

SONG HITS

MAGAZINE

CDC 00043

AUGUST 1981 \$1.25

CHARLTON

PUBLICATIONS

WORDS
TO OVER
80 HIT
SONGS

RUSH

QUINCY
JONES

MAC
DAVIS

PHIL
COLLINS



POP THIS LITTLE GIRL • FIND YOUR WAY BACK • YOU MAKE MY DREAMS • JESSIE'S GIRL • AMERICA • SINCE I DON'T HAVE YOU • TIME • BETTE DAVIS EYES

SOUL 'SCUSE ME WHILE I FALL IN LOVE • IF YOU LOVE • JONES VS. JONES • WINNING • LADY'S WILD • NEXT TIME YOU'LL KNOW • BAD COMPANY • DOUBLE DUTCH BUS

COUNTRY A MILLION OLD GOODBYES • I WANT YOU TONIGHT • LOVE DIES HARD • SURROUND ME WITH LOVE • BY NOW • THE MATADOR

RUSH

POP STAR OF THE MONTH

by Neil Peart

... *Dateline: New York City, May 9, 1980*

In the midst of a crowded and chaotic backstage scene, following the second of our four nights at the Palladium, a few quiet words of agreement became the unlikely conception of this album. Prior to this, it had been our announced intention to record and release a second live album, but an unlooked-for charge of ambition and enthusiasm caused a last-minute resolution to throw caution out the window (onto 52nd Street), and dive headlong into the making of a studio elpee instead. The reasons for this are difficult to put to paper, being somewhat instinctive, but all of us had been feeling very positive, and our Research and Development Department had been very spirited and interesting, so it was felt that the creative hiatus provided by a live album was not really necessary at present, and it would be more timely and more satisfying to embark on the adventure of a new studio album. Right!

... *Dateline: London, June 4, 1980*

It is never too late to change plans, but not so with arrangements! Thus we went ahead with the live tapings we had planned, recording our five shows at the Hammersmith Odeon, as well as dates from Glasgow, Manchester, and Newcastle. Then we would record some shows in this upcoming tour, and put together a live set that would represent a wider scope of our concerts, musically, temporally, and geographically. This is no bad thing, and should prove to be a good move, unless we change our minds again, in which case we could combine three tours, or four, or...

... *Dateline: Toronto, July 28, 1980*

An intense thunderstorm

raged outside all day long, while indoors a storm of a different kind was brewing. In the studios of Phase One, two complete sets of equipment crammed the room, and two complete bands filled the air with a Wagnerian tumult, as Max Webster and ourselves united to record a song for their album, called "Battlescar." This could only be a very unique and enjoyable experience, attempting something on such a scale as this, and I think the result will testify to its success. This day also afforded Pye Dubois (Max's lyricist) the opportunity to present us with a song of his, humbly suggesting that it might be suitable for us, if we were interested. Having been long-time admirers of Pye's work, we were indeed interested, and it eventually became "Tom Sawyer", and it is interesting that an identifiable Max influence crept into the music, by way of Pye's lyrical input.

... *Dateline: Stony Lake, Ontario, August, 1980*

The address and time of year will probably best describe the setting, as the creative work begins in earnest. For those interested in Alex's adventures in aviation, it may be reported that a large pile of wreckage, and a rather sizeable hole in the top of a truck, bear witness to his prowess in the field of radio-controlled airplanes. Happily, he was somewhat more fortunate in his dealings with the genuine article, and he could be seen buzzing and strafing the house.

These exciting distractions aside, we were banished to the barn, and began the process of assembling ideas, both musical and lyrical. "The Camera Eye" was the first to be written, soon followed by "Tom Sawyer", "Red Barchetta", "YYZ" and "Lime-light". Things were taking shape.

It is interesting sometimes to

retrace the sources of some of the musical ideas; for instance, the instrumental section of "Tom Sawyer" grew from a little melody that Geddy had been using to set up his synthesizers at sound checks, then was forgotten until we were searching for a part in that song, when it emerged as a very strong theme. "YYZ" is the identity code used by Toronto International Airport, and the intro is taken from the Morse code which is sent out by the beacon there. It is always a happy day when YYZ appears on our luggage tags!

On the other end of those tags, though, it becomes increasingly apparent to us just how valuable touring is, primarily in our development as individual musicians, which in turn directs the progression of our music. Sometimes in the dark days of a mid-tour depression, brought on by fatigue, homesickness, and hence frustration, the stresses of touring would seem to outweigh the benefits, but when we reach the 'Final Exams' of writing and recording, the evidence of change and improvement is very rewarding.

... *Dateline: Toronto, August 31, 1980*

We return to Phase One, together with our long-suffering old standby, Terry Brown (Broom), our co-producer and Chief Objective Ear, fouling the air with "Gitanes", and offering criticisms and suggestions where necessary. We put together some rough demos of the aforementioned five songs, as well as a rough (to say the least), and riotous (to say the most), version of "Witch Hunt". This was the winner of the most re-written song award, being very difficult to get a handle on, but our intention had always been to use it as the 'production number' of the al-

bum, in the tradition of such pieces as "Different Strings", "Madrigal" and "Tears". This frees us from our usual practice of writing as we would play live, maintaining the discipline of a three-piece band. It would serve as a sort of vehicle for experimentation and indulgence. For instance, we would be using Hugh Syme's talents on the keyboards, and my entire drum part was recorded twice (as two drummers) in one verse, while in another, a percussion section was created by recording each



Geddy Lee

sound differently. The introduction was a very strange endeavor, as we assembled a 'Vigilante Choir' out in the snow, and the sound of the 'haunted child' at the beginning. Although the main thrust of our work has always been directed towards its live presentation, it is nice to take a small dose of studio indulgence! ... *Dateline: Portland, Maine, October 1, 1980*

It was here that we concluded a short tour, mainly the eastern seaboard of the United States, in which we rehearsed the five completed songs whenever possible, and introduced "Tom Sawyer" and "Limelight" into our shows, although both would undergo some changes before being committed to tape.

... *Dateline: Morin Heights, Quebec, October through December, 1980*

Once again we returned to the beautiful Laurentian Mountains, and to the amiable ambience of Le Studio. We had been very much looking forward to our return here, and were not disappointed, it proving to be every bit as great as our memories. A very friendly place.

We were soon made painfully aware (literally) of the ambitious nature of our project, as we had to work long and hard to capture the right sounds and performances for each track. The only exception to this, for no apparent reason, was "Red Barchetta". With only a few runs to get the sounds together, it was to be that rarest of all animals (for ourselves, anyway!), a one-take wonder. No one could have been more surprised than we, especially after the relentless grinding it had taken to capture "Tom Sawyer," "Limelight" and "YYZ". (Are you sure, Broon?)

We had purposefully left one song still unwritten, with a view to writing it directly in the studio, as we have had such good results from this previously. Songs such as "Natural Science" and "The Twilight Zone" have benefitted from the pressure and spontaneity of this situation, although then it happened by force of circumstances, where now our planning includes a space for 'no-plan'.

"Vital Signs" was the ultimate result, eclectic in the extreme, it embraces a wide variety of stylis-



Neil Peart

tic influences, ranging from the sixties to the present. Lyrically it derives from my response to the terminology of 'Technospeak', the language of electronics and computers, which often seems to parallel the human machine, in the functions and interrelationships they employ. It is interesting, if irrelevant, to speculate as to whether we impose our nature on the machines that we build, or whether they are merely governed by the same inscrutable laws of Nature as we. (Perhaps Murphy's Laws?) Never mind!

ANYWAY!! The tracks were eventually finished, albeit a few days behind schedule, when the mixing and the disasters began. In a massive electronic freak-out revolution, the digital mastering machine, the mixdown computer, and one of the multi-track machines, gave up their collective ghosts one after the other, driving poor Broon to distraction, and setting us two weeks behind in the end. After much technical tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth, the machine maladies were finally put right, and Geddy returned to perch on Broon's shoulder, and the Skiers of the Woods were seen no more on the Wilderness Trails.

As with anything that drags on too long, we were glad to finally finish, but even more glad to hear what it was we had finished! It is



Alex Lifeson

a curious sensation, when listening back to a completed album (*Moving Pictures*) for the first time, how quickly all those months and all of those difficulties go racing by. How can a mere forty minutes of music contain and express all of the thoughts, feelings, and energy that goes into it?

Then suddenly you're listening without analyzing, transformed from the performer to the audience, feeling the responses that you hope the listener at home will feel.

Perhaps it is true that in a synergistic way the output does add up to all of that input, perhaps it is all in there for the discerning listener to experience, maybe Time travels backward at the speed of light, maybe Alex Lifeson is 'Gub', maybe...

Why are you asking me all these questions?