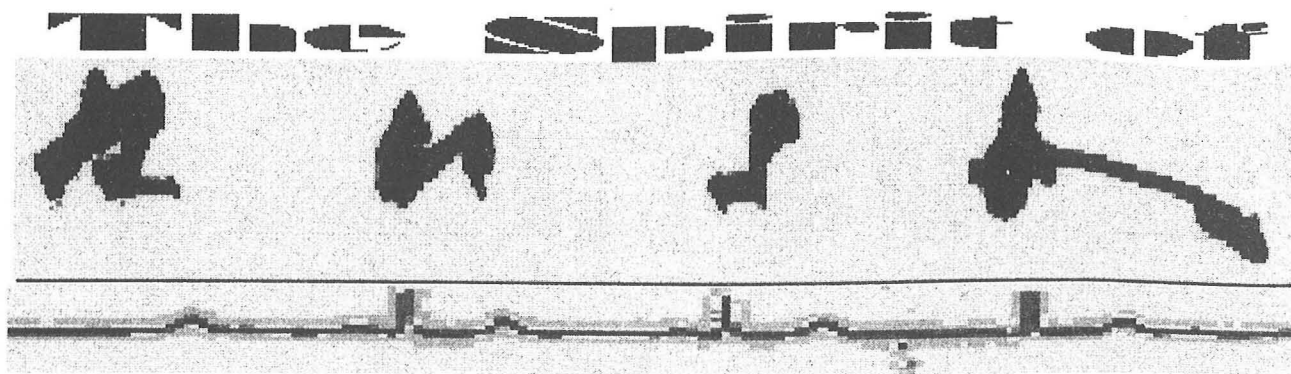


The Spirit of Rush

46



E d i t o r i a l

Hello and welcome to the first new 'Spirit' of '99. We hope you had a good Christmas and that you will have a good new year. You all seemed to enjoy our last issue very much if your letters were anything to go by, thanks for taking the time to write in. We could still do with more of your thoughts regarding 'Different Stages' though, they were a little thin on the ground.

This issue sees (at last) the publication of our Kevin Shirley interview, we hope you enjoy it as much as Janet and I did when we were talking to him. We also have the first part of our reader's poll results (bet you thought we'd forgotten). I'm sure you will agree it makes fascinating reading. Thanks to the 'Mad Jock' for all his work on the poll and to Ray for coming up with the questionnaire.

As mentioned in our last issue this year's Convention will take place at the Limelight Club in Crewe on Saturday 31st July. We shall begin at 1pm on the day and go all the way through until 11pm. All day for the paltry sum of only £10.00 per ticket. That's only a pound an hour (more than I earn in my day job) for an amazing Rush day out - cheaper than all previous Conventions. For your money this year you get two bands instead of one, the giant video screen (in the dark at last - no more annoying sunlight when you're trying to see the screen), the stalls, the bar, the food, etc. Everything you

know and love, in brand new surroundings. The Limelight also boasts pool tables, video games machines, 100 rock CDs on its jukebox (just in case you need a Rush break - God forbid!) It's on three levels and to top it all off Crewe is easier for our Scottish chums to get to, so stand by for a Jock invasion. (But seriously folks) you all seemed to want it moved and I feel it's fairer to all making it more central in the country for travel etc. Tickets are available now for only £10.00 each. Please also include the usual STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE for us to return your tickets to you in. Please use the ORDER FORM enclosed with this issue - it makes our lives a lot easier. After you have had your fill of Rush on the day you can slip over the road to the 2112 Club (is the owner of these two places a Rush fan or what?) - 11pm to 2am for a nominal charge and boogie on down to more classic rock, a fitting end to a great day out!

We shall, of course, be bringing you more details in our next issue - travel information, lists of places to stay etc. We are limited this year to 400 tickets only (fire reg's etc.) so it's first come first served. I do not think we will have any tickets for sale on the day, so be warned, send for your tickets right away.

One item we forgot to mention last issue was the great generosity of Ray Penell who, at last September's Convention gave back the

Signals

To all at SOR and fellow Rushfans,
I've been reading your mag for the last few years and have felt the urge to write in on only a couple of occasions up to now. Listening to Different Stages this week - an American copy courtesy of Adrians Records in Wickford - confirmed how much Rush and their own brand of music has meant to me down the years.

Doubtless like some of you out there in 'Rushland' I was fortunate to have been at Hammersmith for that night on the 'Kings' tour, so I just had to play that CD first to wallow in the nostalgia and re-awaken memories of that night so long ago. For me that was when Rush broke through -- the power and raw edge to their shows from the previous ATWAS tour was still evident, but there were signs of things to come with the subtlety of Xanadu and Closer to the Heart. The memories of that night long buried in the recesses of my mind came flooding back --- the anticipation in the days leading up to the gig, the drive up to Hammersmith with my best mate (in a knackered VW Beetle), buying the T Shirt (£5ish) and programme (£2ish), getting to our seats (front stalls), sitting through the support act (The Tyla Gang) then after what seemed an eternity the lights go down and flash bombs, lights, smoke, long hair, kaftans and twirly moustaches! Ok, so I like the extra CD, I like it a lot and it is an absolute gem of a recording.

As for the rest of the package, it sounds like a live album should..... live ! You know what I mean - some live recordings are anything but after the tapes have been through the studio -- Exit Stage Left, Seconds Out, Unleashed in the East, anyone? -- whereas this sounds relatively un-tampered with, so a sense of atmosphere is retained together with the odd mistake and bum note -- see they are human after all !!!

I'll leave a song by song description to others, but it's the best live album of the four released so far and I can't finish without summing up the

Signals

highlight '2112' in just two words --- Simply Awesome. Get the CD if only for that.

The visual gags throughout the packaging are a blast and the enhanced portion of the first CD crashed my PC so I don't know if it's any good !

As ever, keep up the good work

J SRIVALSAN
(E-MAIL)

Dear Mick,

I just got the latest SOR and I am eagerly awaiting a copy of Different Stages which is on order.

Main reason for dropping a note is to enclose a cheque for £100 to help towards the postage bill the bu**ers from Anthem have stung you with. As if it's not hard enough getting info on Rush from the UK they play a mean trick like that. Despicable. I don't know how much others will be able to chip in - or whether you will get stuck with further charges if you don't pay within a certain time. If you do get funds from others and there is any excess please put it into the "pot" for the next edition of SOR.

Please pay the cheque in quickly and put it to good use. Having just secured a new job and a pay increase I am only too happy to help on this occasion. Keep up the good work and keep the information flowing out to us poor folk who are not on the Web!

All the best.

DAWN COPE
POOLE

Dear Mick,

Haven't been able to track down Different Stages yet as according to various outlets the release had gone back from the 10th to the 16th to the 23rd November. Anyway thanks for another great issue.

DUNCAN
COLLINS
BEDFONT, MIDDLESEX

Mick,

Received the new issue yesterday & read your note about Anthem's postal charges. Outrageous! You would think with the amount of money they make from Rush they could swallow a mere \$325! They must surely realise that Spirit of Rush isn't exactly a huge profit making organisation, just something run by fans for fans. It's not like they've been funding huge European tours by the band and need to make ends meet! On a lighter note, I enjoyed the interview with Larry Gowan - didn't realise he was still around - I lost track after the third album. On the subject of Rush related people, how about trying to get an interview with Kim Mitchell? I'm sure there's still plenty of people interested as he's been very quiet for the last 3 years or so.

MARK HURLEY
(E-MAIL)

Dear Mick,

Thankyou for the latest issue of "Spirit" which I received today.

Please find enclosed a small contribution towards the extortionate freight bill Anthem decided to send you. As you and your editorial team do more to promote Rush in the UK than

any of their record companies has done here for many a year, I am surprised they are not paying you! - and what's more I learned at the weekend that the new album release date has been put back to next Monday for the UK - something that rarely happens with their albums over here!!! (I THINK NOT).

A big thanks to you and all those who organised another great Convention this year -any chance of re-thinking the date for next year as I think it clashes with one of my friend's weddings!!
[Forget the wedding pal - ED]

Thanks also for sorting out the video conversion, some of the footage is quite good, but a lot of the Orbit Room footage is sadly very dark.

As I have jsut gained access to the Internet I was very pleased to read you are setting up a website - I shall look forward to viewing it soon. Cheers for now.

KEITH NIXON
MITCHAM, SURREY

Dear Mick,

I've just received Iss. No. 45 and seen the insert re. the shipping charges. How you keep yourself motivated to produce 'Spirit' when met with this sort of attitude is beyond me, but I and many others are very grateful that you do.



One would imagine that Anthem would be appreciative of the fact that someone is trying to keep the Rush flame burning in the UK, but obviously not. Although the prizes sent each year have been excellent (I very much enjoyed the 'Work In Progress' videos that I won this year) the fact that such a large and profitable organization sees fit to invoice you with this bill suggests a total lack of appreciation with regard to the work done by all the team at 'Spirit'.

I have not seen Rush live since 'Bones' in 1992. I desperately wanted to see them in the States, but my finances simply would not allow it. However, a change of career has altered the situation drastically and for this reason I'm delighted to donate the enclosed sum towards the aforementioned bill.

I'm also very proud to be able to help as I have grown up with the music of Rush from an early age. Now, at the ripe old age of 31, Rush still provide me with pleasure and inspiration and I hope they always will.

Sorry for rambling on, but I wanted to express my love for the band and my gratitude and admiration for yourself and everyone involved in 'Spirit'.

Please remember Mick, that for the people who care about this band, your magazine represents the only source of information on Rush. Long may you continue and prosper. Best wishes.

**RICHARD GREEN
WARSOP, MANSFIELD**

Dear Mick

Enclosed is my subscription fee for the new season plus an additional few pennies towards the cost of the postage that was billed to you from those 'wonderful people' at Anthem Records.

I know it must be extremely difficult for you to contain your anger at this outrageous charge, as without the help of people like Anthem Records your job would be nigh-on impossible!!! So please let me be angry for you. It really does amaze me at the audacity of some companies who would more than likely sell their own grandmothers up the creek to get what they want. Here you are spending your free time promoting their band and doing your best to spread the good name of 'Rush' by holding

events like the Rush Convention which might (and it's a big might) get a mention in the local press or the music rags, making people aware who would not normally have heard of Rush (yes, there are still some poor souls) thus making them familiar with the NAME. A job that some record exec. at Anthem is probably paid a 'king's ransom' to do without having to leave their nice cosy office!!!! Your reward though Mick for doing the same job only 100 times better than any Anthem record exec. **is a bill for over \$300.....(?)**. Let's hope that none of us are on their Christmas card list.

I loved the new style of the fanzine, the glossy cover really adds something to it, and the exclusive interviews with Alex and Geddy were great. My one concern, however, is Geddy rating 'T4E' as their best to date as another album along the same format would really test my fan-following. Please guys, add a little bit of that progressive influence that has definitely gone AWOL over the last few albums which made you so unique. More songs like 'Marathon', 'Losing It', 'Mission', 'Ghost of a Chance' and even 'Alien Shore' where the music isn't all at the same level, as it most definitely is (to me anyway) on T4E. The good thing about a Rush song was the way they USED to let it 'breathe', taking us on a journey that mixed **both** melodic and heavy sounds rather than the 'in your face' material of today!

As I write, 'Different Stages' is not available? But then again Chingford isn't exactly the World's centre for music, so I'll have to head West... (...End, that is) to obtain it.

Once again, keep up the great work, it is very much appreciated by all of us. Sincerely,

**PAUL BLUETT
CHINGFORD**

Dear Mick,

Please find enclosed my subscription renewal plus a bit extra towards the Anthem invoice (a scandal - do the band know about this I wonder?).

Me and fellow subscriber Rich Green did say 'thanks' to you at the end of the Convention after the Tom Sawyer encore but you seemed too pissed to hold a conversation - then again weren't we all.

Just a quick point I'd like to make in response to Allan Monument's letter in 'Signals'. I too would love to see 7/8 dates at major venues but I think Allan is kidding himself a bit. I certainly don't think so many shows would 'sell out at any price'!!!

As you know only too well Mick, it was hard enough drumming up support from hardcore fans to get the Convention to go ahead let alone fill the likes of the NEC, Sheffield Arena, Wembley Arena etc. 7/8 times. I'm afraid that the response when Rush are mentioned now from most people I speak to is 'who?' or 'I didn't know they were still going'.

Alex states that he wouldn't want to short change us by scaling down the show but realistically it would surely not be viable to bring the whole show to Europe and play maybe 3 or 4 shows in the UK (surely the maximum number they could sell enough tickets for). But as far as short changing goes, something would be better than nothing and a number of dates at smaller 'hall' type venues would, I'm sure, sell out no problem - video screens or no video screens. They didn't have video screens in the '70s. It was just about music so why should it be different now?

I'm blabbing on now and have drifted from the point but yes, we are all desperate to see Rush here again. But deep down are we convinced it will happen?

And as far as the record company goes, without more exposure perhaps 'The Limelight Club' at Crewe might be more suitable than a major venue. Any more thoughts on this?

Thanks again Mick and keep up the great work.

**ANDY MILES
MANSFIELD**

Dear Spirit,

I'm hoping that you'll be able to help me make sense of a "flashback" I had recently. It concerns a magazine that was around in, probably, the late seventies called, I think, "Rock On". I seem to remember that in one edition they had an action picture of Geddy in jeans and a denim jacket and in another issue an article; the only thing I can remember about it is something about the band racing remote control cars before their North American stadium gigs!

Does anyone else remember this magazine?

**PETER ROBINSON
(E-MAIL)**

Dear Mick,

As you can read in the poll, I choose the first songs (from Rush to Exit Stage Left) as my favourite songs but it is from Signals to Test For Echo my favourite Rush era or albums. This can sound strange but I think that the first half is "fresher" even though the second half is full of quality and "knowledge" (also with genial songs).

As producers and mixers I chose Chris Andrews and Kevin Chows and Terry Brown because in the song "Fence The Clear" (Tiles) the sound is superb. In my opinion, this band (Tiles) is "the most Rush" at the moment.

I also think it's very positive and interesting all the mentions about Dream Theater (in all the last issues of SOR) but even if I'm also a fan of them I would like to hear about another groups or bands: Tiles, Shadow Gallery, Symphony X, Black Symphony, Magnitude 9, Magellan - from USA, World of Silence (Swedish), Superior (Germany), Lemur Voice (Netherlands), DGM (Italy) and so on, which are as good as Dream Theater and also followers of Rush with a lot of good songs full of quality and personality.

Finally, there is something I would like to mention in the next issue of SOR. In the Basque country, where every day Rush is more and more famous, there are bands as "Etsaiak" whose lead guitar (an absolute fan of Rush) has a tattoo (the same logo - a star- appeared in 2112) in the shoulder. This band has sold more than 50,000 CDs and every time he (the lead guitar) is asked about the tattoo he talks about Rush and I really think this is a good promotion for the Canadian band.

He has already talked about Rush in radio and paper interviews - I hope next time would be on TV.

I am sure that you guys had a really good time in the Convention (Leicester) but it is impossible for me going at the moment (for my job and also my spoken English). If one day convince someone to go with me I will meet everybody in there.

**PEIO IBARLOZA
ONDARROA, ELISKADI (Basque Country)**

Dear Mick and Co,

Firstly, many thanks for a superb publication and I have enclosed my cheque for my next 4 issues. I have added £2 to help pay that cheeky invoice from Anthem.

I have just purchased 'Different Stages' and at the time of writing, I have only played all 3 CDs once. Except the tracks 'Driven' - played several times; Geddy's bass playing is fantastic, and 'Spirit' - played umpteen times to help fine tune my guitar playing. Does anyone do backing music? Please help.

N.B. Different Stages was very difficult to find - quite a few shops did not stock it!

Finally, I have just managed to talk my wife into going to the next Convention for the first time (first time for both of us). Unfortunately I see you have moved it further North. Is there anyone from Poole/Bournemouth going so we can share travelling costs etc?

Yours sincerely,

**TREVOR GREEN
POOLE**

Dear Mick,

I am sure that you will receive many detailed reviews of the new live album so I will spare you yet another. What may be of interest however is the whole set list for the Hammersmith Odeon gig in 1978. Many of the younger readers may not appreciate what has been left off the CD because of space or duplication, but luckily I kept a note of the songs that were played on the same tour at the Birmingham Odeon.

* Bastille Day

* Lakeside Park

* By-Tor and the Snow Dog

* Xanadu

* A Farewell to Kings

* Something for Nothing

* Anthem

* Closer to the Heart

* Cygnus X-1

* 2112

* Encore 1 - Working Man/Fly by Night/In the Mood

* Encore 2 - Cinderella Man

The only difference between this and the CD (apart from Lakeside Park, Closer to the Heart

and 2112) is the changed order of Cygnus X-1 and Anthem.

Best wishes,

**MIKE ROWBERRY
LUTON**

Dear Mick,

Please find enclosed a cheque for £10 to put towards the Anthem bill. This is in recognition of the hard work you do to keep SOR and the Convention going. I had a great time at this year's Convention and it made up for the damage sustained to my car on the way up the M1, when a foreign coach (not Arsene Wenger, but my view of the driver sounds very similar) tried to change lanes with me alongside it.

Anthem/Warner Entertainment are not in my good books this week as witnessed by a conversation I had yesterday lunch time.

Setting: Largest record store in Oxford Street, London.

Me (hopefully): Do you have the new Rush album? It's released today.

Salesperson: Do you know what it's called?

Me: Different Stages

Salesperson: Let me see (checks Rush inventory on computer). No, we have ordered 2 (splutter????!!) but they haven't come in yet, they might be in tomorrow, they might be in next week. It's a 3 box set and Warner aren't promoting it at all.

It's not easy being a Rush fan in the UK. It's bad enough having the release date 6 days behind America, but to have further delays is unbearable. The only compensation was having the current SOR arrive through the letterbox this morning. The interviews with Alex and Geddy threw some really interesting light on the choice of tracks for DS and the lack of UK tours. My only complaint is that I had to stop what I was doing and virtually read it from cover to cover.

**CHRIS HUNT
OLD WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE**

Hello Mick,

Thanks for #45 S.O.R. It seems the live CD has been put back 'til Monday week for us poor record buyers.... though I'd buy an import (if I could get one) to hear it! They've been sold out too!

Well, I think that's all. Look forward to hearing from you, hope the band do carry on. I may not be as fanatical as I once was, but Rush was a big part of my youth and is still a big influence musically to me now. They never stand still. Best wishes,

STEVE LOFKIN
FARNBOROUGH, HANTS

Different Stages

How things have changed. For the first time since Hold Your Fire I FORGOT to buy a new Rush album on the day of release. Put it down to having a new baby, being busy at work, getting old. Or maybe it's just not as important to be there on the first day as it was ten years ago.

A big hand to Rush for bringing in a triple album for under £20. Compare, if you will the price of Different Stages with the Beatles "Red" and "Blue" double albums (£30 each when I last looked). So much music for such a small amount of money – for once I don't feel as if I'm being ripped off.

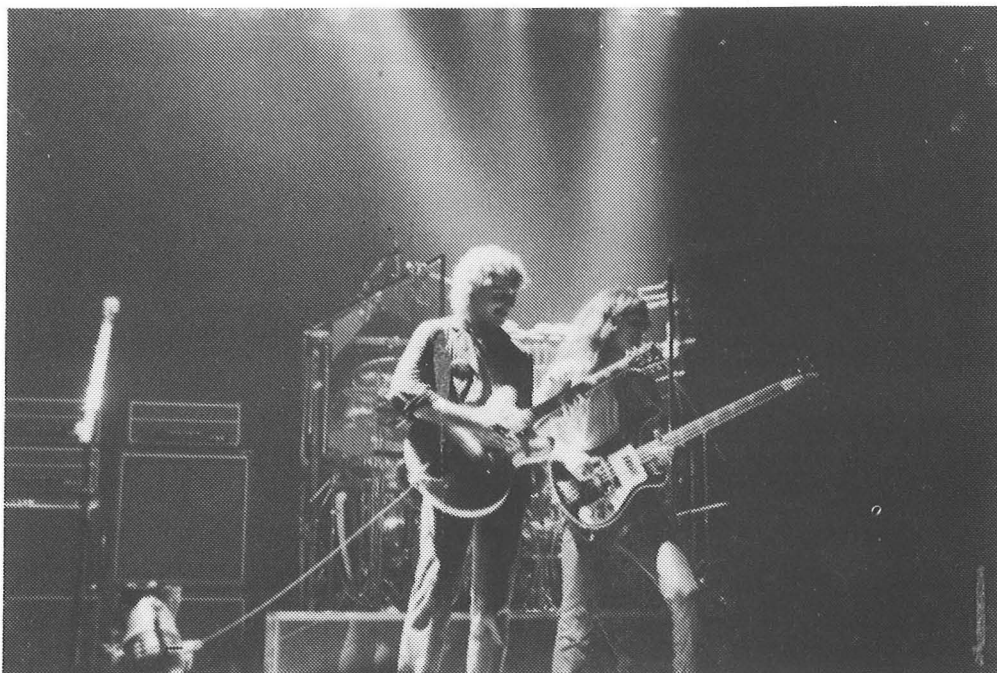
Nice enough sleeve, although Alex and Geddy's interviews in the last issue led me to believe we'd be getting a work of art. I did giggle at the Hammersmith sleeve though – the irony of Geddy as a tout was particularly chucklesome.

Sonically it's certainly a live album, and a good representation of what I saw in Canada last year. I wish I could say I was at the Hammersmith show in '78, but at 7 years old I was more worried about the new ELO album.

I'm sure loads of other people will review the music more articulately than I could. Suffice to say, on this album I think Alex proves just how cool a guitarist he was, is, and ever shall be.

What I would like to comment on is the air of finality this album has about it. Look at the evidence – it's a special package for the fans, it nicely rounds things up, it documents the trio's most successful and enjoyable tour (always nice to go out on top). Reading into what Alex and Geddy said last issue – Neil is obviously still shaken by the events of the last year, his future and that of the band remains uncertain.

Perhaps now is the time for Rush to call it a day. Go out with an astonishing live document of a fine set of shows. Finish it while the album sales (in the US anyway) are still good; and before the band's reputation in the UK is further harmed by a disinterested record company. Stop now before the band find themselves having to play smaller venues. As fans we would have a lot to look forward to – Neil's books, Victor on tour, that elusive Geddy Lee trip-hop album! Perhaps Mercury/ Vertigo/Phonogram would finally be



allowed to put out an "extras" CD - Battlescar, Great White North, You Can't Fight It...

I can't bring myself to wish for that to happen. I've only been into the band for 12 years, but each new album has accompanied a different time in my life. To finally have no more new Rush albums to look forward to would be tough to deal with. The time will come, but let it not be now.

Instead let this live feast be what we all want - the end of stage four. Let stage five be new, fresh, exciting, vital - and let it be accompanied by some UK shows.

Until then - you really should hear the new Kings'X album "Tapehead". It rocks.

THE ANALOG KID

Dear SOR,

This is not so much a letter, as a jumble of thoughts. Silversun are in my opinion a very good band, covering Xanadu is a gateway for a new generation of fans to discover Rush.

Classic Rock is a good magazine, which fills in all the gaps left by Kerrang! and Metal Hammer, both of which I read and enjoy.

I like Presto, it has given me many hours of pleasure. I am an avid music listener, with many albums and my tastes cover many bands including: Korn, Boo Yah Tribe, Juan Luis Guerra, Marilyn Manson, Symposium, RATM etc. I first became a fan of Rush in 1980, and through the diversity of their music and lyrics I was inspired to discover a wider range of music.

It doesn't matter whether a band's music is new or established, ground-breaking or progressive, energetic or technically brilliant, as long as it touches your emotions, then it has achieved its goal. MUSIC IS GOOD!

FINALLY. I must thank Rush for provoking much thought and giving me much pleasure over the years.

Yours faithfully.

ROGER BURLONG

BURGESS HILL, WEST SUSSEX

P.S. Rush got a 4 K review in Kerrang! and a ten out of ten in Metal Hammer for Different Stages.

DIFFERENT STAGES REVIEW

Due to Neil's tragic losses over the last year, Rush have kept up the tradition of a live album

after every 4 studio albums, giving them time to decide if there is still a future for the band. What is different about this album compared to previous live albums is, it is just about the perfect live Rush package.

The three CDs culled from tours 20 years apart show the development of one of rock's greatest acts. The 1978 gig from the 'Kings' tour includes great moments like 'A Farewell to Kings', 'Cinderella Man' and above all, 'Xanadu'. It captures the band at a different phase in their career, a band playing complex material with youthful energy, probably knowing this was an important stepping stone in their history as they tried to chart new horizons. However, it is the first two CDs from the last two tours which make this such a great package. Like a good wine they have matured, producing classic rock music captured wonderfully here.

The sound quality has to be admired, as Rush rock in the face of their recent return to guitar driven music. Old favourites such as '2112', 'The Trees', 'Freewill' and 'The Spirit of Radio' are given a fresher more vibrant feel than past recorded live versions, while the recent material aired shows the quality of these releases with tracks like 'Dreamline', 'Driven', 'Bravado', 'Animate' and 'Resist' joining the Rush classics list.

Couple this with the emergence of 'Limelight', 'Analog Kid' and above all, 'Natural Science' and you have the complete Rush live package. My message to those, who have for whatever reason, waned in their support for the band is to get this album, as you will be blown away by the quality of the material and above all, the performances. Some may moan about the presence of tracks from previous live albums at the expense of recent material, but listening to the album it is hard to imagine the package without these older tracks, as it allows the listener an overview of the band's musical output over 3 decades, something the 3 previous live albums did not.

Finally, reading between the lines of recent interviews, it would appear that there is a future for the band. If that is the case, then the next aim for the band has to be to get that dynamic live feel onto a studio album and finally produce a studio album to lay the 'Moving Pictures' ghost to rest. However, if they do call it a day then

'Different Stages' is a fitting final tribute to the legacy of Rush.

Cheers, all the best for '99.

NAVEEN RATTI
STUDLEY, WARKS

Dear All at SOR,

Renewing my subscription to this great magazine, I've decided to write to you for the first time. My aim was to write you a powerful, defiant and funny letter, but once again technology played some dirty tricks on me (just another case of sorry-dear-but-I've-deleted-something-you-wrote). However, after having showed to my computer who is the master here, now I can send you my message.

As a year has passed since these nice pages had come to me, I want to make some suggestions. So before you throw me to the nearest snakepit, as such is my boldness, please let me entertain you with a few of my humble ideas.

First of all, what about having a brief review of Rush bootlegs? Maybe some of you would like to interchange your opinions of a certain concert you all have heard for a thousand times, or on new bootlegs which may appear at the time. Your judgements may help people like, well, me to know which ones are worthy of my money.

This question of reviewing things could also be applied to that *Mystic Rhythms: The Philosophical Vision of Rush*. A short review of the book in comparison with the contents of those books about Rush we all know by heart sounds pretty good to me. Does any of you would like to write a few lines on it? [How about it anyone? - ED]

Secondly, what do you think about an interview with Rush cover bands? Personally, I would find it more interesting than having news of Dream Theater again and again (I know it means a kind of sacrilege for most of you, but have you ever stopped and think about that quite small number of Rush fans who don't like Dream Theater? Sure you haven't.) And what about bands doing covers of Rush on their records? Apart from 'Silversun', I have been told of a band named 'Shoggoth' (these spellings are killing me) playing '2112' on their last record. Could any of you check it out? Thanks a lot.

Well, that's enough moaning for me. I hope the headaches I have caused you be smaller than the

darn hollow in the ozone layer. But they will be nothing compared to my envy for those of you who went to the Convention (hope you had a good time there, mates).

Yours sincerely,

EVA GARCIA
SPAIN

Dear Mick,

Please find enclosed a small donation towards the cost of giving Rush and therefore Anthem Records free publicity! Just remember STAY CALM!

I'm quite impressed with Silver Sun's version of Xanadu, after all, a straight cover would be boring. As much as I like the Rush tribute CD it might have been better with a bit of experimentation rather than straight copies. I've recently shelled out on the soundtrack to the film "Small Soldiers" just to hear the "Tom Sawyer" re-mix. I love it, even though I hate most rap and hip-hop.

I recently had to cancel a weekend away due to my wife going into hospital - I spent the money I saved on the Re-masters! Very impressive, except "Caress of Steel" - you need a bloody microscope to read the lyrics!

I must recommend Dream Theater's "Once In A Livetime" as anyone who saw them on tour last April will know, they are excellent live and even included a snippet of YYY in their set. Sadly, this isn't on "Once" but the intro' to "Trial of Tears" bears an uncanny resemblance to "Xanadu" [The intention was deliberate on DT's part pal! -ED]

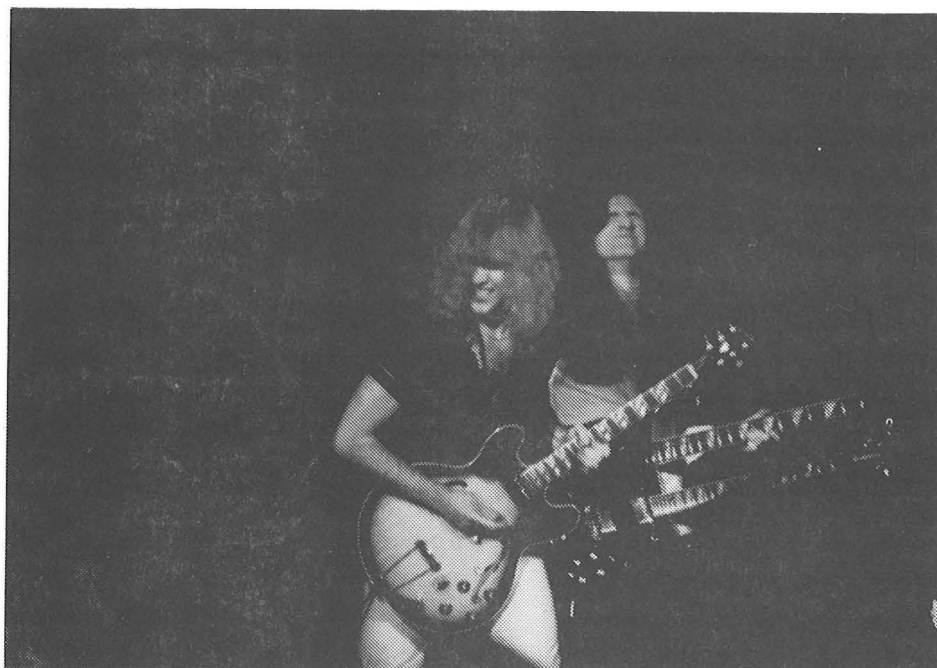
I'll try to get to the Convention in '99, but if I can't, how about selling raffle tickets to those who can't attend? This could raise extra funds and maybe offset Anthem's postal charges!! I'm sure anyone who won a prize would pay the cost of sending their prize to them. [Good idea - we'll do it - ED].

Keep up the good work. Yours,

BILL COLLINS
WILLENHALL, W. MIDLANDS

Dear Mick,

Well after four studio albums it was inevitable a live album was next. The first thing that strikes



me was the absence of the excellent 2001 intro which is virtually drowned out by the crowd noises plus the shortened intro to the T4E second set.

Anyway, all the songs sound great, which is what you would expect from any official live CD but in the first 2 sets the crowd reaction to the songs is exactly the same and Geddy's lack of communication with the fans is like ASOH - sparse. The audience reaction in the London gig sounds much more genuine, this CD sounds just like an excellent quality bootleg CD.

The song selection is generally good as we get spoilt with live versions of classics like Limelight, Analog Kid, Oracle, AFTK, Cygnus X-1 and the underrated Natural Science. But I think only 3 from the T4E songs played on the tour is an error. To omit Virtuality for CTTH again was criminal. I would also have liked Cold Fire or Double Agent instead of The Trees. A song from the mid-80s instead of The Rhythm Method may have evened the balance of songs out a bit better. I know drum solos are important to a Rush gig but they do get a bit boring for us non-drummers and I usually skip this part of any live recordings.

The only gripe I have is set 3 is I think I would have liked a Hemispheres show as this one is possibly a bit too close to the ATWAS live album.

To hear Cygnus - Hemispheres in full would have been great.

So, to round up, we have 3 great CDs to play which have superb packaging for less than £20. For 1999 I would love to see a double or even 2 single videos of the entire Toronto show they filmed at the Molson Amphitheatre. Then let's all hope for another studio album reaches us before the Grand Finale.

**BRIAN SWALES
THORNLEY, CO. DURHAM**

Hi,

Another great issue of SOR, which has encouraged me to re-subscribe. In response to your plea (and in honour of SOR's highest chart placing) I am sending £13 this time.

So, the album. Shit hot. Beats my well used T4E bootleg hands down. It appears to have not been retouched (unlike E...SL), and features many more tracks than ASOH i.e. this is a real fans package and they seem to have realised that only the diehards are likely to buy a Rush live album so they might as well make it a collector's item - although I do wish they had used the complete 1978 show even though certain material would have been duplicated e.g. 2112 and the drum solo, as the comparisons would have been fascinating. But never mind, back to the bootlegs eh?

As to the actual performances on the album, half of it is excellent, the rest is brilliant. Alex is on top form, Geddy covers all the bases (ouch!) with aplomb and Neil has rarely sounded this good. The sheer depth of the sound will be upsetting my neighbours for months, as at top volume the physicality of the playing really hits home.

It really looks as if Rush may not continue due to Neil's sad losses. This would be a pity, but Neil's needs must take precedence over the band at this moment, although he undoubtedly knows that these are probably the closest friends he has and if they can't help him then nobody can. Those of us touched by his music will always be here for him as well and I hope the messages of support from around the world have shown him that he is not alone. If nothing else, he should remember the words to "Tears" and know that some of us also have 'eyes that know why'. If this is the end, they have graced us with a superb full stop and shown that they can still play the hell out of their material. I wish I'd seen it.

**N ROBINSON
DENTON, MANCHESTER**

P.S. The live version of 'Leave That Thing Alone' is utterly superb and cries out for a good going over from a dance/trance remixer. Has anyone at Anthem thought about this? In fact has anyone done this anyway and are there any tracks out using Rush samples, and if so, where can I get them? [*Only the 'Tom Sawyer' one from the 'Small Soldiers' soundtrack as previously mentioned - ED*]

Dear Spirit of Rush,

Hi everybody! Just thought I'd drop a line to say how much I love your fanzine, with its informative articles and great photos. I hear there is a symphonic rock album featuring the music of Rush due to come out - probably in March. I look forward to buying it.

Your fanzine is great - keep up the good work! Best wishes for 1999! Thanks and bye!

Sincerely,

**LISA BOEHM
USA**

SOR,

A quick word. Recently I wore my underpants (I do have some) over my head, stuck 2 pencils

up my nose and went "wibble", I went crazy over the new Rush live album. It ripped my testes off and shoved them up my bum. The best ever. Thanks to Alex, Geddy and Neil. Respect! (The most awesome album I've heard by them).

**TOM (THE MAD JOCK) CORNELL
EDINBURGH**

Dear Mick

thanks for your reply to my initial enquiry about contributing to 'Spirit Of Rush'. I am delighted to enclose my subscription as well as a few reviews of items, I believe will be of interest to fellow readers.

I apologise for the delay in turning your reply around, but November is always one of my busiest months, daughter's birthday and all it entails, not to mention the annual 'Gods of AOR' festival in Wigan (!), that despite its less than attractive venue is a must on my and a few other's, rock/prog calendar.

This event gave me the opportunity to see a few bands, 11 in all, and a review of two releases from Canadians, Lightspeed, is enclosed as we got to talk about Rush for a good hour or so after they came off. It turns out they used to rehearse with them many moons ago. Vocalist, John Persichini talked about remembering the difference Neil Peart made to their rehearsals when he joined, so it must have been a while back. Nevertheless, it was great talking to someone who had met them and no doubt listened to them through a thin, absolutely non-soundproofed, if I remember, rehearsal room wall, eighteen odd years ago.

I look forward to contributing again, a regular feature would be ideal, although I'll probably to have tighten up on my deadlines!

**GEOFF WOOTON
STAINES, MIDDX.**

**Artist: Power of Omens
Title : Eyes of the Oracle
Elevate Records ERO2004**

Let no one say that good technical, progressive rock cannot be found in 1998. Any sceptics need look no further than this 9 track from American four piece *Power of Omens* for proof. So impressed I was that I'd have to say a stronger debut album of its genre would be hard to find, and I

include distinguished contemporaries such as Dream Theater, Fates Warning (sorry! I always thought this should have been their name) or Queensrÿche.

First thing you notice is lead vocalist Chris Salinas' uncanny vocal similarity to the 'Rÿche's' Geoff Tate, tonally almost identical with those effortless leaps from deep, dark warmth to powerful top end scream. It's also the unbelievable precision with which the other three Omenites weave effortlessly through each track that elevates this album beyond the majority of fellow new releases from the obviously swelling vaults of Prog Rock/Tech Metal.

From the 'vocal round' of opener 'Inner Voices' to the phenomenal epic 'Test of Wills' there is no let up from the technical wizardry as the band effortlessly manage to weave from one section of a song to another, seaming up the joins with the precision of a surgeon's knife. What we are left to contemplate, as the essential '*breather*' instrumental 'Tears of the Wind' closes the album, is clearly one of the finest doses of dynamic, progressive music to appear in the last 20 years.

This is not to say it's all plain sailing and there are brief moments when the plot is lost. Salinas tries just a little too hard on 'The Fall' – some of the notes strike me as ill chosen – but things are back to normal by the next track, a short instrumental 'The Quest' which acts as a prelude to the excellent 'The Naked Mind'. The rhythm section of Alex Arellano and Matt Williamson syncopate majestically on this eight minute gem, keeping the whole piece going as it charts a course through what appears to be an undulating terrain of sonic conundrums(!).

Track 7 'Time' sets a fresh challenge (isn't that why we love this kind of music?), as it allows guitarist David Gallegos to take the lion's share of honours and includes the wonderful 'Mother Mary' vocal section that had me hitting the replay button over and over again.

From the opening bars of twenty minute epic 'Test of Wills' you know that you are in for something special, and it does not disappoint. The musicianship is simply awesome, leaving you in no doubt that you're listening to four incredibly talented guys, who on one level seem to be fighting it out, seamlessly creating a piece of artistic turmoil that, paradoxically, has to be every prog/Tech fan's dream. All in all then, a classic that many bands would be happy to have achieved by album number 3, let alone a debut. It should help lift the gloom of any Dream T fans still mourning their last, and in my opinion, rather lacklustre 'Infinity' Opus.

9.5/10

Artist: Chroma Key

Title: Dead Air For Radios

Massacre Records MAS CD0149

I have to begin by saying that I approached this one with caution. Although the cover proudly stated that Chroma

Key featured none other than Kevin Moore (ex-Dream Theater), and Joey Vera and Mark Zonder (Fates Warning), it also kindly informed me that what I was about to listen to was 'Dark Avant-Garde' music which, coupled with the fact that it was on Massacre (!) Records, mad me slightly worried.

However, I am happy to report that I needn't have been concerned in the slightest. The easiest way of describing what the next 43 minutes were like is to return to Dream Theater's 'Awake' album, stick on closer 'Space Dye Vest' (word and music: Kevin Moore) and then ponder, as if you'd need to, as to why he left. I have to admit I don't know the full story behind our Kev's departure from the Dream 'fold', but I'll wager a difference of artistic direction was mentioned in his leaving speech. I found Kevin's 'Vest' one of the highlights of 'Awake' – it showed undoubtedly the path he wanted the band to take, it was atmospheric, strangely compelling and soon became the most played track on my copy of the album. One listen to 'Dead Air' will leave you in no doubt as to what Moore wanted then and where he and his fellow 'Warning' colleagues are now.

I have to admit that I don't possess a copy of Fates Warning's last and well received, 'A Pleasant Shade of Gray', but by all accounts, it was, ironically, also a dark and moody affair. One reviewer describing it musically as "the perfect cross between Dream Theater and Nine Inch Nails" for which Kevin Moore was credited with "elevating the band to major league status".

Of course, to some Dream Theater fans used to hearing the names Rush, Queensrÿche, Symphony X or Vanden Plas brandished readily in reviews as suitable bed fellows, the fact that Chroma Key could be mistaken for Depeche Mode and filed with the likes of Radiohead, Sneaker Pimps or Nine Inch Nails could leave a number of them cold and discourage a fair few from taking the plunge with this one. I can only return to 'Space Dye' and say that like that track, this album is packed with atmosphere and becomes, with every listen, ever more compulsive.

To breakdown the album track by track would be difficult, and I can only suggest that you take the thing as a whole and view it as a thematic soundtrack. Moore's vocals, although never stretched, are superbly understated. Indeed, the vocals act as no more than another layer on the whole canvas of sound, which mixes equal measures of pulsing bass, hypnotic drums, restrained keys, guitar and sampled speech that accompany and narrate intermittently.

That said, there are some outstanding 'songs', highlights being 'Undertow', which reminded me a lot of 80's band *It's Immaterial* and 'America The Video'. 'Even the Waves' just about pips the others to 'song of the album' with its gorgeous melody and strange 'shipping forecast' type voice fade out, it's hard to know what she is mumbling, but the confusion all adds to the track's unconventional appeal.

Melodically haunting throughout, the album closes with the disturbing 'Hell Mary' as a female Stephen Hawking voice

vividly describes a post-apocalyptic scene over a soundtrack of engine noise and low keyboards. The narrator's final exclamations of shock and the words "I can't look!" brings the listener's uncomfortable, yet remarkable, journey to a chilling end.

One complaint is that it could have been a bit longer. 43 minutes left me feeling a little short changed, particularly when you consider the average length of the majority of today's releases.

A highly recommended album nevertheless, one which the open minded listener will live with and love. If, like me, Radiohead's 'OK Computer, left you rather excited, then I'd strongly advise you to add this one to your collection and store the two next to each other, some distance away, however, from DT and their various other Liquid/Platypus/Explorers' Club guises.

9/10

Both CDs are available from the following excellent mail order outlets: Loud 1 (01782 522370), ST Records (01384 230726), CG Discs (01306 730721), Destiny (01489 603549) and will not cost an arm and a leg.

Artist: Lightspeed

**Titles: So Where Are We?, On Second Thought
Lightspeed Records LSCE 9501**

Any of you lucky enough to have been at Gods '98 in November at Maximes, Wigan, will surely have been impressed by the event's 45 minute openers, Lightspeed. Having been formed back in 1997 and hailing from a country close to any Rush fans' heart, Canada, the performance highlighted two things – one the professionalism that 20 years in the industry teaches you, a live set full of confidence, humour and above all warmth was testimony to that, a lesson for many wannabees on the same bill. Secondly, the five guys that make up Lightspeed are genuinely nice blokes.

So what else do they hold of interest to the average Rush fan, apart for their place of origin and the fact that they apparently used to practice in the same rehearsal rooms? Well, sonically they may not be clones of Lee, Lifeson or Peart, but they do offer a neat line in good 'Pomp' Rock, a pleasant mix of 'prog' rock with strong melodic/AOR tendencies.

Pomp has, in certain journalistic quarters, always been a dreaded word, a term that, I feel, needs further definition. The way I interpret progressive music is as follows, and I may be unique in my opinion, but what the hell! Firstly, I find the notion of an American/Canadian 'Prog' band something of a misnomer. I have always seen 'prog' as something quintessentially 'British', immersed in its folklore and eccentricity. Ask anyone to name 5 'Prog' heavyweights and I guarantee you'll find Yes, Genesis, Pink Floyd, ELP and King Crimson mentioned. That isn't

to say that our North American cousins have not produced some excellent 'Progressive' sounding music, grandiose in both its lyrical and musical attitude, but still having that American 'radio-friendly' aspiration that was rarely present within the context of the leading British 'prog' stars, some could even argue that the Brits went too far in the other direction. Bands such as Styx, Kansas, Saga and more recently Spocks Beard, Cairo and Magellan have each added worthy releases to their portfolio, but it's 'Pomp', not 'Prog'. Now that I've got that off my chest, on to more serious matters.

So what has all this 'Pomp'ous, off at a tangent, nonsense got to do with these two Lightspeed releases? Well, to the aforementioned list of Atlantic 'runners' needs to be added Lightspeed, filed somewhere between Saga, Styx and a 'proggy' Toto, their brand of 'Pomp' is intricate, without ever being too demanding. That is not to say that it fails to stand up to repeated listens. I've owned it for some time now and it continues to offer something new with each spin. Released in 1992 on the back of considerable interest from Japan, the debut album 'So Exactly Where Are We?', the stronger, in my opinion, of the two releases, has some outstanding moments.

Sandwiched between the two instrumentals 'So...' and 'Exactly Where Are WE?' are 8 prime cuts, not including the added bonus of two live tracks, 'Bring Back The Fire' and 'Restless Heart', both lifted from the follow-up opus 'On Second Thought', tagged on at the close.

'The Bottom Line' sees the **whole** band given their first opportunity to shine and this they do with a respectful nod towards 'Heads And Tails' era Saga. Another band that springs to mind is Cincinnati based Mara, not a bad thing as far as I'm concerned, as any others who possess their first 'America' release will no doubt testify. Vocalist John Persichini does a fine job, sounding not a little like Michael Sadler. Bassist, Rod Chappell lays down a solid backing that forms the basis of the song and it's the band's drummer, Terry Crawford that produces the tight rhythm section that not only lifts this track, but performs superbly throughout the album. It's Rod, formerly of cult Pomp gods 'Zon', that's also not averse to 'giving it loads' in a live setting, if his antics at Wigan were anything to go by. So what else is on offer here? A track by track listing reveals that 'Miss You Now' is a lighters in the air power ballad with some nice, Pink Floyd guitar fills and soloing from Gene Murray, catchy without ever being throwaway and 'World On Edge' has an eighties almost Mr. Mister vibe to it. The big opening that greets 'Shine On' gives keyboardist Sandy Nemecek the chance to 'shine', and the track gallops along with an upbeat, bouncy feel. 'We're All The Same', one of the highlights at The Gods reminded me of Yes new man Billy Sherwood's World Trade project, interesting key sounds and a closing vocal refrain that could have been Jon Anderson himself.

The multi-talented Terry Crawford takes over the vocal duties for 'Visiting Hours', a track that has him also contributing acoustic guitar and keyboards. Meanwhile,

John Persichini introduces us to his saxophone prowess. Unfortunately, the track, in my opinion, never really gets going, and is perhaps the only low on the album. It also reminded me a lot of little known Americans, Quest, nothing to do with the Scousers of the same name signed to Now & Then who released the phenomenal 'Change' album, but a five piece who provided us with a very Rush sounding, but unfortunately very patchy, 'Opposite Sides of the Picket Fence' album in 1994.

The two live tracks that close proceedings are taken from 'On Second Thought' and show how well 'Speed' 'cut it' in a live situation.

'On Second thought', the follow up to 'So Exactly Where Are We?' continues in the same vein, and in some respects is as strong as its predecessor. Opening with 'Something Changes' with its bright and bouncy keyboard melody, we're soon into 'Bring Back The Fire' and one thing immediately hits you, how much more AOR this release is than 'SEWAW?' That is not a criticism, as the band perform equally as well on 'Second Thought' but without so much of the pomp of the debut.

'Never Too Late' is undoubtedly the poppiest thing on offer on either album and had me remembering '80s popsters 'Go West' for some reason. At only 2 minutes 26 it never really had time to get going and suffers as a result, shame as there's a good song in there. Next up is 'I'll Walk and Wait', a one paced ballad that features some nice piano courtesy of Sandy Nemecek and closed with a killer solo from guitarist Gene Murray. I would have preferred had they left the fade out till later to allow the track to run a little longer.

'Restless Heart', instantly memorable from their live performance is next up and it just as strong within the album setting, undoubtedly the strongest cut on the album, featuring great bass and keys work. 'Angels Sing' starts off promisingly enough with strong bass and drums but despite its lyrical promise of hope and mended 'shattered faith' unfortunately fails to deliver a memorable enough hook to rescue it from being a filler. 'The Rain Keeps Falling' is Saga through and through and is therefore, not unnaturally, deserving of our attention.

'Guaranteed' is another one that reminds me of their debut and as such stands out from the rest. The sax/guitar duel midway through is a neat addition, but just as it kicks in so the track fades, I'm beginning to get annoyed with this tendency!

'Here In The Race' is a very '80s sounding upbeat track that you can imagine being used in one of those '80s teen movie soundtracks. The keyboard stabs suggest that maybe this particular song was originally written in the days when pomp/pop rock ruled the airwaves. I particularly liked the fact that we're treated to nearly 6 minutes of this one, complete with long guitar solo at the end. Lightspeed, you are forgiven!

Closer 'We Will Change' sees acoustic guitar, keys and voice working perfectly together for the opening three minutes, bringing out the album's best performance from

vocalist John Persichini, until midway when the choir and drums join in a 'USA For Africa' type wavy-arm thing. On this particular cut I was hoping for that early fade, maybe I'm just being too fussy now!

'On Second Thought' is, overall, a mixed affair, which had me wishing they'd included less tracks, but beefed up and extended the quality ones which were on there. Not as strong as the debut, tracks such as 'Restless Heart', 'Guaranteed' and 'Here In the Race', however, help lift this one above the average pomp release and is still a worthy addition to any collection.

Gods '98 marked Lightspeed's first visit to England and I really hope they return. It was refreshing to hear good, 'pomp' rock being played again. Apparently, there is a third album on the verge of release, and I for one, look forward to its release in the hope that the new one scores full marks. After all, it couldn't happen to 5 nicer guys!

8/10 So Exactly Where Are WE?,

6/10 On Second Thoughts

News of any further Lightspeed developments can be obtained from their Website at www.Lightspeed-rocks.net Both Lightspeed releases are available from Loud 1 Mail Order (01782 522370) or Big House Records (0115 9475672).

My Top Releases Of 1998 (In No Particular Order)

Savatage – The Wake of Magellan
Labyrinth – Return To Heaven Denied
Power of Omens – Eyes of the Oracle
Spock's Beard – The Kindness of Strangers

Departure – ST

Chroma Key – Dead Air For Radios

Rudess Morgenstein Project – S/T

Kenziner – Timescape

Rush – Different Stages

Treasure Land – Gateway

Kamelot – Siege Perilous

Yngwie Malmsteen – Facing The Animal

An Interview with ALEX LIFESON

ST CATHERINE'S, ONTARIO, 27/11/98

INT: *Let's start the interview with the question everyone wants the answer to - how's Neil?*

ALEX: As you can imagine, it's been a very difficult period for him. He's slowly getting his strength back and his feet back on the ground and it will still take time I'm sure.....and we're here to support him and give him the time that he needs.

INT: *So where is he right now?*

ALEX: He's travelling - learning to find beauty in the world once again.

INT: *I heard he'd been hurt in a motorcycle accident in Japan.*

ALEX: No, that's not true. He's a very careful driver.

INT: *So, how has this tragedy affected both Geddy and yourself?*

ALEX: It's been difficult for all of us, but that's not important. The important thing is that Neil survives this tragedy. He is working towards it and our thoughts are always with him.

INT: *Are you in contact with him?*

ALEX: Yes.

INT: *Is he a little bit better than last month?*

ALEX: Progress is slow, but it's moving forward.

INT: *I can't imagine going through what he's going through.*

ALEX: No! You can't.

INT: *It must be difficult for you and Geddy to: a) watch him go through it and: b) know what to do.*

ALEX: Yes, of course, none of us has any experience with this sort of thing. We just deal with it on a day-to-day basis.

INT: *Any truth in the break up rumours that are going around?*

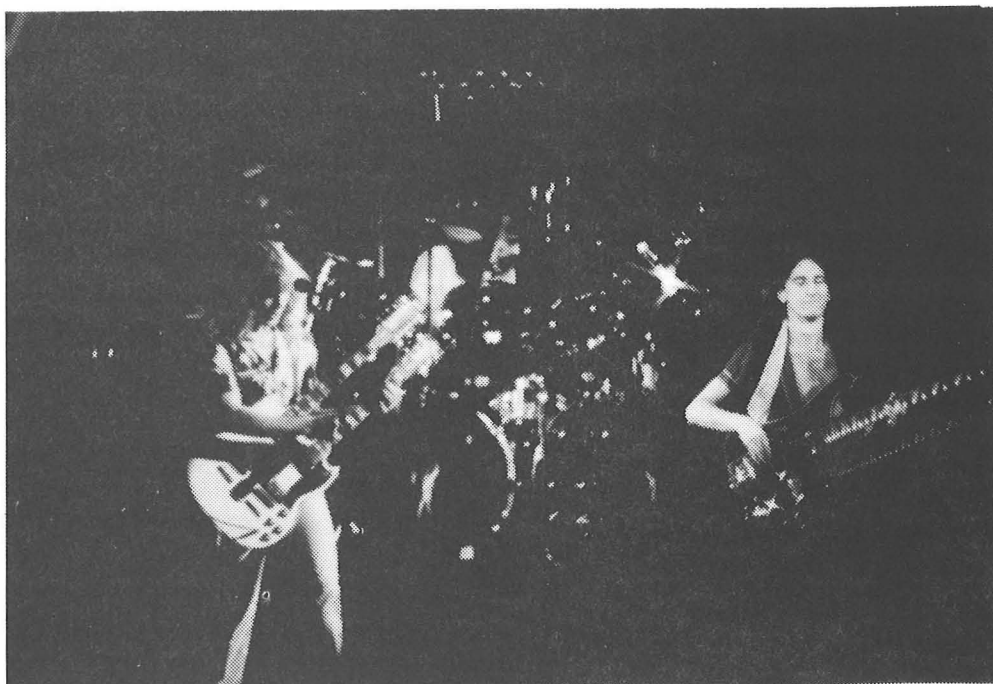
ALEX: We haven't spoken about anything like that, it's too early to discuss that sort of thing. The live record is out now and that's the important thing at the moment. We'll sit down later and talk about the future of the band.

INT: *Correct me if I'm wrong and tell me if I'm being insensitive, but I figure two things could happen when Neil comes back. He could come back with beautiful heart-wrenching lyrics or he could come back with writer's block. Do you agree?*

ALEX: Let's talk about the live record....

INT: *OK. I'll leave it alone right now.*

ALEX: Yes, I think so.



KEVIN SHIRLEY

SOR talks exclusively to the Caveman

PART 1 – THE EARLY YEARS

SOR: How did you first get involved in the music biz and was it something you wanted to do?

KEVIN: Yeah, I joined a radio station when I was 18 and made my first record when I was about 20.

SOR: Did you produce or record it?

KEVIN: Both. I found an artist playing in a pub in South Africa and we went on – not that I knew how – to make a number one hit record.

SOR: So you are South African? You have a kind of red Indian look about you!

KEVIN: (laughs) Yeah, I'm South African but I've been on the Islands and got that suntan thing.

SOR: Did you always want to be involved in that side of the music biz rather than playing yourself – do you play?

KEVIN: I went to university to study music – I have that background. As for playing, I do play, it does help!

SOR: Who did you work with before Rush?

KEVIN: Oh, I worked with a lot of Aussie bands – The Lime Spiders, Baby Animals, Billy Squier and a band called Material Issue – lots of different stuff. I was in Australia for about 10 years.

SOR: You've travelled a lot. Where are you based now?

KEVIN: New York – the Upper West Side.

SOR: Were you asked to record any of the Rush shows on their last couple of tours?

KEVIN: No. Although I speak to Geddy a bunch. I've got a great relationship with him. I haven't worked with them since Counterparts.

PART 2 – THE COUNTERPARTS GIG

SOR: In fact you repaired an amplifier in a dumpster – or so Geddy told us. Can you tell us anything about that?

KEVIN: We were in the studio in Montreal and Geddy had a big bass amp with big Queen Con speakers – lights, everything. It sounded really clean, a bit like a pinto valve bass. We found it in an old beat up hand picked B15.....plugged it in and distorted the crap out of it. It's a tiny little one, totally opposite from what he was working with.

SOR: Alex was using high dirty stuff – wanting to get back to basics.....

KEVIN: I did that with the mix too. I had a good ride with them, but I hated the mixes on that album – the final mixes – really hated them. I have rough mixes of about 7 songs on the album which are much better.

SOR: You didn't like the finished product?

KEVIN: No, I thought it was softened up too much. It was a really ballsy album.

SOR: From our point of view it is a ballsy – almost grungey – album.....certainly after Roll The Bones. So you thought it could have been more hard hitting?

KEVIN: Well, the guys are pretty heavy, you know...but they finessed it up a bit more. They have a history of erm, "hi-tech stuff".

SOR: There are tracks like "Stick It Out" – really ballsy, yet there are songs on side 2 which are so different to that. "Everyday Glory" for example, is very smooth. Is that what they wanted – their influence?

KEVIN: I guess so. However, "Stick It Out" is more where I'm at – or from. I don't know about the typical Rush fan.

SOR: The fans seem to like "Stick It Out".....it's still in the set list. Were they nice to work with – did you get on with them....were they receptive to your ideas?

KEVIN: Oh, really great. They were very receptive. I think they went into the album trying to get away from the clinical or cleanliness of Roll The Bones.

SOR: Did Rush have the whole album complete when they came in? Did they just say "These are the 10 songs", or did you have input into the ways they were changed?

KEVIN: I was engineering very specifically. Peter Collins was producer. He'd spend time with them in their rehearsal studios doing all that stuff, so when they went into the studio all the arrangements had been worked out. I think I was instrumental in a lot of attitude on it.....you know, in way of playing. Peter is one of those guys that has people around him that are pro-active, that can pre-empt situations and have input into something and then he acts like a referee. He'll take what's good and assess it. He's good that way. He also likes someone around to push the band in a more riffy way. I mean, Alex and I ended up close but we certainly had some words at some points and Peter would push us so Alex would get mad (laughs). I remember Alex saying "Give me something.....echo – on the solo" and I would say "No!" He'd be like "Give me some 'effing echo for this" so I'd say "No, be more hip – just play the solo". He'd eventually tell me to f... off and then he'd play the solo. Sometimes Peter would say "Just give him a little delay". Peter would let that situation work and I think it was good for Alex.

SOR: The guitar solo on "Cut To The Chase" is just incredible, was that a straight solo, or was it tweaked in any way?

KEVIN: Jesus, I don't remember. I'd have to hear it. I never actually listened to the album once it was finished. I hated the final mixes so much. I was so disappointed when I got a copy. I even called Peter to say he couldn't let those mixes go out but he said the chaps liked them, so I just went "Alright".

PART 3 - FUN WITH GEDDY, ALEX & NEIL

SOR: How did you get the vocal effect (do you remember) on "Double Agent"?

KEVIN: Erm....well, what I can tell you is we recorded a really funny silly version where Geddy plays an old Jewish guy who owns a pickle shop. He sung it in an old, deep, Hassidic Jewish accent - it was so funny. I can't, however, remember how we got the effect, other than they wanted 'menacing'. If you had the CD for me to hear I'd probably remember.

SOR: Can you tell us what is said at the start of "Alien Shore"?

KEVIN: (Making sound that was like) "BAABAABAAROOOOSH". That was me. It was sung into Geddy's bass.

SOR: Does it mean anything or is it something you made up?

KEVIN: No. It was part of a strange language they have going called "Higenvirst". We had some interesting fun with it. If you look on the album you'll see the "album was brought to you by the letter OE". There were words for things like "beard", "penis", "breasts", "buttocks" etc. One night Alex came in with his cousin who is a hockey player and his girlfriend – typically blonde, wearing a crop top....big breasts. Looking like something from a teen movie.....and Geddy just

suddenly said something about her in "Higenvirst" as I was working at the console tracking. I remember collapsing in laughter.

SOR: How long have you been "Caveman".

KEVIN: For about 20 years. One time I was bulky with long hair – a Neanderthal look, I guess. It's a nickname that's stuck.

SOR: What is Peter Collins called?

KEVIN: "Mr Big" – he's only 5 ft 2. He's great though.

PART 4 - HOW TO GET A GIG WITH RUSH

SOR: Did you know him before Counterparts?

KEVIN: I just sent him a tape – but that's a funny story.....really wild.

SOR: Oh, go on. Tell us, now you've mentioned it (laughing).

KEVIN: I was in New York. I decided to move from Sydney with my 3 year old son and I had been there for a year without any luck, so we're running out of cash. I was doing everything but no-one wanted me. So I called a friend who had been writing with Skid Row/Bon Jovi asking him for suggestions and he told me to "send a tape to Peter Collins". So I did. Peter called and said he liked what was on it and asked me up to Toronto to meet the guys called Rush and see what happens. They wanted an engineer.

SOR: Right place, right time.

KEVIN: Right time! What happened was, I was really out of cash so I was sent a ticket to go from New York. It was a great meeting, really funny. They played my stuff, asked me some stuff. I went to the airport to get on the plane and the U.S. Immigration refused to let me in. My son was with a nanny – I knew her – she was doing me a favour. It was a Friday and she had to be somewhere else at night. So, I'm stuck in Toronto and Josh is in New York – I needed to get someone else to look after him.

SOR: That's bizarre.

KEVIN: So, I'm stuck in Toronto airport. No money, a ticket going nowhere, no visa. So I phoned Peter from there to ask if I had the gig. He'd said he'd let me know – I said I needed to know now! He wasn't sure, the band weren't sure. After an hour he phoned me back and told me I had got it. So then I asked for some money.

SOR: (laughing). Payment up front!

KEVIN: Yes, it was awesome.

SOR: How long did the job take?

KEVIN: Montreal – March.....mixing about middle of June.....erm...about 3 months.

SOR: You must have been aware of Rush and their music.

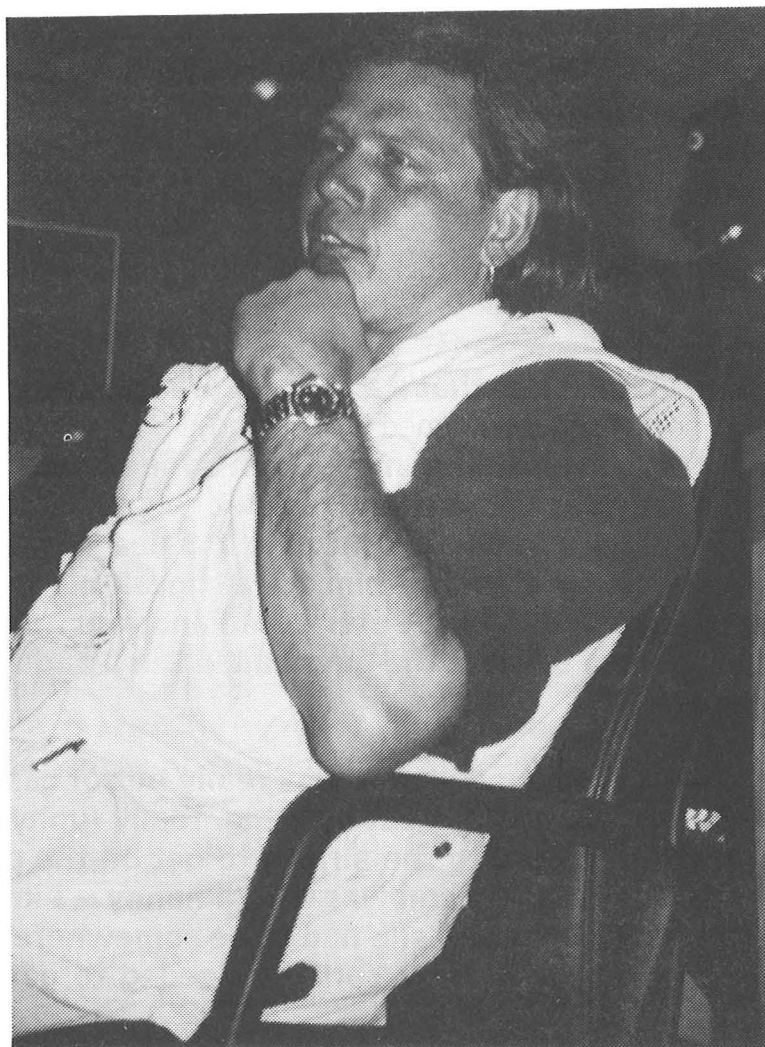
KEVIN: Oh yeah, although I only really knew "Power Windows", otherwise just bits and pieces.

PART 5 - THE DREAM THEATER CONNECTION

SOR: You've moved on to producing now. Do you prefer that?

KEVIN: I have always engineered and mixed stuff. There is a big difference in that engineering doesn't have the pressure. I love mixing but I wouldn't engineer now because I like having the input.

SOR: Do you find you have to like the music you're working on?



KEVIN: No, It's a professional job. I enjoy doing Dream Theater which is awesome, however there are elements of their music I don't like. There are times they can make music like Vikings – the overbearing parts for me. When we were doing the album it was like "lose that stuff – or that stuff.....we need more chorus". It's fine to have a fanbase but you need to get beyond that.....more accessible. I don't know if the fanbase likes stuff like "Hollow Years" – the softer, gentler side. However, you can't keep a career based on a small fanbase of ,say 300,000.

SOR: We feel "Falling Into Infinity" is the best album they've done....both musically and the sound. Compared to "Awake" this flies out of the speaker.

KEVIN: Thanks. The big thing is all the instruments are real. Mike is an incredible drummer and as for Derek, what he played on the album is what he played on tracking.

SOR: Tonight DT played some songs that didn't make the album. As producer did you hear these and say "No, this has to go".

KEVIN: The only one that I think has come out really good that we didn't do is "Speak To Me". They've changed it. I heard it in rehearsal and said "Wow". They said "You passed on that". I told them "It never sounded like that". It sounded really good now. However, the other one's still don't work for me.

SOR: So what's next for you?

KEVIN: Finish DT Live and then I'm mixing for "Cold Chisel".

Toronto SUN: Top Stories Money Life Showbiz Sports

The Toronto Sun, November 29, 1998

What's the Rush? by Kieran Grant

After 25 years together, the veteran Canadian rockers take stock of their careers As Rush releases its latest album, *Different Stages*, the band finds itself in a different, and difficult, stage.

Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart just recapped 25 years together with the double live CD, which has gone gold since hitting stores two weeks ago. Next year will actually mark 30 years since singer-bassist Lee and guitarist Lifeson hooked up to play as teenagers. But, as Lee confides in a recent interview in the downtown headquarters of Rush's own label, Anthem, it's "an anniversary we're not really celebrating."

Rather, Lee's thoughts are with drummer-lyricist Peart, 46, who suffered a double dose of tragedy when his daughter was killed in a car accident a year ago and his wife died of cancer last spring. It's a painful and personal topic that Lee hesitates to discuss. Questions of another album and tour are moot, though judging from a recent string of inquiries we've received from Rush fans, there are concerns for the band's future. "My concern is for Neil and that's it," says a cool but sombre Lee. "My heart breaks for him in what he's gone through, and I can safely speak for all of us that we're all concerned for him as a friend, and that's it. This is my friend, and he's hurting. We're all hurting. To think about anything of a practical nature is inappropriate. "There's been a lot of support (from fans), but the most anyone can do for Neil is give him the time he needs."

A graceful dedication to the drummer's family inside the *Different Stages* CD package captures Rush's feelings best: "Suddenly ... you were gone ... from all the lives you left your mark upon." As Peart recovers privately, the album goes a long way in celebrating the remarkable interplay that makes him, Lee and Lifeson famous. Lee compiled and co-produced the disc, honing hundreds of hours of live recordings from 60 shows on two tours into a cohesive document of a latter-day Rush concert. A limited edition version includes a third disc, recorded live at London's Hammersmith Odeon in February, 1978. All told, the collection is a musical signpost -- a way for Rush to take stock of a prolific career.

"A live album represents a lot of opportunities," Lee says. "It's an opportunity to record new music. It's also a chance to re-evaluate, in the context of all of our music, the old favourites. "It raises the question, 'If this was the last live album I ever did, would this song be worthy of it?' You learn a lot about your own writing. That's a real benefit."

Rush have no doubt learned more about themselves than most bands. *Different Stages* comes as part of Rush's "weird habit" of releasing a live disc every four albums. According to Lee, the tradition started by accident. In 1981, the band narrowly decided to release the studio album, *Moving Pictures*, before the live *Exit ... Stage Left*. The former record went on to spawn the classic *Tom Sawyer* and sell four million copies -- their biggest-ever hit up 'til then. The latter was seen as a good-luck charm.

"It was a pretty good decision, in retrospect," Lee deadpans. Then again, the virtuoso bass player has a lot of Rush experts to answer to when it comes to making a record. Rush's vast following stretches back through many stages: Their days as a cult band fusing complex progressive rock with mystical lyrics, an era captured neatly in the tight grooves of Stages' Hammersmith Odeon set; their graduation to an uncompromising and sophisticated trio capable of great -- some would say surprising -- commercial success and musical influence. "It's hard to put us in context with the rest of the music world," says Lee. "We've always floated along on this separate kind of slipstream. We were never really aware of how weird we were. In our early days we were naive, and in our later days maybe blindly impractical. "And thank goodness for that. It's been a key to our sound that we can do these things under the mantle of hard rock and make it still accessible and viable."

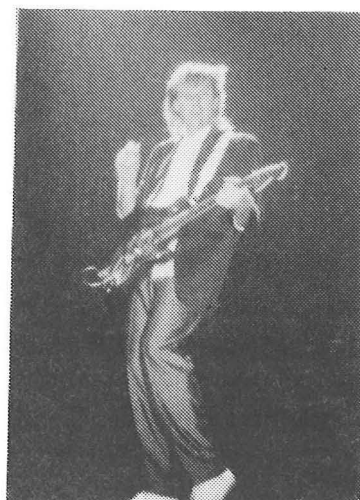
Lee says the best way to please the fans with an album like *Different Stages* is not to try too hard. "If I ask 10 Rush fans what songs they want to have in a set, I can almost guarantee there would be 10 different lists. "I just compared my own wish list with a reality list." The result features staples like *Tom Sawyer*, *YYZ*, *2112* and a rare improvisational run at *Closer To The Heart* alongside tunes from later records, like 1996's *Test For Echo*. It works, but Lee knows he stands to be second-guessed. Where is *Subdivisions*? *New World Man*? "There's no winning," he answers with a laugh. "Sometimes you just have to do what you want to and let the chips fall where they may ..." And move on to a new stage. It's all part of the work-in-progress that Rush continues to be.

"This record is about what our personality as a band has become, and all those various parts good and bad," says Lee. "We're so tied to what we've become as a band, and a family. And most of what we have become we owe to touring 250 days a year and being on a different stage every night."

THE RUSH FILE

Then: 1969 -- 15-year-olds Alex Zivojinovich, aka Lifeson, and Gary Lee Weinrib, aka Geddy Lee, form a band in Toronto with drummer John Rutsey. Neil Peart replaces Rutsey and brings his songwriting skills on board in time for Rush's 1974 self-titled debut.

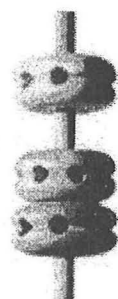
Now: When Lee belts out that "all this machinery making modern music can still be open-hearted " on *The Spirit Of Radio*, he still means it. "It's relevant," he says of the 1980 anthem, which took aim at the inherent lameness of commercial rock radio. "Maybe even more so, because we live in a time that is so encroached upon by corporate psychology that there's almost nothing we come in contact with that isn't tagged or sponsored by something. The whole corporate battle is over, and we lost. "Once in a while we have to question, 'What should the spirit of radio be?' What is it there for other than to pummel you with the same song once every hour?"





S.O.R. POLL

RESULTS (part 1)



"Could you help in doing the poll", Mick asked. "Yeah, No problem" I said. Well done Mick. Conned again. Somebody buy me a computer. Writing everything by hand takes bloody ages. I have no social life now and everybody I know thinks I'm a sad man with no friends. Thanks Mick. Let me buy you a drink sometime (oh poor skippy, now I know how you feel -almost.)

1) *How old are you?*

20's - 38

30's - 89

40's - 4

The average age of SOR readers is 32 or 33. Thankfully there are some keeping us more youthful.

b) *Male or female?*

Male -119

Female - 9

C'mon, there are more women out there - maybe they just don't bother filling in poll results, or are men more inclined to be trainspotters? I dunno.

c) *Are you a musician?*

Yes - 37

No - 93

So we are not all sad musos as the press would suggest. One or two said they were crap - but I included them as they have some musical ability (or not).

2) *What is your fave album?*

Rush - 0

Caress of Steel - 1

A Farewell to Kings - 5

Permanent Waves - 11½

Signals - 6

Power Windows - 15½

Presto - 3½

Counterparts - 14½

All The World's A Stage - 2

Fly By Night - 2

2112 - 6

Hemispheres - 9 ½

Moving Pictures - 28½

Grace Under Pressure - 3

Hold Your Fire - 4½

Roll the Bones - 5½

Test For Echo - 5½

Exit Stage Left - 4

The last time SOR did a poll away back in issues 11/12 "Moving Pictures" won. So no change there then. It received almost double to its nearest rival "Power Windows" which just shaded from "Counterparts". Some people couldn't decide, which explains the halves and thirds. However, these figures are more interesting when we do Q3.

3) 3 Fave Rush Songs?

Xanadu	27	Limelight	20
2112	18	Natural Science	17
Red Barchetta	16	La Villa Strangiatio	14
The Pass	15	The Spirit of Radio	12
The Camera Eye	10	Subdivisions	10

Lots of songs got 1 vote. Someone even voted for "The Fountain of Lamneth". I was surprised "Nobody's Hero" only appeared twice and as for "The Trees" it only got one vote! As you will see next issue, just because a song is a personal fave it doesn't mean you would put it in the set list, yet several songs that either aren't personal faves or are in each person's top 3, appear lots of times.

"Counterparts" had most songs mentioned – 10 in fact and "Hold Your Fire" had 9 out of 10 songs in there. Every song on "Signals" – 8 of them – got a mention at least once. All of "Hemispheres" was in there too. The songs as you can see that polled most are older songs.

4) Which of Alex's guitars do you prefer?

PRS - 31 Signature - 5 Fender Strat - 17 Gibson - 39

So the Gibson wins it. However, 32 of you either didn't know, give a shit or thought it was a "trainspotter's" question.

5) Which of Geddy's basses do you prefer?

Fender Jazz – 15 Wal – 17 Steinberger – 11 Rickenbacker – 53

Kind of overwhelming victory for the Rickenbacker. Again 30 of you said you didn't know, give aetc.

Only one person liked all the basses! Thanks – either you're too clever for me or you like sitting on fences! Failing that would Andy F.. please stand up.

6) Do you prefer early or later Rush?

Early – 44 Later – 64 No preference – 19

I wish you buggers would make your mind up! First most of you voted for early songs then you voted for later work. I'm trying to make sense of all this for you and you're going out of your way to screw it up (selfish bastards). As for the person

who said the “stuff in the middle” you win most awkward person’s vote in this category – congratulations!

A few of you in no preference said “I like it all – that’s why I’m a Rush fan”, however, that could be an argument with people who don’t like some Rush stuff yet are still fans. (Any thoughts to “Signals” please?)

7) *Have you met Rush?*

Yes – 19

No – 111

No great surprise there then. The person who’d met “Alex for 15 seconds” is counted a ‘yes’. If any of you had your toes trodden on by a member of the band as they ran past you – please let me know and I’ll change you to a ‘yes’ vote!

8) *Have you been to “The Orbit Room”?*

Yes – 8

No – 121

If in Toronto, for God’s sake go. If so, send the Mad Jock’s regards to the marvellous Tim – the manager. Congrats to the person who said “Yes – it was shut”. These are the sort of things we want to hear in polls. If you have a wee story to tell add it.

9) *Who do you want to produce the next album?*

Peter Collins - 38

Terry Brown – 21

Band themselves – 11

Bob Rock – 6

Steve Albini – 5

Kevin Shirley – 5

Some of the other names were, Mike Stone, Steve Lillywhite, Ted Templeman, Rick Rubin (that would be fun), Bob Ezrin (even funnier), Brian Eno (I just couldn’t imagine it) and Mutt Lange (!) to name a few. Some of you I think, put your own names – Al Schmitt or Daniel Lanois anyone?. So Collins wins (again).

However, 26 of you said “Me” – well, you can’t all do it. We’ll have the draw amongst you at the Convention. A number also added “Don’t really care as long as there is one”. I say “Amen” to that.

Special mention (awkward answer award) to person who replied “Someone English to take them away form that American rock sound”. Pardon – you lost me there.....

10) *Grade Test For Echo*

Test For Echo 768

Driven 825

Half The World 760

The Colour of Right 741

Time and Motion 721

Totem 726

Dog Years 645

Virtuality 786

Resist 847

Limbo 685

Carve Away the Stone 694

"Resist" takes it (well done folks, one Mad Jock agrees with you). More people gave T4E 10 than "Driven" – 26 to 12, however "Driven" got a lot more 8's and 9's, where "T4E" got a lot of 5's and 6's.

"Dog Years" – worst track. However, 4 of you still gave it 10 and 13 of you gave it a 9. 24 of you, however, gave it less than 5 – two of you giving it 0!

*THERE YOU ARE, MAKE OF THESE ANSWERS WHAT YOU WILL AND NEXT ISSUE
FIND OUT WHAT YOU REALLY THINK OF SOR AND SEE THE PERFECT SET LIST
(PLEASE GOD A FAREWELL TOUR AT LEAST).*



Neil Peart drumsticks that he had won in the raffle, for us to auction. Thanks to him we raised yet more money for the Selena Taylor Foundation.

We learn also that the Japanese version of Different Stages has mini reproductions of the A Farewell to Kings and Test For Echo tour books as well as an additional bonus track – Force Ten. We here at SOR have seen it and it is beautifully packaged -well worth getting your hands on if you are able.

Also, you might look out for a Sci-fi novel called 'Resurrection Inc.' by Kevin J Anderson of the X Files fame. In the foreword to the book the following dedication is made "And also to Neil Peart, Geddy Lee, and Alex Lifeson of RUSH, whose haunting album *Grace Under Pressure* inspired much of this novel".

One last thing, thank you to everyone who contributed to the Anthem postage bill. It really took a weight from my shoulders I can tell you. You're all very special people.

Rush fans – a breed apart! See you all in July folks. Next issue should be with you around Easter time.

Regards,

Mick

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