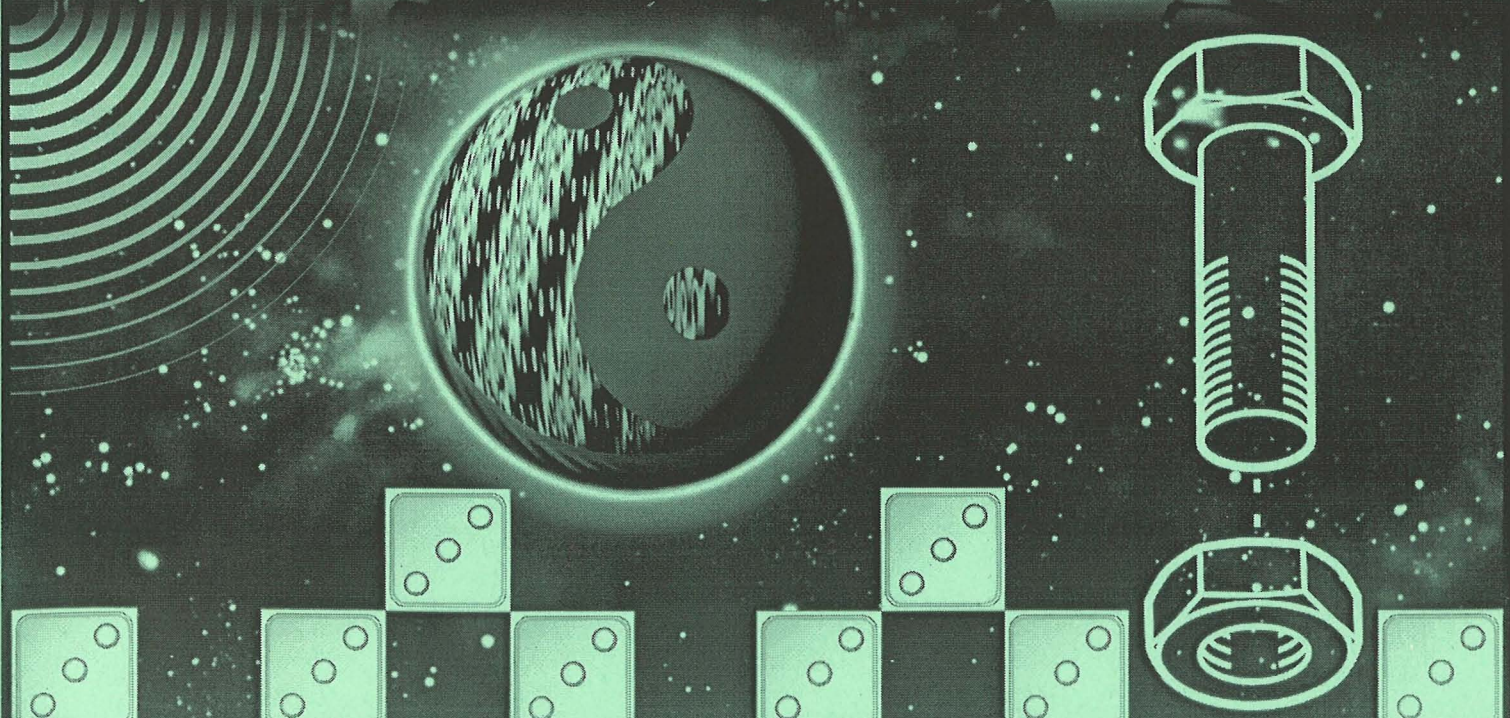
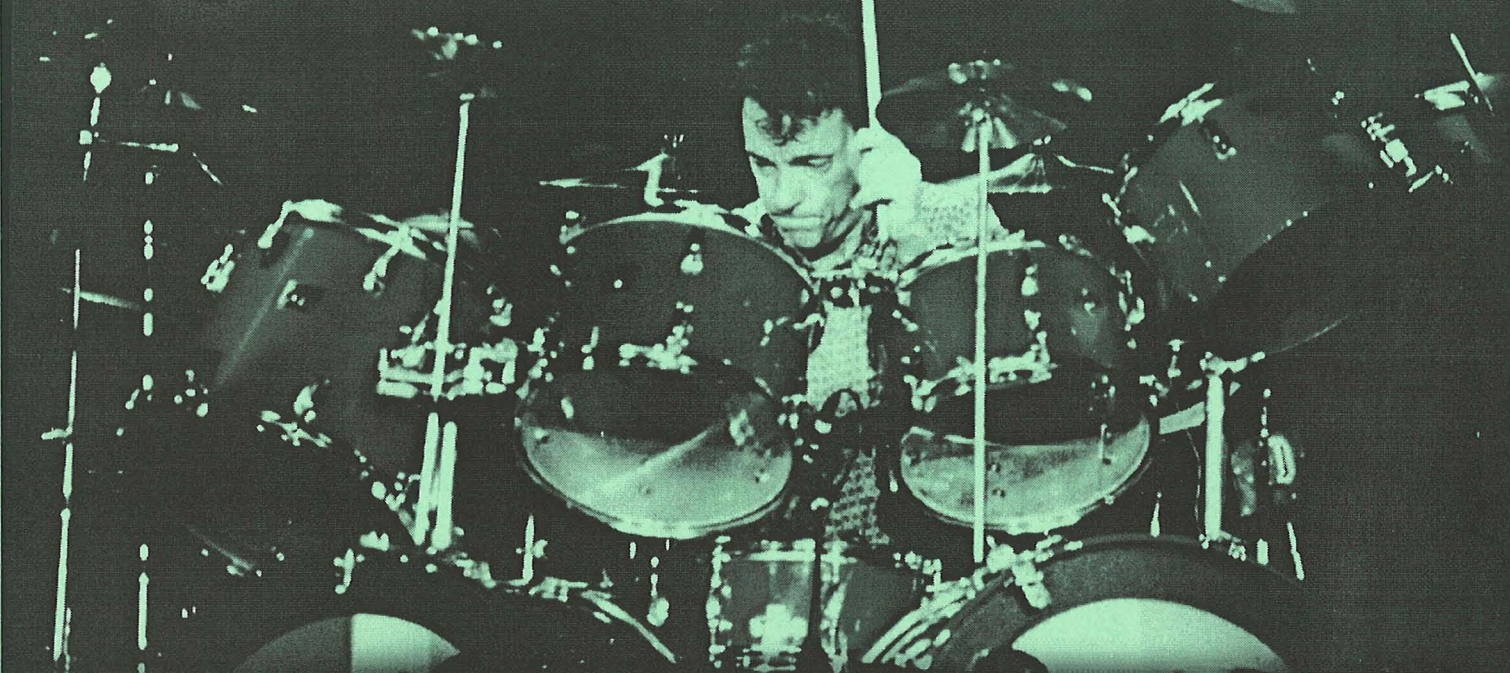


Summer/Fall 2001

No. 58

# Spirit of Rush



# Convention 2001

THE LIMELIGHT CLUB

SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>



# The Spirit of E d i t o r i a l

Hi and welcome to the last Spirit prior to the sixth annual Rush convention in Crewe on Saturday September 8th at 12 noon. If you do not already have your tickets please use the enclosed ticket order form right away, for those of you still unsure of whether to attend or not perhaps a list of prizes that we have on offer will tempt you into coming along for the day. As well as the Anthem presentation award drawn on your entry ticket, here is a small sample of what is on offer in the raffle for you to win.

Mystic Rhythms book - A Philosophical Vision Of Rush, Neils Masked Rider book, Drum Techniques & More Drum Techniques Of Rush books, Various Promo CD's, 3 Different Geddy Lee - My Favorite Headache T-shirts, At Least 1 Tour T-Shirt From Every Tour Starting With The 1977 European Tour, that's a total of 14 Tour T-Shirts Alone. A Very Rare T4E Crew Shirt, 2 Very Rare Roll The Bones Crew Shirts, plus much much more stuff to numerous to list.

If thats not reason enough to attend, a chance to mingle with & rub shoulders with 100's of fellow Rush fans should tip the balance in favour of just coming along getting drunk & enjoying the day out. Tickets are only £10-00 and can be ordered direct from us at the editorial address or by credit card on - 020 7771 2000 or from - [www.ticketweb.co.uk](http://www.ticketweb.co.uk) Tickets will be available on the door on the day, from the opening time of midday 12 noon. Please see the enclosed leaflet detailing a tentative running order of the days activities. Hope you can all make it.

Rush Tribute band The Spirit Of Rush ( nice name ) are playing a headline show at the Mean Fiddler in London ( the old LA2 ) on

Friday 9th November, see later this issue for more dates/details of this new outfit. That's just a day ahead of the debut European performance of progrock supergroup TransAtlantic who headline at the next door but one -the Astoria the following evening, Saturday 10th November. It should be a weekend to remember so why don't you try and get down for the 2 gigs. We'll all be there chum's.

Please send in your thoughts/reviews of the convention for the next issue, which all being well should be with you in late November. Certainly after the 2 gigs mentioned above if we are sober enough.

If you have a subscription reminder form in this issue please return it to us ASAP. Many thanks.

*Until later,*

*Mick*

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# R U S H N E W S

## Latest from the Rush camp

Writing is going slow. The new drum tech is "Gumper", an old friend and we hear that Rush are very happy to have him around. The band are currently taking a month off and Alex is enjoying some golfing. Normally they live in at the recording chalet, however it is very much a 9 to 5 scene at the studio this time around - which would explain why progress is so slow, since it's a complete change from the way they usually record an album.

## Rocket Science Dig their Uncle Geddy.....

Thursday June 28, 2001 @ 05:30 PM  
By: ChartAttack.com Staff

Rob Higgins, bassist/vocalist for Toronto's Rocket Science has been a busy man as of late. He's recently returned from a spring tour subbing on bass for Duncan Coutts of Our Lady Peace fame, who took leave for a spell to nurse various injuries. Higgins just finished mastering Rocket Science's soon to be released debut, Foolscape. Produced and recorded by Rob's uncle, fellow bass monster Geddy Lee, and the boys in Rocket Science at Geddy's home studio. The advance of Foolscape hands you a little of what you might expect and a whole lot you won't. Rob and I relaxed with a cold one on the patio just steps from the studio and he told me a few stories on a hot summers day.

"Jeremy (OLP) just called me up and asked if I could help them out for a little while and we'd just finished tracking Foolscape and we were just going to be waiting for the snow to melt," he laughs, rubbing his goatee. With that tour under his belt, Rob and RS bandmates Richard Faima (guitar), Gordon (guitar) and drummer Daniel Cornelius are now planning for a fall release for an album that seems to have taken a long time to make, but in reality didn't.

"We only got the chance to record, like, once every few months," he explains. "There was really no timetable, so we were in no hurry to put just a record together and put it out as something to do." All of Foolscape's tracks were recorded as they were written, so in

reality Rocket Science's debut only took about three weeks to record.

Songs like the Primus heavy bass smack of "Losing An Edge" and the sonic eardrum punch of "Be" will delight fans of bands that dare to put their musical foot down on the pedal and hold it there. Rocket Science rhythmic interplay and punk-meets-prog fearlessness in the face of a largely pop driven 4/4 time world is refreshing. "We wanted to take some time and make a creative record that explored a lot of our interests instead of making a record that sounds very much the same from song to song," he states flatly. "That's a good marketing scenario, but I think it's more important to make music you wanna make and explore those things," he adds.

Recording at Lee's studio provided a comfortable experience for Higgins and co. "He knew things that we wanted and just tried to help us get them," he explains with a laugh, adding, "He likes things a little weird and out there."

With a host of guest appearances including K.D Lang collaborator Ben Mink, the gals from Sticky Rice and a backing vocal on "Space Suit" by Geddy, Foolscape will keep you guessing as to what's coming next. It's funky, it's complicated at times, and is most definitely not for the faint of heart. The band even dabble in sampling, adding what Rob calls with a grin the "digital soul."

The fall isn't too far away, so for now Rocket Science will gig a bit. They have a stop at Molson Park for an appearance on the EdgeFest side stage before they begin to work on putting together the packaging for Foolscape yet un-labeled launch. Countdown commencing.

*Tim Melton*

[Editor's Note: Tim Melton is a Canadian born and bred bass player who scrambles to the record store with the release of every new Rush album. At some points in life he had to travel hundreds of miles to do so. To have been fortunate enough to hang out with Rob, have a beer, chat about Rocket Science, playing bass, Toronto's music scene and rock 'n' roll at the studio that The godfather of Canadian rock built makes him believe two things.

- 1) God is a bass player
- 2) Fate.]

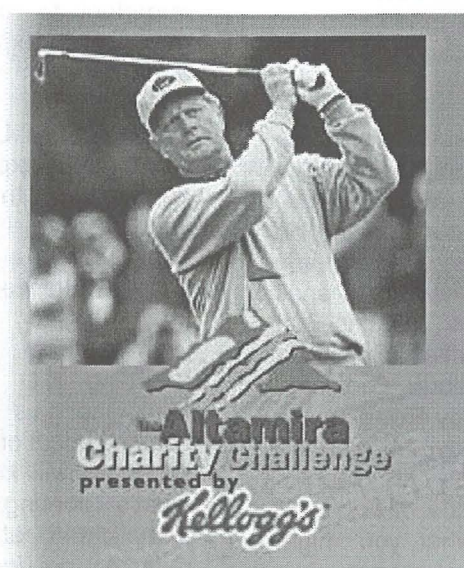


## Alex Tees Off

Alex has taken part in a celebrity golf tournament on July 2nd in Woodbridge, Ontario. Billed as the "Altamira Financial Celebrity Golf Tournament", it also included Jack Nicholson, and Gil Moore of Triumph.

*The Toronto Board of Trade/World Trade Centre Toronto*

Presents: The Golden Bear headlines the 2001 Altamira Charity Challenge presented by Kellogg's. Some of the Golf Professionals and Celebrities scheduled to play as of May 1, 2001



### **Golfers:**

Billy Ray Brown  
Jay Delsing  
Glen Hnatiuk  
Peter Jacobsen  
Jack Nicklaus  
Bob Panasuk  
Tom Purtzer  
Charlie Rymer  
Craig Stadler

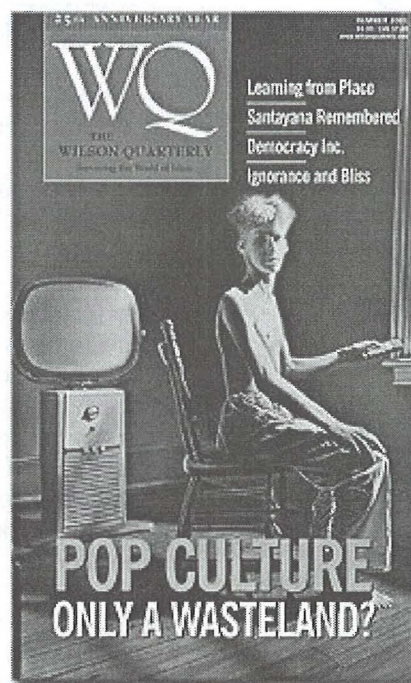
### **Celebrities:**

Cassie Campbell, Canadian Women's Olympic Hockey Team  
John Cerutti, Former Toronto Blue Jays Pitcher  
Dan Clancy, Musician, Lighthouse  
Catriona LeMay Doan, Canadian Olympic Gold Medal Speed Skater  
C.J. Hoyer, Musician, 3 Deep  
Curtis Joseph, Goalie, Toronto Maple Leafs  
Steve Smith, Comedian/Actor  
Alex Lifeson, Musician, Rush

Gil Moore Musician, Triumph  
Ernie Whitt, Former Toronto Blue Jay Catcher

The Altamira Charity Challenge is Canada's largest single-day fundraising event, which has raised more than \$3 million dollars since its inception seven years ago.

## Summer 2001 The Wilson Quarterly



Published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars WQ  
Online: <http://www.wilsonquarterly.com>

### **Pop Culture: Only a Wasteland?**

*The Art in the Popular*  
by Paul A. Cantor

Like the ancient Greeks, Americans know themselves through their popular culture.

*The Perverse in the Popular*  
by Martha Bayles

Behind today's plague of media sex and violence lies a mischievous idea.



# Signals

Hi folks,

Don't know if any you have seen this outrageous show on Channel 4 (Tues 10.30 pm) called 'BANZAI' - a Japanese betting show that asks viewers to bet on events like How many helium filled balloons does it take to lift Larry the chicken? (Answer is of course 90) and 'how long will Anna (former big brother inmate) allow Mr Shake Hands Man to pump away' (1 min 30 sec's) - and these are the repeatable ones !!

They play among other things - RUSH songs as backing music to events such as 'Old lady Wheel chair chicken challenge' to Jacobs Ladder!!! and some other stunt I think included cakes and shopping trolleys (I was too far gone to remember by this time) to Xanadu!! - you've just got to see it to believe it. Also music by Deep Purple and Barry Manilow??! (God those pills are strong.) Check it out.

**SEAN McCABE**  
Email

P.S. very impressed by the Spock's B. gig at the Astoria - my first but definitely not my last.

Mick -

Did I ever tell you about a band called Toad the Wet Sprocket that I always really liked? (not so sure that you would - not heavy at all)

Well, they occasionally played snippets of YYZ and Tom Sawyer during shows in Toronto, and now they've split up. BUT: former lead singer Glen Phillips is now going solo, and this titbit is from the latest diary page of his website....

**STEVE ADAMS**  
Email

Hi.

7/5/01

It's been a little while again. I've been touring. After a few years, it gets harder to come up with things to say. It's a job, much like any other, except for the bizarre and disproportionate attention it receives. I'm essentially a salesman. I have boxes of product I truck around with, and my partner places the wares out for the public to buy while I do the presentation; an entertaining show of testimonials and revelations, guaranteed to make any mark salivate at the prospect of owning a piece of the action for some strange ones (and a few precious and beautiful

# Signals

strangely wonderful ones).

I eat a variety of foods. I read magazines and fail to respond to email (I do, however, flag the ones that I really should respond to, but most of the time I just never seem to actually get around to writing back). I fail to update my website, and await the arrival of someone who can fill it with entertaining prattle on my behalf. I see amusing things, and laugh. I write things on little pieces of paper and then lose them. I worry about getting the bills paid on time. I make disparaging comments about those whose beliefs are slightly different than mine, and then feel a little guilty about my callousness. I feel disconnected, and attempt in vain to fill the empty space with entertainments. I talk on the phone. I come up with ideas for films that I will never make. I neglect to write down ideas for songs, and they evaporate. I lose what precious little discipline I possess. I pine for home. I exercise on occasion. I see old friends, and they see me.

I dream of making an acappella version of the Rush album Moving Pictures. I read. I doodle. I remember my dreams, but forget them soon after. Perhaps I'm being cynical. Stranger things have happened.

Dear Mick,

To say that our conversation on the phone on Friday was a breath of fresh air would be an understatement. For ages now, I have been under the impression, following a misleading TV Rock programme, that Rush had split. I felt euphoric to say the least, when you informed me otherwise, and I've been reeling since.

I used to subscribe to SOR until issue 29 when I had to move location permanently and with all the usual upheaval of a military move, neglected to resubscribe for a hell of a long time. I do deserve to be publicly assassinated as it is an offence no less than treason to neglect the most outstanding rock outfit this world is ever likely to encounter.

Would you agree with me that the internet Rush sites always seem to be a couple of years out of date? I'm not a regular user but it would be nice to get regular updates on a daily basis if at all possible. Now that's the NET. On the strength of your superb publication, I know for sure - and I wait in anticipation for that latest



copy to drop through the front door - that it will contain every ounce of information that I need. For a long time now I have been trying to source the DVD version of Different Stages. A friend had previously informed me that Geddy had announced that he was to work on the project some 18 months ago. As a consequence, I have annoyed nearly every high street main music outlet in the country only to receive very vague responses. Could you possibly please enlighten me, I'm starved of such information? **[GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK AGAIN MARK, UNFORTUNATLY THERE WERE NO DIFFERENT STAGES DVD OR VIDEO RELEASES, FOR THE TIME BEING ANYWAY. SO YOU CAN STOP LOOKING NOW - Mick]**

Anyway, I look forward to the future and receiving the next issue soon and I will ensure that I don't lapse again until at least issue 505 in January 2112!! All the best. Yours sincerely,  
**MARK MORGANS-HURLEY**  
**4 Platoon, B Company,**  
**Abercorn Barracks**

Dear Mick,

Many thanks for issue 57 of SOR. I enclose my cheque for renewal of my subscription and encourage you and your team to keep up the good work.

As well as being a Rush fan for the past 25 years I'm also a fan of the cult 60's series "The Prisoner" (No. 6 etc, etc) hence I was intrigued by the cover of issue 57 front and back. Was there any significance or particular reason for that? **[NEIL SPORTED A #6 BADGE MANY MOONS AGO IN A PHOTO IN I THINK 'SOUNDS' AND THE BAND HAVE SINCE CONFIRMED THAT THEY WERE FANS OF THE SHOW - Mick.]**

Whilst writing I must give a belated thumbs up to the excellent solo album from Geddy. I don't mind if there are some more headaches to come like that one (after the next Rush studio album of course). Hopefully that one is now on the way within the next 12 months. Wonder what dates the UK tour will be (I wish!)? **[FINGERS CROSSED FOR A FULL EUROPEAN TOUR - Mick.]**

Finally many thanks for your recommendations re Dream Theater and, since I last wrote, (issue 54), Spocks Beard. I have discovered that "The Beard" is indeed out there. Great music and even better to come from both bands I reckon! **[CHECK OUT TRANSATLANTIC AS WELL, THEY PLAY THE ASTORIA IN LONDON IN NOVEMBER. WE'LL BE THERE - Mick.]**  
Kind regards,

**CHRIS PHEBY**  
**Hampshire**

Dear Mick,

Thanks very much for the latest excellent issue of Spirit that arrived in the post just the other day.

Every new bit of news about the band is getting me more and more excited....seven songs already demoed and what's all this about a return to eight minute tracks!!

Like all your other readers I'm dreaming that maybe I will get a chance to see Rush on stage again although I suspect it will not be in this country. **[YEAH IT WILL - Mick.]**

I know it's a bit premature, but I really need to know which web sites I should be scanning to make sure of tickets to see the band in maybe Toronto or a venue on the east coast of America (New York?) Perhaps somebody who has seen the band in the US or Canada before, could do a feature for the fanzine on where we should be looking? **[KEEP LOOKING HERE IN SPIRIT MY MAN - Mick.]**

On an optimistic note, in the event that Rush do play in the UK, is it worth having a mechanism in place so that readers can be notified as soon as dates are announced? Maybe we could all send you an SAE over the next few months so any mailout could be done quickly and with minimal financial cost to the fanzine? **[YOU BET WE'LL SORT SOMETHING OUT EARLY NEXT YEAR - Mick.]**

Sorry that I can't make it to the convention this year but find enclosed my re-subscription for the next four issues. Thanks for all your efforts, which I can assure you, are greatly appreciated.

**MIKE LAPWORTH**  
**Kingston upon Thames**

Dear Mick and Janet,

Hope the following can feature in the next issue:-

### **BOYCOTT BIZZARE!!!**

**[NEVER ITS A GREAT MAG - MICK.]**

Have just discovered a lovely little feature in this mag (normally full of semi-nude ladies and features on all things wacky and wonderful) which I think will make us all very angry indeed. In the June 2001 issue on page 45, under the feature "Zine Zone", written by a gent called Joe McNally (remember the name guys, you'll want to kill him later....) he writes the following about Spirit, and I quote the full article:-

"A Rush fanzine, obviously, which presents problems for your reviewer. Clearly, Rush are simply hateful, with their blend of sleeves-rolled-up muso axe noodling and Ayn Rand-influenced right-wing politics. But they're also



part of the holy trinity - cider, bad heavy metal and worse fantasy novels - that has kept many a smalltown lad going through adolescence.

Let's just say that if the idea of four interviews with Geddy Lee floats your boat, then this is exactly what you've been waiting for. So come on then, Geddy, what exactly are Tobes of Hades?"

Well fantastic publicity I'm sure you'll agree. Who is THIS TWAT??? Obviously his musical taste ranges from Britney to the Backstreet Boys, so he probably wouldn't know a good piece of music if it kicked him up the arse. By the way, if you fancy letting the editor of this nonsense know what you think, his name is Joe Gardiner + his e-mail address is [bizarre@johnbrown.co.uk](mailto:bizarre@johnbrown.co.uk) [CHILL OUT ROB, CHILL OUT! - Mick.]

But onto a better read all round, issue 57. First of all, good news about the appearance of Force Ten on convention night. Hope they are as good as the wonderful convention bands of the past - Jack Secret Show, YYZ and Tom Sawyer - a motley crew who I know well from personal experience!! Does this mean that the evening of live music provided by the fans has now gone down the tubes?? [NOT IF WE CAN HELP IT, BUT IT MIGHT BE THE CASE - Mick.]

Also, what is the situation with Neil and Larry Allen? That was a real shock and I think merits further investigation if possible. [ANYONE KNOW THE FULL STORY? - Mick.]

To reply to Kevin Henry's letter, I think the fact that YYZ play on the Sunday is pretty good as it in some way makes the convention a full weekend - with more chances to appreciate Crewe's bars and appreciate more great music. And as for Tom Sawyer who played in 1998, well, as far as I'm aware, Simon the guitarist is slaying them as part of YYZ, Neil (bass) and Tim (on the drums) have disappeared, and me (well I was lead singer that night for the first and only time!!) I'll be down on Friday, Saturday and Sunday this year to relive the whole convention experience for the first time in 3 years and I can't wait!!

Thanks Mick and Janet and see you in Sept. Don't forget if you need any help on the day let me know in advance otherwise I'll be at the bar all day. Cheers.

**ROB HUNTER**  
Hamilton, Lanarkshire

Dear Mick and all Rush convention attendees:

Well, it seems hard to believe that almost 12 months have gone by since Cherie and I made our first trip to the great U.K. to meet our good friend Kevin Owen, and be introduced to a whole new group of Rush fans at the convention. It was such a great time, and we will miss being there this year. The good thing is that we are all 12 months closer to new music from Rush, and that is what brought us together in the first place.

Cherie and I, who will be married on October 6, 2001, have many fond memories of our time with you all in Crewe, our visit to Scotland, and our time spent in London. [CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU BOTH FROM ALL HERE AT SPIRIT.GOOD LUCK FOR THE FUTURE - Mick.] We will have a Lemon Hooch in your honor on the 8th of September!

Regarding the convention: Keep an eye out for Kevin Owen. I think he is the odds on favorite to take the Grand Prize at the convention again this year. [HE'LL DIE FIRST - Mick.]

And a special nod to Kevin Henry for his consecutive convention streak! Kevin, I think you must hold the world record for attending Rush conventions, and it will never be broken. Cheers! [HERE HERE !!!!- Mick.]

Anxiously awaiting the unveiling of Rush 2001/2002,

**CHRIS KASPYRZYK**  
and **CHERIE POISSANT**  
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Mick,

Firstly, Can I thank you and all at 'The Spirit of Rush' for the continued fantastic work and keeping our Rush dreams alive!

Secondly, I am trying to get in touch with Neil Peart and obviously this is a difficult undertaking. I wonder if you have any information which could be helpful? Please check out my website at <http://www.alanemslie.com> you can see who I am etc.

Ok enough prattle. Any help you can give me would be really appreciated. Thanks and keep up the great work. Best Wishes

**ALAN EMSLIE**  
Email



# GEDDY LEE interview with MMR

Attended by a studio audience

Our guest this afternoon was turned onto music and playing it early in his life. At the ripe old age of 13, he was already jamming with his pal Alex Lifeson who he first met in history class at Fisherville Junior High in the Toronto suburb of Willowdale. By the age of 14, Alex, Geddy and pal John Rutsey on drums were playing under the name of Rush. Their first gig was at the 'Coffin' which was a drop in youth centre/coffee house in a church basement - admission was 25 cents and I believe for the evening's work, they made 25 dollars. By 1974 their self-titled debut record was released and started to be played on MMR's sister station in Cleveland, WMMS. They were then signed to Mercury records but 2 weeks before they would open a national tour for a popular artist of the day, John Rutsey quit. Auditions were quickly held and Neil Peart joined the band. They opened up on schedule on that August 14<sup>th</sup> evening in '74 at Pittsburg in front of 11,000 people. By 1975 their second album and first with Neil had been recorded - 'Fly By Night' and marked Neil's debut as the band lyricist with Alex and Geddy composing the music on most of the tunes. This unique partnership has continued on for 20 albums which have gone on to..... get this.....sell over 35 million records worldwide. (loud clapping and cheering).

In November their singer and bass player and keyboard player and gentleman sitting next to me released his very first solo album on Atlantic records. It's called 'My Favorite Headache' and what a pleasure it is to introduce Mr Geddy Lee (clapping/cheering - Ged says 'thanks'.)

MMR:

So nice to have you here for the first time in our 32 year history. You know when I think of music I think of it as a wonderful, powerful force that grabs you and carries you somewhere ..... takes you on a journey...transforms you as it does it and delivers you safely back home..... and that can be in the scope of a 3 minute song. It takes you out of yourself. I'm wondering if you have a memory of a time when music did that for you - music as such a force bigger than yourself?

Geddy Lee:

Oh entirely, my entire pre-adolescence was spent with headphones on listening to the artists of the day that moved me. It was exactly as you described it; it was a trip into their music and it inspired me and made me do what I want to do today.

MMR:

You say you didn't choose music - it chose you...

Geddy Lee:

Pretty much. As a teenager/pre-teen, everyone struggles to look for something they can do pretty well, and music was something I always come back to. It was something I felt I could do and for some reason it seemed pretty natural for me to want to spend the rest of my life doing it.

MMR:

You're mum wanted you to be a scientist or something, is that true?

Geddy Lee:

(laughing) I think when I was about 3 or 4 we discussed me being an atomic scientist, of course with no conception of what that meant other than an association with rockets.

MMR:

Is it fair to say that Philly/Cleveland was one of the first in the N/E corridor to embrace your music?

Geddy Lee:

Well I remember a time certainly when we were playing in this part of the country and we had missed Philly and there was this tremendous petition to 'come to Philly' and we were amazed with the amount of names on this. We did come here eventually and we were shocked at the great support the city gave us.

MMR:



The first gig was November 20<sup>th</sup> 1975. You guys were supporting Robin Trower and Montrose (laughing). I don't know if you have any memories of this show?

Geddy Lee:

I do remember that gig. It was the first time we played the Spectrum, the first time we had experienced a 'Philly crowd' which was pretty intense. It was all true.

MMR:

By the second Philly gig which was March 11 1977 you guys had went on to be headliners and that was at the Tower Theater. Ticket prices were \$4.50, \$6.50, \$7.50 (Ged - 'A good buy!'). The opening band were Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Geddy Lee:

Oh I do remember that show. It was the only time I think, that we played with Tom Petty. They were good guys.

MMR:

So let's talk about the new record. You are quoted as saying 'A sold record I never intended to do'. Is that true?

Geddy Lee:

That's totally true. I've always enjoyed working with Alex and Neil - we've had a great professional relationship all these years and I've never felt frustrated or lacking in any way of expressing myself creatively. It's a great relationship and the amount of time when Rush is going full bore...the amount of time Rush takes out of my life, is a lot. So for me, to do something outside of that would only mean my family life/personal life would suffer. So I made a conscious decision not to go down that road until there was some other time that maybe it would seem natural to do it. With Rush being on an extended hiatus - the way it has been the last 4 or 5 years - there was then a big amount of time available for me and I can't go that long without doing something productive --writing music of some sort. For me it was an opportunity to express myself in a time when Rush were inactive.

MMR:

So many of the songs are written from a personal level. Was that difficult for you to express?

Geddy Lee:

At first it all seems like an exposition of your soul. At some level when you start you feel very exposed. I think the benefit of taking a few years to gather material slowly is that you have time to live with the idea. You have time to live with the songs. 3 or 4 months later you can go back to them and see if you still feel that way. That time was very beneficial for me and I got very comfortable with the idea. It became much more valid and much less embarrassing to go out and bear my soul so to speak..... and it actually became quite challenging intellectually to have to go through the process of examining my thoughts and I found it to be a rather clarifying experience.

MMR:

You penned all 11 songs, or at least co-wrote them all....at least the music with your friend Ben Mink. You have written songs often with Rush but it's the first time you've written a whole album I believe.

Geddy Lee:

Yeah (laughing). Y' know it's the job that was the tough part (said in a jokey attempt at a cockney accent). Because I work with such a prolific writer and a great lyric writer then when you do step out on your own you have that little bit of hesitation. I found, as I said, after a time, I just started enjoying the experience of it and I found it very helpful for me to write my thoughts down and examine how I felt about certain topics and it became a lot of fun actually.

MMR:

Did you ever submit any of the ideas to Neil to see what he thought of them?

Geddy Lee:

No, I did this solo, on my own. Of course I had Ben to write with...who is a great sounding board, and of course he comes from a slightly different background musically ,having worked in country music. I had my doubts as to whether he was capable of knowing what a good lyric was (laughing).....

MMR:

Trains, trucks and drinking.....

Geddy Lee:

No offence to you country fans out there (in extremely bad Texan drawl that sounds more like Hughie Green). It wasn't exactly the 'egg sucking dog' I was planning writing about (laughter and cheering).

MMR:

We're speaking of your co-writer on the album, Ben Mink. He's been a friend for a long time and I believe was best man at your wedding. Is that correct?



Geddy Lee:

I didn't know him actually when I got married but he would have been (laughs). He played in a band years ago called FM. They were from Toronto. They were a synth type prog rock band - as we were. They were not as heavy as we were or as raucous as us but still a rock band. He was a pretty talented guy, he played electric violin and mandolin...kind of elegant instruments. We became friends on that tour and remained very close friends since. In the last number of years he's been working with K D Lang. He's moved out to Vancouver so we don't see each other so often. We talk on the phone usually late at night and make as many bad jokes as we can at each other - that gets us laughing, He of course, played on one track on the 'Signals' album, 'Losing It' where he does a marvellous electric violin solo ...and that was the only professional type of correspondence that we had ever had in the past. We kept saying to each other over the years, 'Maybe we should try writing together'. It was kinda 'Oh naw, it would just probably wreck our friendship' (laughs). So when I was in Vancouver on the last Rush tour, early '97, I went on down to his studio with him. He had to pick something up and we picked up a couple of instruments and started playing together. We looked at each other and kinda said 'This is really silly - that we have never tried to write together', because our feels are so similar on our instrument. So we said 'ok, let's make an agreement that before the end of the year we will try to write at least one tune and see what happens'. So he came to Toronto late '97 and we spend 7 crazy days in my house doing some writing. We decided to deep it up for a couple of years and eventually that's what led to this album.

MMR:

I would like to play 'My Favorite Headache'. You had considered Dave Gilmour to do some solos on this but eventually passed. Did you contact him about this or did you just let it go?

Geddy Lee:

No. I just let it go. We realized there was no soloing (laughs) so the record took much more of an ensemble kind of thing where soloing wasn't what the album was about. So maybe save that for another time.

MMR:

I've read you are speaking about a character in that song - someone who for him life won't go away.... viewing through artificial means. What did you mean?

Geddy Lee:

Well, when something traumatic happens to people they can have a tendency to give up and then rationalize their giving up....and this character in this song is all about that. He lives a very small life. He experiences the big things in life through TV, through artificial stimulation, rather than turn the tube off and go out there and live life. His favorite headache is the recurrence of intelligence that says, 'Look, I'm not going away, life won't go away, you can hide, you can rationalize it but it's still out here for you'. So that's kinda the black comedy created in that song.

MMR:

In terms of the album as a whole, I read a quote you had written saying 'It relates to my relationship to music which is what I love to do but it makes me crazy and wreaks havoc on my life to do it the way I like to do it. But on a bigger level this album is what life is to me. It's not easy but it's what we have to deal with' ...kinda like what you said about the song.

Geddy Lee:

Pretty much. I mean life is messy and you know, when you are younger, that you think that you've got it all sussed out and you can organize it and that's the last laugh 'cause you can't organize it - it organizes you (laughing). So a lot of the songs on this album deal with fallibility, inability to cope and trying to cope....trying to sort out the yin and yang of life.

MMR:

It's complicated.

Geddy Lee:

It sure is.

MMR:

Do you have any secrets to success in that area?

Geddy Lee:

No! Just don't give up on it.

MMR:

We have a studio audience of Rush/Ged fans - any questions?

Phil:

Are you or the guys planning to do a VH1 Behind the Music special?



Geddy Lee:

I can't say at this point. There has been some interest in us doing something but Neil has been unavailable over the last number of years. Possibly some point in the future, I don't know.

George:

Are you going to tour with this album? If so, can you play the Tower?

Geddy Lee:

(everyone laughing). I would certainly love to take those players - Ben and Matt and others - out to do some dates, but at this point, my day job is calling me back. Alex and Neil want to get writing a new Rush album. So I'm going to start that but I'm hoping to late spring, you know...earn a few brownie points and some time off for good behaviour .....and maybe get out and do some dates. I would like to do some small places - 500-1,000 venues. To do it as Rush couldn't do it, on a small scale, you know, just have some fun.

Ken:

Is there anything in your entire career you can stand back in awe at? You know, can't believe it's happened or been that big.

Geddy Lee:

Jeez, just about every day of my life. I can't believe all the good things that have happened to me. You can't think about it all too much or it paralyses you. I'm very appreciative of the good fortune I've had. I've been able to work in music which I love to do. To be able to do what you want to do and make a living at it is a big bonus. I am thankful I have excellent kids and my marriage is still intact and that overawes me more than anything, I tell you. Next year will be 25 years (clapping and cheering as Ged says 'thankyou')...so I have much to be thankful for. I try not to take it all for granted.

MMR:

Did Rush ever do any holiday tunes? I don't think so....

Geddy Lee:

The 'Rush Xmas Album' has yet to come (laughing).

MMR:

Being raised in the Jewish faith, were you and your wife Nancy desirous of bringing your kids up in a certain religion?

Geddy Lee:

I'm a great believer in the traditions of all religions. My wife and I believe in gleaning the most positive energy we can from any culture's traditions so we celebrate Hannaka, Xmas. We don't celebrate religion in a traditional manner, we don't believe in organized religion. We do feel our own interpretation of spirituality..... believe in positive energy and that's the overriding message we give our kids. What they want to believe in is entirely up to them and we just try to provide an environment that's happy and positive and full of 'good old Jewish angst' (laughs).

MMR:

Is it difficult for your children to be grounded coming from your background?

Geddy Lee:

Is it difficult? I think it can be. My son who is about 20 is remarkably grounded and I can't explain it (laughs). He's a great kid and you know, we have a great relationship and good communication. My daughter is 6 and is a whole different thing. She's a much more 'in your face kind of gal'. Well see how life ends up treating her. I think it is difficult but so far so good.

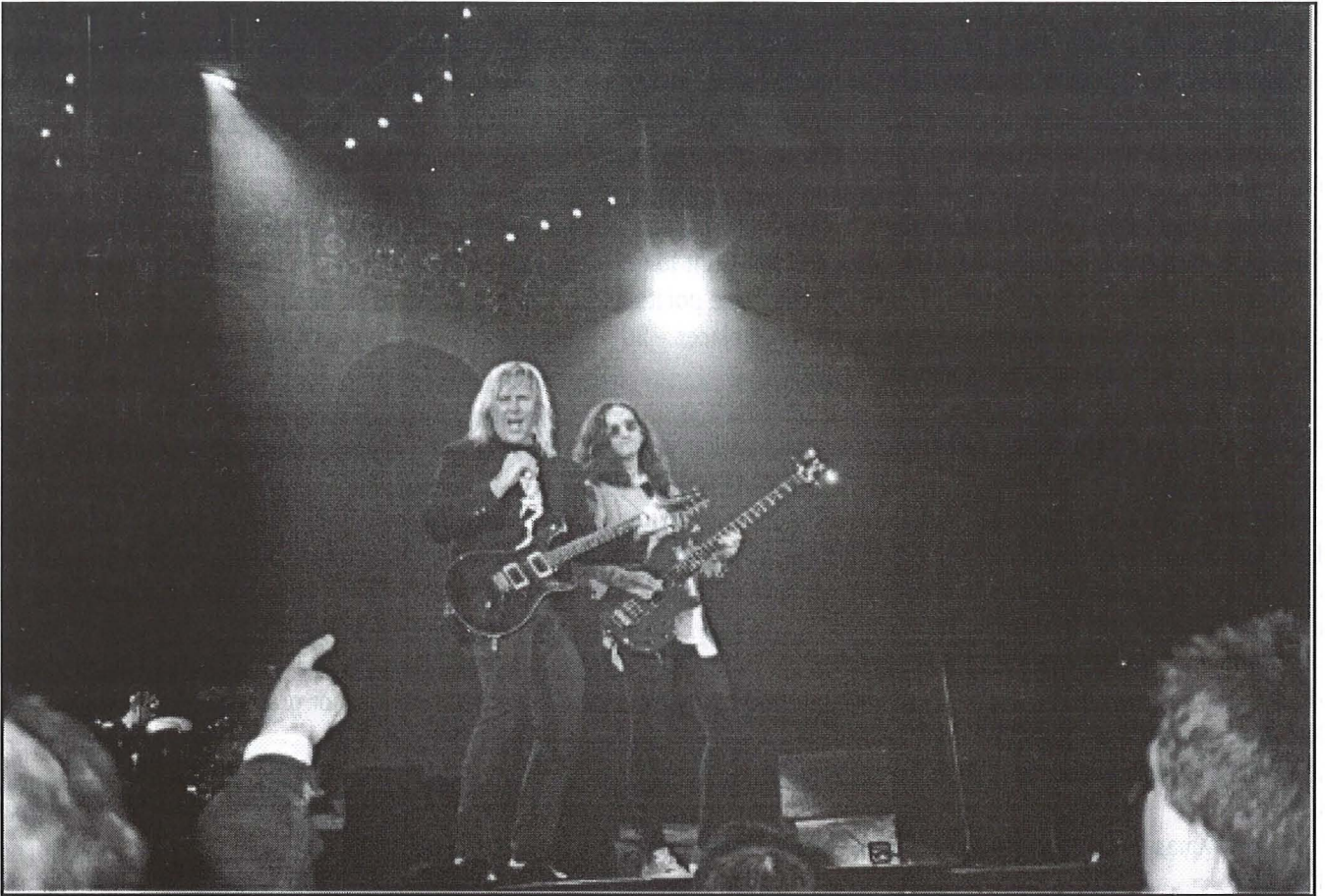
MMR:

Your use of Matt Cameron on drums, how did you come to know him.... how did you come to use him?

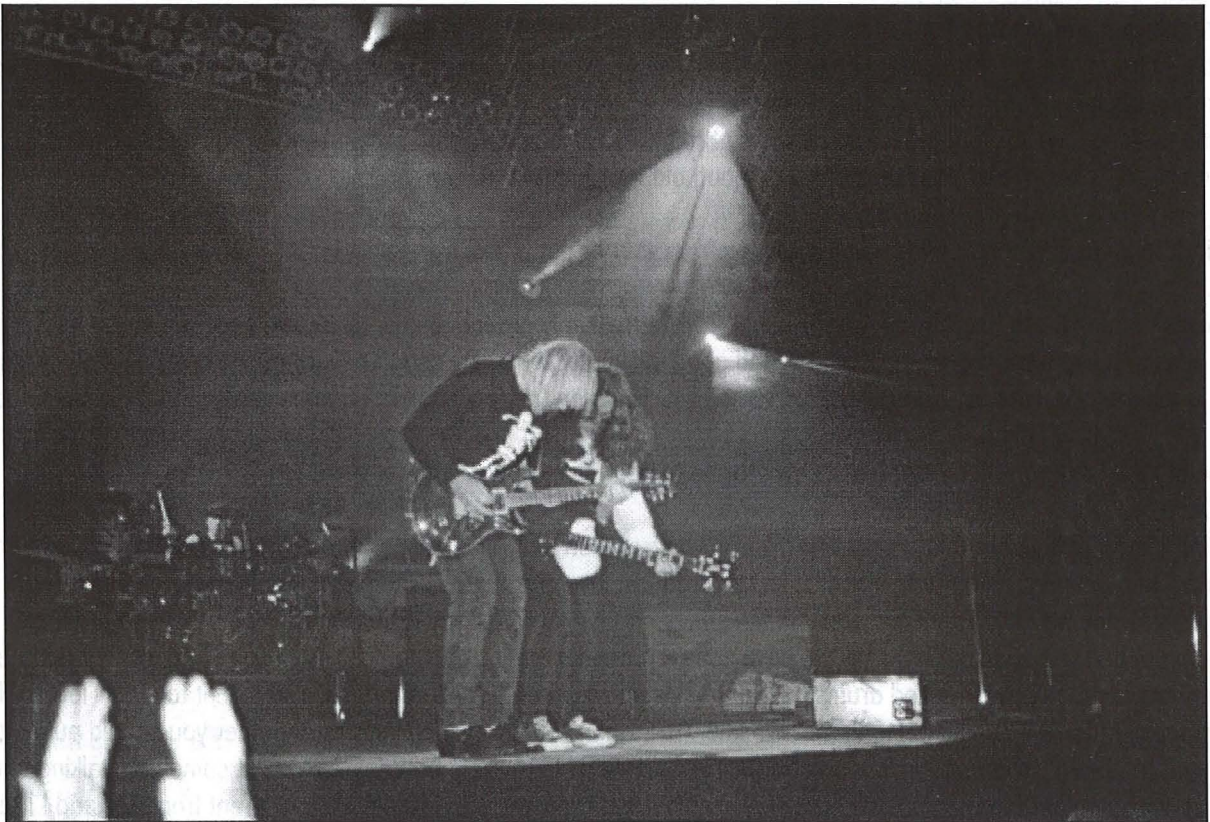
Geddy Lee:

Well, I didn't know him before this project and I was in conversation with AdamKasper who produces the Foo Fighters and had worked with Soundgarden. He's a Seattle based producer and engineer. I liked his work and I wanted him to work on this project in some way and I sent him some of the songs and he said 'Well you are obviously going to use a drummer - who's going to be the drummer?' I said 'we have not even begun to think about it yet'. Ben and I had worked out the drum arrangements on computerized drums before, but we always knew a real drummer would take it to a new level. There is no replacement for the human being there. He said 'Well, when you are putting your list together you should put Matt Cameron on it'. I said 'Of course, he's a great drummer and would be there'. So Ben and I spent some time talking about it, pulled out our Soundgarden records and man, he is just a great drummer. Stylistically a bit different from Neil and I like that idea that we'd be going to a different place in terms of the rhythmic attitude, so I called him up and he was very enthusiastic. He was great and said 'Hey, let's go'. We had about 3 weeks before he was leaving for Europe with Pearl Jam, so we thought 'If we're going to use Matt we need to act right away'. So we said 'fine' and said 'ok - we're going to Seattle. You stay right there, we're coming right away'. So we went down there.



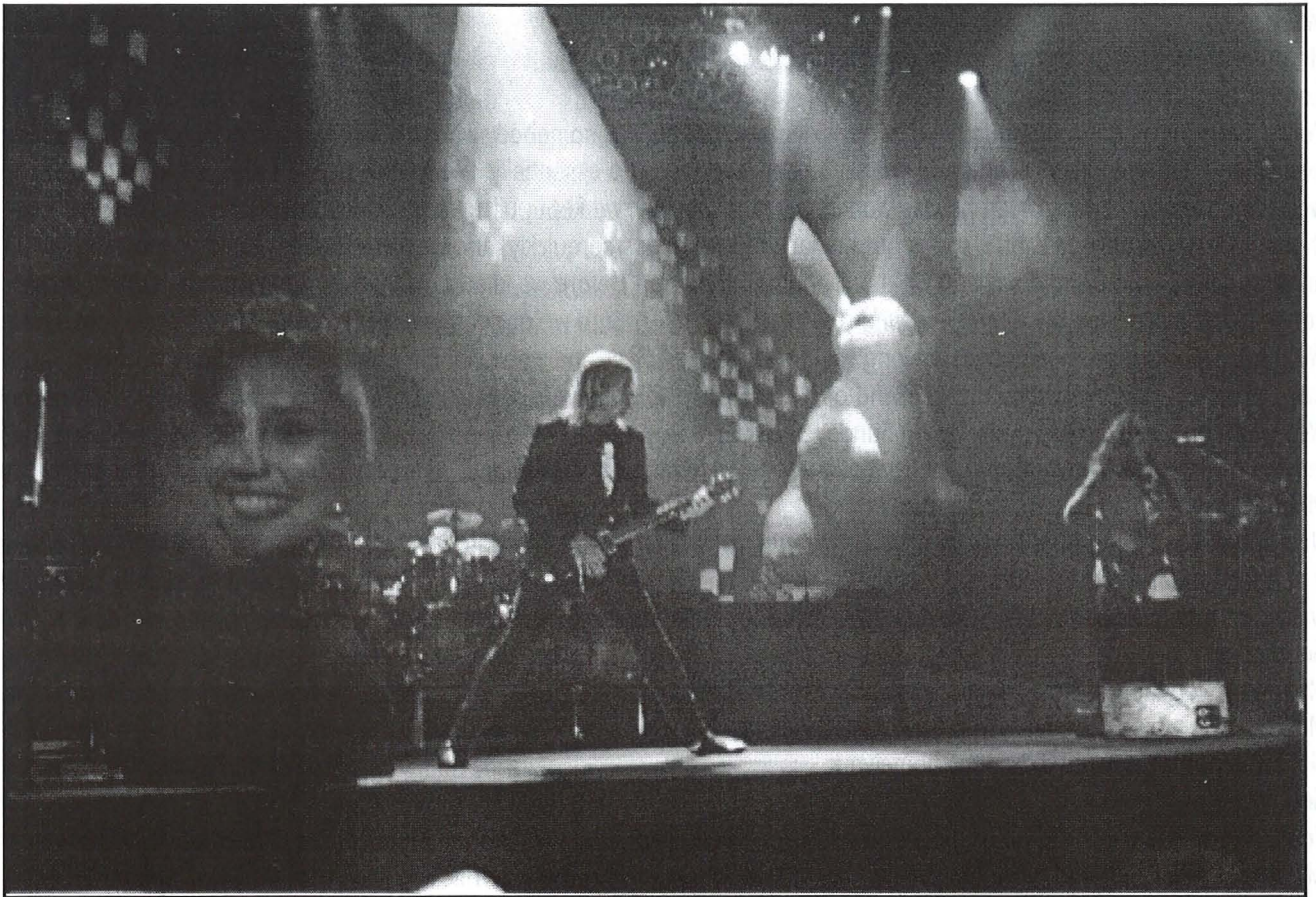


Photograph — Mark Ferguson

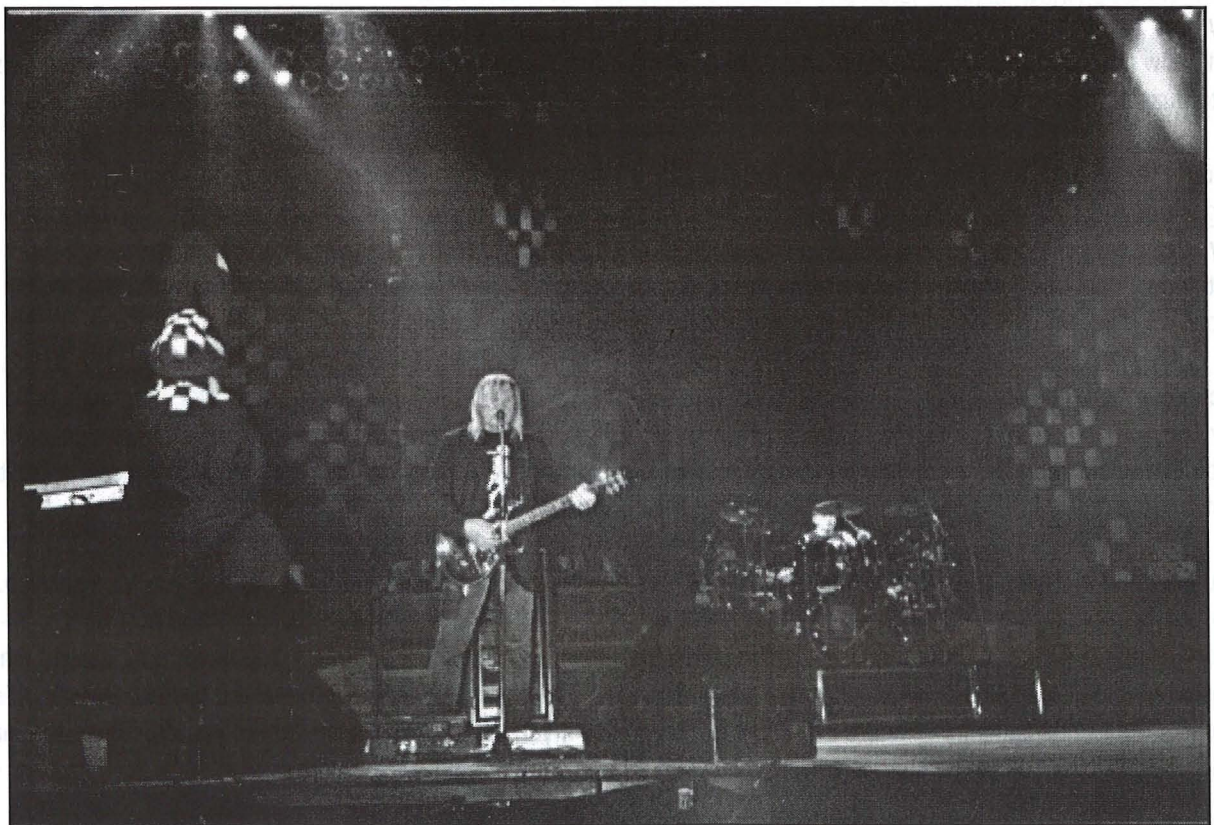


Photograph — Mark Ferguson





Photograph — Mark Ferguson



Photograph — Mark Ferguson



MMR:

He does great work on this record as does Jeremy Tagg.

Geddy Lee:

Yeah, Jeremy is actually a friend of Matt's coincidentally, but he was somebody whose ability I was very aware of. I like his drumming a lot. He plays in Our Lady Peace, a band from Toronto essentially. He was someone I always had in mind as well. When we worked with Matt he was working so fast and well, we kept pulling more songs out of the bag. Originally we thought he would play on 4 or 5 songs but he nailed those songs so quickly, and we were like 'Eh, would you like to play on another song?' 'Sure' he'd say and we'd pull another one out. Before we knew it we had 11 tracks down. One of those songs didn't make it on the album and when we went back to Toronto we decided we needed something more spontaneous. We'd been working on those songs so long we felt a bit stale. Over one weekend, it was I think my birthday weekend, late July, when we gave everybody the weekend off. .... we came to the studio, Ben and I. We wrote this song over the weekend. We got off on it, we called Jeremy up on Sunday and said 'Can you come in tomorrow and play drums?'. He said 'sure, I'm leaving on Tuesday - no problem'. So that song came together very quickly and I was very happy to do something with him.

MMR:

Now speaking of Pearl Jam, I believe on their recent tour they were up in Toronto and you were on the side of the stage and, if I understand it correctly, during the song 'Wishlist', Eddie Vedder changed the lyrics to the song ever so slightly saying 'I was as fortunate as Geddy Lee'. (Ged laughs, clicks fingers and says 'You got your homework done'.)

Geddy Lee:

Man, were you there? How did you know about it? (audience laugh)

MMR:

No, I was not there, but I did do my homework.

Geddy Lee:

Yeah, that was funny. I did go to that show as I hadn't seen Matt since we finished the album and I met some of these guys whilst in Seattle, so it was nice. I had never seen Pearl Jam live. They were terrific live and yeah, they just wanted to embarrass me any way they could.

MMR:

Did the crowd roar?

Geddy Lee:

I don't know how many people picked up on it. There was a cross section of people who picked up on it and there seemed a definite buzz in the room.

MMR:

I heard on this record, for some of the songs you did 2 or 3 different versions of songs, unlike Rush who pick an arrangement and stick with it. Any chance any of the other versions may show up on other forms?

Geddy Lee:

I don't know. I doubt it. Those other versions are really searching for the right version. We really only did that with 1 song 'Window' - 3 different tempos and I think that was me just being neurotic (laughs).

MMR:

Are you neurotic in the studio?

Geddy Lee:

I can be extremely neurotic. I get very into what I'm doing, very passionate. .... I want it to be as good as I can make it. It's kind of a curse really, I drive myself crazy trying to get it as good as I can.

MMR:

Do you ever find in trying to perfect it, the original raw version was almost better? Fiddle about and you lose passion.

Geddy Lee:

Well yeah, that's a danger. There's an expression called 'perfection is the enemy of good'. You have to be careful that you know what you're risking when you go after that perfect thing. First of all it's impossible to make it perfect anyway. It's a nice concept but I don't think I've figured out how to accomplish it yet, so you have to be careful you don't lose the magic of the song. Don't overlook that a song is a living thing with a heart that has to be adhered to.

MMR:

You've been to things that one might not expect Geddy Lee to appear at - record signings, record stores all around the country, interviews (Ged - 'Kissing babies, running for office'). Is this a new experience? It must have been a while since you've done it at that level.



Geddy Lee:

Yeah, I think we got very..... insular for a while. I think it's a dangerous thing to happen to a band but I think it's inevitable. That comes about from too much touring -when you're touring, there is security imposed on you, for obvious reasons and that security creates a wall between you and your fans. It's hard to live without it for practical reasons, but it's an unfortunate separation that occurs. I thought for this album I may not have any touring plans so it would be nice to actually get some feedback from fans.....to do things we could not do in the context of Rush - which has such an intense schedule when we're doing it. I agreed to do some signings and they have been an incredibly pleasant experience and I've got to meet a lot of fans and meet them eye-to-eye for a split second anyway. I've been amazed at the impact that Rush's music has had on them over the years. It's one thing to hear someone has been a fan for over 20 years but it's another for someone to look you in the eye and tell you 'Your music has changed my life'. It's a very powerful moment. For me it's made it very gratifying - it's made me appreciate our supporters all the more.

MMR:

Speaking of supporters, we have a roomful of them here. Would anyone else like to ask Geddy a question?

Laury:

Are you interested in doing any soundtracks - like The Lord of the Rings movie. Secondary to your Rivendell....

Geddy Lee:

I think it's an interesting concept working on a soundtrack. Remember you are always at the mercy of the director. I have a problem with authority (laughs). I don't know how well that would go down. Certainly I would like to try it at some point. In some ways Rush's music is very soundtrack like. We've used a very cinematic way of putting songs together from way back when we did By-Tor and the Snow Dog. That was a little mini-drama. We just provided the orchestration. I think it's something that would lend itself to my writing style, so possibly.

Tim:

Hi. I am wondering if you have a favourite song off the new album?

Geddy Lee:

Well there are 2 songs that keep vying. One is 'Slipping' which is a bit of a different track, kind of a personal song for me. It was the one song written fairly early on in the sessions and when we wrote it Ben and I looked at each other and said we had to make a record. There was something about it that felt too good to ignore. The other song is 'Working At Perfekt'.... kinda the story of my life - the life of a failed perfectionist. Those are 2 of my favourites.

MMR:

Another question. B-man is here..... the author of the Rush biography 'Visions'. Everyone in this room will feel they are the biggest Rush fan of all times - good chance B-man is (laughing).

B-man:

On the song 'Grace to Grace' the music on the verses sound like a train going down a track to me and there is a lyric in there 'a hundred thousand miles of track'. I was wondering, did the music come first - I know with Rush you do it both ways - the music or the lyrics? How did this one come about?

Geddy Lee:

The lyric came.....that lyric line 'a hundred thousand miles of track'. I had written quite a while ago. I have this little note book I've been carrying around for years and I'm too lazy to use it most of the time. I write certain things down and that was one of the things I had written down and when Ben and I wrote the music for that verse they seem to be completely synchronous. Even though they were written separately, in a way, the idea was already there.

MMR:

We are about to play 'Grace to Grace'. Is there anything else you would like to say about the song?

Geddy Lee:

Yes, this is a song that was really inspired by my mother's life. My mother is a holocaust survivor. Her and my father were. They came over to Canada after the war. Their lives were interrupted in a dramatic and terrible way, as many war veterans have been. Thinking about people who go through terrible trauma due to war or circumstances of life that are unavoidable. It's their innate elegance and survival spirit that makes them carry on and live a good life.....an uncomplaining life, and are still able to laugh, raise kids and despite what seems like it should be a devastating...an irreparable event.....and that song inspires me, or those events in her life, inspired me to write the song.

MMR:

This is Grace to Grace.

**To be continued.....**



# *The Spirit of Rush*



Declan Burgh (centre)  
Guitar / Keyboards / Bass Pedals / Vocals

Steve Kightley (right)  
Bass / Keyboards / Bass Pedals / Backing Vocals

Steve Hughes (left)  
Acoustic & Electronic Percussion / Backing Vocals

## So why a RUSH tribute group?

Well, we had played extensively in one guise or another in various outfits over the years. Either in pub bands or in original groups even recording and getting our own material out there, in a hope to reap some rewards from the often fickle and sometimes static and prejudiced musical environment.

The music scene we felt, had become a very stagnant and un-awe-inspiring place to exist. We spoke about some of the great groups that had come and gone, and those that were still rockin' after all the years, and doing it well.

We agreed that RUSH were a band unparalleled in diversity, and musical excellence and how with the current trends leaning evermore toward tribute groups, that now was the time to strike. Undoubtedly, we were concerned that the consensus might be that we were just reproducing works that were not our own, and that it be easy to do so. This only cemented in our own minds, the complexity of these compositions and the amount of effort needed to accurately reproduce them live.

Unfortunately, RUSH don't visit these parts all too often, and the chance to perform this musically challenging material in a live setting was like a red rag to a bull, and so, away we went. We felt the talent was there, and as a group we gelled straight away both musically and personally.

The set at present leans more towards the 80's era of *RUSH*, from *Permanent Waves* through to *Counterparts*, but with some earlier songs like *Closer to the Heart* and *XANADU*. We believe it to be a good cross section, spanning 20 years or thereabouts, and so we should hit on some of everyone's favorite *RUSH* tracks.

## A bit about us:

### Steve Hughes (Acoustic & Electronic Percussion):

Steve has performed with some big acts over the last few years: live and studio work for *THE ENID*, *BIG BIG TRAIN*, as well as playing in Declan's previous incarnation, *BALANCE*. Peart is one of his biggest influences and sites *Power Windows* and *Hold your Fire* as his fave albums, from the Fab Three.

### Steve Kightley (Bass, Keyboards, Bass Pedals)

Steve has mainly performed with local groups in and around his home town of Northampton. His musical influences and tastes definitely rest in the "PROG ROCK" sphere. Fave albums include *Power Windows*, *Grace under Pressure* & *A Show Of Hands*.



**Declan Burgh (Guitar, Keyboards, Vocals)**

Declan has played with local covers groups and his own original groups since his arrival in Northampton in early 1990. His only recorded work to date being his solo project *BALANCE*, with the 5 track CD *INSIDE OUT*. The opportunity to perform this music is a great "buzz" and the live interaction is what he's looking forward to the most.

- **Name: Declan Burgh (Guitar / Keyboards / Vocals)**

- **Age: 29**



**Personal Profile:**

Born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1972 Co. Limerick, Ireland into a musical family, I moved to the U.K in 1989 where I began playing guitar and singing in local pubs and clubs.

I took part in various "Jam Sessions" where I subsequently met, and began performing and forming alliances and groups with the musicians I met. I've been playing for 10 years playing and song writing along the way. I've also taught guitar and played live extensively throughout the country.

**Equipment:**

- Mesa Boogie Tri Axis Guitar Pre-Amplifier
- TC Electronics 2290 Digital Delay & Sampler Effects Unit
- Rocktron Hush Unit
- Beringer Ultrafex II Enhancer
- Mesa Boogie 295 Stereo Power Amplifier
- Furman Power Conditioner
- Dbx Compressor
- Korg Tuner

**Pedals & Controllers**

- Boss Volume Pedal
- Boss CS-2 compressor
- Boss ME-5 (used for midi only – patch changer)
- Dunlop Cry Baby
- Roland FC200 (for bass pedals & synth lines)

**Cabinet**

Mesa Boogie 300w Cab

**Guitars:**

- Music Man "LUKE"
- Ibanez 777
- Primary Hand Made Guitar

**Keyboards:**

Roland XP-60

- **Name: Steve Kightley (Bass / Keyboards / Vocals)**

- **Age: 34**



**Personal Profile:**



Born on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1967 in Northampton, I have always had a keen interest in the local rock music scene. Over the years I have been involved with various small, local live acts but the "The Spirit of Rush" project represents my debut in terms of performing serious, complex rock music. I also enjoy writing my own original material and hope to eventually develop some of the ideas to become full-blown progressive rock songs – hopefully to be recorded and performed live with Declan and Steve.

**Amplifier:**

Trace Elliot AH300-7 GP7 Head (300W)

**Pedals & Controllers**

Roland PK-5 Bass Pedals  
Korg Toneworks AX100G Multi-Effects

**Cabinet:**

250W Peavey 1 x 15" Cab  
400W Modified Sound City 4 x 12" Cab

**Bass:**

Yamaha TRB5-II 5-string Active Bass  
Ibanez G10 5-string Passive Bass

**Keyboards:**

Yamaha PSR-340

**Career:**

- 1984                    **"GRAIVE MISTAKE"**
- 2001                   **"THE SPIRIT OF RUSH"**

• **Name: Steve Hughes (Drums / Backing Vocals)**

• **Age: 25**



**Personal Profile:**

Born on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1975 in Hillingdon, West London.

I have enjoyed playing with some great live acts over the years with **THE ENID** being just one of those. I have recorded a number of CDs with them so check 'em out. The opportunity to perform the RUSH material is a great challenge, which I'm looking forward to greatly.

**Equipment:**

Yamaha Birch Custom  
Istanbul Cymbals, Hi-Hat & China Crashes

**Pedals:**

Drum Workshop

**Keyboards:**

Roland "V" Drums (Electronic Drums)

**Career:**

- **"THE ENID"**
- **"BIG BIG TRAIN"**
- **"BALANCE"**
- **"THE SPIRIT OF RUSH"**

**Set List and play order:**

INTRO  
THE BIG MONEY  
SUBDIVISIONS  
LIMELIGHT  
MANHATTAN PROJECT  
TURN THE PAGE  
FREEWILL  
AFTERIMAGE



DISTANT EARLY WARNING  
MISSION (and Guitar Solo)  
GRAND DESIGNS  
CUT TO THE CHASE  
XANADU  
RED BARCHETTA  
CLOSER TO THE HEART  
TOM SAWYER  
2112  
THE SPIRIT OF RADIO

Live Dates:

Limelight Crewe August 19th

Monday 27th August - Newages Social Club, Stamford, Lincs

Support - Vai/Satch tribute band G2

£2.50 Tel: 07866 772462

Saturday 1st September - Mr. Smith's, Bournemouth

Friday 9th November - The Mean Fiddler (LA2), London

Tickets: [www.wayahead.com](http://www.wayahead.com) <<http://www.wayahead.com>>

Saturday 17th November - Zac's, Milton Keynes

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## FORCE TEN NEWS

**Bradford based Rush tribute band Force 10 are looking forward to this years convention and are currently finalising last minute arrangements and fine tuning for the gig.**

Drummer Graham Clarke who earlier this year returned to England having spent 5 years living in Canada said "it's great to be back in England playing with me old pals again. I played in a few bands in Canada which I enjoyed but I'm pleased to be back and whacking out the Rush numbers again." Graham added "it didn't take me long to get back into it and now I'm raring to go. The most difficult thing about playing a Rush tribute (apart from the playing itself of course) is deciding which songs to play – choosing 20+ songs from all the albums Rush have done is a pretty difficult task. When we decided to reform Force 10 earlier this year, we had over 60 songs between us that we wanted to play. All the old arguments about whether we should play more of the old or new songs went on for about a fortnight."

"It's certainly true that compromises had to be reached and difficult decisions were made not to include songs in the set. I particularly remember Damian, the singer, not being too happy at excluding his favourite track 'Middletown Dreams'. He cried for a week." He shouldn't grumble too much, he pretty much had his way in choosing the majority of the songs. "But you can't play every song and what we tried to do is get a blend of every Rush era so there'll be something for everyone at the convention." I don't want to give too much away about which songs we're playing but 2 – 2½ hours on stage is definitely going to be a marathon set. What I will say is we put together a terrific set and a treat for any Rush fan."

After the convention we are looking to tour the North of England sometime in October/November.



## PEOPLE ARE SAYING.....

**An interview with Ben Mink - from 'Reverb', Roland, Canada**



Ben Mink is a songwriter and producer, as well as a gifted session musician (violin/mandolin/guitar/programmer). But most people know Ben for co-writing and co-producing with k.d. lang. Rush fans will also know Ben for his violin work on "Losing It" from the Signals album, and his work with the seminal electronic trio FM.

As a session musician, Ben has worked with Anne Murray, Jane Siberry, Barenaked Ladies, Raffi, Prairie Oyster, Bruce Cockburn, and on and on. He produced the "Maybe You Should Drive" album for BNL, and is no stranger to the Juno and Grammy awards.

His list of credits continues to grow, but he recently took time out to talk to us about recording, songwriting, and of course his Roland gear.

**R: I think when most people think of Ben Mink, the next thing they think of is k.d. lang, that association.**

BM: That's fine. [laughs]

**R: What's your role there? You were a member of the Reclines, right?**

BM: Yes, but I joined her first as a writer, really. We had met in Japan at the 1985 Expo and six months later I sent her a song called "Turn Me Around" that I'd written in part when I was 17, and then finished at that time, (when I was 33). She and her record company, SIRE, quite liked it and suggested we get together to try writing, which we did. So initially I met k.d. as a writing partner and was then asked to join the Reclines for the recording of her first CD in England.

**R: Which album was that?**

BM: That was "Angel with a Lariat." It was her first release for Sire Records, with Dave Edmunds producing.

**R: So from there you kept writing together, and good things happened.**

BM: Yeah, we kept writing and over a period of time, each album somewhat escalated in popularity until we shifted from the country field into popular music, which is where we were probably headed anyway. We still retain a real love of good country music to this day, although I think for us politically the boundaries were set and closed from day one. Realizing that, we decided to do what we felt from our hearts and "Ingenue" emerged, which was the album that really opened things up for us.

**R: "Constant Craving" was the single that really hit it out of the park for you.**

BM: Yes.

**R: How'd that work out with the Stones? They lifted a part of that, didn't they?**

BM: I'm sure it was unconscious, but apparently that's what happened. Their lawyers contacted us on very short notice and said that they'd recognized the similarity between the two songs. To avoid any problems in the future they suggested sharing the authorship, which was very gentlemanly of them.



**R: So now you're co-written with Mick and Keith!**

BM: I look forward to meeting them someday! [laughs]

**R: Recently you've been writing with Geddy Lee. I thought that was a bit of a twist.**

BM: Well, Geddy and I have been close friends for years. Rush were fans of FM, and at one point (1979), we'd toured with them. I also recorded with Rush on the Signals album. (A violin solo on the song "Losing It"). From that period on, I guess it was about 1980, we've been friends. During that entire time, we've never tried to write anything. It's always been just hanging around although he used to play bass on some of the k.d. demos; sometimes he'd casually come over, play bass, and then we'd catch a Blue Jays game afterwards.

**R: So Rush fans need to know that if they can get their hands on some k.d. bootleg demos...**

BM: [laughs] I don't think there's too many around, but there's always been that interaction, in its' own incongruous way. I used to listen to all of Rush's album demos, and Geddy to mine, and we would offer each other our opinions.

**R: How did your writing session go now that you guys finally got the chance to sit down and write?**

BM: Just fine, thanks entirely to Roland equipment... [laughs] No seriously, it went quite well. We have no great aspirations; it's a reason to hang out as much as anything else and we'll see what happens.

We have parallel studio setups...his in Toronto and mine in Vancouver, with virtually the same set of equipment. So that theoretically, when I go to Toronto, we can basically plug everything in and get up and running in a moment, and it's the same here.

**R: So what do your studios look like?**

BM: As far as the computers go, we're both running Macs (mine a G3 and Geddy a 9600) and we're both using Logic Audio heavily. We've both got ProTools 24 mix systems. As far as outboard gear, we both have Roland JD-990's (with orchestra cards). Geddy still has the S-770's which he's been using faithfully for many years. He's always raved about "that sampler". It's never gone down even during all Rush's tours.

**R: They got the first four in the country [from Saved by Technology in Toronto]. That was for the Presto tour. We met Geddy backstage when the tour hit Vancouver, and he mentioned that the S-770's hadn't let him down once.**

BM: Well, they don't, they're great samplers. So he still uses his.

We have some Demeter DI mic and instrument preamps; we're also using a new mic by Neumann, the TLM-103. We tried them when they first came out, they've been fantastic. As far as mic preamps go, he's got the Demeter at his studio and I switch between a couple I'm still trying out; I have a John Hardy M-1, and we tried the Drawmer which worked out pretty well, too.

**R: Eddie Schwartz was raving about them to me.**

BM: Yeah, they're nice. But I'm definitely not a "gear fascist". I think you can take any decent microphone and by moving it this way or this way, make it sound like half the other mics in the world. And if you know what you're going for, it truly doesn't matter.

I've heard fantastic pieces of equipment sound like garbage, because of poor taste. Ultimately, it's all about taste anyway (hopefully good) and great performances, not to mention good songs.

I use a dbx-160X compressor which I've had for ages. The combination of the [John Hardy] M-1 and the dbx-160 has been used on all our vocals for probably the last eight years. I keep comparing to a lot of the new preamps like the Avalons, etc. but I still prefer the dbx/Hardy combo. We've used that with k.d. on a good deal of her recordings.

**R: This way, with similar set-ups, you and Geddy can swap data very easily.**

BM: Yeah, that was the idea. Backing up data is always the problem. We're using the DVD ROM rewritable format now. You can get 5.2 Gigs or 2.1 Gigs per side, which is still not enough [laughs]. And they're quite slow. But, you know, everyone's got those kinds of problems.

We walk in with those disks, open them up and it's all there... except when it's not.

**R: Do you guys run similar mixing desks?**

BM: Yeah, right now we both have Mackie 32's, and as far as mixing we're still experimenting with how much computer automation to use as opposed to just "putting-your-hands-on-the-fader". There's still something very exciting about that. Mixes are still performances. You can build them of course, slowly, but it's generally more exciting to get your hands on the faders and simply react instead of sitting there tweaking your mouse hour after hour.

Basically our systems run around Logic. We rely heavily on it because we don't have the time or patience for any more learning curves.



**R: That's a really important factor. Geddy stressed that too, when he was here trying our new bass amp.**

BM: You don't have enough time. When you have families as we do, you really have to partition your time effectively and I would rather take ten steps quickly than one that's going to probably lead me to a dead end because I don't know that program.

But I'm always open to new things and I keep learning new stuff when I'm not faced with a deadline.

**R: Some of us have our little V-Studios at home and we look in magazines like Mix or EQ and we see these awesome setups and we think we can never get those sounds without all that gear, and then you hear something like this where you just plugged a mic into a board and went for it.**

BM: Well even a bad mic. It's done everywhere now to the point where nobody cares, which is great. Listen to Radiohead for example. Their stuff is so compelling, and the sounds are "inspired," but largely lo-fi. It just works. They know how to manipulate garbage. And most of the world runs like that now, too. I don't think it's anything too novel any longer.

As a kid, I learned by playing with garbage, and then you work real hard and learn what's supposedly "good" sound. You go through that and in the end you come up with a library of personal taste. And it includes low tech. A "bad" sound works great as a foil for a "good" sound. In the end it's a matter of taste. Whatever is going to, as Geddy says, "combust," is right. You search for sounds to combust the track. The ingredients don't matter.

Roland equipment has always been an important part of my set up. I think you've got some way to go regarding your manuals [laughs]. But over time, I think they've proven to be still my favourite and most important gear.

I've got a number of modules and pedals, a VG-8 and the guitar synth (GI-10), which I both use have really been fantastic.

**R: So when you guys sit down to write, do you sit down with guitars, or what do you do?**

BM: He plugs in a bass and I get a guitar. Generally, that's the way we start. And then we just start noodling. The actual writing goes very, very quickly. The arrangements etc., take as long as we need them to, but we're also learning as we go along.

**R: Are you using any of the SR-JV expansion boards?**

BM: Yeah. We're using the Orchestral one a fair bit, which I've used for years. I've used some of the string sounds to supplement my own strings, 'cause I play violin live on record. But I'll use them to supplement. There's some excellent cello patches, and the warm strings and viola sounds are really quite good for thickening up section parts. I really haven't had a chance to listen to some of the other cards. The Asian card sounds good, but one has to be careful. You certainly hear a lot of these patches on recordings, and they can get worn out pretty quickly.

If you end up using patches right out of the boxes, it's often going to sound like "patches right out of the box". There's so much you can do with them afterwards.

**R: What kind of stuff do you sample? Do you sample your own playing?**

BM: Yeah, everything. I have numerous collections ... vocal things and lots of strings and whatever I've compiled over the years that has character. If not, I just make one up.

A lot of times I use Time Bandit, which will take the one note, copy it and retain the original qualities. I think it's as good as anything I've heard. Vibratos and most of the characteristics are retained even with the time stretch over an octave, and it'll also convert individual notes into a scale over the keyboard. I'll also then use ReCycle, which is another program that I guess a lot of people are familiar with that chops up drum loops or whatever and shoots it off to your sampler where it'll lay out the programs for you. It works in mono, which is a little unfortunate, but doesn't really matter too much. It'll save you eons of time, though. You simply send it via MIDI, or SCSI, to your sampler and it lays out the whole program across the keyboard chromatically, in a moment. So what used to take me hours just takes minutes. I'll create my libraries like that, and if they're not too hard to access at the moment I'll just call them up.

I've got tons of Roland gear lying around here. I never go to a studio session without my DR-660, the little rhythm box. I always keep it around. If I need an extra little cymbal hit or anything, I'll just poke it in quickly. And for click tracks, it's so tiny and MIDI friendly.

For Drum programming I also use a little handpad, that Roland stopped making, called the Handy Pad, PAD-5. I bought one for about \$30 from a friend. It's also got really sensitive touch pads, so if you want to tap in a bongo rhythm it's really cool.

**R: So what are you working on next?**

BM: I'm writing with a number of people, and I'm presently producing an ethnic recording for a group called Finjan. It's going to be released on Rounder records. It's Eastern European klezmer music. I'm just finishing that up today and tomorrow. That'll probably be out in the summer.



# Closer to the hearts of Rush fans

Band's admirers come from Brazil, Japan, England



REBECCA ECKLER

The program asked, "Are you ready to rock?" It went on to read: "There is no need to ask, 'Why are we here?'"

But, Saturday morning, I was most definitely not ready to rock. And I was asking, "Why am I here?"

I wasn't entirely looking forward to spending my Saturday with a couple hundred Rush fanatics, who gathered at the National Trade Centre for RushCon 2001, a convention to celebrate Rush's music and meet fellow fans.

I've never understood music fanatics. I'm always left wondering, "Why does anyone need 18 T-shirts with a band's name?"

I went to the convention thinking there would be many Star Trek crossover fans. And a lot of older brothers. I always believed the only fans of Rush were older

people say when you ask about the band. "My older brother listened to Rush." My older brother did, in fact, listen to Rush.

And, until this weekend, I never thought I knew any Rush songs. I'm not so much a Neil Peart fan as I am a Neil Young fan.

But if you mention to Rush fans you don't know any Rush songs, they refuse to believe you. "Sure you do. You know *Tom Sawyer*, *Spirit of the Radio*, *Closer to the Heart*."

They're right. Somehow, (maybe it's because I'm a good Canadian), I do know those Rush songs. Thank God. I arrived just in time for the acoustic singalong, led by Elise Delvecchio, who actually sported rats' tails.

You know rats' tails — when your hair is really short except for a few really long braids hanging down your back. I have really bad

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memories of rats' tails. In the early '80s, two of my brothers once got in a fight and one of them cut the other's rats' tail off with a pair of scissors.

Delvecchio was super kind and handed me the lyric sheet. I'm not sure if I was overly tired, but I teared up listening to them sing *Tears*.

There were couples holding hands, guys with buddies, single

sionately. As I watched, I thought, that's it, my boyfriend and I are going to put on the Dylan CD and start having weekly singalongs. It would bring us closer together.

"To me," said Delvecchio after singing 18 songs, "it's all about Rush's ideology and philosophy. Do you understand?"

Nope.

"Well, they're asking you to have integrity and follow your heart and that's what I do."

Just when I was ready to admit that Rush fanatics are A-OK, I asked her if she can spot a Rush fan anywhere?

"I can," she said. "It's their geekiness. I'm sorry, but it's true."

What is true, is Rush has one heck of a following. Fans flew in from Japan, Brazil, England and all across the States, to attend. The convention, which closed yesterday, featured tribute bands, speakers, souvenir stands, charity auctions and contests like Best Tour Story and Name That Rush Tune.

(Based on the singalong, I think everyone would be a winner.)

Fans also toured Rush landmarks in Toronto — the Cabbagetown headquarters of Anthem/Sro, Rush's record label; Old City Hall, which was featured on the cover of 1981's *Moving Pictures* album; and lead singer Geddy Lee's house in Rosedale.

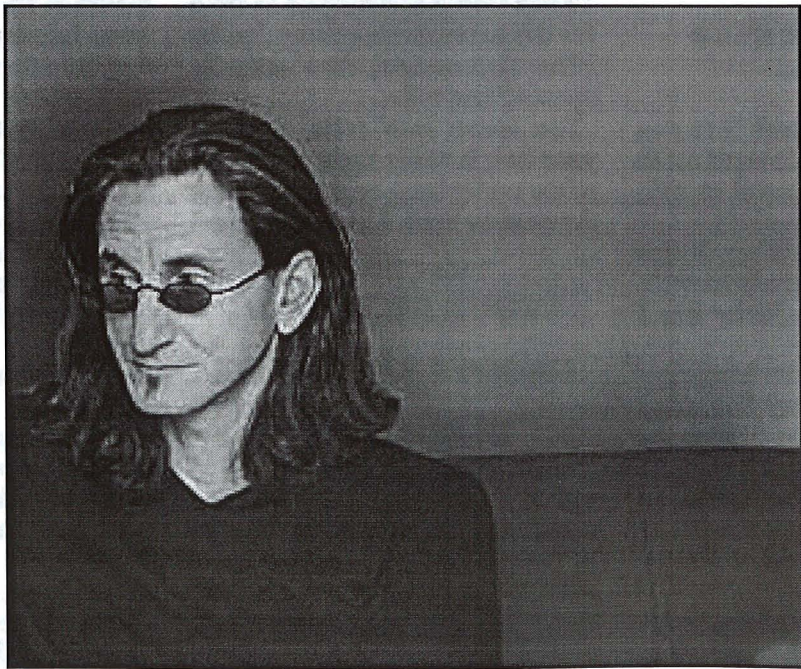
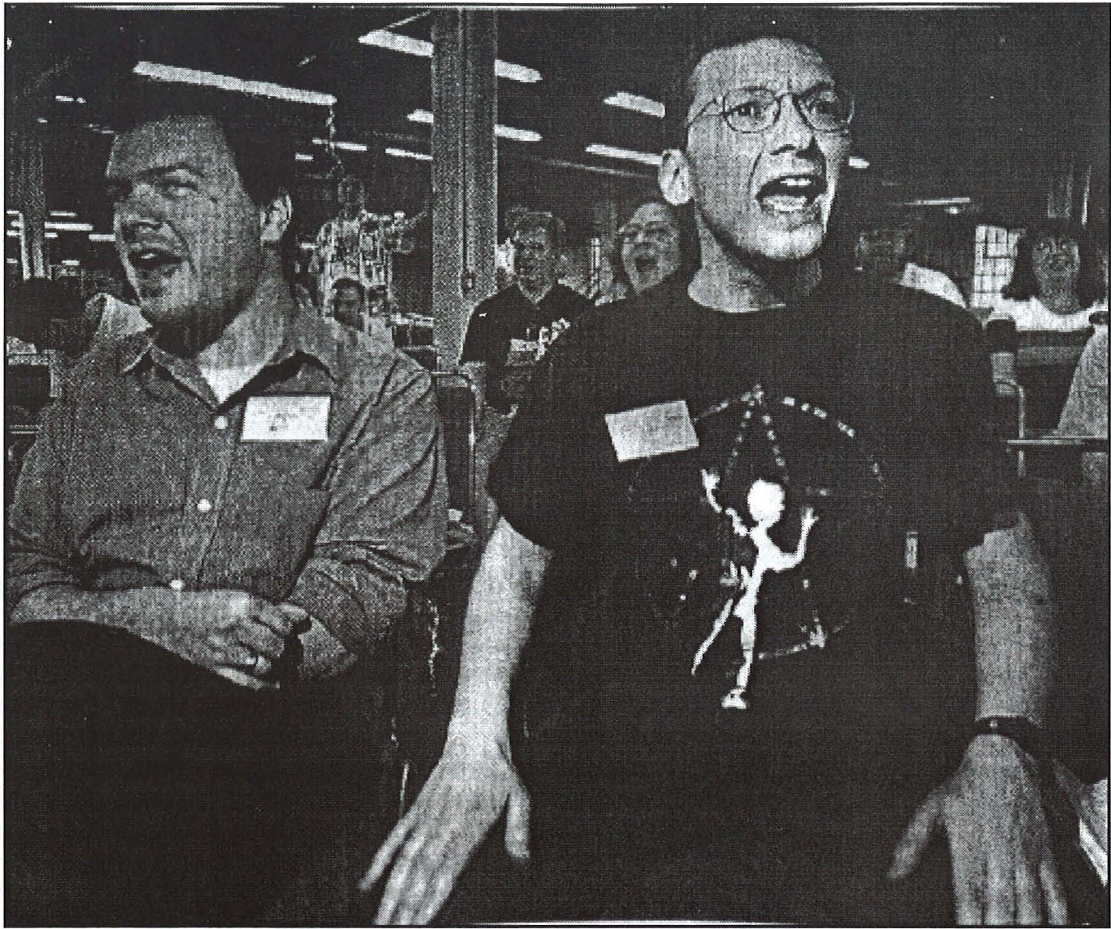
The one thing it didn't feature was a member of Rush. Fans were forgiving. Almost everyone I talked to said, "They're in the studio, that's why they couldn't come. We want them to be in the studio."

I asked Tony Douvis, a 34-year-old investment representative from Oakville who has seen Rush perform at least 20 times, about the concert T-shirts, which almost everyone was wearing. "It shows where your allegiance lies."

I couldn't leave before testing my theory. A group of three male fans, John, Brad, and Glen, stood by the Rush videos for sale. I asked each, "Are you an older brother?"

The answers? "Yes," "Yes," and "Yes."







# *What's the Rush?*

After 25 years together, the veteran Canadian rockers take stock of their careers

By KIERAN GRANT -- Toronto Sun

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.

"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.

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?"



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