

SPIRIT OF RUSH

JULY 1996

ISSUE 34



Spirit of *Rush*

EDITORIAL

Have you ever had one of those days, when nothing has gone right and everything has gone wrong? Well the last two weeks have felt like that. What with final rehearsals for *The Jack Secret Show* gigs, and work.

I've been pulling my hair out trying to get this issue finished. Including may I say trying to get you an exclusive of the tracklist for *Test for Echo*. Well understandably it's been hard because the fact that we are currently just under two months from release (August 27th). The thing is the next issue of *Spirit* will be out the week the album comes out, so no exclusive review this time. Anyway to cut a long story short, I managed to get a tracklist from a slightly dubious source at *Atlantic Records* in NYC. You will find the list on page 19. There are 10 titles listed, there is either 1 or 2 missing. Also these titles have NOT been confirmed*, let's just hope that they're legit.

The tribute album, *Working Man: A Show of Bands*, is still heading for release on July

23rd, but I understand there maybe some problems with the release, more on that in the next issue (if it doesn't make release). I've heard a copy of it, and to be honest with you I'm pleasantly surprised, it kicks. *Natural Science* has to be heard to be believed.

A tour is set to start in October on the East Coast of the States. I've had no confirmed dates as of yet. Next issue we will have a list of the dates. I will be heading over for the first 2 or 3 shows if anyone would like to tag along then either drop me a line at the editorial address or to my Email address (in the panel on the right).

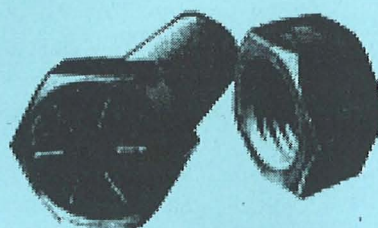
On the centre pages you will find a map and some last minute details about the convention. There are still plenty of tickets left, so if you're still not sure about coming, then all I can say it's bound to be a good day, with some surprises, nuff said. See you there or in issue 35.

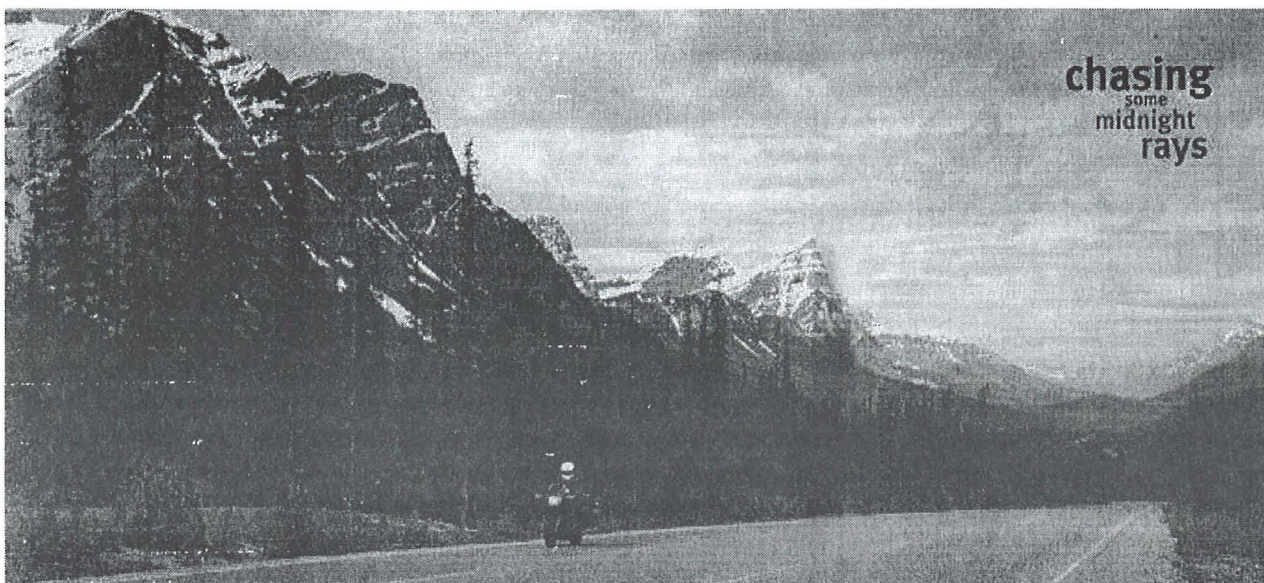
Stewart - 5pm 18th June.

23 Garden Close,
Chinbrook Road,
Grove Park,
London,
SE12 9TG.
England.

Editor Mick Burnett -
mick@yyz.com;
Co-Editor Stewart
Gilray -
stewart@yyz.com;
Typist Janet Balmer
Printers C.J.L.
Contributors Andy Piercy
- andy@yyz.com; Steve
Adams; Neil Elliott -
neil@yyz.com; Janet
Balmer; Dave Milcoff -
dave@yyz.com; SRO/
Anthem.

Spirit of
Rush





By Neil Peart

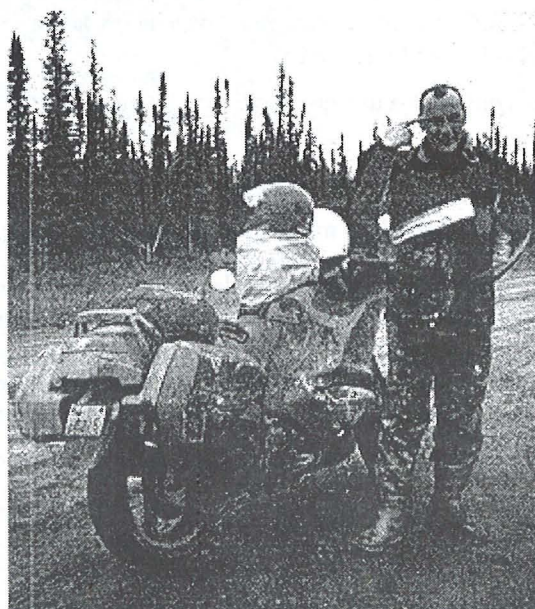
Taken from "Cycle Canada", April 1996

Far beyond the end of the rainbow, on his way north of 60, Neil Peart finds splendour in the mud. Or perhaps not...

Neil Peart is the drummer and lyricist for the rock combo Rush, and a long-distance touring rider with a penchant for dumb ideas.



Somewhere along the greasy Mackenzie Highway leading to Yellowknife, Neil Peart, (above right) considers blowing his brains out. Fortunately, his finger was unloaded. Otherwise, Neil wouldn't have lived to tell us of his rainbow-blessed journey north, which included a climb on the Columbia Icefield (below right).



It was a dumb idea to begin with, and I blame myself. Brutus and I were planning a two week motorcycle tour of Western Canada, and I mentioned that it might be fun to go farther north. Far enough, perhaps, to see the midnight sun.

We scanned the map and checked distances. There weren't many choices; in the far north, roads are few and inhabited destinations limited. A tempting little line high on the map, the Dempster Highway, reaches all of the way to Inuvik. And the Arctic Circle. But no, not this time. Same for Alaska or the Yukon—we could never make it there and back in two weeks.



Some fool suggested Yellowknife, and we started ciphering. The return journey, with a few scenic tangents, would be about 13,000 km; allowing for a day in Yellowknife, this would mean averaging more than 900 km a day, one day after another. Factor in uncertain weather, mountains, some long and remote stretches of unpaved road in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, various police forces interfering with our idea of a proper pace and mechanical difficulties, and it looked a little daunting.

At the same moment we looked up from the map and nodded solemnly to each other. Yes, we would go north of 60 to catch some midnight rays.

HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE

Thus we set off on a long, hard journey, on our sport-touring BMWs—great for the paved roads, but not for the other part of the route: A Thousand Miles of Dirt. And worse: heavy rain in the Northwest Territories would turn a construction zone into a quagmire, and send us and our bikes sprawling in the mud. It was then, as I lay in the muck smeared in greasy clay and looked at my fallen motorcycle, that I knew for sure.

It was a dumb idea to begin with. And I blamed Brutus.

GOING NOWHERE, REALLY FAST

As a general rule, we favour two-lane roads (with the odd passing lane), the choicest scenery (with a nice hotel and a good wine list nearby) and creative routing (meandering around the countryside for hundreds of kilometres, but still getting to the hotel by cocktail time). Our official motto:

"Taking forever/to go nowhere/really fast."

This plan we put into effect. On the move with the rising sun, usually by 6 a.m., we made rapid progress while the roads were quiet and the world was still waking. Breakfast would come later at a small-town diner. In the first days we rounded Lake Huron and then the North Shore of Lake Superior, with its landscape of glacier-scoured rocks and windswept pines so beloved by Canadian landscape painters.

Beyond Thunder Bay, a hot prairie wind replaced the cool lake breeze, and in Manitoba the forest drew back like a curtain. The wide green prairie opened on every side and the world seemed like a disk, with 360 degrees of horizon. A quick stop at the BMW dealer in Winnipeg corrected a leaky gasket and a faulty electrical relay, and we continued west with fresh oil and filters.

In Saskatchewan, a scenic loop through the Qu'Appelle River Valley lured us off the Trans-Canada. On a sudden ridge, we stopped and looked out over the deep canyon, across to the ancient corrugated walls of the other side,

and down to where a tiny tractor plowed up a long cloud of dust trailing in the still air.

In this prairie province, the Qu'Appelle Valley is, for lack of much else, a significant geological feature. The winding, grassy trails of a ski hill have even been carved into the valley wall. Yet, on the whole, the Saskatchewan landscape doesn't seem flat exactly, but more rumpled and rippled—a wide green duvet. As Brutus and I sped over the vast grid of empty roads, the fields of wheat and canola were bright from the early summer rains. My helmet filled with the perfume of lilacs as we passed the isolated farm houses. In Melville, a line of freight cars waited by the towering grain elevators—a classic prairie scene. Over a tall glass of lemonade outside the Waverley Hotel, Brutus and I discussed how our gas mileage seemed to be radically diminished by these "prairie autobahns." Some quirk of the atmosphere, no doubt.

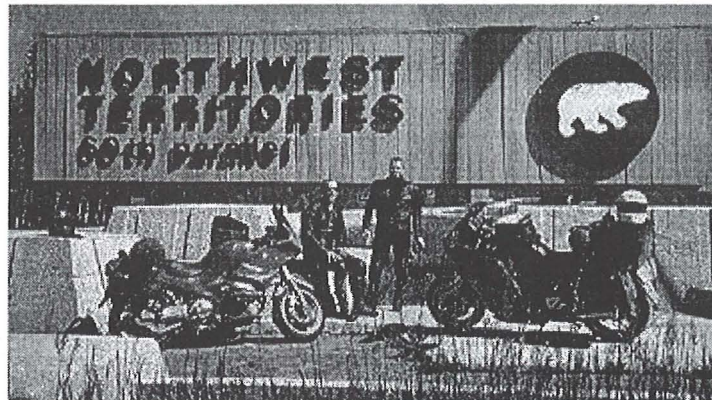
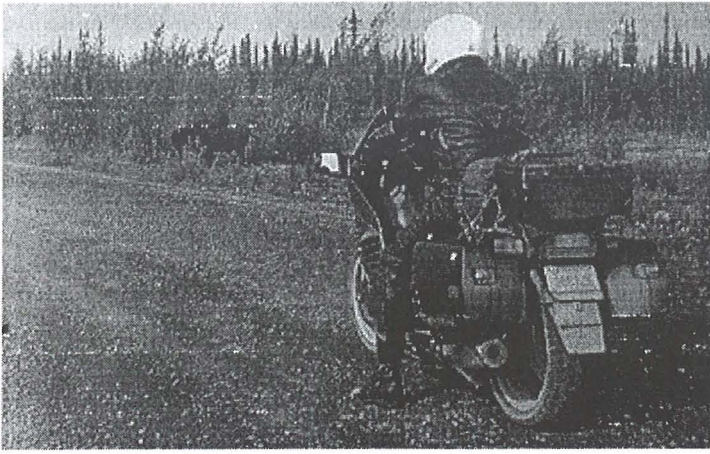
WESTWARD HO

Thunderstorms whipped the streets of Regina that night and kept us awake to watch the lightning play. By dawn the prairie sky was clear, and the streets washed clean. We headed out of town on to the Trans-Canada—until Brutus ran out of gas, a hundred metres short of Chubby's gas station. It turned out his gas tank hadn't been seated properly when the relay was replaced, and now there were three full litres out of reach of the fuel pickup. This would be corrected at the BMW dealer in Calgary, where we also collected some needed supplies—more foam ear plugs, a radar detector for Brutus, a screw for my sunglasses and a good Japanese dinner with flasks of hot sake.

After breakfast at Lake Louise (still one of the most beautiful places I've been) we headed north on the Columbia Icefields Parkway. This was territory new to both of us, so we'd planned this day to allow time for scenic overlooks, hikes away from the road to view waterfalls or the turquoise waters of Lake Peyto framed among the snow-painted mountains. Time was set aside for photos and videos, wildlife viewing (black bear, white-tailed and mule deer, moose, wild bighorn sheep, ravens, magpies), and a climb up the Athabasca Glacier (breath-taking, in both senses).

The Columbia Icefields Parkway demanded time for hiking and wildlife spotting. An angry-looking bison (top left opposite) at the side of the Liard Highway caused a moment's pause while heading toward the Northwest Territories. Before the rain and mud there was dust, torrents of dust, on the long trail north across permafrost and muskeg.

Jasper is a pleasant town catering to outdoors lovers, and from there we turned west, leaving at dawn. Mist hung on the lakes and mountains, and a herd of mule deer, heavy-antlered stags, rested in the dew-soaked grass. Through



the Yellowhead Pass, we rode below Mount Robson (highest peak in the Rockies), and on into the northern British Columbia interior. The weather remained fickle, and eventually we decided that the only way to be prepared in B.C. was to wear our rainsuits all the time. With our sunglasses.

Through this remote area I had thought we could dispense with the radar detector. It was a dumb idea, and I blame myself. Sure enough, near the middle of nowhere we were stopped and charged with exceeding the posted limit. Brutus gave me a verbal thrashing, and I deserved it.

From Hazelton, a long road led away into the bush. Paved at first, it faded to gravel, then became narrow and rough until finally we reached the Sportsman's Kispiox Lodge. We checked into a nicely appointed little cabin my favourite kind of accommodation, but a vanishing species. The swift-moving Kispiox River bustled between the trees, snow-dusted mountains rose in the distance and a sudden rainbow glowed in the south. From its end came not a pot of gold, but a Harley, roaring into my photograph and away up the little gravel road. We wondered what he was doing there; perhaps he rode by and saw our BMWs, and wondered the same about us.

The Stewart-Cassiar Highway leads straight north to the Alaska Highway, and it was partly paved, and partly not. The day was partly clear, and partly... not. We wore our sunglasses... and our rainsuits. Most of the traffic consisted of RVs, many of them travelling in wagon trains,

either for safety in numbers, or because once they caught up with each other, none of them could pass (having the bulk and acceleration of a glacier).

Near the end of the longest day yet—more than 1,100 km—we were treated to the best road yet: the Alaska Highway, east from Watson Lake in the Yukon. Now travelling against the flow of RVs, all heading “north to Alaska,” we had the road to ourselves. As my notes recount: “The road becomes a winding, fast delight, and the efficient. All weariness, pain, and fatigue are totally forgotten, lost in the sheer delight of riding a challenging road through majestic mountains.”

After that, things turned wild. The Liard Highway, a wide, straight gravel road, leads into the Northwest Territories (where it is called, more accurately, the Liard Trail), through uninterrupted stretches of low forest, alternately dark with spruce or bright with aspens. This is the land of permafrost, without which this part of the north would be a desert—the earth, frozen year-round, holds enough water to support the muskeg swamps and scrub forest.

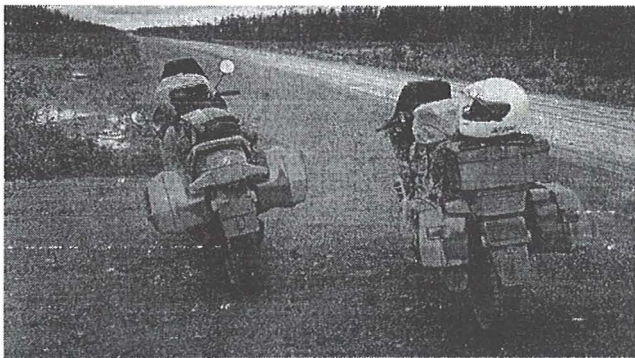
Torrents of dust on the road forced us to ride well separated, and at one point I came upon Brutus stopped in the middle of the gravel, pointing ahead to a large black shape at the roadside. “It’s a bear,” he said. “What do you think we should do?”

After a moment’s consideration, I said “I’ll ride by it really

slowly, and you have the video camera ready when it starts chewing on my leg.” When I pulled alongside, the bear sat up, faced me with its ears erect, then turned and bounced into the woods.

Another time it was a bison, a huge, angry-looking bull with flies swarming around its red eyes. Once again I rode by slowly, wondering what he would do, but the bison shook his massive head a couple of times and lumbered into the bush.

Whenever we stopped for a break or to look at a waterfall, another kind of wildlife closed in: the infamous northern insects. The big flies were called “bulldogs” by the locals, and seemed to be attracted by the heat of our motorcycles, while the clouds of mosquitoes were after our blood.



TWENTY KINDS OF MUD

It is said that the Inuit have 20 words to describe different types of snow, and soon we learned that unpaved roads are like that too. Sometimes a hard-packed surface let us cruise easily at 80 or 100 km/h, while on other sections it felt as if we were surfing through the loose stones. If we looked far enough ahead, we could pick out the sweet spot—the groove left by trucks—and simply let our wheels follow it. Sometimes the bikes would oscillate beneath us, fishtailing in rhythm, and we had to learn to conquer our instinct to hit the brakes or back off the throttle—pour it on, as a dirt rider would, and you can ride on through.

A ferry carried us over the Liard River to Fort Simpson, far enough north now that at 11:00 p.m. I was reading by the light from the window of my hotel room (which had a bullet hole in it), and watching kids play in the streets outside. Next morning we were on the Mackenzie Highway, headed for Yellowknife, and that’s when the rain started.

After almost 300 km of wet gravel and bleak wilderness, during which we encountered a handful of other vehicles, a ferry carried us over the Mackenzie River (the ferries are replaced in winter by “ice bridges”; the trucks just drive across the frozen river, which has the safe load ratings

posted on the shore). The rain continued, harder now.

Over lunch at the Snowshoe Inn in Fort Providence, passing truck drivers told us this was the first big rain since the snow had melted, back in April, and if we were headed for Yellowknife... they shook their heads.

It seems no matter where you go in Canada, it’s a two-season country: winter and construction. The road’s rutted clay surface was awash, and had the consistency of paint. With our wide, relatively slick tires, it was like skidding around on a greased griddle, and we gushed slowly through deep, slippery trenches. Brutus’s back wheel caught a protruding boulder, and he went down, sliding to a stop with the bike on its side. Slipping and dancing, I managed to park my bike on its centerstand and skate over to help him. Once his bike was righted, with the loss of a mirror, I couldn’t get moving again—each of my wheels was caught in a different rut, and the back wheel spun uselessly, pushing me sideways down the road.

Brutus came over to help, but it was all we could do just to stand up. Soon my bike was down in the muck, and I followed, flailing into the mud-wrestling pit. A tractor-trailer driver had been hanging back, waiting for us to pull ourselves together, and as it came skidding up to us, I flagged him down and called up to ask him how long this lasted. If it went on much longer, we might be facing defeat.

“Maybe five clicks more,” he told me, before trying to drive off, but he couldn’t get the big rig moving again. As Brutus and I half-rode, half-waddled in the other direction, the truck’s drive wheels spun in the mud, and the truck went nowhere. After stopping for me. I blamed myself, and I’m sure the truck driver did too. No doubt he’s still hoping to meet me sometime, on a dark highway.

MIDNIGHT TAN

After a 10-hour struggle through the gravel and mud of the Mackenzie Highway, our first stop in Yellowknife was the spray wash, where we stood in our rainsuits and sprayed each other before we turned to the bikes. The Explorer Hotel is a surprisingly luxurious high-rise on the edge of town, and its restaurant made an excellent reward for our sufferings: Arctic char, caribou and buffalo steak, fine wine, and a decadent finish of Cherries Jubilee and cognac.

The next day we explored the city, hoping the bright sun and fresh breeze would dry out the Mackenzie Highway before we faced it again on our way back. Yellowknife’s population is only about 12,000, but it’s the centre of government and business for a huge territory (a million square miles, or one-fifth of Canada’s area). Along its tidy

paved streets, modern buildings house branches of most of Canada's franchise stores.

In contrast, the Old Town reflects the community's beginnings, with lanes that wind around a bay of Great Slave Lake. Float planes still take off and land all day, serving hunters, remote settlements, mines, oil rigs and defence installations. The rustic Wildcat Cafe and the Bush Pilot's Brew Club overlook the shore, and the daring exploits of the early bush pilots are also documented in the city's museum, which we visited before our appointment at the local Honda dealer.

It was time for another oil change, which we could have done ourselves in the hotel parking lot, but in these enlightened times, what do you do with the used oil? Also, playing in all that mud had gummed up something in my engine—it backfired loudly all over town while rough-looking characters ran for cover—and I hoped a mechanic might be able to help. The dealer was mainly geared to ATVs and snowmobiles, but the capable young mechanic, Mark, was able to find a sticking cable and get my fuel-injection back in synch.

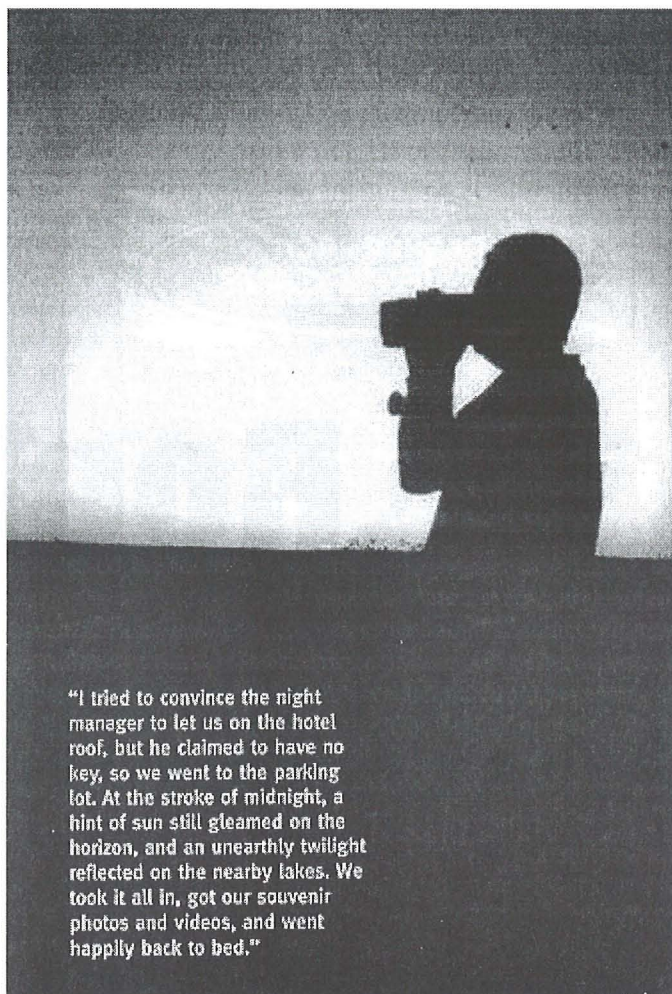
After running on five or six hours sleep a night for a week, we were in bed early that evening, with our alarms set for midnight the summer solstice. When I called Brutus's room, his sleepy voice told me he'd already decided "fuggit" and turned off his alarm, but now he growled: "Okay, let's get it over with." Nice talk, with our goal finally at hand. I tried to convince the night manager to let us on the hotel roof, but he claimed to have no key, so we went to the parking lot. At the stroke of midnight, a hint of sun still gleamed on the horizon, and an unearthly twilight reflected on the nearby lakes. We took it all in, got our souvenir photos and videos, and went happily back to bed.

Ahead of us now was the long homeward journey, down through Alberta to the Peace River and Edmonton, where we would pick up new tires and brake pads, then east on the Yellowhead Highway through Saskatoon and more of Saskatchewan's wide green duvet. Near Winnipeg, we would pick up the Trans-Canada again, but the sunshine would end at the Ontario border, and wind and rain would chase us the rest of the way home.

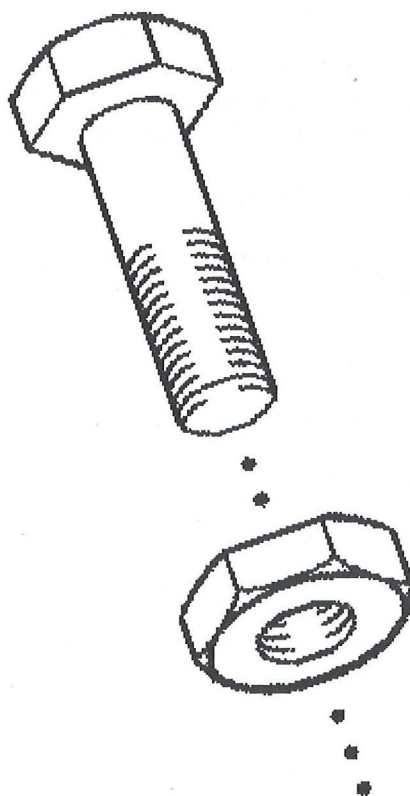
After yet another thousand-kilometre day, with cold and rain and strong winds gusting off Lake Superior, we huddled in the Parkway Motel in Wawa, Ontario. We were deeply fatigued, chilled and wind-battered. Wet clothing was spread everywhere to dry. The Weather Channel talked about more cold, more wind, more rain. A taxi delivered take-out pizza to our motel room.

At the same moment we looked up and nodded solemnly to each other. It had been a dumb idea to begin with. I blamed myself.

Brutus did too.



"I tried to convince the night manager to let us on the hotel roof, but he claimed to have no key, so we went to the parking lot. At the stroke of midnight, a hint of sun still gleamed on the horizon, and an unearthly twilight reflected on the nearby lakes. We took it all in, got our souvenir photos and videos, and went happily back to bed."



King Lerxst

on Rockline

January 29th 1996

[Steve Downes (announcer)]: Tonight, Rockline is very proud give you the opportunity to speak with Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson.

Well, if an idle mind is the Devil's workshop, then old Beelzebub's got nothing on Alex Lifeson. What does he do on his first extended vacation from Rush in about twenty years? What else - goes back into the studio to make an album. This time, however, it is to fulfil a personal desire to write and record music that is uniquely his own. Hence, *Victor*, Alex Lifeson's first ever solo project.

We're going to be hearing what Alex did on his vacation as he joins us live from our Canadian flagship station Q107 in Toronto tonight. Good evening, Alex.

[Alex Lifeson]: How ya doin', Steve?

[SD]: Very good, thank you. I hope the new year finds you well.

[AL]: Very, very well.

[SD]: Do you recall, Alex, when it was that the idea, or, more exactly, the desire to do a solo album first came upon you?

[AL]: I remember thinking about it in the late 70's. I think we all thought about it at that time, without making any kind of real definite movement towards it. After all these years of recording and touring, I realise now, after doing my project, that it would've been impossible until I had a length of time like I did to work on it.

I worked ten months on the record. The last three months, I worked every day on it, and I didn't stop thinking about it for some minute of that whole time.

[SD]: Wow.

[AL]: So, it really required that sort of a commitment.

[SD]: And really being able to step back from the band completely, as you all did.

[AL]: Yeah, I think we needed to do that, regardless. At the end of the last tour, Geddy and his wife Nancy had a baby girl, which was about a week after the tour ended, so their timing was perfect.

But, I couldn't see myself sitting around for a year and a half not doing anything more constructive than working on my golf game. So, I kind of dove into it at that point.

[SD]: You know, all three of you in Rush participate equally in the creation of the music, and the execution of the music of that band. But, I think a case could be made that of the three of you, we probably know the least about who Alex Lifeson is. Would you agree with that?

[AL]: Possibly. I suppose in some ways I've been a little bit more in the background, but I think I'm certainly an integral part of Rush and the sound of Rush. The other two guys happen to be brilliant at what they do, so...

[SD]: Well, there's no question about that part of it, but I think it's more in terms of how much you choose to reveal about yourself.

[AL]: Well, exactly. I think for all three of us, we're very protective of our private lives. You know, when you do something like we do, and you're always on the road, and you're always in somebody's face, it's important to have something that's not really accessible to a lot of people.

[SD]: Right, that doesn't belong to everyone else. But -

[AL]: Exactly. I was just going to say that our private lives have been that thing. It's been an anchor for us, really, in this sea of craziness that touring and being in a rock band is.

[SD]: Delighted to be playing some tracks from the album. This, as a matter of fact, is the first single from Victor. It is called "Promise". Alex Lifeson, on Rockline.

[SD]: Yeah, how 'bout all them new years resolutions? [laughs] Keep that promise. That is from the album Victor. That's the name of Alex Lifeson's new solo CD project.

Alex is joining us tonight to talk about that, and anything else that might be on your mind.

[SD]: We are back live tonight, the phone ringing' off the hook for your calls for Alex Lifeson.

Alex Lifeson with us, our first stop, San Diego, tonight. Taylin is on the line listening to ROC 102.1. Taylin, you're on with Alex Lifeson.

[Caller]: Hey, how ya doin', Alex? Good evening.

[AL]: Good, Taylin, how you doin'?

[Caller]: Pretty good. I'm just kind of wondering what the inspiration or the driving force behind "Promise" is. Like are these songs that you've been, holding onto, during the course of Rush, and just decided to make an album now, or is it just something that's hit you now?

[AL]: No, none of the songs were things that I had in my own little catalogue. I kind of approached everything fresh. I co-wrote a number of songs with Bill Bell who is another guitar player friend of mine that I'd met working on something else a couple of years ago, and [in funny, high voice] Pooky! and I have become very close, good friends. [laughs]

[SD]: [laughs] You must be, if you can call him "Pooky". [laughs]

[AL]: [laughs] Yeah, well that is kinda weird when we're in public. We stopped holding hands, so it's not quite as difficult as it was.

[SD]: Oh, good. [laughs]

[AL]: But, we wrote a number of songs, ["Promise"] being one of them. Really, it was just fresh, and it was nice to work with somebody else; I love working with Geddy and Neil very, very much, but it was, again, I think really good for me to be around other influences and around other people, and to be in a different situation completely.

[SD]: Those of you who are familiar with the work of another fine Canadian artist, Tom Cochrane, might recognise the name Bill Bell. The two of them have worked together over the years, have they not, Alex?

[AL]: Yeah, that's right. Actually, Bill did a lot of work on Tom's record last summer, as well as a couple of other records at the same time - Larry Gowan, and Jim Stockwood as well, who he's been working with quite extensively. So, Bill's been quite busy. He's a *fabulous* guitarist, and a terrific person to be with; full of life and energy. I really like his company.

[SD]: Down to Florida we go. Robert is in Coral Springs tonight, listening to 94.9 ZETA in Miami this evening. Hi, Robert.

[Caller]: Hi. Yeah, I was wondering if Alex had recorded a song last year with Skid Row's Sebastian Bach, and I have another question... You might want to answer first?

[AL]: OK, that one first. Actually, when we first wrote "Promise", Sebastian was in town for Christmas. He popped by my place and put a vocal on that song. The problem was that as things developed, and as I wrote the rest of the material for the record, I really wanted to have one single voice on there - one single male voice. So, when I talked to Edwin about working on the record and we got focused on all the songs, I decided to go with him.

The take that Sebastian did on the song was really, really great, and Sebastian is a fabulous singer. Talk about energy! The whole studio at home was shaking when he was out there jumping around, bouncing off the walls doing it. I really felt really badly about not using him on the record, because I know that it meant something to him, and he really enjoyed working on it. Unfortunately, I had to make that call, and I did.

[SD]: Robert, what's your other question?

[Caller]: I heard Alex was also in Car Stereo Review magazine back in '94. I was wondering if he had some sort of special system?

[SD]: I've heard that the word "killer" may be applied to your system. [laughs] Perhaps literally, Alex.

[AL]: That was in my wife's car. I didn't have anything special, but it was quite a monstrous system, and I can't even remember all the things that went into it. It was quite a system - you could hear the car a hundred miles away, actually, at mid-volume. My son currently is driving around in that car, and he's blown the speakers a couple times, and I thought that was impossible. But, again, he takes after his father, so...

[SD]: Blown the speakers? I think the doors came off, didn't they? [laughs]

[AL]: Yeah. [laughs]

[SD]: Robert, thanks for the call. Jack in the McAllen Brownsville, Texas area listening to the new Q94.5. Jack, you're on with Alex.

[Caller]: [cheerful voice] Hey! What's goin' on?

[AL]: OK, Jack, how are you?

[Caller]: I'm doin' pretty good. I'm actually in a pretty good mood. I've got two questions for you. What do you like most about working solo?

[AL]: Well, it was a very new experience for me. I think, when I look back on the whole thing, I think just being in charge of it, and the fact that I pushed myself much harder than I think I've ever done before. I've come out of it with a new sense of who I am and what I want to accomplish, and a wholenew work ethic. I love work now, and I can't get enough of it.

[SD]: And Jack, your other question?

[Caller]: OK, and did you find it easier or harder than working with the rest of Rush?

[AL]: In a lot of ways, it was harder, only because the full responsibility was mine. I wrote the material, I played guitar, I played bass, I played some keyboards, I did some programming, I worked on the cover, I paid for the thing! [laughs] You know, every aspect of it, I did. So, in that sense, it was harder in some ways than what we do with Rush. It was a very different thing for me, and I'm glad of the experience. It doesn't affect anything that I feel about Rush, and what I want to do in the band.

[SD]: Alex Lifeson on Rockline here with Rush and "Stick It Out".

[SD]: That's Rush from their most recent release, back in '93, *Counterparts* and "Stick It Out". Alex Lifeson with us tonight.

To the RIFF in Detroit, we go. Jeff is in Rochester, Michigan, this evening. Your on with Alex Lifeson, Jeff.

[Caller]: Hey.. I just want to say I'm a huge Rush fan, and I really enjoy *Victor*, also.

[AL]: Thank you.

[Caller]: My question is, in the songwriting process, is it the music that usually comes first, or was it the lyrics? What inspired you?

[AL]: In the case of *Victor*, I wrote the music first. I wrote, I think, five songs, and kinda spent some time on that. I worked lyrics for those songs, and then continued writing music, and then took a chunk of time off and worked on lyrics for those songs.

I have to say that I was pretty nervous about writing

lyrics. I hadn't done it in about eighteen years, and I don't remember it being a particularly great experience eighteen years ago. I was afraid I couldn't do it, and that it would sound a little corny, or whatever. But, once I settled on thematically what I wanted to do with it, it seemed to come fairly quickly.

With Rush, it goes both ways. Quite often, Neil will submit a whole pile of lyrics, and Ged and I will go through them, and kind of pick what we'd like to get started on. Other days we just feel musically inclined, and start working on the music, and then fit the lyrics to it afterwards.

[SD]: *Victor*, Alex Lifeson. There's a song, that's the opening track from the album, as a matter of fact. Lyrically, that's sort of cutting' right to the chase, isn't it, Alex? [laughs]

[AL]: Yeah, he's not - that guy's not feeling too good. [laughs]

[SD]: Apparently not. [laughs]

[AL]: He's a little p'd off.

[SD]: Let's talk to Andy now in Wichita, Kansas. He's listening to T95. Hi, Andy.

[Caller]: Hi. My question is, how did you get hooked up with Edwin from I Mother Earth to play in *Victor*?

[AL]: I Mother Earth opened the last show that we did on the last tour, which was here in Toronto. Although I didn't get a chance to meet [Edwin] that night, I met some of the other guys in the band. When it came time to think about vocalists for *Victor*, I had to listen to their CD, and thought that Edwin would really suit the material well. He just has a certain quality and a menace in his voice. For song's like "Don't Care", for example, or "The Big Dance", I just thought he'd be perfect.

I called him up, and he said that he'd love to give it a whirl. We got together, and we've become quite good friends. I think he's done just a fabulous job on it. I thought it was great.. performance wise.

[SD]: No question. And I Mother Earth, did I hear you say earlier that they have a new album coming out this spring?

[AL]: Yeah, they're just finishing up now. They may, in fact, be done. I think they're talking about a release in the next month or two, with a tour beginning in April. So, look out for that, they'll be great. I played on one of the songs on the record, and the material is really strong. It's going to be a really good album for them, I think.

[SD]: Look forward to that. Let's head to the Chicago area. Chris, listening to 103.9, "The Wabbit", in Chicago. He's in Grey's Lake, Illinois. Chris, you're on with Alex.

[Caller]: Hi Alex, hi Steve, how ya doin'?

[SD]: Fine. What's your question?

[AL]: Hi, Chris.

[Caller]: I wasn't supposed to say "how ya doin'", but, oh well. I actually got a request and a question. The request is, the song "By-Tor and the Snowdog" hasn't been played in about 50 years, so can you maybe do it next time?

[AL]: Yeah, we were holding out for the 51st.

[SD]: [laughs]

[Caller]: And my question is, the Auden poem, "Victor", is obviously pretty dark and disturbing. What got you interested in "Victor", and why'd you decide to put it to music?

[AD]: I was fiddling around with the music. I wanted to have something on the record that was a little different than the other songs. I really wanted to have some variety overall on the record. I thought it'd be kinda cool to do a song where I didn't actually play guitar on, and just did all the programming. I thought, also, once the music had been written, that it'd be kinda fun to do a spoken word thing - sort of a pseudo-beatnik kinda reading.

I opened a book that I had of [Auden's] collected poems to "Victor", and I read it through. Although "Victor" the poem is very, very long, I condensed it for the song. It really caught the essence of what the record was about, dealing with the dark side of love and how it can push you to do things that are pretty horrific. So, it seemed to suit the record quite well.

[SD]: Not only - and I want to make sure I'm correct on this, Alex - but not only is the album named *Victor*, but the project, and indeed the people you were working with collectively are also being called "Victor". Am I right about that?

[AL]: That's right. I didn't want to call it "The Alex Lifeson Project" or the "Big Shot, Big Deal Project".

[SD]: [laughs]

[AL]: I mean, these - everybody that worked on the record was so into it, and I just felt that it would be fairer to have everyone involved as more of a band project, and to salute them for it.

[SD]: Let's talk to Tom, now, in Springfield, Ohio, listening to 104.7 WTUE in Dayton this evening. Hey, Tom.

[Caller]: Hey. Alex, I'm happy to be able to talk to you tonight.

[AL]: Thanks.

[Caller]: First, let me say, I think the record is absolutely brilliant. I think only the first three songs is there a hint of your work with Rush, and the balance of the record seems to lean toward a more modern rock, or a more alternative side of rock. I was wondering if there was ever any discussion about marketing the album to other than traditional rock stations.

[AL]: No, we never really talked about that, and I never really thought about that. When I set out to do the record, I really just wanted to wing it. Whatever I felt that day instinctively is what I kinda followed up on. So, there was no gameplan for it. As far as I was concerned, once I finished the record, it was done, and if no one heard it, that's OK - at least I did it. All of that stuff comes later, and it's usually in someone else's hands [who is] better suited for that sort of thing.

[SD]: Yeah. There's really a myriad of styles on this record. You cover a lot of ground here. There's a lot of different places to go.

Amanda in Hill's Shore, New Hampshire, listening to 100.3 WHEB in Portsmouth tonight. Hi, Amanda.

[Caller]: Hi, Alex.

[AL]: Hi, Amanda.

[Caller]: First, I was wondering, what kind of feedback have you gotten from Geddy and Neil on this album?

[AL]: They were both very, very positive and supportive. They, I don't think, wanted to get involved in it in the early stages of it while I was writing and recording. I mean, they always asked how things were going, but I think they wanted to basically stay fairly neutral on it, and didn't want to affect at all what I was doing.

After I finished, they were the first two people that I gave copies to, of course. The feedback that I've gotten from them has been very positive and very supportive, and I love them for that.

[SD]: Alex is at Q107 in Toronto tonight, near his own hometown there. Stan is in Branghton, Ontario, this evening. Stan, you're on Rockline.

[Caller]: Hey, Alex. Happy new year.

[AL]: Hey, same to you, Stan.

[Caller]: I was wondering if stuff you'll do in the studio with Rush will bring you new, and maybe a different style of playing because of the solo album?

[AL]: Well, for me personally, I think that my level of playing is quite high right now, just because I've been working on this project for so much of last year, and I had

two weeks off, and then started this new Rush record. So, I'm feeling like I'm in really good shape playing-wise.

The fact that we had a year and a half off, and we all did other things - I mean, Geddy made this *beautiful* baby girl. Everybody came into the project feeling so good. We had, I think the best time we've ever had writing the material for the new Rush record. We started recording it this past week. I think it's going to be great. I really have high hopes for this one. It just feels so good.

[SD]: We'll be looking forward to that.

[SD]: Alex Lifeson, our guest for the full 90 minutes, we'll be hearing more of his record, *Victor*, coming up in just a few minutes.

[SD]: Back to the phones, now, for Alex Lifeson. Robert in Louing Louisiana listening to 92.3 WCKW in New Orleans this evening. Robert, say hello to Alex Lifeson.

[Caller]: Hello, Alex. How you doin'?

[AL]: Good Robert.

[Caller]: Years ago, you worked with Rik Emmett on a project, *Beyond Borders*.

[AL]: Right.

[Caller]: Was that kind of the impetus for this project? Did you want to work more as a solo artist?

[AL]: Not really. That didn't have anything to do with it. I've worked on a couple of projects here and there whenever I've had the opportunity, and I enjoyed doing that very much. But, no, specifically that project had nothing to do with this.

[SD]: Rik Emmett, of course, the driving force behind Triumph for many, many years.

Kevin in Virginia Beach, Virginia, listening to FM99 WNOR in Norfolk, Virginia, this evening. Hi, Kevin.

[Caller]: Hello, OK. First of all, I wanna thank you, and the other guys from Rush for inspiring me to pick up the bass 15 years ago. I think you're the most underrated guitarist I've ever heard. What I'd like to ask you is, have you thought about recording with the old Gibsons and Hiwatts you used to use?

[AL]: Actually, I've got a Hiwatt that I picked up for recording on this album that we're working on now, as well as my stacks after stacks of Marshalls. And I'm using the Gibsons quite a bit in the studio, but I do like using the Paul Reed Smith guitars live and also in the studio. So, I have a whole pile of stuff that I go through.

[SD]: Quite a setup in your own home there, I under-

stand, too. Quite a studio there in the homestead, right?

[AL]: Yeah, we had a lot of fun. We managed to knock pictures off the wall, and other things that were sitting on a desk out there. It became a contest after awhile - can we turn up loud enough to knock things over? [laughs]

[SD]: [laughs] Vibrate it right to the floor, there.

[AL]: Absolutely.

[SD]: Let's talk to Ed now in Madison, Wisconsin, listening to 101.5 WIBA FM. Ed, you're on with Alex.

[Caller]: Hi, Alex.

[AL]: Hi, Ed.

[Caller]: Very strong album. As I'm listening along to it, I see your sense of humour cropping up in "Shut Up Shuttin' Up". I was just wondering what possessed you to put that on the album? I got a kick out of it.

[AL]: Well, the album was developing into quite a dark record, and I just wanted to inject a little bit of levity in it. So, I got my wife, Charlene, and her best friend, Esther, who's a real character, in to do this little bit of nagging about the funny little habits that some of us have, and the silly little things that we argue about that end up becoming big things in the overall picture. We had them in there for about seven hours going through so many different things, and they were well lubricated with a couple bottles of wine. By the end of it, of course, we couldn't get them to shut up.

[SD]: [laughs] Of course, right.

[AL]: So, we had a lot of fun with that one, though.

[SD]: [laughs] Yeah, it sounded like Charlene might've been having a little bit too much fun there towards the end. [laughs]

[AL]: Yeah, well, Charlene's the straight girl. It's Esther that really takes over.

[SD]: Oh, is that right? [laughs] That was a great story.

[AL]: But, that's Esther. Right Michael? [laughs]

[SD]: You gotta hear that track on the *Victor* record.

Let's talk to Jerry in Jacksonville, Florida, listening to ROC105 tonight. Hi, Jerry.

[Caller]: It's a pleasure to be talking to Big Al Dexter of the Orbit Room.

[AL]: Now you got it.

[Caller]: I have one question for you, Alex. Your son, Adrian, co-wrote the music and did the program for "At the End" and "The Big Dance". My question would be, could we possibly see a CD from him in the future?

[AL]: I sure hope so. He's written some stuff that just blows my mind. I mean, he's got a handle on creating moods and colors with music that is overwhelming. He's eighteen years old, he's going to be nineteen in March. I think that he has a future in music, and I know that's what he wants to do. I support him and stand by him 100%.

[SD]: Is he a player as well? Does he play an instrument?

[AL]: He's been playing guitar for four years. He's very good, even though I don't get a chance to hear him much. He's very secretive about his playing, but I sneak around the house and catch him when he's practising. He's a good player, but he's a really good songwriter, and he's developing those skills right now. I think that perhaps in a couple of years, we might actually hear something from him.

[SD]: Great skill to have. Good question, Jerry. Thanks for the call.

Let's see if you can guess who's singing lead vocals on this track. This is from "Victor" on Rockline, the first solo record from Alex Lifeson.

[SD]: The song is called "Start Today" from Alex Lifeson's album, *Victor*. On vocals... well, it's not who you think it is, let's put it that way. As a matter of fact, George listening to Q104 in New York has a question about that particular vocalist. George?

[Caller]: Hi. How are you?

[AL]: Great.

[SD]: Fine, what's your question for Alex?

[Caller]: I just wanted to know, where did you find Dalbello? Her sound is great; she sounds a lot like Geddy from the earlier days. But I guess it was just a coincidence?

[AL]: Well, you know, it didn't occur to me when she did it, because I was sitting there in the control room staring at her in the studio doing it. We spent quite a bit of time on the song. She's been around - she's a Canadian singer - she's been around for quite awhile here in Canada. She has a few records out here, and she's got a record coming out very shortly, if it's not out already. She was just completing it when I was finishing up *Victor*.

But, she is just amazing. I mean, even when I hear that song today, it just gives me goosebumps. She's got such power and such a sense of character in her voice. I loved working with her, and I think I fell in love with her on that day working together. [laughs] She was great. A really smart, excellent person, and wonderful to work with.

[SD]: Hopefully, this will give her some exposure down

here in the states, and we can get clued in on what a lot of Canada has known for a number of years here. Dalbello is her name.

Thanks, George, for the call. Scott in Miami, listening to 94.9 ZETA, tonight. Scott?

[Caller]: Yeah, hello. I'm a flight instructor down here in Miami, and I had read somewhere that you used to do some flying. Just wondering if you're still sticking to it.

[AL]: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I just picked up a little bit of time on a Navaho going down to Bearsville on a friends plane. But, more importantly, over the last couple of years, I've been flying with the Canadian Air Force on the F-5.

[SD]: Wow.

[AL]: I've got a couple of hours on F-18, but I've picked up, I guess about four hours on the F-5. So, that was one of my thrills of my life to do that.

[SD]: I bet. How many G's were you pulling at one time?

[AL]: I think the max we pulled was 6.2 in the 18.

[SD]: Wow!

[AL]: Yeah, that was a lot.

[SD]: That's a whole new way of looking at life, isn't it? [laughs]

[AL]: It sure is! [laughs]

[SD]: Scott, good call. Chris in Oceanside, California, listening to ROC102.1 in San Diego this evening. Chris?

[Caller]: Hey, how's it goin', Alex?

[AL]: Good, Chris.

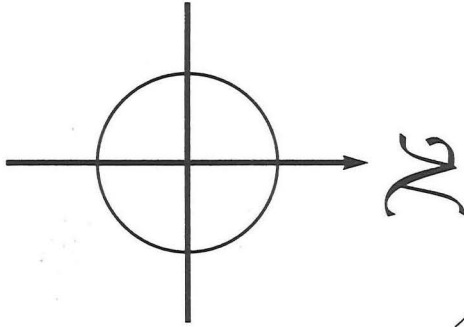
[Caller]: My question for you is, is it possible that in the near future, or anytime in the future, that Rush might do an acoustic collection of songs?

[AL]: Sort of an unplugged thing, I guess you mean. You know, I think we're kinda really plugged in. I would think that we'd probably like to keep it that way. We've never felt a desire to really do that. I think I'd rather try to play more of the older songs that we haven't played in a long time as they were recorded, or as they should be played live, than spend the time to work out an acoustic set.

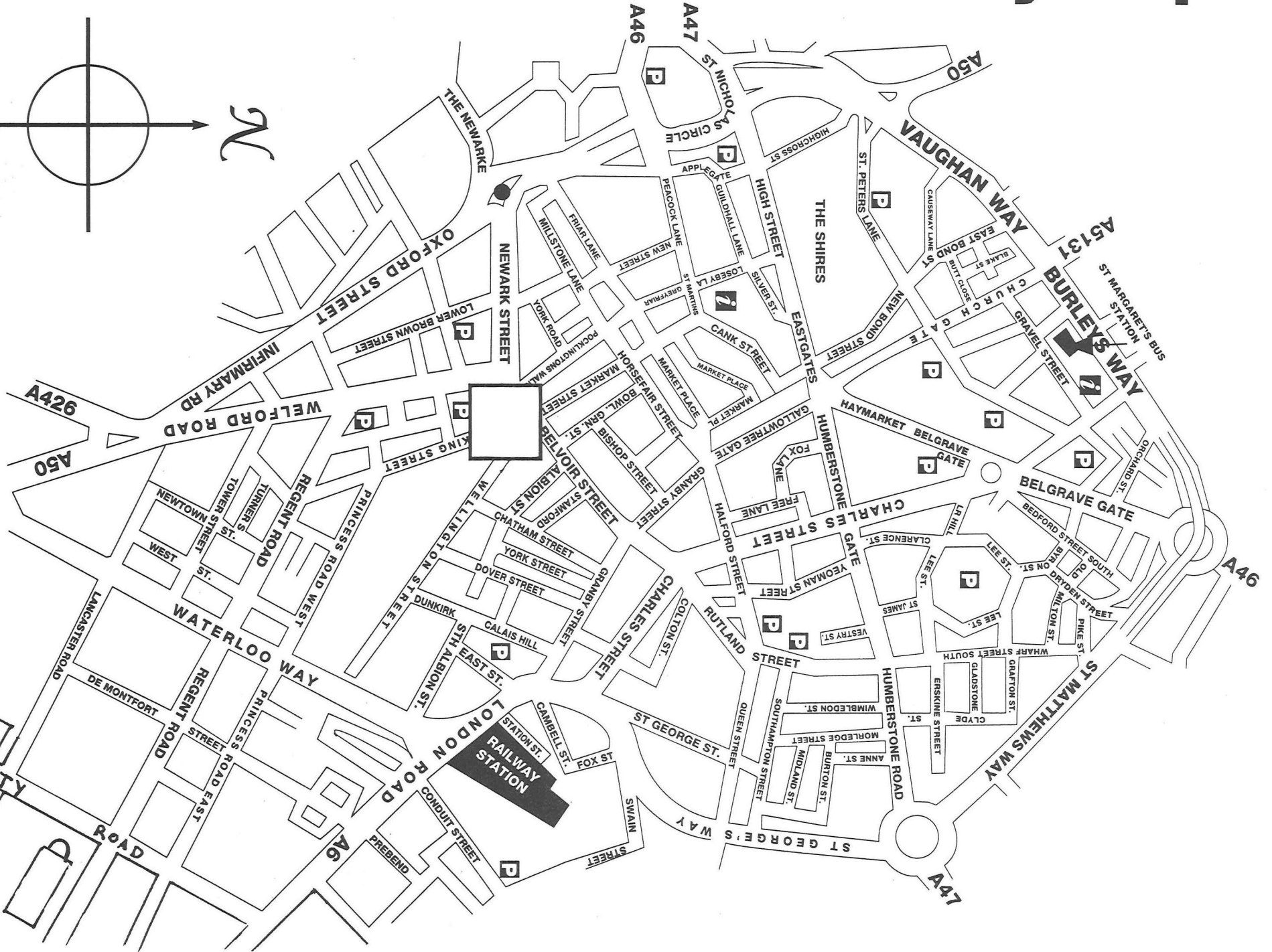
[SD]: Wow, so do them in their original arrangements. Boy, that would make a lot of the old fans thrilled to hear that.

Continued on page 27.

Leicester city map



The Convention Centre



THE SPIRIT OF RUSH 1996 CONVENTION

The final details for the *1996 Spirit of Rush Convention* are as follows. The event starts at 2pm and will go on until 11pm. You will not be admitted until 2pm and which time the doors will open.

Throughout the day we will be showing promo videos from *Fly by Night* right up to *Nobody's Hero*. During this time there will be various collectors stalls open, to allow, you the fan to buy or sell any rare items, such as programmes, photos, records, CD's and cassettes among other items.

When you arrive half of your ticket will be taken, please hold on to the other half as this entitles you to be entered into the Grand Prize Raffle, details of which were in the last issue of *Spirit*. The draw will take place 8pm, just before the live entertainment starts with *The Jack Secret Show* playing for over two hours.

We will also playing selections from *Test For Echoes*(We're currently waiting for final approval on this from SRO/Anthem).

Travel

On the opposite page you will find a map, with the venue clearly marked. For those driving, the easiest way to get to the centre of Leicester is by either coming in from the M69 or the M1 from exit 21. Follow the signs for the A46 towards the centre of town then follow the map.

If you have any questions what so ever about the convention or travel.. Perhaps you could offer someone a lift, or maybe you're looking for a lift then call us on 0181 851 0143 for Mick or 01235 812501 for Stewart.

Anyway we to see you all there.



Differences we sometimes fear

After the last issue's lengthy diatribe I'll try and make room for something a bit more trivial this time out.

But not without reference to the piece on Bill Tierney's classroom practises, which prompted Steve Streeter, editor of *A Show Of Fans*, to chastise my behaviour on ethical grounds and argue the case for his fellow countryman.

It was an interesting, and occasionally confusing transatlantic e-mail debate, which pretty much ended with us agreeing to disagree. Not only did we see certain things very differently (particularly the notion that the world at large recognises that Rush are a GOOD band whether it actually likes them or not), but the Atlantic gulf between us only added to the problems as we misinterpreted each other's terminology and emphases.

But such is life. I still totally disagree with Steve S. on a couple of points, but recognise that rock music *can* be used as a teaching tool; I always did. And if Bill Tierney gives extra credits to kids who can spot iambic pentameter and know what half-anagrams are then that's fine. But I won't



"If you show me that new claw polish one more time..."

apologise for getting on his case about giving an extra credit to a kid who sang Neil Peart's praises, even though it now appears that this wasn't the case. Shame Bill didn't make that clearer in the first place.

End of subject. And I've already spent longer on it than I intended, but at least it's helped me get through the

first few paragraphs of a piece I'm struggling to find the inspiration to write. I had been planning to review a few of the ever-growing collection of Rush cover bands dotted around the globe (America mainly), but this onerous task looks potentially beyond me because I can't bring myself to listen to more than 15 minutes of any of the tapes of them at one time[‡]. In defence of Animation, Power Windows, Visions, YYY, et al, I'm sure the actual event of seeing them (ie. hearing Rush music played live) is everything, and that to listen to recordings is pointless when the real thing is easier to come by, but at the same time I can't bring myself to offer their existence anything more than a cursory glance.

At any rate, the notion of trying to like these bands brought me on to a subject close to the heart of this column. I've noted before that the 'fandom' thing is a strange phenomenon, and one of the reasons is that quite often it seems to involve - or demand - behaving in a permanently positive way towards anything relating to the chosen idol. As any cynic (and strangely enough journalists fall easily into this category of human beings) knows, where there's brass there's muck. Not everything about Rush and Rush fans can possibly be pure sugar and spice. [I'm sure a poll of the world's prison population would turn up a few fans of a certain Canadian rock trio].

The long-awaited return of the series that takes you back in time to see how Rush albums were first reviewed by the music press. This issue Kurt Loder, that bastion of Rolling Stone and MTV, offers a contradictory summing up of possibly my favourite effort by our Canadian chums.

■ You can't write that...

● *Grace Under Pressure* review, Rolling Stone, June 21, 1984.

This album needs no critical assistance: If you like Rush, you'll love it; if not then GUP is unlikely to alter your assessment of the band as a lumbering metal anachronism.

For the record though, Rush has managed to incorporate a number of modern elements into its sound (note the almost danceable rhythms in "Afterimage" and "Red Sector A", and the swelling synthesizers and electropercussion throughout). Geddy Lee, the group's bassist and vocalist, has also gotten his dog-calling falsetto shriek under control.

But these signs of incipient hipness are not what sets young pulses racing throughout the North American heartland. Rush is a band with a message. Briefly put, it's "Be free, and don't let the grown-up world grind you down." Thus, on "The Enemy Within", Lee sings "I'm not giving in/To security under pressure/I'm not missing out/On the promise of adventure." And the hero of drummer-lyricist Neil Peart's sci-fi allegory "The Body Electric" is an "android on the run, seeking freedom."

The problem, though, is musical. On record, the lack of melody and any but the most rudimentary harmonic development soon becomes oppressive. In addition, Alex Lifeson is not a particularly interesting lead guitarist, and the strictures of the trio format still result in more splattery drum bashing than you'll ever care to hear. Rush delivers the goods all right: strong social statements enveloped in a massive, pounding sound. But it's old news, and old music, too.

Kurt Loder (3 stars out of 5)

to show

A *Show Of Fans* (which always looks good) is editorially +ve in *extremis* – and always makes a point of not wanting to receive material that is in any way derogatory towards Rush or any of its readers. It's a laudable stance in many respects (the band takes enough of a knocking in the press anyway), but a very unrealistic one in that it cannot possibly stand up to close scrutiny over time. Sooner or later something negative *must* crop up. And it's just not right to sweep it under the blanket.

In regard to the tribute bands (God I hate that expression) I dare say ASOF's creed would be to deem them great guys simply for having great musical taste. But that doesn't make what they do beyond criticism. Sure they'll be doing their best, having fun and trying to give people like us a decent night out (possibly not even in the name of making a living), but the point is that trying to describe art – and to a lesser extent any behaviour – ultimately involves judgement and/or criticism. As everyone knows, he who puts himself above the parapet should expect to get shot at, and the role of archer is specially designed for those of us who don't have the talent, or the balls, to do it ourselves.

But criticising the players for their playing is only part of the thing. As far as I'm concerned nothing Rush-like is off limits for our debate/criticism on these pages (we've been down this road before...). As a tightly knit group we are the Rush family in this important respect; we criticise from within, but show a unified front to the outside world. And let's face it, the outside world wouldn't give a toss about our concerns over a disappointing set list on the Counterparts tour (I saw the video – did anyone else feel short-changed by the encore?), lack of European tour dates or Alex's failure to put spotted dick on the desert menu during The Orbit Room's winter season.

Ah well. Enjoy the facts dotted either side of these ramblings and there'll be more, or less, next issue.

See you at the convention.
#I've only listened to Animation so far, and boy does their drummer suck. He actually tries to *complicate* Neil's playing!

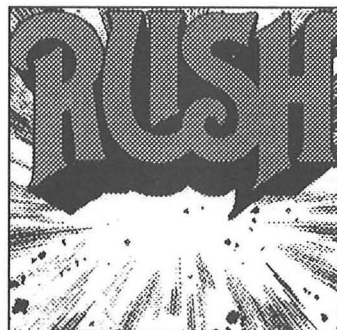
Another series featuring material stolen from the NMS begins. The FAQ (frequently asked questions) file has solutions to queries about every album, and coupled with snippets from other sources this column should build into a completely useless set of fairly chronological information for Rush anoraks only. This issue: 1968-75

Just the FAQs #1

Where did the name "Rush" come from?

In August 1968 the band's formal line-up was Alex on guitar, John Rutsey on drums, and Jeff Jones on bass and vocals. They got a job to play at the "Coff-In," a coffee house in the basement of an Anglican Church for \$25 a night.

"The band was excited, but they had a big problem. While they had been dreaming of playing, they had neglected to come up with a name for their group. So a few days before the gig they sat around in John's basement trying to come up with an appropriate monicker. They weren't having much luck when John's older brother Bill piped up, 'Why don't you call the band Rush?' and Rush it was." (from the 'Visions' biography)



Why did John Rutsey leave the band?

He quit because he had different ideas about the band's future to Alex and Geddy, and he wasn't excited about playing in Rush any more. His diabetes was also a strong argument against extended tours.

Whatever happened to John Rutsey?

"John's still around. I see John quite often. He gave up playing shortly after he left the band and went into bodybuilding. He competed on an amateur level for a while ... and has sort of been in and out of that, but he still works out, and I work out with him a few times a week at a local gym – at Gold's, here in Toronto." – Alex Lifeson, in the 2/6/89 "Rockline" interview

Where did By-Tor's name come from?

Rush's road manager, Howard, came up with the title at a party. There were two dogs at the party, one a German shepherd and the other a tiny white nervous dog. Howard used to call the shepherd By-Tor because anyone that walked into the house was bitten. The other dog was a snow-dog (white ...). So from that night on Howard called the pair of dogs "By-Tor and the Snow Dog."



What is The Sign of Eth?

A variety of answers have been posted to the NMS:

eth n. Variant of edh.

edh n. 1. A letter appearing in Old English, Old Saxon, Old Norse, and modern Icelandic to represent an interdental fricative. 2. The symbol in the International Phonetic Alphabet representing the interdental voiced fricative, as in /the/, /with/.

"Eth" is a letter in the Old English alphabet that was dropped from the alphabet as it evolved into Middle and Modern English. It represented the sound /th/, as in "cloth" for example. It looked like a lower-case "o" with a cross on top. Capitalized, it was like a "D" with a horizontal line through the straight part. This was also the symbol used for a capitalised "Thorn", another Old English letter representing /th/.

"Thorn" was adapted into the Old English alphabet from a Germanic rune of the same name, and was associated with the Gothic word "thurisaz", which meant "demon". "Eth" therefore has a historical background in representing demons and hell. "The sign of Eth is rising in the air..." could represent the demonic power in the Tobes of Hades, or By-Tor himself – when the sign is rising By-Tor is coming forth from Hades to do battle with the Snow Dog (since we usually assume that Hades is underground)

Is Rivendell a real place?

Rivendell was a safe haven for travellers in Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".

Rush Rolls On

Taken from the San Francisco Chronicle February 1994

Rush saunters onto the stage of the Great Western Forum to the strains of "Also Sprach Zarathustra," the symphonic slab of bombast immortalised in Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey."

The band often has been accused of pretentiousness, but this decidedly regal entrance comes off more like inspired campiness — the good-humoured musical equivalent of rolling out a red carpet.

CRITICAL INDIFFERENCE

If any band deserves to celebrate itself, it's Rush. Formed 20 years ago in Toronto, the trio has endured years of critical indifference to become one of pop music's top concert draws. Many of the band's 19 albums have sold more than a million copies, and bold new acts such as Primus and Living Colour have spoken of their respect for the Canadian band.

Rush is on the road again, this time promoting its new Atlantic Records album "Counterparts." (The band appears at the Cow Palace Friday night and at the San Jose arena on Saturday.)

The album seems well on its way to duplicating the success of its predecessors, fuelled by the popularity of the hits "Stick It Out" and "Cold Fire."

AN EXPLANATION

Attempting to explain Rush's puzzling popularity, drummer lyricist Neil Peart struggles to sort out his feelings.

"Phoenix was the last show we played, and I remember being on stage and thinking 'Why?'" Peart said. "All these people still come back to see us. I guess it's a holistic thing, where the sum is greater than the parts. It must be this

larger thing that surrounds us like an aura — the sounds we create together, and the integrity and dedication we bring to it."

Ron Nenni, program directory at San Jose's KOME-FM, says Rush fans are some of the most loyal he's ever seen. He credits the band's success to musical and lyrical savvy.

"They're some of the most highly regarded musicians in rock," Nenni said. "Not only has their music evolved, their lyrical content is very interesting too. There's a kind of science fiction/history influence in the lyrics. If you attend a Rush concert you see a lot of the fans look kind of nerdy. You might say they appeal to intellectual rock fans."

Peart would no doubt be pleased to hear such testimonials — one gets the impression that he feels the band's efforts sometimes go unappreciated.

DEDICATION TO CRAFT

"The audience can't know that creating my drum parts take three days of blisters, or that I sift through every word and note," Peart said.

"But this kind of dedication adds up to one thing, and that's quality. I hope there's a sense in the audience that care has been taken."

Peart's third-floor suite at the posh Four Seasons feels as homey as a hotel room can. A laptop computer sits atop a desk in the living room. Emergency supplies such as a flashlight and a radio are on hand in case of aftershocks from the recent earthquake.

A bicycle stands in the foyer. After his interviews are completed, Peart will pedal through Beverly Hills to the grittier community of Inglewood

for a sound check with his bandmates, singer-bassist-keyboardist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson.

It's a trek many Angelenos would hesitate to make, but Peart says his thirst for adventure has led him down more dangerous roads in Europe and Africa. He says such explorations are essential for his sanity.

HARMLESSLY ECCENTRIC

"Biking is good for a balance of real life and getting out of the bubble," the drummer said. "We never wanted to be a band that goes from the limo to the hotel to the aeroplane. On a bike you're a harmless eccentric. Of course, you tell people you're biking to Inglewood and they say, 'Don't wear a red bandanna.' But who's going to bother a bike rider? For me (biking) helps me keep life big."

Rush's new album takes its share of similarly risky turns. Musically speaking, "Counterparts" is leaner and more straightforward than previous efforts, with a pop sensibility similar to the band's best-selling 1981 album, "Moving Pictures."

But most potent is the new album's compassionate lyricism. Songs such as "Nobody's Hero," "Everyday Glory" and "Animate" detail Peart's efforts to come to terms with death, as well as his determination to get in touch with his feminine side.

"I'd been doing a lot of thinking about duality and how it applies to questions of culture, gender and of race," Peart explained. "Where gender is concerned I think the feminine is beautiful, but I also think the masculine side is good. I concluded that I don't have to reconcile them. I can have them both."

Inspired by the philosophical writings of Nietzsche, Carl Jung and Camille Paglia, Peart began examining some of the bleaker aspects of Western values – homophobia, pop culture idolatry and sexism. "Counterparts" often bridges the chasm between popular perceptions and opposing viewpoints.

TWO TRAGIC DEATHS

On "Nobody's Hero" Peart mourns the tragic deaths of two friends, one of whom was gay.

"It began as an abstract inquiry into the Western idea of a hero, and whether that idea is good," Peart said. "I finally nailed it down to athletes, entertainers and politicians – these people who are supposed to be superhuman with no faults. A kid grows up thinking a hero is some superhuman deity beyond normal mortal limits. How can anyone aspire to attain that? Why admire those people rather than somebody who has worked 25 years to learn a skill, or a person in the neighbourhood who sets a good example?"

"That's why I included the lines about the first gay guy I knew. I was about 18 when I met him, and he used to take me to his parties and it was never a problem for me. As I say in the song, he introduced me to another reality. He's nobody's hero in most people's perception, but as a person who's left behind family and friends he definitely qualifies as a hero."

Acknowledging one's feminine side, expressing compassion for a late gay friend – these are touchy subjects for a band with a decidedly

masculine following. Peart admits the average Rush fan seems to be a straight white male, a fact he describes as "unfortunate."

"People of darker persuasions are rare, and that's too bad because I consider myself to be multicultural by nature," Peart said. "If anything I'd like to see a surge of black female fans, but what can I do? You can't choose your audience."

"But that being said, what better audience to receive these kind of messages? People had a number of misconceptions and fears about 'Nobody's Hero' because it expressed approval of homosexuality, and they thought there might be some homophobic reaction to it. I think that song expressed sentiments that merit some thought."

TRIO WORKED THE CLUBS

Rush was formed in 1969 by Lee, Lifeson and drummer John Rutsey. The trio worked the club circuit until 1973 when they decided to record an album. Just months before the band's first U.S. tour Rutsey was replaced by Peart, a move that would signal a substantial change in the band's sound. Peart's jazzy playing and conceptual lyrics lifted Rush from the blues-rock doldrums to more mystical realms. On early albums such as "2112," "A Farewell To Kings" and "Hemispheres," Rush exhibited a penchant for bustling arrangements and indulgent playing.

As the '80s approached and the public grew weary of exhibitionist rock practised by Yes and Emerson, Lake and

Palmer, it seemed Rush was destined for a bargain bin fate. But the band displayed surprising moxie on its 1980 album "Permanent Waves," which featured more concise pop melodies.

The next year the band released what would become its most popular album, "Moving Pictures." Inspired by jazz fusion, new wave rock and African pop, "Moving Pictures" was a genuine coup – a successful reconciliation of pop song structures and virtuosic performance.

"We'd see all these people at our shows who had no idea why they were there or what we were doing," Peart recalled. "For some reason we were in that year. That record and that tour did twice the business we did before or since. So I guess in a way it is a definitive record."

A REFINED FORMULA

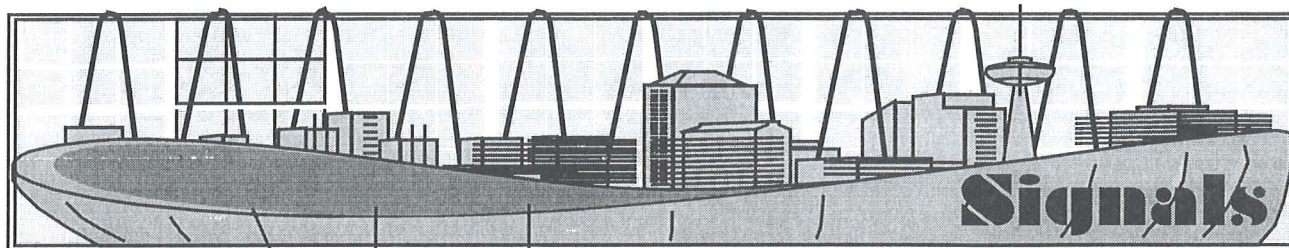
More recent albums such as "Presto" and "Roll The Bones" have found Rush refining its formula. Where the emphasis was once on flawless execution, the band now reaps the greatest joy from composing – placing its formidable musical chops into tuneful context.

"Once things start flowing we're truly like 'Whoopie!'" Peart said. "I remember when we were doing songwriting for the new album, and Alex and Geddy would run into my room pleading for the lyrics and screaming, 'We're coffee achievers!' There's a genuine childlike excitement to the whole process."

Test For Echoes

With the new record due out roughly the same time as the next issue of Spirit, we'd thought we give you the exclusive tracklist. After spending about £20 on phone calls we finally got the tracklist from Atlantic Records. As you all heard in the last issue there are 12 tracks, a first for a Rush studio record. We're currently waiting final confirmation from SRO/Anthem.

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1, Test for Echos | 2, Virtuallity | 3, Time & Motion |
| 4, Half the World | 5, Dog years | 6, The Color of Right |
| 7, Driven | 8, Totem | 9, Carve Away the Stone |
| 10, Resist | | |



Dear SOR readers,

Signals in Issue 33 (May '96) printed some excellent letters from people who I believe have a grip on reality where Rush are concerned. Take a bow: Martin Withers (don't we all!!!) of Bournemouth, Mike Brown of Southampton and Gary Cross of High Wycombe (home of the fabulous Wal basses, one of which I'm a proud owner). They all had some interesting point and I'd like to add some of my own if I may.

1) Singles releases: In my opinion, Rush songs do not lend themselves very well to the singles format as thankfully, they do not write four minute pop ditties only bought by pre-pubescent school kids (Take That etc.). CD singles are overpriced anyway. A few pounds extra buys the whole album containing ALL the tracks.

2) Many letters mention record sales. WHY? Rush have sold some 30 million albums. If you spread this out over all the bands releases, taking into account the fact that 99% of the fans will have all their albums this isn't that many when you compare them to someone like wacko who sold 30 million copies of the Thriller album alone. (No, I haven't got it!!). To my ears, Rush don't make music which has mass appeal. The bands sales are remarkable though. My point here is that it's the songs and the music which are important. The units they sell are of secondary importance. Look at the band. Do they look pissed with their lot in life? Not to me!

3) Exposure: Rush have been around for over twenty years. Think back to when you first heard them. My friend's brother was listening to Rush when I called round one day. I was about 13 years old (I'm now 27). All the band's records and videos are available in shops for anyone who wants to listen. My local Virgin megastore actually offered to put Victor on one of their listening posts for me. I don't care if I'm the only person at work or on my street who's heard of them or likes them (I have and I do). Many of you like me, grew up with Rush from your teens into adulthood. I still enjoy the music just as much even now. Rush probably are the biggest cult band in the world which suits me fine.

At the end of the day, Rush will stop touring and split up. Like tax and death, it's inevitable. Sure, it would be great to see them live more often but as Mike Brown pointed out, musicians are people with lives of their own and you can't please all the people all the time.

When "D day" does arrive, just be thankful that you were along for the ride and be happy in the knowledge that you'll have a collection of brilliant records which will last way beyond 2112!!!

One final thought. MUSIC IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN SO LIGHTEN UP AND ENJOY WHILE YOU STILL CAN!

All the best.

Paul Cook
Petersfield, Hampshire

Dear Mick,

In response to R Carriers letter in Issue 33, I also think it would be a good idea for readers to send in their favourite RUSH songs. You could probably organise it so that we have a TOP TEN song chart and a TOP FIVE album chart. From the letters in Issue 33 it would seem that SOR readers have a wide choice of favourite songs. Anyway here are my top ten tracks and top five albums.

ALBUMS

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. MOVING PICTURES | 2. HEMISPHERES |
| 3. PERMANENT WAVES | 4. 2112 |
| 5. PRESTO | |

SONGS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. THE SPIRIT OF RADIO | 2. RED BARCHETTA |
| 3. CHAIN LIGHTENING | 4. CYGNUS X-1 BK II |
| 5. LA VILLA STRANGIATO | 6. FREEWILL |
| 7. LIMELIGHT | 8. 2112 |
| 9. A PASSAGE TO BANGKOK (LIVE) | 10. XANADU |

I would also like to nominate my favourite guitar solo. It has to be the break in "FREEWILL".

Ian Davies
Merthyr Tydfil

Dear Mick,

I look forward to SOR every issue and I certainly did not subscribe to the magazine to read negative letters slagging off the greatest band in the galaxy who are probably the hardest working band in the galaxy as well. To quote Ray Daniels who said in an interview I saw on the Juno ceremony's, "the band has toured on every album, whether they wanted to or not."

I'd just like to say, we all have a choice, when was the last time somebody pointed a gun at your head and made you buy a Rush album or for that matter a concert ticket? Think about it!

Rush owe us nothing. I as a devoted Rush fan am quite happy with whatever they choose to do whether it be touring, not touring, new album, no new album.

Anyway, enough of my waffle, thanks for all the great work Mick and lets see some more letters like Mike Brown's in Signals Issue 33.

Brian R Socha
Montrose

The following e-mails taken off of the Internet relate to Steve Adams' Trivia Page in Issue 33.

SOR 33 was a fine read. We really enjoyed the issue. That is if you omit Page 25. Please, let me elaborate.

Normally I try to keep my EMail to a minimum. I have found through years of experience that it is darn near impossible to carry on a lengthy conversation let alone ANY kind of friendly debate. Unfortunately, cyberspace, by it's own nature (right now) is a clinical, face-less - basically non-emotional vehicle for information exchange. Obviously, this will begin to change as technology introduces more advancements AND as the MASSES are able to afford it. I have always found that in person is best, voice is second best and letters third. Yes, a debate should ultimately be friendly. After all, we are a rational animal, yes? If a debate can not be conducted in a rational manner, then you have no choice but to walk away. Oil and water. My counterpart, my foolish heart.

I have also found that in most cases it takes just as long, if not longer, to receive responses from another person through the net than it does even by third class mail! No kidding. In other words, there is a lot of hype surrounding the info highway. [I know it's a lot of hype, because part of my day job is creating that hype through advertising and design. That's entertainment! . . . business as well . . .] We must see through the smoke screen and use the technology as a tool to our advantage. Everything, my friend, has it's place. Somewhere.

Anyway, I read Steve Adams installment of Rush Trivia, which I have always found enjoyable in the past.

This time Steve has really overstepped the boundaries of even his OWN ethics (at least from what I read them to be). Bill Terney (I do not know Bill) seems to be presenting a really positive FUN item of interest that I think every Rush fan would at least acknowledge to be cool, if not super cool. I certainly saw HIS point of view very clearly and found it to be correct.

No Steve, I do NOT see your point of view. (I did try, really.) You are arguing basically about nothing (borderline arguing with yourself). You attack Bill - "What's wrong with this guy?" - and suppose to be a Rush fan as well. That is a complete contradiction in terms, hands down. You could say, "I'm NOT a Rush fan, therefore, there MUST be something wrong with this guy." Then you would be in the right - according to YOUR subjective view of the world. (But I am ASSUMING you ARE a Rush fan!) Nothing wrong with that! I don't think Bill was saying Neil Peart is Shakespeare or Hemingway. Not at all.

The old argument that Shakespeare, etc., would find Mr. Terney's behavior contemptible is an empty one. Would Ayn Rand have liked Rush? I doubt it. Does that matter one way or the other? Not really. Rand is a great philosopher, as Rush are great musicians. No conflict here. Just as there is no conflict in what Bill is doing through his job. There doesn't seem to be.

Rush HAS been used as a learning vehicle in schools for years. In Connecticut, a local school district used Power Windows as a lesson in Literature, morals and ethics. Look at the POSITIVE! You can really reach young minds with contemporary things, including music and powerful lyrics. What happens is you lead those young minds to OTHER authors, poets and philosophers. I can't begin to count the number of time I have picked up a book due to a Rush reference. That is a GOOD thing. I can only HOPE that there are MANY more Bill Terneys out there doing the same thing. I wish my teachers in High School would have done that! I applaud Bill 100% in his efforts. Bill's actions are absolutely wholesome as well as rational. Even when I was in High School, I was the editor of the school paper. One issue, I reviewed 2112 in depth, one full page on Rush (which pissed off a lot of teachers back then) and in doing so put forth the philosophy of the individual through various philosophers. This was BOLD back then. Rush was not very popular in my school. But I did it because I knew I was RIGHT. I had a conviction. I had the guts to speak my mind. Granted, I had a lot to learn, but I stood my ground and made sure my article was printed intact! Interestingly enough, I got straight A's in journalism and writing. Hummmm . . . makes me wonder. Suffice to say, Rush helped expand my horizons immensely. I also did the right thing. You know what's really scary Steve? Being told by YOU in a blanket statement that I am an irrational human being. You have, by your own words slammed a large sector of Rush fans. What is the irony of it all is that you don't even know us.

Tell me Steve, how would I get hurt or compromised by reading Neil Peart quotes on a blackboard in school? How? You have absolutely no rational base for that statement. In fact, you make the strongest argument FOR what Bill Terney is/has been doing.

A tip of the olde hat to Bill! You have, by your own words, strengthened HIS position.

PS: On the Top 10 Ways

Number 2: "Who put this Runrig crap in here?" I hope you are not trying to say Todd Rundgren. Todd happens to be one of the best musicians, song-writers, composers to grace this planet. If you are unaware of him then you OUGHT to be exposed to him and his excellent music. I always loved that FACT that when you get to the Rush bin, Todd was right there! Todd and Rush always went hand in hand in my home, as well as everyone I have exposed Todd to.

I can ONLY assume that you did not see that. You surely would have edited it out. This is quite the slam on Todd, which I find SICK and uncalled for. It's one thing slamming some crap like New Kids on the Block, but please...keep it to what REALLY is crap, eh? Why badmouth someone who is truly a great musical force? Anyway, it certainly WAS NOT light hearted. Too bad. This has nothing to do with a lack of a sense of humor either. In fact, the person who wrote that Top Ten list needs a good whack or his ears cleaned out.

Anyway, the rest of the mag, for the most part, was super!! The expanded letters section was EXCELLENT. Good show. Boo-hoo, you got our zip code wrong. Maybe you can fix next time? It's 61108 not 91108.

Thanks to all for listening.

Steve Streeter

The following is Steve Adams reply to Steve Streeters Email.

Hi Steve

I just read your lengthy diatribe about my latest Trivia piece. I'm surprised you found it so disturbing, but I totally stand by it and if you will indulge me I will even justify it further for you — not that I expect to be able to change your mind!

Firstly the easy bit — Top 10 reasons and so on. Runrig are a Scottish folk band, NOT Todd Rundgren (jeez, that would be some spelling mistake...). Not that I particularly like Todd Rundgren you understand. In fact I don't dislike Runrig. I put the phrase in quote marks cos it's the sort of thing people say. If I was saying it then there'd be no quote marks (since the whole piece is mine).

Whatever. On to Bill Tierney. And again some easy bits.

1.
I said Peart would probably find Bill's classroom behaviour contemptible, not Shakespeare. (Freudian slip on your part?). And you know as well as I do how Peart has objected to OTT fan behaviour in the past ("get a life"). And I agree with your suggestion that Ayn Rand probably wouldn't like Rush, etc...

2.
If Bill's prepared to post his comments onto the NMS then they are already in the public domain. He can really have no argument against me reprinting them.

Onto my main points (please bear with me, this goes on):

3.
You said: "I do NOT see your point of view. (I did try, really.) You are arguing basically about nothing (borderline arguing with yourself). You attack Bill - "What's wrong with this guy?" - and are supposed to be a Rush fan as well. That is a complete contradiction in terms, hands down. You could say, "I'm NOT a Rush fan, therefore, there MUST be something wrong with this guy."

Your inference here is that I should have no argument with the behaviour of a Rush fan simply because he/she is a Rush fan. I don't think I need to argue this point.

4.
I think my argument against Bill using his personal *musical* tastes in *English* teaching remains a strong and RATIONAL one (I could understand if he was relating a favourite poet/author, but this is one man's favourite music), and your argument about me apparently slamming Todd Rundgren actually supports my case.

About Todd Rundgren you said:

"It's one thing slamming some crap like New Kids on the Block, but please...keep it to what REALLY is crap, eh? Why badmouth someone who is truly a great musical force?"

So if I'd slammed NKOTB or Boyzone (a UK equivalent, who I mentioned in the piece) then that'd be OK? The whole point of my piece about Bill's teaching methods was that he should not be inflicting his personal musical tastes on his pupils in the guise of an English lesson. You support him purely because you like the music he is using. If he was telling kids what great meter, alliteration or allegory was used in a line from a NKOTB song I'm sure you'd be on my side of the fence. You say you'd have loved your teachers to have used Rush in their lessons - but if my (or your) teachers had used a band I (we) hated in their teaching I dare say I (you'd) have paid less rather than more attention - and thus my (your) education is likely to have suffered as a result. That's the compromise.

And I'm sure you accept that there are a lot more schoolkid fans of NKOTB and similar bands than there are of Rush. So for every one pupil who has heard of, or even likes Rush (and gets the extra credit from an enamoured teacher), there is likely to be an entire classroom of kids who don't. That's how their education could be compromised.

Sure I acknowledge all your points about how references in Rush lyrics have led us to discover some wonderful literature - I've done just the same - and in the right context I don't doubt that they can also be used as a teaching aid, but the context is everything. Being force-fed the teacher's favourite album in the name of English education isn't the same as a project or lesson on how different bands/lyricists use different themes, styles and grammatical/poetic expression in their songs, which strikes me as a much fairer (to the kids) way of highlighting, or indeed brightening up, a subject in the classroom.

Oh boy, I better stop there. And I thought your mail was a long one! I'm circulating this to Mick, Stewart and Bill as a matter of course, and with your permission I'll acknowledge your support for Bill and/or our continuing debate in the next Trivia page. Needless to say, if any of this has made any of us think and/or react then I hope these are positive effects. I've enjoyed developing the Trivia page into a more provocative and/or personal piece — as opposed to just being vaguely informative/entertaining — and don't want to go back. Maybe one day someone will write in supporting my arguments??!! (Mick where are you???)

Thanks for reading.

Steve Adams

Album Reviews

ALBUMS REVIEWED BY UNCLE TEL

Howdy there folks! It's yer ol' pardner in grime, yes 'tis me, yer ol' Uncle Tel, back with a brand new batch of glazzy discs to review. Just when ya thought it was safe to buy another run of the mill album to pass the time until Rush release their all new "Test For Echo" album. Well dudes, forget a poor substitute and scrounge, ponce, or try an' buy one of these 'lil beauties.

Now Mick tells me that some of you spooks have written in negative comments about yer Uncle Tel's reviews section and that's a no no folks, 'cause we here at The Spirit, first and foremost, agree our publication is about our beloved Rush, that should go without saying. But even Mick and my good self spend a lot of time and effort on your behalf, looking to bring you something to think about between albums, tours, videos, books and other items of Rush related banter. Indeed a lot of the time Mick and I, are going to gigs and checking out new and exciting bands to keep in touch with the music world in general. We'd be a sad pathetic bunch of twats if all we done was to sit on our laurels waiting for Rush news to come through the letterbox.

*** Kak ** Mediocre *** Good **** Excellent ***** Buy It At All Costs**

PICK & MIX - (DELEC CDD 023)

Well what a gem this is, a double CD, disc 1 is exactly 70 min, 20 secs and disc 2 is 71 mins 11 secs; with 23 tracks and only £5.00. This album is really very, very, good, bordering on brilliant. This double offering from Delerium records is a compilation of all the bands on their label, and what a damn good cross-section they've got. Jazz rock, space rock, psych rock, folk rock, you name it and it's sure to be on one of the 2 discs, with tracks by "Porcupine Tree", "Nova Express", "The Steppes", "Sadaar Bazaar" and even "Boris & His Bolshie Balalaika" doing a really mind-numbing cover of Hendrix' "Purple Haze". There really is something for everyone on this brilliant offer - searing guitars, sitars, balalaikas. Get a copy from Delerium records, P.O. Box 1288, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 9YB, England. Cheques, P.O.s or credit cards also I.M.O.s. £5.00 includes P&P (what a bargain). *****

SUCCOUR - (POT CD 01)

Also known as the Terrascope benefit album, 'cause this double CD package comes from a music journal like ours, that depends on your subscriptions to keep it alive. The guys at the "Ptolemaic Terrascope" to give it the full name, were in real financial difficulties, when they put their noggins together and asked as many bands that they'd interviewed and reviewed and done articles on as they could, to donate a song for this CD to sell purely to get them back on their financial feet. So great was the response, that what started originally as an album of help, turned into a whopping 35 track double CD only release. With acts from the USA, Norway, Australia, Japan, and good 'ol blighty. The bands include Randy California, Flyte Reaction, Bevis Frond, Sundial, Cul-de-sac, and even a spacey-guitar freak out by Captain Sensible (I didn't know he could play a mean geetar like that). This offering has something for everyone, a real good cross-section of talent, and all, for a very worthy cause, saving the bacon of a very good inspirational journal that the Terrascope is. You can obtain yourself a copy of Succours 35 tracks, 78 mins CD1, 78 mins CD2. Just send £13.25 (includes P&P) to:- Ptolemaic Terrascope, 37 Sandridge Road, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7BQ, England. *****

RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS - "ONE HOT MINUTE" (WARNER BROS 9362-45733-2)

Well what can be said about the Peppers that the music lovers that you are, don't already know. So on with the music, this album has all the usual format that we've come to love about the guys. Funky, raw and very, very catchy tunes, this album

though has some really up front scorching guitar passages ad some thoroughly harmonious singing, thrown in with the usual fuck word here and there just to give it, its Chilli stamp of authenticity. 13 tracks of pure genius and 61 mins of meltdown. *****

PAUL ROLAND - "SARABANDE" (GASLIGHT CD 501)

Paul Roland is hailed as England's pop-psych guru, and well deservedly so I might add. This album sees Paul taking a trip on Arabian magic carpets, through the mists of time to Camelot, Avalon and onto the realms of the deep blue sea. From the opening track "The King Will Come" you are transfixed by his mystical lyrics and haunting melodies with some fluid guitar work from lead guitarists Kevin Fox and Anthony Walker. Track 2 is "Morgan Le Fay" of Arthurian Legend, this is pure majesty and so the album nicely chugs along..... but the mainstay is Roland's pastoral English lyrics set against a backdrop of Victorian atmospherics.

A very fulfilling album that includes a bonus track, and an unreleased Marc Bolan cover in the guise of "Meadows Of The Sea" donated by Marc's widow June and given some punch by The Bevis Frond on lead guitar. There's also a Kinks cover "I'm Not Like Everybody Else". You can obtain a copy and more info from Paul Roland himself, c/o Gaslight Records, P.O. Box 177, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 0YF, U.K. *****

BRYAN FERRY - "BEST OF BRYAN FERRY AND ROXY MUSIC" (VIRGIN 7243-840951-23)

A thousand years old and still going strong, no, but it's like Bryan's been around a long time man!!! This CD has most of Bryan's solo work and the least rockier side of Roxy with maybe the exception of "Virginia Plain" and "Street Life". The rest of the tracks are just too commercial for any true Roxy/Ferry aficionados. That's not to say that the album isn't good, cause it certainly is, I just think the title conjures up a more all-over foray of his work which sadly this does not. ***

ETHEREAL COUNTERBALANCE 2 - "MELLIFLOUS CONFLUENCE" (SGCD11)

Originally a vinyl-only release back in 1994. September Gurls Records have finally brought this out on CD with 2 bonus tracks and well worth the wait I'd say. Ethereal is no other than Rustic Rod Goodway of Magic Muscle, J.P Sunshine and Rustic Hinge fame. This is Rodders, his guitar, pedals, effects and all up front vocals and backwards loop tapes aided by Phil Smith on bass and

drums. If you like fuzzy wah, wah guitar, and back masking effects, then this is it baby - 12 tracks of freaky guitar-orientated mayhem. The mix is really sublime, a truly superb upfront sound with psyched out lyrics to boot (it's just a pity that E.C.1 hasn't surfaced on C.D. yet, as the first album is equally brilliant). Contact Rod at: 24, Linden Close, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 0BB, U.K. Cheques or P.O. for £11.00 (includes P&P) *****

ADRIAN SHAW - "TEA FOR THE HYDRA" (WORONZOW WOO 27CD)

Adrian was bass player with Hawkwind on their Quark, Strangeness & Charm album and with Magic Muscle, J.P. Sunshine and now with The Bevis Frond. This album draws from all of these sources and melds them all together to bring a collection of songs where Ade handles all vocals, bass, synths, piano and guitar and drums as well. With outstanding contributions from Nick Saloman - lead guitar on track "Red & Grey", Bari Watts - lead guitar on track "Heart Of Stone", Andy Ward on track "Red & Grey". And it must be said that Adrian's 17 year old son Aaron plays some mighty mind blowing axe licks on "Roger's In A Home". "Live For The Day" is a track that could easily be mistaken for a Lennon & McCartney song leftover from Sgt. Pepper or the White album, but no, it's all Adrian's own work. The whole album is awash with searing guitars, swirling organ and swooshing synthesizers. The "Rogers In A Home" track which for my money at least is the highlight of the album (Roger, of course, being Syd from Pink Floyd fame who as you all know was another Roger like that of Roger Waters), the guitaring of young Aaron Shaw sounding very similar to Gilmour/California and Sammy Hagar. What with all the other superb tracks this is one helluva CD. I'd go as far as to say its got to be in the top 3 albums released this year anywhere in the cosmos. ***** **PICK OF THE CROP**

Available for just £11.25 (includes P&P) from:- Woronzow Records, 102 Crescent Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN4 9RJ, U.K.

SUNDIAL - "LIVE DRUG" AC8015CD

Put out by guitarist Gary Ramon's own ACME label, this CD is the first ever official live album by one of the UK's top underground psych rock bands of the '90s. Most of the material is taken from their last album "Acid Yantra" reviewed in these very pages by yours truly a few issues ago. These songs were recorded at their only UK gig last summer at the Quintessence Club in London. Of the 7 tracks, track 5 "Slow Motion" is taken from the "Reflector" album and track 7 "Expolding In Your Mind" is taken from the debut album "Other Way Out". Anyone who hasn't heard Sundial before, it should be said that Gary Ramon is a guitarist extraordinaire. Sundial sound like they've been around for a long time when in fact they're quite new on the scene (debuting 89/90 onto the pro scene I think). This is a really good album except the lack of audience noise between tracks. The odd clap and whistle can only just be heard. But all in all, the band sound crisp and clear, very good quality indeed for an independant label. Joined this time by Craig Adrienne on drums and Jake Honeywill on bass. This three piece band are devastatingly good. ***** Get your copy for just £10.00 (included P&P) from ACME Mailorder, P.O. Box 248, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6WT, U.K.

MORNING GLORIES - "FULLY LOADED" (RADAR RECORDS SCAN CD06)

The Glories hail from New York and consist of Christian Gibbs - guitars, vocals, Nick Palumbo - bass and Kenny Savelson - drums.

I must admit I know very little about these boys as there's very little info on this CD at all. The music speaks for itself though. Tough, aggressive in the Nirvana/Pearl Jam mould, this is a very good album, if not a brilliant one, and the songs are well constructed and deftly executed. I'm told they have a newer album out than this '95 release, but we're yet to find it here at "Spirit Tower". This CD though, is enough to make you seek out more of this fine outfit from the Big Apple. In fact the more you play it the better it seems to get, know what I mean!! 11 tracks - 38 mins worth (not enuff). *****

FU MANCHU - "IN SEARCH OF..." (MAMMOTH MRO 134-2P)

Released on Feb 27th '96, this is Fu Manchu's third album to date and by far their greatest. This really is a band that goes from strength to strength. 12 tracks and 40 mins of bludgeon riffola mind melting rock-a-la-Sabbath with the exception of Ozzy's missing vocals. This is Black Sabbath with demonic vengeance, absolute and ultimate power. Thundering power drumming, fuzzed out bass guitar, like there's no canvas left in my speakers - wow!!! Bludgeoning guitar feedback and all hell's broken loose. The twin guitar prowess of say Judas Priest at their best, and you've got a pretty good idea what I mean. In fact you'll have to forgive my demented warbling as this has just blown my grey matter clean out of my ass. A mighty dandy album by a damn good band. This is our joint **PICK OF THE CROP** *****.

King Lerxst on Rockline

Continued...

[AL]: Yeah, it would be fun to do that, I think.

[SD]: Yeah. Alex Lifeson from Rush on Rockline with "Dreamline".

[SD]: I love that one. "Dreamline" from Rush. Alex Lifeson with us for the full 90 tonight. Mark is listening to us in beautiful Bamph, Alberta. CJ95 in Calgary is our station there. Hey, Mark.

[Caller]: Hey.

[SD]: You're on with Alex Lifeson.

[Caller]: A lot of Canadian bands have been influenced by you, among them The Tragically Hip. I was wondering if you were doing anything with any bands like that, especially the Hip, in the next little while.

[AL]: Not at this point. The Hip are a very big band in Canada; they're a terrific band, and they tour and do everything in their own right. Perhaps in the future we might have the opportunity to work together. I'd love to go out every show and watch them play, but as far as working together, no plans for it.

[SD]: That would be a nice bill, wouldn't it? Rush and the Tragically Hip. Love to see that.

[AL]: Yeah, it would be great, actually.

[SD]: We're speaking with Alex Lifeson. We'll have more from the *Victor* album and more of your phone calls coming up on the Global Satellite Network.

[SD]: That is "Mr. X", one of two instrumental tracks you'll find on the *Victor* album that not only showcases the stellar guitar work of Alex Lifeson, but also some great work by Peter Cardinelli on bass and also, Blake Manning on drums, there.

Matt in - is that Denton? - Texas, listening to Q102 in Dallas, home of the soon-to-be-going-to-the-Superbowl Dallas Cowboys, there. Hey, Matt.

[Caller]: Hello.

[SD]: You're on with Alex Lifeson.

[AL]: Hi, Matt.

[Caller]: I'd like to ask you, doing all the work on the album, on your own, did it change the dynamics of recording with Rush at all? I mean, did it change your input level that you might have given on a Rush album considering you've done all this on your own now, and you have the

experience behind you?

[AL]: Yeah, I think I feel a little more self confident, having done what I did. I think if I brought anything into this new writing session, it's been that. I'm a little more definite in what I'm doing and the way I hear things. I think when Ged and I worked together, that has just helped us work a little more efficiently. We seem to be getting all our results much quicker than we have in the past, and the results seem to be much more definite.

Now, I'm not saying that it's all because of this. The fact that we had the time off and everybody was in such a great headspace really added to that whole experience being as good as it was. But, for me personally, I do feel more confidence having done this.

[SD]: Thanks, Matt. Once again, Alex Lifeson from his album *Victor* on Rockline. This is the final track on that CD, "I Am the Spirit".

[SD]: From the album *Victor*, Alex Lifeson and "I Am the Spirit". We'll be back with some closing thoughts from Alex in just a minute on the Global Satellite Network. Don't go away.

[SD]: [holding back laughter] Thanks to everyone for listening and calling tonight.

...and to our guest this evening, Alex Lifeson. Always a pleasure, Alex. We talked about it very briefly, and I know you guys - Rush has just gone back into the studio. Can you give us any sort of idea of the direction of the new Rush album?

[AL]: I can't. But, I can say that we started recording last week, and everything sounds *great*, and the material is really strong, and we really feel strongly about this record. I think it's going to be one of the best records we've ever made. I always think that with each record, but this time, I really believe it. There's a feel to this record that I don't think we've had on any other Rush record, and I can't wait to hear this record finished.

[SD]: Nor can we.

[AL]: Really looking forward to it.

[SD]: Congratulations on some great work with *Victor*, and I hope you get a chance to take that out on the road one of these days, as well.

[AL]: Thank you so much, it's been a pleasure.

[SD]: I'm Steve Downes, see ya!

