thumps out bass lines that hold the middle ground between Lifeson’s screeching guitar and Peart’s manic, high-energy percussion.

Until they decided to make Rush their life’s work, the band members worked all sorts of odd jobs to support their musical involvement: Geddy spent time as a plumber, while Alex pumped gas and fixed flat tires. Three years ago they began work on their first album titled simply Rush.

“The first stab at that album was done in eight hours following a gig,” says Alex. “We cut it at Eastern Sound in Toronto and we were warmed up after the show so most of the songs came in two or three takes. Then we decided we could do it better so we recut the whole thing eight months later at Toronto Sound.”

UNTACHABLE LP: After being rejected by every label in Canada for being too heavy, they released their self-produced album on their own Moon Records. Not much happened with it until their manager brought a copy around, and a Canadian distributor picked it up for distribution in the United States. Then Atlantic Records picked it up. Rush has had a hit in America, and has been able to tour with some of the biggest bands in the world.

“Overture” is the only band that’s never given us any trouble on the road,” says Neil. “Lots of times it’s not a band’s fault that the opening act gets fucked over, and it’s not worth talking about, but it does happen all the time. Kiss impose reasonable restrictions and we get along really well with them as friends and business-wise.”

KISSALIKES: “At the end of our last tour with Kiss in San Diego we were gonna dress up as them, put on their makeup, and go out and do our set as them. But what finally happened was an on-stage pie fight in front of 6,000 screaming kids. They caught us at the end of our set by surprise, and whole stage was covered in shaving cream and whipped cream. Then it was our turn at the end of their set. All their guitars and drums and machines were completely buried in shaving cream, so their encore sounded just great!”

Their first followup album, Fly By Night, was their first with Neil Peart replacing original drummer John Rutsey. Rutsey, according to Rush, quit because (choose 1): he didn’t want to travel; his health wouldn’t let him travel—at this late date nobody’s saying. And last year Carees of Steel helped push Rush to headlining status both here and in their native land. Peart, a self-confessed sci-fi buff who’s been into writers like Samuel R. Delaney and C. S. Lewis “since I’ve been into reading,” began writing sections of 2112 during the band’s most recent American tour. The ideas and scattered lyrics began coalescing as Alex and Geddy added music to Neil’s neon nightmares.

FUTURE SHOCK: “The mood was set by Neil’s lyrics,” claims Geddy, “and we wrote music to try and fit into that mood. The way we usually write is to sit in hotel rooms trying to come up with heavy metal on an acoustic guitar, but this was the complete opposite.”

Neil takes up the narrative: “2112 is a cycle of songs based on a development and progression of some things I see in society. We come across a lot of weirdness on the road and it comes out in the music. The cycle begins with an “Overture,” then the discovery of the guitar and music. Guitars don’t exist in the Solar Federation because the computers won’t allow music—it’s not logical. Then there’s the “Presentation,” where the hero brings his guitar to the priests in the temples of Syrinx. But the acolytes smash it up and send him away. And he has a dream about a planet, established simultaneously with the Solar Federation, where all the creative people went. He’s never seen anything like it before, this alternative way of life; even the way they build their cities is totally different. And he gets more and more depressed because he realizes that his music is a part of that civilization and he can never be a part of it. But in the end he finds that the planet is real and things do change for him.”

Although they’re moving toward significance and ambitious artistic statement on 2112, Rush remain true to their hard rock roots. On the second side of 2112 Rush revert to their basic wall of sound, with guitar, bass, and drums cranked up past the pain threshold, with Geddy’s tortured I’m-gonna-sing-this-song-or-die-wailing at the center of attention.

“We don’t want to change what people think about rock & roll,” Alex states firmly. “We just want to show them what we think about it.” And, oh yes, all the boys watch Star Trek, thrilling to the adventures of (Canadian-born) William Shatner and his Entereprising crew “whenever we’re anywhere.”

Alex Lifeson, guitar: “Our favorite Canadian band is ourselves.”

Neal Peart, drums: “Guitars don’t exist in the Solar Federation because the computers won’t allow music—"