launches into Bob Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone."]*—***Monterey Pop Festival, June 18, 1967...*** "Now we'd like to play around a little bit, and really play out of key. It's dedicated to somebody's girl-



IF ONE WERE to tabulate Rush's qualities, the results would read like a list of attributes a band should avoid at all costs if it wants to make it to the top: intricate arrangements; songs that regularly clock in at seven minutes, and often longer; and brainy lyrics that are more reminiscent of political science discourse than the usual steamy rock rantings. But it is their very defiance of formulas and trends that probably explains why this Canadian trio has sustained an unusually consistent and successful career for close to a quarter-century.

"We're certainly misunderstood by a large amount of people," says Rush bassist Geddy Lee. "But those who understand what we do have stayed with us.

THE 70'S

LIVING IN THE LIMELIGHT

Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart look back at Rush's long, illustrious career.

by Chris Gill

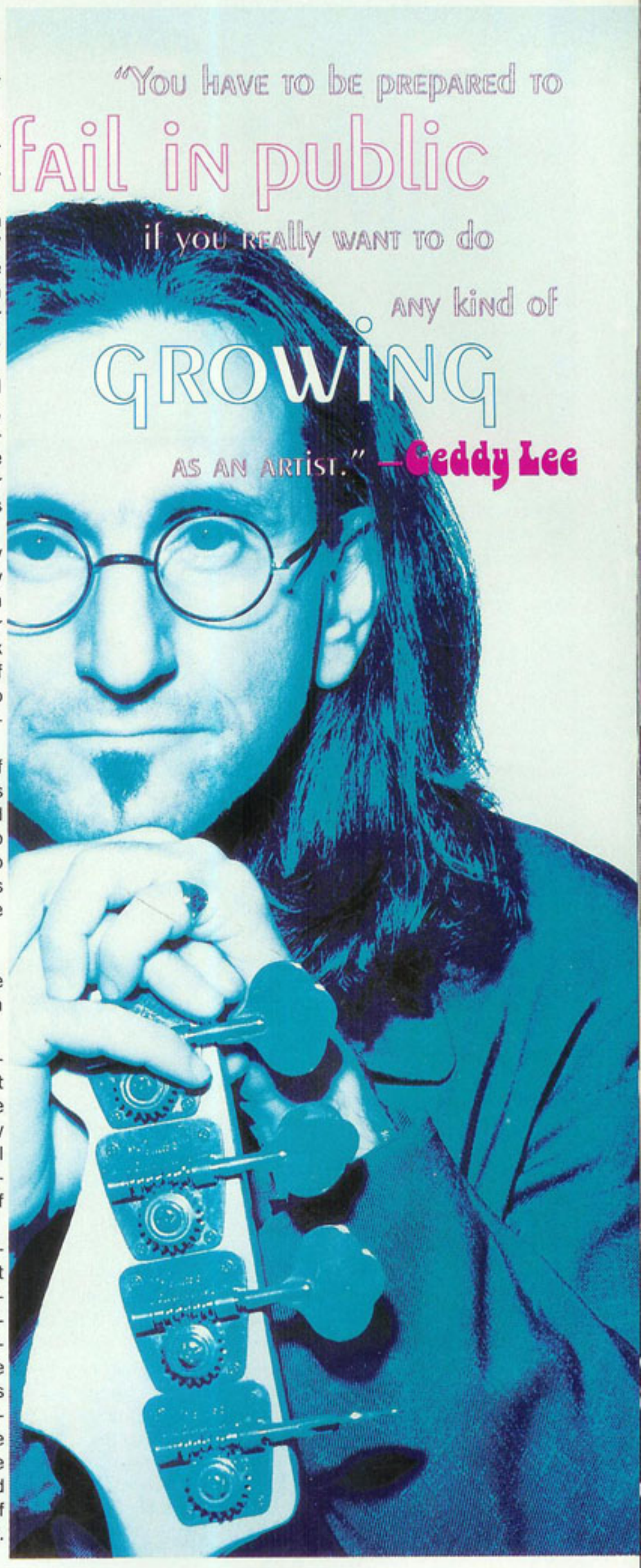
We've changed a lot over the years, but our audience has tolerated those changes. In fact, they *expect* us to change."

Since 1974, when the band released its debut album, *Rush* (Mercury), they've completed 19 albums, including their most recent Atlantic recording, *Test For Echo*. Over that period, Rush's music has adopted many different forms. At first, they churned out Zep-like hard rock before progressing into a more flamboyant style that showcased the individual members' talents. But just as their music started to teeter on the edge of excess, Rush pulled back and started experimenting with synthesizer textures and rhythmic-oriented explorations. Their most recent efforts exhibit a combination of these attributes, dominated by organic guitar/bass/drums instrumentation.

"We grew up with the idea that we have to be able to pull off live whatever we do in the studio," notes Lee. "In the past, I boxed myself in pretty good with trying to sing and play keyboards and bass all at once on stage. But we've progressed to the point where we can create a greater variety of sounds with fewer instruments. That's one of the reasons there are far fewer keyboards on this record than any record we've done in the last 10 years."

Part of Rush's longevity may be attributed to the fact that they haven't ever gone away long enough to be forgotten. Whereas many bands at their level of success take longer and longer breaks in between albums and tours, Rush has worked almost non-stop for their entire career. The band recently enjoyed their longest break ever, laying low since completing their *Counterparts* tour in May of 1994. Guitarist Alex Lifeson spent the hiatus recording a solo album, *Victor* (Atlantic), and drummer Neil Peart worked on a Buddy Rich tribute album.

"We needed this break," says Lifeson. "It was important to all of us on a professional level as well as a personal level. Ever since I was 15 years old, my whole life has been based around what the band has been doing. We needed to get away from Rush. We needed to do some other things in our lives. So this break was really important to us. When we got back together to work on the record, everybody was that much more pumped up and into it. But it wasn't like we were trying to make a comeback. We never went anywhere."



ANDREW MACNAUGHTAN

GUITAR WORLD: Over the course of its career, Rush has undergone some radical musical changes, yet you've managed to maintain your audience.

GEDDY LEE: It's a testament to their tolerance. They're really curious as to what we're going to do next. They also understand that we're kind of an experimental band, despite the fact that we've achieved a certain level of commercial success. In a lot of ways, every record is a little experiment. We're not sure what it's going to be until it's on the way to being it. There's a part of our audience that appreciates the openness of that. There's a conviction and an element of sincerity that appeals to them.

ALEX LIFESON: A big part of our longevity is that we've always operated outside of mainstream trends. We're quite a unique band in that nobody else sounds like us, and we don't sound like anybody but ourselves. When a new wave of music hits, everybody jumps on the bandwagon. With the alternative movement, for example, there are thousands of bands that sound like a few bands. And it happens all the time. It's a normal progression. Everybody who's starting out wants to sound like whatever's cool, hip and trendy. Of course, record companies like to develop that whole thing because that's how they make money. So they feed that whole process. Music goes through these periods of non-development until the next big thing happens and everybody jumps on *that* bandwagon. We've tried to stay outside of all that. We do what we do, and it comes from our hearts and brains. It's a natural evolution for us.

By Chris Gill

TIME AND MOTION

Alex Lifeson dissects several key songs from Rush's past.

"ANTHEM" *Fly By Night* (Mercury, 1975)

WE WERE TRYING to be quite individual with *Fly By Night*, which was the first record that Neil, Geddy and I did together. That song was the signature for that album. Coincidentally, the name of our record company, which is Anthem records in Canada, came from that song. Neil was in an Ayn Rand [*author of* The Fountainhead] period, so he wrote the song about being very individual. We thought we were doing something that was different from everybody else.

I was using a Gibson ES-335 then, and I had a Fender Twin and a Marshall 50-watt with a single 4x12 cabinet. An Echoplex was my only effect.

"2112"

2112 (Mercury, 1976)

WE STARTED WRITING that song when we were on the road. We wrote on the road quite often in those days. "The Fountain of Lamneth" off *Caress of Steel [Mercury, 1975]*, was really our first full concept song and "2112" was an extension of that. That was a tough period for Rush, because *Caress of Steel* didn't do that well commercially, even though we were really happy with it. We wanted to develop that style. Because there was so much negative feeling from the record company and our management was worried, we came back full force with "2112." There was a lot of passion and anger on that record. It was about one person standing up against everybody else.

I used the ES-335 again, and a Strat which I borrowed for the session; I couldn't afford one at the time. I used a Marshall 50-watt and the Fender Twin as well. I may have had a Hiwatt in the studio at that time, too, but I think it came a little later. My effects were a Maestro phase shifter and a good old Echoplex. There were a limited number of effects available back then. The Echoplex and wah-wah were staples in those days.

"LA VILLA STRANGIATO"

Hemispheres (Polygram, 1978)

THAT WAS ALL recorded in one take. Because we were writing on the road, we used our soundchecks to run through songs that we were going to record. We would come off the road, have a few days off and start recording. It was all recorded at the same time, with all of us in the same room. We had baffles up around the guitar, bass and drums and would look at each other for the cues. My solo in the middle section was overdubbed after we recorded the basic tracks. I played a solo while we did the first take and re-recorded it later. If you listen very carefully you can hear the other solo ghosted in the background. That was a fun exercise in developing a lot of different sections in an instrumental. It gave everyone the chance to stretch out.

By that time I had my ES-355, and my acoustics were a Gibson Dove, J-55 and a B-45 12-string. I had my Marshall in the studio. I had the Twin and two Hiwatts, which I was also using live, but the Marshall was my real workhorse. The Boss Chorus unit had just

Continued on page 100

NEIL ZLOZOWER

By Neil Peart

A PEART RESPONSE

IN ADDITION TO his role as drummer and percussionist with Rush, Neil Peart also writes the band's lyrics. Peart eagerly took pen in hand to answer the following question, put to him by Guitar World*: "Why has Rush endured for more than 22 years?"*

The reasons for Rush's longevity are as mysterious to us as they are to the outside observer. As in life, it's one thing to decide to be around for a long time and quite another to *achieve* it. One can only approach this game of chance with the wise traveler's advice: "Hope for the best, and plan for the worst."

You can *hope* to play the music you love and be successful all your life, but you have to *plan* to make a living. That's the reality. For the young musician, even that modest plan is a road with many forks; when I was starting out, some of my friends were determined to be "professional musicians"—i.e., make a living at it—and in pursuit of that "plan" they would play *anything*: polkas, Top-40, country, cocktail jazz, prom music, whatever.

Me, I skipped the plan and went straight into the *hope*—I only wanted to play music I really *liked*. There were other ways to make a living: weeding potato fields, delivering papers, selling posters and hippie paraphernalia on London's Carnaby Street, working in my Dad's farm equipment dealership, whatever. For me, music couldn't be a *job*; it had to be a true labor of love. If I was going to do it, I had to *love* what I was doing. It was the principle of the thing.

How deeply engrained these things can be was taught to me in 1972, in London. Temporarily out of work and "financially embarrassed," I accepted an offer from a guitarist friend to play some "cocktail jazz" at a "gentleman's club." This involved playing dinky songs as quietly as possible while

Continued on page 112

GW: But you don't seem to be *totally* oblivious to musical trends.

LIFESON: We go through periods where we want to sound heavier or more majestic, or pull back and be sparser. There's certainly music by other bands around at the same time that also has those characteristics. Those are things that we like listening to individually. But we don't make an effort to emulate them.

LEE: Rush has been around for a long time. Trends in music come and go. It wouldn't be very believable for us to jump on any particular bandwagon. Our interest in other styles of music has to be honest. I may respect something that's going on in contemporary music, and want to learn about it.

When the whole synthesizer revolution happened, I had a real hunger to know about these instruments, to try to integrate them into our sound. And while I hate the term "alternative" because it doesn't really mean anything anymore, it does generally refer to an American sound that's dry, rhythmically oriented and a little bolder in the bottom end. That's a sound that we were interested in experimenting with, which is why we chose to use an American mixing engineer on this record.

Sometimes we find ourselves asking each other, "Is this too weird for us to do?" It goes around the room for a while and we go, "Yeah. It's probably too weird. But so what? I like it, so let's do it." You have to be prepared to fail in public if you really want to do any kind of growing as an artist. You can't just take the safe way out every time. Sometimes you have to do it because it seems right. You may look back six months later and go, "Why did I do that? That was so retarded. It was such a bad decision." But when you're in the middle of it, and it's interesting to you and you're getting off on it, you have to do it.

GW: Some critics have categorized Rush as a progressive rock band, but you've remained separate from that movement.

LEE: It's interesting. I don't know how you would categorize us anymore. What's progressive rock? What does that mean anymore? I don't know. If there is such a term, do we still fit into that? In an era where all these "progressive rock" bands are reforming, they've become nostalgia acts. Here we are, never having gone away and still moving forward. I don't know what that says about the term progressive rock. [Producer] Rupert Hine used to joke that what we do is "post-progressive" rock.

GW: You two have played together in Rush since 1969. How did you meet, and when

Continued on page 93

"The song's tail end alternates between three distinct effects created by two pedals: an Echoplex doubler and a Maestro octave box alternating every third bar between having the octave up and the octave down. The song also contains some Hohner clavinet, which was owned by one of our famous Memphis pals, Carlos De Marlos. It's such an interesting sound that it ignited Dusty's *[Hill, bassist]* interest in learning some keyboard skills and it was he who subsequently handled all the tickling of the ivories."

"CHEAP SUNGLASSES"
***Deguello* (Warner Bros., 1979)**

"This song was actually written during a trip from the Gulf Coast up to Austin, Texas. A bright spot of creativity flared as we were passing the hamlet of La Grange, and I recited all three verses of 'Cheap Sunglasses' within the space of 20 miles. And that's the way they stayed. Though that may sound simplistic, the lyrics speak for themselves. 'Simplistic' is indeed a word which may come to the minds of some.

"The lead track was performed on a fake Fender guitar which I used for the wiggle stick—there is a little dive bomb in the solo section. I played it through a Marshall Major, a short-lived 200-watt beast, which had one blown tube. Hence the rather bulbous, rotund sound. There's also a little bit of digital delay for that Bo Diddley impersonation at the tail out, and a Maestro ring modulator, which produces the strange tag to each verse. It appears three times, and it's a pretty funny sound. That is one insane effect put to good use." ●

RUSH

Continued from page 56

did you first decide that you were going to make music together?

LEE: I met Alex in junior high. He was not in my class, but the first time I saw him he was wearing a paisley shirt. I thought he was a goofy-looking guy. I was a "musician." I played bass, and I was hanging out with a couple of guys. We were looking for a guitar player. Alex and I had a mutual friend, who became a professional hockey player later, who kept telling me, "You should check this Alex guy out. He's a good guitar player." So eventually we hooked up. The next year we were in the same class, and that's how we got to know each other. Eventually we started playing together.

GW: What type of music were you listening to then?

LEE: We were listening to Cream, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, early Who.

GW: I would guess that Led Zeppelin figured in pretty heavily a little later.

LEE: Led Zeppelin was a huge influence when they first came out, as were other heavy three-piece bands, such as Blue Cheer—even though we could only stand two of their songs. There were only two songs they could actually play, but they sounded really good. We were always impressed that they were the loudest band we ever heard. The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane were influences of a different sort. We never were influenced by only one style, which may account for the eclectic nature of our music.

GW: Why did your first drummer, John Rutsey, leave the band?

LEE: He was having some personal problems. We were at a critical stage because we had done a low-budget record with the help of our manager and put it out on our own label. We had gotten some attention in America, signed a deal with Mercury Records and were preparing for an American tour. Suddenly, we were breaking away from being this local bar band sensation. The combination of his personal problems and the life that he was going to be living led to a parting of the ways.

GW: How did you find Neil Peart?

LEE: We held auditions the week after John left. This big, hulking six-foot-one guy with very short hair pulled up with this really tiny drum kit—with little 18-inch double bass

drums. Neil played like he plays, which is like a monster. He totally blew us away.

GW: Was Rush always a three-piece band?

LEE: Way early on we had a piano player, who played electric piano, did some vocals and played guitar. That didn't work out for various reasons. And we went through another period where we had a rhythm guitarist, but that was way back when we were playing bars. Those two failed experiments with expanding the outfit made us realize that three is a better number to work with, although it can be slightly more frustrating in terms of what we can get away with sonically.

LIFESON: We talked about adding a keyboard player in the mid-Eighties. But early on, when we started fiddling with keyboards, we decided that to bring someone else in would disrupt the chemistry between the three of us, so we took it upon ourselves to figure out how to reproduce the synthesizer parts from our albums live without adding another player to the mix. It wouldn't work for us to bring anybody else in.

GW: Since the band co-produces its records, how does a producer fit into your creative team?

LEE: A producer is a very important element to us. We need someone there to be the sounding board. We need someone we respect who will tell us if the song is going in the right direction. On this album, a lot of the arrangements were worked out. We made demos complete with vocals and multitracked instrumental parts. It was in pretty complete form when we sent it to our producer, Peter Collins. On some songs, Peter would say, "That sounds fine. Nothing needs to change." But there were a few songs that he had a tremendous impact upon in terms of the structure. Even on the songs that he doesn't change, he has a tremendous impact because he gives us the confidence of knowing that we got it right.

GW: How does the band write its music?

LIFESON: Neil sets up his computer in his bedroom, stares out the window all day and works on his thoughts. Ged and I sit in a studio and spend the day working on music.

When we were writing songs for *Test For Echo*, we didn't want to throw bits and pieces at Neil. We wanted to present him with fairly completed works. Consequently, for his first listen he heard two or three songs, which wasn't usually what we do. It's usually one after another.

We have really good working relationships. There were days that I didn't go into the studio until well into the afternoon. Normally we'd start at 11 in the morning. I just let Geddy work on his own for a bit, and he would reciprocate by letting me work on guitar stuff on my own. We gave each other a lot of space, and it made us work together much better than we ever have.

GW: Is that how you've managed to work together for so long?

LIFESON: Exactly. You have to be aware that people need space. You have to do that in any kind of relationship.

GW: Alex, most guitarists in power trios tend to go for heavy chords, but your playing is much more linear.

LIFESON: The whole dynamic of the guitar's role in a three-piece is something I'm acutely aware of. I've always had a lot of ground to cover. Because we intentionally downplayed keyboards on this record, it really gave me the space to develop the guitar parts. I wanted to get a lot of size out of the guitar, and not just a heavy, million-amps sound. I wanted to develop the relationship between acoustics and electrics playing the same parts. I wanted the acoustic guitars to be more rhythmic and lock into the hi-hat and ride cymbal and then have the electrics power through that.

GW: Did you use a variety of guitars to keep the tones from being too one-dimensional?

LIFESON: I go into the studio with about 30

guitars, although only a handful of them become my staples. I tried three or four new Les Pauls just before we started recording. I have a Standard that tends to be a little on the light side in terms of sustain and depth, but this new Custom that I just got sounded great. I think it's actually still sustaining. [*laughs*] That became my workhorse. The combination of Les Paul and Tele has been one of my favorites for a long time—getting the clarity of the Tele on top of the thickness of the Les Paul. I have two PRS's and a Strat that I like to use in the studio. I'd pull other things out for small bits here and there.

We've just started rehearsals and I'm starting to realize that it's going to be a little more difficult for me to emulate the acoustic/electric quality that this record has. I just got a few hybrid acoustic/electric Godins and I'm trying out the Roland VG-8. I'm looking forward to messing around with all of that stuff.

GW: It doesn't sound like you used many effects this time.

LIFESON: I basically recorded everything straight into the amps. I wanted to go for a tough sound. It was refreshing for me to do that. I have a long history of being effects-dependent, and it's always been a part of my sound. I think effects can affect your confidence in your playing sometimes.

GW: What was your amp setup?

LIFESON: I used my two 30th Anniversary Marshalls and two older JCM 800s—a 50-watt and a 100-watt. All of my Marshall cabinets have 25-watt Celestions in them. I used a Hiwatt with a Mesa/Boogie preamp, but I didn't rely on it too much. On its own, the Hiwatt was too clean, but I thought it would be useful to have that blended in with the Marshall to have that good, crisp, amp sound. We found that we got better results with the four Marshalls by cleaning up a couple of them. I used my DigiTech 2101 quite a bit, as I did on *Victor*, and it has become a really important part of my overall sound. It seems to knit the amps together into one solid sound. I run that through a Palmer Speaker Simulator, a PDI-05 or a PDI-03.

GW: Geddy, are you still playing the Fender Jazz Bass that you started using on the last record?

LEE: I used it on every track, even though I brought out all my basses. I love the Rickenbacker and my Wals, but where my head is at right now, a Fender works for me. I'm able to get the bottom end and muscular top edge I want out of it. It's not too twangy. It's a different bass sound. I'm also experimenting more with the lower and deeper aspects of the bass. I detuned my E string to D on five or six songs. The Fender is fabulous with that stuff.

This was also the first album where I did not use an amp. I used a combination of various speaker simulators—a Demeter tube D.I., a Palmer speaker simulator and a SansAmp. I would have one track dedicated to D.I. bass and one track dedicated to a combination of speaker simulators, and I'd play with the balances.

GW: Was the SansAmp the source of your distorted tones?

LEE: It was totally grunged-out. I usually use an amp and speakers to do that, but I found that it sounds more finely tuned without an amp. You have to find a technique that suits the engineer you're working with. If you have a professional engineer, you should be able to describe a sound to him and let him try to get it, instead of being too dictatorial about it and taking away his strengths.

Kevin Shirley, who was our engineer on *Counterparts*, had a certain way of doing things. He loved to get an aggressive sound from the amps, so he'd set them so they were almost exploding. He'd ask, "Do you mind if I fiddle with your amp?" and then turn everything up to 14. He got a great, bestial sound for my bass.

GW: Looking back at your work, is there anything that you consider a failure?

LEE: Sure. There's one or two songs on every album. You hope to minimize your failures so they don't spoil an entire album. It's acceptable to have a couple small failures on every project. It's inevitable that over the course of a 20-year career, there will be certain albums that will be considered failures in their totality, but nobody—except perhaps for a real genius—can be at the top of his form all the time.

But for us "pretend geniuses" who are out there trying to keep themselves and their audience entertained, it's a roll of the dice. We're just trying to better ourselves and our music. Unfortunately, the path to that goal is often a crooked line. Sometimes you become caught up in the more unusual aspects of songwriting. The result of that is maybe what you've done is not as accessible as something else you've done. It happens.

GW: Rush releases a new album every couple of years. What keeps you working so hard?

LIFESON: We love it. We love being together, and we love each other. It sounds corny, but it's true. We really enjoy what we do. Whatever else is going on doesn't matter to us. We've been fortunate in that we've been able to do what we wanted to do and what we felt was right for us. We've had an audience that has grown with us and expects that from us. Our audience knows that we're writing for ourselves and nobody else, and they respect us for that. We're not trying to compromise ourselves by trying to write songs to reach a new audience. We just do what we do. We're not concerned with trying to be cool or hip. We've managed to stay outside of that and maintain a fan base that allows us to keep going. It is unique. I can't think of many bands that have had the same lineup for 22 years.

GW: What is the glue that has kept Rush together for more than two decades?

LEE: There's a chemistry between the three of us personality-wise that is very positive. Whenever we sit down to do any band-related things, there's a natural sense of humor and spirit that takes over. Everybody has their complaints and things that they don't like about being "married" to two other guys in a musical situation. But whatever grumbles or gripes we might have had individually, when we get together that seems secondary and the jokes start flying and that camaraderie takes over. We work well together. Ultimately, we have a high level of respect for each other's professional capabilities.

LIFESON: We love writing music together. We laugh a lot together. When we work, we like to be secluded. We go away to a studio in the country and take the weekends off to go home. We're around each other all the time—having dinner, sitting around in the evening when we've finished working—and all we do is goof around and laugh. We've always done that. It's made us want to be together. In fact, we look forward to it.

GW: Do either of you have any closet musical tastes that aren't evident from your work with Rush?

LEE: Yes. I have a great desire to write like [classical composer] Montovani. [*laughs*] Some people say that I already do. There's a side of me that likes angry, aggressive music and there's another side of me that likes soft, beautiful music. I think that explains the conflicting influences that exist within the Rush sound. Maybe those are the influences that fuck our music up! [*laughs*] Some days I think like a bass player and I want to play bass player's music. Other days I think like a vocalist, and I want to write beautiful melodies to sing. It's always a bit of a battle between those two forces.

GW: Alex, what Rush songs are you the proudest of?

LIFESON: There are points where I think I've gotten magical guitar sounds. The solo in "Limelight" really stands out to me—the fluidity of that sound and the style of that solo.

It really touches me inside.

GW: Your guitar tone has changed quite a bit from the early days.

LIFESON: There was a certain element of restraint in my early sound. I think that has to do with the fact that I was using a Gibson ES-335, which was my main guitar then. Then I moved on to the ES-355, which was essentially the same thing. That became Rush's guitar sound.

A friend of mine said that one thing he liked about my old guitar sound was that it had that pinched quality. You could hear the fingers hitting the fretboard, and you got a sense of the hand more than the amp. After he said that, it became clear to me that that was part of my individual approach to my sound. Certainly with this record I got a lot more sustain than back then.

GW: Is there any one song that you think sums up what Rush is about?

LIFESON: "Tom Sawyer" is the one song that is most associated with Rush. It has all those elements—Neil's style, Ged's trademark voice and the guitars are very me. So many people relate to it. But so many of our songs give hints as to what we're about.

GW: What would you like the band to achieve that it hasn't yet?

LIFESON: We've done so much. For me it's more of a personal thing—what I can achieve on a personal level. We work hard on all of the aspects of the band, so it looks after itself. But we try to push ourselves in other areas, and it all helps the whole. We're always striving to go forward. ●

ALEX LIFESON

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come out at that time, but I think I used a Roland JC-120 for the chorus sound here. That was the first of many "chorus" albums.

"THE SPIRIT OF RADIO"

Permanent Waves (Mercury, 1979)

THERE WAS A radio station here in Toronto, which is an alternative station now, and that was that station's catch phrase. That song was about the freedom of music and how commercialized radio was becoming. FM radio in the late Sixties and early Seventies was a bastion of free music, and you got to hear a lot of things that you wouldn't have heard otherwise. It was much like MTV was in the beginning, before it became another big network that feeds a large but very specific segment of the viewing audience. Radio has become a lot more commercialized since then. The station that we wrote that song about won't play our music. As a matter of fact, they played the hell out of the Catherine Wheel's version of that song, but they wouldn't dare play our version.

By then I was using mainly a Strat that I had modified by putting a humbucker in the bridge position. I also played a 355, which I used in the studio for the next couple of records. My amps were Hiwatts, the Marshall, the Twin and a Sixties Bassman head and cabinet. The flanger on that song was an Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress, which I still have. I used the Boss Chorus Ensemble, and I had graduated to the Roland Space Echo, which replaced my Echoplex.

"LIMELIGHT"

Moving Pictures (Mercury, 1980)

"LIMELIGHT" IS ABOUT being under the microscopic scrutiny of the public, the need for privacy and the importance of it—and trying to separate the two and not always being successful at it. Because we've never been a high-profile band, we've managed to retain a lot of our privacy, but we've had to work at it. Neil's very militant about his privacy.

My guitar was a different modified Strat with a heavier and denser body. We set up a couple of amps outside of the studio as well as inside, so we got a nice long repeat with the echoing in the mountains. I tried to make that solo sound as fluid as possible. I bent

most of the notes, and the guitar was processed with lots of long delay repeats and reverb, so notes falling off would overlap with notes coming up. I spent a fair amount of time on that to get the character, but once we locked in on the sound, it came easily.

"NEW WORLD MAN"
Signals (Mercury, 1982)

MOST OF *SIGNALS* was completed, but we wanted to add one more song. Neil had been fooling around with the lyrics, so we wrote and recorded "New World Man" in the studio in one day. It has a very direct feel. Doing that in one day was a lot of fun. The pressure was on but the pressure was off at the same time.

It was almost compulsory to do solos at that time, but I didn't want to feel that every song had to have that kind of structure. I wanted to get away from that, and to this day I feel that way. I enjoy playing solos and feel that my soloing is quite unique, but I'm bored with that structure.

For that song, I played a Tele through the Hiwatts with a little bit of reverb and chorus.

"THE BIG MONEY"
Power Windows (Mercury, 1985)

THAT WAS A tough one that took a long time to complete. It was recorded in Montserrat. The guitar was tuned up a whole step with the E string at F#, and I played a lot of open chords. I did a lot of drop-ins where I hit a chord and let it ring, then dropped in the next chord and let it ring, and so on. When we started recording the song it sounded too ordinary, so we tried dropping in those chords during the verses as an experiment.

I remember doing the solo in this studio in England, SARM East, which is in the east end of London. We set aside a week for solos, last-minute vocals and mixing. The control room was tiny. There was barely enough room for me to turn my body around when I was playing. But I got a really great sound with the repeats and lots of reverb. I loved to be soaked in that kind of effect at the time.

I used a white modified Fender Strat that I called the Hentor Sportscaster. The name came from Peter Henderson, who co-produced *Grace Under Pressure*. The amp setup was a couple of Dean Markley 2x12 combos, two Marshall 2x12 combos, two Marshall 100-watt JCM 800 heads and two 4x12 cabinets. I also ran a direct signal. By that time I had a pretty comprehensive rack with two t.c. electronic 2290's, a 1210 that I used for phasing and a Roland DEP-5.

"TIME STAND STILL"
Hold Your Fire (Mercury, 1987)

WE WERE IN a bit of a reflective period at that time. Everything seemed to be moving by very quickly. Aimee Mann came up and did vocals in the chorus of that song. It was a lot of fun to work with her, although she was very nervous. We weren't necessarily playing the kind of music that she was into or listening to, but she liked the band. We made her feel relaxed very quickly and turned the whole session into a fun thing.

That was the year that I got the Signature guitars with single-coil active pickups. It's very apparent on this song. The guitar has a clear, metallic sound that really sings. I got into that bright tone, and my sound was still very chorusy. I had gotten rid of all my Hiwatts and the Dean Markleys and was using primarily Marshalls again—2x12 combos as well as the JCM 800.

"SHOW DON'T TELL"
Presto (Atlantic, 1989)

WE'D TAKEN A seven-month break, which at that time was our longest hiatus. We needed to clear the cobwebs and get away. We came into *Presto* feeling a lot more enthusiastic about working. The change to Atlantic Records was good because we felt like we needed a change all around. We were going into the Nineties, and it made everything fresher. We needed to do some spring cleaning.

Oddly enough, I had been working on the basic ideas of that song at home and brought it to the studio when we started writing the record. We developed it from there. It was much heavier in the early version. The tempo had come up a little bit. We were working with producer Rupert Hine, and his approach to the guitar sound was a little lighter than I wanted. That was partly my fault, because I was still using the Signature a lot, which didn't lend itself to a very thick sound. The amp lineup stayed the same as before, and effects would come and go. I was fiddling around with whatever was new at the time, as I've always done.

"STICK IT OUT"
Counterparts (1993, Atlantic)

MY GUITAR PARTS on that song were recorded with a Peavey 5150, a 100-watt Marshall JCM 800 and a JC-120, which I used for some clean things. The guitar was a '72 Les Paul Standard that I played on certain songs in the past. I used a dropped-D tuning and ran the guitar straight into the amp with no effects.

We had gone back to working with Peter Collins, who produced *Hold Your Fire* and used a much more direct approach to recording. We were moving back towards the essence of what Rush was about as a three-piece. In retrospect, *Counterparts* didn't work as well as we'd hoped, but it led us in the right direction. We're much more satisfied with *Test For Echo*, which we view as a progression from *Presto*.

"TEST FOR ECHO"
Test For Echo (1996, Atlantic)

THERE'S A LOT of different stuff on there. I tuned the entire guitar down a whole step to a D standard tuning. I got a new Les Paul Custom with beautiful sustain, a heavy tone and a compact-but-not-small sound. In the choruses I used a Godin Acousti-Caster, which has a really interesting sound that is almost acoustic but definitely electric at the same time. I used primarily Marshalls: 50-watt and 100-watt JCM 800 heads and two 30th Anniversary models, with four cabinets—two vintage 4x12's and two new 1950 cabinets with Celestion 25-watt speakers. I used a DigiTech 2101 to knit everything together. The important thing with that is to use it through a good speaker simulator, like the Palmer. The compensated outputs on the 2101 don't quite do it for me, but through the Palmer it has nice body and width.

I feel like we've arrived with this record.

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ALEX LIFESON

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There's a particular feel that I don't think we've had before. There's a nice groove and a lot of really good Rush songs. We were all really together on this album, and although we strive for that all the time, it's not always achievable. The mood was so good in the studio, and we were so unified in direction. ●

NEIL PEART

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chubby, boorish salesmen in 12-piece suits guffawed into their pints of lager. After the second set, I blush to admit that I packed up and left—the only job I've ever walked out on. Unprofessional, I know, but I just couldn't stand it.

When at last I joined up with Geddy and Alex in the summer of 1974, I found that we shared that same "feeling" about music, that it was somehow *exalted* above all. We more or less made a pledge to do it the honest, straightforward way, believing that if we played music *we* really liked, other people might like it too. We were young and idealistic, and didn't know any better.

When we hit the big-time American circuit, we saw how calculating some bands were about being "commercial," crassly playing the rock-star role and cynically "playing down" to their audiences. Selling anything they could to be popular, these were not *musicians* as I understood the vocation: They were politicians and businessmen (without the 12-piece suits).

Among the three of us, we used to call it "the Sickness"—it seemed so dishonest, so corrupt, so *wrong* to sell our beloved Music so cheaply. We also saw "the Sickness" take a few victims, those who were not strong enough to stand apart from "the role" and lost themselves inside it, one way or another.

But if I was at all sanctimonious or judgmental about this principle back then, I'm not anymore—I realize that everything has its price, and everybody pays it, one way or another.

In any case, when Rush's first three records "failed to move enough units of product in the U.S. market" (that's the way people used to *talk* to us!), the suits began to put a little pressure on us to shape up and get with the program. We were urged to write some songs with "hooks."

"What for?" we asked. "We don't want to catch *fish!*"

Yes, in the face of this pressure, we made dumb jokes. Then, however, we rebelled and hammered all that angry defiance into a record called *2112*. This one finally seemed to *reach* people, perhaps because it was so strongly *felt*, and *2112* became successful enough to get the suits off our backs.

Now we were free...

...to *work* ourselves to death. Existence became an endless series of one-nighters and all-night bus rides punctuated by brief, desperate marathons in the studio. Oh, it wasn't all *that* bad, of course, but again, everything has its price. When you're ill, or tired, or broken-hearted, giving that "everything" night after night can be a soul-destroying ordeal, and so it sometimes was.

However, we did it, and along the way we grew up. Songs about science fiction and fantasy became songs about *this* world and the people in it, and instrumental meanderings developed into more concise (if no less baroque) arrangements. Changes were taking place around us, and we didn't resist them—always fooling with new gadgets and new styles, trying nearly everything that wandered by. Whatever *didn't* work for us was burned away, while the essence was refined in the crucible of future work.

And all this time, the people in our audience were growing up, too, and they also had to respond to the changes in the world around them—one way or another. Because Rush's music remained a true reflection of *us* and our lives, we were sometimes able to remain *relevant* to these people and play on in "the

soundtrack of their lives." This is a beautiful thing.

Along the way, other listeners discovered us for the first time and established their own relationship with the music and its place in *their* time. This, too, is a beautiful thing.

So, is this any kind of answer to why Rush has endured so long?

Perhaps.

If you ask me, I think we've just been damned lucky. ●

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guys a lot, and it was all good.

GW: That doesn't seem too surprising, though, because Pharcyde has always struck me as having kind of an acid rock mentality, and it's easy to hear a connection between your sound and Cypress Hill's. So it kind of makes sense.

HEXUM: Yeah, it does. Like SA's rap on the song "Down"—"Have you ever made out in"—is a little bit similar to Bootie Brown of Pharcyde's style.

Some of the elements of our music are hardcore hip-hop, but we do come more from the garage band stance. I think the big difference is, when you're in a garage band, you

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DROPPING MAD KNOWLEDGE

A glossary of hip-hop and hip-hop related terms and artists.

ACID JAZZ: A mixture of funk, jazz and hip-hop as practiced by acts like Brand New Heavies and the James Taylor Quartet. Typically, acid jazz will apply drum loops, samples and turntable scratching to arrangements reminiscent of either CTI-style fusion bands or Seventies soul acts.

THE BOMB: The dope shit; something incredibly cool. From the 1976 Parliament hit, "Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof Off the Sucker)," specifically the line, "P-Funk. Uncut funk. The bomb."

BREAK BEATS: A hot rhythm section passage on a recording. In the early days of rap, DJs would extend the groove of a popular record by finding a break beat, and repeat it by cutting between two turntables. The DJs would then rap over the breaks. With the advent of digital sampling, break beats were looped, and then manipulated digitally.

CHEMICAL BROTHERS: English trip-hop duo responsible for the 1995 album *Exit Planet Dust.* (Astralwerks).

DANCEHALL: A Jamaican pop style using chanted, sing-song vocals over backing tracks built on synthesized bass and drum machine. Dancehall is to reggae as rap is to funk.

DRUM-N-BASS: A fusion of techno and dub, this predominantly English style is built around sped-up break beats (often as fast as 140 bpm), atmospheric keyboards and subsonic bass effects. Also known as Jungle.

DUB: Originally an offshoot of reggae, in which the backing track from a popular recording was stripped down to its basics; typically, the bass would be heavily boosted as other tracks dropped in and out, often with heavy use of echo. Nowadays, "dub" is applied to any dance music receiving that kind of studio treatment.