## BY PAUL ROGERS



A surrough back our England I merelitor as an of the content with a surrough back of the Child Back of Child Back

Fast broad 25 years. In sitting in the searing Butteris C. Ordice of Warmer Bottern Machine 1 and learning resident Parts 1 fest organis states about in the years just 16th owned. Search Search 1 and 1 From the moment opener (and first engile) Tor Cy. This the species, Soletie & Amore is the sound of a band self-children (best and selfenying doing!—profession that the control is not called in communal obligation like some vettern shot if effort, for it is come enhanced children in the come of the control in the control in designation and control in the control in the control in a the shart devices and circuming, pulls bean lines, great enabling if great at the shart devices and circuming, pulls bean lines, great enabling if great and by code—fort or is a precisually shart service for every great and the control in th

bluery trouthes, lots of acoustic guitar, and a willingness to take chances. It's a cliché, but Snakes & Arrow's is truly a return to form.

\*\*Imiting Control

Times aust making some channing for a Classer saids, and I had a couple of

stakes I was just about to put on the grill," Says ammently down-to-earth. Buth guitard And Librorus speaking from this Forusto have his control home. How one procomment transly gainst the popular picture of the cock star filestyle, but then. Ruth was never a fixed bord. While this might be the like link you'd attach to from their single-middle devotion to being that to themselves has more in common with the original "fluxly you" punk offices than the staffy prop ladd from you long beam punk with.

Despite some decidadly dodgy costume choices in the 1970s, and song tities live "By-Tor Ajnd The Smou Dlag." this is not Spinal Tap.

"On, back when we were 23 or 24 years old in a buring band, seeing the world for the first time—yeath, of course we had great times and great parter. "Ulesconceals." We were young and see once you say of your good and you are supported."





as a war away every poor to the make and an allow the ring it maint about the rook in plates, the -1 was about being a good part, a being seat maskage and working hard. We all had families when we were young as we were brough do not be eath and like how a less has been hay firmly plateful throughout our career. Indeed with all of Auth is three plate decades of success, why make an adout at all fings for the steep love of it—they hardly pred the money of the acclumations. The Bossumer's is a fault. If Manne enters, while it has the acclumations.

the acclaim after at ... "Bocause it's a lot of fur." Lifeson retors. "We've been doing it for 33, 34 years, and furth what we do. That's our job and we be oblige. It hist or pre-fur making this moored shart a commember." You've probably guessed by now that Rush's songurising an 1 sevind by days-long drug binges or Jack Dameb-scaled rights in strip cube. Fair from it.

"Godby (Lee), Rush bassist Vocalist) and L., yal know we only live a few minutes from each other, and we see each other other. We gay terms together and use go out for other and at all lies that Willie good himsel, with the should our forwhard and overhead smach, and how the Bordeaux (winted) are doing, and should use drink a Rhone (une) bright, and how's your prostate? and those sort of things.

bility a lot of accusic staff shome and one-sing out a lot of the accusic playing that were coming through born. We just decided that we enough shares that withing—I guide it, was mid-March of set year—and that we enough keep it very occusil and simple and not staff up the module. If the Plant is dummerly holding had any lytics, mig-bet nough send them by and we a resist for that the or an train a day (Minn feel area in Pro-Combing Feel and resident and dur Trace feel and are from a certain poly feel and feel and feel and feel and area of a extraction of the advantage of the analysis of the advantage of a resident feel and suitable temporary and protection of the other and the advantage of the analysis of the analysis of the other and the advantage of the analysis of the analysis of the advantage of the analysis of the analysis of the analysis of the advantage of the analysis of the analysis of the analysis of the analysis of the advantage of the advanta

Rush's long cases, and Lifeson concurs, though with characteristic mode stip. These is an energy on the record. I think a lot had to do with having the time of going into the studio working the way the worked—a slow saveling of excitement about the material set was developing. And then when Nick cares in the just brought sound have soon of challenging in terms of performance that we rose to the occasion and I will be a life or the second or the consistency.

"There was no series of femilion or stress—it was just good, hard work with very, very happy results. When I hear this record, hear our whole history... and it's not just because Far Oy' has that F-sharp chord from "Himispheres" Lifeson laughs. "That's the way I hear it, and it's in a hear.

Lifeson credits the Grammy-winning Raskulinecz (Foo Fighters, Velvet

Revolver, etc.), who co-produced Stakes & Armus with the hand with contributing to the disc's "classic Rush" echoes-despite, at 36-years old. being from Iteraty a different generation.

"I think it just come naturally on our part, but yo' know. Nick is a fee, and so's Rich Chycki who engineered the record, so they had this whole areada-they wanted everything to be bold and majertic, and the way they remembered certain [Rush] songs from certain albums from certain eras and I think they were probably instrumental in forming that moid."

In fact, Lifeson can't say enough about Raskulinecz's contribution to the band's creativity. "First of all the guy is brilliant, he's really an excellent engineer in every respect. He's a big, joylal, extroverted kind of guy, who brings such a great, positive energy to the environment. . We've worked with a lot of people over the years and it's not easy producing a Rush record because we know what we want and, for the most part we're going to do whatever we want to do! So it's refreshing to have somebody who's a little vouncer, who has a different approach, who's worked with a lot of kinds of bands, who's had his own success so he's not intimidated and who ket wants the best of even thing."

-tm0/mile

Lifeson's adament that Rush had no idea they'd enjoy such longevity when they started out at the end of the 1960s.

"When Nell joined the band in 1974, we'd already done six years in a local thing around the bars and clubs. It was certainly not a long-term plan: I remember thinking that if we could get five years and make five records and four that that would be really a good lifespan for a rock band."

So everything's kind of a bonus for Rush these days, and there's no pressure for them to write hits on conform to fashion-meaning they can eniov the recording process more than ever. The biggest surprise to Liferon is that they're doing it all.

"So many years later and with these aching bodies, we can still do it.

these aching bodies, we can still do

it, and we can still find it within

ourselves to be so excited about

working with each other!"

and we can still find it within oursales to be so earlied should working with each other! It was great watching Neil play. I'd oo in the room for a few moments--i. mean it was so loud when he was playing in there-but it was so expling at the same time to watch one of the greatest drummers in the world playing drums to a song that you wrote?

That sense of fun and excitement is particularly evident in tracks like the guirky instrumental "Malignant Narcissism" and Lifeson's one-take solo acoustic intertude "Hope." They simply couldn't haven taken chances like these early in their career.

"Probably not," agrees Lifeson, "You know, you're so busy trying to be cool and being right... It was really a treat to do [Malignant Narcissism]. because we seldom do that. We're very stuck in our ways, and even when we're playing live, if we have an improvisational part of a song, we only improvise once, and then it becomes the new part!"

Some of Shakes & Arrows' bluesy, somewhat simpler sense of songcraft is a spill-over from Rush's 2004 album of classic garage rock cover tunes, Feedback

"Yeah, [Feedback] was really a lot of fun to make... that whole process was quite quick and we did a lot of it off the floor, playing together, which we really enjoyed. So we did a little bit of that with this record. The whole blues thing, I mean that's a part of who I am, and that's the kind of stuff I loved to play when I was younger, and it makes for a nice bit of variety."

The extensive use of acoustic guitars on Snakes & Arrows is down to Lifeson's growing appreciation of composing songs on that instrument: "I wrote all the stuff on acoustic," he explains. "I made a conscious effort to write on acoustic, I really wanted to do that. I thought that it is much clearer to me if something is working or not. I met David Gilmore when he played here in Toronto... and we had a really nice conversation about a lot of things, but one of the things we talked about was how useful writing on an acoustic guitar is. You know immediately if things are working musically. It's very easy to disguise a part with a sound-you know, with

delays or chang-but maybe it's not expressing the real essence of what the music is. And on an accustic it does that. So when it came to recording (Snakes & Arrows) many of the accustic parts became so integral to the ways the songs were developed that I maily wanted to keep them in there

"Geddy was really on my case about doing an accustic piece on the record...I didn't rehearse ("Hope"); I didn't write it: I just went in ... everyone liked it, we mixed it on the spot and that's what you hear. And that's kinds nice that it's so ours in that sense.

"I keep saving fun, fun, fun, fun, fun-but the record really was just a wonderful loy and maybe it's more so because [2002's] Vapor Traits was so difficult, it was such an emotionally difficult time for us and that record took 14 months to make and in the end their were some disappointments about that record for us... For me it's mally a sonic issuer it was mastered much too hot; it's too loud and it eats away at us and we want to address that-and maybe for no other reason than it would just make us sleep peacefully at night. But [Vapor Traits] was really important to us and there's a lot of passion and there's a lot of feel and emotion on it. This record was the opposite; this was freedom and just go and play."

It's also noticeable that, in recent years. Godity I se has temporary his extreme, love-it-or-hate-it helium-high voice that made Rush's early work instantly mononizable

"Well, it's maturing," multi Lifeson, "I think he's more of a singer than a screamer, which is really what he was back then. I don't think you can expect to sing like that for close to 20 years-it's very hard."

So how does Lee tackle the vocal demands of Rush's back-cataloque in their live set?

"He does the best that he can, it's important to him to try to get as close as he can to what those songs were, but it's not always easy at this age and especially during a three-hour show. So we have to be careful about how we select those songs and how we treat them."

So how do Rush-now in their mid-50s and with a four-and-a-half-"So many years later and with

month world tour beginning in Atlanta in June-view life on the road today?

"Well, I think you'd have a few different comments on that question," Lifeson laughs, with his signature, good-natured frankness, "Neil doesn't enjoy touring particularly and be would rather not, given the choice, but he understands that

it's important to support the records and we are essentially a live bandthat's our strength I think.

"For me, I really enjoy it-I love getting up on stage and playing. Touring itself, the process of touring, I'm a little over it after so many years. I love being with my family-I have a grandson and another coming this summer. I have a very, very great relationship with him and I'm going to really miss him a lot on this tour-and I lost that with my own kids. But we realize that it's important to support the material and the record and, look, Rush fans are unlike any other fans and it's important to them that we tour; we play, and everybody has a great time."

But backstage life is not the party it once was for Rush-by choice. "It's like a library, but quieter!" Lifeson says, only half-joking. "We don't allow anybody in the dressing room, we don't have guests...we like to keep the dressing room quiet before a show. Neil kind of has his own space now, so it's very quiet in his part of the world. We've not laptons. we're answering e-mails, and we do a little bit of yoga and stretching and then, after the show, we keep the room closed for at least twenty minutes or so and Ged and I have a chance to just decompress. We have a glass of wine and a bite to eat... It's really not a party scene and hasn't been in a very long time."

Their band may be called Rush, but Lifeson, Lee and Peart were never in the "live fast, die young" camp. And an album of Snakes & Arrows' qualby should make us all grateful that they paced themselves. •

RUSH