

*the spirit of*  
**Rush**

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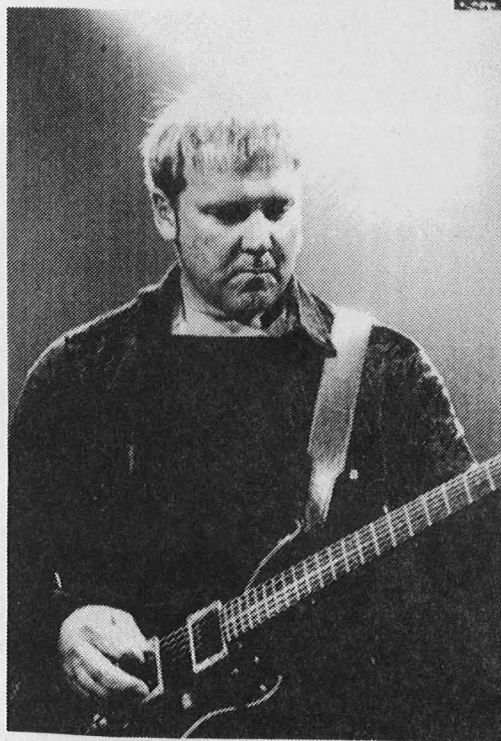
May '97

Issue 38.

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# *Spirit of Rush*

## Editorial

Hello and welcome to yet another action packed issue of The Spirit of Rush. We have tried to get this issue to you as soon as we could after no.37 in case any of you were planning a trip to North America to catch the band on the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg of the 14<sup>th</sup> tour. You should have picked this issue up in mid-May from your doormat (if all went well between here and the printers). As you read this only a couple of weeks of the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg would have taken place and with the tour running until the first week of July you should have time to make arrangements for your trip to see the band perform. Revised/confirmed tour dates can be found on the back cover of this issue, together with details of how to order tickets from the venues using VISA/Credit Cards.

As promised last issue we have included a flyer for you to photocopy and distribute in your area for this years convention, please hand out as many as you can or put them up in local records stores (put them in the Rush CD/tape sections) any/all publicity for the event would be welcome.

Talking of the convention, if you have not ordered your tickets yet you will find another order form with this issue, so use it quick before you forget. Anthem and the band have

once again agreed to supply us with a selection of items, for use in the raffle/auction part of the event. Some of the confirmed items are as follow... Roll the Bones – Award Plaque. Complete sets of the re-mastered albums, Tour Merchandise & some other surprises. As you can see the band and their management have been very generous once again. Many, many thanks to them.

We have included a page or two of guest houses in Leicester for you to stay once the convention is over. We'll try and print more in each issue between now and the big day. From the next issue we would like to include details of anyone who can offer a lift to another fan to and from Leicester. Please send in your name and phone number together with your starting point, which will be printed in our next issue. You can then expect loads of phone calls from interested parties wanting a lift. Seriously though it's a great way to meet fellow fans and you can share the petrol expenses as well.

Just space left to mention the new album from Detroit based band Tiles. Fence the Clear was mixed by one Terry Brown as mentioned in last months news page, and what an excellent job he has made of it. I've lived with it for a couple of weeks

now and it improves with every listen (check out how to order a copy direct on the inside back cover) any news of a UK/European release Chris? From the opening fusion sounding "Patterns" through the epic closing number "Checkerboards" Tiles cover all the bases, why this band are not signed to a major label is beyond belief. Personal favourites include "Anothers Hand" and It's marvellous mid-section extended instrumental passage. "Game show" with it's spot on lyrics which could have been penned by Zappa in his heyday. "He's a wonderful guy" indeed! And last but not least my absolute fave "Changing the Guard" poignant lyrics meet haunting/atmospheric music in a truly astounding song which I'm sure will be a highlight of any gigs the band play in the future. By the Way any news on a UK/European tour yet, Chris—Chris? "Fallen Pieces" would make a good (Medieval) sounding intro tape to take the stage to as well. To steal a phrase from over twenty years ago that most (older) U.K. Rush fans will be familiar with "Tiles are probably the best undiscovered band in Europe at the moment I strongly recommend you to check them out, NOW!" (copyright G. Barton.)

*Mick*

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### STOP PRESS

Setlist changes

Dropped: The Big Money,  
Subdivisions.  
Added: Limelight,  
Stick it Out.



# DISTANT EARLY WARNINGS

## I'(m leaving) MOTHER EARTH

In a surprising chain of events Edwin has decided to part company with I Mother Earth. Edwin will stay with the band until after the current set of dates, which go through until August. After this Edwin will leave the band. The reason for the split is down to that industry classic, "We want to go down different musical paths".

The band are currently looking for a new singer, below is a copy of the advert that they are using.

**Wanted:** Vocalist for pro band in the Toronto area, ready to record follow-up to double-platinum album. Band has large following in Canada, U.S. and overseas, a Juno award, plus other several other accolades.

If you think you've got what it takes to fill Edwin's shoes, send a bio/resume, photo, and your demo to the following address:

c/o John Boyes  
869 Broadview Ave.,  
Toronto, ON  
M4K 2P9

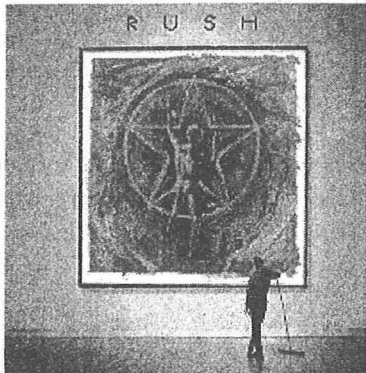
## RE-MASTERED

Polygram, not Atlantic, have released the first set of 6 studio albums completely re-mastered, which is nice. The problem is they've been released in North America, but not here in Europe yet. I've spoken to SRO/Anthem and their not sure when they'll be released. Let's hope there out here soon.

## Retrospective I (1974-1980)

RETROSPECTIVE I, compiled in association with RUSH, is the band's first ever single disc greatest hits package. It collects together the best of RUSH's classic seventies material, from their 1974 debut album RUSH through their best-selling 1980 album PERMANENT WAVES. The set has been 20-bit digitally re-mastered from the original master tapes by legendary engineer Bob Ludwig, utilizing the APOGEE UV22 SUPER CD ENCODING process resulting in extended resolution and improved sonic accuracy. RETROSPECTIVE I was designed by long-time RUSH graphic artist Hugh Syme.

Track Listing: The Spirit of Radio, The Trees, Something for Nothing, Freewill, Xanadu, Bastille Day, By-Tor and the Snow Dog, Anthem, Closer to the Heart, 2112 Overture, The Temples of Syrinx, La Villa Strangiato, Fly By Night, Finding My Way.



# Just the FAQs

The Permanent Waves (PeW) Q&A session...

#4

**Has anybody ever noticed that the signs on the right side of the cover say Lee, Lifeson and Peart?**

Yes. (But not on all copies...)

**Why was the headline on the newspaper on the album cover blocked out? (Note: The Anthem Canadian release does not have this problem.)**

"There are always the inevitable last minute crises, such as the Chicago Daily Tribune being still so embarrassed about their 'Dewey defeats Truman' error of more than thirty years ago that they actually refused to let us use it on the cover!" (Neil Peart, in the PeW tourbook)

- To clarify this: When Harry Truman ran against Thomas Dewey for president, Truman lost in most of the states with early returns. So, it looked like Dewey was going to win. The Tribune released an early morning paper the next day with a "Dewey defeats Truman" headline.

**What is the "words of the profits" quote in "The Spirit Of Radio" about?**

It's referring to "The Sounds of Silence," by Simon and Garfunkel. Here are the relevant lyrics:

- "The Sounds of Silence":

"And the sign said:

'The words of the prophets  
are written on the subway  
walls, and tenement halls  
And whispered in the sounds  
of silence'"

- "The Spirit of Radio":

"For the words of the profits,  
Are written on the studio wall,  
Concert hall -  
Echoes with the sounds ...  
Of salesmen."



**What is "Free Will" about?**

"The song is about freedom of choice and free will, and you believing in what you decide you believe in." (Geddy Lee)

**In "Free Will" which lyrics are correct (the ones on the album sleeve or the ones Geddy sings)?**

"That's a funny question. I've had a few lately from people who are so sure that what they hear is correct, that they disbelieve what I've put in the lyric sheets! Imagine! People have quoted me whole verses of what they hear, as opposed to what's printed, sure that they are right and the cover (me) is wrong. Scary stuff, these egocentric individuals. I assure you, other than perhaps dropping an "and" or a "but," we take great care to make the lyric sheets accurate." (Neil Peart, December 1985 Backstage Club newsletter)

**Where is "Lotus-Land"?**

"Lotus-land as it appears in 'Free Will' is simply a metaphor for an idealized background, a 'land of milk and honey.' It is sometimes also used as a pejorative name for Los Angeles, though that was not in my mind when I wrote it." (Neil Peart)

**I heard something about a song called "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight."**

Apparently it was supposed to be on PeW, but was dropped. According to *Visions*, some bits from it ended up in "Natural Science." Delving deeper into the Trivia, it turns out that Sir Gawain's (holy) symbol of choice was none other than the pentangle, or a pentagram as a circumscribed star...

Dear Spirit,

First let me apologise for my wart analogy in my T.F.E. review! Spirit 37 was great except for the fact that it left me feeling that it was like a teasing school kid... look what the Americans are having but you Europeans can only dream about.... A Rush Eurotour!

I just don't agree with the bands justification that the record company doesn't do enough to support the band. Why not ~~take it up with them~~, ~~instead of penalising the fans who DO~~ support them?

What do Rush do to help the record company once a record is released? They don't tour, if a single is release the band don't supply new material for b-sides, which would encourage fans who already own the album to buy the single, and maybe get it into the charts, thus getting some airplay and letting the masses know they still exist and are better than ever.

After all what did you do in the early seventies when you had no record deal, to promote yourselves? You toured!!!

When I tell me work mates I've just bought the new Rush CD they either say "Who?" or "Are they still going?" We fans can only do so much to promote the band, the rest is up to Rush themselves.

Neil says Test for Echo is a call for a reply... Is anyone out there? Yes, we're out here in Europe, how about a tour? I await your Echo! I find it ironic that Neil can go to the ends of the earth by cycle, but can't get Rush to your Europe. After all, how long would it take? A month? Six weeks at best.

Don't forget most of your fans are "Working Men" with families and mortgages and can't afford to visit the U.S. to catch you in concert, but if you toured our home countries, we'd be there two or three nights.

I'd just like to end with a heartfelt flea... I've been a fan for twenty years and supported every release, So, Geddy, Alex & Neil please tour Europe and give the European wing of your record company a kick up the rear on our behalf.

Thanks,  
Bill Collins, West Midlands.

*I'd just like to say, I agree 110% with Bill, I'm sick of hearing, that they don't WANT to tour Europe because of East/West. I've heard the stories of how hard it was for Alex and Geddy to get Neil to tour AT ALL for test for echo, but for the decision to be made to do a world tour, and NOW to say, no sorry It's going to be a North American Tour only, get a grip, I'm beginning to think that it's not just East/West that deserve a kick.. Ed*

Dear Mick and all at SOR,

Do you know of any way in which I will be able to get Test for Echo on vinyl? I have placed orders with HMV, Ainleys & Virgin, in Leicester, but as yet they have been unable to come up with anything, Does this mean that t4e succumbed to the Glamour for CD's/tapes or am I just a little bit behind these days? As you know, I have each previous Rush album on vinyl, and it would be a shame to let this one go. Any help you could give me would of course be welcomes, and I will pay well for a good (mint) copy of t4e.

Chris, Leicester shire.

*Chris, as far as we are aware t4e was never released on vinyl (unless anyone out there knows better?) Ed.*

P.S. Would you consider starting a pen-friends section in the next issue of SOR?

*We have mentioned it several times in Editorials etc. But have never had more than one or two interested parties wanting one, if enough people write in following this mention of it again, of course we'll start one up right away. ED*

Hi SOR,

Thanks for another excellent issue of SOR. It seems that there will be some more people from out of the U.K. at this years convention. I've contacted Partick Clerens, whose letter was printed in the last issue and he wants to go with me. Gerhard Zimmerman (the guy with the nut & bolt painted on his car) has also contacted me and he and a friend of his wants to come aswell (the more the merrier Ed.) As I first read my letter in issue no. 36 I thought that it has been too hard to write that other fans weren't loyal enough because they didn't come to Leicester. But I know that it's an expensive trip, so people had to stay home because of money problems or for other reasons. To have doubts about the loyalty isn't fair (we agree with your sentiments Jorn).

Have you seen the "Work in Progress" videos, they are brilliant, I'm not a drummer, but it's just great to see Neil Peart play and have a close look at his technique. There are a lot of other things on the tapes than only drumming. You learn a lot about Neil himself and about his philosophy and he explains how Rush work together. I like it very much, and you? (We like the videos very much, if you have not seen them yet. What are you waiting for, an invite?).

Bye,

Jorn Thoms, Germany.



Dear S.O.R.

I got my first issue of Your "Rushzine" and I do have to say congratulations for the brilliant job. I also have a question for your readers: "How's the music situation in your countries? In Italy it is terrifying. The records sold are very few. The majority of Italian artists fills me with disgust, the valid ones instead are left in a corner. If you talk about progressive to somebody who's under 25 he thinks about dance music; if he's over 35 he thinks about politics. If you want to contact me and write/talk about this, about rush, about music and whatever, this is my address:

Marco Milioni  
Via Bazzanese 29/6  
40033 Casalecchio Di Reno (Bo)  
Italy,

Email: [dseabo1@spbo.unibo.it](mailto:dseabo1@spbo.unibo.it)

I hope you to reply! Please rescue me! Still congratulations for S.O.R. your work is precious.

Cheerio, Marco.

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Dear Spirit of Rush,

Well, I've not wrote for ages so I think it's about time. I tried to get to the convention last year but the cash-flow situation wasn't so good. Now this year I was looking forward to because things brightened up, my girlfriend got pregnant and everything seemed fine... Then I found the baby is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I can't even get to see them live either. So Mick, if you do Publish this letter and the band is reading this, can't you just do one show? Wembley stadium would be perfect.

Yours hopefully,

Gary Tunstall, St. Helens.

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Dear S.O.R.

Hmmmm, quick response. I Like it!! Keep it up. Thanks for my first issue of "Spirit" which I eagerly read from cover to cover. Actually it's the first time that I have EVER read such a magazine that I subscribed to from cover to cover, and then gone back over it again and again. You have achieved a first, so congratulations!! The reviews of t4e and the Working Man tribute album were interesting, and although I am a little late here are my views of both. I hope you print them. I Won't rattle on with my views on the musical complexity as I have been a bass player for the last 18 years, I thought that I would leave that avenue well alone. If the music is enjoyable to listen to, and was enjoyable for the band to play then that's good enough for me. That's what music should be about.

As for people complaining that they have had to wait 3 years for t4e to come out are talking out of their hats. Just try waiting for a YES album or even better, a Rolling Stones album, then you will know the true meaning of a long wait!!!!

The working Man tribute album is just what a tribute album should be. People who admire Rush playing Rush songs. I agree that most of the solos are very overplayed and do detract a little from the songs but it still doesn't make it crap. I really don't think that buying a Kula Shaker album is music more worthwhile. Like, yeah, let's all form a band that sounds like any early 70's band and cream the money out of the 70's craze that seems to be sweeping everywhere at the moment. What great integrity. If you like that kind of music then fine, but lets not argue about. I also agree that no one could improve on the way Rush play them, but I don't think that anyone tried to. It just sounds like the people involved had a lot of fun paying tribute to the best band in the world. RUSH. I just wish there had been more of "By-Tor" than there was. Now that would have made it truly classic!

Just a final word before I sign of. Does anybody have a spare pewter "star man" badge that was on sale at the moving Pictures tour, and the pewter "fire hydrant" band that was sold at the signals tour? I had 2 of the star man pins and one fire hydrant pin and some bastard stole them off my jacket. If anyone out there has both/either of these that they would like to sell to me then could they please let me know. I would be very grateful, and by the way, I have a lot of Rush sheet music which includes bass lines. Here is a quick list of what I have got: everything that is on Hemispheres, Permanent waves, Moving Pictures, Signals, Grace under Pressure and Power Windows and I think that I have got Hold your Fire as well, but I can't be sure. I've got t4e (the song), finding my way, working man, fly by night, By-Tor, anthem, bastille day, lakeside park, no one at the bridge, all of 2112 all of All the worlds a stage. A farewell to kings, Xanadu, closer to the heart and Cinderella man. Some said that they would like to get hold of some, so if they let me know what they want I will willingly photocopy it for them.

Cheers,

Karl (Geddy) Beeston,  
67 Blake Close,  
Hednesford,  
Cannock,  
Staffordshire,  
WS11 2UB.

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# **RESPECT THE BRIDGE:**

## **A traveler's guide to music, ordering in, and cop cars**

**(Compiled during October & November, 1996)**

**by Ray Wawrzyniak,**

**with a lot of help from my comedy sidekick,  
Kevin Hulme**

Gee, I'll bet you thought you'd never get through the subtitles!! But don't sweat it- I thought I would never get home from Rockford, Illinois!! But I'm getting ahead of myself...

Well, when I last graced the pages of our this beloved fanzine, I believe I was ranting and raving about Kumbayah '95. Thankfully, my traveling partner and I were spared the torture of sitting through what had become an annual summer event this year. Seems that the powers-that-be decided that "Kumbayah" would be taken out on the road this year, and Alex Lifeson's little side project (that would be Rush) would not enable him to take part. (Boo hoo, I think not!!) So, the writer inside me has been itching to share my trials with those of you who are patient enough to sit through them ever since!! And alas, what better source of material than a new Rush tour!! Therefore,...

October brought us many things. The new football season was underway. The World Series had returned to those who were cheated out of it. Snow had begun to fall here in Buffalo, New York (actually, I think it started sometime around July), and Rush was preparing itself to see if anybody out there even cared anymore. Were they serious? I think when Neil posed in his bio the "Test For Echo? Is anybody out there?" question, I'm sure he was being at least a little modest. Did they actually think after two-and-a-half years that we were all just going to *forget*? I think not!!

The opening of the tour found Rush in Albany, New York. The opening of a tour is almost a re-orientation for fans, and a must for those who consider themselves to be fanatic. "What? The tour opens in Australia? O.k., I'll call for the air fare, and you get the tickets". Price, accommodations, travel; they're not even a consideration. You have to be there, wedding or no wedding...

So, when people from all corners of the globe (and I mean, the globe!!) began arriving in my beloved state in mid October, that immediately put to rest Neil's previously stated concern. To see people coming from England, Ireland, Seattle, San Diego, Buffalo, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and points in between that I probably missed, was yet another affirmation of the dedication of the ardent Rush fan. We were all here now, ready for the show.

Ahhh, the show. That's what it's all about, isn't it? Part of the fun is the anticipation of the tour, the games you play in the car. You know, you've done it, too: "Do you think they'll open with \_\_\_\_\_ again?" "Do you think they'll play \_\_\_\_\_?" "I heard they were actually gonna play \_\_\_\_\_!!" "Were you really just driving 95 mph in this weather?" You know the routine.



So when my party and I arrived in Albany for the first show on the tour, we had already done 450 miles or so worth of those questions. I'd say we were ready. But were we, really? I'll never grow accustomed to the fact that, you know what's going to hit you, and you prepare for it, but when you actually see it, it's overwhelming. We know Rush will be great, we know the routine (sort of...), but did we imagine this? Just as we thought we were really ready in '91, and then they play 'Anthem'!! Just when we thought we were really ready in '94, and then they play the Prelude to 'Hemispheres'!! So, were we really ready when they played "2112"...in its entirety? Or "Natural Science"? Had we really imagined this? I think not. Albany was a great show, but it was really an affirmation that Rush was back (were they ever really gone?), that the fans were still there, and that we were all ready to put our lives on hold again for a few months so we can cater to our collective alter-ego.

Show #2, the next night in Buffalo, New York, saw the band in a bigger, brand new arena. Buffalo, with its close proximity to the band's hometown, has long been an "automatic" stop on any Rush tour, and this tour was no exception. I don't know what to say about the show in particular. All three guys were there again. They dressed cool again. And, I must say they played great again. Just another show to add onto the list. Where to next?

Saturday, October 26th, had originally been scheduled as a date that would find Rush in Ohio. However, the band's record company, Anthem Records, released the official statement that Rush would not be able to play the gig scheduled for Dayton, Ohio, because the venue would be unable to hold a show such as Rush's. Therefore, the band re-scheduled a date at the Rockford Center in the thriving metropolis of Rockford, Illinois. It was a Saturday, and my friend Kevin and I had already planned on the Dayton trip. So, we figured, "What's another hundred miles or so?"

How wrong we were. I will never go to Rockford, Illinois again (nor will I go to Boston again, but, again, I'm getting ahead of myself...). Would you like a reason? Heck, I'll give you 630 reasons!!! The drive from Buffalo, New York to Rockford, Illinois is 631 miles. Again, it was a Saturday, and by law we had to go, but..... It was tough. After driving half way on Friday night, and half way on Saturday, we arrived. But had we? I mean, we drove a hundred miles an hour at times, respecting every bridge we went under for the possibility that a cop car might be waiting on the other side, passing by such now-infamous participants as "Scott Iowa", to arrive in....Rockford. Rockford. Say it three times fast and it's still...Rockford. Kind of like "Bedrock". Since not too many people were there (I'll get to that in a minute), let's just say that Rockford is like New York City in these ways: That's it. None.

When we arrived in the city, Kevin and I honored our tradition of checking the box office for the current status of ticket sales/attendance. Upon being questioned, the box office clerk estimated that the 8,000 seat arena had only sold 6,000 as of 4:30 the afternoon of the show. I was appalled. I mean, hadn't Mr. All-knowing himself, the editor of the cheese publication (and you can quote me on that) "A Show of Fans", put together some kind of petition? Didn't he say that his dog, uncle, next door neighbor, and sister's ex-boyfriend were "all gonna be there"?!!? Well, imagine his surprise, and more importantly, that of the band, when they looked out into an arena filled (?) with a whopping petition-driven.....5,100 fans. How embarrassing!! I wouldn't be too proud to claim that I got together that many fans for a Rush show. Heck, I have that many people over my house to watch a football game!! Granted, the small attendance and arena made for a unique experience. Also adding to the

experience was the omission of "Resist" that evening, the appearance of Pamela Sue Anderson on stage with the band (well, sort of...), and the return of Alex's introduction of the members of the band. As well, the Halloween lights that encircled the stage's refrigerator were something different that I took from that show, as was Alex donning the black Chucks. Oh, by the way, the show ruled. But I'm never going back there again. Even if the hotel attendant was as nice as she was. But I did still respect the bridge rule on the way home.

Next was Cleveland. Cleveland brought us to the Arthur J. Gund Arena, a must on everyone's "Top 5 arena names" list. Unique to the Cleveland show was the film intro for "Half The World", the movie trailers at intermission, and the fact that we actually avoided going to a Subway because of its ill-advised location. Seeing Rush in Cleveland is always something I look forward to, because of its obvious historical reference in Rush's history. The show was great. The band looked cool. "2112" still ruled. And Jenny McCarthy, well, I'll save that for Kevin...

Next up (for Kevin and I at least) was a week-end trip for Kevin and I to the now god-forsaken city of Boston, Massachusetts, and the lovely Hartford, Connecticut. No easy drives here, again, and the respect the bridge rule was in full force (although broken tragically once). Now, much has been written of the historical importance of Boston and its place in the building of our great nation. And indeed, of the six shows I have seen on this tour thus far, with a seventh just days away, I'd have to say that Boston show was a real highlight. The place was packed. Sold out to the rafters. The crowd was just nuts, especially this idiot a few rows ahead of us. The band was great. "Resist" sounded awesome. Neil's book was on sale there. But damn that traffic!! Damn the layout of the arena!! Damn the crowded stairways!! Thank god for everything that went on inside, because outside was a place I never want to visit again! (But don't let that stop you from going!!) But man, that was a great show!!!

The next day, we found ourselves in Hartford. There's nothing like stepping out of the fitting room in a store in a mall and then going right into the arena. This arena, the Hartford Civic Center, actually has a mall located on it's lower floor!! Odd, eh? Anyway, we enjoyed the show from seats that were a little farther back from the stage that we had grown accustomed, and that only served to reinforce the talents of the entire Rush *crew*. That was really a SHOW. I loved the city. I loved the sound. I hated the delivery service, but Kevin loved the actress in the movie. We'll be back to Hartford, for sure.

As of today, December 3rd, I am anticipating my next Rush show at the Nassau Coliseum on December 14th. That will be my 46th Rush show. It may end up in my top 3. I may end up ranting on and on about something I experienced. Heck, I'm going to take my new bride to that show, her first; that in itself will make the show unique!! But I know in advance that the show will be great. I know they'll all look cool. I know "2112" will sound awesome. I know what they'll open up with. So why do it all again? Well, like I've said, I've seen 45 of them already, and I'm still not used to that feeling even yet. I can't wait for that show, and I can't wait to share my experiences with those of you willing to listen.

"Test for Echo? Is anybody out there?" Hey, don't worry; I'll be...



(I don't think I'm ever going to be on an awards show, so this is the only time I can do this...)

A million thanks to all who made the first half of this tour a real blast: Kevin, Monica, Steve Zimmerman, Dave, Mick, Stewart, Janet, Steve Adams, Jimmy, Chris, Cheryl, Brad, Ken (I haven't forgot the wings), Bill, that security guard by the bus in Albany, Scott Iowa, the hotel attendant in Rockford, Jenny, that idiot dj in Hartford, the guy who made me gag for half the show in Hartford, the cop in Rochester, and most of all, my new bride Lisa (not Katie), for her patience and understanding.

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# *Rush Convention*

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PRESENTED BY



*The Spirit Of Rush*

LEICESTER UNIVERSITY

SATURDAY AUGUST 30<sup>TH</sup> 1997 - 2:00PM TIL 2:00AM

Featuring two performances by  
**The Jack Secret Show** + *support*

Guests:  
TBC

Tickets: £12.00

Credit Card ordering: **0116 934 2000**

# what the papers said 2.

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**DAY 15: Boston, MA**  
**November 9, 1996**

**The Boston Globe**  
**November 1, 1996**

**Rush bucks trends to deliver for fans**  
by Steve Morse, Globe Staff

Trends come and go, but Rush remains. The Canadian power trio has bashed away for 20-plus years and has no plans to stop now, despite a radio climate seen as inhospitable to veteran bands. So what else is new?

"Rock music is very fragmented these days, but we've always stood outside the mainstream anyway," Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson said yesterday. "We've had the benefit of a great, very loyal fan base, so we haven't had to compromise ourselves. With every record we make, we try to move forward and not live off past successes. We feel like a fresh, young band with everything we do. And as I look out during the shows these days, I see a lot of young kids coming to check us out, so that feels good."

After a three-year absence, Rush is back on the road and headed to the FleetCenter on Saturday, Nov. 9. For the first time, it's "An Evening with Rush." That means no opening act, but instead two sets of Rush totaling two hours and 45 minutes. It also means a batch of tracks from the new album "Test for Echo" (a more aggressive, guitar-driven work that shoves keyboards further back in the mix) and archival tunes such as "2112" ("We're doing all of it, which we've never done live before") and "Natural Science."

The tour also has plenty of new video, a Rush trademark.

"We get trapped behind all the [instrumental] pedals and triggers, so it's good to have visuals," said Lifeson. "And we're using a lot of lighting effects, but no pyro like we did the last tour."

Rush had taken some time off to enable Lifeson to make a solo album ("Victor," which showed his heavier, almost punky side). Singer Geddy Lee took the time to father a new baby girl, and drummer Neil Peart (who's motorcycling the length of this tour) to make a drum compilation and take swing lessons from noted teacher Freddie Gruber. "Neil has changed his whole style around. It's now more circular and fluid rather than linear," said Lifeson.

"We're all in very good spirits, very healthy and enjoy being back on the road," said Lifeson. "And we still like each other's company, I must say."

**The Boston Globe**  
**November 11, 1996**

**RUSH BRIDGES THE DECADES WITH EASE**  
By Paul Robicheau

The more things change, the more they stay the same for Rush. Yet the Canadian rock trio keeps moving within its idiosyncratic yet successful reign over the arenas for two decades. And after a near-three-year hiatus, Rush hit a packed FleetCenter Saturday with a lean, refreshed delivery that bridged the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

The two-set show, topping 2 1/2 hours, let Rush stretch out more than ever, from the 20-minute "2112" - an awkwardly futuristic suite with fans shouting "Hey!" on cue and quadrophonic sound like it was 1976 all over again - to several songs from the flat new "Test For Echo," which were much better live.

Rush had a typically colorful light show, backing video (from cartoon imagery to perfect-angle stage action) and a few props (laser-firing radar dishes for the new CD's title track). Yet the emphasis remained on the trio's precise musicianship, which married hard-rock flourishes with tricky, fusionlike shifts.

Drummer Neil Peart anchored the fresh attack, as he juggled mixed stick grips with a looser feel, suggesting the influence of a recent Buddy Rich tribute project. his platform revolved from a primary new single-bass kit to a double-bass set with electronic drums for "Red Sector A" and "The Trees," which he spiced with cowbells. And his later solo remained indulgent but thoughtfully varied as a peerless tour de force.

Geddy Lee reached to sing the old high notes of "2112," yet mostly seemed relaxed, even in lashing fleet, funky bass lines. He played less synthesizer, but mixed analog and digital sounds. And guitarist Alex Lifeson squeezed frantic bursts in freedom tales "Red Barchetta" and "Freewill" that contrasted with his edgy, spacious chords in newer songs like "Roll The Bones."

An encore of chock-a-block instrumental "YYZ" underscored Rush's spot as an arena anomaly. The trio's growth from Zeppelinesque space rockers to cool technicians couldn't have maintained fan support without heart and humor. As Lee sang in "Spirit of the Radio" (and airplay is short now for Rush), "All this machinery making modern music can still be open-hearted."

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**DAY 16: Hartford, CT**  
**November 10, 1996**

**ATTENDANCE - 9,642**  
**CAPACITY - 10,500**



By  
CHRISTINE M. COONEY  
Staff writer

Veteran rockers Rush, on hiatus since 1994, are back with a new release, *Test For Echo*, and they're curious to find out if the public is still interested.

"Of all the titles we considered, *Test For Echo* was the most evocative," said drummer/lyricist Neil Peart in a recent telephone interview. "Everybody needs some affirmation to know they're not alone, an echo.

"It was also a beautiful metaphor for us because we've been away for awhile, so we're saying, 'Is anyone out there?'"

The Canadian trio has been off the road since wrapping its *Counterparts* tour in mid-1994. Now Rush is at the beginning of the *Test For Echo* tour, which will stop at the Hartford Civic Center on Sunday.

During the down time, Peart and guitarist Alex Lifeson dabbled in solo projects, while singer/bassist Geddy Lee took a vacation to spend time with his newborn baby.

Peart, the busiest of three, put together a tribute album for the late drummer Buddy Rich called *Burning For Buddy*; wrote his first novel, *"The Masked Rider: Cycling in West Africa"*; completed the video *"A Work In Progress"*; and found himself a drum instructor.

It's hard to imagine one of rock's greatest drummers taking lessons again (from the legendary teacher Freddie Grubbs), but he did.

"I felt restless, stagnant, like my playing was getting stiff," said Peart. "When your playing is forced to become mathematical, a certain stiffness can creep in."

Peart wanted to find a way to merge looseness with his clinically perfect playing. "Freddie suggested ways to make my playing circular and precise, but smoother for me as a drummer."

After spending two years in his basement playing to the spiders, Peart is finally getting a chance to play live again with

the *Test For Echo* tour.

But after more than 20 years of touring, it's a lot harder for these veteran rockers to enjoy the perks of playing live.

"A lot of the advantages of being of the road don't exist for us anymore - like getting tighter and better as a band," said Peart.

"We already have that after 22 years of playing together, it's like telepathy."

So while young bands thirst to be on the road and hone in on their musical skills and increase their fan base, Rush is out there to keep its demanding fans happy.

"Making touring a productive time is hard, because it's very repetitive," said Peart.

"I work hard to make some kind of stimulation so I can get a reward out of it."

To pass the time, Peart takes his bicycle with him and does his own sight-seeing tours.

As far as the recording/writing process, Peart wears the double hat: drummer, lyricist. The most intricate relationship is between himself, as the lyricist and Lee, as the vocalist.

"Writing for someone else's voice is a different discipline," said Peart, who acknowledges that since they're close friends it's a real collaborative and instinctual effort on their parts.

Asked if he has any preconceived notions about how the songs should be song and Peart says, "That's always the mystery. I always have a theatrical structure, but when I pass it along it's words on paper. To hear a human voice is a pretty exciting affirmation - echo."

Peart described his role in the recording process as "my part is so solitary, but Geddy and Alex have to really work together as a team so it's a little more difficult for them.

"This time around it took about a week or two for them to find the right chemistry."

With *Test For Echo* completed, Peart was approached by Warner Bros. Publications and DCI Music Video to make an instructive video about drumming. Peart had been

approached 12 years prior, but felt the timing wasn't right.

"I was still a little reluctant to do 'A Work In Progress' because I didn't want to take the cap and gown of the teacher," said Peart.

"With this record I decided the time was right to impart what I learned."

"Neil Peart: A Work In Progress" is a two-video box set containing almost four hours of insight, instruction, philosophy and performance by Peart.

"To speak to the camera and explain things that have no words, like the architectures of drums and how they come together mentally was difficult to impart," said Peart.

After playing the drums for more than 30 years, Peart continues to practice daily and allow himself to be taught.

"I still consider myself a graduate student," said Peart.

When asked how he saw Rush in the '90s he said, "We have already been the original alternative band and at same time never been isolated from mainstream.

"To me I don't see any difference. We're a reflection of ourselves and our time which is what it's all about — longevity."

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**DAY 17: San Jose, CA**  
**November 20, 1996**

**The San Francisco Chronicle**  
**November 17, 1996**

**Q AND A WITH GEDDY LEE OF RUSH**  
**By Robert Levine**

Bands and musical genres go in and out of style, but Rush seems almost immune to the whims of popular taste. Without achieving the kind of personal celebrity normally reserved for bands whose albums regularly go gold or platinum, the Canadian power trio has pounded out progressive hard rock for more than 20 years without ever fading from view or losing touch with its audience. Although the band has never been a critics' darling, it is cited as a major influence by such younger acts as Metallica

and Primus. After a three-year break during which drummer Neil Peart put together a tribute to Buddy Rich and guitarist Alex Lifeson worked on his solo album "Victor," Rush recently released its 16th studio album, "Test for Echo." Calling from a tour stop in Pittsburgh, singer-bassist Geddy Lee, 43, discussed Rush's future, its gradual return to a more guitar-driven sound and the current tour that will take the band to the San Jose Arena on Wednesday.

**Q.** You took the longest break in your 22 years as a band before recording "Test for Echo." What was it like to have all that time off?

**A.** It was a great break, mentally and physically. I think it was the best thing I could have done in terms of renewing my interest in what I do. I was getting to a stage when I was a little fried and not sure if I wanted to carry on.

**Q.** Did that break and your band mates' solo projects affect the sound of the new album?

**A.** Yeah, I think whatever happens to you in your life shows up somehow or another in your music. For myself, having a break certainly made me hungry to get back to work. With Alex, he definitely had to exorcise certain demons, find out what it takes to do his own thing. I think that was a very positive experience for him in a lot of different ways. I think he came back more confident and playing very well. And I think Neil just likes to work, period. He has a book that's due out.

**Q.** On the new album, you continue your move away from keyboard-driven material back to guitar-oriented rock. What inspired your return to a more raw sound?

**A.** I think it's just been a weaning off of those textures. I think there was a time when those textures were very curious to me and it was kind of an interesting experiment that lasted quite a few years. I think that along the way we started feeling a little trapped by those devices — a little cornered. It occurred to me at some point, "You know, I'm not getting a whole lot of joy out of these instruments anymore — they're feeling more like a responsibility."

**Q.** Neil Peart recently said something to the effect that being a longtime rock star is like having your refrigerator drawings



released for public consumption. How do you feel about playing some of the material you wrote almost two decades ago?

A. Some of it is quite a lot of fun to play and you kind of rediscover it in a certain way. On this particular tour we decided to play "2112" in its entirety. It's very idealistic, and here we are almost 20 years hence and, God, can I sing these lyrics, and can I put myself in the frame of mind to act out this mini-drama? I found myself quite able to do that onstage, although in rehearsals I had a hard time. I couldn't help myself from chuckling from time to time.

Q. Just as you're revisiting some of your older material, bands like Metallica and Primus are citing it as an influence. What's your reaction to this?

A. I think that a lot of that stuff has helped us look at some of our old material in a different light. It's very complimentary that some of these young bands we consider very talented are influenced by us. It makes us think that maybe we accomplished more than we thought we did with a record or a particular period of our growth.

Q. Do you find it ironic that you've been embraced by some fairly hip acts after getting a generally harsh critical reception?

A. There's a lot of irony in that. It proves that young musicians are attracted to our music because there are a lot of things in it attractive to young musicians. We are players first, writers second and arrangers third. I think it's kind of understandable that musicians would be drawn to our music.

Q. You're in an odd position in the music industry in that you've achieved lasting success without latching on to any particular trend. To what do you attribute that?

A. I get asked that question in just about every interview and I can't say that I've ever been able to answer it properly. I just set out to be in a band. I had no idea I would still be in the same band almost 30 years later. Certainly there's a certain level of musicianship. There's a feeling from our fans that there's a sense of conviction about what we do. And there has to be enough accessible sound to keep it interesting.

Q. You said earlier that you're not sure how long you can see yourself doing this. Is this something you've discussed as a band?

A. We don't talk about it, but it's harder to get everyone to agree to do tours every time out. Everybody's got a different opinion: Some of us like to be on the road, some of us don't like to be on the road. Sooner or later that's probably going to have to come to a head. We might carry on for a number of years and we might not. It's better for myself as a member of this band to believe that nothing lasts forever.

**The San Jose Mercury  
November 20, 1996**

Techies rush to spam Rush  
by Brad Kava & Claudia Perry

Don't think Rush drummer and lyricist Neil Peart is a Luddite, even though he makes fun of the Internet on the band's latest release, "Test for Echo."

He just thinks techies should include a sense of humor in their specs.

"Net boy, Net girl/Send your impulse 'round the world/Put your message in a modem/And through it in the Cyber Sea," he writes on "Virtuality." Not exactly a techno-slam, but Peart told Mr. Hump Day that it had gotten him spammed.

"I've become the Salman Rushdie of the Internet for daring to poke fun at it," he says by phone from a tour stop in Maryland. "I can't believe the acid that had poured through the ether. I have some friends who use the Internet productively, but for the most part, it's the worldwide wank."

Peart is no stranger to computers, though. "I do every bit of my work on a computer. I have a fax modem. I'm not a Luddite. But I recognize its limitations."

For example, he can no longer answer mail. He used to answer every letter he received, but the volumes of e-mail, particularly over this song, have been overwhelming.

"The feedback has been so vicious. The song was supposed to be a lighthearted take. It's about two vagabonds waving on the Internet as their only affirmation.

"As with faith, people are sure this is good; so they are sensitive. From now on I don't talk about it.

Continued on page 16.

# *Rush Convention*

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## where to stay in leicester

On the next 2 pages you'll find a list of hotels and guest houses in Leicester. Give them a ring and I'm sure they'll be able to arrange a room for you all for a night or two. next issue we'll have another page or two of places you can try, if these aren't enough.

Waltham House	500 Narborough Rd, Leicester, LE3 2FU	Tel: 0116 2891129
Westerby House	161 Uppingham Rd, Leicester, LE5 4BP	Tel: 0116 2763906
Woodside Farm Guest House	Woodside Farm Ashby Rd Stapleton, Leicester, LE9 8JE	Tel: 01455 291929
Beaumaris Guest House	18 Westcotes Drive, Leicester, LE3 0QR	Tel: 0116 2540261
David House	17-21 Saxby St, Leicester, LE2 0ND	Tel: 0116 2545139
Humberstone Lodge Hotel	320-322 Humberstone Rd, Leicester, LE5 0SA	Tel: 0116 2621962
Revill Bed & Breakfast	78 Lancashire St, Leicester, LE4 7AE	Tel: 0116 2667654
Saxby House	24 Saxby St, Leicester, LE2 0ND	Tel: 0116 2540504
South Fork Hotel	464-466 Narborough Rd, Leicester, LE3 2FT	Tel: 0116 2899960
The Yews Hotel	29 London Rd Great Glen, Leicester, LE8 9FL	Tel: 0116 2593369
Alexandra Hotel	342 London Rd, Leicester, LE2 2PJ	Tel: 0116 2703056
Aylestone Park Hotel	37 Belvoir Drive, Leicester, LE2 8PB	Tel: 0116 2833637
Belmont House Hotel	De Montfort St, Leicester, LE1 7GR	Tel: 0116 2544773
The Bradgate Hotel	18 Prebend St, Leicester, LE2 0LA	Tel: 0116 2557993
The Brant Inn	Leicester Rd Groby, Leicester, LE6 0DU	Tel: 0116 2872703
Burlington Hotel	Elmfield Avenue, Leicester, LE2 1RB	Tel: 0116 2705112
Castle Hotel	Main St Kirby Muxloe, Leicester, LE9 2AP	Tel: 0116 2395337
Craigleigh Hotel	17/19 Westleigh Rd, Leicester, LE3 0HH	Tel: 0116 2546875
Croft Hotel	3 Stanley Rd, Leicester, LE2 1RF	Tel: 0116 2703220
Crossways Hotel	392 Narborough Rd, Leicester, LE3 2FR	Tel: 0116 2895398

Crown Hills Hotel	35 Copdale Rd, Leicester, LE5 4FF	Tel: 0116 2736630
Dominion Inn	Dominion Rd Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8FD	Tel: 0116 2313789
The Forest Lodge Hotel	16 Desford Rd Kirby Muxloe, Leicester, LE9 2BB	Tel: 0116 2393125
The Forest Park	Hinckley Rd Leicester Forest East, Leicester, LE3 3GD	Tel: 0116 2394677
Forte Posthouse	Braunstone Lane East, Leicester, LE3 2FW	Tel: 0116 2630500
Forte Travelodge	A46 Thrussington, Leicester, LE7 4TF	Tel: 01664 424525
The Gables Hotel	368 London Rd, Leicester, LE2 2PN	Tel: 0116 2706969
Glenfield Lodge Hotel	4 Glenfield Rd, Leicester, LE3 6AP	Tel: 0116 262755
Grafton House	7-13 Saxby St, Leicester, LE2 0ND	Tel: 0116 2540350
Grand Hotel	Granby St, Leicester, LE1 6ES	Tel: 0116 2555599
Gynsills	Leicester Rd Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8HB	Tel: 0116 2313693
Holiday Inn	129 St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 5LX	Tel: 0116 2531161
Hotel St.James	Abbey St, Leicester, LE1 3TE	Tel: 0116 2510666
Johnscliffe Hotel	73 Main St Newton Linford, Leicester, LE6 0AF	Tel: 01530 242228
Lancaster	Station Rd Desford, Leicester, LE9 9FP	Tel: 01455 822589
Leicester International Hotel	Humberstone Rd, Leicester, LE5 3AT	Tel: 0116 2010201
Limes Hotel	35 Mountsorrel Lane Rothley, Leicester, LE7 7PS	Tel: 0116 2302531
Mill On The Soar Hotel	Coventry Rd Broughton Astley, Leicester, LE9 6QD	Tel: 01455 282419
Narborough Arms	6 Coventry Rd Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5GB	Tel: 0116 2848212
Old Tudor Rectory Hotel	Main St Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8DG	Tel: 0116 2320220
Park Hotel	125 London Rd, Leicester, LE2 0QT	Tel: 0116 2554329
Prebend Hotel	18 Prebend St, Leicester, LE2 0LA	Tel: 0116 2557993
The Red Cow Hotel	Hinckley Rd Leicester Forest East, Leicester, LE3 3PG	Tel: 0116 2387878
Regency Hotel	360 London Rd, Leicester, LE2 2PL	Tel: 0116 2709634
Rothley Court Hotel	Westfield Lane Rothley, Leicester, LE7 7LG	Tel: 0116 2374141
Scotia Hotel	10 Westcotes Drive, Leicester, LE3 0QR	Tel: 0116 2549200
Spindle Lodge Hotel	2 West Walk, Leicester, LE1 7NA	Tel: 0116 2338801
St. Albans Hotel	8-14 St. Albans Rd, Leicester, LE2 1GF	Tel: 0116 2544654
Stakis Leicester Hotel	Junction 21 Approach Braunstone, Leicester, LE3 2WQ	Tel: 0116 2630066
Stanfre House Hotel	265 London Rd, Leicester, LE2 3BE	Tel: 0116 2704294
Time Out Hotel & Leisure	15 Enderby Rd Blaby, Leicester, LE8 4GD	Tel: 0116 2787898
The Town House	32 Wood St Earl Shilton, Leicester, LE9 7ND	Tel: 01455 847011



"But I think the Internet is a pale imitation, just like virtual reality is a pale imitation of reality. As compared to reading a book or what rock music is to an adolescent, these are deep things. There is no way the Internet can replicate that or come close to approximating it."

He likens it to CB radio in the 1970s. "The next big thing is never the next big thing for very long."

Anyway, he adds, lighten up. "Rock is a disposable editorial page scrawled on a wall. It is a reflection of that time and it is constantly evolving. It is a mirror moving down the road, reflecting what is."

Rush, which plays the San Jose Arena tonight, is on a worldwide arena tour that will last until summer — some old classics, some new material. One unearthed chestnut is the complete 30-minute "2112," from the band's breakthrough album, which was played shorter live at first because Rush was an opening band and the whole song would have taken the whole set.

They are also playing the nine-minute "Natural Science," which Peart first suggested as a joke. His trio-mates latched onto it seriously.

Peart, 44 and a man of eclectic intelligence, recently put out an album celebrating Buddy Rich and has been working to round out his own drumming style, focusing more on passion than precision. He's also written a book about bicycling for a month through West Africa, called "The Masked Rider."

Looking out from the stage he can tell fans are getting older by the number of eyeglasses reflecting back to him.

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**DAY 18: Sacramento, CA**  
**November 21, 1996**

**The Sacramento News and Review**  
**November 20, 1996**

**Rush To Judgement**  
**by David Nathan**

"The first time I remember hearing the music of Rush was in the summer of 1982. I was 17 and working as a camp counselor. A group of my fellow counselors were huge Rush fans and played the band's tapes endlessly. It was an inescapable annoyance,

and I've disliked Rush ever since.

So, when asked to do this piece for the band's upcoming show at the Cal Expo, I said, through my dripping saliva, "Sure, I'd love the opportunity to write about Rush."

To be fair, I thought I should at least listen to the band's latest release, "Test For Echo". So I did. The verdict. Pretty standard-issue Rush, except for a few grunge-influenced licks here and there. On the whole, though, nothing spectacular.

In fact, it's been quite a while since Rush hit its creative peak in 1981 with "Moving Pictures", its best and most successful album. This, as chance would have it, was the very album that all those jerky camp counselors kept playing over and over 14 years ago. So to say this represents Rush's greatest work and refer to this same music as "an inescapable annoyance" should tell you something about my feelings towards the 40-something power pop-trio from Canada.

I hate them.

And this was to be my spin on the band as I awaited Geddy Lee's call last week. Lee, Rush's vocalist and bass player, was off to a bad start when the phone finally rang 20 minutes after our scheduled interview time. Torontans are notoriously late people.

Lee sounded pretty tired. Turns out, he was calling on his off day from the tour, and I don't think he really felt like talking to me, either. Still, I asked him about how, if at all, he thought Rush has changed over the years.

He'd obviously heard this one before.

"Well, it's been kind of a slow change from a strange band into a weird band."

I was a little surprised. Geddy had made a funny!

Feeding off this sudden burst of momentum, I reeled off another question why Rush had taken such a long hiatus before recording "Echo."

"We all needed a break," he said. "In my personal life, my wife had a child." I inferred from Lee's tone that he was the father of the child and, as is customary in these matters, congratulated him. He continued, "I won't specify any particular problems [between band members]

except the basic, 'Well, guys, we've been together for 20 years and maybe we should take a break and make sure it's still what we want to do.' "

The reunion album, Lee declared, is "a successful attempt at stripping down" Rush's sound. "We've approached that in our last few records, but I think we achieved it with this record."

I'm not sure, but I think Lee was referring to the notable and merciful departure from the overuse of keyboards on "Echo". Many of Rush's late 1980s and early '90s discs have been watered down by needless synthesizers, but I don't think I heard any on "Echo."

As Lee continued answering boring, run-of-the-mill, "rock interview" questions, I had an epiphany of sorts: This Rush singer guy is pretty cool.

Unfortunately, this ruined everything.

Here I was, all set to have fun making fun of Rush, the most pretentious band in history, an easy target, and along comes "Mr.-Down-to-Earth-Nice-Guy" Geddy Lee. Everything he said was humble and lovable.

The lousy bastard.

"What about the well-known 'Rush wuss factor'?" I asked using more diplomatic phrasing.

"Well, I don't think I ever considered us real rock 'n' roll in the first place. We may have rocked, but we didn't always roll," Lee said. "As other forms of heavy rock have developed over the years, in context, I don't think we're really that hard."

He cited Bjork and Soundgarden, among others, as musicians he admires today, and went on to offer some modest self-deprecation, humorously referring to band member Neil Peart as "a goof," guitarist Alex Lifeson as "an idiot" and to himself as "a jerk."

I must tell you that, by this time, Lee had successfully taken the wind right out of my sails. I had fought him and lost. With his jabbing congeniality, old Geddy dropped me like a three-foot put and rolled me out like wholesale carpeting. And the worst of it is ... now I like Rush!

I just don't care for the music, that's all."

**DAY 19: San Diego, CA**  
**November 23, 1996**

**ATTENDANCE - 8,532**  
**CAPACITY - 11,242**

The San Diego Union-Tribune  
November 26, 1996

Rush lets its by-the-numbers approach occasionally Exit... Stage Left

By Jeff Niesel

After 20 years, the Canadian rock trio Rush finally is starting to lighten up.

Unlike other progressive rock groups from the '70s — such as Yes, King Crimson and Emerson, Lake & Palmer — Rush, which played a three-hour concert Saturday for a crowd of 8,532 at the Sports Arena, has been a consistent draw.

Since the mid-'70s, the band's lineup of Geddy Lee on bass, vocals and keyboards, Neil Peart on drums and Alex Lifeson on guitar has packed arenas. And its albums, including the recent "Test for Echo," continue to be released at a steady rate and debut high on the charts.

Rush's live performances, however, have been strictly by-the-numbers affairs as the group tries to duplicate the studio versions of its songs note for note, seldom engaging in any spontaneous playing.

While much of Saturday's concert featured the same calculated moves that have earned the band members their reputation as rock's least sensitive guys, the show had a number of unusually carefree moments that suggested the group may be on the verge of a rebirth.

Right from the start, Rush showed a willingness to experiment. Near the end of the second song, the 1985 hit "Big Money," Lee and Lifeson successfully segued into a short, surf-rock jam — an unheard-of departure from Rush's usual mode of operation.

The group also altered the arrangements of "Red Barchetta" and "Closer to the Heart" to let Lee and Lifeson display their skills. The jam at the end of the instrumental "Leave That Thing Alone" also had the feel of improvisation.

Despite the breaks from tradition, Rush's 24-song set was still plagued by the tedious, synthesizer-heavy material from its past seven albums. Songs such as "Animate Me," the syrupy ballad "Nobody's Hero" and "Roll the Bones" (complete with a silly, prerecorded rap) came off as listless and generic.

"Driven," "Half the World" and "Virtuality" — tracks from "Test for Echo" — fared no better. The stage props (a giant video screen and satellite dishes that spit out lasers) provided an all-too-obvious illustration of the band's interests in high-tech communication.

Even though Rush has tried to write about such current issues as AIDS and violence on TV for "Test for Echo," the songs that resonated most with the audience were ones from the band's peak in the late '70s and early '80s — "The Trees," "Closer to the Heart," "Tom Sawyer" and "Spirit of the Radio."

Rush received the best reception for "2112," a 20-minute song from its 1976 concept album of the same name. The track's driving instrumental introduction was compelling, but when Lee started singing the Ayn Rand-inspired lyrics about a repressive futuristic society, the song's mixture of science fiction and individualist ideology became overbearing.

Although Lee joked that the band (who are all in their 40s) had to take their Geritol during the 20-minute break, Rush showed little signs of aging. Peart was a little slower on the drums, but he remains one of rock's most talented players (his signature drum solo was dynamic, if pretentious). Near the end of the show, the poker-faced Peart even hammed for the cameras that were projecting his image onto the large video screen behind the stage, letting out an excited smile that suggested he still gets a charge out of performing.

It looks as if Rush has put the fun back in its live show. Now the true test is to see whether it can put the rock back into its new music.

DAY 20: Las Vegas, NV

November 24, 1996

The Las Vegas Review-Journal

November 26, 1996

LONGEVITY PROVES BOTH BLESSING AND CURSE  
FOR ROCKERS OF RUSH

by  
MIKE WEATHERFORD

Technology is relative, Rush seems to be telling us.

From the harnessing of radio waves for the commercial entertainment ("The spirit of Radio") to cyberspace ("Virtuality"), it's good to go with the flow and incorporate the changes, but more essential to do something well that stands free from technological change.

In the case of Canadian power trio Rush, that something is the ability to consistently furnish rock radio with a distinctive high-octane sound, and to play it all by themselves when they have to.

And since they don't have to, it means dressing up their now-static sound — complex "progressive rock" on the edge of heavy metal — with whatever bells and whistles come into play as the years go by.

The stage set and vintage video clips for Rush's marathon concert on Sunday seemed to suggest that today's futurism is tomorrow's kitsch. Art deco "space age" prop pieces suggested a long-forgotten world's fair where optimism and faith in the future prevailed.

Adding satellite dishes to the stage clutter and familiar video images to the cinema-size rear screen (O.J. Simpson, Bill Clinton, etc.) when the band launched its second set with the new "Test for Echo", suggests that optimism has been replaced by a cynicism that technology and information aren't really leading us anywhere (Test for Echo).

And fans on Sunday could be a little cynical when Rush could give us movie-quality front-projection video and surround sound from speakers hung over the back of the audience, yet still couldn't deliver a clean, articulate sound from the fortress of speakers that blasted the audience from above the stage.





The muddy mix made it hard to find any range in Geddy Lee's familiar yelp; though he was reportedly ill enough to almost cancel the show, what you could hear sounded like the same duable voice we've been used to for more than 20 years.

Longevity is the band's blessing and curse. It has the option of packing a show with nothing but favorites or new songs, which seemed to come off with more energy than they do on the new album.

Yet, going so long without major change brings a certain static level to the show; so many of the new songs sound like the old ones, with only the technical effects to liven them up. And having to play to a "click track" to phase in so many of the audio and visual effects took some punch out of songs that otherwise would find their own pace live.

On the other hand, synthesized drum effects made Neil Peart's solo the most entertaining drum solo in years, and, coming after a funky, "Miami Vice"-style instrumental, a rare moment when the band let a little rhythm creep into its mechanic, heavily technical style.

Otherwise there were precious few moments when the band felt free to loosen up, such as adding "Wipe Out" to the end of "Big Money", and their now-standard reggae flameout to the end of "Closer to the Heart". And some songs still sound timeless like the best of prog-rock: "Red Barchetta" and "Freewill" among them.

But you have wonder how long Rush keeps planning on doing this, and whether an aging audience suggests they've lost the influx of young people that keeps them in the arenas instead of smaller venues.

Fans have to hope the band as a whole becomes like the 1968 film "2001: A Space Odyssey" (thus "Spake Zarathustra" opened the show) or their own 1976 sci-fi opus, "2112", which drew a huge crowd reaction: Dated but still worthy and lovable in their own ways.

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**DAY 21: Los Angeles, CA**  
**November 26, 1996**

**ATTENDANCE - 19,319**  
**CAPACITY - 25,000**

**The Los Angeles Times**  
**November 28, 1996**

## **Fans Get a Power Rush**

**By**

**NATALIE NICHOLS**

Rush's energetic, three-hour concert Tuesday night at the Forum was an old-fashioned rock show, strictly for adoring fans. There was no stage-diving, no crowd-surfing - just an elated, near-capacity crowd flicking its Bics and cheering on its heroes.

The veteran Canadian power trio, in turn, provided everything a Rush aficionado could want: hits, favourites and songs from the new album, "Test for Echo," plus loads of instrumental noodling and plenty of lasers, strobes, video and live camera shots of the band members on a huge split screen behind them. (The only things missing were explosions and smoke.)

The arena-rock trappings, including drummer Neil Peart's rotating riser, belied the group's low-key presence, but complemented its brand of musicianly, yet populist, prog-rock. The sound has remained remarkably consistent for 22 years: Stripping the blues from such influences as Cream and Led Zeppelin, Rush produces rock flourishes galore but little groove. The tricky time signatures and instrumental virtuosity offer some drama and Peart's high-concept lyrical metaphors occasionally strike anthem-like notes. But the repertoire is alarmingly one-note - and either you dig it or you don't.

Accordingly, the Forum audience was ecstatic as guitarist Alex Lifeson and bassist-keyboardist Geddy Lee unleashed barrages of expert riffs (never mind that Lee's grainy falsetto occasionally couldn't quite reach those high notes). While his drumming was comparatively streamlined, Peart still managed a lot of notes, including an epic, nearly 10-minute solo.

In spite of all the jamming, however, the show was surprisingly devoid of spontaneity. Parts of Peart's solo were played in sync with visuals, making it feel overly rehearsed. Not that the fans cared: When the lights finally came up, they screamed for more.

**LA Weekly**  
**December 6th - 12th 1996**

Whatever one's opinion of Rush's importance in the great pop scheme of things, one must admire their paranormal musical abilities

and unfaltering dedication to their craft. Few bands can boast packed arenas 22 years into their careers without some reunion gimmick attached. With the band ostensibly on the road in support of their new Atlantic disk, Test for Echo, this tour (with two nights in L.A.) was the first to forsake an opening act and offer three hours of unadulterated Rush!

Rush attracts geeks of every persuasion and musical preference. At the Forum, tattered tour shirts abounded, from Sepultura to Miles Davis, Yes to Rage Against the Machine. The bank opened the first set with "Dreamline" on a stage littered with various kitchen appliances, miniature electrical towers and a Three Stooges cardboard cutout. A few Test for Echo tunes and an abbreviated run-through of their epic 2112 were enhanced by a cascade of neon pink, purple and green lights that issued from prop satellite dishes. Cheeseball biker-movie trailers ran during intermission instead of the bygone arty shots dramatizing Ayn Rand's writings, or lush videos that accompanied the music. The second set commenced with the title track from the new album and a plum-colored view of drummer/lyricist Neil Peart in silhouette. Like the Planet of the Apes movies, Peart's lyrics invite interesting interpretations; during the evening, the many phases of Rush's career were represented: sci-fi prog (2112), abstractions of man's struggle ("Tom Sawyer," "Subdivisions," "Free Will"), existentialist noodle-poodle ("Dreamline," "The Trees") and anthemic favorites ("Spirit of Radio," "Closer to the Heart").

As the lights dimmed in anticipation of Peart's percussive dementia, Kiss' recent Forum show came to mind. Rush didn't need exploding guitars or blood capsules to dazzle their audience. The juxtaposition of Peter Criss' putt-putt "solo" with the extreme congestion of snares, toms, bells and exotic gewgaws in Peart's bunkerlike drum kit was good for a chuckle. The crowd was a blanket of air-drums during his quarter-hour-long solo, the same on he's been embellishing since the '70s, which features more rhythms that stoned fans in the crowd. Midway through, Peart stood up while the drum riser turned 180 degrees to reposition a more world-beat-friendly kit within smashing range.

Some complain about Rush's lack of spontaneity. But the straightforward assault is necessary - no masturbatory

jamming means more hits. Guitarist Alex Lifeson trilled with expert abandon, while mosquito-voiced Geddy Lee, the Zeus of the bass-god pantheon, shrieked and thundered and tinkled. As always, they put on a excellent show. Never mind their detractors; 30,000 L.A. Rush fans can't be wrong.

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**DAY 23: Phoenix, AZ**  
**November 29, 1996**

**ATTENDANCE - 10,858**  
**CAPACITY - 12,000**

**The Arizona Republic**  
**December 2, 1996**

**RUSH, Rush, rush echoes its raw power**  
**by**  
**Larry Rodgers**

In its first tour in more than 2 years, rock power-trio Rush is taking to heart the title of its new album, Test For Echo.

The signal came back loud and clear from an appreciative audience Friday at the America West Arena as the Canadian band dished out an array of tunes from its latest effort, as well as hits from 20-plus years.

The 1996 version of Rush sports a stripped-down sound, with vocalist-bassist Geddy Lee turning less to the synthesizer than in the past. This allows more room for fun-loving guitar maestro Alex Lifeson and superdrummer Neil Peart to shine.

After a rousing version of past hit The Big Money early on, Rush settled into an electrifying first set featuring songs from Test for Echo, including the driving Driven and Limbo, in which Lifeson unleashed some savage licks. Half the world was played against an innovative video, as were most other songs.

Later in the three-hour show, the band hedged its bets with older favorites, including a soaring Freewill, as well as the obligatory Tom Sawyer and Closer to the Heart.

When Rush hits on all cylinders, as it did most of the night, you'd have to go back to the days of Cream to find a rock trio that delivered as much power onstage.

**DAY 24: El Paso, TX**  
**November 30, 1996**

**ATTENDANCE - 5,295**  
**CAPACITY - 8,000**

**The El Paso Times**  
**December 1, 1996**

**Rush revives classic rock in El Paso**  
**by**  
**Jeff Wilson, Special to the Times**

By opening Saturday night's concert at the Special Events Center with music from the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey," Rush set the tone for the night to come.

Rush, the Canadian trio of bassist Geddy Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer Neil Peart, took an El Paso crowd of more than 6,000 through an odyssey of 23 years of music that covers the 20 albums the band has recorded.

Rush opened the show with the little known "Dreamline," from the album "Roll The Bones" but that was what made this night special for Rush fans. The show, billed "An Evening With Rush," gave the band the opportunity to perform some of its lesser-known songs which is what the band did.

"We're glad to be back in Texas," Lee said to open the show. "We've got a big show planned for you. I hope ya'll took some vitamins this morning."

Rush proceeded to mix the old with new, going through a set that included "Big Money," and "Driven" and "Half the World," from their latest album "Test For Echo," before returning to old classics like "The Trees" and "Force Ten."

The band was backed up by a huge video screen that mixed live shots of the band with clips from videos.

"We always enjoy playing extended shows like this," Lee told the crowd. "It gives us a chance to play some foolish songs and some serious songs. This is one of our favorites."

Lifeson then moved into the ballad "Nobody's Hero" from the album "Counterparts." The song details the struggles of people dying from AIDS.

Rush then moved into the classic and crowd favorite "Closer to the Heart," one of the band's most popular songs.

But the best came next as Rush played its own space odyssey, "2112."

"2112" is Rush's fourth album and the one that put the band on the map. Again mixing video with live shots, the band played the space opera in its entirety, getting the crowd on its feet with the "Overture" before breaking into the powerful "Temples of Syrinx."

Lifeson went center stage with "Discovery" and brought the house down with "Presentation." Rush ended the opera, about a distant planet where preachers rule. But a boy discovers music which brings the rule to an end with an alien race descending on the planet with the "Soliloquy" and the "Grand Finale."

The band then took a 20-minute break before closing out the show with such classics as "Limelight," "Tom Sawyer" and the ballad "Time Stand Still."

Rush provided all that it promised and more, proving once again that classic rock will always be around.



*Here's Howie... u.*



1981 was undoubtedly Rush's biggest year; the year they pretty much did twice the business (in terms of record and concert ticket) sales they'd done before – or since. This edition mainly focuses on Moving Pictures (MP), but there's a couple of Exit... Stage Left (ESL) points to be going along with too.

# Just the FAQs <sup>#5</sup>

## MOVING PICTURES

### What building is on the cover of MP?

According to rkleiner@alfred.carleton.ca (Ron Kleiner), it is the current seat of the Government of Ontario, at Queen's Park.

### What do the pictures on the MP cover mean?

"When Hugh Syme was developing the multitude of puns for the cover, he wanted the guys 'moving pictures' to have some 'moving pictures' to be moving past the people who were 'moved' by the 'picture' – get it? So he asked us to think of some ideas for these pictures. The 'man descending to hell' is actually a woman – Joan of Arc – being burned at the stake (as per 'Witch Hunt'), and the card-playing dogs are there because it was a funny, silly idea – one of the most cliché'd pictures we could think of – a different kind of 'moving picture.'" (Neil Peart, December 1985 Backstage Club newsletter).



### How does Neil play plywood?

"Well you wear gloves so as not to get splinters, you take a piece of 1/4" plywood, and smack it down HARD on the top of a wooden stool. Very demanding, technically – took years of practice." (Neil Peart)

### What is the mob saying at the beginning of "Witch Hunt"?

- "It is purposely mixed so that you cannot understand what is being said, but the tenor of the situation, the hatred, the ill will, and the fear comes through loud and clear. This effect was created by emptying the studio (in the middle of a snowy night) of production staff, road crew and band, and depositing everyone in the cold outside the isolated facility. With tape recorders rolling, Neil gave his best fanatic's speech, gradually getting more and more whipped up as everyone involved let themselves get carried away." (from Visions)

- "We went outside of Le Studio and it was so cold, it was really cold; we were well into December by then, I think. We were all out there. We put a couple of mics outside. We started ... rauw, raew, wrow ... (starts mumbling), ranting and raving. We did a couple of tracks of that. I think we had a bottle of Scotch or something with us to keep us warm. So as the contents of the bottle became less and less, the ranting and raving took on a different flavor and you got little lines of ... you remember Roger Ramjet (sp?), the cartoon Roger Ramjet? What was the bad guy's name ... his gang of hoods, they always had these little things they would say whenever they were mumbling ... mrrblaarr ... mrrblaarr ... crauss. It started to take all this ... we were in the control room after we had layed down about twelve tracks of mob – in hysterics. Every once in awhile you'd hear somebody say something really stupid." (Alex Lifeson, on "In The Studio")

### What is that thing on Neil's chest in the "Vital Signs" video?

It's a microphone. A PZM, to be exact. It was used in an attempt to record the drums the way Neil hears them.

## EXIT... STAGE LEFT

### Has anybody noticed that the ESL cover photo contains stuff from all of the band's previous studio albums?

Yes. Here's the list:

- "Rush" from the first album on the side of a box
- The owl from FBN
- Picture of back cover of COS
- Man w/star logo from 2112
- The puppet king from AFTK
- The businessman from HEM
- The naked guy from HEM
- The lady off the cover of PEW
- Two movers from MP

### What does Geddy say just before "Jacob's Ladder" on ESL?

"We'd like to do an old song for you right now ... This was done a long time ago by the [possibly "that"] old T.C. Broonsie. This is called 'Jacob's Ladder.'"

### Who is T.C. Broonsie?

Terry Brown.

### What is "Tom Sawyer" about?

"'Tom Sawyer' was a collaboration between myself and Pye Dubois, an excellent lyricist who wrote the lyrics for Max Webster. His original lyrics were kind of a portrait of a modern day rebel, a free-spirited individualist striding through the world wide-eyed and purposeful. I added the themes of reconciling the boy and man in myself, and the difference between what people are and what others perceive them to be – namely me I guess." (Neil Peart, Dec 1985 Backstage Club newsletter)

### My CD contains pictures of Geddy and Alex, but not Neil. Why is this? Can I get a CD with all 3 pictures?

I have no information about why the picture of Neil is missing from the Mercury CD. The missing picture is present in the liner notes for the MFSL gold CD of the album.

### Who is Pye Dubois?

Pye Dubois was the lyricist for Max Webster. "Tom Sawyer" began life as a Max Webster song called "Louis The Warrior," but Pye gave the lyrics to Neil after "Battlescar" was recorded. Pye also helped Neil write "Force Ten."

### What is a barchetta?

The barchetta is a type of Ferrari race car. Barchetta is actually pronounced "Barketta", according to 2 Italian friends of mine. Another source of information is: "The Complete Ferrari" by Godfrey Eaton; 1986 by Cadogan Books Ltd.

### Where can I get a copy of "A Nice Morning Drive," by Richard S. Foster?

It was printed in the November 1973 issue of "Road & Track" magazine. It's also in the Summer 1988 issue (No. 5) of SOR.

### What does "YYZ" mean?

YYZ is the transmitter code for Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport. Every airport is assigned a unique three letter code, and that code is always being transmitted so that pilots can tell, roughly, where they are and verify that their navigational radios are tuned properly. These codes are also written on your luggage tags when you fly. The intro to the song is Morse code for "YYZ."



**DAY 25: San Antonio, TX**  
**December 2, 1996**

**The San Antonio Express-News**  
**December 4, 1996**

**RUSH DELIVERS PRECISELY WHAT FANS WANT**  
by  
**Hector Saldana**

Like actor Richard Dreyfus' irresistible urge for contact in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," nearly 11,000 loyal Rush fans packed into the Alamodome Monday night for reaffirmation with Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson, and Neil Peart.

Why? Because after 22 years together, the members of Rush (like Ol' Blue Eyes) still do it their way, if sometimes a bit heavily-handedly.

Gone are the spectacular, thunderous, unpredictable bomb effects of old that would more than occasionally punctuate the live sound and thrill the red-eyed masses. In their place was the perfection of follow spots, lasers and digital MTV-style video.

"The Trees" was accompanied by cursory video visions of magnificent maples, while the smooth pop of "Half The World," from the new "Test For Echo" album, offered inane images of the band and a signpost reading "the half."

Live footage worked best, allowing those without binoculars to see Lifeson, Peart and Lee get down and rock.

Lee's high, nasal vocal still cuts distinctively through the three-piece bombast. The singer roamed the stage freely with his Fender Jazz bass, often joking with Lifeson, who lorded over a barrage of guitar pedals.

Peart's drums sounded like cannon fire. The numerous high-pitched tom-toms were mercilessly whacked in inimitable trademark fashion by the gifted drummer, so fond of odd time signatures.

The new instrumental "Limbo" was loud and percussive. Sampled voices, seemingly out of nowhere, eerily drifted from suspended speakers in the middle of the Alamodome for a surprise effect.

Technology has taken more of a toll on Rush than age. Lifeson's mastery of chorus

effects tends to mush-up his driving chord attack. Lee's abandonment of his clackity Rickenbacker 4001 bass maybe makes sonic sense but lacks character.

Straight-ahead arrangements worked best. "Closer to the Heart" was instantly recognizable, but it was on "2112" that the old lion roared fiercely, in large part because Lifeson decided to play loud and rough.

After a brief intermission, Rush returned with the popular meta-physical paen "Free Will," followed by "Roll the Bones," featuring some inventive video accompaniment.

The concert was a giant lovefest. Lee and company deliver the goods like consummate pros, trading the old rawness for modern precision. Hey, it's the '90s.

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**DAY 26: Dallas, TX**  
**December 3, 1996**

**Ft. Worth Star-Telegram**  
**December 4, 1996**

**Rush brings best of old and new to Reunion appearance**  
by  
**Dave Ferman**

Dallas — Rush began putting out records in 1974, graduated to headliner status two years later, was packing arenas soon afterward, and has since notched up a string of rock radio favorites with a frequency matched by hardly any other long-running progressive/hard rock act.

As a result, the drawback to going to see the band live has, for years now, been that the Canadian trio just couldn't play as wide a selection of the old and the new as their volume of material dictated.

The band's decision to do a long, career-retrospective show while featuring the strong, stripped-down hard rock of the new Test For Echo was exactly what was needed. Last night's show at a fairly full but not packed Reunion Arena was the best show I've seen the band do — and that's going back to 1978.

Rush's early material tended to bombast and ponderous progressive rock, but since 1980's Permanent Waves, the band (bassist/vocalist/keyboardist Geddy Lee, guitarist/

vocalist Alex Lifeson and drummer/lyricist Neil Peart) has often struck a good balance between harder, intricate fare and more pop-oriented songs. In other words, they found a middle ground, a way for the two sides of their musical personality to complement each other.

And hearing all the best stuff back-to-back-to-back, from Closer to the Heart and the ecology fable The Trees to more recent fare such as Nobody's Hero and Animate, is to appreciate the group's strengths all over again, from their nimble, muscular ensemble playing to Lifeson's tasteful hard rock guitar work to Peart's adult, thoughtful lyrical turns.

The tough Echo material, such as the instrumental Limbo, the poppier Half the World and the thunderous Driven, was just the icing on the proverbial cake, solid songs that point to a renewed artistic future, even if the empty seats displayed the band's slowly declining fortunes in the marketplace. With different lighting schemes for every song, and the themes and lyrics to Driven, The Trees, Half the World and others underscored by well-made, often intriguing videos, this was state-of-the-art latter-day art-rock by a band that has stood up quite well over the years.

**The Dallas Morning News**  
December 5, 1996

**Rush rolls at Reunion**  
**Art rockers show longevity**  
**during Tuesday night show**  
By  
**Al Brumley**

Here's an unsolicited tip for Rush next time they come to town: Open with Analog Kid instead of Dreamline and sub in Circumstances for Red Sector A, and by God, you've got yourself a show.

Not that Tuesday's concert at Reunion Arena wasn't a kick in the sternum, but things got off to a critically slow start with Dreamline and didn't improve much with Big Money.

And there were other things that provided cause for concern: a few anxious look between guitarist Alex Lifeson and bassist Geddy Lee; Mr. Lee's stumbling over a lyric here and there. Not even Red Barchetta pulled them totally out of their funk.

The eighth song, The Trees, thankfully and

finally shook the dust off, even prompting a rare smile from an unusually grim Neil Peart.

Of course, even when they're not totally in sync, Alex, Geddy and Neil can still peel the paint better than just about anyone around — enough anyway to make you think twice about those Primus comparisons.

And once Tuesday's show — before 12,500 we-know-all-the-lyrics fans — got rolling, the band's 20-plus years on the road paid off with a powerful ear-splitting roar.

There was no opening act — with all those songs, who needs one? The band crisscrossed its catalog, including such staples as Closer to the Heart and Subdivisions, along with cuts from its new album, Test for Echo.

The big surprise was the complete 2112 Medley, expertly played and milked for all its gloppy, Arthur C. Clarke-ian splendor. It also featured what had to have been one of the best light shows in Reunion Arena history.

It's amazing to think that these guys are still getting away with this art-rock stuff. But they're less enigmatic and precious than Yes and they're less cantankerous than Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and they've aged a heck of a lot more gracefully than Jethro Tull (with the possible exception of Mr. Lee, who's starting to look like a startling cross between Howard Stern and Mother Teresa).

Intermission came at precisely 9:30, but even then the band didn't stop entertaining. After the "Let's all go to the lobby!" cartoon, they played trailers from old biker films, including Hell's Belles ("Two chicks, two guys and one out-of-sight cycle").

Unfortunately, deadline loomed before Mr. Peart's always-interesting drum solo and the scheduled show-ender, YYZ. But Test for Echo sounded great, and the guy in front of me, who has seen Rush 18 times, swore that the end of the show would kick the first half's rear. Chance are, he was right.

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**DAY 27: Houston, TX**  
**December 5, 1996**

**The Houston Press**  
**December 5, 1996**



## RUSH TO JUDGMENT

By  
Hobart Rowland

Sanctimonious intent and senseless experimentation are the lethal ingredients in some of rock's deadliest moments, and at one time or another, Rush has epitomized both. Few acts have provoked more delight and more disgust, more admiration and more irritation, more euphoria and more nausea, than this durable Canadian power trio. The group has practically swaddled itself in contradictions, weaving them into an armor seemingly designed to deter critics' lashings and anything else that might throw the group's middlebrow karma out of whack.

Lately, though, the data indicates that it may be safe for the ultimate thinking headbanger's act to ditch its martyr's shroud. Twenty-two years into its career, the band has sold more than 35 million copies of 20 releases, a dense catalog that includes 16 trips to the studio, three live CDs and one best-of collection. It continues to fill stadiums worldwide, proving that Rush is one of the moist endurable live acts around. The group found its first fans on the road, and the stage still provides the most effective make-or-break introduction to its music. Make it through three hours of Rush's union of art-rock pretension, busy guitar work and abrupt time changes played dutifully, loudly and precisely, and you should know full well where you stand on your way out.

At a time when the group may be past its creative prime, new Rush releases consistently inch up the rock charts, often with little help from radio. Young, adventurous bands such as Primus and Soundgarden proudly sing Rush's praises. Even critics once appalled by the band's music, and even more appalled by its success, have started to find the occasional good thing to say about Rush.

What gives? Could it be that the rest of the world is finally figuring out what millions of Rush fans have known all along? Anything's possible, but more than likely what we're witnessing involves a phenomenon significantly less dramatic: patience.

"We had to wait [this] long for [a] generation to come around and understand us," says Rush drummer Neil Peart. "Because certainly the [music] writers in the '70s didn't understand what we were trying to do."

It's easy to come away from a conversation with Peart thinking that he, guitarist Alex Lifeson and bassist Geddy Lee actually get off on the critical abuse they've suffered — that it has only heightened their resolve and bound them more tightly together. After all, if Rush's existence hinged on the approval of anyone but itself and its fans, it might not have made it past 1976's sci-fi rock opera *2112*, a release that resisted harsh — and justifiable — pummeling by rock's arbiters of taste (though it has since gone platinum, proving once again that critics mainly influence other critics). Rather than buckle under to the name-calling, Rush moved forward, negotiating its way through the late '70s with another pair of numbing doodle-metal epics whose fairyland titles, *A Farewell to Kings* and *Hemispheres*, pretty much say it all.

"We are experimental, so there have been tangents," says Peart. "I can look at an older song

and say, 'That was an interesting tangent that was like a dead-end canyon.' But I don't regret any of our excesses."

Rush's most refined tangent — its stint as a synth-inclined, radio-friendly pop band — began with 1980's *Permanent Waves*, home to the AOR staple "The Spirit of Radio," and culminated with 1985's *Power Windows*, arguably the band's most consistent and least windy work. But again, if Rush had listened to writers such as myself and ended on a high note in 1986, it wouldn't be on the road right now supporting its 20th release, *Test for Echo*, an impeccably produced, guitar-heavy affair good for at least four or five decent moments.

"We're not trying to write for an imaginary audience or some lowest common denominator," says Peart. "We write for people like us. And there are a lot of them out there."

Even with the current moratorium on Rush bashing, one can assume that most journalists inclined to devote more than a few sentences to the band are A) serious fans or B) had once been serious fans. I admit to a mix of A and B; I've been a Rush Ranger for 16 years now, though of late my enthusiasm for the band has fluctuated from release to release. I inform Peart that I've been questioning my faith, and he lets go the sigh of a person who's heard it all before.

"Fandom is a very fickle enterprise," he explains. "We have to win [our fans] every time. We never take for granted that we're going to put out a record and people are going to buy it; we never take for granted that we're going to go on tour and people are going to come. It makes us insecure, but that's okay, we shouldn't be secure. If we fuck up, people won't love us."

My love affair with Rush began — and to an extent ended — with Neil Peart. His dizzying drum aerobics on early '80s releases such as *Moving Pictures* and *Signals* blew my impressionable young mind — as they had many a teenage timekeeper since. At the time, a prized sketch of Peart girdled by his drums hung in my bedroom as inspiration, though it didn't much help my technique. Try as I might, I couldn't survive the exhausting workout that is "Spirit of Radio" without a break. Keeping pace with my prog-rock inspiration was a humbling experience, so I gave up trying and focused my playing on more reasonable goals — like, say, "Brown Sugar."

As I got older, my enthusiasm for Rush waned in proportion to my decreasing respect for Peart's drumming, which, to my mind, was becoming less interesting. I'd discovered the Clash, the Pretenders, Elvis Costello and Squeeze, and was getting into drummers with whom I could actually play along without cramping up. They were human; Peart was superhuman, and therefore no longer worthy of my attention. But Peart makes no apologies to anyone for his abstrusities.

"It's very facile to say that less is more," he says. "I don't believe that in drumming, and I don't believe that in words either. If you are going to use something simple it has to be excellently chosen. I would never be happy playing mindless rock beats. But I'll always find ways to imply that if it's what is needed."

After a short defection, I was lured back to Rush for a time during college. The mother ship has a

way of keeping a leash on Rangers who stray. It does so by sabotaging their pleasure centers with a remarkable chord progression, a monster chorus or a wordy lyric that's, nevertheless, hard to shake, thus, finessing them — okay, us — back into the fold.

"People have grown up with us as we've grown up. People have dropped in and out along the way, but some stay with us," Peart says. "It's all been earned."

Aside from his duties as drummer, Peart writes Rush's lyrics. He has since 1974, when he was hired to replace the group's first drummer, John Rutsey, whose "mindless rock beats" couldn't be molded to accommodate the band's increasingly intricate ideas. Peart became the band's lyricist by default, after the rest of the band expressed their distaste for the job.

"I'm only a lyricist for maybe a month every three years," he says. "But still, it becomes another profession of collecting the stuff, refining the craft and keeping lists of phrases, bits of conversation and possible song titles."

Peart's fussed-over prose has been a primary rallying point for Rush haters over the years — second only, perhaps, to Geddy Lee's Pavarotti-chipmunk wail, which, in its highest late '79s register, was pegged quite accurately as a cross between Robert Plant and Donald Duck (he's since toned down the histrionics). In Peart's world, Tom Sawyer walks the 20th-century landscape as a tough-as-nails warrior, Egypt enjoys half a CD's stay in outer space and a forest is up in limbs when the maple trees pit themselves against oaks in a battle over sunshine rights — all of which would seem pretty silly if Peart's tone wasn't so stone-faced sincere most of the time. Rush has a healthy sense of humor, often opening its shows with clips from classic cartoons and Three Stooges episodes, but you'd be hard-pressed to find much of it in Peart's lyrics.

For the group's latest CD, *Test for Echo*, Peart sequestered himself in room at Chalet Studio, a country retreat outside of Toronto, for days, churning out lyrics to such dandies as "Driven" ("Driven to the margin of error / Driven to the edge of control / Driven to the margin of terror / Driven to the edge of a deep, dark hole") and "Virtuality" ("I'm a castaway, stranded in a desolate land / I can see the footprints in the virtual sand").

"I think I've gotten better at [writing] over the years," Peart says. "There is still plenty of metaphysics woven in there and lots of abstract metaphors. All of that stuff is there, but I've learned better to write on multiple levels, where it can be perceived as a simple statement if you want to take it that way."

Peart put away his notes during Rush's year-and-a-half hiatus after the 1994 tour for *Test for Echo*'s predecessor, *Counterparts*. During that period, while Lifeson recorded a solo release (Victor) and Lee spent time with his baby girl, Peart produced a tribute to big band legend Buddy Rich (*Burning for Buddy*) and retooled his technique behind the drum set.

"I completely restructured my whole approach to the instrument, really ... holding the sticks differently, hitting differently and sitting differently," says Peart. "I even postponed the recording of this album so that I'd have a full year to let these things come to maturity."

Longtime Peart enthusiasts, however, needn't concern themselves with any adverse side effects. "It's very subtle; the listener probably won't notice it," he says. "Even our co-producer at the time commented that it still sounds like me."

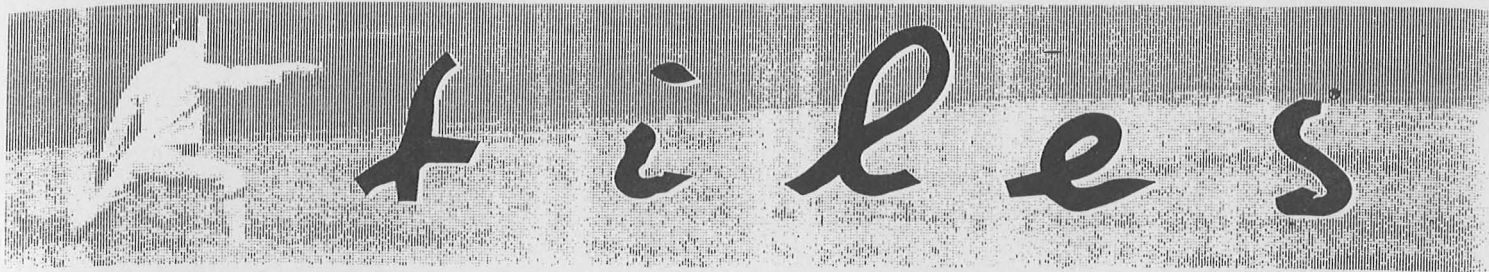
Peart was forced to waste part of his break from Rush on a less constructive project — trying to quell gossip that he was terminally ill. "I almost hate to dignify rumors by addressing them," he says, "but it was just a whole bunch of bullshit people dreamed up. People were phoning my parents and asking, 'Is it true he's dying of cancer?' What if it were true? It gets so uncivilized when you think about the realities of it. People always forget that there are real people involved."

Guess it comes with the territory. When a band is moving along as smoothly as Rush has for the last two decades without the help of hype, it seems there's always someone around to toss a little friction into the equation. Still, there's no denying Rush's increased hip quotient. Whether the newfound tolerance — and, in some cases, respect — has come as a result of the group simply hanging in there long enough to earn it, whether the band's music has actually improved with age or whether its detractors have simply run out of nasty, one-off dismissals that look good in print is grounds for the sort of debate that Peart could not care less about. Besides, he says, Rush still has a way to go with some rock institutions.

"Geddy told me an interesting thing the other day — that when he was doing a small Q&A session for *Rolling Stone*, the writer let slip that we are their readers' number one most requested group for them to do a full story on," Peart says. "But they won't because of who they are and who we are. That's a trip, if you ask me."

"We're just not cool enough for them. But that's okay, because they're not cool enough for us."





## BIOGRAPHY

**TILES** is a hard rock act from the Detroit area featuring Mark Evans (drums), Jeff Whittle (bass), Paul Rarick (vocals), and Chris Herin (guitar). Formed in February 1993, the band spent their first year together writing and recording, and released their debut CD in June 1994. Simply entitled "**Tiles**", the disc features songs which blend progressive rock overtones with an aggressive hard rock edge. Mixed with lyrics of an "observational" nature, **TILES** continues to cultivate a sound which demands more than just passive listening. Gene Simmons of **KISS** calls their music "...refreshing...a unique style...".

In 1993 **TILES** was privileged to be selected from over one hundred and twenty bands to contribute their song "*Dancing Dogs*" to the "*Z-Rock Best of Detroit Stuff, Volume I*" compilation CD. "**Tiles**" was chosen as "*Best Local CD*" of 1994 at Z-Rock's annual local awards show.

**TILES** reached the international music scene in the summer of 1995 when **Polydor** released "**Tiles**" throughout Europe on their Dream Circle Records label. Sales were strong with the help of excellent reviews from *Aardschok* in the Netherlands (91/100), *SCREAM* in Norway (6/6), *Rock Hard* in Germany (8/10), and others. On the opposite side of the world, **Teichiku Records** developed new artwork designs and released the disc throughout Japan. *Burrn!* magazine gave "**Tiles**" an 88/100 saying "...(**Tiles** is) a wonderful album with a very high level of technique and a great melodic sense...". The CD entered the *Burrn!* charts at #47 in December 1995.

**TILES** will release their second CD, "*Fence the Clear*", April 15, 1997 throughout the metro-Detroit area with European and Japanese releases to follow this summer. "*Fence the Clear*" was recorded at Stages Recording in Novi, MI and produced by Chris Andrews and Kevin Chown. The CD was mixed by noted producer/engineer **Terry Brown** at Town Music Studios in Toronto, Canada. Brown is recognized for his work on the first eleven **Rush** albums and has releases by **Fates Warning**, **Blue Rodeo**, **IQ**, **Cutting Crew**, **Max Webster**, **Voivod**, and **Moist** to his credit. He recently finished producing and engineering the new album by **Fates Warning**.

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