

Rush Aims For New Generation

After 3-Year Break, Trio Regroups For New Atlantic Set

BY PAUL VERNA

NEW YORK—After more than two decades of delivering hit albums on an almost yearly basis, the members of Rush took three years off from each other to break the pattern of being in the band and find themselves as human beings.

Bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee spent time with his family, guitarist Alex Lifeson released his first solo album, and drummer/lyricist Neil Peart pursued various projects, including the Buddy Rich tribute series "Burning For Buddy."

When they reconvened early this year to record their 16th studio album, Lee, Lifeson, and Peart found a renewed musical spirit that's evident throughout "Test For Echo." The Atlantic album will be released Sept. 10.

Lifeson says, "We've always been close, but the three of us reached a new level in our relationship, and I think it really shows on this record. The last time we had that vibe was on 'Moving



RUSH

Pictures," the Canadian band's 1981 double-platinum album, which yielded the hits "Tom Sawyer" and "Lime-light."

Although the members of Rush knew they risked losing touch with their fan base by taking three years between studio albums, the break was critical for them, according to Lifeson.

"After 20 years, we needed to just explore ourselves as people. Our lives had been centered around the band," he says. "When I think back over the last 20 years, I think in terms of tours, or where we were recording at any given time. My connection is always to the band, and we needed to break away from that."

It took some settling in, but after an initial soul-searching period of working together, the band found its creative muse again.

"During that first week, I really wondered about the future," says Lifeson. "I thought that maybe this was going to be the last record, and maybe we would tour it, maybe not. But once we got into it and once we finished the record, I thought, 'We've got a lot of stuff in us yet.' We were already talking about the next record while we were working on this record. I know there's a future there for us."

Highlights on "Test For Echo" include the epic-sounding title track and first single, which explores themes of global communication; the acoustic-oriented "Half The World," featuring Lifeson on the mandola; the instrumental "Limbo," the title of which is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Rush Limbaugh; and "Virtuality," a song about life on the Internet.

The album was recorded at Bearsville Studios near Woodstock, N.Y., and McClellan-Pathé and Reaction Studios in Toronto with Peter Collins, whose credits also include Jewel, Bon Jovi, and Suicidal Tendencies. It was engineered by Cliff Norrell and mixed by Andy Wallace.

As it did on 1993's "Counterparts," Rush has minimized the use of keyboards and concentrated on solid, bass-drum-guitar grooves.

Lifeson says, "We've been working

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Under Summer Skies. Hometown heroes the BoDeans showed that one can go home again, as they returned to Milwaukee to play Summerfest, an 11-day music festival that began June 27. The annual event featured more than 700 acts on 12 stages. Shown, from left, are Bob Babisch, Summerfest entertainment director; Richard Wolod, director of national alternative radio promotion for Reprise Records; Kurt Neumann and Sam Llanas, the BoDeans; Elizabeth "Bo" Black, Summerfest executive director; and Mark McCraw, manager of the BoDeans.

4 Non Blondes' Perry Makes Solo 'Flight' On Interscope

BY CARRIE BORZILLO

LOS ANGELES—If selling 5 million albums worldwide doesn't make someone happy, what will? Well, if you're Linda Perry, former lead singer of one-hit wonder 4 Non Blondes, a bit of respect would be nice.

Perry, whose quirky voice helped the single "What's Up" propel the band's 1992 Interscope debut, "Bigger, Better, Faster, More," to platinum status in the U.S., makes her solo debut on the label with the highly personal "In Flight," due Sept. 10.

"I wish we had some respect and credibility to go with our platinum record," says Perry of her former band. "It's great to make records and money, but it doesn't mean anything if there's no respect or longevity."

"When I got in 4 Non Blondes and started working within a band, it was great because it was something I never did before. I don't want to do it again. I

like doing things myself, for me. I just felt it was time to move on and go in my own direction. I felt that I wasn't going to get any more inspired being in that same relationship."



PERRY

Perry quit midway into recording the band's highly anticipated follow-up. The record was shelved when Perry left.

"It sounded like a 4 Non Blondes record," says Perry. "I

wrote stupid, poppy songs that probably would've been hits. But I didn't want to do that."

"In Flight," which Perry describes as "one big mood swing," was produced by Bill Bottrell of Tuesday Night Music Club fame. The songs are more emotionally charged and introspective than those on "Bigger, Better, Faster, More."

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Bob Dylan Unearths Egyptian Records; Shrinking Atlantic Raises Grumbles

THE JOKER AND THE SPHINX: Bob Dylan is starting a label, Egyptian Records. The first release on the imprint, which will go through Columbia Records, will be "The Songs Of Jimmie Rodgers—A Tribute Album." Tentatively slated for fall release, the collection will feature a number of artists—including Dylan, Bono, Dwight Yoakam, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and Steve Earle—warbling their favorite tunes made famous by the Singing Brakeman. Dylan's own albums will continue to be released directly on Columbia.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC: According to sources, Atlantic Records is reviewing its artist roster, and many acts are expected to be dropped. However, the number of cuts is nowhere near the 100-plus acts some grumbling industry-ites have been mentioning. Atlantic had no official comment, but one label executive notes, "For years, everyone's criticism of Atlantic has been that we have too many bands; now we do something about it, and all we're doing is getting shit for it." Additionally, Atlantic would not comment on whether Extra Fancy had been dropped, although the band has certainly been open about its dismissal from the label. Members of Atlantic act Stone Temple Pilots are working on side projects while lead singer Scott Weiland continues to get treatment for drug addiction, according to sources. STP's manager, Steve Stewart, would not comment on the side projects, saying only, "STP is not breaking up. We're anxious to go out and tour as a complete band."

DIGGING UP THE PAST: The Sex Pistols have come back, as have Kiss and a number of other bands from the '70s, so why shouldn't the Rutles? Why not, indeed. On Oct. 29, Virgin will release "Archaeology," "an album of vintage, previously unreleased material," according to the band's handlers.

The Rutles, created by "Monty Python's" Eric Idle, are responsible for such seminal albums as "Sgt. Rutter's Only Darts Club Band," as well as the groundbreaking documentary "All You Need Is Cash."

The new/old album was, according to lore, buried in a time capsule to be discovered in the next millennium by archeologists or to be dug up by the members of the band when they were strapped for cash. No word on any live appearances by the band to support the release.

THIS AND THAT: We have no idea who has the rights

to new material from the Who (MCA, which is reissuing many of the band's albums, couldn't tell us by press time if it did), but whoever does should immediately put out a single and video of the acoustic version of "Won't Get Fooled Again." Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend have been performing a killer take on the rock classic following their "Quadrophenia" shows. It could do for the Who what Eric Clapton's reworked, unplugged version of "Layla" did for him. Sony has

formed Sony Music Independent Labels (SMIL) for such stand-alone labels as Work (which previously went through Columbia Records Group) and 550 Music and 3T (which were linked with Epic). SMIL will be overseen by Dave Glew, chairman of Epic Records Group. So just where did the name for Al Teller's new company, Red Ant Entertainment, come from? (Billboard, July 27). According to the head ant himself, it

comes from the initials for his full name, Alvin Norman Teller, and the red ant is known for being a particularly hard-working creature. Mercury will distribute "Safe And Sound: A Benefit In Response To The Brookline Clinic Violence" Oct. 22. The album, released through the Mighty Mighty Bosstones' imprint, Big Rig Records, features performances from a number of top Boston alternative bands that played a series of Boston benefits in February 1995. The concerts were held after two women were killed in attacks at three Boston-area women's health clinics in December 1994. Proceeds from the album will go to the National Clinic Access Project, which helps clinics remain open despite increased violence and harassment. Among the artists on the album are Letters To Cleo, Morphine, Belly, Tracy Bonham, Aimee Mann, and of course, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones.

ON THE ROAD: Everything But The Girl is on a U.S. theater tour until Aug. 5. The duo will return in the fall with more dates. Corrosion Of Conformity, whose new album "Wiseblood" comes out Sept. 3 on Columbia, will open for Ozzy Osbourne in the U.S. before taking the support slot for Metallica in Europe in September. Brian Setzer, backed by a 16-piece orchestra, is on tour through September. Radiohead, which just can't seem to get off tour, has been pegged as Alanis Morissette's opening act in August in the U.S.



by Melinda Newman



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SLOBBERBONE DELIVERS A SECOND 'PIE' ON DOOLITTLE

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tured tracks from Brutal Juice, Baboon, and other bands who lived or hung out at a particular party house in Denton.

The self-released version of "Crow Pot Pie," put out 1995, landed the band a deal with Austin, Texas-based Doolittle, which will issue a rerecorded version of the album. It also netted them a press kit chock-full of clips and rave reviews, interest from major labels, and a helping hand from Darin Murphy and Jeff Osborne at William Morris Agency on the booking front.

Doolittle is hoping to land a major-label distribution deal for the label or only for "Crow Pot Pie." (Doolittle has a pressing and distribution deal for Hamel On Trial with Mercury, which also bought out the small indie's option on Prescott Curlywolf.)

"It's funny, the whole deal for us was not about getting an album out or a record deal as much as doing it to have something as a vehicle to keep us touring and eventually quit our day jobs," says Slobberbone's 25-year-old singer/songwriter/guitarist Brent Best. "We're really surprised; this is more than we wanted."

Best, whose tales of drinking and love lost tread into the musical territory of Uncle Tupelo, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and Jason & the Scorchers, says a lot of pressure has been put on the band to live up to the press accolades.

Kevin McAlester, who hosts the new-music show "The Adventure Club" on modern rock KDFW Dallas with Josh

Venable, admits that they were amazed by the band's popularity.

"Both Josh and I were taken aback by the songwriting when we first heard it," says McAlester. "From the time they released the CD themselves, maybe before, people have been talking about them and it hasn't really stopped. They're well respected among musicians here, too."

Pete Brigaitis, manager of CD Warehouse in Dallas, says area interest in Slobberbone is so high that fans of the band not only purchased the first version of the album but are picking up the second one as well.

"There is a lot of anticipation for the Doolittle release around town," he says. "People just kept asking and asking for it. The old version was good, but with the new album you really get to hear the vocals and catch the lyrics. And, it captures how they sound live, which they just keep getting better and bet-

ter at."

Best formed Slobberbone in 1992 with drummer Tony Harper. The two were also in another local band called Gravel Truck. The other Slobberbone members (bassist Brian Lane, guitarist Mike Hill, and fiddler/organ player Scott Danbom) joined after the first "Crow Pot Pie" was released.

"As a kid growing up in Austin, I listened to stuff like Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson, which someone my age now would say was country, but at the time it was more far out for country. But, when you're a kid in school trying to be cool, country wasn't cool," says Best. "So, when I started playing in bands, I'd play in loud guitar bands and punk bands. But when I really started writing songs, [they were] really country. At that point, I didn't wrestle with it anymore."

Frustrated with playing the back of drive-in beer stores and diners in Den-

ton, Slobberbone decided to record a disc to send to larger clubs in hopes of landing better playing opportunities.

Sam McCall of the Denton-based Interscope band Brutal Juice, who, Best says, "records everyone's band in town," recorded and mixed "Crow Pot Pie" for \$400. The band paid another \$900 to print up 500 CDs, which were sold or given away at shows and Dallas-area mom-and-pop record stores and sent to the press and club owners.

"After a [spring] showcase, we talked to a lot of A&R people, but we're not really interested in going to another label," says Best. "Doolittle just happened to find us, and it made sense because we made it clear from the beginning what we wanted to do. We wanted the album to be a vehicle to get to the next level. It's not like being on a label, it's just like making records with someone [who is] that into what we're doing."

Jeff Cole, president of Doolittle, says the game plan for spreading the word

on Slobberbone is to secure better distribution, keep the band on the road, and work the press.

"The band wants to do nothing but tour, and we're big on tour support. We have a lot of posters and stickers and stuff out at the shows, and they're playing primo rooms now," says Cole, who co-produced the new version of the album with the band. "We're hiring McGathy Promotions to help out. It will go to college radio in September."

Cole says the band rerecorded "Crow Pot Pie," which features seven of the 12 songs on the original album plus four new songs, for about \$25,000.

"The idea of rerecording stuff we already recorded was weird, but we had a different lineup so we knew we had to," says Best. "It was a real headache. When we listened to it, the mix sounded too slick. No one would believe it was us. So, we remixed it in Austin. I wanted the album to give an indication of how we are live, and I hope it does."

RUSH AIMS FOR A NEW GENERATION

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towards that for a while now. Even with [1991's] 'Roll The Bones' we were starting to go more in the direction of getting back to a three-piece sound. And it's been progressive since then. This record has virtually no keyboards."

"Test For Echo," which will be released worldwide simultaneously by Atlantic, will be worked aggressively to

Rush's core fan base, according to Atlantic VP Vicki Germaise, who says the title track will go to album rock radio Sept. 6. Atlantic plans to follow that track with "Half The World" and "Virtuality," which Germaise believes have the potential to cross over into pop.

"If you look at where Metallica's getting played—rock-oriented top 40 stations—this really sounds mainstream for them," says Germaise, referring to "Half The World."

Jo Robinson, assistant PD and music director and midday DJ at active rock station WRCX Chicago, finds the Metallica analogy appropriate. She says, "About eight months ago, [PD] Dave Richards said, 'Let's start testing some old Metallica. Let's make sure it's cool to play a lot of Metallica in anticipation of their new album.'"

"Well, when we found out about the Rush album, we looked at each other and said, 'This is the same situation. This will be an event in Chicago the same way the Metallica album was an event. We'll make it seem uncool not to listen to Rush.'"

Retailers are equally excited about the prospect of a Rush album. John Grandoni, director of purchasing at Carnegie, Pa.-based, 155-store National Record Mart, says, "We're already getting some requests for the new album. We've always done well with Rush. I'm sure sales will be excellent in a late-'70s date, but the key will be to go beyond the hardcore fans and spread it to the next generation."

Rush plans to tour behind "Test For Echo" starting Oct. 18 in Albany, N.Y., and will swing through various points in North America until early next year, according to Lifeson. The band will return in the spring of 1997, hitting amphitheaters and sheds.

During that break, Rush will mix its fourth live album, which will feature material recorded on the "Counterparts" and "Test For Echo" tours, as well as previously unreleased tracks from a late-'70s date at London's Hammersmith Odeon, according to Lifeson.

Rush's shows are booked by International Creative Management in the U.S. and the Agency Group in London. The group's music is published by Toronto-based Mark Cain Music.

amusement business

BOXSCORE
TOP 10 CONCERT GROSSES

ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
EAGLES KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD	Feyenoord Stadium Rotterdam, Neth.	July 17	\$1,680,683 (2,832,960 guilders) \$35.60/\$29.55	46,840 sellout	Mojo Concerts
COUNTRY AMERICA: WILLIE NELSON/WAYLON JENNINGS (27), TANYA TUCKER (28), BROOKS & DUNN/HANK WILLIAMS JR. (29), TRACY LAWRENCE (30), LITTLE TEXAS, PATTY LOVELESS (28), JOE DIFFIE (30), OTHERS	Sunnyview Expo Park Oshkosh, Wis.	June 27-30	\$1,578,752 \$40/\$22.50	56,384 100,000, four shows	Starshow Presents
TINA TURNER BRIAN KENNEDY	Croke Park, Dublin	June 28	\$1,510,000 (948,733 pounds) \$40/\$35/\$30	40,000 sellout	Aiken Promotions
KISS MELVINS (14) NIXONS (16)	Rosemont Horizon Rosemont, Ill.	July 14, 16	\$1,156,520 \$50/\$35	29,887 two sellouts	Jam Prods.
LOLLAPALOOZA '96: METALLICA, SOUNDGARDEN, RAMONES, RANCID, PSYCHOTICA, RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, AND OTHERS	South Florida Fair- grounds West Palm Beach, Fla.	July 18	\$1,109,258 \$38	29,191 35,000	Cellar Door Concerts
BON JOVI PICTUREHOUSE	RDS Stadium Dublin	July 13	\$1,075,000 (673,918 pounds) \$40/\$35	30,000 sellout	Aiken Promotions
H.O.R.D.E. FESTIVAL: BLUES TRAVELER LENNY KRAVITZ RUSTED ROOT NATALIE MERCHANT	Pine Knob Music Theatre Clarkston, Mich.	July 14-15	\$889,865 \$30	32,936 two sellouts	Cellar Door Ritual Inc.
GARTH BROOKS	McNichols Sports Arena Denver	July 18-20	\$850,344 \$18.75	51,512 three sellouts	Varnell Enterprises
LOLLAPALOOZA '96: METALLICA, SOUNDGARDEN, RAMONES, SCREAMING TREES, RANCID, PSYCHOTICA, AND OTHERS	Green Mountain Fair- grounds Pownal, Vt.	July 9	\$809,000 \$38	26,386 27,500	Metropolitan Enter- tainment Group
KISS NIXONS (21) D GENERATION (22)	Civic Arena Pittsburgh	July 21-22	\$768,115 \$40/\$27.50	24,271 two sellouts	DiCesare-Engler Prods.

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