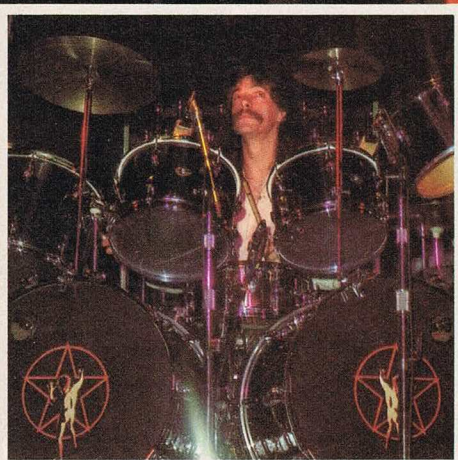
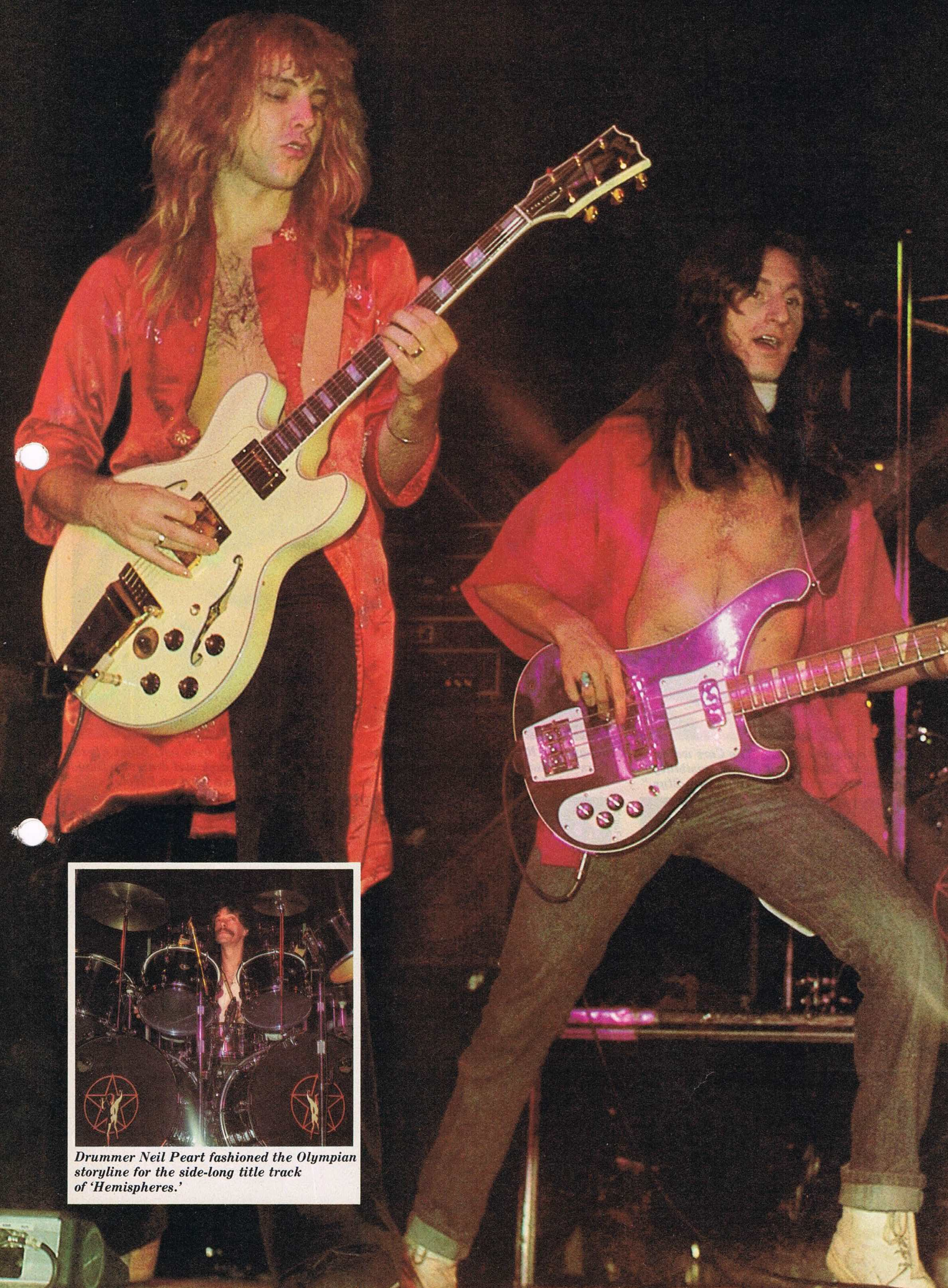




**GEDDY LEE
INTERVIEWED**

**GIANT WEEKLY NATIONAL CONCERT, TV,
NEW ALBUM, AND MOVIE LISTINGS**

RUSH WEEKLY



Drummer Neil Peart fashioned the Olympian storyline for the side-long title track of 'Hemispheres.'



Rush's music of the spheres

Canadian conquerors attain extra-terrestrial heights on 'Hemispheres'

by David Fricke

Geddy Lee likes to get things out in the open. The 25-year-old bass guitarist for Rush—Canada's prize-winning entry in the post-heavy metal race—has absorbed his share of flak in the band's 10 years together and the whole subject of Rush's massive non-acceptance by tastemakers has become quite tiresome for him.

"We're unfashionable, we're not trendy, and we do things people think are pretentious," he laughs quietly, amused by his own cynicism. "But if a critic, for instance, pans your album, what does it really mean? If an album is good, people will find out about it on their own."

Alex Lifeson with Geddy Lee: "We're unfashionable, we're not trendy, and we do things people think are pretentious."

Firm believers in rock & roll populism, Rush—Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson, and drummer Neil Peart—have based an entire career on the unshakable faith of fans who still believe in the louder things in life like crash-course guitar, a furiously complex but impenetrable beat, and Wagnerian bombast that pins you to the wall. And those fans don't review records. They buy them, more than enough to put gold and platinum copies of 2112, *All the World's a Stage*, and *A Farewell to Kings* on a wall in Lee's Tudor-style Toronto home.

The band's sixth studio album, *Hemispheres* (Mercury), is likely to snare wall space of its own before long. But Lee, a soft-spoken brown-eyed sort whose shoulder-length brown mane and Barclay James Harvest sweatshirt distinguish him from his suburban neigh-

Damn the critics, quoth Geddy Lee. "If an album is good, people will find about it on their own."

bors, already has his modestly furnished home, five cats, and a mellotron in his living room to remind him that he is a successful '78 model rock star.

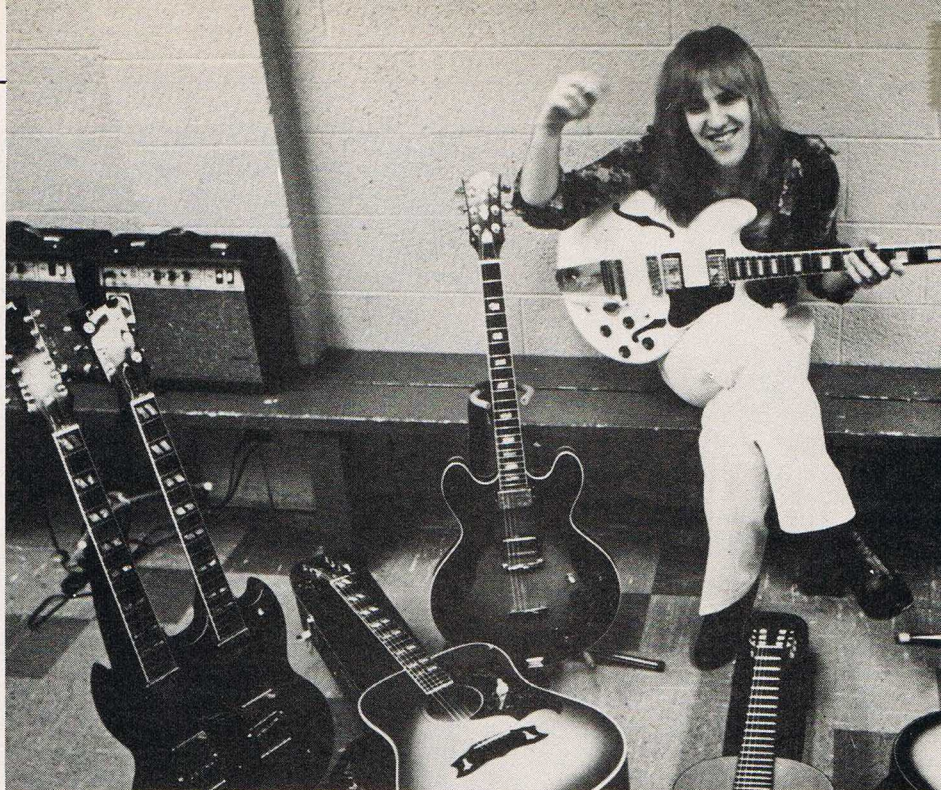
"The only justification I need for what I'm doing with Rush is that we finish an album and we love it. Then we take it to our fans and they respond to it. If what we were doing wasn't right, we wouldn't be where we are. There may be ways of becoming bigger than we are, but I'm not complaining."

Nor is he complaining about the way *Hemispheres* turned out. Pulverizing production, impeccable playing, and an artful marriage of timeworn power chording and compositional tricks from the Yes/Genesis grab bag mark the album as the band's most impressive recording to date. Whatever your reservations about the Olympian scope of Neil Peart's storyline for the side-long title track (the conclusion of the Cygnus X-1 tale from *Farewell*), you can't argue with the Nordic-like Lifeson's expert negotiation of the rhythmic twists and turns, mustering both the blaze of Page and the bluster of Beck, while Lee narrates with an intense banshee wail.

Side two is taken up with two shorter songs—"Circumstances" and the cartoonish "The Trees"—and a tightly or-



Rush—Alex Lifeson, Geddy Lee, and Neil Peart—celebrate their tenth birthday with 'Hemispheres.'



Six-stringer Lifeson gets the spotlight this album with a 12-part instrumental, "La Villa Strangiato."



Lyricist Peart explains that much of the album was written in a two week span. "The Trees" took 30 minutes.

Photos by Fin Costello



chestrated nine-minute instrumental, "La Villa Strangiato." According to Geddy, the latter is loosely based on Lifeson's frequent nightmares. "Alex doesn't really call them nightmares," he corrects. "They're just strange dreams. He's plagued with them and he drives us crazy by calling us up all the time to tell us about them until we just say 'Stop, you're giving me a headache.'"

The real headache was in arranging the 12-part suite for live performance, which is how it was recorded. Manically shifting from acoustic prelude to guitar attack to big band swing, the piece (jokingly subtitled "An Exercise in Self-Indulgence") is a roadmap of stops and starts "which took us days to get down. We did it in one live take, but it took 40 other takes to get it right. There were two small sections, about 40 seconds, which sounded better on a previous take that we inserted. But out of nine minutes, who's gonna notice?"

The perfectionism Rush projects on record and stage is the product of an arduous battle for recognition. When Geddy Lee left the Toronto school system at grade 11 to join Rush, the power trio sound of Cream and Zeppelin was not welcome in the neighborhood bars where the band cut its teeth—when it could.

"Clubowners didn't want to hear it. Their big concern was that the waitresses couldn't hear the beer orders. We even did one gig in Oakville, Ontario where we played half a set and that was it. They got so many complaints from the neighbors next door we decided it was best just to get out of there."

With the big beat came big ideas.

After hastily recording a debut album (*Rush*) for their own Moon label, the boys faced a U.S. tour without a drummer. Original stickster John Rutsey wanted to play solid, steady rock while Lee and Lifeson and other plans. "People were experimenting—like Yes—and we wanted to be part of it. So when everything looked great and the tour was going to happen, we said 'John, if it's going to happen, it's got to be the three of us.' And he said, 'Right, so I'm leaving.'"

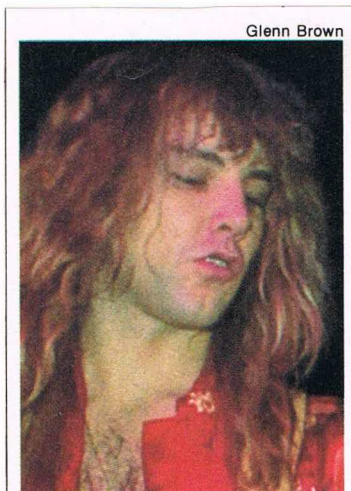
Enter the mustachioed Neil Peart. Subsequent albums, like the underrated *Caress of Steel* and *2112* utilized Peart's lyrical abilities and dabbling in mythological sci-fi in a Yes-cum-cock-rock context, ringing up big sales particularly among headbangers in the Midwest. Peart asserts that "*2112* really brought us all the success we need to justify ourselves to the 'business.' At this point, our struggles are really artistic."

"We don't think", says Lee, "in terms that we have to make this album better because the last one was good or sold well. This is another album of ours and every album is a point in Rush's history and if it's not getting better, something's wrong. Every album has to be the perfect Rush album."

Hemispheres comes real close. But Cliff Burnstein, the Phonogram A&R rep and band confidante who signed Rush in 1974, feels that "the effect on some people who are fans will be weird because the band makes no attempt to be accessible on this album. But I've always told them to take chances and they're sure to get more respect for doing this record."

Lee, however, is quick to dispel the band's image as intellectual downers with amps turned up to 10. "People have this image of us and come up to me all the time, saying 'you guys take yourselves too seriously.' And I say 'You're full of shit. We don't take ourselves too seriously, only what we do because to us it's worth caring about.'"

At the rustic Rockfield Studio in Wales where they recorded *Hemispheres*, Alex Lifeson demonstrated that care with his tool kit. "Rockfield is more like a farm," laughs Geddy, "really funky. But they had these ignorant latches on the studio doors, two latches on each door and invariably one wouldn't work. So in a fit of frustration, Alex took those latches off, sealed them over, got a hydraulic door opener, mounted it, and built a handle for it." And that's not all. "We're still trying to talk them into getting a couch." ●



Alex Lifeson's 'Hemisphere', 32

RUSH

Canada's Heavy-Metal Conquerors Defy The Critics Once Again

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Rush

Geddy Lee lashes out at critics in both 'Hemispheres'—(David Fricke)