

REVIEWS

MEGATON RATING

MELTDOWN

SEARING

SUNBURN

HEAT RASH

COLD AS ICE

**METAL
HAMMER**

ALBUM OF THE MONTH



Tracks: Animate, Stick It Out, Cut To The Chase, Nobody's Hero, Between Sun And Moon, Alien Shore, Speed Of Love, Double Agent, Leave That Thing Alone, Cold Fire, Everyday Glory

When you consider that to the majority of today's rock audience the three piece can only mean Nirvana, the irony of Canadian power trio Rush once more hitting a creative high, of creating their finest album since 1981's 'Moving Pictures' in their twentieth anniversary year, will sadly be lost among an

audience who really couldn't give a damn.

But that's their loss and I ain't gonna lose any sleep over it. Over the past twenty years Rush have scarcely paid attention to current trends and instead forged their own progressive path. A path that's led to the serious power rocking of

'Counterparts'. Yes, Rush have at last returned fully to the burgeoning hard rock Messrs. Lifeson, Lee and Peart can muster when the mood takes them. Since 1982's 'Signals' that has been infuriatingly infrequent. In 1993, Alex Lifeson turns in his heaviest performance in an album that fairly races along.

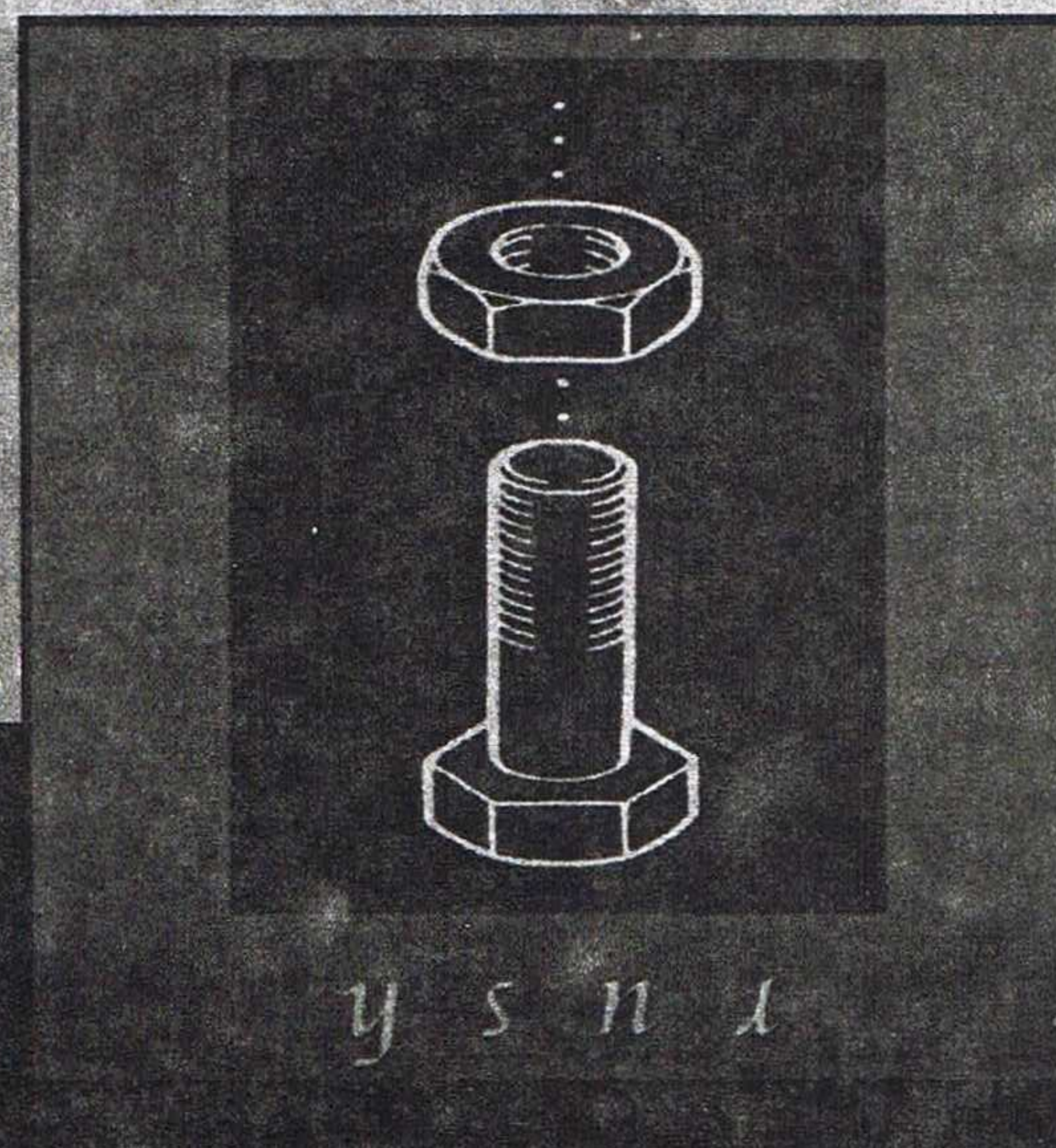
With Geddy Lee's keyboards buried in the mix where once Lifeson's guitar played its part, any Rush fan will revel in the rolling 'Stick It Out', the storming 'Cut To The Chase' and the surging power of 'Double Agent' (the latter featuring the sort of Lifeson riffage that Rush dabbled with in the '70s).

Even Neil Peart seems to have undergone some kind of rejuvenation. Is 'Speed Of Love' not the first Rush song to feature the

'L' word in its title? And the political correctness of 'Nobody's Hero' is warming where it could have been simply suspect.

It takes something special to be on your eighteenth album and be able to send a shiver down the listeners spine, but when Lifeson begins that colossal riff midway through 'Double Agent' you know Rush are well and truly back on serious form. Nirvana's 'Nevermind' was certainly the three piece album of 1992. But 'In Utero' sucks and everyone knows it. With 'Counterparts', Rush would seem to have a much safer bet.

JERRY EWING



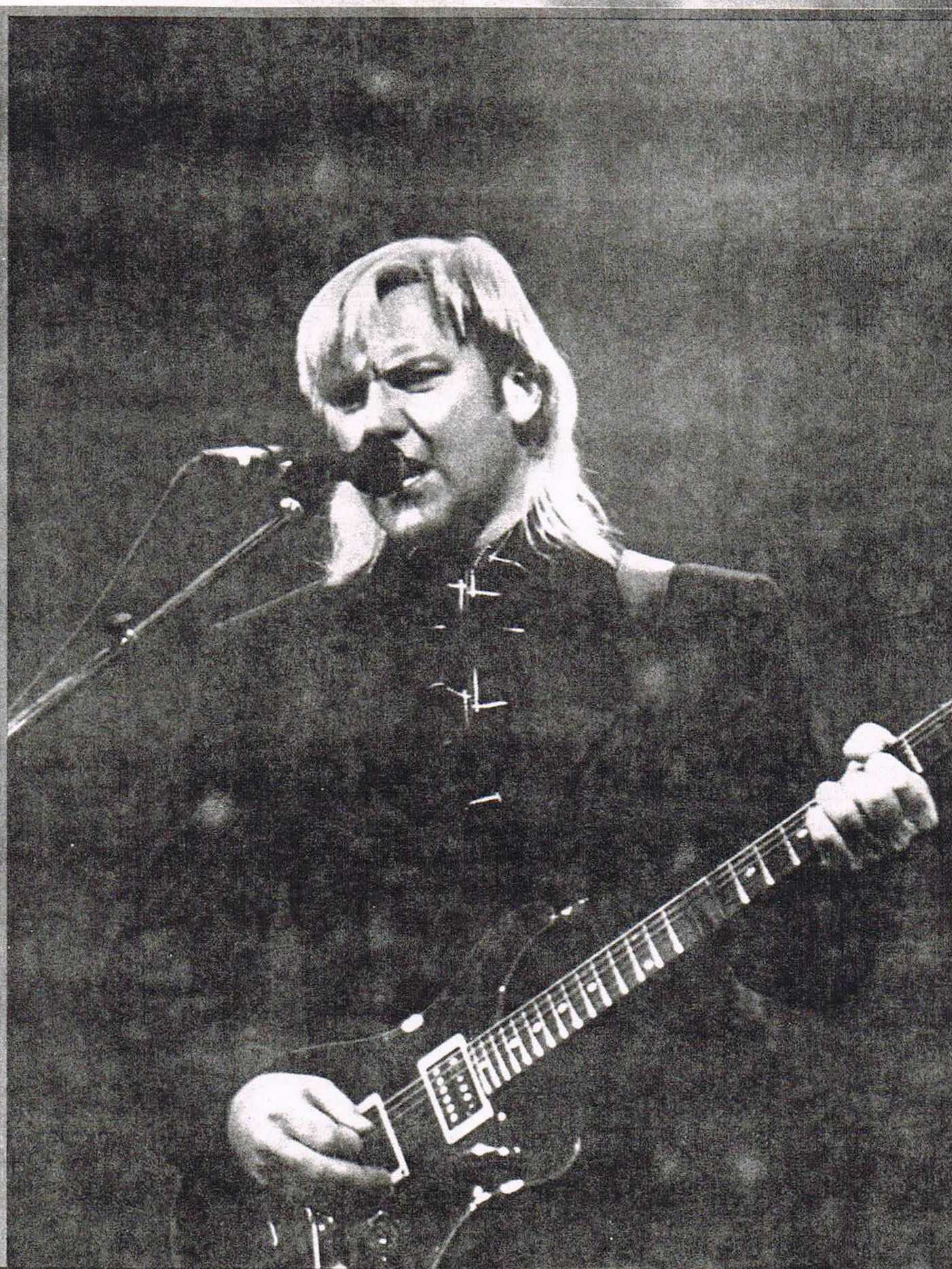
RUSH

COUNTERPARTS (Atlantic)

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IN THE RUSH

In such times of universal disillusionment, when being in a band means you shun both limelight and the trappings of success, it comes as an almost unique surprise to find someone in a band literally frothing at the gills with excitement, determination and longing. It's even more of a surprise when the person babbling excitedly is none other than Alex Lifeson of Rush. But, dear reader, this is indeed the scenario. As Rush approach their twentieth anniversary, the release of their latest studio album imminent and thoughts of another lengthy world tour pepper conversations, one could be forgiven for believing these forward thinking Canadians were perhaps thinking more along the lines of a bit of peace and quiet and certainly not re-entering an increasingly harsh musical environment, especially when you consider that bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee once told me that the band had seriously thought of giving up the ghost prior to the release of 1989's 'Presto' album. But no... "It's nice to hear the guitars again," laughs Lifeson, ever amiable and courteous. He exhudes an honest delight when questions concerning the worth of 'Counterparts' are met in the positive. "Since 'Signals' keyboards have constantly played a more important role, at the cost of the guitar, rather than to compliment it. On the last couple of records I think we've been getting closer to it but we really made a departure from it. "We really changed everything with this album. We mixed it all up. We got an engineer who had a much more basic style of recording. He stuck a microphone in front of the amps and tom-toms, and if he wanted to EQ it he just moved the mike around until he got the sound and then he went for it.



Hardy perennials RUSH are about to release their eighteenth finest effort since 'Moving Pictures'. And with the guitarist JERRY EWING that he's never

SH

HOLTER



"This is the first time since 'Moving Pictures' that I've been in the studio recording guitar instead of the control room, where I'd been working thinking it was more efficient. With this record I had the amps cranked up, I could hardly hear anything in the can and the guitar was just vibrating through my body. I could feel it coming through the pick ups and I thought "Where have I been all these years" That's where you do guitars, in front of the amp."

Although Lifeson's bristling with eagerness to relate the excitement of the studio environment, he also claims that for both Geddy Lee and drummer Neil Peart, the feeling was pretty much the same.

"It affected Neil and he got a much straighter sound from his kit," Lifeson reveals. "It wasn't overly EQ'd, it's a bigger sounding kit and Neil has a fairly intricate kit. And I think it's been a while since Ged's used an amp to the extent that we used it on this record as part of his direct sound."

"Everyone was really into this different style of recording. And then when we got to the remixing, then we added a little more of the sophistication that we're used to."

All this talk of studio unity and new ideas contrasts sharply with reports elsewhere in the British press that Lifeson and Lee were at loggerheads over the direction of the new album. That Lee wanted more keyboards and Lifeson definitely wanted the guitar. If this is so, then Lifeson seems to have come out on top.

"Hmmm, I wonder where that comes from," he queries. Indeed Rush aren't your average gossip column fodder. "From the last tour, we'd be sitting in the bus talking about the direction we were gonna go in with this record, and it was going to be a rawer approach, with guitars playing a more prominent role versus the

nth studio album. 'Counterparts' is without a doubt their
tar pushed all the way to the fore, ALEX LIFESON tells
elt so excited about the band.

IN THE RUSH HOUR

keyboards.

"This was something we had already decided when we got into the studio. I was a little more paranoid than everyone else and everytime Ged would reach for a keyboard I'd cringe and make some complaint (laughs). He was good about that. We developed each song from a three piece approach, and then when it was time to fit in some keyboards we did. There was no problem between us. We don't work that way."

Given the reported feeling of stress within the Rush camp in 1988, and then taking into account the three studio albums that have followed, the kinetic energy of 'Presto', the masterful tones of 'Roll The Bones' and now the powerful hard rock of 'Counterparts', it's almost as if a rejuvenation process has gone on within the Rush camp.

"Yes it has," laughs the guitarist. "That's all I can say. After the stress of the 'Hold Your Fire' tour we did take a break and didn't know where we were going. We really enjoyed 'Presto' and its tour and also the whole 'Roll The Bones' thing. With this record, I personally can't wait to get out on the road, and I'm really looking forward to playing a lot of the new songs. I think it'll be a lot of fun."

The return of producer Peter Collins (who'd worked on 'Power Windows' and 'Hold Your Fire') and the change of recording style has leant a vibrant, almost live feel to 'Counterparts'. Lifeson clearly agrees.

"I think that certainly has a lot to do with it, as well as the type of songs these are," he notes. "It's been a long time since we wrote a song like 'Stick It Out', that's really riff based and quite heavy. It's a joy to hear, quite honestly."

'Counterparts' is also the first Rush album that features the word 'Love' in any song title ('Speed Of Love'). It also marks a shift in writing style from Peart addressing such issues as relationships ('Cold Fire') and homosexuality ('Nobody's Hero') in frank openness.

"Yeah, it's always tough with Neil," declares Lifeson. "His lyrics have always been the kind of lyrics you need to digest. With me I find that some of these songs are very multi-layered and you can really

get a lot out of them on different levels. That's the fun of his lyrics. The more you listen to the song the more you get out of it.

"I guess you're right, they are more approachable. 'Speed Of Love' has the word 'love' in the title, which is really quite

something. But I think it's from a more mature perspective, rather than talking about

with a set made up of songs from all our records."

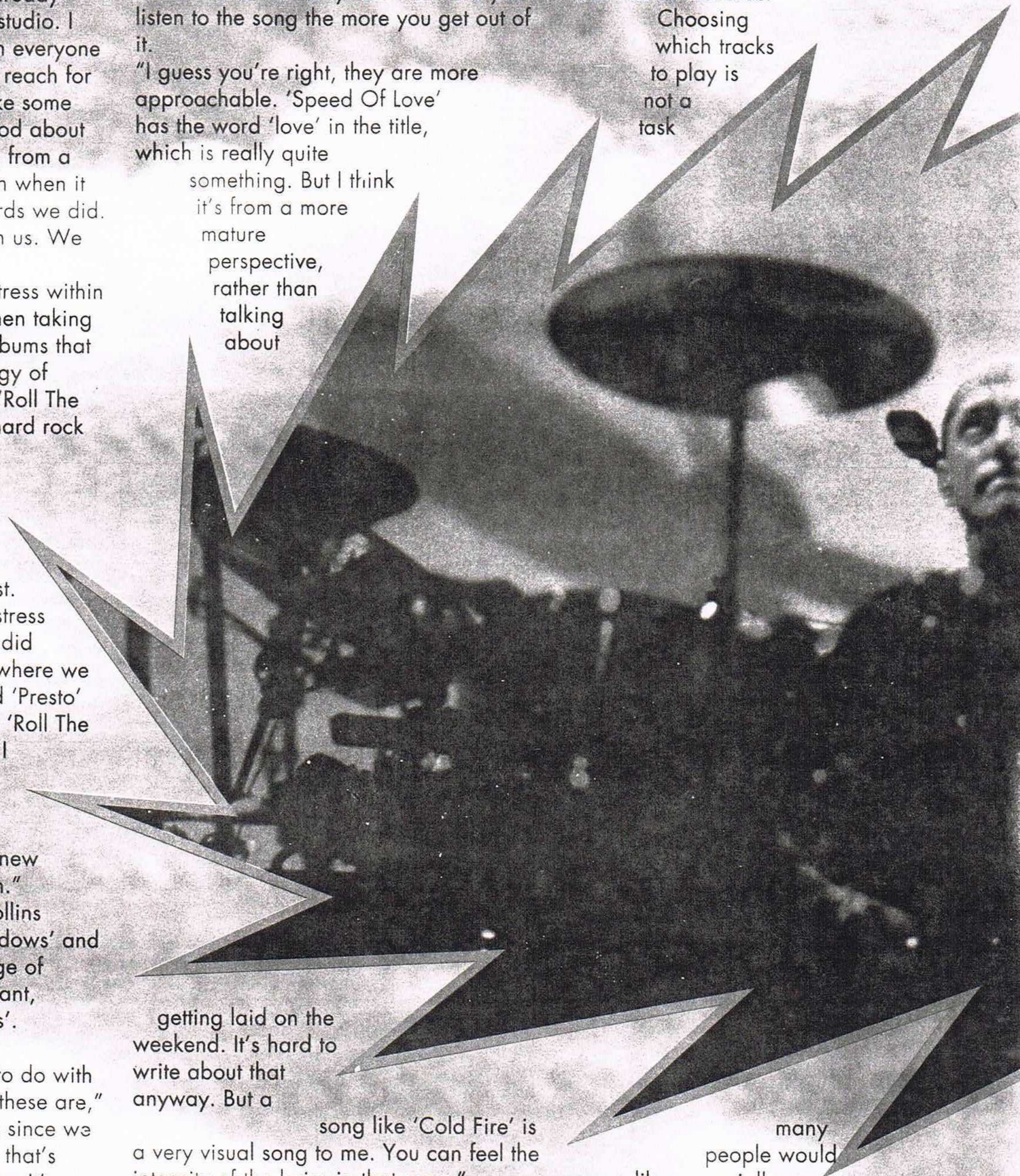
Choosing which tracks to play is not a task

getting laid on the weekend. It's hard to write about that anyway. But a

song like 'Cold Fire' is a very visual song to me. You can feel the intensity of the lyrics in that song." Next August will mark the twentieth anniversary of Rush's long and respected career. There is already talk of a live set comprised of songs from each of the band's albums.

"We've spoken about that but obviously haven't made any decisions," he reveals. "I don't know if we would do that on this tour, as that's still almost a year away. One scenario is that we record a lot on this tour and come out with a live album as our next release, and then maybe tour that live album and at that point come up

many people would like, especially considering Rush fans and the passion with which they hold early works. One recalls the adulation that greeted 'Xanadu' on its return to the set for the 'Roll The Bones' tour. "That is a tough one," he laughs. "There are a lot of records and the set would be quite long. We hadn't played 'Xanadu' for a long time and I knew that coming back to Britain and playing it would be a knockout. We're actually talking about bringing back 'Cygnus X-1' and maybe something from 'By-Tor'. We



might really go back and do something wild with it.

"On the last tour we put a bunch of songs in medley form and that was a lot of fun to play for us. You may not get the whole song, you get a good chunk of it and it's kind of fun to listen to."

The intended tour will begin at the beginning of next year, with half the year spent

detached and untouchable, how aware are they of the ever changing 'scene' around them?

"I think we aware of what's going on around us," he muses. "Maybe not quite as aware as we were in the past, but there has been so much activity in that end of the music scene in the last few years that it's hard to keep up. Here in North America, the whole thing that happened in Seattle, and the zillion

bands that came out of that area, it's really tough to keep on top of that.

"Like you say,

Yet after twenty years of drastic change, Rush may have proved that a fire still burns in their belly, but do they ever sit and wonder just where they go from here?

"Certainly you think about those things, and it does remain an elusive question until you get in the studio and start writing," Lifeson offers. "I always feel like that. Whenever we finish a record and before we go into write a record I always think 'Well, we just did it, and that's it and now what are we gonna do?'". There's only so many notes and I think we've played them enough times already.

But you always go in and you're motivated or stimulated by different things, and at the end of it all you're finished with this work that you've

done and you really get off on it. It's unique and it's different and it's individual and you get charged up by it and you can't wait for the next one.

"With this record, I think this is the most satisfying record in a long time for me. I think that after about every record we come out of the studio and you kind of get away from it for a

few weeks and when you go back to it you always wonder whether you could have done this differently or that better. But it has to represent a certain time. It's the record from that period. Otherwise you spend years and years making something different, not better.

"With this record I got away from it for a while and now when I listen to it I really get off on it. I really enjoy listening to it. I think the songs are strong. I think the sounds are great. The whole impression of the record is good. And I find that I'm not as picky about the little things on this record as I have been in the past.

"I can't wait to get out on the road to play these songs. I've got stacks of Marshalls for the next tour, to get back into that whole thing. And at the same time I can't wait to get back into the studio to make another record."

For now though, Lifeson has to contend with what he admits is his favourite album since the best selling 'Moving Pictures'. One can only agree. There's no doubt that Rush have turned in one of the best performances of their career. All parts are very much in working order.

"I think we've established something, an energy and an excitement," he claims. "Maybe its been missing, maybe it hasn't. Maybe it's just been channelled in a different way, but there's something about getting up and cranking it up and playing that perhaps we haven't done in a while."

we've always been kind of removed from all that. Rush just kind of ploughs along on its own course and whatever else happens doesn't really concern us that much. We still enjoy making records, we still enjoy playing live. I don't know if it really has much bearing on what's going on

around us. But we certainly keep up with it, to a point anyway.

"I mean, I'm sitting here at home and I'm into such a whole other scene when I'm at home, as we all are, that you don't really think about the band. You don't live it every day so you don't think about music in those terms. When you get out on the road that's all you think about. You check out what's happening and who's playing."

Rush have undoubtedly conquered where other bands have fallen by the wayside. 'Counterparts' enigmatic grooves see to that better than mere words can indicate.

in North America.

No definite plans for Europe, but Lifeson indicates that Autumn

may see a tour on the back of the possible live album.

"It's a long way away and we really haven't got down to discussing it yet," he declares. "I don't know if we'll be coming to Europe in this first half of the year but we have spoken about it. We certainly had a great time last time we came over, although I know we haven't been coming over much over the last seven years. A lot depends with what happens with this record."

Given Rush's perceived status as elder statesmen of the hard rock world, a band