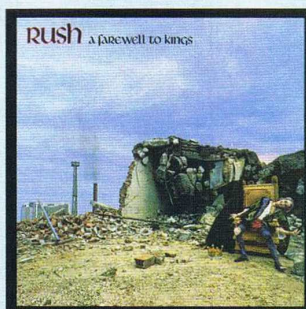


RUSH

A Farewell To Kings/Hemispheres UNIVERSAL

Listen to the Rush genius as it was intended – on vinyl.



Some time in the mid-90s many of us did a rather foolish thing: we sold our souls to the Great God 'Compact Disc' and turned from the old ways. We declared the old gods, vinyl and LP, 'false'. We accused them of 'scratchiness' and 'impurity'. We discovered 'digital', and we heard it was good. We abandoned vinyl to the ignominy of charity shops (or, in my case, sold all our LPs to pay for drugs). And then, CD itself was supplanted and a new god, the mp3, arose in the West, and Death followed with it...



A reminder of vinyl's warmth, and Rush's progressive spirit.



But as we know, vinyl's slowly and surely coming back into vogue, and what better time to get into it. Rush are celebrating their 40th anniversary year by re-releasing 14 of their classic Mercury albums on 180-gram black platters.

The recent reissue of *A Farewell To Kings* and *Hemispheres* isn't about carefully re-packaged, über-geek boxsets full of cheeky and tempting extras. (Though, to be fair, the vinyl's being offered with digital download codes for lossless audio.) Rather, they're what most of us want and need: extraordinary and hefty slabs of vinyl made available again, beautiful in their vanilla nakedness.

The renaissance in vinyl is no mere nostalgia. It's a reminder to take time to marvel and physically connect with music. Listening to *A Farewell To Kings* on this format is to connect with what made us love Rush in the first place. Firstly, there's that cover: a landscape to get lost in and interrogate for hidden meanings. CDs and downloads just cannot communicate the power of the visual, and Hugh Symes' *Farewell* art is iconic.

Then there's two sides of startlingly well-judged tunage. Back in 2012, Alex Lifeson said that *2112* was the first album where Rush sounded like Rush. Hard to dispute, but *A Farewell To Kings* defines their 70s sound: fierce and yet pastoral, mystic and yet heavy. This is an album made for vinyl: it insists we get up and take a break after Act One, then turn the disc over (the pleasure in that act!) and continue.

1978's *Hemispheres* is a different yet no less intriguing beast. It's surely a bridge between Rush's cosmic 70s prog and the sound that ultimately led to *Moving Pictures*. *Hemispheres* offers a serious insight into the changing nature of the band. The *Cygnus X-1 Book II* suite – with its fond look back at *Farewell*'s own *Cygnus X-1* – now seems a long goodbye to their old selves. *La Villa Strangiato* and *The Trees* foreshadow the 80s sound which define Rush in the popular mind.

These reissues could so easily just be cash-cow exercises. Rather, they're a reminder of vinyl's warmth and vibrancy, and also Rush's progressive spirit.

RACHEL MANN



LOCUS FOCUS

Rock gazetteer **David Roberts** puts prog on the map.



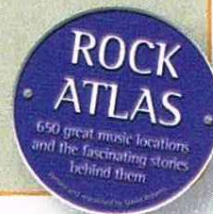
NO.14

RUSH AT ROCKFIELD

When brothers Kingsley and Charles Ward set up what came to be called Rockfield Studios in the 1960s, their aim was to create a recording facility big on what Kingsley called "natural acoustics". The arrival of Canadian prog rock trio Rush took that concept to a completely new

level when they set about recording their fifth album, *A Farewell To Kings*, there in June 1977. When Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart created the album's 11-minute-plus odyssey *Xanadu* they built the opening acoustic preamble around the most natural sounds imaginable: birdsong. The rural Welsh studio's courtyard was rigged up to catch the dawn chorus of warbling and at little inconvenience to the band members who would regularly rise in the late afternoon, before recording until daybreak. Bass guitarist and lead vocalist Geddy Lee has suggested that the Rockfield experience might have been one long bacchanalian haze of marijuana and alcohol consumption but the Monmouthshire isolation certainly had the desired effect. Complete with its blackbird accompaniment, *A Farewell To Kings* would deliver Rush their first UK hit album and lead to a hugely successful sequence of seven UK Top 10 albums over the following 10 years.

Rockfield Studios is location No.683 in the new edition of *Rock Atlas UK & Ireland*, published by Ovolo Books/Red Planet, price: £19.95.



PROG IN BRIEF

Heather Findlay and Dave Kerzner release the first single from their **Mantra Vega** project (right) on June 22. It's called *Island* and will be available through their website. Their debut album is due out in September.

