

RUSH: *Presto*

(Atlantic) † † †

Rush is *the* archetypal progressive rock/metal band, a legend that a horde of adventurous new bands must be measured against. They cast the mold. Bend it, if you will, but Rush has long been the method that is greater than the madness of odd and sensational musical ideas. They were an entity that needed a couple of real

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Edited by Janiss Garza



root and metal records to completely create their own identity, but by then it was a moot point and a new musical arena was created, attracting the heartiest musical students, adventurous metalheads, as well as the casual listener who may have been captured by a single song on the radio.

Once established, they roared above the commercial battles and have provided some of the most identifiable and original music the rock and metal worlds have ever heard. As a three-piece that has always been able to cover any song on record without compromise live, Rush has lived up to the highest of musical standards. Their

newest album, *Presto*, is a welcome change, and also another page in a very colorful book.

The modus operandi for this Canadian power trio has been a series of releases within a similar framework, a live effort to document that segment, and then an exploratory venture into new sonic lands. *Presto* presents Geddy, Alex and Neil in a more basic musical environment. The emphasis is on the three original instruments—guitar, bass and drums—with keyboards sprinkled tastefully over the backdrop.

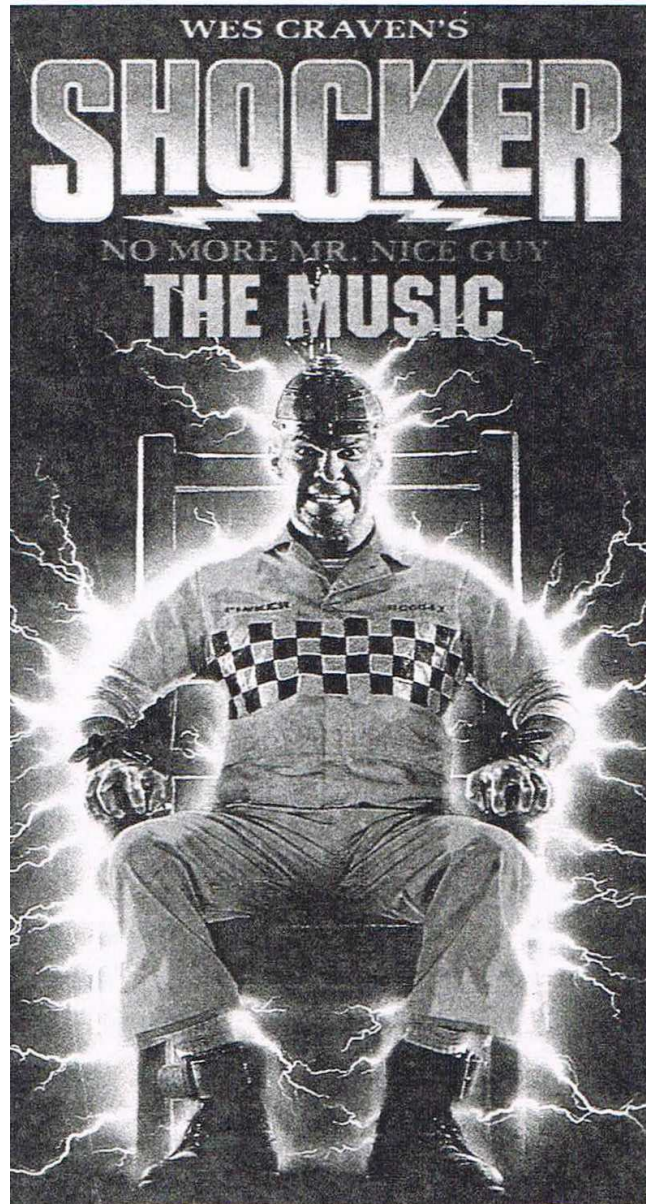
The title track gives the listener a glimpse of the more innocent days of the band and the live favorite "Trees," but the band is much more sophisticated now. Rush has concentrated on melody in their last few efforts, so that it is easy to be lured in by just the musical magic, their incredible command of their instruments and the range of sound they can achieve. *Presto* fits well inside the Rush catalog, and is com-

plemented by the remarkable production of Rupert Hine. Is *Presto* a classic Rush work? It is up against some of the most intelligent music ever offered, but that is the cross a band of this stature must bear; they are compared only to themselves and their past works, not the trail of others. I think this record has moments that are immediately brilliant, but there is nary a song that would knock a great Rush tune off the perch of favorites. "Red Tide" and "Available Light" are captivating, giving the second half of the album a more brooding and contemplative feel. Lyricist and drummer Neil Peart is a concise genius who has committed his soul to this planet and whose observations can't be evaluated within the space of a record review. They must be considered at your convenience.

Rush is one of the true originals, a creative legend that is still viable and compelling. With *Presto*, they will certainly satisfy the legions that adore this form of entertain-

Killer	† † † †
Heavy	† † †
Maybe	† †
Save your bucks, dude	†

ment, though that one moment, a radio single or video masterpiece that might be just the thing to increase their audience, is not there. If you have enough headspace to absorb the magic of this wonderful band, this album will be easily assimilated. It is cer-



tainly their most accessible work since *Signals*. Any Rush recording is a safe investment. *Presto* is a solid buy worthy of your collection. Maybe it's the true measure of a band that this is but one of a dozen Rush works worth owning and listening to. A legend is always hard to live up to. By switching recording labels and slightly shifting musical direction, Rush remains alive and vital. How many bands of this era can say that after 17 years? —Jon Sutherland