Month-By-Month Scoops For 1981

**AC/DC**
More Dirty Deeds From Australia's Bad Boys

**RUSH**
Power Trio Reveals Secret Plans To Break Down Radio Barriers

**ROLLING STONES**
A Provocative Full-Color Peek At Their U.S. Tour

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How They Turned A Demo Into Their Biggest Hit

**STEVIE NICKS**
She's Got A Pair Of Hits and She's Taking Them On The Road

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Is He Crown Head Of The Rock Gentry Or A Hippie Out Of Time?

**BLUE OYSTER CULT**
Why They Almost Broke Up At Castle Donington

**BILL PAYNE**
Keyboard Tips From A Piano Man

**IAN HUNTER**
Will He Continue On His Own Or Re-Form Mott The Hoople?

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STEVIE NICKS
1981: A special year-end report
News events of the year and the people who made them
(news reports by Philip Bashe)

Jan.-Feb.
Grace Slick rejoins Jefferson Starship, Rockpile splits, Christopher Cross wins five Grammys

Mar.-Apr.
Ringo weds Barbara Bach, Eddie Van Halen marries Valerie Bertinelli, Adam and the Ants invade America, Ozzy bites bird

Rush
The Canadian trio inaugurate the new year with their most accessible work to date, Moving Pictures

AC/DC
You know a band has cemented its fame when it can release a five-year-old LP and have it go double platinum

1982 Rock & Roll Calendar Poster

May-June
Bob Marley dies of cancer, Kim Carnes hits big with "Bette Davis Eyes"

Stevie Nicks
Nicks clicks with her first solo LP, Bella Donna

Billy Squier
"The Stroke" becomes a radio anthem, and Squier becomes a teen idol

July-Aug.
Harry Chapin killed in car crash, Meat Loaf returns

Sept.-Oct.
Stones give sneak preview in Worcester, Massachusetts, Hall and Oates follow Voices with Private Eyes

Nov.-Dec.
Rock comebacks of '81: Moody Blues, Gary U.S. Bonds, Blue Oyster Cult, Steve Winwood

Rolling Stones
A photo essay of the tour of 1981

Music Gear
This month's section includes G.E. Smith showing off his collection of guitars and amps, Billy Payne on piano, consumer report on the G&L 100 Series II guitar, a gift giver's guide to shopping for guitar trimmings, plus a guide to the latest products from the music factory

Letters
Feedback from our readers

Listings
The most complete guide to rock on the road

Front Pages
News from the rock & roll scene

Circus Word Find
Puzzling game for fans

Stage Pass—Blue Oyster Cult
BOC enjoy their most successful LP in years, and fans enjoy their most lavish stage production in years. No lasers, but Godzilla joins the group. Also: Ian Hunter sheds Mick Ronson, keeps his shades on and keeps rocking

Longplayers
Reviews of the new LPs by the Pretenders, John Entwistle, Triumph, Marianne Faithfull and more

Back Pages
Inside information on the rock scene

Circus/S
“EXIT... STAGE LEFT,” A NEW, DIGITALLY-MASTERED, LIVE-PERFORMANCE, TWO-RECORD SET FROM RUSH. IT TRANSFORMS YOU INTO A LIVE AUDIENCE.

Technology has done it. Now you can feel the unmistakable, undeniable, unduplicated kinetic thrill of a live Rush concert, in an album. Through a process known as digital-mastering, they've come as close to the real thing as a recording can.

This second live Rush album is a distillation of Rush’s best performances from their recent tours. You'll hear “Closer to the Heart,” “Spirit of Radio,” and a dozen others—as you've never heard them before. Witness Rush fill the house. Your house. With location sound that sounds alive.

PRODUCED BY RUSH AND TERRY BROWN
they may have become a household name in 1980, but 1981 was the year their music became a household sound. Until last winter Neil Peart, Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson, a trio known as Rush, got more recognition for their bombastic live shows (and sometimes, more infamy) than for their well-crafted but seldom-aired Mercury albums. Moving Pictures, the Canadian band’s 10th release, was the record that changed all that. It appeared in February, and before March was out such surprising hits of radio speakers to which Rush had always been strangers.

After 13 years of work, Rush had forged a real identity, shaking loose the heavy-metal tag that had burdened the band for so long. “We never considered ourselves a heavy metal group, anyway,” snaps blond guitarist Alex Lifeson. “We feel we have more to offer than that.”

At the same time, Rush was playing an exhaustive tour that took the band from Kalamazoo, Michigan on February 20 to East Troy, New York on July 5. There was hardly a free night in between. Man for man, Rush was making itself the biggest North American rock group of spring 1981: The band would go on to play 79 concerts for 905,000 fans, and rake in over $4 million. Unlike the room-demolishing quintet REO Speedwagon, Rush had only three members to divide the spoils among, and never had to dip into its earnings to pay for hotel damages.

“We have better things to do with our time and money,” insists a management spokesman; for example, making sure that Rush albums are engineered to their best potential. “At Stony Lake, Ontario the previous August,” Neil Peart recalls dryly, “we were banished to the barn where we rehearse, and we began assembling ideas. On August 31 we returned to Phase One Studio in Toronto and put together some rough demos of the five songs we’d written at the barn.” With the band was producer Terry Brown, who “killed the air with Gitanes cigarettes,” according to Neil, “and offered criticism and suggestions.” A sixth song, “Witch Hunt” (Peart’s most up-to-date celebration of freedom of choice), was picked unanimously for the forthcoming album’s “full-fledged production number,” to be recorded and overdubbed along the lines of the earlier “Madrigal.”

At one point the proceedings turned almost as sinister as a real New England witch hunt. Explains Peart: “Recording the introduction was a very strange endeavor. We assembled a ‘Vigilante Choir’ [the song makes reference to witch-hunting ‘vigilantes’ like the Rev. Jerry Falwell] made up of the band, our equipment people and friends. The choir sang out in the snow; then we got the sound of the ‘haunted child’ at the beginning. Though the main thrust of our work has always been directed toward live presentation, sometimes it’s nice to take a small dose of studio indulgence.”

In September Rush made the kind of move that can spell the difference between a Top 10 and a Top Three album, embarking on a whirlwind eastern seaboard tour to play some of the new songs live and iron out kinks in the arrangements. “We rehearsed the completed songs whenever possible,” says Peart, “and introduced ‘Tom Sawyer’ and ‘Limelight’ into our shows, although both underwent some changes before being committed to tape.”

When the trio returned to Morin Heights, Quebec on October 2, it had those two songs down so tightly that it was no wonder they were all over international radio a few months later. Significantly, both were in unusually low keys for singer Geddy Lee. “You’ve got to face it,” Lee admits. “Before Moving Pictures we had a very raw sound, and a lot of people didn’t want to put that sound on the radio. Also, I had a very weird voice that people didn’t think was suitable.” Rush dropped the key signatures just enough to force Geddy to sing in a smoky baritone instead of the countertenor wail he’d made famous. Programmers and even housewives couldn’t resist the new Rush sound, with its controlled vocals and its even rhythms. “All through the album,” says Geddy, “we’d lock into a groove, and we’d stay there for a while and hang out. It was a nice change from our old stuff; it didn’t seem so abrupt.”

Adds Jim Sotet, PolyGram Records Executive for National Album Promotion: “Moving Pictures has also been successful because Rush has remained loyal to a rock & roll style. When the band fiddles with reggae on ‘Vital Signs,’ you don’t hear any trendy Kingston accent in the vocal. Rush has never been swayed by fads or by the public relations side of the music business. You never heard a Rush disco record, did you? Even when the guys alter their sound, it’s got to be on their own terms.”

The latest Rush record, Exit Stage Left!, is a double live set that reinterprets songs drawn largely from the four studio LPs made since All The World’s a Stage. Like all Rush’s recent work, the project was carried out under strict band supervision.

“Yes, we made a few repairs to the record,” Neil Peart confides. “A part here and there would ruin an otherwise perfect song, so we patched up the odd bit. Sometimes we had hit the wrong thing, and gone suddenly out of tune. When the two worlds of concerts and studios collide,” he explains, “it creates a real pressure zone for us. It would be so much easier if we were perfect!”

Peart’s penchant for getting things right has been a Rush hallmark ever since the slim, dark drummer joined the band in 1974. A Toronto native, Peart tried out his sticks and mallets in Britain, hoping to establish a reputation, but when childhood friends Geddy Levy and Alex Lifeson fell out with Rush charter drummer John Rutsey after one LP, Peart discovered his real niche.

“We had a pretty definite idea as to what we wanted,” Lee explains, “and as soon as Neil came in and sat behind his kit, we just knew he was right. He was
doing things we'd always wanted to hear behind our music—and Neil is also our man of words." It was Peart's imagination that fueled the futurist space musical 2112 in 1976, and since then he's often been regarded as a near-supernatural being by Rush's trippier fans. But Peart, who lives at a farmhouse and whose tastes run to sailing, skiing and hockey rather than to seances, wants the crowds to understand that he and his partners are people, not "demigods."

Rush will have its hands full till spring with rehearsals and tours of Europe and the U.S. The group is making use of these two dozen or more planned dates to try out the new song "Subdivisions" which, like "Tom Sawyer," is expected to make some headway as a 45.

But when the powerhouse returns to record in Canada in 1982, bands like Van Halen will have to gird themselves more tightly for battle if they hope to beat Rush on its own rock-hard North American ground.