Rush working to keep its fans satisfied

By Aaron Beck
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Rush is calling its tour a 30th-anniversary celebration, and, according to www.2112.net, band members’ memories are serving them well. The Toronto trio’s first show to include drummer Neil Peart, bassist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson was Aug. 16, 1974, in Civic Arena in Pittsburgh.

Leis’s publicist told the bass player he’d call The Dispatch last week to answer hard-hitting questions such as:

Q: Does rock ‘n’ roll keep your young or make you old?

A: “It covers part of my body that have definitely aged faster as a result of my occupation, but I believe the spirit keeps you young.

Q: How has your voice changed?

A: “I think I’m a much better singer than I was 10 years ago. I know how to use my voice in a better way... It’s a little fatter and less shrill, but also the material that I sing is less shrill. It’s very pleasant to sing at the top of your range the whole time. It’s not good for the vocal cords in your heart.”

Q: What keeps this exciting 30 years or so?

A: “I think our motivations are still the same as they always were. We want to go out and play a song that we enjoy, and I think we’ve probably discovered from the previous tours to keep our fans happy.”

Q: What has Rush rehearsed

A: “we have a few... The Lambretta Ears, from our Moving Pictures album, is almost always at the top of the repertoire. We’ve been given it a few times, but we always go, ‘Well, I just don’t want to play that song. I’m not thrilled about it.’ You don’t want to do it, but you have to be honest. We’ve made it to be released an album of cover songs (Feedback, June 29). How did this idea originate?

A: “We always talked about throwing together a couple or two into the encore just for fun. When we put this 30th-anniversary tour together, we realized that we didn’t have enough time to do a proper studio album. A friend of mine suggested, ‘Well, maybe you guys should dip into your past. Play some songs you used to play when you were in your twenties. Last year, just record them quickly for fun, not overthink it, and just put out a little EP to celebrate where you were as opposed to where you are.’ We thought it might be a way to juice us before the tour, so that’s what we did. We tried not to get too overly with it and really go back and play songs that we really did play in early versions of our band. We reworked about eight of them and did them live off the floor in a very short period of time for our — three weeks. It was really a lot of fun. The (Yacht’s) Heat Full of Sound, I think, is one of the best things we’ve ever recorded. Makes me wonder if we should have stopped recording. Do you meet people who are shocked at the amount of humor or levity at a Rush show? A: “If there was a lot of time, that we walk around with. Some of the songs off our 1984 album, ‘Roadshow’ we played that night. It was a lot of fun to play songs that we really played in our own time.”