

**POLICE**  
FULL COLOR POSTER

VAN HALEN • RAINBOW • BOOMTOWN RATS  
America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine

JUNE 1981 \$1.50

# CREEM

## RUSH

What's The Hurry?

## RICK NELSON

Travelin' Man Is Back

## CREEM's Guide To ROCK FANS

Duh, umm...

## GARLAND JEFFREYS

Roots, Rock,  
Reggae And  
The Rumour

## ADAM & THE ANTS

New Romantics  
Raid On The USA

## SIR DOUG

Texas Tornado Alert

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## ROKY ERICKSON

1981 Update

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- JERRY LEE LEWIS
- ROSANNE CASH
- BYRNE & ENO
- SMOKEY ROBINSON
- MARVIN GAYE

- JOE ELY
- FUNKADELIC
- ELLEN FOLEY
- BRAINS
- THE NUNS

## THE MAN BEHIND BLONDIE

Chris Stein's Diary On  
Dark Roots, Studio Secrets  
And Hanging Out In  
Hollywood





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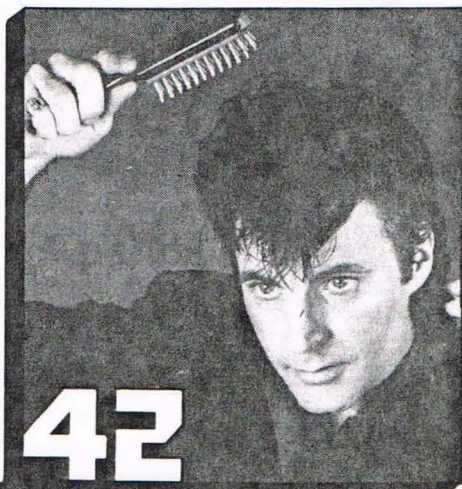
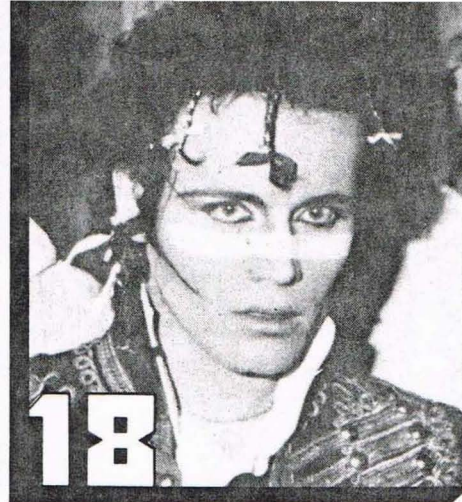
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Seconds earlier, CREEM writer J. Kordosh had entered the room...

the band is running through their sound check. Sherry suggests that they sit somewhere where Rush won't see them, so as not to disturb the sound check. As Cobo seats about 12,000 people and no one else is in the arena, this does not present an insurmountable difficulty. However, it does cause Kordosh to idly wonder exactly what he could do to disrupt the activities of people standing on an elevated stage some hundreds of feet from him. Drop his pencil real loud?

After a half-hour of sitting on their thumbs, the pair return to the hotel, where they are met by CREEM editors Sue Whitall, Dave DiMartino, and Mark Norton. Splendid sea-food cuisine is enjoyed by all, and many drinks as well. The talk turns to whether or not Rush has a sense of humor. Pointing to the Chu-Bop cover of *Permanent Waves*, DiMartino notes: "I'd be worried if a band put out that cover and didn't have a sense of humor." The portentous comment is generally forgotten as the conversation degenerates...but Kordosh will have good reason to remember it later.

After dinner, only Norton doesn't chicken out, agreeing to go to the concert with Kordosh.

*Friday/The Concert:* Well, I'm Kordosh, and I suppose it's time I got this thing into the first person. I wouldn't want anyone to think this is written on some kind of rock or anything.

I was later able to infer that Rush have some sort of collective paranoia about making mistakes during a live performance. Of course, this is intrinsically impossible, as their material is one gigantic mistake unto itself. Although even the running dogs of criticism have been woofing and wagging lately, Rush's last two albums aren't all that much different from their earlier *Alpo*. I mean, how many levels of pretentious boredom can there be?

What's more, this miasma of moronism is about as dangerous as getting shampoo in your eyes. In other words, it has nothing to do with rock 'n' roll, or even crossing the street against the light. I haven't seen every act in the world, but I daresay that the Irish Rovers take more chances onstage.

The best that can be said about these musicians-by-innuendo is that Alex Lifeson is a competent post-Page guitarist. Geddy Lee, who played—excuse me, strapped on—a double-necked bass during one song, plays with all the gusto of a teen-aged girl who's thinking about giving up ballet lessons for punk rock. And Neil Peart can hide behind every triangle, gong, bell, empty paint can, and any other percussion instrument he can think of—adults will prefer one good wallop from Charlie Watts from now until 2112. Wait a minute, I forgot that Geddy Lee is also the group's vocalist. At least, I wanted to.

Since a Rush concert is *de facto* humorless, Norton and I had to "make our own fun." Peart's drum solo—I swear, it's true—during "YYZ" wasn't exactly a scream, but Norton asking, "Does this mean I'll miss *The Love Boat*?" helped a whole lot. We prowled the corridors, interviewing hapless Rush fans (RE-dundant, Kordo). Sample snip from the tape: "Why

Fin Costello

# RUSH: BUT WHY ARE THEY IN SUCH A HURRY?

by J. Kordosh

*Thursday:* Kordosh has been roused from his afternoon nap by Sherry Ring, publicist for Mercury Records. Ring is calling from New York to firm up connections for next week's Rush interviews.

"No problems with Neil and Alex," says Ms. Ring. "But Geddy still says he won't talk to anyone from CREEM."

"Hmmp? Huh? Whannot?" mumbles Kordosh.

"Well, it's that *Eleganza*..."

"Till 'im I dint write it," Kordosh snoozes. "Lots of people cut up in that one."

"I know, but...well, if he sees things are going well with the other guys maybe he'll change his mind."

"His business."

"By the way, did I mention that the album's gone gold?"

"Huh? Album? *Permanent Waves*? Went gold a long time ago, dint?"

"No, the new one!"

"New one? Thought it was just released...has it been released?"

"Two weeks ago! Isn't that something?"

"Yeah, that's something, all right," admits a practically-there Kordosh. Now the question is: *what*?

*Sunday:* Doze-addict Kordosh is glancing at his morning paper through half-closed eyes, hoping there's a good basketball game on TV today. This getting up at 10:30 is killing him. A review of the new Rush album, *Moving Pictures*, catches a mucous-filled eye.

Congenitally unable to understand phrases like "smoldering rock masterpiece," "jazz-influenced virtuosity," and "visceral rock sounds," he begins to nod off until a single sentence falls off the page: "What's most interesting is Neil Peart's perceptive lyrics." Having listened to the LP

“  
Are we  
talking about  
laws, or are we talking  
about morals?  
--Neil Peart  
”

in question, he feels his viscera—which are the internal organs of his body—begin to quiver. Nothing like a smoldering rock review he decides, his head hitting the pillow.

*Thursday:* Sherry Ring has called again, this time to finalize the Rushaviews. Unfortunately, Kordosh—guilty of a rare act of motion—is not home and misses the call. He cheerfully dials Ms. Ring, reversing the charges.

The publicist mentions that *Moving Pictures* will be slotted #8 with a bullet in next week's *Billboard* charts. The dazed Kordosh, by now unable to continue tracking the twelve-inch virtuosity, wonders if he should pray for the souls of all the polyvinyl cows slaughtered in the cause. Later in the evening he listens to the record again, but falls asleep during side two. It might be mentioned that he suffers a similar reaction while reading through the many poems junior high school students send him for critical perusal.

*Friday:* And the 13th of the month as well. A cold wind sweeps Detroit as Kordosh makes his way to the Pontchartrain Hotel to meet the hitherto-disembodied Sherry Ring. Personable and charming, she tells him that Rush was awarded a platinum Chu-Bop for *Permanent Waves*; he is fascinated by the favorable review.

They walk over to Cobo Arena, where





Alex Lifeson looks on in wonder as Geddy Lee demonstrates teen girl gusto...

Bob Alford

do you like Rush?" "Rush ROCK DE-TROIT!" "No, no; Tokyo rocks Detroit." And so on; I brooded over the potential sequel "ZZZ."

But the fun was ending and pretty soon we'd be facing the real music—Neil Peart, lyricist. And I use the word in the broadest sense.

Friday/The First Interview: Backstage with Peart seated across from me (and Norton standing behind me), I thought Peart looked more like 35 than his actual late-20ish. Dressed in a red sweatshirt, blue jeans, and bright blue tennis shoes, he appeared decidedly normal—except for his eyes, which have the zomboid intensity of the you-can't-escape-me zealot.

(I should mention, perhaps, that Peart has no sense of humor whatsoever, although he'll deny that claim. What the hell, maybe he does have some kind of sense of humor, but you'll probably find Kennedy's brain buried in your backyard

**“**  
**You**  
**can't say**  
**the Stones are good**  
**musicians.**  
**--Neil Peart**  
**”**

before you find it. In any case, it goes a long way in explaining what followed.)

First off, we had to clear up—for the sixth or seventh time—exactly *why* Geddy Lee wouldn't talk to us. (Let me make it clear that I rank a conversation with Geddy Lee just below “standing in line” on my list of cool things to do.) The entire thing stems

from a tragic misunderstanding: in the October, 1980 issue of CREEM—I'm pretty sure it was CREEM, but maybe I should check—editors Whittall and DiMartino cooked up a fictional debate between “Janie Jones” and (uh oh) “Geddy Lee Roth” for the ever-whimsical *Eleganza* column. Well, perceptive-guy Geddy sure enough knew where they got *that* name from...although I'm not saying it didn't take him several days of hard thinking.

Satire-hater Peart explained: “It was insulting—the things that were put into his mouth were things that he would never say, in a way that he would never say them. And no one in their right minds would ever want to be compared to David Lee Roth.” Don't take it seriously, David Lee, *I betcha he's only kidding!*

But no! “The magazine did it,” Peart continued.

“The magazine did *what?*” asked Mark “I

TURN TO PAGE 61



Howard Thompson of CBS International has signed Roko to the overseas label with hopes of inciting the domestic company to follow suit. *Roky Erickson & The Aliens* signals an official return to twelve-inch vinyl in well over a decade. The album's cover checks out no less ridiculous than the first Elevators' slab. A photo of Erickson ripped in half, collaged in blue and red sketches of fanged demons and bloody eyeballs, all submerged in a wash of psychedelic vomit. Five ruinic symbols (not the title of the record as overseas trade press mistakenly acknowledges) lifted loosely from the Jacques Tournier *Curse Of The Demon* synopsis spookily stare out from somewhere near the top; scary stuff. The tunes—as they are—mix recent efforts with older (s.a. "Two Headed Dog," "White Faces"). All are exquisite representations of Roky's unbounded perspectives (for lack of a better word!), "Don't Shake Me Lucifer" steals the show with a Chuck Berry format, Roky screaming and ranting no less convincing (and on par w/) moments of "Miss Me." All the vocals (guitar sounds too) have been meticulously EQ'd so it all sounds like a psychedelic record! Frequency-wise—the tremelo'd treble of Erickson's high-pitch register match in synch with the high ends of the guitar so the result converges on the cool kinda sound you'd expect when, uh, records last sounded cool (67?). The metallic shine and vibrato of the melodies and instruments come off just as biting and for-real as the first Elevators disc—why aren't people proclaiming wild-in-the-streets what a masterpiece this is? It's been out for a few months now, where is everyone? Why don't you know about this record? You should.

I've graduated from being a fan of the arcane, to being a fan of impulse and first-person witness. In either case, what I dig and re-relate via personal endeavor has been altered and affected by Roky Erickson. It's an indelible stamp that I hold sacred.

## RUSH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Wish I Were At Bookie's" Norton.  
"The magazine slandered Geddy."

Pouring oil on these troubled waters (and simultaneously looking for my Bic lighter), I said: "Wait a minute. If you took this to court, CREEM would win hands-down. It's clear-cut satire. And there are laws that say that if this is obvious satire, there is no libel."

"Obviously," Peart agreed. "Are we talking about laws, though, or are we talking about morals? It was immoral; it wasn't funny."

"I'm glad you mentioned that," I lied. "I see a lot of threads running through your lyrics, but one I can't pick up on is humor. Is there a reason for this? Is there something I'm missing?"

"I'm not a comedian. I'm a musician and a lyricist...I'm not interested in being a humorist."

Well, you and me and Johnson makes three, Neil, old pal. Knowing a good thing, I pressed on: "Do you see rock music as being funny in any way?"

"Hmm," mull'd the author of "By-Tor And The Snow Dog." "Some people I think, are—'witty'—put it that way," he

said, pronouncing the word "witty" in an exaggerated sissy tone.

"It's just that this—what I would call a lack of humor—is what let you guys in for a lot of criticism," I offered.

"No, no. You see, you're dealing with cynical, jaded critics here, who in a lot of cases, are frustrated musicians. The people who have given us the 'humorless' tag are the frustrated, jaded people...cynical... who think the only thing that's good is what's funny and off-color."

I didn't have the heart to tell Neil the *real truth*, namely that this frustrated musician hoo-hah is just the tip of the iceberg. What we *really* are is frustrated writers. Now, can anybody guess why?

"If we laughed at our work then we'd laugh at our audience, just like so many bands do. They say, 'Hah, these stupid schmucks,' and they [the stupid schmucks] soak it up. We don't look at it that way. We give our audience the credit of being as intelligent as we are." Danger! Danger! Straight line!! But who are these blackguards who are out there laughing at you jerks anyway?

"There are lots of people who do laugh at their audience. Lots of bands and lots of writers and lots of authors do it."

"But, let's face it—rock music isn't Jesus Christ back on earth," I said. "It's simply another mode of entertainment. It can be funny."

"If you look at it that way. To me, it's a reflection of my life. I spent the better part of my life learning how to do it, so to me it's not a joke."

Well, seeing that things were *really moving along*, I figured I'd try the old aren't-you-guilty-now-that-you're-rich chestnut.

"Do you feel guilty at all about making as much money as you do compared to other people who work every bit as hard you do?" I equivocated.

"Uh, no; on the contrary. There's no amount of money that could pay you back for what you go through doing what we do."

"What about the other people?"

"Which other people?"

"You know, the ones that work for a living."

"It's really not the same. I mean, I have done ordinary jobs. You can't go out in front of 10,000 people and make a fool of yourself. It's really not the same as going to work in a factory everyday, I'm sorry," he said, adding his nervous-tic laughter.

"But I've heard the Stones sloop up songs beyond belief—I mean, *the Stones*—I heard Keith Richard come in on a chorus of 'Honky Tonk Women' where there was no chorus! It was OK."

"They're the people that laugh at their audience," explained the patient Peart.

"The Stones?"

"Sure they do. You don't think they're good." This wasn't a question; it was a statement.

"I think they've written a good song or two."

"You can't say they're good musicians," countered Peart, who was evidently talking about some other Stones than the ones I've been listening to.

"They're good musicians. They're astute songwriters."

"Astute? In other words, clever

marketing strategists."

A little later, this "marketing" baloney was sliced a little thicker. We'd gotten around to the sophomoric ending of "Spirit of the Radio" ("For the words of the profits are written on the studio wall, concert hall/Echoes with the sounds of salesmen"); I'd asked Peart if he was consciously emulating Paul Simon when he wrote it.

"This is where a sense of humor comes into it. I was sitting there thinking of the conclusion of the song and the parody came into my mind. And I thought, 'Well, either this is very stupid or it's very great.'"

Right.

"But all it says is...salesmen as artists I can see as an ideal, but they have no place telling us what to play onstage and they have no place in the recording studio telling us how to write songs...any more than a car salesman."

"I imagine any band with any integrity would feel the same way," I naively added.

"But you're talking as if every band had that. They don't."

"Well, I'm sure the Beatles didn't have some salesman standing over their shoulders saying, 'Hey,' write 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da.'"

"You must imagine they lived with the pressure, though. And you certainly can imagine—well, it's a lot of speculation involved, but I think it's safe to say that Paul McCartney does not have a lot of artistic integrity."

"Possibly. But, on the other hand, there's no question that Paul McCartney is a very talented person. He uses that talent in a certain way."

"He's a prostitute."

"Strong words. Very strong words."

"Not to me," said Peart. "I don't think a prostitute's an evil thing."

Nor do I. And—again, there's a lot of speculation involved *here*, too—I think it's safe to say that Paul McCartney can not only play the bass better than Geddy Lee (I won't mention the vocals), but that he can probably play guitar better than Alex Lifeson, play drums better than Neil Peart, and write about 80,000 times better than Rush and the National Hockey League put together. I mean, if you think "Mary Had A Little Lamb" and "Someone's Knocking" were *outright drivel*, I invite you to listen the "The Temples of Syrinx" or "Cygnus X-1 Book II" by Neil & Co.

Besides, McCartney's richer.

☆☆☆

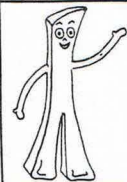
Well, well, well. Where does Peart get all these crazy ideas, anyway? Now, I can't say for sure—but I asked him about their ubiquitous logo (you know, the *really cool* manannardstar) and he said: "All it means is the abstract man against the mass. The red star symbolizes any collectivist mentality."

And now, to quote Ayn Rand (*For The New Intellectual*): "(The Fountainhead) was published in 1943. Its theme is: individualism versus collectivism (my italics). The story presents the career of Howard Roark, an architect and innovator, who breaks with tradition, recognizes no authority but his own, etc., ad nauseam."

Not that we weren't tipped off early on, when—while talking about writers—Norton said: "What about Ayn Rand?"

"What about her?" said Peart.





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Well, we asked some really clever questions that are known only to select rock critics (i.e., "Do you read her?" "Do you like her?"), when M.J. asked about Howard Roark? "Would you identify with someone like Howard Roark?" asked my jaded cynical comrade.

"Certainly," said Peart, adding the inevitable tic-laughter.

"He was a motherfucker, he really was," said the always-slow-to-express-himself Norton. "He did what he wanted to...he was shunned by society. Why don't you write an album about him? Howard Roark...all the Howard Roarks there are in the world."

"I think I have," Peart said. "I think everything I do has Howard Roark in it, you know, as much as anything. The person that I write for is Howard Roark."

I don't want to add that many people consider Ayn Rand to be a *prima facie* fascist, but I will anyway. Later on I tried to pin Peart down on his feelings toward the right wing. "I have as many quarrels with the so-called right wing as I do with the left wing, you know. I can't stand the whole concept of law-and-order and authority and everything, which is obviously the precept of right-wingism and you know it as well as I do. If you don't, you can take my word on it and you can take it to the bank."

And no problems with the bank, eh? "It is a life that no amount of money can ever compensate for," the suffering drummer told me. "That's why I could never, ever feel guilty about the dollar I earn." You and McCartney, pal; you and McCartney.

*Saturday/The Second Interview:* Dead tired, I went back to Cobo early the next evening to talk with Alex Lifeson, Rush's guitarist. Possibly the only *homo sapien* in the group, Lifeson—who looked as beat as I felt—donned a nondescript blue ski jacket and mittens as we adjourned to a *very cold* back room somewhere in the Cobo maze.

After Peart, anything short of William Shockley would be anticlimactic, but Lifeson did his best to fulfill the interview obligation. He gave me his opinion of the previous night's show ("...weird...this audience is really a fired-up crowd; really a lot of pushing and shoving"), success ("For us, everything has been a gradual climb"), and his general dissatisfaction with performing ("It loses a specialness...certainly, for me when we started out it was really exciting, but I can't really say that I feel the same anymore.")

Lifeson was flat, bored, and probably distracted as well. He offered none of the Peart hard-line, showing regret over missing his kid's birthday ("again") and enthusiasm over professional hockey. In other words, he seemed to be a normal person. Much more at ease than Peart (Example: I asked them both why they don't put their pictures on their album covers. "We're not selling ourselves," said Peart. "Well, they're *inside* the album," said Lifeson), the guitarist seemed to be—and this is only my impression—looking for something interesting to do with his spare time. He told me that he builds models and has taken up flying to occupy himself.

"I'm nobody special; it's no big deal," he said. "I don't think a lot of people *want* to see it that way, really." Believe me, this guy takes some sort of Normal Pills. He did let

me in on the Rush songwriting m.o., which I must admit is a seeming puzzler.

"Neil will bring down a draft of lyrics... and (Geddy and I) will sit down together and take it from there." Jeez, I thought I felt sorry for him *before*...

*Saturday/The Denouement:* I left Cobo with a backstage pass, having no intention of sitting through another Rush extravaganza. Throwing critical caution to the winds, I whipped my car to the front of the arena and looked for the youngest, most fresh-faced Rush fan I could find. Two guys and two girls—surely no more than 17—came by.

"Are you guys really big Rush fans?" I asked.

"Jesus, yes."

"OK...here's a genuine, honest-to-God backstage pass that will allow you to go behind the scenes," I said, dangling the sticky square. "Just slap it on your leg and they shouldn't hassle you."

One kid got down on his knees. "What do I have to do?"

Throwing him the pass, I just said good luck.

*Saturday/Postscript:* I would like to thank everyone who helped make this story possible, in particular: Sherry Ring, Neil Peart, Alex Lifeson, and Mark Norton.

Not to forget Geddy Lee, of course. I really enjoyed not talking to you. In fact, I can't remember enjoying not talking to anyone as much as I enjoyed not talking to you. Let's not talk again real soon, OK?

## LETTER FROM BRITAIN

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perhaps suitably—as though she's been embalmed. *Trax's* emphasis is on London gigs, reviews and venues, on the film and music listings in the city that so far have been the sole domain not of the music papers per se, but of the leftists and middle class intellectuals' cultural watering hole *Time Out*. Their writers include—as usual—a fair smattering of ex's. Brian Harrigan, ex-news editor from *MM* and Mark Ellen, a fresh faced ex-NME freelance (reportedly told not to darken their doors again when he went off to earn a crust at *NME*). *NME's* Giovanni Dadomo pops up again here, as does *NMN's* Tom Nolan.

Issue 4 bills the use of Spandau Ballet as a feature not because of their place in the New Romantics field so much as the fact that—yes folks—they live in London; the most interesting thing about a Shock (a mime band) feature is the headline (culminating in "they make records on which they don't play," perhaps not surprisingly for a mime group); an article on the waiter character from *Fawlty Towers* (the TV output of Monty Python's John Cleese gives a hint that future issues may broaden interviews away from just music). *Trax* is, when all is said and done, respectable. A spin-off from *Girl About Town* (a huge money-spinning give-away that exists solely off adverts for secretarial jobs). Aimed obviously at a readership they see as having grown out of the existing music papers, I suspect its existence worries the Big Three more in terms of the advertising revenue it may pinch than any esoteric considerations.

This same week a look at *NME*, *MM* and