

Rush' could use worthless lyrics

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News Reporter

an interesting Canadian rock and roll band, has, in the course of a year, a tremendous following in this country.

the midwestern rock ethos being what it is, come as no surprise to a concert at the Silver Saloon Tuesday night. The band played out with ease days

last year's concert at the Silver Saloon (now the Silver Saloon) and three respectable

hard rock albums to their credit, Rush now seem to be in their prime. Their powerhouse performance Tuesday night certainly attested to that fact. But the show also revealed a few weaknesses in the band's current direction — weaknesses that must be resolved before any further growth can take place in the band.

First things first: their lyrics. One of the highlights from their first (and best) album was its very anonymity. Sight unseen by the average record buyer, Rush was just another strong

rock and roll band. Lead guitarist Alex Lifeson had a powerful style. Vocalist Geddy Lee had the most unusual vocal grate this side of the Atlantic. Noddy Holder and he managed to play credible bass as well. And nobody really heard from, or cared about, the band's drummer.

In the typical semi-literate style employed by most of the better rock and roll bands, Rush's lyrics were pure throw-away. Which was fine.

Then came the change.

When drummer John Rutsey

departed, fellow Canadian Neil Peart took over the job. Only one problem resulted, however — Peart, Rush would have us believe is a poet.

So, instead of the pedestrian "Blah, Blah, I love ya baby," lyrics that we have all come to know and love, Rush resurfaced with such titles as "At the Gates of Hades," "Rivendell," "The Necromancer," "Didacts and Narpets" and "Bacchus Plateau."

Who needs this?

Luckily, in concert Rush plays at such a volume that most of those pretentious lyrics are obscured anyway. Unfortunately, one aspect of their performance — and in fact, one regrettable factor in the whole of their newest "Caress of Steel" album — cannot be hidden. Several of the tunes performed Tuesday (all new

ones, incidentally) dragged and plodded semi-melodically while vocalist Lee tried to keep up, screaming lyrics like: "Panacea— passion pure/I can't resist your gentle lure/My heart will lie beside you/And my wandering body grieves."

What it all means is that Rush seem to be composing accompanying music to drummer Peart's pre-written lyrical "poetry." The end result, of course, is an unevenness that eventually could mean the proverbial kiss of death for Rush — unless they straighten up and realize the glories of writing worthless lyrics.

But all this can't change the fact that within themselves the members of Rush form an exceptionally tight band. Guitarist Lifeson's huge Marshall amplifiers have to be heard live to be appreciated, and, even to

those who find the band less than desirable, bassist Lee's voice sounded unusually strong in the live context.

In essence, all Rush needs is to drop the pretense and continue their rock and rolling. Perhaps they might do well to follow the course of Nazareth, the British group that occasionally covers other artists' work — songs by Joni Mitchell, Nils Lofgren, Bob Dylan and Leon Russell — and manage to make them sound exclusively their own.

But as a performing unit, Rush seems to be stronger than ever. Their performance Tuesday night drew a tremendous reaction from the capacity crowd in the Silver Dollar.



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