

Rush's Rock Gets Bogged Down In Band's Own Aural Quagmire

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BY CLIFF RADEL
Enquirer Pop Music Critic

Anyone who wonders how much control rock groups have over their audiences should consult Rush. Friday night, approximately 12,000 people journeyed to Riverfront Coliseum ostensibly to hear this Canadian trio.

Ostensibly appears in the preceding sentence, because several ticketholders did not come with music on their minds. They didn't want a concert. They wanted a B.Y.O.F. (Bring Your Own Fireworks) party, where they could spend the entire evening rocking the arena with the sharp reports of firecrackers and the ominous blasts of M-80s.

FOLLOWING AN audience-produced pyrotechnic display during "Lakeside Park," Geddy Lee, Rush's vocalist and bass guitarist, made a simple request: "Please do not throw fireworks in the building." Then, the three-man band began "By-Tor and the Snow Dog," the third number in its 101-minute set.

This piece lasted nine minutes. For the first six, the audience honored Lee's request. On minute number seven, a dry-ice fog crept across the stage. One concertgoer was so moved by this sight he could not contain his joy. So, he detonated a cherry bomb. After that, the remainder of Rush's show was played to the accompaniment of Roman candles flazing in the aisles, M-80s exploding in empty hallways and blazing sparklers thrown toward the stage.

It is too bad Lee's request was ignored. It was the only thing Rush did all evening that was worth listening to.

Rush was, in a word, awful. Lee sang in a high-pitched squeak. There are two possible explanations as to how his voice got that way: (1) he had a faulty larynx and in the world's first transplant of this kind he was the recipient of a

Munchkin's voice box; or (2), he took a very deep breath of ether before going on stage. What came out of his mouth couldn't have been produced by his natural voice. Or could it? If it was, a major theological question has been answered. God does have a sense of humor.

THREE SENTENCES will cover the exploits of Lee's Rush partners, drummer Neil Peart and guitarist Alex Lifeson. Peart's playing was so muddy it would have led to his dismissal from an elementary school drum and bugle corps. Sloppiness also characterized Lifeson's ad-libs. His aimless meandering up and down the neck of his guitar contributed greatly to thickening the aural sludge Rush terms music.

Rush snuck its paltry musicianship by the crowd, and in the process was called back for a 20-minute encore, under the cover of a music smoke screen. The overamplified distortion coming from the speakers, the preponderance of whole notes, the absence of any attack, the muddled unison figures and the organ pedals, which Lee played with the surefootedness of a drunken hippopotamus, increased the fuzziness of the group's sound and clouded the audience's good judgement. With such objects of obfuscation, who needs dry-ice fog?

Rush's instrumentation recalls rock's premier trios, Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. End of recollection. Rush is not a trio of virtuosos like Cream. Nor does it possess a captivating musician, composer and entertainer like Jimi Hendrix. Even a run-of-the-mill trio like ZZ Top stands several rungs above Rush. At their best, the would-be musicians in Rush would not make the nucleus of a \$5-a-night bar band.

Cheap, watering-hole bands were the order of the night. Opening acts Judas Priest and Uriah Heep saw to that. Both bands produced music with identical, lumbering tempos, sickly guitar improvisations and vocalists squealing like frightened pigs.

syllables match up), with a fine flush of Mediterranean fire and bravura. That's the major pity about the whole film. Quiry does bravura very well; it's a pity he was given such material on which to use it.

The only decent writing in the whole exercise is in an extended fight scene between Theo and Liz after they're married. The best acting on view is in the scene in which they hammer out the multi-million dollar marriage contract. When Mastorakis, Walls and Fine try to write tension-filled scenes showing Tomasis wheeling and dealing his way to even larger wealth the results are laughable.

Thompson's directing style leans to helicopter beauty shots of Greek islands, to a standoffish reluctance about any scene that needs subtlety and to get-in-there-and-see-the-sweat-intrusiveness about any scene with any passion to it.

IN YOUR idea of fun filmed fantasy is a two-hour, voyeuristic dabble in the lives of fabulously wealthy, fabulously powerful, fabulously beautiful people who do things you have neither the money nor the guts to do, then "The Greek Tycoon" (at the Tri-County, Valley and Skywalk Cinemas) may be just your cup of retsina. If you're after history, you'll find history as Harold Robbins might have interpreted it. If you're looking for art on film, I'll suggest a rerun of "The Beverly Hillbillies."

But, what troubles me more is whether or not "The Greek Tycoon" continues what could turn into a cinema genre more horrible than disaster movies. Here we have a transparent filmography of Kennedys and Onassis. Up the street, in "F.I.S.T." there are strong hints of Jimmy Hoffa's life—though writer Joe Eszterhas stoutly denies that he was writing about Hoffa specifically.

What next? Maybe an incisive investigation of that tangle among Eddie, Debbie and the Widow Todd; I see that one as a musical from MGM.

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