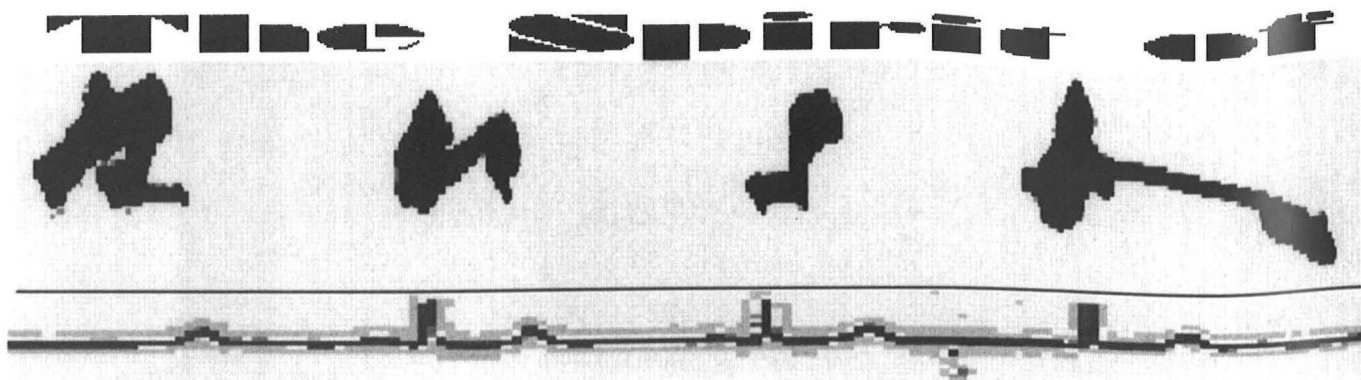


The Spirit Of Rush
Issue No. 45 – Winter '98/99'





E d i t o r i a l

Hello and welcome to what Janet and I consider to be the best issue ever of 'The Spirit of Rush' with 3 exclusive interviews and your letters. I think this must be our first 'All New' - no reprint material issue. I'm sure you'll let us know if I'm incorrect. Anyways, join me in thanking Alex, Geddy and Lawrence for their time in talking with us, it was fun!

Thanks to everyone who came to the Convention last month. Everyone seemed to have a good time (see Signals). Let's hope next year's will be an even bigger event. Talking of next year, we are changing the venue - people seemed to think 'a change is as good as a rest' and Janet and I agree so next year we shall all convene in Crewe at the 'Limelight' club on Saturday 31st July. No tickets for sale yet but the price will be reduced to only £10.00 and the bands playing will increase to two cover/tribute bands - both 'Tom Sawyer' and 'YYZ' have agreed to perform next year. So you get 2 bands for less money in a great little venue, what better incentive do you need to put Saturday 31st July 1999 in your diary right away. Tickets will be available once we send our next issue out in late Jan/early Feb next year. So please do not send for them until then. Oh and Kevin Owen is banned from coming next year, OK!

'Different Stages' should have just hit your local record store as you get this issue. Have a good listen and send your comments for

inclusion in our next issue - by mid Jan 1999. No later please.

Lawrence Gowan is currently here in the UK doing a support slot on 'The Stranglers' latest tour. The November dates are listed after the interview with Lawrence which appears in this very issue. Some of the dates are a little out of date now I'm afraid, but if you can get along to one (or more) of the shows you are in for a treat. You will not be disappointed. Go now!

You might like to know that we are in the process of setting up a 'Spirit Of Rush' website to complement the magazine and keep you up to date with all things surrounding Rush. The website address is:

<http://www.cix.co.uk/~speedboat/>

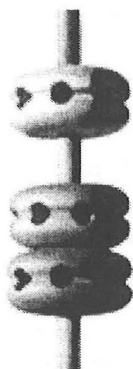
All should be up and running within the next few weeks, so look out for it and tell your friends.

Rush tribute band (and Convention players) 'YYZ' are still gigging - you can check them out at the following:

- ◆ Sunday, Nov 15th, The Old Wheatsheaf, Stoke-on-Trent,
 - ◆ Thursday, Dec 3rd, The Old Railway, Birmingham,
 - ◆ Friday, Dec 11th, Limelight Club, Crewe
- They are trying to get a London gig sorted for early '99. We'll keep you posted on their progress.

As many of you will already know, the cost of a four issue subscription to 'Spirit' is now **(cont on inside back page)**

R U S H
Atlantic Records • Inc.



Rush Different Stages

(Bio Release from Atlantic/East West for promotion purposes)

Live albums have become a tradition, even an inevitability for Rush. Long recognised as the quintessential touring band – for years they averaged 10 months on the road and over 200 shows – they carved out a unique niche for themselves independent of the quixotic tastes of trend-setters, taste makers and radio programmers alike. With the release of *Exit.... Stage Left* in 1981 a pattern emerged. After every fourth studio album (*Greatest Hits* sets wouldn't count) a recorded document of the most recent tour would be released. *All The World's A Stage* was the first in 1976 and *A Show Of Hands* came out in 1988. With the subsequent completion of *Presto* (1989), *Roll The Bones* (1991), *Counterparts* (1993) and *Test For Echo* (1996) tradition dictates it's time for *Different Stages*.

But each of Rush's live albums have played a much more profound role than merely marking the passage of time or capturing a sonic snapshot of a particular tour. Each release indicates the end of one phase and the beginning of another in the group's still-evolving musical growth. Rush's recording career can be readily divided into four phases. The early years were purely and simply heavy metal. Then followed the experimental years when the trio pushed the boundaries of progressive rock and established their reputations as virtuoso musicians. The third phase was a reaction to the second – the group pulled back from their all-encompassing love affair with technology and studio wizardry and reclaimed their reputation as innovative songwriters. The fourth phase, captured on *Different Stages*, proves Rush has found the place between rock 'n' roll simplicity and techno complexity that retains the most attractive elements of both.

I remember when we recorded our first live show at Massey Hall (in Toronto, 1976). It was over two or three shows and that was it. What we got was what we got and if you happened to be nervous or out of tune, well.... It was warts and all. For the next live album we recorded more shows. We reacted to our first live album by having everything polished and repairing the bad notes. It was almost too cleaned up. We overcompensated for the rawness of the first one and wound up with this album that was sterile, I think. By the third live album we reached a happy medium.

It wasn't my intention to do another I thought enough was enough with three double live albums out there already. But it also wasn't my intention to have the band keep producing records for this many years down the road. Who knew?

GEDDY LEE

Different Stages was culled from over 100 performances digitally recorded on a 72-track system during the *Test For Echo* Tour of 1997. (Three tracks, "Bravado", "Show Don't Tell" and "Analog Kid" are from the 1994 *Counterparts* tour.) Concert sound engineer Robert Scovill listened to every recording while transferring the concerts to a more malleable 48-tracks and selected about a dozen versions of each song for Lee and his co producer/mixing engineer Paul Northfield to choose from.

Remarkably we found a lot of the performances were coming from the same night. If you look, almost 70 per cent of the album is from Chicago. It's so ironic. You record over a hundred shows and you end up with an album that mostly came from one venue. I don't remember it being a particularly special night, but when I listen back to it there's something about the sound of that venue that sounded like an event. There was an excitement in the air. Every time we put up the Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia or one of the Detroit shows – even if those performances weren't

quite as good as some others, as long as they were in the ballpark the excitement factor made up for it and we would choose it. The irony of the whole thing is that you develop a very extravagant method of recording where you can record over a hundred shows and you end up using only about five.

GL

The Test For Echo Tour was unique in several ways. It was the first time Rush had recorded every night of a tour. It was the first time Rush had ever played all seven parts of "2112", the title-suite of their seminal 1976 album. It was also the first time Rush had ever toured without an opening act. It was an incredibly liberating factor for a band that had long felt constrained by the limitations of a conventional concert appearance. (Union rules and volume restrictions generally limit the length of shows.) Freed to play two sets over almost three hours they were able to include selections from each of their earlier incarnations and still introduce their audience to a wide range of their newest material.

We could have done an hour and half and gotten in and out, but that's not our style. Playing is the most fun we have out there on the road. That's the best time of the entire night. The whole day leads up to the performance, and you can't really enjoy your beer after the show unless you've gotten a good work out. We've always done at least a two hour show and the idea of being able to play for three hours and to do an intermission was always a fantasy we had.

It was not an easy decision. That was part of the system that gave us an opportunity to do what we do. Being an opening act for other bands for years turned us into what we are. It's not the best thing for the system to deprive someone of a gig, we understood that. But at the same time we thought: "We've been around a long time. Many tours later I think we've satisfied our debt to the system. So we'll take this one for ourselves and indulge ourselves: we're going to do the two sets."

GL

More than twenty years ago, in a Melody Maker interview published on February 11, 1978, Geddy Lee said something that still rings true today.

"I think we're something apart from trends. We're neither a trendy nor fashionable band; none of us feel that music is threatening us. More importantly, our audiences are growing, so it still has to be in vogue with those people. I think we appeal to a mentality and there's still a lot of that mentality."

The next day, a Sunday, Rush played the first of two sold-out shows at London's Hammersmith Odeon.

The reason (a tape of) that show even exists is that we did it for some radio show, I can't remember which. I remember at the time I had a cold and my voice was really raw. During the early part of the show I had very little control vocally so I changed a lot of the phrasing that I normally sang with in order to compensate for the cold. Listening back to it at the time it probably seemed dramatically weird to me so it never made it on to the radio show and we just kept the tapes.

Twenty years later I found them again and wondered, "What do these sound like?" I couldn't remember the circumstances of the show. So Alex and I went into the studio and we put them up and mixed them for fun about a year and a half ago. We were amazed at the energy of the live performance. It was a particular kind of energy that's connected with the age that we were, the kind of players that we were. Playing those songs today would not have that same vibe.

GL

So Different Stages proves to be just that; both a figurative and literal commemorative of Rush's different stages of evolution as performed on different stages around the world. The 2-CD set of the album proper consists of 22-tracks covering the entire scope of Rush's 25-year recording career. The bonus 11-track CD of the 1978 Hammersmith Odeon show provides a dramatic counterpoint to the refined sound the group honed over the next twenty years of recording experience. What new phase for Rush the album heralds is still anyone's guess.

October 1998

Alex Lifeson

Talks candidly with Spirit Of Rush



SOR: The release date of 'Different Stages' was put back from October to November why was this?

Alex: Yes, that's right. We wanted to add a couple of additional tracks to it, one to each CD. I just received the EQ. reference CDs at the end of August with the two songs added (Analog Kid and Show Don't Tell). The artwork is being sent to my house as we speak, for my final approval - Geddy has already seen and approved it, then it's off to the presses from here.

SOR: Who did the artwork for the cover?

Alex: Hugh Syme once again, our old friend has come up with the goods.

SOR: Why did you choose to put songs like Closer, Radio, Sawyer, etc. onto 'Different Stages' when they have already been on live releases in the past?

Alex: To repeat certain songs I don't think really hurts us, 'Closer To The Heart' is so different on each live record that it's nice to have it there as a marker.....to chart the development of a song over a long period of time.

SOR: Are you happy with the overall sound on 'Different Stages' compared to your previous live albums?

Alex: Yes, we are so happy with the way this sounds. It's got power and depth, good separation, a fine distinction between the instruments and yet the audience is wrapped around you. Having never seen Rush live (laughs) it's difficult for me to say but I hope this is how we do come across in a live setting. Paul Northfield did a fine job in mixing it.

SOR: Going back in time to the Hammersmith Odeon in 1978, why did you record a live performance so soon after the release of 'All The World's A Stage'?

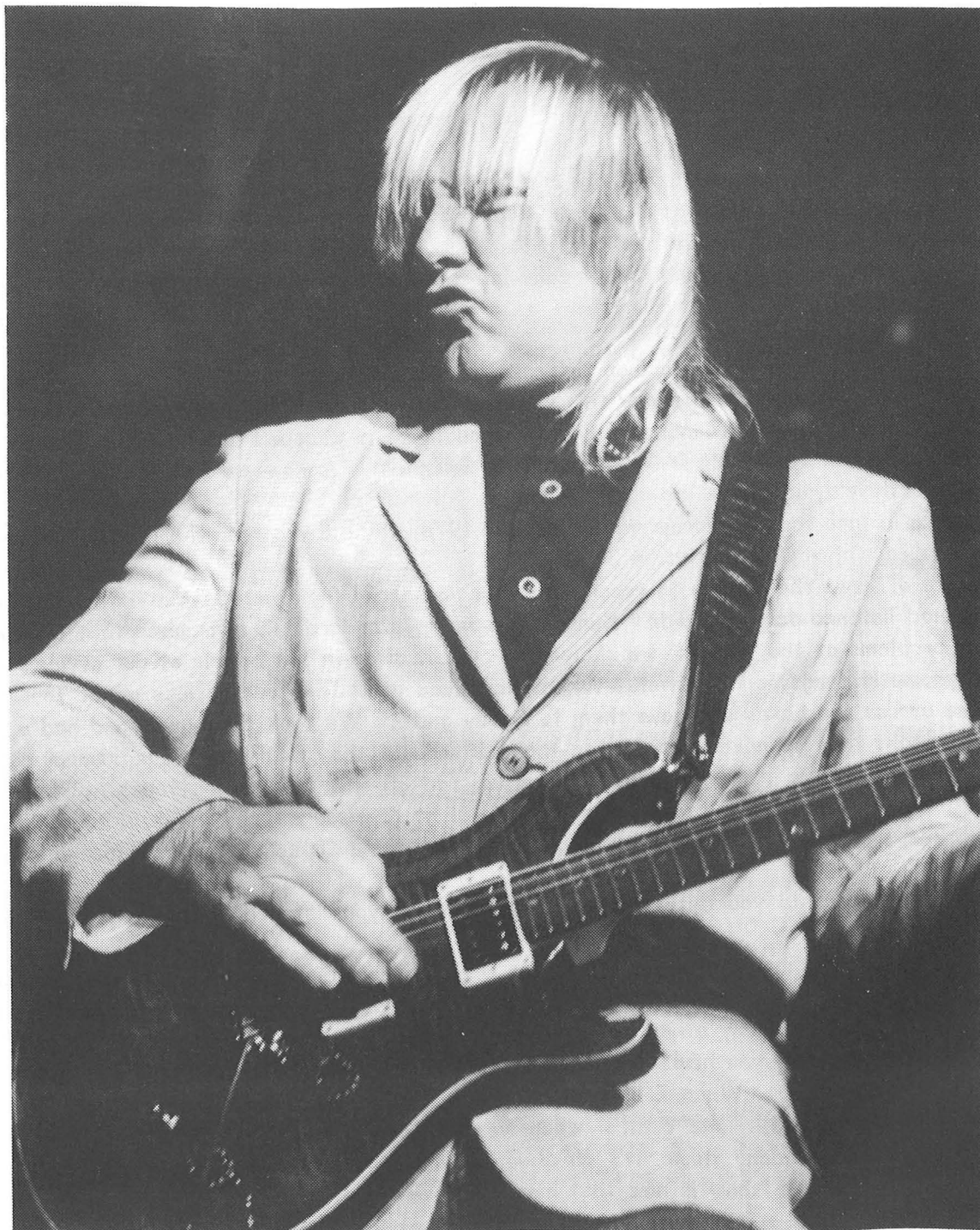
Alex: We were offered the chance to record for a radio special (not the BBC) so that's why we did it. Once we had listened to it we didn't think it was up to standard. I remember that Geddy was having throat problems at the time, so we shelved it - put it away in the bowels of our office here in Toronto and promptly forgot all about it. When they were renovating our offices about four years ago they came across the boxes and gave them to Geddy and I. We took them away and had a listen to them and thought they sounded a lot better than we thought they would from our memory of that recording. The tapes were remarkably well preserved for 20 year old analog tapes. They're not good enough to release as a live record in their own right (I disagree - ED) but in terms of this packaging and keeping the retail price as low as possible, this third CD comes out as a nice free bonus for our fans.

SOR: What differences did you detect in your playing when you listened to the old and new live recordings?

Alex: When listening, it's hard to be objective, but what I remember most about the Hammersmith show is what the stage looked like, my dressing room, what I was wearing etc.....the red housecoat, I think (laughs). It evoked so many other memories for me in terms of our history. In terms of the playing, I think it sounds very youthful. I guess we were only 23/24 at the time and very excited to be doing what we were doing. When I listen to the current live recordings I hear a maturity and confidence in our playing now. The control when we play now is much better, back then it was adrenaline and youthful abandon. Now, it's all about pacing the show the dynamics of it all - the subtle internal parts that the show is now that maybe it wasn't back then. As we've gotten older, we've matured in many ways and I think the live show has as well....it's a natural development and evolution of our profession. We've taken things to a level where we're very confident in the control of what we do....the youthful spiritedness that we had in the past was a part of where we were then,

a part of where every young band is at that point in their careers. In the overall scheme of things it's very difficult to feel 25 when you're 45 (laughs) no matter how hard you try, it just doesn't happen.....your brain is in a different place.....along with your knees and your elbows (laughs) and all those other potentially sore parts of your body. It's senseless to try and recapture that, it just doesn't exist anymore. You can take it to a whole different level and find great reward and satisfaction in being able to have that kind of confidence in where you have taken your craft.

SOR: Why will you not be putting out a live concert video to accompany the release of 'Different Stages' as you did with 'A.Show Of Hands'?



Alex: We did film our first (of two) nights in Toronto last year (June 30th '97), as I already mentioned we have only just given our approval for the CDs and cover of the live record - everything is very fresh and we want to get this out and let it walk it's own path and then tackle some other things, one of which would be the video. We recorded that night in Toronto which I haven't seen myself, but Geddy has looked at some of it (see Geddy interview for more details) so it may turn out to be the next project we will work on in the short term. Then, in the new year, we'll try and decide about where we're going to go from there.

SOR: In the light of Neil's tragic recent losses, do you see Rush continuing as a unit in future?

Alex: That as you can imagine, is very difficult to answer. I don't think anyone could imagine what a difficult period this has been for Neil, for all of us.....but mostly for Neil. It's a very private matter and we're all dealing with it as best we can. Everyday things get a little bit better so we have our fingers crossed that sometime in the very near future we can decide where we're going to take the band. To say anything else would be pure speculation at this point in time. Right now, our focus is on 'Different Stages'it's a great package of Rush stuff from a number of years. The actual cover and packaging is really great. We've included a lot of personal little bits and pieces that we've collected over the years. It's really a joy to look at....it evokes many great memories for me of many great times. Hopefully in the future we can plan for more great times.

SOR: Do you think if the band continues, we could persuade you to come and play 'An Evening With Rush' to us European audiences?

Alex: The problem in the past has been that we have cut back on our touring schedule and unfortunately if we are only going to do 70 or 80 shows instead of hundreds like we used to in the past, then we have to concentrate on America. In the future, depending on what our touring plans are, we would love to get back over and play in Europe. We have requests to go and play in a lot of places so we'll just have to wait and see what the future holds for us. The last time we came over to Europe for the 'Roll The Bones' shows we had hoped to get more support from our record company at the time, but I guess their priorities were somewhere else and it was hard for us to get a substantial commitment from them for the support we needed to re-establish ourselves in Europe.

SOR: Unfortunately, the record company here never seems to support you in the way we feel they should.

Alex: Yes, unfortunately you're right, which is a shame. Back in 1978/79 it was a different story.....we had a different following back then I think - a stronger following and it wasn't so bad to come to Europe and not have record company support. We were at a different level at the time. We could come over, and in terms of a whole tour, if we lost money we could absorb that loss which we did on a number of those early tours. It's a lot different now. To take a show like 'An Evening With Rush' and fifty or so crew members to Europe for a month is a very difficult commitment to make now.

SOR: It's a fact of life that record companies here (UK) do not really support rock bands much anymore. They're more interested in other genres of music at the moment which leaves the rock music fan here, out in the wilderness. Some of the other N. American bands we follow, have toured here recently with a scaled down show. Could you not do the same with Rush -play theatres again rather than arenas?

Alex: Well, I really do like playing in small venues....you know I have the Orbit Room here and I do play down there when I get the chance. We did a show here at the Phoenix Theatre back in December of '96 (The Molson Secret Show - ED) which to do once in a while is great fun, but in terms of balancing the budget on a tour it would become very hard indeed to carry the show that we have. To scale it down to a small theatre and do a week or two in the UK and several more in Europe would be virtually impossible to do because that's not where we're at anymore in terms of our production....the show is what it is and it has become a very integrated presentation now. To not include the video screen and lasers and all the other things that have become an important part of a Rush show, we think would short change our European audience, which we don't want to do. We would still love to come over and play a handful of shows at the larger arenas, so let's hope we can.

SOR: Things have certainly changed here in the UK now regarding arena-sized venues. We have several new ones now in Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff and a couple in Scotland worth a look. So you would not

have to do multiple nights at Wembley or the NEC in Birmingham anymore, you could spread things around now and perhaps attract more fans to the gigs because they wouldn't have to travel so far to a show.

Alex: Exactly, that would be real nice.

SOR: Do you have any plans for 'Victor' again?

Alex: No, I have none at the moment. I guess in the time between the two legs of the last tour and the time since the tour finished there was some stuff that I did. I probably have ten or fifteen songs that I've put together as exercises more than anything else really, but I'm not committing myself to another 'Victor' project at this time. At some point in the future I will definitely do something like that again....I'd love to.

SOR: And live 'Victor'/solo shows?

Alex: We did consider it after the release of 'Victor' but then I committed myself to Rush and 'Test For Echo'. Once we had completed 'T4E' I had a five month window that I could have gone on the road with, but everyone else who would have been involved with me were committed to their own projects, so we couldn't get it together. To do it properly I would like to get another album under my belt...to cull enough material to flesh out a good live set to make it all worthwhile. Anything's possible.

SOR: In hindsight, which era of your career has been the most fulfilling?

Alex: That's very difficult to answer because in a lot of ways what we did in the beginning was very rewarding....the kind of success that we started to have around 1978 was our first step forward and then with 'Moving Pictures' that was another much bigger leap forward. The independence that we felt after '2112' was a very important period for us. The last tour was, I think, one of the best that we have ever done - certainly one of the most pleasing tours to do for many reasons. Physically and emotionally we all played really, really well. Doing the 'Evening With.....' that was something we had wanted to do for a long time and it was very rewarding to have been as successful as we were with that in terms of the way the band came across. I thought we sounded well. It's tough to pick just one time as being the most fulfilling - we've had a lot of peaks and a few valleys (laughs).....but mostly peaks I think.

SOR: What music are you listening to yourself at the moment?

Alex: I haven't really been listening to that much recently, it's been a funny period for me this past year. I've been finding it difficult to really get into working around music - playing or listening to much. It's been a bit of a roller coaster ride for me in that sense. I have recently been getting into a little bit more work....I have started to pick up my guitars again - a lot of acoustic stuff, funny tunings and things like that - so that's been getting the creative juices going. I've been spending a little bit of time in the studio....I have some feelers out for some small independent projects to work as a producer or arranger....a couple of remix things for some friends of mine, so I'm starting to get busier now and into the Fall. I'll be getting busier which I'm getting excited about - the fact that I'm playing more now is also a good thing. While doing 'Victor' I spent so much time playing in that period, then I had three weeks off before we went into the studio to work on 'T4E'so I went through a period of about 18 months where I was playing constantly. I really liked the way that felt, I felt rejuvenated and of course I continued to play a lot during the last tour. Then when everything happened last summer I kind of got away from it for a long while, but now I'm getting back into a routine of playing for my own enjoyment again, which is promising.

SOR: You did play the 'White Ribbon' benefit show a while back, did you enjoy being on stage again (see Spirit No' 43 for more details of this concert)?

Alex: Yes, that was great, a lot of fun. It was very well organised so a bunch of us got up and played one or two songs. The Dexters - the Orbit Room house band were the backing band for the evening. They're all great musicians and the perfect choice for that sort of gig because they are so on time all the time. It went really well and they raised a lot of money for a very good cause. We all had a great time with it.

SOR: You did play at several 'Kumbaya' festivals as well in the past, will there be any more of them?

Alex: I'm not exactly sure when they did the last one, although I do know that they changed the format - rather than having just one show here in Toronto they spread it out across the country doing smaller shows as they went, a 'Kumbaya' tour if you will....and I'm not sure if it was as

successful as doing just the one big show. I remember the last time I did it there were a lot of last minute cancellations - a lot of big names who had committed to doing it pulled out and Molly (the organiser) was really disappointed because she had worked very hard to try and get some big names to gain more exposure. She was really hurt by it - she had the wind knocked out of her.

SOR: Do you still fly your plane when you can?

Alex: Yes, I do, but I haven't done so much recently. I did do some flying during the last tour....about 20 hours or so, in the plane that we had chartered.....which was the very first time that we had done that for a tour. Geddy, Liam and Peter used to come up with me - a real small crew (laughs). It was a Beach King Air, a turbo prop which the guy's invited me to sit up and fly some of the legs. It was terrific, real fun to do. I really haven't flown too much over the past couple of years, so it was nice to do it.

SOR: We saw you flying the air force jet plane in Alberta a few years ago on Much Music. You looked like you really enjoyed that.

Alex: Oh yeah, that was a lot of fun, an experience I will never forget.

SOR: How about your cooking.....you used to do a lot for the band in the past. Are you still hard at it in the kitchen?

Alex: Yes, I've been cooking like crazy (laughs). I love cooking, it really became a very creative outlet for me. My wife has her own business which has become quite busy over the past couple of years and with me having had some time off it kind of became my responsibility over that period of time. It became a challenge and lots of fun to try and be creative, so we ended up having a couple of dinner parties a month where we would invite anywhere between 8 and 20 people over for a meal.



It's a real challenge to cook for 20 people - it's all about timing, getting the right courses at the right time. I'm a bit of a stickler in the kitchen and I don't like other people around.

SOR: Any work on the inventing front lately?

Alex: No, not really. Everything's been invented (laughs).

SOR: I know that we're supposed to be talking about 'Different Stages' but it's difficult to ask questions about something we've only just heard nine songs from. Perhaps this is a little early (mid-Sept) to be doing interviews for something due out in the middle of November?

Alex: Yes well (laughs) I would think that would be the case (more laughs). I've been speaking to people for the last five hours - German and Dutch press and they haven't heard anything. All they had was a list of the songs. This underlines what I said earlier about the record company (in Europe) and their lack of commitment.

SOR: Why did you play '2112' on the last tour with a Les Paul and not the PRS?

Alex: I just wanted a change. I thought that the Les Paul was the perfect choice for something like '2112' because I didn't have a vibrato arm back then so I didn't need one now. The Les Paul is a fun guitar to play - it's got a nice weight and that classic look to it. It was fun to mix the guitars up a little bit and not just fall back on the usual standard instruments that I normally play.

SOR: You have to keep 'JJ' on his feet!

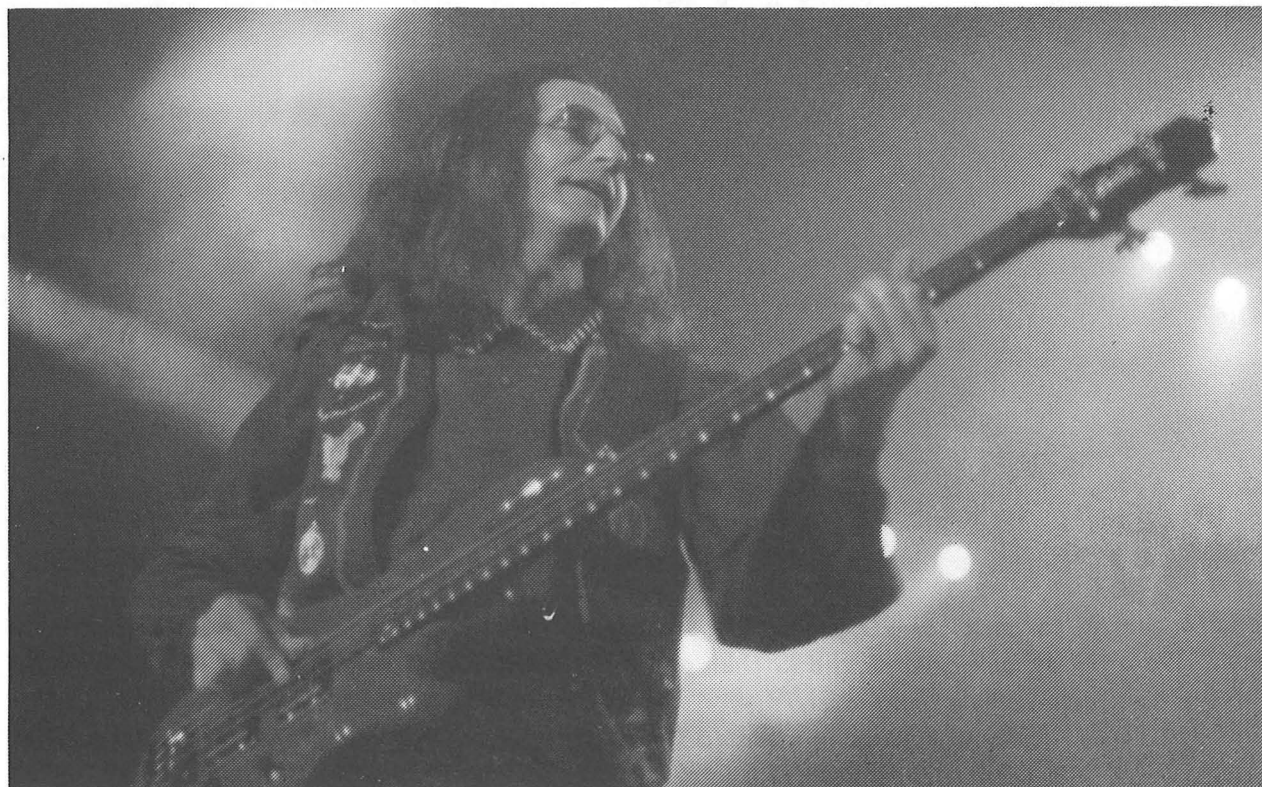
Alex: Yeah, not drinking coffee and eating potato chips (laughs) all day. I think you'll really notice the weight of the guitar sound of '2112' on 'Different Stages' when you hear it.

SOR: We are holding our third Rush Convention in Leicester this coming Saturday, do you have anything to say to the fans who are attending or reading 'The Spirit Of Rush'?

Alex: Please accept my apologies for not getting over to Europe more often. I really do appreciate that everybody has stuck with us for so long now. It has been a very long journey hasn't it (laughs)....I really do think that all the fans will really enjoy this 'Different Stages' package, we have worked really very hard to keep the price as low as we could..... to make the Hammersmith disk a free one - as much as one can anyway. Most of the credit for this must go to Geddy - he has worked by far the hardest in getting it all together. He was at the studio almost every day with Paul. I went in seldom and made only minor changes, so this is really Ged's baby. The cover is a real joy to look at and really brought a lump to our throats when we were going through all of our stuff. We all have our own collections of memorabilia dating back through the years. I really do feel that our fans will like it a lot.

SOR: When we spoke to 'JJ' (see last issue) he mentioned that you store everything in a warehouse in Toronto.

Alex: All our equipment yes. Over the years you never know what you might need. There's such an interest in retro that you never know if something you used 15 years ago might become relevant now. It's impossible to get in this warehouse - it's stacked to the ceiling and it's a very big warehouse (laughs). It houses all of our current gear as well as tons and tons of old stuff.



Signals

Dear Mick,

Thanks, once again, for another set of brilliant Rush memories. I refer, of course, to the one day a year that is Rush Convention Day.

It was great to see you, Tommy and Steve again and we made a new friend, Simon, who's fairly local to us and has put us in touch with a record shop that may be able to do us a deal on a set of Rush remasters, fingers crossed.

Myself, Eve and Iona had a great time at the Convention. The video, the stalls, the karaoke, the playback and the band were all brilliant, topped only by our, now traditional zero prizes in the raffle, boo hoo!

The playback really whetted my appetite for the new album, the versions of some of the songs sounded very different from the one's we're familiar with. Can't wait!

I don't know if you've come across it yet, but I found a new magazine whilst browsing in my local newsagent. It's called Classic Rock and the first November/December edition has two Rush mentions, a small news item about the new live album and an entry for All The World's A Stage in the Ten Of The Best live albums. There's also going to be something in the next issue, out on 3 December, although there's no indication what this might be. No doubt, an album review at the very least.

Anyway, I've just dropped them a line to point them in the right direction. They're at 19 Bolsover St, WIP 7HJ (*A magazine that is well worth a look, a real quality production!* – ED).

I can't remember if I've mentioned this before, but whilst we were on holiday on the Costa Brava this summer, we took a daytrip to Barcelona. As we were making our way back to the train station we came across a little record shop. We investigated and came out with the 2 CD set, Mirrors, for 2,500 ptas (about £10) so if you're ever in the area it might be worth a visit. It's in Carrer dels Tallers, which is off La Rambla, just south of Placa de Catalunya.

Gracias y buenas noches,

PETER, EVE & IONA
ILFORD, ESSEX

Signals

Dear Mick,

Thanks for the latest issue of SOR and for all the others I have received over the years.

You will find enclosed my answers to the poll that you sent out. Like Paul Cook (Signals – Iss. 44) I found some of the questions obsessive but have answered them 'best I can'. (*Results of the poll will be in our next issue so get yours in now, if you haven't done so already* – ED).

As you read through my answers I'm sure you will find a sense of apathy and for this I apologise. While I sympathise with Neil over his recent tragedies I don't think we'll ever see Rush on these shores again. This is something I felt before Neil suffered these cruel twists of fate.

I know there is the argument that they don't have to come if they don't want to, but it would be nice to reward the loyal fanbase they have in this country. We're not talking about a 20 date tour (would be nice though!) but 7/8 dates spread over a couple of weeks at the country's major venues to me is not a lot to ask. There is no doubt that these gigs would sell out at any price, so I'm sure they would pay for themselves. But, following Neil's tragic losses I would be extremely surprised if the band even carry on!

Well I've got that off my chest now so I'll end there. I still love their music no matter how annoyed I get.

All the best,

ALLAN MONUMENT
BANGOR

Hi Mick,

Thanks. A really enjoyable convention this year, it had a nice feel about it. Although there did not seem to be as many there as last year – anyway, their loss. The programme, an exclusive preview of 'Different Stages', a very good set by Tom Sawyer, plus the videos was great. Hey! I won my first raffle prize! A tape of selected tracks from 'Different Stages'. By the way, the live version of 'Driven' – brilliant. Can't wait for the CD's release. Not able to get across the pond for the tour, I really look forward to the release of 'Different Stages'.

Anyway, many thanks Mick for your efforts on these conventions. Would you please pass on my thanks to: 'Tom Sawyer' for a good set, to Andrew and Ray and his brother for their company during the evening, to Mad Jock for being Mad Jock and to the band Rush. Where would we be without them!

MICK MURRAY
ESSEX

Dear SOR,

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone that got up on stage and sang their hearts out during the karaoke session. Believe me when I say that it takes bottle to get up on stage without an instrument to hide behind, so a huge SHOW OF HANDS to everyone.

A special thanks to Rob Hunter who was the "Gedmeister" for the gig. Rob did such a brilliant job that no one could tell it was his first gig with us. So thank you very much and see you soon.

I speak for everyone in "Tom Sawyer" when I say that it was an honour and certainly a pleasure to play in front of such a great audience. It was difficult to hear the monitors sometimes because the singing was so loud, but hey, we're not complaining!

A big thank you to everyone who was involved in the organization of the day, for a change everything went smoothly, a good indication of the level of organization behind the scenes. Every year the convention gets better and better, so 31st July 1999, The Limelight club in Crewe is set to be a monster.

We'll see everyone there. Cheers.

SIMON FRASER-CLARK

TOM SAWYER is:

Neil Orgee - #Bass & Keyboards

Tim Batkin - Drums & Percussion

Simon Fraser-Clark - Guitars & Bass pedals

Dear Spirit,

Well, another year, another convention (this is getting habit forming!).

Once again the general mood of the day was very relaxed and very enjoyable with one or two familiar faces and also some new Rush freaks to swap stories with (hi Shane - thanks for the tape!). It never ceases to amaze me what a great variation of people turn up at this thing. All shapes, sizes and ages - incredible.

By the way, that raffle was fixed, wasn't it? (*Don't start me up on that subject - ED*). The

tracks from 'Different Stages' sounded good, although through the PA the sound was a tad muffled and made it sound like a good quality bootleg!

'Tom Sawyer' I felt were entertaining. While they were not as technically correct as 'The Jack Secret Show' they more than made up for it with great enthusiasm and spirit which I guess is the important thing (*most people thought they were better - ED*).

A quick suggestion - maybe a change of venue might be good for next time. I know that Mick rated the Limelight club in Crewe when he came up to see YYY (ideal facilities all on three floors). I appreciate that it may be further for some to travel (and ideal for others!!) but a change of scenery sometimes makes for a fresh approach and I know some people felt a little bit too familiar with Leicester this time. (*We could not agree more and next year's convention will be in Crewe. See elsewhere for details - ED*).



Still, that's in the future. Keep up the good work,

DAVE LYTHGOE
STOKE-ON-TRENT

P.S. To Andy with the pony-tail, the name of the shop selling Converse All-Stars is 'Schuh'.

Dear Spirit,

Congratulations on a great convention! It was great - well organised and I certainly feel - well priced. I feel that we are resigned to the fact that Rush may not be touring Britain/Europe again (as I've highlighted in the NMS) and any substitute in the UK is well applauded. Sometimes one feels that tribute bands are "better" because you get so close to the front, you can request which song you want and you can also get numerous encores! My only criticism - and this was echoed by a few people at the convention - was that the karaoke section should have been extended to musicians as well (as in two years ago). Often with bands like Rush there are people who like the music because of the technicality involved and they are often people (however good or bad) who wish to get on stage and have their claim to fame. It's very difficult finding fellow musicians locally that like Rush and the best opportunity is at the Convention. I hope that for the next Convention this point can be raised and noted. The main point of the Convention is audience participation - and what better way?

Anyway, all the best to Spirit of Rush for the exemplary service given. (*Good point Zahid - and something we are looking into for July 31st 1999 in Crewe - ED*)

Yours,

ZAHID HASSAN
BRADFORD

P.S. Say hello to the guy playing Red Barchetta at the very end (on guitar). I played drums with him on Xanadu 2 years ago!

Dear Mick,

Greetings, trust you are well. Once again, yourself and staff have done us proud with yet again an outstanding Convention. Loads of "new faces" this year (which is great) along with the usual sprinkling of "Veterans". Everybody seemed up for it this year (oooerr!!) joining in and having a laugh.

The preview of the new live CD was great (Limelight sounds awesome). Once again it

proved memorable for me in coming away with the main prize in the raffle for the second year running, I guess I won't be welcome next year!! (*You got that right pal! - ED*). Don't worry, I'll give somebody else a chance. Seriously though, I'm very honoured and it will always remain a special moment in my life.

Just remains to say a big thank you to a great bunch of friends who made the day extra special - Stevie, Mark, Kevin, Lee, Stuart, Lorraine and Ritchie. Cheers!! Thanks again for a great day Mick, your hard work is appreciated believe me. Take care,

KEVIN OWEN
PENZANCE

To all at SOR,

Many thanks for another excellent day at Leicester, once again with impeccable organisation.

Many thanks to Steve from Manchester, Erik from LA and a fella I met later in the evening - no wonder I can't remember his name, but he's seen the Main Men 47 times.

The band put together a brilliant set and Mr Fraser-Clark's playing was spot on. I must say, if the band were willing, it would be nice if we went back to the format of the first year where people could play the instruments, because not everyone can sing but I know a lot of people there are musicians.

Finally, I listened to the version of Xanadu 'done' by Silversun and I fail to see why anyone would want to take an example of a Rush epic and turn it into a 4 minute thrash. It really has very little to commend it. (*What do other readers think of Silversun's efforts? Let us know - ED.*) To my ears, the first song that came into my head was Dog Years off T4E. Still, that's only my opinion.

Once again, many thanks for an excellent Convention and see you again next year.

ROBIN ROBERTS
WELLINGBOROUGH

Dear Spirit,

What is it about this band that makes fans wake from their malaise when a new live album is released? The band's fourth (and final?) live cornerstone, 'Different Stages', brings to a close yet another chapter in their long and distinguished history.

The song selection on discs 1 & 2 are culled from the last couple of tours. One can argue long and hard, as to the merits of why the

inclusion of, once again, for the likes of The Trees, Freewill, Closer (yawn), Limelight, Spirit (nausea), and Tom Sawyer (who should have been drowned long ago!). The latter two hopefully only there to close out the set before the encore (YYZ!)?

But when you think of some of the songs the band has played since ASOH was released, like: Virtuality, Driven, Time And Motion, Cold Fire, Half The World, War Paint, Scars, Double Agent, Ghost Of A Chance, The Pass, Superconductor, etc. Then you start to wonder and ask, why were some of these not used as substitutes? Okay, not all of them may be classics, by any means, but surely worthy of inclusion in place of many of those old and tired rehashes? (*Read the interviews with Alex and Geddy in this very issue for some insight into the song selection for 'Different Stages' - ED*)

Overall though, you still get a top quality and a slickly recorded album, which forms a well-rounded and complete package.



The reverence the band holds when it comes to live albums, is also borne out by the vast amount of bootlegs that are available, and that have appeared over the years, and continue to do so. Which makes disc 3 from good old Hammy O. in 1978 particularly interesting. This is a Live Rush Connoisseur's delight. A chance to hear a top quality recording from the height of the bands formative live years. Unfortunately, we do not get the full set, but hey, it's something of an achievement that we get to hear this stunning archival material in the first place. To hear classics from their era like By-Tor into Xanadu, Kings, Cygnus, and the rare special treat of Cinderella Man, are pure ecstasy.

This is where the band's bootlegs have come in and filled that growing gap of much sought after and much needed live material. The following is a brief and rough guide to some of the latest and better quality releases around, covering all era's of their career.

'Come In And Feel The Show' - (I-VENT 31 01.9-98) I-Vent Records 1CD-R. Toronto 1974. Sound quality on this private release from Germany is not bad. Slight let-down being it is biased on the right speaker. Between songs you get derisory, but funny audiences comments. Nice cover and label with band shot from the era. 45m 6/10

'Live Anthem 1975' - (GE 085) - Gypsy Eye label Japan. 1CD. Toronto 1975. Unimaginative title, but good glossy packaging with backstage band shot. Shows the band expanding their live set. Quality is very good. 67m 7/10

'Discoveries' - (SRR-005) - Syrinx Productions 1CD-R. Recorded in Fresno, CA. in 1976 on the '2112' tour. Also 5 bonus tracks from 1974 and 75. Quality is excellent and cover very good. 70m 9/10

'The Hallowed Halls' - (SRR-003) - Syrinx. 1CD-R recording from Manchester, on the band's 1st UK tour in 1977. The set includes a pre-released version of 'Xanadu'! Very good quality production all round. 70m 8/10

'Cygnus X Story' - (GE024) - Gypsy Eye. 2CD. Excellent quality show of a set that had been released previously on another label as 'Cygnus', but this is of better quality and greater length! Recorded in Tucson, Arizona in 1978. Cover and layout are top notch. 92m 9/10

'Rocinante' - (SRR-001) - Syrinx. 1CD-R from Vancouver 1978. Very rare show and of really great quality. 'Spheres' based artwork and an excellent first release from the label.

70m 9/10

'Hemisphere Performance' - (elements-042). Elements Of Crime Label! 1CD from Oslo 27/5/79. Quality is okay, but nothing stunning, packaging bright and 'Spheres' oriented.

78m 7/10

'Atmospheric Disturbance' - (SRR-006)- Syrinx. 2CD-R. Anaheim, CA. 1981. Neat cover and a quality recording with 2 bonus demo(?) tracks, I think not! Good stuff.

130m 8/10

'Moving Pictures Story' - (GE-056) - Gypsy Eye. 2CD from Hartford 20/12/81 on the 'Pictures' tour. Cover and layout very good. Back cover states 'Soundboard Recording' - but it is not! If it was, sound quality would have been better than it is!

115m 8/10

'Virtual Songs' - (PR-0597) - Prism Records USA. Private 3CD-R release from Phoenix in 1996 on the 'T4E' tour. Quality is okay, a bit jumpy in places. Bonus material on disc 3. One of only two full-length T4E shows I know of. Packaging okay with the 3 discs crammed into a single case, with no labels!

210m 7/10

'Dances With The Moon' - SRR-002) Syrinx. 3CD-R. Meadowlands Dec. 96. The only other full 'T4E' set. Disc 3 has bonus material: interview and Peart's Percussion piece 'Momo's Dance Party'. Packaging is excellent with the 3 individual cases, with different covers, banded together in a printed green strip, fastened with Velcro. Excellent. Syrinx state: 'Producing quality limited edition Rush recordings on CD-R.' They certainly do, and are obviously big fans, as much care seems to go into them.

210m 9/10

'Déjà Vu' - (SRR-007) Syrinx. The diamond in the labels catalogue thus far. World exclusive releases of 7 alternate 'Counterparts' studio tracks. Each different from the album versions. Band interview between tracks, and a bonus track of Pye Dubois reciting his original poem that became 'Between Sun And Moon'. Cover is great and a real step up in quality, as is the material. Excellent

51m 10/10

That's about it. Hope there has been something of interest in here, not only for the collector, but for the general fan also? If anyone is interested in further information on these, or picking some of them up, send in to Rush CD's at the editorial address, enclosing an SAE/IRC, and

we'll pass on what we can.

**BARRY
PRESTON**

The Convention Through My Eyes
From Rob Hunter "Unofficial" Lead Singer,
Tom Sawyer

1998.....a strange year. Had just been promoted by my company - a move from Scotland to Norfolk in the offing for the summer ---pay rises and all the perks that a new Holiday Park Entertainments Manager can expect.

Then all hell breaks loose, the cough, the breathlessness, the long periods of being tired. The hospital check-ups followthen the news - "Sorry, Mr Hunter, you have been diagnosed with Hodgkins Disease". For the uninitiated, a cancer of the lymph gland. From that day in March, I was not allowed to work at all.

Emotions were mixed to say the least - shock, anger, denial and finally loads of tears...but above all "What the hell was I going to do all year?" Well, it was in April-ish when a nice little opportunity arose, courtesy of a certain Mr Burnett...

"Hi Rob, it's Mick Burnett. Tom Sawyer have asked me to find out if you would like to handle vocals for the convention as they are doing the main set this year".

I was shocked but very pleased at the prospect. A chance to do some proper singing to some proper music at last. Of course I had to explain to Mick that my illness may prevent me from doing the show, but I was pretty keen....and all because I did one song on the karaoke at the '97 bash!!!

Nothing else happened for a few months. I was trying to remember loads of lyrics. It's all well and good singing with 10,000 odd nutters to "Tom Sawyer" or "Limelight"but it's a whole new ball game when you realise that you'll be the sole voice to a few hundred die-hards. Strangely I felt little nerves at the prospect, probably because of the feeling I had that I would be singing at some sort of family gathering, full of friendly faces and helpful, willing voices.

Rehearsals went well. Journeys from Scotland to Worcester (the band's base) by various means of transport ensued. For example, coach via Digbeth station in Birmingham (a place to

avoid at all costs – the biggest f***** bomb shelter I have ever seen!!) -- also by rail via New Street Station courtesy of Virgin Trains after the show itself (I now see why Virgin has the worst complaints record in the country ---- Mr Branson, please take note!!).

Enough of this jibberish, back to the rehearsals. Drove up with Simon (guitarist) and his wife Tracy to Tim's house (the drummer with the replica Moving Pictures kit). The first weekend of rehearsal mainly involved us thrashing through all sorts, mainly pre-Signals material and concentrating on stuff from Moving Pictures and Permanent Waves. I had a real desire to do some older, more unusual stuff eg. Cygnus X-1 Book 2 or even the Fountain of Lamneth as a real surprise, but our limited technology meant we had to stick to the more well-known material, which was fine by me. It was a bit of a strain singing properly after such a long gap. After the first night, my voice was shot to pieces...how was I going to handle a 2 hour show, for God's sake? But practice, warm-up exercises and loads of coffee (thanks Tamm) did the trick...

A few weeks to go and the final set-list arrives through the post. Time to swot up again on the lyrics. Although we all know that Neil's lyrics are wonderful, lyrical and quite unique, I must now feel some semblance of sympathy for Geddy. Neil just seems to add loads of prose to his writings, meaning loads for me to remember...God, The Camera Eye was a killer....so Neil, for the next album, if there is going to be one...more consideration for us singers, please? Ta very much.

Another problem soon arose..."how do I actually sing the songs? Do I try and imitate Geddy?" The quick answer to that ...out of the bloody question!!! Considering that the only way I could sing some of the material eg. The "Each of us a cell of awareness" verse from "Freewill" was to sing it an octave down from the original, made me sound more like Barry White rather than Geddy. But it was either that or use a nutcracker on myself, and whilst we all love Rush so much, I was not prepared to damage delicate and important parts of me for the cause.

D-Day...Saturday, 19th September. Arrive at Tim's house early to help pack all the gear – mainly Simon's guitars and all his twiddly-bits, Tim's kit and all his bits and bobs.....and me and my mike!

Arrived at the University around midday...much to Mick's delight (don't worry, we hadn't forgotten). Onto setting up, which is a real advantage if you are a lead singer as you have bugger all to set up! So in the tradition of all great rock singersI went to the bar!!! Finally met up with some fellow countrymen (Stevie, Stuart & Lorraine --- not forgetting Mad Tom and his 3 lovelies!)

Soundcheck time and the tingling starts. When you finally stick your copies of the set list down on your monitors, you know it's for real, especially when Mick is shoving a camera in your face while you're trying to sing Subdivisions! A small crowd gather...way, way at the back. Silence after each song....hey guys, we weren't that bad!!....But a few smiles and reassuring nods and winks follow. Nerves have now gone, replaced by a real desire to deliver. Finally a chance to fulfil a real ambition – to sing at a proper rock gig!!

A chance to relax for a while and watch the karaoke --wonderful as always – brought back a lot of happy memories. ShowTime in a few minutes...final thoughts.. "Can I remember the words? How will the crowd react?"

We walk on stage to the theme from Monty Python ...a nice choice... then those immortal words from Mad Tom "I want you to please welcome home.....Tom Sawyer!"

And we're off with Bastille Day – sung in the style of Barry White of course – nice way to warm up the ole vocal chords. Fly By Night & The Camera Eye follow.....A little trouble remembering the lyrics at this point, hence the strategic positioning of my notes on the PA plus my feeble attempt at an early crowd singalong! From that point, it was easy and a real joy...a mass party, fab reactions between band and audience, just a superb feeling.

Limelight was just monumental. Distant Early Warning – a wonderful chance to get a lovely cuddle and dance on stage (thanks, Nikki!!!). The rest of the show was just a blur.....but you couldn't get rid of the grin on my face.

Personal highlights for me? ----Limelight, the mass chorus on Closer To The Heart (wonderful chaps!), Red Barchetta (my 2nd all-time fave Rush song, behind Jacob's Ladder) and Natural Science, especially the Led Zep stomp!

Then it seemed in the blinking of an eye, it was all over....apart from doing Red Barchetta again with Robbie the guest guitarist (well

done mate!). Very good reactions to the show, nice to hear and just a sense of complete satisfaction. Now I know in a little way how Geddy, Alex and Neil must feel after every show they do. To perform in front of a crowd with such passion, happiness and sheer spirit will live with me for a very long time.

To all you guys who were therethanks for everything...and see you next year!!!!!!

THANK YOU'S GO TO.....The guys in the band of course, Simon, Tim and Neil plus their wives Tracy, Tamm & Gina ... (Good luck with the baby, Tracy!!!)

Mick for having the daft idea of inviting me to do this in the first place!!!

And of course, to every single one of you who turned up.....

SPECIAL MENTIONS GO TO...

(we'll meet up for a few, I promise!)

Stevie McAnally, Stuart Borland & Lorraine Mad Tom and the 3 Lovelies (Kerry - you promised to ring me!)

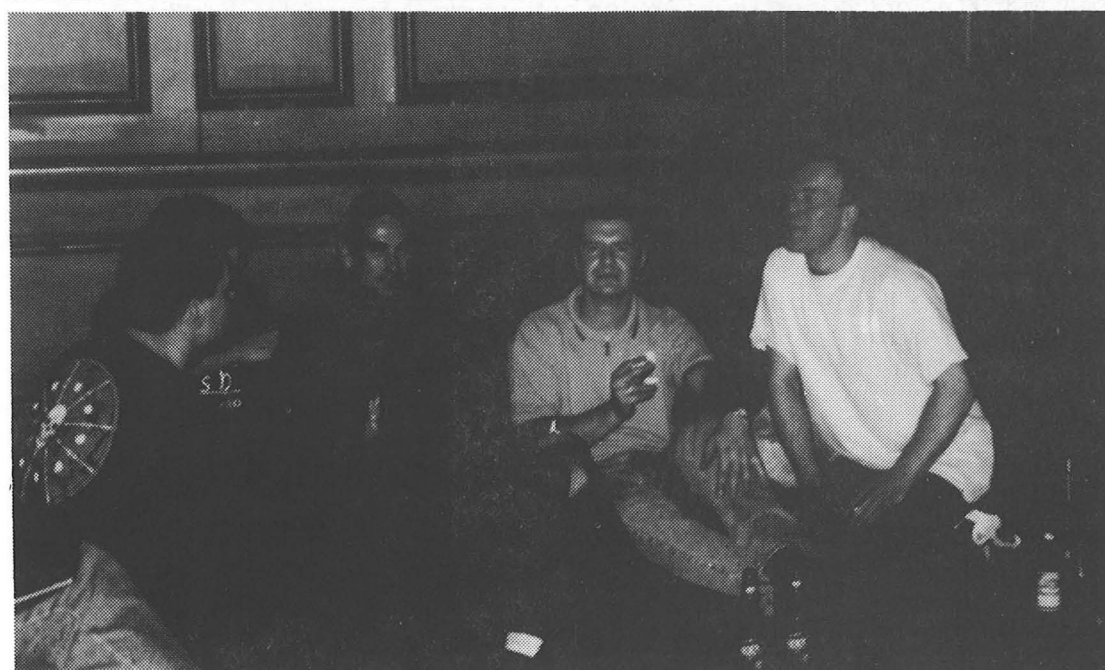
Nikki Brooks (hope you did a good review in Guitarist for us and we must do lunch when I'm next in London!)

Every single karaoke singer - well done on a magnificent effort.

AND FINALLY OF COURSE.....

To Alex, Geddy and especially Neil....

All our thoughts and prayers will always be with you. And maybe, just maybe, there may be another opus in the pipeline.....but in regards to Neil's experiences and maybe being someone living with cancer I know them better than most, I think we'll all understand if they decide to hang up their plectrums and drum sticks





Geddy Lee

Talks exclusively to Spirit Of Rush
about the making of Different Stages

SOR: Who's idea was it to use the theme from the movie 2001 to open your shows?

Geddy: That was me, I have to take the blame for that one.

SOR: Is it a favourite film of yours?

Geddy: No. It's just that I came up with this idea to do a satirical take on the images presented in the film. I thought it would be humorous to take the nut and bolt from the cover of 'Counterparts' and put them in a sci-fi setting - which of course many fans would hopefully enjoy. I thought it was funny that these two pieces of hardware would couple at the crescendo of the music made famous in 2001. It was all in the aid of a comic opening.

SOR: You got the production credit of 'Different Stages' all to yourself, can you tell us about the workload involved with producing?

Geddy: Paul Northfield and myself did the majority of the work, Alex just popped his head in now and then to say "Hey!" (laughs) to check things out, got bored and left (more laughs). It was a quite daunting task to go and sort through all the shows that we had recorded on the 'Counterparts' and 'T4E' tours - between 60 and 100 shows or so were recorded. Between Robert Scoville, Paul Northfield and myself we tackled it though. Robert did the most difficult task by sorting through the initial sets of tapes which were recorded in 72 tracks digital..... which is a nightmare to mix like that, so they had to be mixed down to a usable 48 track format. Anything that could not be used from either a technical or performance-wise aspect was eliminated before it was mixed down. So Robert narrowed it all down to roughly 20 shows and then Paul and I stepped in to analyse the material and find what we wanted from it.....rather than have three minds mulling over the final mix, which would have been a nightmare.....so really it was much better to have - as 'The Troggs' would say - 'One Mind On It'.

SOR: And you were happy to be that mind?

Geddy: Yes, I'm more neurotic and masochistic (laughs) than the other two guys.

SOR: Alex mentioned that it was your baby.

Geddy: Yes, it was my baby but it was like a really "big" baby (laughs) with a huge head.

SOR: Are you happy with Paul Northfield's contribution?

Geddy: Yes, we are. He did a brilliant job on it. We were determined to make, what will more than likely be our last live album, we wanted it to be our final statement. You can't keep doing live albums forever and ever. You have to achieve what you set out to do and then move on. With our previous live albums I always thought we got close, but no cigar. With this one, I think we really nailed it down and that's largely due to Paul's insistence that we get the sounds as good as possible and sorting out which of the songs were the most vibrant.

SOR: So you think that 'Different Stages' sounds much better than 'A Show Of Hands'?

Geddy: Oh yes, by a long way. I think that some of the songs on here sound better than the studio versions - 'Dreamline' and 'Natural Science' to name just two. I was really pleased that we were able to find such special performances and record it in a manner that was so good.....to fine tune the sound without taking the live-ness away from it. That was the important thing. 'Exit Stage Left' was a sophisticated sounding record, but it didn't feel very live as a result. With 'All The World's A Stage - the other side of the coin as it were - was too raw for me, so we got close with 'A Show Of Hands' but this time I think we got it right. This is largely due to the people involved and the fact that we had so many shows to choose from. We were able to find some very special performances of certain songs.

SOR: Did you consider other titles before settling on 'Different Stages'?

Geddy: Yes, we had a few others kicking around (laughs).

SOR: Did you notice anything specific about the changes in your voice over the years when you listened to the 'Hammersmith '78' tapes compared with the shows you had recorded on the last two tours?

Geddy: Once I'd gone through puberty, I noticed a change in my voice (laughs) but I do think my voice had changed dramatically between now and 1978.

SOR: Did you enjoy listening to the old Hammersmith recording?

Geddy: Yes, it was fun and I was surprised at the quality of the performance and of the recording as well..... although there are a few songs on there where my voice was a little ragged and I remembered that at the time I had a cold, which is why we never used it on the radio. Nonetheless, we felt it had something that would be interesting for the fans to listen to and it would be nice to include it in the live package as a bonus for our fans, was what motivated me. It was a special time for us, that period, when we spent a lot of time in London working, recording etc. We all have a lot of memories from that period.

SOR: Did you have to patch any of the Hammersmith recording up at all?

Geddy: No, not much. What you hear is pretty much what you get (laughs). We only fixed a couple of out of tune guitars, if I remember correctly.

SOR: The Hammersmith show sounds very raw, like you mentioned earlier about 'All The World's A Stage' – compared to the other two discs.

Geddy: Yes, a different kind of energy and band architecture back then. Complexities were overt back then in '78, whereas there's more that's intrinsic in the fabric of the material now. I feel that is the most dramatic difference.

SOR: Looking back to the 'An Evening With Rush' tour, did you enjoy it and did it work for you?

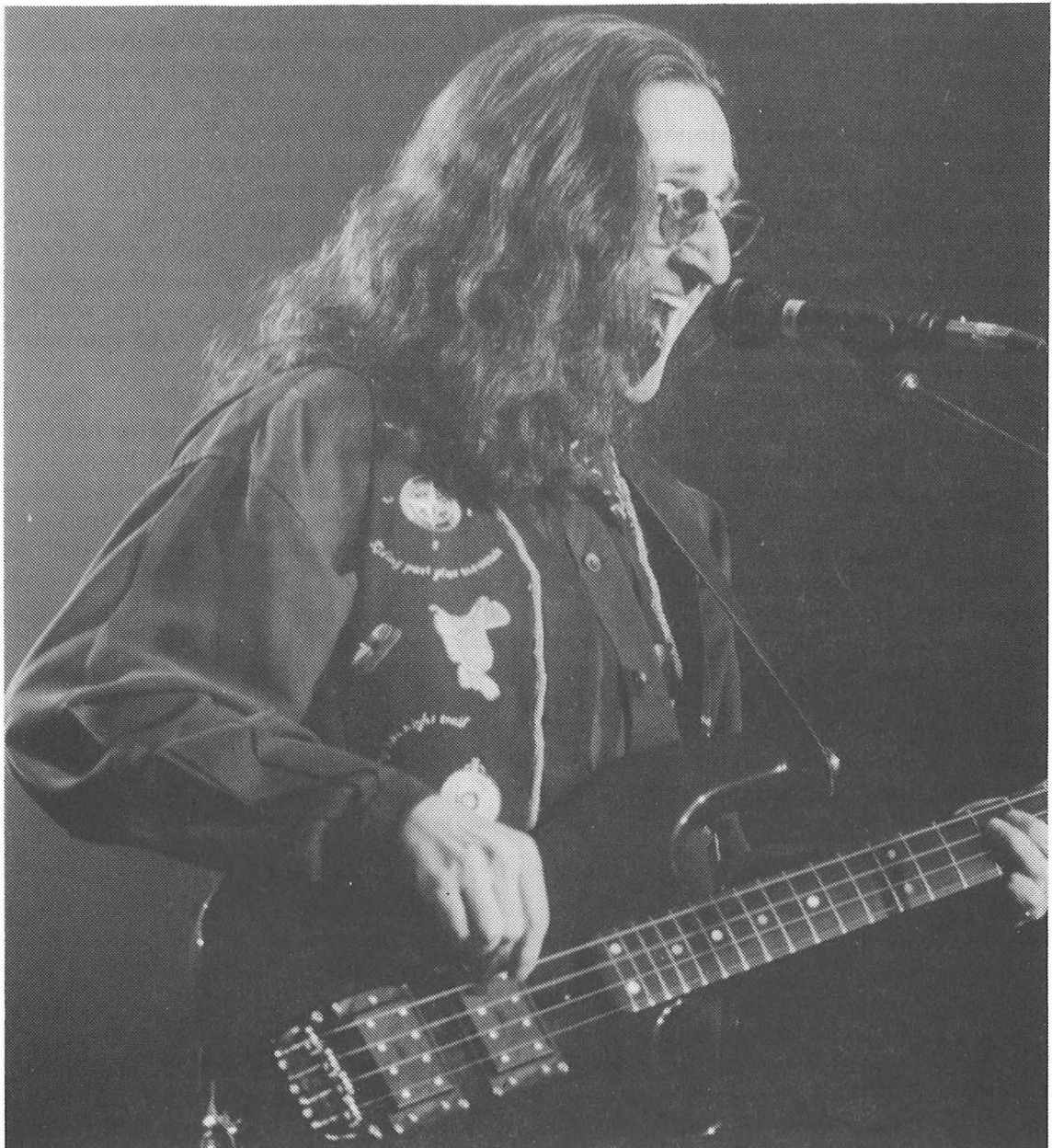
Geddy: Yes, to me it was the best tour we have ever done.

SOR: Why did you stop using the Rickenbacker guitars?

Geddy: I just wanted a change of sound. I have thought about bringing them back once in a while, but I like the Fender basses a lot. I still have all my old Rickenbackers though.

SOR: Are Fender going to put out a Geddy Lee signature edition bass guitar?

Geddy: Yes, I have been working with them to try and reproduce my '72 bass right down to the measurements between pick-ups. They have done a great job and will be releasing a limited edition sometime very soon. I'm not exactly sure when though.



SOR: Looking back, now that it's a couple of years old, how do you feel about Test For Echo'?

Geddy: I'm still pleased with it. For me it's one of our better albums. I like the songwriting a lot and the sound of it is very satisfying. I think it's the best one of the last three or four that we've done.

SOR: How involved were you with the Mercury remastered editions of your albums 'Rush' through 'A Show Of Hands' and are you happy with the finished results that you have heard?

Geddy: We had a lot of input, it was a deal that we came up with between us and them (Mercury). They wanted to put together the greatest hits packages (Retrospectives 1&2) - we agreed to that if they would remaster all the albums beforehand and release them in their original packaging for our fans to listen to them how we would have liked them to.

SOR: They were all released at very attractive prices as well.

Geddy: Yes, they did a great job. They were very co-operative with us. Bob Ludwig re-mastered all of them and I approved all of them once he was done. The people at Polygram (Mercury) were just fantastic in dealing with all of that, they really pulled it off. I think all the remasters series sound great in their new form. We are very happy with them ourselves.

SOR: Why didn't you play any of the songs from 'Presto' on the 'Evening With Rush' tour?

Geddy: We just didn't feel the material on that album matched up, we only have 'X' amount of time to play and with the passage of time I don't think that that material stands up to the other material that we have any more. (PRESTO DEBATE GOES TO MICK!)

SOR: Do you have any plans for a solo record in the near future?

Geddy: Yes, I have been doing some writing with various people here in Toronto. I'm beginning to get a lot more interested in co-writing and producing. I think I'll go in that direction for a little while.

SOR: How involved in the Artists Against Drink Driving campaign were the band?

Geddy: We didn't have a lot to do with it. We were asked for an endorsement and we were happy to give it. None of us I'm sure, like driving on roads if other people are doing it drunk.

SOR: Was it difficult to come up with the final track listing for 'Different Stages'?

Geddy: Yes, it was, there were several songs which we would have liked to have included, some which we unfortunately did not record - others, like for example 'Time And Motion', we had listed on about eight boxes of shows but when I listened to the tapes, it just wasn't there. We never found a single recorded version of it - which I was very upset about. We also could not find any live recordings of 'The Pass' or 'Ghost Of A Chance'. *(The BBC recorded Rush's show at Wembley on 17/4/92 [Roll The Bones tour]. Both these songs would have been recorded back then - in fact 'Ghost Of A Chance' was indeed included in the hour or so of the show which was broadcast by the BBC as part of the Tommy Vance show in the summer of 1992. Perhaps it's the BBC and not Rush who own the copyright to this recording, hence Rush were unable to use it - ED).* I really dug out all the songs we had which I thought really should be on there, my only regret is that some songs were overlooked, but you only have 75 minutes of time for each CD, so some things have to go I'm afraid.

SOR: Will you release a live video of the 'An Evening With Rush' tour in the future?

Geddy: Yes, I am looking at the possibility. I do have several ideas kicking around my head at present regarding the band's visual presentation. I don't think it will be a CD-ROM - I'd like to go beyond that. I'm looking at DVD at the moment, trying to gather as much information about them as I can - current availability, distribution etc. Because for me, that's the next big thing regarding exploration of visuals with the band. At the moment I do not think enough people have the machines in their homes to warrant us putting something out in this medium but I think by next Christmas (1999) the situation may have changed to make it worthwhile.

SOR: Have you looked at any of the live footage that you have in the can?

Geddy: Yes, I've looked at some of it and I'm very happy with what I've seen so far.

SOR: What types of music are you currently listening to yourself?

Geddy: I'm listening to a band called 'Mono', to the new 'Massive Attack' album, 'Ry Cooder' and 'The Cuban All Stars'.... and to a collection called 'Funk and Fusion' which is really great.

SOR: Do you still collect baseball memorabilia?

Geddy: No, I haven't been collecting as much as I used to. I've kind of got enough now (laughs). I'm starting to collect wine at the moment.

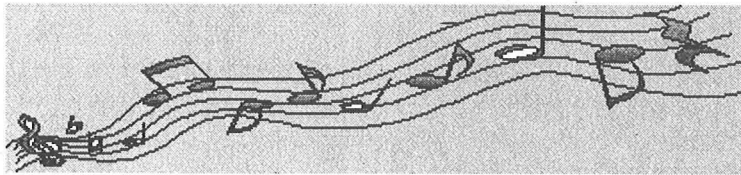
SOR: Do you have a message for the readers of 'Spirit Of Rush'?

Geddy: Well, I'd like to give my regards to all you guys - thanks for sticking with us for all these years. We appreciate the loyalty of our fans and we never take you for granted and I hope one day we can get out on the road again and play for the fans in Europe... which we unfortunately don't pay enough attention to.

SOR: Are you happy with the cover of 'Different Stages'?

Geddy: Yes, I had a lot to do with it. I worked with Hugh Syme and did a lot of organising on it. I sent it over to Alex and he loved it. There's a lot to pore over on there.

Lawrence Gowan



Spirit Of Rush catches up with this unique Canadian singer/songwriter on the first leg of his 'Home Field' tour in the UK

SOR: How did you start in the music business?

LG: Well, I started in Toronto in the late '70s - two or three years after Rush, say about '75 and by that time we were playing the clubs Rush had started in. They were kind of the pinnacle band in Canada at that point and hundreds of bands like us were chasing the trail that they had blazed.

SOR: So you were a band?

LG: Oh yeah! I started with a band and that broke up in 1981. It was actually after that I managed to get a record deal and was recognised more as a solo artist. My first record was in 1982 with Columbia, but the second record wasn't until 1985 when I recorded with Peter Gabriel's band in England. Ascot to be precise.

SOR: Ringo Starr's studio?

LG: Yeah, his home and studio. It was at this period I was managed by the same manager as Rush and I got to meet them at the annual Xmas party. I met Alex and Geddy about '82 or '83 and from then on at the annual bash.

SOR: Neil?

LG: Not until about 1990.

SOR: So '85 would be your real start in music?

LG: Well, the video explosion in '85 gave me a stage where I could compete, as the videos we did were really strong.



Bob, Larry and Ian in Bournemouth

SOR: But your songs are strong - surely they got your songs heard?

LG: Oh, I'm glad you said that. I think one of the reasons I'm still here is because the songs did override or supersede the videos. In fact to this day, even when I play in Canada there are people who say to me "God! that was better than I expected it to be". I get that comment quite a lot from people who have never seen me live before.

SOR: Why?

LG: Well remember, I picked up the video sword in the mid-'80s and used it to my advantage, but often anything connected to video-based bands was quickly dismissed on musical terms by the early '90s. By then, the '80s was looked down on because of video to an extent, you know - who was actually playing, who was miming etc. There was good music then but also good visuals, sometimes both. A lot of '80s music lives on, but most of it has not..... I mean, my best stuff from that period has become enhanced through years of touring.

SOR: You don't play with a band anymore?

LG: Oh I do! I played with my band a couple of months ago. I've been doing these solo piano concerts for about a year though. I was asked to do a solo thing for big folk festivals in Canada. I wasn't too keen as I didn't see myself as a folk artist. However, the year before they had Elvis Costello and that persuaded me.....in fact, a few of the artists involved before, I would not have associated with folk music. The more I did, the more the audience reacted to it. I felt this was a great way to re-invent some of my material in a completely different way. So, basically, you know - I dropped the smoke, the lighting rig, things perhaps people are fed up with and began to just play. As a result, my career has really expanded so much that I feel this is the best way to introduce my music around the countries.

SOR: Your writing melodies are very strong - do you write alone?

LG: Mostly. Some songs are co-written.....Eddie Schwartz and Jim Vallance - who writes with Bryan Adams.

SOR: How about the "Lost Brotherhood" (LB) album?

LG: That's when I started to co-write. I wrote, however, all but two songs - which were co-written.

SOR: How did you feel to have someone like Alex come in and put his stamp on the songs?

LG: It was suggested that I should play some of my songs to Alex and ask him if he wanted to be involved. He immediately said "yeah". You know, Alex is a really approachable guy and he went and did a great job on it. He really focused his energies on it, you know.

SOR: Do you remember which songs he played on?

LG: Yeah, oh yeah. "Lost Brotherhood" itself, "Call It A Mission", "Fire It Up", "Love makes You Believe", "Holding This Rage".....

SOR: That's a great song. Was it written about anything in particular?

LG: About 1984, I went to N. Ireland for the first time. My uncle, who was alive at that time, used great expressions - some of which stuck. He spoke about how much rage there was in his country and I wrote down the words "Holding this rage". After that I was walking down the Falls Road and I thought, you know, 'God, all these great murals that only seem to describe hatred'. You know, it's amazing - all that artistic effort..... into something so negative. The line took hold - "Holding this rage is not the answer".

SOR: Now, we've all got our fingers crossed.

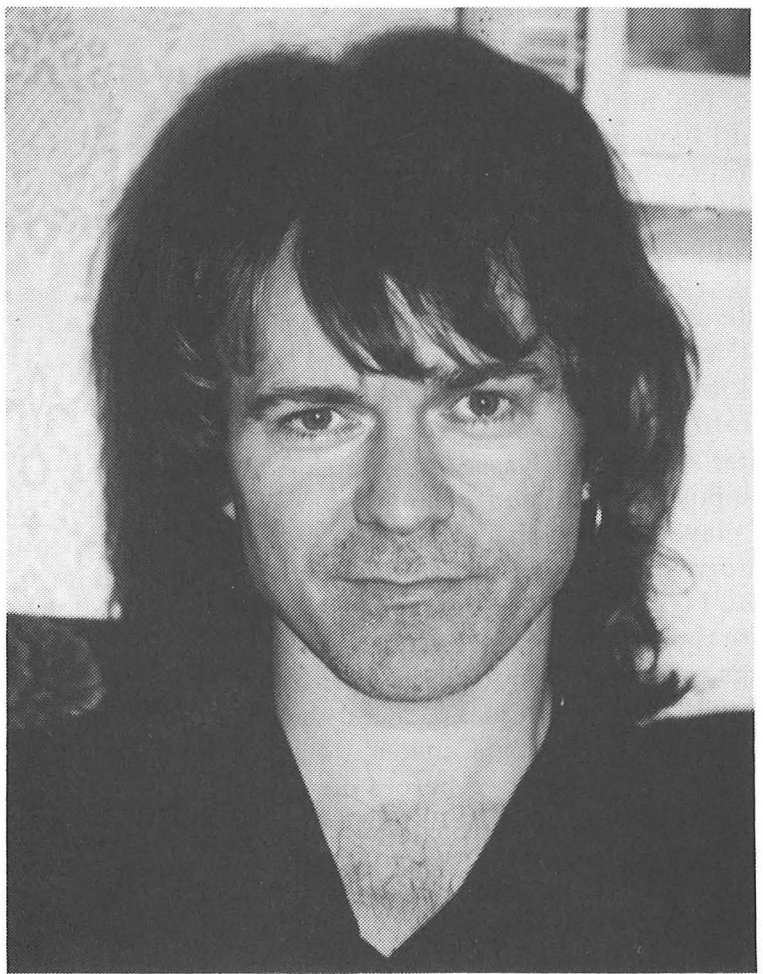
LG: Exactly.

SOR: So, Alex was on quite a lot of songs?

LG: About seven out of the ten on the album.

SOR: How long would that have taken him? Did he do his parts with you?

LG: A couple of weeks. He was very focused....he didn't come in just for a couple of hours. He knew what he wanted to do when he came in. He worked on the songs first in his own studio and then came in and layed the tracks as he heard them and then we would all discuss them and haul them apart. He then spent long days in the studio until he found something he felt was great and we would hopefully feel the same about - mind you, he also spent all the while cracking everyone up!



SOR: Was it easy to get him to do the video?

LG: I think (laughs)..... I had to hound him into it...then he did it happily. I don't know, I've never discussed this with him but I feel this was a hard thing for him to do. I'm guessing here, but I don't think Rush at this point had done any TV or video without all three being there - so perhaps this made the decision to do the video, a difficult one. Seeing how we had the same manager.....

SOR: So you got Ray to push him into it!?

LG: Well, I danced around the question - 'You've played a great guitar solo on the song; it would look stupid if I tried faking my way through it - wouldn't it?' It was a case of 'You're a guitar guy - step out, do your solo...that's it'. Maybe if I'd got him to wear a mask as well he might have been more into it!.....I hope I'm not misrepresenting him here....he was very intense.....he's a pure musician.

SOR: But that's Rush all over, isn't it?

LG: Well, any band that made it in the '70s.....the bands that emerged in that era, did so based on live performances - on musicianship. As I said, the reason people are so down on '80s bands is they achieved success by 'studio enhancing' or what was shown on screen in front of a camera and this leaves question marks over their musicianship. Mind you, I don't regret the video thing. If there is one thing I regret.....and I hate to say this....is that I didn't force the issue to come and play here sooner. I kept waiting for the perfect deal. I should have started from scratch and let the live show and word of mouth turn it into something - I should have done it earlier.

SOR: England/Britain is strong on indie or dance. There is no real rock radio station. Commercially it's hard, even for a band like Rush - there is very little promotion with TV or radio or press. It's great that you've come here - we often have to travel abroad to see bands we like.....

LG: Everything you say to me only spells OPPORTUNITY. You've basically said there is (whispered) 'nothing I really want to hear out there' - but that means there is an audience out there for me. There is an audience sick to death.....some of the the bands doing so well just now are justsorry,.....shit. They just don't have it. They've never even played a gig and their record is platinum. It's been going on for years and it sucks. However, my opportunity (I say it again) is to play to a hundred people a night - or less (laughs).....but I'm in a place so well-contained that word of mouth can work as the vehicle for my music.

SOR: Your reputation will go before you!

LG: That's it!

SOR: Were you involved with Canadian Band Aid?

LG: No, no I wasn't. "Criminal Mind" (the song) had just come out about three weeks before it. I could have gone in but it would, or could, have looked opportunistic at that point. A month or two later may have been OK - I try to be careful about that sort of thing.....not wanting to build my career on it. Kind of like the show at Althorp - I'm honoured to be asked, but I hope to steer a path through it so people don't think 'Oh, his big career moment....'

SOR: Surely not. I mean, you've been touring for about three weeks now. The song "Healing Waters"was apparently written about the same time as Lost Brotherhood, is that correct?

LG: Yeah, On the LB album I was trying to weigh how much orchestral style and how much heavy rock to do. I think heavy rock kind of won out.....I thought I'd go with the heavier at that point. "Healing Waters" was one of my favourite pieces but it didn't feel quite right. Alex played a beautiful guitar solo, but it was Alex who said afterwards that he didn't think the song needed it. It was his fave piece as well and he suggested keeping it orchestral as he felt it was more emotional that way. He played an integral part in the decision to leave it the original way. With all that and the record company not being too keen to put it on.....they said it could blur the album or what I was trying for in '90..... I left it until last year when someone mentioned it to me to try again. Even then it didn't sound quite right. When Princess Diana died, a local radio station phoned and asked if they could use some songs as a dedication to her as some of my songs are quite emotional. It was then I listened to it again and with strings and piano.....and the lyric "healing waters" it seemed so right.

SOR: Was it released in Canada?

LG: Yes, it was released before the funeral - that's a point I feel I have to make. I had no knowledge of events to come..... like Elton singing at the funeral. "Healing" was being played before the funeral and it was so heavily requested, the main radio station in Canada called Sony and told them to release it. They agreed and said it needed pressing right away. By the Monday, the executive of Sony said he felt there was no longer a point because of Elton's song being re-released, but the station said it was still heavily requested. They decided on a limit of 5,000 copies, with all proceeds going to Diana's charities. Then it was decided to put it on greatest hits. After that, I was offered to do the Althorp gig.

SOR: We believe you've recorded with Terry Brown?

LG: Yeah, oh yeah - Rush, of course. Terry was the first producer I approached to do the first album but it never worked out. All my career I've wanted to work with him. He's worked on four new songs with me. They should all be available.

SOR: You did Kumbaya - have you good memories?

LG: Oh yeah, Alex was in that as well. I heard it once on radio. It sounded really good. I only did it the once though.



Gowan November Tour Dates

(supporting the Stranglers)

- 1 - Oxford, ENG - Apollo
- 3 - Warrington, ENG - Parr Hall
- 4 - Nottingham, ENG - Rock City
- 5 - Halifax, ENG - Victoria
- 6 - Scarborough, ENG - Futurist Hall
- 7 - Hanley, ENG - The Royal
- 9 - Bristol, ENG - Colston Hall
- 10 - Guildford, ENG - Civic Hall
- 11 - Northampton, ENG - Derngate
- 13 - York, ENG - Barbican
- 14 - Liverpool, ENG - Philharmonic
- 15 - Blackpool, ENG - The Grand
- 16 - Rhyl, ENG - Pavilion
- 18 - Wolverhampton, ENG - Wulfrun Hall
- 19 - Salisbury, ENG - City Hall
- 20 - Norwich, ENG - UEA
- 21 - London, ENG - Shepherd's Bush Empire



Band/Artist: Gowan

Title of Album: Home Field

Record Label/distributor: Panoramic Music/Cargo Music

Distributed in Great Britain "only" by Panoramic Music Artwork & Design:

Chris Jones for Crusoe Sound & Design

Celtic Logo by: Hugh Syme

Cover Photograph: Patrick A. Nicols

Tour Management: Bob Roper

Stage Management: Ian Gillies

And to all the Young Farmers out there...

"Sometimes the harvest takes a little longer than expected..."



Dream Theater



Once in a LIVEtime thoughts.....

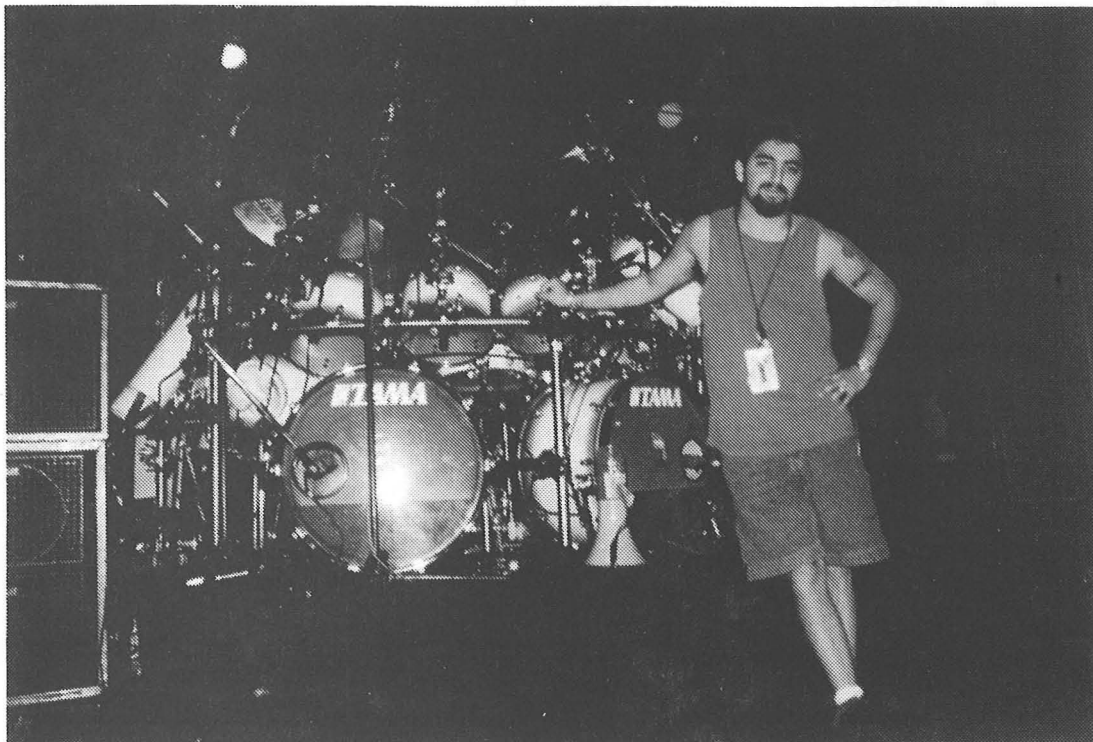
After 6 years of semi-constant touring and 2 live mini-EP's, it seemed the right time in our career for a "proper" live album to represent our musical catalog thus far.

This whole double CD is taken from one show in Paris. This was one of the final headlining shows on the "Touring Into Infinity" tour. In order to capture as much music possible (and also because some of our songs are very LONG), we performed a set that evening that was over 3 and a half hours in length.

A live Dream Theater show is really the only way to understand and experience what this band is all about. Besides getting to see us actually PLAY our instruments (which seems to be the biggest appeal of DT), you become part of a society or a secret club which is exclusive to these fans that are absolute FANATICS!! Our fan base has never been casual. They are hardcore fans that go to dozens of shows on a tour. They know every set list we play. They know every nuance of the music. And it is this interaction with these great fans that can only be fully understood & appreciated by going to a Dream Theater concert.

The songs represented here in this collection cover a spectrum of our 10 year recording career. There is a balance of material from different albums, a balance of "popular" songs and cult favorites, a balance of heavy songs & softer songs, a balance of our very complex songs & our more simple songs. And of course, what Progressive live album would complete without the obligatory self-indulgent solo spots!!!! The arrangements to the songs are almost never the same as the album versions. Some songs are extended and have improvised jams thrown in, some songs are shortened and have been combined to create medleys, some songs have bits & pieces of cover tunes thrown in.....It's this variety and these embellishments that I think make our live show, and this album, exciting to listen to everytime.

Enjoy! Mike Portnoy



£10.00. this means that the cost of a single issue will now rise to £3.00 per copy. As you can see, it makes more sense than ever now to subscribe to the mag rather than buy it on a single issue basis. If you have a reminder to subscribe with this issue please act ASAP.

Dream Theater's new double live set 'Once In A Livetime' is in the shops now, along with the longform video of the same name. Kevin Shirley (his interview will be in our next issue... promise!) has done a sterling job on the production. It really is worth you checking it out at your earliest convenience.

I really must thank the following people for all their help at the Convention and for their continuing support and assistance in putting 'The Spirit of Rush' together. Without these fine people we would not be in our 11th year of publishing, with many more to come I'm sure. Raise your glasses and give thanks to - Janet Balmer, Tom (mad one) Cornell, Andy Faulkner, Andrew Field, Sister Sue, Malcolm and Cheryl, Kira, Mick and Chris, Simon Fraser-Clark and band, Rob Hunter, Chris Loydall, Rob Last, Paul Hands and band, Mary Hooton at Atlantic Records, Ray Bispham, Matt Goodluck, Stevie McNally, Miles Salter, Neil Elliot, Ed Scott at East/West (thanks for everything mate), Matt and Kim Honey of Hard Roxx, Paul Hollingshead at Blueprint Printers, Ray

Wawnyzniak, Monica Davidson, Dave Orenchuk, Anna at Anthem. If I missed your name I'm sorry.

Tiles guitarist Chris Herin and bassist Jeff Whittle are shown below with Terry Brown (Rush, Fates Warning, Cutting Crew) at Town Music Studios in Toronto, Canada. Brown mixed Tiles' upcoming third album "Presents of Mind", which is scheduled for a November release in Europe on the InsideOut/SPV label. Early 1999 release dates are pending for Japan and North America.

"Presents of Mind" will feature the artwork and graphics of Hugh Syme - renowned for his work with Rush, Megadeth, Queensryche, Aerosmith, Fates Warning and many others.

Regards,

Mick

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