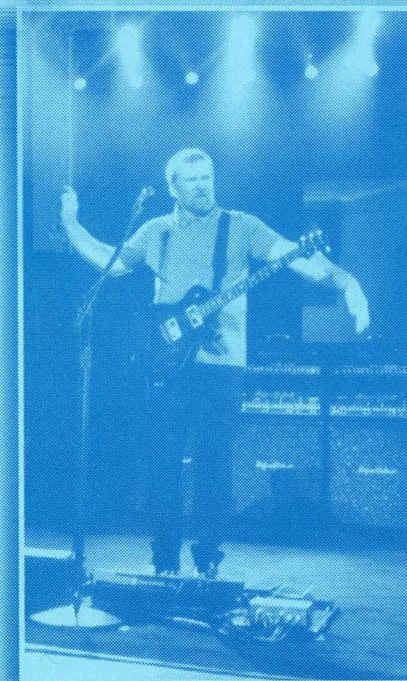
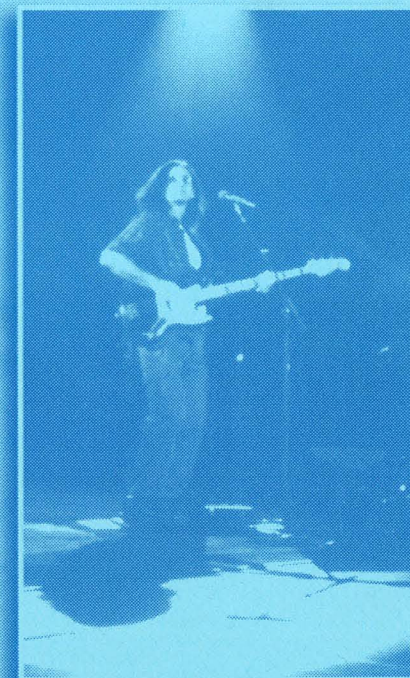
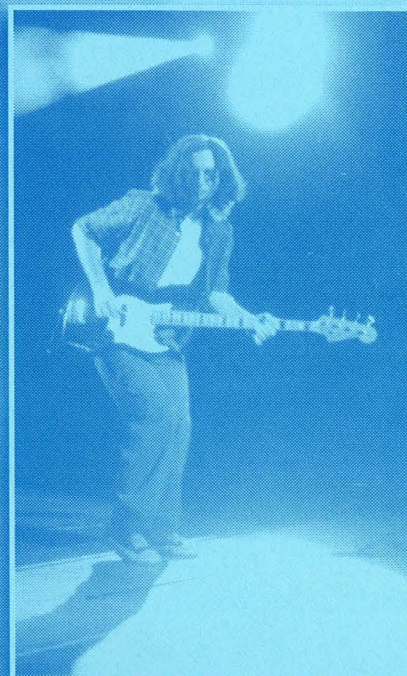


spirit of rush



The Spirit of Mick Editorial

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Thanks to: Monica Davidson, The Mad Jock,
Brad Parmeter, Steve Streeter, Chris Loydall
Website: <http://www.spirit-of-rush.com>

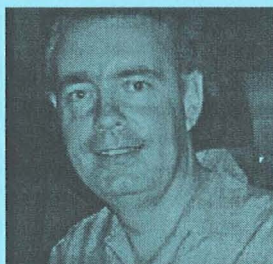
Photos: Janet Balmer, Stu Borland
Cover by David Kendall

Editor: Janet Balmer

This issue is Dedicated to Lesley, Jamie and Steven

Dear SOR readers,

It was never my intention to be writing this editorial and now that I am doing it, I have to say that these are the hardest words I've ever had to write. As you are all, no doubt, aware, Mick, our beloved editor passed away suddenly on 31st July.



After the initial disbelief and shock subsided, myself and the hardcore of SOR made the decision to go ahead with the Convention on 31st August and try and hold it in the way Mick would have wanted. I am delighted to say that the Convention was a massive success and we raised a ton of money for Mick's family (Lesley, Jamie and Steven). I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped out on that frantic but rewarding day and to also thank all those who attended, everyone who made such generous bids in the auction and all those who bought so many raffle tickets. Initially I was daunted by the prospect of getting the show on the road, but I was supported throughout by so many people who wanted to ensure that it was a success and a fitting tribute to Mick. Firstly I would like to thank the Mad Jock (Tom Cornell) who was an absolute rock for me and who made himself hoarse on the day acting as MC. Also I'd like to thank Lesley, Chris Loydall (and daughter), Sue and Kiri (Mick's sister and niece), Andrew Field, Cliff, Cheryl, Kiera, Steve Mac (and son), Stu Borland, Ray at the Limelight, Phil Johnson, Kevin Henry, Kevin Owen.....and anyone else I may have forgotten. It was a fantastic team effort folks!

Mick brought a smile to our faces to the last - the funeral car was emblazoned with a huge 2112 in red flowers which kept the occupants of south London wondering what on earth was going on..... and the chapel was blasting out 2112 The Overture as everyone arrived. Add to this the vicar's speech... which included references to 'Sabbath, Deep Purple and Rush' and The Mission which was played as we departed. It was an uplifting day - just as he would have wanted it.

Only 3 weeks prior, I had been in the US with Mick, Mad Jock and a group of friends seeing the first 5 Rush shows. During the first show at Hartford Mick looked like a man who had found true happiness. Generous as ever, it turned out that he had procured 2 photo passes for the Scranton and Charlotte shows - which he gave to myself and to others rather than for his own use. You can see some of the results in the pages of this issue.

I would like to thank Rush for putting on such a cracking show and for their gift to Mick's family. I would also like to thank Anna at Anthem and Neil at East West Records for their donations to the raffle for the Convention; and Monica Davidson, Ray W, Steve Streeter and Dave and Margot Orenchuck for their solid support from the US and Canada and their efforts in raising a huge amount of funds to add to Micks Memorial Fund.

As I explained in my letter to you all, it is my intention to carry on for this issue and one final issue of SOR only. To tell the truth, it has been very difficult for me to carry on alone and I don't feel like I could take the place of Mick. So the next issue will be the last and I have decided to dedicate it to Mick..... if you have a memorable/funny story or photo about him please send it in for publication. The last issue will also contain the convention pics and all the usual interviews and articles.

Having said that, I have some good news - soon, in the wake of SOR, a new Rush publication will be launched, run by the Mad Jock himself. It will be called 'Turn The Page' and if you have ideas as to what you would like to see in the new 'fanzine' and what format you would like it to be, please write to me at the editorial address or email Tom at madjock.2112@geddy.demon.co.uk. Further info' as to the transition to the new publication will be in the final issue of SOR.

It looks increasingly unlikely that Rush will tour Europe if the rumours are anything to go by, but we will of course, let you know, if we hear otherwise. I hope you enjoy Issue 63 nevertheless, despite the delay in getting it out to you. In this issue, as well as the largest Signals we have ever had, you will find a transcript of an exclusive interview Mick and myself had with Geddy back in May, some great accounts of readers' visits to see Rush on the VT tour and much more. Take care,

Janet

Signals

Dear SOR,

After years of anticipation, the news began to filter through of a new Rush CD. It didn't bode well.... NO GUITAR SOLOS and NO KEYBOARDS? "Christ, what have you done!" I thought. But this is Rush! What a fool I was to doubt them after all this time.

I remember seeing them at Bingley Hall, Stafford on the Moving Pictures/Exit Stage Left tour (The Camera Eye played live!). Before the show, Ultravox and Visage were played over the sound system - this gave a taster of what the band were listening to and later influenced the Signals album, which I really struggled to get into.

It has since become one of my favourites.... the Visage 'Fade to Grey' song greatly influencing 'The Weapon'. Vapor Trails is like Signals in that it is difficult to appreciate immediately, but after numerous plays in the car on our holidays it has grown on me to the extent that I feel that every song is a classic that will still be revealing little nuances for years to come.

Starting off with a statement of intent from Neil on drums, and hopefully ending with another statement of intent... 'Endlessly Rocking' indeed! I'll not run through each track as we all know by now how good they are! Just observations on a few songs....

Ghost Rider is lyrically and musically excellent, shades of U2! How It Is is very catchy, like REM, only better! It became the official anthem of our holiday - 'It's such a cloudy day, seems we'll never see the sun!' That's how it was! Vapor Trails puts me in mind of the Presto album. Secret Touch has some Primus style bass from Geddy towards the end.... bludgeoning bass! It has a very personal lyric from Neil that I can identify with, and Geddy's 'Oh salvations' are very Thom Yorke veering towards operatic.

I must commend Geddy on his vocal work on the album. He has pushed himself and used his voice to add texture instead of the usual keyboards.

Alex more than makes up for the lack of solos with some great riffing and background detail. Neil, as always.... the lyrics are meaningful yet economic and the drum work is excellent, not as flash as in the past but still lots going on in the background. With the Tarot theme of the

Signals

artwork, shouldn't Neil's credit have been drums and cymbals? All-in-all, a fine return and as always the band pushes the envelope that little bit more, creating some fine sonic landscapes.

One BIG victory! Here's hoping the band have a few more albums in them. I sincerely hope they tour 'Europe this time, but even if they never tour again I'll be happy as long as they keep on making music together. Long live RUSH!

By the way, has anyone seen the episode of the Simpsons where Bart falls in love with Rainier Wolfcastle's daughter and visits her in Canada? As the family get off the coach at the terminus the soundtrack plays Geddy singing 'Take off to the great white North'. Also in recent issues of the Wildstorm comic 'Authority' there is a female winged character from Canada called Rush! Rush... pop culture icons, look out for low flying pigs!

Finally a suggestion. How about printing Neil's 'making of the album' diaries? I read a Power Windows one in a magazine years ago, and I think some tour programmes had them. They were very interesting and informative.

Also would it be possible to print the ISBN OF Masked Rider for those of us not on the net?

[ISBN: 1895900026 - JANET] Cheers.

Bill Collins

Willenhall, West Midlands

P.S. Steve Mason.....trust me, get 'Scenes From A Memory'....you'll love it after a few plays.

P.P.S. "Rush - if you hated them before, you'll really hate them now!" would make a great T-shirt!

Dear Spirit,

I was hoping to get an import version of Vapor Trails at a recent music fair, but this was not to be so I bought it from our local record shop. Anyway, when I got my CD I made the very stupid mistake of not having my first listen to it on my main hi-fi - I recorded onto audio tape to listen to it while driving at work. The thing is, I only have a portable cassette/radio in the works van, so when I first played my copy of Vapor Trails the sound was rough and tinny, every track seemed quite the same and my first impression was, 'what's all this drivin?'

But, after playing it in my car and main hi-fi, well what a complete difference, I thought.... this album is superb. My favourite tracks being One Little Victory, Ceiling Unlimited, Ghost Rider, Peaceable Kingdom, Earthshine, Nocturne and The Stars Look Down.

This is one of the best albums to date, definitely better than T4E and with 13 tracks - 68 mins, definitely worth the money....and definitely 10 out of 10. It definitely rocks. Endlessly rocking.

Mark V Lilley
Doncaster

P.S. Fingers crossed for a UK tour.

A new Rush album is like a puzzle to me. At first I do not understand it, but I keep at it until, little by little, all is revealed. First impressions are it's like a ten ton weight - heavy but unmemorable, crash...bang...wallop, springs to mind. However, with time, a smile appears on my face. Yes, I now get it. Cue, One Little Victory.... big drumbeat time changes aplenty, major riffing, thudding basslines - a cocktail of sounds for a successful album. And the riffs roll on Ceiling Unlimited. Peaceable Kingdom - what a powerful track that is. Earthshine with Alex's highly emotive solo. Fear returns - Part Four, that is all jagged guitar work mixed with thick funky basslines and Neil's cymbal work. However there is subtlety here, from the radio-friendly How It Is to Ghost Rider and the title track. All slow riffs mixed with Ged's plodding bass.

Lyricaly challenging, thought provoking, observant and personal. As for musical style, Neil's drumming comes across as less complex, more economical..... while Geddy's vocals display more range, depth and variety. Check out the treated vocals on Secret Touch and P.C.

I think Vapor Trails has it all - great artwork, modern, fresh, colourful and abstract. New ideas, excellent musicianship..... individual and collectively. A great album.

I saw 2112 at the Office Club, South Shields, my home town....thought they were great. Come back soon.

M Ford
South Shields

Good morning Mick.

The trip to the USA may be over but I am still on cloud nine! It would be very remiss of me not to thank the whole gang (Janet, Cliff, Jock, Neil, Steph and of course, you) for making me feel so welcome and for providing such excellent company throughout.

Special praise is reserved for both Janet and you without whom the trip would never have got off the ground. Cheers guys.

I am left with fantastic memories which will stay with me for ever. I sincerely hope that our friends in the UK get to witness the show. They will not be disappointed. Regards,

Ian Nelson
email

P.S. I am in contact with the guy who sat with us at Raleigh. I have given details of "Spirit" and he in turn has passed them onto two other Rush fanatics. Let's hope they and others subscribe without delay!

Hi Mick

A belated thanks for responding so quickly a few weeks back with the (then) latest copy of SOR. Its good to be reacquainted with the magazine. The latest 2 issues have each been a cracking read and brought me bang up to date with the news.

Reaction to the album in a nutshell: Having lived with Vapor Trails for a few weeks I'm delighted to say that I've cracked it. Contrary to how some of your readers have enthused, I by no means found VT an immediate listen. Fantastic songs, but encased in very dense production - some of those (deliberately) distorted effects came through at first as sonic "muddiness". With so much material here it took a number of listens - in bite sized chunks - to strip away the layers to fully appreciate what was there. Crucially, Rush are without doubt still moving forward - despite what some critics maintain about the band treading water. They continue to challenge their audience (me, for one). I am appreciating the album all the more for having been made to work a little harder than usual. I have no problem with a heavier sound. Peaceable Kingdom, Nocturne, Earthshine and the title track are to the fore at present. I can't wait to hear the new songs live. Which brings me to.....

Hope you and the SOR Hard Core enjoyed the first batch of shows. [WE DID MATE, WE SURE DID - MICK]. Hartford in particular must have been an emotionally charged concert for the band (tinged with a touch of nerves?) [NOTHING WE COULD SEE - MICK].

Look forward to reports in the next issue. The set list looks impressive (if not as radical an overhaul as we might have expected). [WE CONCUR - MICK].

We did look at doing Toronto and Milwaukee shows. Various logistical nightmares and some outrageously priced flights to Canada (July = exponential increase in flight costs) thwarted

plans. I would add that Simon Lucas was extremely helpful in putting together a fare quote that, although still high, was the most competitive. However, armed with extra dates we aim to return to the charge for the autumn.

Although..... are there yet any hopeful signs of dates for UK/ Europe?. (You're probably sick of this question!). [FINGERS CROSSED MATE - MICK]. My reason for asking is that, if doubtful, we will redouble our efforts to head to N. America and start the detailed planning process now.

Thanks for keeping up a fantastic magazine and a vehicle for Rush fans to stay in touch. All the very best.

Richard Morris
email

Hi Mick,

Had to drop you a line to recommend a new Rush related release I've been listening to. As we all know, 'everybody got to deviate from the norm ' & there's no better way to do so than to purchase ' Exit Stage...Right : The String Quartet Tribute to Rush.'

Not being a particular fan of classical music, I purchased this more for it's Rush connection than anything else & it was more in hope than expectation that I sat down to listen. How misguided I was! The entire album was an absolute joy from start to finish. The driving force behind the project seems to be a guy called Todd Rubenstein as he has arranged & produced the disc. Todd acknowledges his love of Rush in the liner notes & this love is obvious in the arrangements. The nuances & subtleties of the songs are brought out beautifully & breathe new life into these classics. Of particular note are the renditions of YYZ, Jacobs Ladder & Red Barchetta. Fabulous !! The other nine tracks are also a pleasure to hear & this has actually given 'Vapor Trails ' a break from the stereo!

I'm not sure if it's on release in the UK, I bought it mail order from www.cmhrecords.com in the U.S. Cat. no is CD-8567. It cost about \$20 including p&p & arrived within a week. If you can handle your favourite songs being re-worked with no drums or vocals (replaced by Double Bass & a Viola for the lyrical phrasing) check it out, you'll love it !

Hope you enjoyed the 5 shows you went over for Mick. There are 4 of us from the Mansfield/Nottingham area heading over between October 19-26 for 3 shows in Toronto, New York & Hershey,PA on the second leg. If Andy Bell from Chesterfield reads this, i'd be grateful if he could drop me a line: R1chg@aol.com

Many thanks for your ongoing efforts with the mag, they remain very much appreciated. Cheers,

Rich Green
Mansfield.

Dear Janet,

It was with shock and sadness that I read of Mick's death in the letter you sent, I hadn't heard the news until then.

My condolences to his family and to all those involved in The Spirit of Rush, not least yourself.....and I understand completely if the fanzine is not able to continue.

Due to work demands I didn't go to the convention, although I had a ticket and was planning on going. I hope the convention was as successful as it could be - a celebration of the music of Rush and those people for whom it means so much. I never knew Mick, but I appreciated the work he put into The Spirit of Rush and looked forward to receiving it.

I recently decided to go over to Canada for the current tour. I have got tickets for the gigs in Montreal and Toronto, and then plan to go on to New York to see friends there and hopefully make it to the gig there. With all good wishes.

Bob Morris
Birmingham

A Little Tribute to Mick ***More than a Rush fan - a True Friend.***

"Steve! Hey can you come up with a cover by this weekend for the new Spirit of Rush?" Of course I can Mick! It will be in your hands in time.

Mick Burnett was first and foremost a friend. I first came in contact with Mick around 1988-89. During the incubation of A Show of Fans (my little Rush fanzine that lasted 18 issues), I found out about The Spirit of Rush through a New York City rock shop in the Village. A proper place for a Rush 'zine I thought. SOR most certainly sparked my drive to go forward with ASOF - a North American Rush fanzine. After numerous phone calls and letters - I found Mick to be a true friend. We had so much in common. Usually on the phone Mick would describe the graphics he needed for an issue - then we would go off into other topics from Marvel Comics to The Prisoner (one of the BEST TV shows EVER! British of course!!) to Dr. Who - another Brit classic. In fact, Mick sent me the first Prisoner CD soundtrack which was virtually impossible to find at the time. Mick was always upbeat and my memories will always be just that - just a wonderful positive fun-minded guy - one I always enjoyed

speaking with and getting to know better. When I think of Mick, of course Rush is forefront. But it would be totally unfair to say that was itof course it wasn't. As much as Mick was focused on the 'zine - with 62 issues under his belt - he was such a down-to-earth guy. I will miss him very much. Without my friendship with Mick - I don't think I would have ever done A Show Of Fans. He certainly inspired me and gave his 100% support in my efforts. I'll never forget that. And I'll never forget the support you gave me in my own personal troubled times. A true friend indeed. You are missed Mick.

I wish peace and comfort to the Burnett family. Miss ya mate!!

Steve Streeter
sstreeter@mac.com

Dear Janet,

I am very sorry to hear about Mick, Having only just found out. This has shocked me. I was only yesterday trying to get in touch with Mick, would you believe, as I know in the past he has paid a visit to Madison Square Gardens for the Rush New York gig. I was hoping to meet up with him, assuming he was going along.

I have been away on business recently and only just got back, so on my list of things to do was....get in touch with....and so on. I only met Mick a few times and he left an amazing mark on me, not just for his enthusiasm for the fanzine, band and music, but was always willing to do anything for his fellow fans.

He also organised for me - as I went alone - front row tickets for numerous gigs. The first Rush gig I ever saw was in Birmingham, although I did not meet Mick until some 4-5 years later. I still have a huge collection of memorabilia which Mick had collected, which I won in a raffle at a convention in Leicester some years back.

My best regards to everyone. I am sure Mick would thoroughly appreciate your efforts in keeping things going. Thank you. Love and best wishes to Mick's family. Kind regards,

Graham Hollick
Leicester

Hi Janet,

I'm sorry about the untimely passing of Mick. Please accept my condolences on behalf of all of us in Tiles. Mick and yourself have been valuable supporters of Tiles and progressive rock in general for a long time - something we have always appreciated! It was a pleasure to have met and talked to Mick when we toured Europe in 1999.

Best wishes for the future and hopefully we'll meet again!

Chris Herin
Tiles

Dear Janet/Spirit of Rush,

Even two months on I'm still stunned by the news of Mick Burnett's death. I never met Mick - although I did speak to him on a few occasions around the time of the 1988 Hold Your Fire tour - but you didn't have to know the man to recognise his overwhelming passion for all things Rush. I don't think it does a disservice to the many contributors to the fanzine over the last 15 years to say that Mick was the Spirit of Rush.

Ever since I stumbled across the first issue in an obscure Manchester record shop in 1987 it has been an essential part of my life and it's passing after the Christmas issue is going to be very hard to deal with. SOR, guided by Mick, maintained the band's profile in this country at times when most people would have thought they'd long since split. It's demise will leave a hole almost as large as the group eventually will - we'll only know how much when it is gone. Those oft-quoted lines from Afterimage have been used with regard to Neil's tragedies and they're no less apt for both Mick and SOR itself. My thanks to everyone who's written for or just read SOR - it's been endlessly rocking.

Mark Walton
Carlisle

P.S. Since I can't conceive of having no Rush input apart from very infrequent articles in the mainstream musical press - and with hopefully the possibility of a UK tour next year (please God!) - any readers are welcome to contact me at my home address or by email at:

Mark.walton@cngroup.co.uk
40 Cumberland Street
Denton Holme
Carlisle
Cumbria, CA2 5JH

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your recent letter. I had read of Mick's tragic death on the internet in early August but for a while refused to believe the news. Your letter confirmed the awful news.

Though I did not have the pleasure of meeting Mick, his efforts in keeping SOR going were greatly appreciated. I have been a reader from the very first issue and SOR was always a great read - an oasis of information for us European Rush fans.

Whatever decision is taken with regard to the future of SOR, you have my unreserved support. I would like to take this opportunity to

thank everyone involved in producing this great fanzine - a great labour of love.

Finally as I was not able to attend the convention, I obviously have not contributed to the collection on behalf of Mick's family. Please could you let me know the best way to do this, as a show of my respect to his loved ones for their loss and an appreciation of Mick's efforts over the last 16/17 years. [ANYONE WISHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO MICK'S MEMORIAL FUND PLEASE SEND DONATIONS TO THE EDITORIAL ADDRESS - JANET]. Regards,

**Naveen Ratti
Studley, Warks**

Dear Janet,

Please pass on the remainder of my money to Mick's family in appreciation of his work on SOR. I look forward to the last two issues of SOR. Regards,

**Stephen Moore
South Shields**

Dear Janet,

I have just received your letter about the sad news regarding Mick..... I had no idea and it has come as a great shock to me, please if you can pass on my sincere condolences to his family and all the team of SOR. I have been a member of SOR for ten years and although I never met Mick I still fell as though I have lost a dear friend and can't say enough of my appreciation of his work with the magazine. Thank you also for going ahead with the next issue and convention and I hope that you cope with the hard work through this difficult time. My words are inadequate but I just wanted to try and make things a little easier for you and to show Mick's family that his memory will survive and prosper. Many regards.

**Ged Bretherton
Golborne, Nr. Warrington**

Dear Janet,

We refer to your letter on the website and would like to pass on our condolences to everyone in the SOR team and to Mick's family. You, of course, have our full support in whatever decisions you make for the future of the Convention and magazine. As hard as it will be for us to live without 'Spirit', we realise that it must be an incredibly difficult and time consuming task to produce the magazine and organise the convention and what a huge loss Mick's death must be for all concerned.

When I saw the original notice on the website, without your letter, I couldn't quite believe what I was reading and it was incredibly frustrating not being able to find out what had happened. I did send an e-mail to the address I had

corresponded with Mick about the possibility of UK tour dates, but I assume that you have no access to this.

Eve and I still remember being handed flyers for the fan club outside Wembley Arena and meeting Mick and some others in a Wembley pub before going off to see the band on the Hold Your Fire tour. It was great to find out that there were people out there who felt the same about Rush as we did, after getting nothing but blank looks for so long whenever we mentioned the name.

We hope that this year's convention went well and that lots of money was raised. We were very disappointed not to be able to attend the last couple of years, but the venue made it impossible for us by not allowing our daughter Iona in, who, incidentally was 8 years old on 31 August and who has appeared in the pages of SOR. Once again, our thoughts are with you all, especially Mick's family and we look forward to the final editions of the magazine. Yours sincerely,

**Peter Robinson, Eve Gartshore,
Iona Robinson
Ilford, Essex**

Dear Janet and SOR,

I got in from work this afternoon to find an envelope with the familiar SOR letterhead visible through the envelope's window. As I opened it I idly speculated that it was stop press news of an imminent tour, instead it was the tragic news of Mick's untimely death.

Please pass on my deepest sympathy to Mick's family and everyone at SOR. I don't really know what else to say, except 'God bless you Mick'. Yours sincerely,

**Bill Collins
Willenhall, W. Midlands**

P.S. Please don't let 'Spirit' die with Mick. Keep it going as a tribute to him.

Dear Janet,

I am so sorry to hear the terrible news about Mick. I have never met him but feel sure we would have got on really well.

I have been receiving the SOR since issue 3, so I know how much work he and the rest of the team put into each issue.

I re-subscribed again in June of this year, for the next four issues. I would like to receive the Autumn and the special editions, but please if you are planning to reimburse me for the other issues then please don't. Instead add this money to the collection for Mick's family. Yours faithfully.

**Ian Drain
Portsmouth**

P.S. I do hope the band will recognise the contribution Mick has made in keeping us in the UK informed about all things Rush.

Dear Janet,

I have just received your letter informing me that we lost Mick. I, like everyone else I am sure, remain completely shocked and saddened at such news.

I only met Mick once at the very first Rush convention but I am one of the long standing Spirit of Rush subscribers and expressed my greatest appreciation to him. Each time I renewed my subscription for the work that he did on keeping dedicated Rush fans like myself up to date with that the band were doing.

I think my first subscription was in about 1987 or maybe 1988 but after 15 years or so of reading his editorial I am bound to feel like I knew him, and maybe as a Rush fan I did know him and could relate to him very well but, of course, in reality I did not know the person he was at all. My thoughts are with you and his family to whom he was a part of everyday life.

I think your idea of an auction is excellent with the proceeds to go to his family. Will this be at the convention only or auction via the website or via SOR subscribers by post? [FOR THE MOMENT, ONLY AT THE CONVENTION BUT WE MAY DECIDE TO AUCTION OTHER ITEMS IN THE FUTURE - JANET] Personally I would like to own a treasured Rush item of Micks and would be prepared to bid well to try and secure one.....it would be a nice tribute to him to sit with my collection of SOR magazines. Please do keep me informed with events as SOR slowly closes down - your idea of a final tribute issue is also excellent. Once again my thoughts are with you all who knew him so well. Regards,

**Tony Goldingay
Lichfield**

Dear Janet,

I am deeply saddened to hear of Mick's passing. SOR was something I always looked forward to receiving over the past 14 years or so. Please pass on my greatest sympathy to Mick's family.

But as you say 'things must carry on' and I will look forward to the last two issues of this most excellent fanzine with even greater anticipation and value them even more so. Cheers,

**Lee Bool
Abertillery, Gwent**

Dear Janet,

I received your letter this morning and was deeply saddened to hear the news about Mick Burnett. Please pass my sincere condolences to his family.

I am a professional percussionist and have been greatly inspired by the music of Rush and the drumming of Neil Peart. It has been very important to me to be a member of SOR and Mick helped keep my Rush dreams alive. Although I never met him, I feel a kindred spirit with him.

In a very small way, not really sure of how I can do anything for Mick's family at this time, I enclose 10 CD's of my music which is strongly influenced by Rush. I thought perhaps they could be auctioned off and raise some money for the boys? [THANKS ALAN - JANET]

Regrettably, I am unable to attend this year's convention, but I hope to meet you next year. Yours sincerely,

**Alan Emslie
Edinburgh**

Dear Janet,

I was shocked and saddened by your letter that arrive the other day. I am really sorry to hear that Mick has passed away suddenly, although we never actually met we spoke on the phone a few times. His passion for Rush (and Dream Theater) was obvious and he had a clear love of the music. I cannot imagine what it must be like for you but I am pleased that you are going to publish the next issue and are going ahead with the convention. I'm sure Mick would have wanted that.

It seems terribly sad that just as Mick's favourite band returns after such a long time away that Mick should no longer be around. I only hope he got to see them on the current tour? At least he got to hear Vapor Trails which is a great album. I trust the convention and the final magazine will be a celebration of Mick's tireless enthusiasm for Rush. I'm just sorry he won't be around to see it. All the best.

**Simon Duckett
York**

Dear Janet,

Many thanks for keeping me informed as regards the fanzine. I am naturally saddened to hear what has happened and I realise there's not much I can say to ease the pain of your loss. I personally cannot say that I knew Mick, I think I met him once, but I knew of the work you both do on the 'zine and for that I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I shall miss it tremendously as I always saw it as keeping me in touch with my favourite band. A band I've supported for 22 years now. I always admired the dedication it must have taken to search out the information that was in the mag, and I found that very positive. If you require any help for the final special edition I offer it willingly. I do have experience at producing fanzines having

run one for around 4 years called 'Shine on you crazy Diamonds' - related to my favourite footy club Rushden and Diamonds. You only have to ask. [THANKS ROBIN - I WILL KEEP IT IN MIND]

Unfortunately, I cannot make the convention, but I wish everyone there will have a great time. I'm sure Mick would have wanted it that way. Tough times demand tough hearts! Best rgds,

Robin Hales

Irthlingborough, Northants

P.S. As I can't make the convention, I'd like to send a donation towards Mick's lads so I'd appreciate some details of whom to make a cheque out to [TO MYSELF AT THE EDITORIAL ADDRESS - JANET].

Dear Janet,

I was both shocked and saddened to receive your letter regarding Mick Burnett's sudden death. Please pass on my sincere sympathy to his family and all concerned at SOR.

I have been subscribing to the fanzine for over ten years and have always looked forward to reading the next issue. I have had my letters printed a number of times, as recent as the current issue 62 where I mentioned other music discovered through the fanzine that has brought great enjoyment to myself and my wife in addition to our mutual love for all things Rush.

I never met Mick personally but he certainly did a great job with the fanzine and persevered throughout the years that news was thin on the ground about Rush. So all credit to him and the 'team'. Look forward to hearing from you regarding any further news and anything about the Christmas issue you intend to produce. Kind regards,

**Chris Pheby
Hampshire**

Janet,

The Rush fanzine has kept me up to date with things that are going on with the band and I hope you get as much pleasure out of doing the fanzine as I get from reading it. If it is possible could you please ask in the fanzine where I can get a copy of Neil Peart's 'A Work In Progress' on video - or on DVD if this is not possible. [CAN ANYONE HELP ROBERT OUT? - JANET]

**Robert Wilkes
2 Sutton Place
Billingham
Cleveland TS23 3BA**

Hi Janet and Co,

One word describes the emotional event on August 31st - 'remarkable'. As before, 2112 were awesome....with a classic set list - BRILL! What a limelight finish- a night I shall never

forget. So if I hear right "see you next year"..... hopefully a convention in the future is in the pipeline? Or do my ears need washing in Geddy's laundry machines [YES THERE WILL BE SOME FORM OF CONVENTION NEXT YEAR - JANET].....Thankyou from a fan not for a limited time!! (surely not the only one). Bye for now and rock on. All the best. Regards,

**Mark Tucker
Burnley**

P.S. For Rush penpals I always reply:

Mark Tucker

**The Old Vicarage
23 Palatine Square**

Burnley, Lancs BB11 4JF

P.P.S. A Rush bootleg 'recommendation' - anything from US tour '78, especially Tucson Convention Center, Nov 20 '78. Also, latest Vapor Trails tour "unreal" (especially Peart's solo). Yes Rush still kicks ass live as always. So keep Geddy's laundry machine running on.....Cheers. Rock on....

Dear Janet,

Thanks for the letter updating me on the situation with Spirit of Rush. I am very pleased to hear that the convention will go ahead - that is what Mick would have wanted I am sure. I have enclosed a contribution for the Convention. It is a CDR copy of one of the best Rush bootlegs in my collection. I design my own artwork as you can see. I would like you to use this to help raise some money for Mick's family. [THANKS PATRICK. WE SOLD THIS CD AT THE CONVENTION - JANET]

I hope the Convention goes well. I will not be able to attend but I wish every one well. Enjoy yourselves and make it a happy occasion, as it should be. I would like to ask you for some help..... I am looking for a Rush Fan club that I could join. Is there one that you know of and how can I get in touch with them? [CAN ANYONE HELP PATRICK? - JANET] Thanks and regards,

**Patrick De-la-Mare
Folkestone**

Hi Janet,

As a bemused, in limbo Rush fan I would be grateful if you can shed some light on the subject on issue 63, autumn/fall. As I believe there to be a delay due to circumstances beyond control (which is understandable). The convention was brill!! 2112 an event (one of the best cover bands to be seen). Please can you confirm any future dates. Bye for now.

**Mark Tucker
Burnley**

Tel: 01642 861476

SOR Exclusive!!

INTERVIEW WITH Geddy Lee - MAY 2002

SOR: Hi Geddy. How are you?

Geddy: I'm not too bad thanks. How are you

SOR: Fine, we're actually having a heatwave over here.

Geddy: I thought that was illegal over in Britain (laughs).

SOR: Congrats on Vapor Trails (Ged - "Thank you") a storming album. A real heavy album a return to the power trio of old.

Geddy: I don't know. I guess so, as that's what people keep saying. It's hard to see it when you are inside looking out. I can't say I have too much respect for it at the moment as I feel like it's just been taken away from me about 3 weeks ago. It's still on the new side but it seems to be pleasing people so I'm happy about that.

SOR: Most of the people over here that have heard VT have said they thought it was really heavy - was that the kind of direction you wanted to go?or was it just the way it turned out?

Geddy: I think it was kind of a natural expression of what we are, you know, it was a very intense time these last 6 years or so. It seems quite natural that whatever record we produced would have a greater degree of intensity on it. I think it's exemplified by a heavier style.

SOR: You've got 13 songs on there, did the ideas just keep flowing?

Geddy: (sighs) Well the first 3 or 4 months writing were very difficult and not very fruitful. We were writing but we felt there was a spark missing.... and that we were rusty or something, and we were still dealing with emotional issues and trying to feel like we were kind of understanding each other. We were starting to realise that we were going to probably produce the record ourselves so it was kind of a difficult start. I was kinda tired, having come off a promotional tour myself for my own album - Alex had done some production work, so I think the first 3 months was a period that needed a lot of talking and needed a lot of failures to help focus us on what we really wanted to do... and at that point we took a month off and when we came back from that break it was remarkable; like we had turned a huge corner and we could see really the sort of record we wanted to make, and we started jamming - Alex and I - for about 2 weeks and everything about these jams was different to before the break (laughs). There was just such an intriguing and inspiring atmosphere at these jams that a lot of these jams turned into these songs. At the end of the day we were worried we didn't have enough great material and then another song would emerge, then another and so on, and we couldn't part with them so we put them all on the record.

SOR: Did you use any of the material from before the break or did you scrap all that?

Geddy: OH NO! Some of that actually stood the test of time. Some of it turned out better than we had thought. In fact 'One Little Victory' was one of those songs so it just went to show that we didn't have a clear perspective on what we were doing and that's why there was so much emotion involved..... and that our expectations were so fucking high that we needed to take a step back to see what was good and what was not good. There were some songs that got thrown away - for example 'Earthshine'. There was an entire other song written around those lyrics and that was, I think, the first song we wrote and we kept listening to it and saying "I think something's wrong with this song". And after the break I just said to Alex "This song's not working, let's start it from scratch". So we had a couple of jams and I completely rewrote that song from beginning to end - the first time I've ever done that with a lyric ... taken the lyric and written a completely different song around it.... and that's the song that we have now. It's just that the sessions became more inspired after our break. For some reason we were able to see the truth easier.

SOR: So you had all the lyrics before you started the music?

Geddy: No. Not always. No, it was a bit back and forth and the problems we were having sorting out the best music was the same situation with the lyrics. Lyrics would come and only maybe one verse was knocking us out or maybe there was a keyline here or there, so Neil and I worked pretty closely together and he gave me incredible license to manipulate these lyrics the way that I felt they would fit what he wanted to say and what kind of music we were producing. Sometimes it was very much kind of back and forth, writing and rewriting and some of them - 'Vapor Trails' for example or 'One Little Victory' - just were natural. The lyrics worked as they were and we had some music crafted to suit them and so, you know, as with Rush as normal. there is never just one way that a song comes together and that held true for this as well.

SOR: A favorite lyric on the album is "life is a power that remains" off 'Secret Touch'. Most of Neil's lyrics seem very uplifting.... inspired. Did you and Alex feel that?

Geddy: Yes, I think it took a while to be able to express those kind of things clearly. Sometimes in the early going obviously they were very personaland needed, you know, Alex and I to be a sounding board, trying to shape them so they weren't only about Neil. That they were something we could all relate to in our own experience.... and that to me seemed to be the most important thing - to push so that we could be true to all that Neil had gone through.....in that in many ways he was bearing his soul on this record but that it didn't reduce the value to strictly biographical, you know, open enough to obtain a particular universality that served the music better and enabled me to express my emotions as well.



SOR: Did you yourself or Alex contribute any of your own lyrics?

Geddy: Yeah, just a word here or there. Generally, I thought it was important for Neil to do the job he was doing before all this transpired. It's just like in sports, a guy gets ill or something happens - he doesn't lose his job. I think it was important as a therapeutic thing. Important in a sense that what the band is about.... that he came back.... and came back to the job and to do the best possible job he could, and as that it was a huge confidence builder for him to come back to work, to have the time to slowly build his drumming back to where it should be.... and the same thing applies to his lyrics. You know, you don't just get back in and start doing great stuff right away. It requires support and objective criticism - as we all need and in that regard, all 3 of us have never worked in a more respectful or professional manner and I don't think we've been able to look each other in the eye and discuss strengths and weaknesses of our work so easily without any bias.

SOR: There seems to be loads of vocal harmonies on the album, did they take the place of keyboards as there are very little keyboards on the album?

Geddy: In a way, yeah. Alex was dead against using keyboards on this record much to my chagrin (laughs), I mean I just love strings, but in his own way I think he'd rather pretend he was a keyboard and use goofy guitar sounds. So I said "that's fine - it's not a problem" and it forced me to use my voice differently as you suggest, and I used vocal textures to accomplish what I would normally do with keyboard textures. There would be for example, a section of the song that was dying for some kind of other textures so I would just say "Alex, here I'm going... there's a part of the song where you could do something outside it, why don't you pretend you're a cello section or whatever and have a go at staying up late and going nuts on this section and see what comes up!" He loved doing that, he loved having a few hours just to create some soundscape which I just think he is great at.... brilliant at anyway. I think it worked out quite well. Suddenly that became his responsibility and became another way to express himself.

SOR: It seems he doesn't solo on this CD - not in the traditional way. Was this an avenue he purposely wanted to go in, to be more of a team player than to do his own solos?

Geddy: Very much so, we tried to encourage him with 3 other songs to have a go at some soloing but he was dead against it. He is not into the concept of soloing, he doesn't think it's very modern and he would much rather create an interestingensemble sound than to go off into a long solo. It's just not where his head is at musically, which is fine.

SOR: What songs did you find were the easiest or hardest on VT?

Geddy: Hardest? - from what point of view?

SOR: Writing first and then recording.

Geddy: Well...it's hard to say. You know, a lot of the songs as I said, were born out of jams and the result of that was that we kept a lot of original performances. Alex and I shaped songs around them, so at times, you know, Neil had to shape his drum performance to a pre-existing jam session which was difficultand which sometimes it slotted quite easily. But from a writing point of view 'Ghost Rider' was probably the most difficult song to write because it was inspired by a jam we had that had a great mood but it was quite hard to find the right chorus for the song and make it work. We wrote maybe 10 different choruses for that song until we found something that was true to that- you know - delivered the right punctuation, so that was a tough one. From a writing point of

view a song like 'Peaceable Kingdom' was a song that was entirely composed from a jam - several bits from a single jam. Originally we had intended it to be an instrumental song, but after 9/11 Neil had written this lyric that we thought was very suitable for the music and Paul Northfield was very encouraging that the song was too strong to be left as an instrumental.

SOR: Is that the 'tower' mentioned in the lyrics?

Geddy: Yeah, so anyway, that turned out to be one of my favourite songs so I'm glad we persisted with that one. It's hard to say, every song has it's easy moments and it's difficult. As I said, 'Earthshine' we re-wrote twice. They were both easy to write, both times (laughs). It wasn't a difficult thing, but it was difficult getting the right perspective that the song should have. On this record more than any previous Rush record, time was our great friend. Having thrown out the great deadline boundaries was the best possible thing we could have done.

SOR: So there was no rush, you could take your time and do what you wanted.

Geddy: Yeah. The decisions were made on the quality of the song... as they always are, but never before have we been so tough on ourselves - "Is this good enough? Is this performance as good as it can be? Are we expressing this lyric in the best possible way?" It encouraged us all to play devil's advocate and to make sure we were judging each other with a tough eye 'cause this is like 6 years since the last studio event and this is an opportunity. Here we are back again and we never really believed we would be in that position again after all the things that had gone down, it was an opportunity not to waste. We thought it was one that deserved to be given the breadth of passion we felt.

SOR: So all 3 of you enjoyed the year - the process of making the record?

Geddy: For the most part, yeah. Of course you've got the torments of trying to write and writing can sometimes be a torment. I would say the first 11 months, even when it was difficult, was great fun. I don't think we've ever enjoyed each other in a professional circumstance more and I don't think we ever showed each other as much respect either. Mixing the record was another story altogether, mixing was extremely difficult - the most difficult I've ever been a part of. We had disastrous results on the first attempts to mix the record and that was December 2001. We basically mixed for 2 weeks and then threw all the results out and started again in January... and that was the point (after mixing for another 2 weeks) that we decided that all 4 of us were way too close to the material and we needed to bring somebody fresh in. That's when I brought David in to do some mixes - who had done some work on my solo album... and ...(SOR "he would have a fresh viewpoint")....yeah, we needed his fresh ears. He was great, he came down and we spent the next month mixing and it was a tough little bastard to finish... I have to say. It didn't want to finishthis record didn't want to stop.

SOR: You all look very happy on the photos we've seen. It looks like a good vibe you had going on there.

Geddy: Yeah, it was a good vibe. Andrew took those photos. He came down to the studio one day and, you know, it's just the way we are with each other. Those photos are very honest.

SOR: Can you tell us a bit about 'Freeze', Part 4 of Fear? ...a long time coming...

Geddy: Yeah, it was a long time. It was one of the last things we wrote for the album and again we found this one jam session that had these intense moments and those lyrics slotted right into it for me. They were fun to play with.

SOR: So will we see the Fear quartet when you start touring?

Geddy: I don't know. We haven't figured that out yet. I guess it's possible...

SOR: It would be a nice show stopper in about a 20 minute block. Will you be drastically changing the set list/lighting this time?

Geddy: Yeah, we're trying to re-vibe it... the choice of material. There's a lot of it song wise we have no interest in playing againand trying to bring in some songs we haven't played for a while - for a really long while. We'll see what we end up with. It's one thing to write it down on paper and another thing when I try to sing some of those songs. We all try to play them (laughs) and sometimes they don't pass the quality control tests.

SOR: There seems to be no actual production number this time. You could do the whole album in theory?

Geddy: Yeah, but we would have to do, like, a 5 hour set (laughs)...to play all the favourite songs people want to hear plus the new material. It'll be a bit of a battle. We could easily play 6 or 7 songs off this record but we'd use up so much time, the favourites people want to hear would not get covered. So it will be a tough one to figure out which ones we're going to do. I think what we will probably do is prepare 6 or 7 songs and maybe, you know, just revolve them.

SOR: Yeah, that would be nice as Rush fans tend to come to multiple shows.

Geddy: Yeah, we'll see if we can get our heads around that. Until we play them it is hard to say. It's one thing to make a record, it's another thing to play it live..... make sure it stands up..... and if they do stand up we'll maybe sneak some more in there.

SOR: Are you looking forward to touring again after so long?

Geddy: 'Looking forward'? (sighs) It's not the expression I would use. The phrase I would use perhaps is, 'it's a bit daunting'. I confess it's going to be hard for me to leave my family. I'm challenged by the idea of going back out there. I look forward to going out there and satisfying our fans' need to hear us play, but it's a lot of work and it's sitting very harshly on our shoulders at the moment. Underneath all of that it's an excitement.

SOR: You've got quite a big tour coming up. We've seen a schedule, it's large!

Geddy: It is. I don't know what got into us (laughs). I think we are just trying to ride this wave of enthusiasm while it lasts.

SOR: Are you going out with the usual crew? Howard, Liam etc.....

Geddy: They will be there for sure. We've been in a series of production meetings and got a few things planned.

SOR: Are you going to tour places you've never been to before?

Geddy: We've never been to South America and we are getting ridiculous demands from Brazil/Mexico. We may if we can manage it. If we survive the American leg we could sneak down there and give it a shot.

SOR: Japan too. You haven't been there for 20 years!

Geddy: Yeah. Just been talking to a couple of their journalists but I can't really answer that yet. We have to see how everybody deals with being on the road again.

SOR: So you are thinking of taking it one step at a time.....

Geddy: Yeah. It's one thing to say 'lets go out and do a big tour' and then you are in the middle of it. We are not quite as young as we used to be - have to see how the bodies keep up (laughing). Trying to play a 3 hour show I have to see how my voice holds up. The last tour was very tough on Neil's body playing that long a set so we'll have to see how we hold up.

SOR: With today's technology how would you feel about something like a pay-per-view satellite show or internet?

Geddy: Yeah! Yeah. I would consider doing that for sure.

SOR: So fans that can't get to see you could at least watch.

Geddy: That is a very good idea.

SOR: Did you consider taking a support act with you?

Geddy: We considered it for about 5 minutes and then decided 'no' we wanted to play a long show and the only way to do that is not to have a support.

SOR: What are your thoughts on T4E six years down the line?

Geddy: Well, I look back at the record....I haven't listened to it a lot.....there are some good songs on it but there is something missing for me a little bit..... a bit of intensity. I see that on a couple of our past 5 or 6 albums at times.

SOR: This, we think, is your strongest album since Roll The Bones without a doubt...

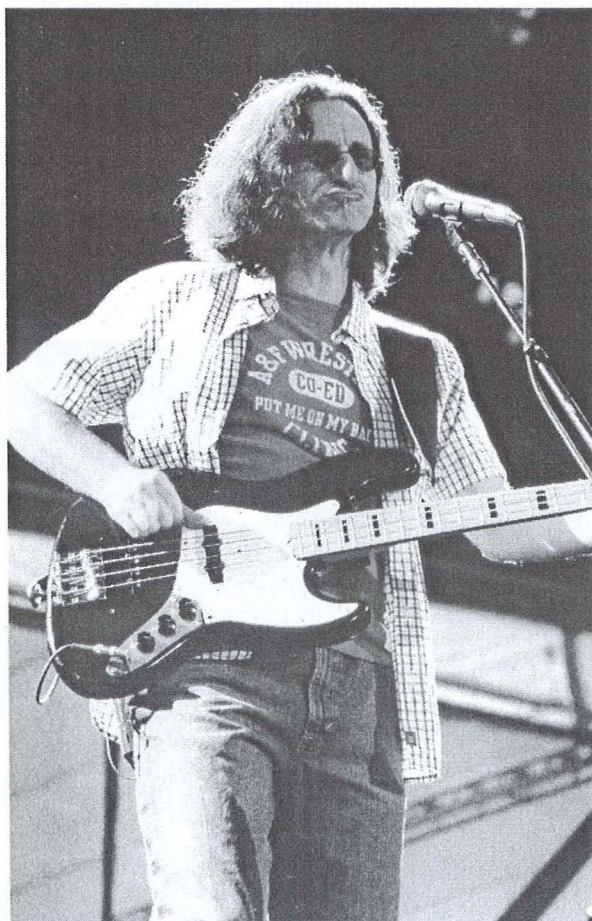
Geddy: Oh thank you!

SOR: I've been listening to you since Geoff Barton introduced me to you in 'Sounds'.

Geddy: Wow! My God. What happened to him?

SOR: Don't know,. He is possibly a sports writer for a paper up North. I bought your albums on his recommendation.

Geddy: Yeah, that's right. He did a lot of good turns did Geoff. It's funny that every little while we talk about how much we miss England. We did so much work there and spent so much time there. I miss London from time to time.



SOR: You don't come over on holiday?

Geddy: No, I haven't been in London for a while. Of course Neil and his wife lived there for a time after Selena passed away. I went over to visit them there in ...what...about '97/98.... Oh, I was also there when a friend of mine put on a huge event there in early 2000. I was over at that for a few days.

SOR: What, a music event?

Geddy: No it was actually a wine tasting event.

SOR: Still into wine?

Geddy: Yeah, still a drunk (laughs)

SOR: Alex too we believe?

Geddy: Yeah, but his body can't take it as much as mine (laughs)

SOR: Did you use any new instruments or equipment whilst in the studio?

Geddy: No, I just used my main bass for the whole record and equipment-wise I used pretty much the same gear. It's all solid stated devices. There's a different kind of amp I used for bass distortion called an RBI which is new. We, of course, recorded the album digitally, almost entirely so.... but during the mixing process we transferred some guitars over to analog tape. When we mixed down we mixed down to analog tape and digital, and when it came time to choose, I would say about 75% of the album ended up being the analog tape version of it. So technologically it was quite interesting. Alex was using Gallien Krugerno....I can't keep track of, what's he using?

SOR: He's just changed hasn't he?

Geddy: He changes them every 5 minutes but he is using amps that look like an aquarium.

SOR: An aquarium?

Geddy: Yeah. Maybe I should get some fish on my side of the stage (laughs).

SOR: Yeah. Get rid of the fridge.

Geddy: Yeah (laughing). That's about it for gear.

SOR: Now you are doing promotions for the album would you consider doing any in-store signings like you did for My Favorite Headache?

Geddy: Oh, I enjoyed that actually. A lot of people would think it a nightmare for me, but it wasn'tyou know, to meet a lot of the fans and have a couple of minutes to look into their faces and actually see who pays attention to what I do.

SOR: It means so much to the fans as well.

Geddy: It meant something to me too and I would have no hesitation of doing that again. I think though it would be very hard to do it on tour just from a timing point of view and an exhaustion point of view, but in the context of the way I did it when there was no tour and I had time, it was really fine.

SOR: I know you won't know your entire schedule but would you like to come over to Europe and tour?

Geddy: Oh yeah. We are talking about it. It's definitely a strong consideration for us. I am hopeful if the American/Canadian tours go well we'll be able to venture further to Europe/South America.

SOR: It would be next Spring if you do it?

Geddy: Oh no, it would be late Fall.

SOR: Now in the UK, we have some new purpose built venues - it's changed quite a lot over the last few years.

Geddy: Oh that would be interesting.

SOR: There are 10 to 12 arenas compared to the last time you were here when there were only about 3 or 4. We also have a rock radio station (TotalRock) which is a first for the UK. Rock music seems to be getting a lot more promotion now over the last couple of years...

Geddy: Great!

SOR: And they play Rush records as well...

Geddy: How dare they!! (laughs)

SOR: Over here it is much more of a dance scene.....

Geddy: I can imagine.

SOR: Some of it is great music but it is blanket coverage. But now we have a magazine called Classic Rock - a new one.

Geddy: Yeah, I'm supposed to talk to them - 10 minutes ago!

SOR: Sorry we'd better let you go then.

Geddy: It's ok, have you covered everything you wanted to?

SOR: Just one thing. With DVD releases of the 3 videos to come, any chance of unused footage being added as icing on the cake?

Geddy: Don't know. It depends on what shape they are in. Usually whatever is cut out is because it's technically unusable either because of performance, recording problems or visual problems. Sometimes what is left out of a video is not just choice but a technical decision. I have an entire T4E sitting on tape which will eventually see the light of day in some shape or form.

SOR: We really appreciate your time Geddy.

Geddy: No problem Mick, it's nice to talk to you both. Take care/

SOR: Good luck with the record and tour.

Geddy: Thanks to all your supporters - all the people who have supported the fanzine. I appreciate it.

Extract from "An in-depth look at Rush's Vapor Trails album and tour"

by Brad Parmerter

Lit Up with Anticipation

As the lights went down in CtNow.com Meadows Music Center on the hot and humid evening of June 28, the anticipation and energy was palpable. It was the type of excitement felt by fans that haven't seen their favorite band perform live in almost five years; the nervous energy of a crew who had worked extremely hard to get rehearsed and prepared for a show they couldn't wait to get under their belts; and the myriad of emotions of three musicians from Toronto who four years ago didn't know if this night would ever happen.

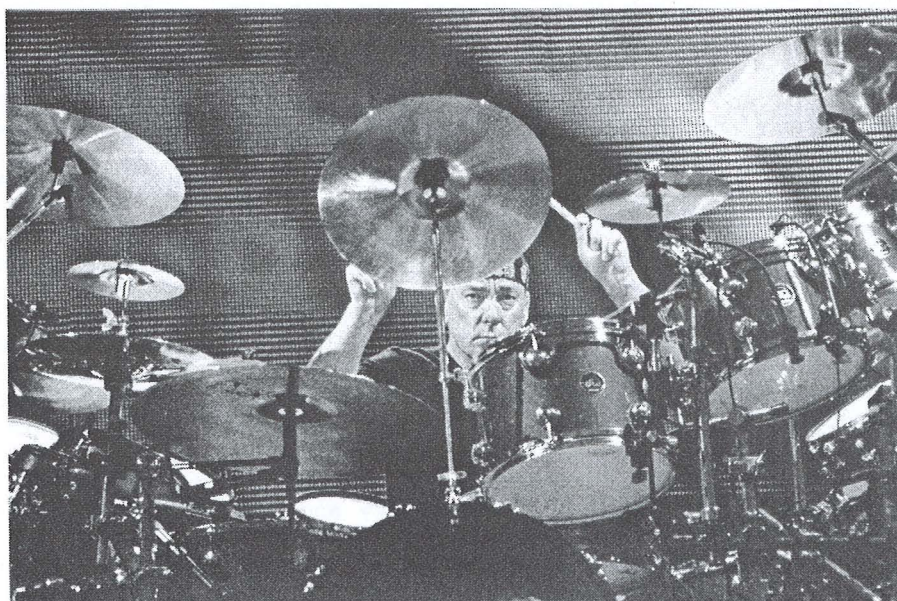
Fans had been gathering for hours outside the venue discussing the rumored setlists floating in cyberspace, the upcoming special on Canada's MuchMusic, Alex's outrageous tourbook photo and favorite songs from the new album. Outside the box office old friends were catching-up with fans they hadn't seen since July 4, 1997 in Ottawa and were now preparing for life to, as one fan described it, "return to 'normal,' or 'abnormal' depending on how you look at it."

But now the wait was over and as the lights went to black the crowd roared. The familiar strains of The Three Stooges theme soon flowed over the PA and Alex Lifeson, Neil Peart and Geddy Lee entered stage left. As the theme slowly drew to a close the band erupted into "Tom Sawyer," the lights panned up and the crowd welcomed back their favorite rock trio, Rush.

Vapor Trails On the Road

During interviews prior to the tour, Lee and Lifeson announced that it would again be billed as "An Evening with Rush," a three-hour show similar to the 1996-97 Test For Echo tour. They alluded to a number of surprises for fans including a very different setlist from recent tours and they hinted at taking some cues from a fan-based poll at rushpetition.com. All was revealed during the tour opener in Hartford and the reshuffling would include the removal of songs from recent albums as well as some songs that had become staples in recent years: "Force Ten" (played every tour since 1987), "Animate" and "Stick It Out" (both played since 1994) and the crowd favorite, "Closer to the Heart" (which had not missed a Rush performance since its 1977 debut - Geddy and Alex even played this without Neil at a Celebrity Tennis Tournament in 1990 with Mr. Big drummer Pat Torpey). With 17 studio albums worth of material to choose from, they added some gems from the past including "Vital Signs" (which had not been played since the summer of 1992), "New World Man" (last seen in 1986), an all-'70s encore of "By-Tor & the Snow Dog/Cygnus X-1/Working Man" (not performed since 1981, 1980 and 1992 respectively), and a song they'd never performed live, "Between Sun & Moon" from their 1994 album, Counterparts.

As "One Little Victory" announced the return of Rush on CD, the opener of the live show, "Tom Sawyer," quickly brought the crowd to their feet in Hartford and declared the return of Rush on stage. Sporting a new on-stage guitar amplification set-up from Hughes & Kettner, Lifeson displayed his masterful fretwork, which did not diminish during his time away from the road, as he tore through the "Sawyer" solo. An energized Lee leapt into the air to signal the end of the song as Lifeson gathered around Peart's kit - they were back.



They immediately jumped into a double-shot of classic tracks from the '80s starting with the crowd-favorite "Distant Early Warning" which featured pink and green lighting patterns accenting the rear-screen projection video footage and a white-light heavy, dynamic musical transition from the solo section back to the chorus. "New World Man" followed it up with a sharp and twinkling guitar tone from Lifeson's cream Fender Telecaster. Lee and Peart displayed why they are arguably one of the best rhythm sections in rock as they delivered a deep groove interspersed with dynamic drum fills and downright funky bass licks. Adding an extended solo to the 'classic' Rush-sounding "Earthshine" from Vapor Trails, the band again displayed their growing tendency to add structured improvisational sections to their new material (which began on the 1991 Roll the Bones tour). This, the first of four new songs played each night, reminded fans why they've stuck with the Canadian trio for almost 30 years - despite the numerous nostalgia acts that tour year after year, Rush has constantly challenged themselves to record, release and perform relevant music with each new album.

The following trio of songs, "YYZ," "The Pass," and "Bravado" demonstrated not only their individual skills but their songwriting skills as well. The classic 1981 instrumental, "YYZ," sounded as fresh and exciting as it did when it was first performed, each with their section to stretch their legs yet all of their parts intricately intertwined. Lee's vocal ability on the tender and emotionally charged "The Pass," from 1989's Presto album, was evident and Lifeson delivered an equally emotion-filled guitar solo. Peart's drum-work for "Bravado" was sublime, never one for a simple drum pattern, he masterfully combined the use of his right and left floor-toms with his snare drum to create a driving, yet restrained tempo. An extended solo section at the end of the song gave Lifeson time to shine. "Natural Science" is one of the most dynamic of all Rush songs. After bringing this gem back to the set on the last tour, (it's last appearance was in 1981), they enjoyed playing it so much that it remained part of the set this time around and it's placement as the closing song of the first set could not have been paced better. Again the musical journey is matched by that of the brilliant visuals both through lighting cues and rear-screen animation. A moody guitar and vocal intro builds until the full band crashes in for a rolling journey, "wheels within wheels/in a spiral array/a pattern so grand/and complex/time after time/we lose sight of the way/our causes can't see/their effects." The animation is performed live and as the band rocks through the mixed time signature passages, the crowd is sent sprawling through a vast blue and yellow tunnel. As the first set rises in intensity and pacing, that same path is traversed within this one incredible musical voyage, leaving the crowd thankful for the emotional break between sets but wondering what was to come in set number two.

The second set began about halfway through intermission as a very slow sunrise on the rear-screen and the sound of chirping crickets. After five minutes or so an animated dragon stomps across the screen evidently looking for prey [see the video footage on the following page for his discovery]. As the dragon unleashes a mighty roar of fire, pyro is set off on stage and the band erupts into the first track on Vapor Trails, "One Little Victory." The heat could be felt more than 30 rows back, but the intensity didn't stop there. This track is a powerhouse on the album but live it come alive. Lifeson's Telecaster provided a searing tone, Lee's vocals recall the 70's and Peart drove the beat with controlled fury. "Celebrate the moment" indeed!

The move of "Dreamline" from the opening song of the set, where it was on the past two tours, to the second set meant that it allowed for a beefed up visual presentation including lasers and a much more vibrant set of light cues. Two different camera angles on the rear-screen during the solo presented both a close up of Lifeson's facial expression and his black PRS CE-24.

Peart, regarded by many drummers as one of rock's best - and with Modern Drummer's Drummer of the Year awards to prove it, brought new spice and flavor to his 7-minute drum solo. Unlike many drum solos which display only speed and volume, Peart has always structured his solos like stories with a definitive beginning, middle and climactic ending with peaks and valleys within. His DW acoustic kit consists of 11 drums, 10 cymbals, 2 Roland V-Drums, a cowbell cluster and various trigger pads and pedals. The set also includes an electronic 'back kit' with 4 Roland V-Drums and 5 Roland cymbals plus more trigger points (this 'back kit' was used for "Red Sector A" and a portion of his solo). He has jazzed-up the solo by incorporating bits from his 1986 instrumental "Pieces of Eight" as well as a boisterous selection from his Burning for Buddy projects by playing along to a sampled big band. The decibel level of the crowd at the Meadows Music Center erupted to immeasurable heights as he transitioned into this section. A palpable wave of admiration and delight swept over the crowd as he finished his solo in a crescendo of horns and drums. The Hartford crowd was extremely privileged to hear Peart's drum-work again, and more so than other crowds that I was a part of this year, they seemed to recognize that. As the cheering died down Lee and Lifeson returned to stage center with acoustic guitars for a one-song Rush Unplugged. The stage, which moments ago seemed so large with the thunder and precision of Peart's solo and synchronized lighting effects, now seemed transformed into an intimate, softly lit area just big enough for the guitarists and their stools. A stripped down version of "Resist," from Test For Echo, was delivered with stark simplicity and tenderness. Lee's voice shone as he reached for high notes that his matured voice nailed, notes that he would likely not have been able to deliver quite so well years ago. Lifeson's delicate guitar solo sung and Lee's

yearning voice brought the song to crescendo and then settled it back down again as easily as it had risen.



Representing their 1978 album *Hemispheres*, "La Villa Strangiato," again showed how well the three members interact as a group as they traversed the instrumental giant. Lifeson stole the microphone for his nightly 'rant' which has Peart and Lee in stitches at most venues. A favorite visual for this song came during Lifeson's moody and swelling guitar mid-section as lasers cut through the soft blue lighting and formed waves and triangle shapes above the crowd. As the solo rose to a climactic crescendo, the cue changes and a fan of lasers emerges from behind the drum kit and hovers over the entire amphitheater. A blue and green wash of soft light set the mood onstage and red spotlights highlighted the performers. The tempo changes and become short and more staccato, following suit the background wash starts pulsating in time with the band helping to take the crowd from the moody guitar break to the impending return to the song's energetic finale. Lifeson transitioned into the familiar guitar intro of "The Spirit of Radio," again eliciting an enormous roar from the Hartford crowd. An array of yellows, reds and blues danced from the upper light trusses and splashed the crowd from the light fixtures on the stage. A sea of clapping hands welcomed the chorus and especially in Scranton, PA, they seemed to have shook the nerves of opening night and were thoroughly enjoying themselves. A quick wave to the crowd and they hurried offstage for a short break before coming out for the encore.

Returning to the stage, Lee and Lifeson opened the dryers and removed shirts, tossing a few into the crowd as Lee quipped that after "three hours and they're still not dry." When fans saw Lifeson sporting his white Gibson ES-355 guitar they knew they were in for a old-time treat. Fans were jettisoned back to 1975 when Lee announced they'd be returning to the 'tobes' and Lifeson and Peart exploded into the Fly By Night classic, "By-Tor and the Snow Dog." The aggressive and angry tone of the ES-355 matched the song's dueling intensity as all three members hit a groove and took the song to a new level. As the battle wore on, they segued into a portion of "Cygnus X-1" which has been teased on previous tours but was well represented here. Stunning lights and a humorous rear-screen animation piece featuring the stage dryers being sucked down a twisting and turning tunnel into the black hole of Cygnus, only added to the performance.

The show closed with a track from their 1974 self-titled debut, the epic rocker, "Working Man." This classic cut worked the crowd into a frenzy and the band by this point in the show also showed their enthusiasm. In Scranton, Lifeson stood in front of Lee's microphone as Lee was singing the first verse and performed a full lip-sync, as if he had taken over the role of vocalist - Lee and Peart again were in stitches at Lifeson's antics. As the show came to a close, after-show chatter between fans focused on one thing: pure joy that the Canadian trio were back and how well they had performed. Many had traveled long distances for opening night in Hartford* and they were not let down. A set list that included songs from 15 of 17 studio albums and a visual presentation that included cutting-edge technology had fans beaming with excitement.

*Attending the first four shows was the staff of the U.K. fanzine *The Spirit of Rush*. Editor Mick Burnett died suddenly a month after his trip to America. A friend to many fans around the world, Mick will be missed.

Peart Receives Zildjian Cymbal Plaque Award

Zildjian representatives John DeChristopher, Lennie DiMuzio, Jim McGathey and Paul Francis paid a visit to Neil Peart when Rush pulled into Boston for one night at the Fleet Center. During the visit Lennie presented Neil with a Cymbal Plaque Award in recognition of his contributions to the art of drumming and his long time relationship with Zildjian. The award featured a vintage cymbal from Armand Zildjian's personal collection.



www.Zildjian.com

Geddy Lee Hosting Radio Show

Geddy Lee co-hosted LA Lloyd's Rock 30 the weekend 23-24th November! Log on to <http://www.rock30.com> for details.

Rush Drummer Breaks Silence About Family Tragedy In New Book

Since 1997, Rush drummer Neil Peart has been tight-lipped about the tragic deaths of his 19-year-old daughter Selena and wife Jackie, both of whom passed away within a 10-month period. Now he's pouring out his heart about the pain and hopelessness he endured and the road he took to recovery in his new book, "Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road," which is being published by Canada's ECW Press.

The book features new prose, text from journal entries and letters to friends, providing a personal and emotional day-by-day account of the 14 dark months that followed his wife's death, and how the support and companionship of friends

helped him through the bleakest of times.

At first, Peart was despondent and even contemplated taking his own. "In the days following Selena's death, I had learned for myself how a sunny day could actually seem dark, the sun totally wrong, and how the world around me, the busy lives of all those oblivious strangers, could seem so futile and unreal — as futile and unreal as what passed for my own life," he wrote.

A rational man who had asked a multitude of questions in his own lyrics and always came up with eloquent answers, Peart was crippled by his horrific misfortune. The guy who always exhibited empathy for his fellow man was suddenly wracked with agony every time he saw people unburdened by such tragedy. "It was hard for me to accept that fate could be so unjust, that other people's lives should remain unscarred by the kind of evil that had been visited upon me," he wrote. "The big question, 'why?' was a ceaseless torment, as my brain struggled for meaning (Is this a punishment? A judgement? A curse?), and when I saw other people with their children or with their lovers and mates, or even just apparently enjoying life, it wasn't so much ill will that moved me, as it was jealousy, resentment and a sense of cruel injustice."

With the lack of answers to his aching questions, Peart, an avid motorcyclist, hopped on his BMW R1100GS motorcycle and rode 55,000 miles over the next 14 months in an effort to find some meaning in his life. He traveled from Quebec to Alaska, down the Canadian and American coasts, through the West to Mexico and Belize, and then back to Quebec. During his travels he wrote about the minutiae of his life, from the most mundane to the profound. He chronicled conversations with people he met along the way, places he visited and the multitude of feelings he experienced.

"Once I went speeding past an old couple, and smiled as I imagined their conversation: him grumbling about me, and her telling him not to be such an old grouch," he wrote. "Then, suddenly I was in tears, thinking, 'I'll never get to be a grumpy old grandpa!'"

As much as the endless driving cleared his mind, it was the compassion of others that proved most healing.

"I felt affection and gratitude not only for their help, but for their understanding, for simply knowing what I had endured, feeling for me, and demanding nothing more than I continue to live."

By the end of his journey, Peart discovered that, as another musician said "All you need is love."

Jon Wiederhorn
from MTV News

New Rush Greatest Hits?

There have been rumors for a couple of months now that Rush's previous label, Mercury/Universal, was planning on releasing a third compilation album to cash in on the success of Vapor Trails. Like its predecessors Chronicles and Retrospective I and II, this album would cover material from the first 12 studio albums.

This rumor has now been confirmed by Melodirock.com. Set for release November 5th, the album is to be titled The Spirit of Radio: Greatest Hits. Additional rumors have it that the band, who left Mercury for Atlantic records beginning with Presto, were against the

new compilation's release, but were not given any input whatsoever, not even in regards to the song listing. The one consolation is that Hugh Syme will be allowed to design the cover.

Monica Davidson

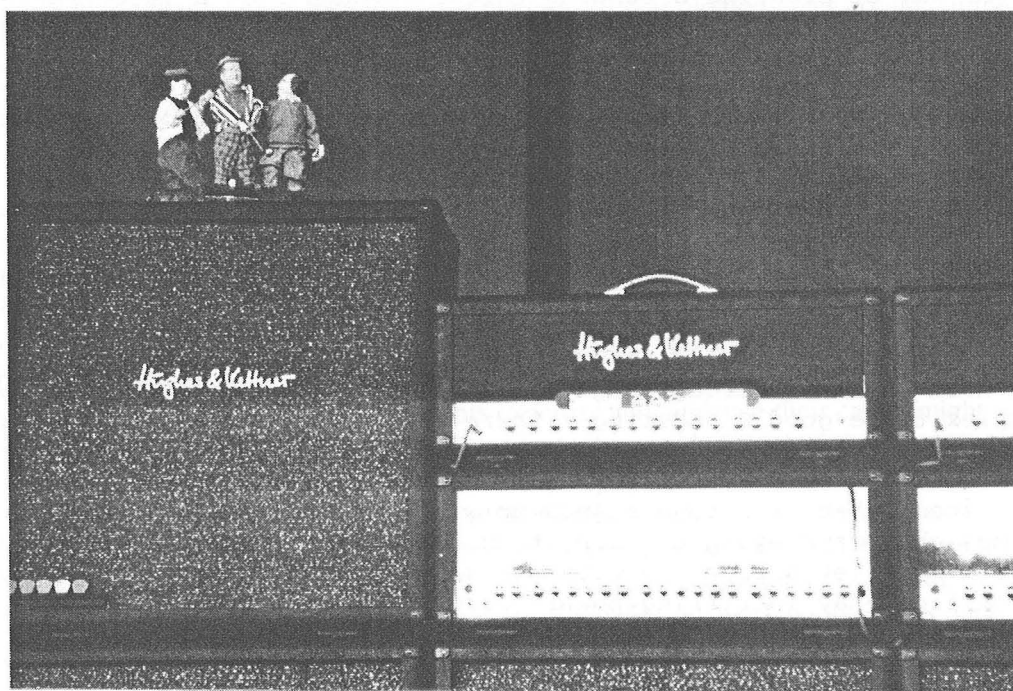
Rush Tour Brazil

RIO - The Canadian rock trio Rush comes for the first time in November for three concerts in Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul e São Paulo, announced José Muniz Neto, artistic director for CIE. The shows will occur on november 20 in Porto Alegre at Estadio Olimpico, 22 in Maracana - Rio de Janeiro and 23 in Sao Paulo, most probably at Pacaembu Stadium for the Kaiser Music Project and Santa Cerva in Concert.

Yosuf Karsh

A famous Canadian passed away today (14/7/2002) -Yosuf Karsh at 93. Born in Turkey he made Canada his home since the 20s. The world knows him for his famous portraits of politicians, artists etc. We know him as the photographer that captured the boys during the Grace Under Pressure project. Like the boys, he received the Order of Canada.

Keith Greenard



Reader's Vapor Trails Reviews

Dear SOR, this review of Rush's latest album is my tribute to Mick & the fantastic effort he made for the sake of 'spreading the word' on this side of the Atlantic. He clearly felt the way many of us readers do - that this phenomenon from Toronto is truly the 'Rolls-Royce' of rock-bands.

One striking feature of the energy driven 'Vapor Trails' is that it is by three musicians who are no longer spring-chickens, in a genre which rarely sees groups reach anything like this age! VT has youthful energy & the voice of maturity rolled into one. It does in fact signify the opening of the 5th chapter in the annals of RUSH, & who can guess how much more is to come? After all that has happened, it is testament to an extraordinary resilience from the group that they have bounced back are now going strong once again. The fact that 'Vapor Trails' exists, & that they are on-the-road again, is SO significant to fans like me - this new album is particularly poignant as a result. Yes, my eyes have been watery...

There is a definite sense of going back-to-basics on 'Vapor Trails'. This is the first work since '2112' which credits the band with simply guitar/bass/drums duties. The message couldn't be any more emphatic!! The approach is taken to the extreme in that even on '2112', the song 'Tears', for example, featured Hugh Syme playing string-synth, but on VT there are NO guests - there are NO additional instruments. As a fan I have nothing against their frequent world's-smallest-symphony-orchestra approach to being a band (& I would personally be happy if they decided to use other instruments to great effect in the future), but VT shows clearly what the bottom-line is in the Rush camp.....they are a power-trio, 3-in-1 with decibels...

Another significant decision was to NOT shoot videos (& 'Amen' to that!!!). Although I have seen most of their vids, I don't think it is what Rush is about & I could happily live without any more...It is great that VT has more songs than on any previous album, & that the running time is longer than on any previous album. I love the art-work again (Hugh Syme is certainly still a vital part of Rush in that respect) & I think the portraits are the best ever, both in visual quality & once again for what they say about Neil (who appears alongside 'Ghost Rider'), Geddy (who appears alongside 'How It Is'), & Alex (who appears alongside 'Nocturne' -his association with dreams harks back as far as 'La Villa...', & this song features some particularly interesting guitar playing). The Tarot-concept is a clever way of creating a running thread through such a large/varied song list, & Neil's play of words in the choruses of 'Peaceable Kingdom' strengthen the theme further. As with most Rush albums, this one has certainly been a 'grower' for me. I wasn't blown away by the 1st hearing, not even by the end of the 2nd week. It is something that I've tried to analyse before with relation to albums like 'Presto', 'Counterparts' & others, as I'm sure other fans do, but I haven't quite worked it out yet!!!

At first this set of songs struck me as being far more simple than usual in terms of rock-song-format (harmonically predictable & hence less progressive - at least in the sense that I understand the term), & as most fans seem to have noticed, Lrxst is not soloing!!! But what always happens has happened again, like an affirmation of faith - I am now listening to all 13 songs with enjoyment, & knowing in my gut that I'm going to want to hear them again, many times...That has to be the acid test for strong songs, doesn't it? Songs don't have to be cleverly complex to be good & enduring - there are subtleties in these songs which I am once again discovering bit by bit. To me these songs have 'feel', that ingredient to which Geddy refers to on the 'Exit...' video. Having reached that stage I can understand that if a song stands up without the need of a solo of the calibre of 'Limelight', for example, then it must be a very good song already, & that's fine!!! But let's face it, with guitar as centre of attention throughout VT Alex has a field-day in riffing/power-chord terms, & isn't it glorious? As are Geddy's vocals/bass & Neil's drums/cymbals/lyrics (which have once again got me thinking on all sorts of levels). Without dwelling on it, a special salute should be directed at Mr. Peart (our 'Professor'!) for making millions of Rush fans' dreams come true by doing his thing & prompting VT & tour - what an inspiration. Sweet miracles are possible...

As I have written on a previous review for SOR, I could write volumes on the particular moments on VT which have got me excited (for example, the ecstatic chorus to the title track), but I have to keep this letter reasonably sized - suffice it to say that VT is deeply sincere, powerfully emotional, never mundane, always thought provoking, brimming with energy, creative, Endlessly rockingwell, what did you expect from these three men of Willowdale... That's a wrap,

➤ **Dan Hudson.**

The Second World War from the invasion of Poland to VE and VJ day was not as long as the gap between Test for Echo and Vapor Trails. Since 1996, countless seasons have come and gone, there have been two World Cups (and two Quarter Final defeats for England), six Rush conventions, Sheffield Wednesday have been relegated and Rick Wakeman has released over a dozen albums.

I always knew the band would get together again to make at least one more album. To have finished in the period since Different Stages would not have seen the door fully shut on their career. It would have been like getting to the penultimate chapter of a book and deciding not to read it. Of course they may end up like the Stones - recording albums well into their sixties, but I somehow envisage them having more integrity in their approach. Whatever, if the band do decide that Vapor Trails is to be their swansong, we have 17 studio albums to savour. However, is Vapor Trails a worthy finale to a dazzling career?

I have been a fan of the band since Permanent Waves (see SOR 30) and like my fellow subscribers was delighted at the news that the band would once again rendezvous in a recording studio. I have been to all six conventions (seven on 30 August) and in that time Rush have not released a studio album. Test for Echo came out shortly after the first sojourn to Leicester. Rush can now join the six year album gap ranks along side such distinguished bands as Boston, Pink Floyd, Don Henley and Def Leppard - though for a different reason of course.

Leading up to the release on 13 May, I started to play the latter albums particularly T4E which is an album, which, having spoken to Rushheads at the conventions in Leicester and Crewe, is one that fans like, but no more. I, however, love the album. The title track, Half the World, The Colour of Right (a wonderful vocal from Mr. Lee), Limbo and the simply gorgeous Resist with its spine tingling piano. Even the much maligned Dog Years is musically terrific.

The big day arrived and I called in at HMV on the way back from a Queen convention (Freddie, and not HM) to pick up a copy. I was in a near delirious state though after four days of boozing, decadence and debauchery at the Queen bash (just think Crewe multiplied by more than four) and my now 40 year old body was crying out for sleep, rest and definitely no alcohol for at least a few days. I decided that having waited for six years that another day would not make any difference and retired to bed.

On the Tuesday I went to work still feeling knackered, but with the thought that I would be listening to the new Rush album within nine hours. On arriving home I took the disk out of the case and placed it carefully in the drawer of my CD player. My first impression was one of shock at the intensity of the music and by the time the album finished I could not remember any note or lyric from the previous hour. I played the album again and came to the conclusion that I hated the production. I have never been a fan of the so called Phil Spector wall of sound approach. Neil is regarded (and rightly so) as one of the world's great drummers, but he is buried so deep in the mix. The production is a polar opposite to that on Grace Under Pressure.

Production is such an important process in the making of an album. Of course you need strong songs with a good performance, but these elements can be ruined if the wrong studio is used or with a woeful producer. The Beatles were so lucky to have met George Martin and without his expertise and guidance their career might have petered out long before Abbey Road. Terry Brown was very important to the sound of Rush and personally I would say his albums are the stronger, but that's not to say that Peter Henderson (though Alex might disagree), Rupert Hines or Peter Collins are ghastly (far from it). The poll in SoR 46 had readers' suggestions as to who they would like to see produce a Rush album. A shame that Steve Lillywhite pulled out at the last moment as he would have been very interesting. Mutt Lange would have been as well, but the album would take another six years and Mike Stone is longer with us. Personally I would like to see Kevin Shirley work on their next opus. His work on Iron Maiden's Brave New World and Journey's Trial by Fire and Arrival is excellent.

I continued to play the album continuously in the hope that slowly, but surely the odd riff, chorus or lyric might leap out at me. It couldn't be that I might never like the album. It would be like going to see the next James Bond film Die Another Day and not liking it or waking up one morning and deciding I no longer liked football or alcohol - in other words unthinkable and not in the equation. They say that albums that take a long time to get

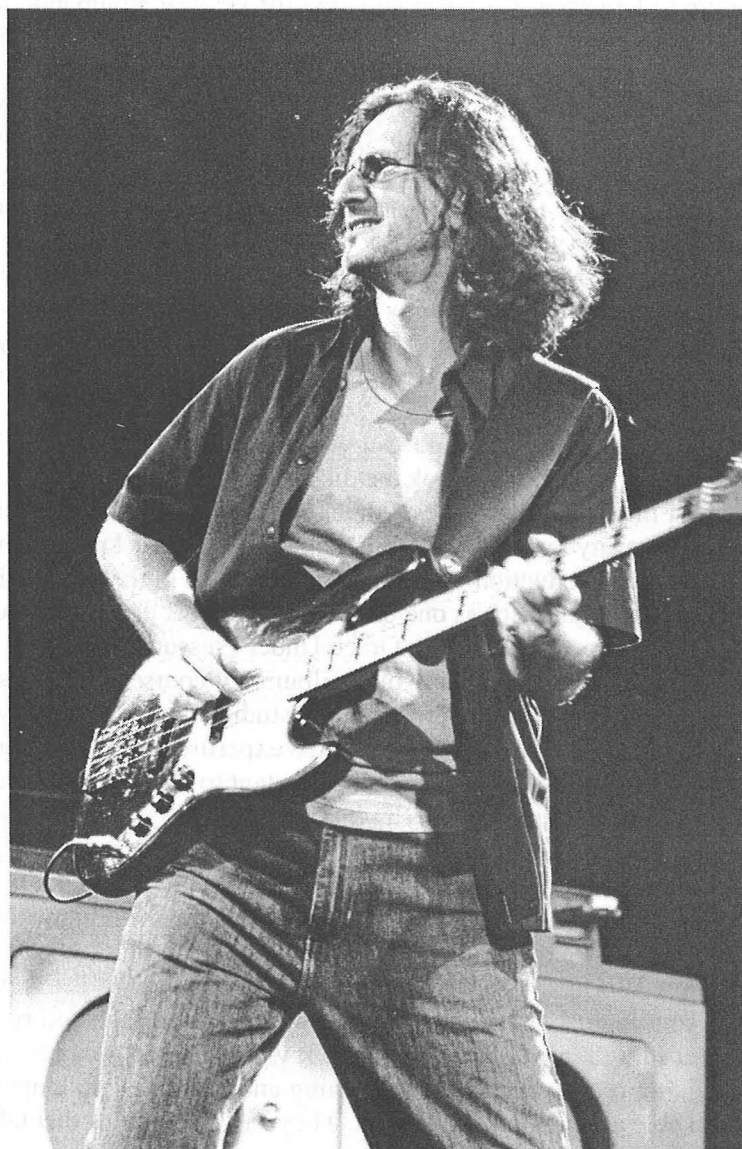
into are the ones that you love most. Well at this rate in a few years time Vapor Trails will be my A Night at the Opera or Going for the One. In the meantime though, I bought Moby's 18 and A-Ha's Lifelines which had a much more immediate impact on me and eventually these were the two albums I was playing too death.

I was hoping to submit an article for the last SOR, but I loathed the album so much so decided to hang fire until the next issue hoping by which time - after dozens of repeated plays - the songs would become recognisable and contemporary classics. I have read such glowing reviews for Vapor Trails and I felt like a leper in my disapproving. If the album had been by just about anybody else I would have given up a long time ago.

Another reason for not submitting an article was Neil's comments in issue ten of SOR in which he could not understand people having a go at a number of things such as the track listing for A Show of Hands, individual performances and the bands supposed lack of education. It seems to me that God created musicians and actors and those that were left behind became critics. I have never had much respect for critics and I did not want to become a hypocrite. However, fanzines though are there for fans to communicate to each other a love of something mutual that most other people cannot comprehend. Because we care and understand the band and their music we have opinions and as long as we are not derogatory of the band as human beings then debate is healthy and one that humans perform daily. Without input to SOR, the fanzine would have folded a long time ago.

I won't go into a track by track analysis of Vapor Trails, but the stand out tracks for me are Ghost Rider, Peaceable Kingdom, How It Is, Nocturne (great to see Fear growing beyond a trilogy) and Earthshine. I am hoping that 2112 will perform some of these songs in Crewe as I deem they will take on a new life live. It is now over two months since I first heard Vapor Trails and the album has grown on me immeasurably. You have to consider that most albums released in the last decade have been half as long again as those released before the age of CD. Most bands couldn't fill a 40 minute LP with quality material whereas they now have over an hour to fill. Vapor Trails isn't far off the mark despite the production. Signals will never be toppled though as my favourite album.

Kevin Henry



No Sleep 'Til Newcastle

Geordies on the Vapor Trails Tour June2002

Looking back, its funny how these things start. In late 70's I had just a Saturday job, a bit of spare money and was able to buy any Long Player (as my granny would call them) I wanted. On a trip into the newly opened Virgin in Newcastle, I heard something which was ultimately going to play a large part in my future musical tastes. That something was 2112. At that time, my circle of friends consisted of Rush, Genesis (as you could only be one or the other) or Sabbath Fans. I missed Rush playing Newcastle City Hall on my eighteenth birthday, because a friend of mine thought that the ticket at £1.50 was a bit too much to give for a present. After that disappointment, I pretty much vowed that I would try to see them live, whenever I had the chance. I queued overnight (Valentines Day 1978) in a blizzard for tickets for the 'Kings' tour, caught the Hemispheres tour, then decided to venture further afield when dates were announced for the cowshed at Bingley Hall. I decided to put a bus on (its something we do a lot up here!) and while organising this, I met someone who, I would find myself next to, at the back end of a Northwest 747-400 on its way to New York, 23 years later.

Alan, was 40 this year. On a trip to see 'the toon' in the FACup semi-final at Old Trafford, we talked of many things. His wife Denise asked him what he would ultimately like to do if he had the chance, to this he replied – see either Rush, Styx, or Heart in the States. Women are very devious creatures - as the time rolled on to his birthday, Denise was in constant touch with me about when VT was coming out, and if any tour was going on. Believe it or not the dates were 'officially' announced on Alan's birthday, April 15th, but by then we'd already decided that I'd do the trip and take Alan for his birthday. All this planning was done 'behind his back' - I swear it would've been easier to have an affair with the woman, with all the furtive phone calls going on!. That week I got tickets for the second night at Scranton (thank god for the Internet !!) and my wife - god bless her -, sat while I was at the match, phone in one hand, keyboard in the other, trying to get tickets for the opening night in Hartford. To her dismay, their server couldn't cope with the demand, and she watched front block seats disappear from the screen before she could 'press ok to confirm'. She still did good tho', after speaking to an actual real person, spinning the yarn about travelling all the way over from the UK..etc..etc, we got tickets in the third row of the second block.

I've been very lucky in my quest to see Rush, mainly because my brother-in-law lived in Virginia for 18 years and he found out when any gigs were going on locally (and locally in the American sense is anywhere within a days drive!). So basically all I had to do was tell him what time I would get in to Dulles. Various tours have taken me to Hampton, Charlotte, Chapel Hill, Philadelphia and Largo - it would have been Hampton twice if they hadn't cancelled a gig due to Geddy losing his voice.

This time however, we would go north, about 140 miles north of New York to be precise. We managed to find the nearest hotel to the gig, which was in one of theses 'amphitheater' type places, which is basically about 6 blocks of seats fanning out from the stage, backed by 'lawn'. It would be a great idea over here, its just we'd lose a few people to drowning and hypothermia by the end of the summer. I'd spoken to Mick a few times before coming over and we were sharing the same digs, but by a jet-lagged induced lights out at around 9, Mick and the rest of the crew hadn't arrived. Next day, I found out why. About 2 hours after we picked up our car at JFK, a weather front moved in and closed the New York airports, so the rest of the lads (and Janet) were bussed up to Hartford, sans luggage. It was good to finally meet people you previously only read about, and while e-mail is good, its not quite the same. Introductions were made, directions sought, discussions over possible Who covers for that night following the news of the 'Ox's death, and arrangements to meet later were set (which would prove difficult under the circumstances).

Now if you haven't been to a gig in the States before, you need to know a few things before you set off. Picture ID is EVERYTHING, you may look like you're on your last legs, but if you aint got that bit of paper (the new European Driving License is ideal) saying how old you are, you are knackered - you wont be able to pick up tickets OR buy alcohol. Just because I hadn't stood in the 'over 25' line to produce ID (again) to get a black wrist band, I couldn't get a pint. Thankfully tho' the lady behind the bar remembered me as I pushed my way to the front (try doing that in the town on a Saturday night). I waved the wristband and two pints were duly handed over after a bit of banter in the queue, which ended with someone saying, 'man, I would kill for an accent like that' – strange folk.

On the Test For Echo tour in Largo, the ticket agent wasn't going to accept my British Passport as valid ID, as she hadn't seen one before. I ask you, land of the free.... I don't think so. But there's always that doubt at the back of your mind as you bowl up to the 'Will Call' window and produce your TicketMaster confirmation and ID, that they turn round and say, 'I'm sorry but we have no tickets for you'. Thankfully the tickets are there, they have my name on them, I am who I say I am, and I my picture ID verifies all of the above. Of course now they realise we're English, and we've come all that way just to see a rock band... 'yes pet, but not just any rock band'!! We get to our seats - much better than I thought - a little stage right, but hey, it's the first night. We see Mad Jock walk in, resplendent in kilt and Scottish flag (and I thought I was being different in a NUFC shirt) and head down the front.....way down the front, lucky man.

Dido and Linkin Park is playing over the PA, then, the sound we've come to know and love.....hello, hello ,hello....HELLO, and we're off and running.... the three stooges launch straight into Tom Sawyer. Needless to

say, we go completely beresk (that's not a typo) . I'm not that keen on Distant Early Warning, but the song played live takes on new life -New World Man is next up. They are very tight, the sound was good, even though Alex broke the North American All Comers record in the 'Number of guitar changes' category. I'm not exaggerating, but I think in the first set that he changed guitar for every song, but the guy still didn't miss a cue, dancing (as he does) on his pedals. There is no let up. Geddy says a few small words of introduction and thanks and we're off again, Earthshine from VT comes across great live, and turns out to be the only 'new' song in the first set. After YYY / The Pass / Bravado / Big Money, Geddy introduces 'Between Sun and Moon' as a song 'we've never played live before', believe me you couldn't tell !. A great rendition of Vital Signs, (am I the only one who misses that 'pudding' bass at the end ?) leads us into Natural Science and the ads.

Half time, catch your breath, a guy sitting next to me notices I'm taking notes (sad, but true), and wants a copy for the set list etc.

We get talking and it gets around, 'hey these guys are all the way from England' ..such celebrity could go to my head. After a well earned drink, we settle back down during the interval, the PA is now playing what sounds like jungle noises alongside heartbeats. The screen behind the stage slowly clears to reveal a mountainous landscape, and a dragon is seen in the distance. The noise wasn't a heartbeat, it was the beat of dragon wings. All this takes about 7 or 8 minutes to play out, meanwhile the band are onstage 'standing around' . Finally the dragon is right in your face and produces a cigar (I kid you not) sniffs it lovingly, then 'breathes' on it to light it. The crowd are going wild by now, then the dragon looks into the lens and.....well you'll have to go see the show to see what happens next. The drums kick in, and One Little Victory opens the second set. As a small aside I was discussing the new album with a mate, he told me he couldn't list to OLV without imagining Brian Connolly, saying 'are you ready Steve, Andy, Mick, well then lets Gooo', and the band launching into Ballroom Blitz (try it , it works). Driven comes up next, with accompanying video, then Ceiling Unlimited & Secret Touch from VT, then one of my all time faves, Dreamline. I'm not ashamed to say I shed a tear, don't ask me why. Cue the lasers and it has to be Red Sector A, followed by Leave That Thing Alone & The Rhythm Method - always entertaining, especially with the nice 'swing' ending. Then I think what most of us agreed was the highlight of the show, two stools appear, Alex & Geddy come on with acoustics and do Resist. Geddy put the mike in front of 'Lerxsty' to say hello but he declined. The crowd were almost reverent at this point, it was something none of us had ever seen, or even contemplated...I'm talking about Alex speaking - not the unplugged bit!. It was a good song to do unplugged, but go and make your own mind up. Now we were built up into a kind of feeding frenzy... Overture & Temples came next, then Limelight (which is my all time fave) and all of La Villa Strangiato, and then another first. Just after the solo which starts with 'that' note (you know the one I mean), Alex starts a kinda Ted style rap, it only last a minute or so, but goes on about something called a Bambolina - all of it made no sense whatsoever, but hey, who cares. When he finished, Ged went over to him and mouthed 'Bambolina'?, Alex just shrugged his shoulders. Spirit ended the set and they were off.

Back on they come, and the surprises just keep on coming, 'At the Tobes of Hades'sings Ged, and they do right up to the layered fantasy bit, and segue into Cygnus X-1 (the bells are a dead giveaway)... great stuff all. Then that big E we like and Working Man, the band are really loosening up now, and seem to really enjoy playing the older stuff (but it is only the first night), maybe the crowd reaction - which was nothing short of witnessing the second coming - will be enough to persuade them to keep/add old stuff in the set.

And that's it, the second set itself was about an hour 40, value for money or what ? . We wound our weary way the half a mile or so back to the hotel and crashed with that comforting ringing in the ears.

Met up with the lads the following morning for a bit of a PM. Personally I could've done without Distant Early Warning and Red Sector A, but these were all singles in the States so you can understand why they were included. The common thread seemed to be 'Resist, acoustic, amazing'! And, 'WTF was Alex going on about'?. Jump into the car for the 180 miles or so to Scranton, PA. -and it was 180 miles of forest, both sides of the road. Never mind, we ate the miles up and we sitting down to a 'Philly Cheese-Steak' by half one. We had directions to the gig so set off to try to find it. Eventually after a 20 minute drive thro' a forest, past a football stadium the size of St James' in the middle of nowhere, we passed the car park, but couldn't see anything of Montage Amphitheater. We parked up and walked a little to see the tops of the tent-like construction, in a valley surrounded by trees. You can almost hear the planners over here can't you. "tell you what I've had a great idea, we'll chop down a few square yards of forest and build an amphitheatre, miles from anywhere, with only a two lane access road.....feck off !.

By this time we had no idea what time of day or night it was, one minute I was watching some golf on TV, the next it was 6 o'clock, time we weren't here.

Now usually the Yanks are very good at organising transport and access to large events, this sadly wasn't one of their greatest achievements. We were directed to a car park, which in winter would be used for the skiers of the region. We decided to get the 'shuttle' down to the gig. It was explained that as it was the start of the new concert season, there was a new initiative, and a shuttle would be laid on (\$2) to ferry people up and down the hill... bearing in mind most Americans are bone idle and wont walk more than 5 yards if they can get away with it. The only thing was , there was only one 15 seater to do this shuttle. I worked out, that with the size of the car park, people would still be there waiting to leave by the time Poison turned up the following weekend. Onto the gig, where this time we did meet up with the rest of the lads - who had a couple of photo passes for that night show - chewed the cud for a while, then went for a drink. At this point I was also due to meet Ian from Newcastle, who'd tried unsuccessfully to chat my wife up in Trillions on the Friday before while dancing to 'The Trees', using the

line that he was going to the States to see them, thinking she'd be well impressed. She was.... its just she was married to someone who was about to make his 5th trip. Anyway we got talking, and thro' a drunken stupour decided to meet at Scranton. Where were you ???? the seats for the second night were much better than the first, about 20 rows in front of Alex.

The pre-gig routine was pretty much the same as last night, get tag for drink.. 'whats this?', 'it's a UK driving License', 'hey man never seen one of these before.... hey Carl , you seen this, these guys are from England'...etc..etc. Hello, hello, hello..Hello, and off we go again. Looking back its easy to pick out the differences between the shows - the second night was much looser and flowing than the first night, with more interplay between the band. They dropped Secret Touch for Ghost Rider, a most excellent track, with accompanying film. There was more interplay between Alex and Geddy, who introduced us to 'the guys he worked with' saying 'him at the back is one' (Neil) and 'him way over there is another one' (Geddy). Tonites gospel according to Alex was about a mixed drink of Orange and Grapefruit he'd had, and even tho' he was just over the road from the hotel he got a taxi back, "The fare was only \$2 but I gave him a 50 cent tip, some say that was too much, what do you think ?" The Americans around us looked quizzically at him going on - I just thought it was funny, that he wasn't making any sense at all, and - other than backstage at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1980 - I'd waited 20 odd years to hear the guy speak. We could see the Maytag clothes dryers in place of Geddys backline much better in Scranton, and at the end of the set they were emptied, and the t-shirts therein thrown to the crowd. Alex used his trusty old 335 for the encore, it had packed up after a couple of chords in Hartford.

Then it was all over again, they dashed straight off, onto the bus and away, probably because they didn't plan to spend the next three days in traffic just to get to the I81-South. We trampled through woods and darkness to get back to the car, and got back to the hotel, where after a drink, turned in for the night.

Then it was back to JFK and home, well worth the planning, the cost; just to see the look on Alan's face when we gave him the tickets; for Resist, Limelight, Dreamline, By-Tor, Dragons; meeting Mick, and seeing your favourite band play that song live just one more time.

So much so that if the rest of the tour is confirmed, they are due to play YYZ and Madison Sq Garden, within 2 days of each other in October half term, which are the two places (other than Newcastle City Hall) where I would like to see them. So dear reader if anyone fancies making the trip give me a call, and we'll meet up stateside.

Graham Parker

Or mail gcp_1@lycos.co.uk

Mission – Two Go Mad in Toronto

This is the story of two Rush fans who had always dreamed of going to see their favourite band on the other side of the Atlantic and finally got the chance to do so. This is not supposed to be a "sod you, we went and you didn't" story more a "we had the chance to go and went".

Like a lot of Spirit readers we read with envy the reports and set lists from the Test for Echo tour in 1997 and made a pact that next time we would go ourselves. As the news of Neil's tragedies reached us we, like all of you thought "that's it, I guess Roll the Bones will be the last time we ever see Rush" At the beginning of 2001 there was the first news of rehearsals, followed by reports of new songs and then at last, confirmation of a new LP. We sat in a pub in Twickenham and agreed that if Rush were going to tour we'd go to America or Canada to see them as we felt that it was unlikely that they would come to see us!

Savings plans were put in motion and each time we met we'd talk about where we would go, what Rush might play and how much we had saved up (particularly difficult if you're a father of two like Simon). Then the dates came out. We decided to go to Toronto - I guess mainly because it's the hometown gig and we wanted to do the Rush sights too. At first it looked bleak as we couldn't get flights at a price we could afford, then a friend who works for an airline offered us vouchers to travel standby thus instantly halving our airfares and making the trip possible again. We ordered the tickets for the Molson Amphitheatre for the 17th July online, scarcely believing that our dream might just come true.

Monday 15th July 8.30am, we met at Heathrow airport full of excitement and looking rather strange in smart shoes, trousers and shirts (necessary if you're travelling standby). We were listed on the 11am flight to Chicago where we would change on the way to Toronto. By 10.45am it was becoming apparent that this wasn't going to be as easy as we thought. The plane was full and we'd have to wait for the next one. Shit. The next one at 1.00pm was full too and we were the only people not to get on. By now our dream was in tatters, one last flight at 4pm.... we get on, or we go back to work tomorrow, tails between our legs. We sat in the Terminal 3 bar heads in our hands, each with our own thoughts. 3.30pm and it's not looking good, I was feeling physically sick from the stress of it all, tempted to pack it all in there and then. 3.45pm, all the other passengers are on the plane and I'm convinced that it's all over and I'm going home on the bus when the woman at the desk calls for Browne and Lapworth, suddenly we're on our way. Yessss!!

We get to Chicago and there's one last plane to Toronto in 70 minutes time. To our surprise we get on it with plenty of seats to spare and one hour later we're in Toronto. However with one last twist of the tale our bags fail

to turn up and so at 12.00am (5am in the UK) we get a taxi into town to our hotel where our beds greet us after a long stressful day.

We wake in Toronto to a hot sunny morning (30 degrees plus) and put on yesterdays clothes. As our bags will apparently be with us by lunchtime we decide to go for a wander along Yonge Street (the main shopping street) and down to the CN Tower and Skydome. On the way we took in the first port of call on the Rush pilgrimage, the Massey Hall (the All the World's a Stage venue) then up the top of the CN Tower and what a view, we can see tomorrow night's venue on the lakeside! We pick up our gig tickets and hold them in our sweaty little palms and also get tickets for tonight's Blue Jays baseball game for only \$2 (or £1) - the Tuesday night special offer! After picking up the obligatory tourist tat for the folks (fridge magnets, cuddly toys etc) it's time for a drink and we head for a bar called C'est What where a selection of over 15 Canadian draught beers await us. After several hours of imbibing and chatting with the locals we decide that we now smell so bad that we should go back to the hotel to put on some clean clothes. Unfortunately at 6.30pm our bags have still not arrived and with the ball game looming it's on the phone to the airline for a few choice words. The bags arrive in the nick of time and we're off to help break the Blue Jays four game winning streak as they lose 6-5 to New York in the last inning. Then it's off to our beds via the Dennison Brewery Company.

Wednesday morning, the 17th July 2002, bloody hell we're going to see Rush tonight! After ten very long years of waiting we're going to see our favourite band play a gig in their hometown, maybe dreams do come true! We're both on a high as we check out a few more of those crucial sights, the star on the walk of fame, the front entrance of the Orbit Room and the Parliament Building (Moving Pictures cover) before we hit the second hand CD stores. Just time for a pre-gig beer or two then with only several hours to spare we're at the Molson Amphitheatre, as the crowd and the atmosphere build we're chatting with the locals about the upcoming show. It quickly becomes apparent that although these guys are as into Rush as us, this is less of an event as most of them have seen the boys numerous times over the last 10 to 15 years as they delight in letting us know. Still, we spoil it for them by telling them the set list!

At 6.30pm the gates open and we're in. Following a quick visit to the merchandise man for T-shirts and books (not tour programmes they're \$20/£10!) we're at our seats, all we need now is for the band to show up.

Over at the beer stall I spot a man in a kilt unfortunately rather than greeting us as fellow pilgrims/travellers from the UK he's more interested in showing off his backstage pass, blocking one seat and his aloof attitude. Still the locals are friendly and as show-time approaches the seats fill and we get a glimpse of Geddy's backline of three washing machines!

Just after 8.00 and to a huge roar Rush are on stage cranking out Tom Sawyer to an 18,000 strong congregation. No doubt the set-list will be covered in greater detail by others but our own personal highlights were Natural Science which finished the first set, a stonking version of Dreamline, Neil's drum solo and La Villa Strangiato (complete with rant from Mr Lifeson)

Points of note,

- a) We got Ceiling Unlimited rather than the alternating Ghost Rider
- b) Alex plays solos in Earthshine and One Little Victory
- c) Of the four new tracks played we thought that Secret Touch came over best live
- d) Canadians cheer all the way through every song rather than a loud roar at the end like back at home
- e) I am now deaf in my left ear from the man next to me going Woooo! every single time there was a nice lighting effect or Neil caught his sticks
- f) After the best drum solo I have ever seen (over seven minutes long) Neil didn't even acknowledge the rapturous standing ovation that he got
- g) The unplugged version of Resist works much better than we thought it would

Rush finish possibly the best gig we have ever seen with By-Tor, A bit of Cygnus X-1 and Working Man then it's "we'll see you again soon Toronto" and the lights are on and it's mission accomplished.

On the way back we agreed that the last three hours have made all the stress and grief of Monday worthwhile and realise that we are a couple of lucky bastards to have seen Rush again. Back at the hotel and we're not the only Rush fans staying there as the bar gradually fills with fellow devotees. One group who we talk to ask where we're from and their jaws hit the floor when they find out we're from London, England, - not London, Ontario and they announce to the bar that we are major Rush-heads, a compliment indeed! The journey home is largely uneventful and stress free (only one missed flight) and we arrive back in London to a sunny Friday morning proudly wearing our Vapor Trails T-shirts.

Like all of you, I really hope that Rush make the effort to come over to Europe and particularly the UK so that all Spirit readers and not just a lucky few can get to see their favourite band one last time. It was a real privilege to see three musicians still at the peak of their powers playing some of our favourite songs, let's hope they make it over here and soon.

Mike Lapworth and Simon Browne

Alex Lifeson on the making of Rush's 'Vapor Trails'

Q: How different was the methodology in making "Vapor Trails" from earlier Rush albums?

A: We are very much into routines and scheduling. In the past, we always allotted six weeks for writing. Write two songs a week. Finish all the writing. Two weeks for pre-production and re-arranging and any of that stuff. And then go into the studio and start recording.

With this record, we decided no deadlines. It would take as long as it would take. We would not push ourselves in that sense. And we made a point of getting good sounds from the beginning, so everything we recorded was useable.

Consequently, a lot of the record is from those early jam sessions. Geddy and I would jam for a couple of days and then sift through and cull the best bits. And then we would start song construction after that. We spent the first two weeks just communicating. Talking. Getting to be comfortable with each other again. We didn't play much in that time. Exploring some sounds. But we just talked a lot. Then we started writing after that two weeks.

A couple of months after that, we took a break. And when we came back to it, everything was clear to us. In that initial period, we wrote a lot of crap. We wrote a lot of junk on disc. It was important for us to play and get stuff out of our system. A lot of stuff we were writing was boring, predictable, unoriginal.

There were a few gems in there, but most of it was garbage. When we got back to it, we could clearly see where we needed to go with it.

Q: So you worked independently from Neil Peart?

A: He is there, in his own space, working on lyrics. He had his kit set up in the live room at Reaction (Studios), so he could go in and rehearse whenever he wanted to, without interfering with us. I know he walked by that control room many, many times and wanted to come in and get something going. But Ged and I like to get deep involved into it before we give him anything. We are always getting lyrics from him, but we wait until we have a few songs, so that he can get a sense of direction, where it is going.

Working out his drum arrangements comes later. But it is important that he bases what he is doing on more than one song. It was frustrating for him, because it took us a while. It took us a few months before we felt we had material we felt was indicative of this record.

Q: So the music went off in a different direction after you started. How would you characterize the direction you went with?

A: For me, the writing took on a real interesting dissonance that we never had. It is very passionate. Quite intense for a Rush record. It is probably the heaviest record we have made in some time. There are no keyboards, so it is a very organic record. I was so hoping that we wouldn't include any keyboards on this record. I always have a fight with them; keyboards occupy the same frequency range as guitars, primarily. They are flat. There is nothing deep or dimensional. They are samples. We have used them in the past, and I had issues then. But that is the direction we took.

This was an opportunity for me to write guitar parts that keyboards would have taken in the past -- shading and colour and background stuff, atmospheric things. But it is more organic. It has feel to it. It comes from the movement of this hand, rather than pushing a key. Geddy was really open to it. He understood my frustration in that area. I think I proved to him we could go to a whole other area with the guitar, and then he took his voice to a whole other area, using it as an instrument, creating all those things we created in the past. The record is more organic. It really represents the three of us.

Q: Rhythmically, it is a much more direct style than some of your older material. There isn't all the weird, changing time signatures.

A: Geddy and I have been listening to a lot of our old stuff. Going through all our records, for the setlist for our next tour. It is a really interesting process. We have not listened to "Fly By Night" or "Caress Of Steel" or "Hemispheres" in decades. We only ever played one or two songs, and maybe nothing from some records. I could see how we wrote back then. We always challenged ourselves. All these funny time signatures. Movements. Things were very abrupt and slotted in. I can hear that now.

With ("Vapor Trails"), we tried to be more subtle and fluid with time changes. In "Freeze," there are movements and changes, but they happen in subtle ways. The guitar will overlap with the drums, or the bass will follow a pattern. They will shift that way, rather than everyone shifting at once. I think we are a little more mature. We look for a different thing now than we did back then. It was the power and intensity. The complication is a little subtler. For me, I love hearing music that sounds very complex

and complicated. Until you play it, and you go: Oh my god! This is so easy. That is an art to take a simple chordal pattern and twist it enough to make it sound hard to play.

Q: Do you ever have conversations with Neil about the lyrics and discuss what theme might unify the album? With "Test For Echo," it seemed to be about the problems of communication. Did you ever conclude what underlying theme there was to "Vapor Trails"?

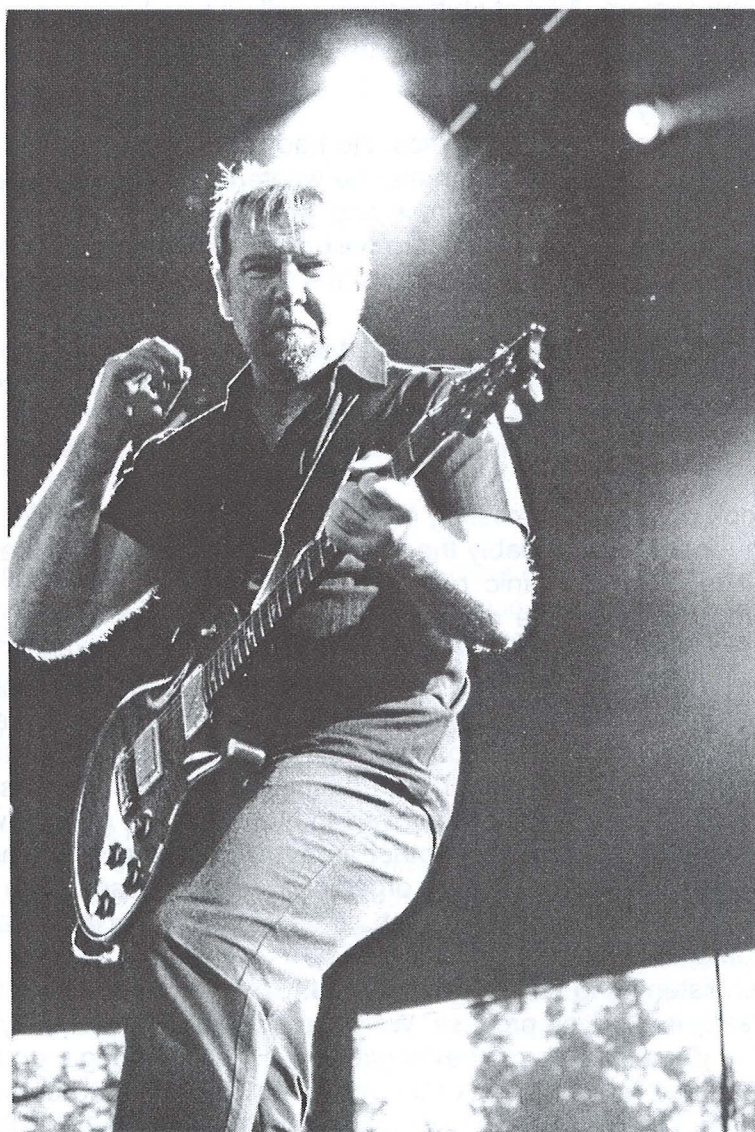
A: I don't know if we ever discuss those things. Neil brings us lyrics. In his mind, he has a theme or a thought that becomes central to what he is thinking. In the old days, it was a lot more apparent with the concept things.

This record, it hasn't been so connected to one theme. There is a sense of recovery and hope. It is a very positive, optimistic record. Which I think is important, given what Neil went through in the last five years and what we all went through. (The album) is a little more all over the place. It reflects a lot of what happened, and certainly his feelings.

Q: The image of vapor trails, tracing your path suggests reflecting on what one has been through.

A: And it disappears. The important thing is where you are going.

To be continued in the final issue of SOR.....



Howard Ungerleider Interview

from WPB 10/11/02

By Double Agent 5150 on rushweb.net

An interview totally not planned but just happened to be literally in the same room so I fired away as many questions as possible and was quite surprised at some of the stories and information Howard had to offer in such a limited time.

Howard, how is the tour going along for you at this point?

Howard-It has been going quite good for the guys. They are comfortable and we are getting into our groove more and more I think. So on a working level and a personal level things are going really good.

What is the difference between good for the guys on the crew and band and on a personal level versus the actual business aspect of the tour?

Howard-The tour has had its moments where from a business stand point we are shaking our heads. Giddy, Alex, and Neil are total professionals and it does not bother them or do they notice when they come into half filled arenas. However, it does really make us take a strong look at what is going on in each market and if there is interest anymore in the band for these big venues.

Can you give me an example?

Howard-Sure. The Meadowlands show is a perfect example. Rush has ALWAYS sold very well in New Jersey. The show in November as of today has sold under 6,000 tickets. It has been in danger a few times of being canceled outright. The Rolling Stones are on tour now and Guns N Roses and a bunch of rock acts are back in action this fall and winter and there are parts of the country that are just selling horrible. Atlanta hasn't sold that well for us and Florida has done moderate to pretty good. The upcoming Rochester show looks bad...I dunno.. The problem is the band is now lumped in as a classic rock act and or fit nowhere in a format to make the new music which is really strong go anywhere.

You have worked with many other artists i.e. Queensryche, Metallica, Blue Man Group...how is your company working and do you manage being out on such a big tour and keeping all of those things intact?

Howard- I basically run everything all day and night long. It is a constant running machine to be honest and it does well right now.

You worked on the Empire tour correct?

Howard-Yes I did. It was a total fluke. We never expected that tour to get so huge and then before you knew it Rush were ready to tour with Roll The Bones so I was busy doing all of these huge Queensryche shows all of a sudden and really only had time to design the stage and set up for the Roll The Bones tour.

Can you tell me what you have or had in store for material on this tour that we will not see?

Howard-Like what?

Like the alternate setlist?

Howard-All of those songs like Passage To Bangkok, Nocturne, Vapor Trail, etc., were and all have been ready to really go from a presentation point of view. The band basically just decided to go with The Trees and Freewill and have stayed with it.

So the bottom line is there will be no switching for the rest of the tour then?

Howard- Nah. This is it. We have no plans at all to change up the setlist. There is not too many dates left.

Any changes for the South American dates?

Howard-None really. With the exception of Closer To The Heart again like we did in Mexico City the shows will be the same. Just in front of triple or even more the people.

Will you have a different stage you will be using? A different size?

Howard-Nope. This is exactly what will be going to Brazil and will fit very well into those stadiums. Probably just going to connect a direct feed into some of the available screens for better views. That will be a lot of people.

Has there been any talk about what to expect as far as attendance wise for the Brazil shows?

Howard-Estimating right now near a quarter of a million people for the three shows. Security is going to be an issue for sure when we get there but I am sure that will all iron out by the time we get there.

Can you tell me in comparison any odd stories about people attending Rush concerts years ago compared to today?

Howard-One story always sticks out in my mind. Phish and Grateful Dead fans used to buy up tons of Rush tickets when they would be touring in the same market. They would buy up like 5 or 6,000 tickets to see Rush and use them to get into Phish. I guess we were using the same looking tickets and at a quick glance it looked like Rush when they saw the "sh" at the end of the ticket or whatever. So if Rush was having a show and there were like 8,000 people in the audience it was only because the Phish and Dead fans had taken all of the tickets. It did not matter to the band. It went right into their pockets....(laughs hard)

Is the Vapor Trails tour the best tour you have seen by the boys?

Howard-One of the best for sure. The Echo tour was a good one. We really had a good time on the Power Windows tour. Hold Your Fire was tough and so was the Grace one. Although that had some great times on it as well. Presto I remember was something the band and crew just clicked on and we could not wait to get back out on the road again after.

Worst or one of the worst Rush nights on the road you could remember?

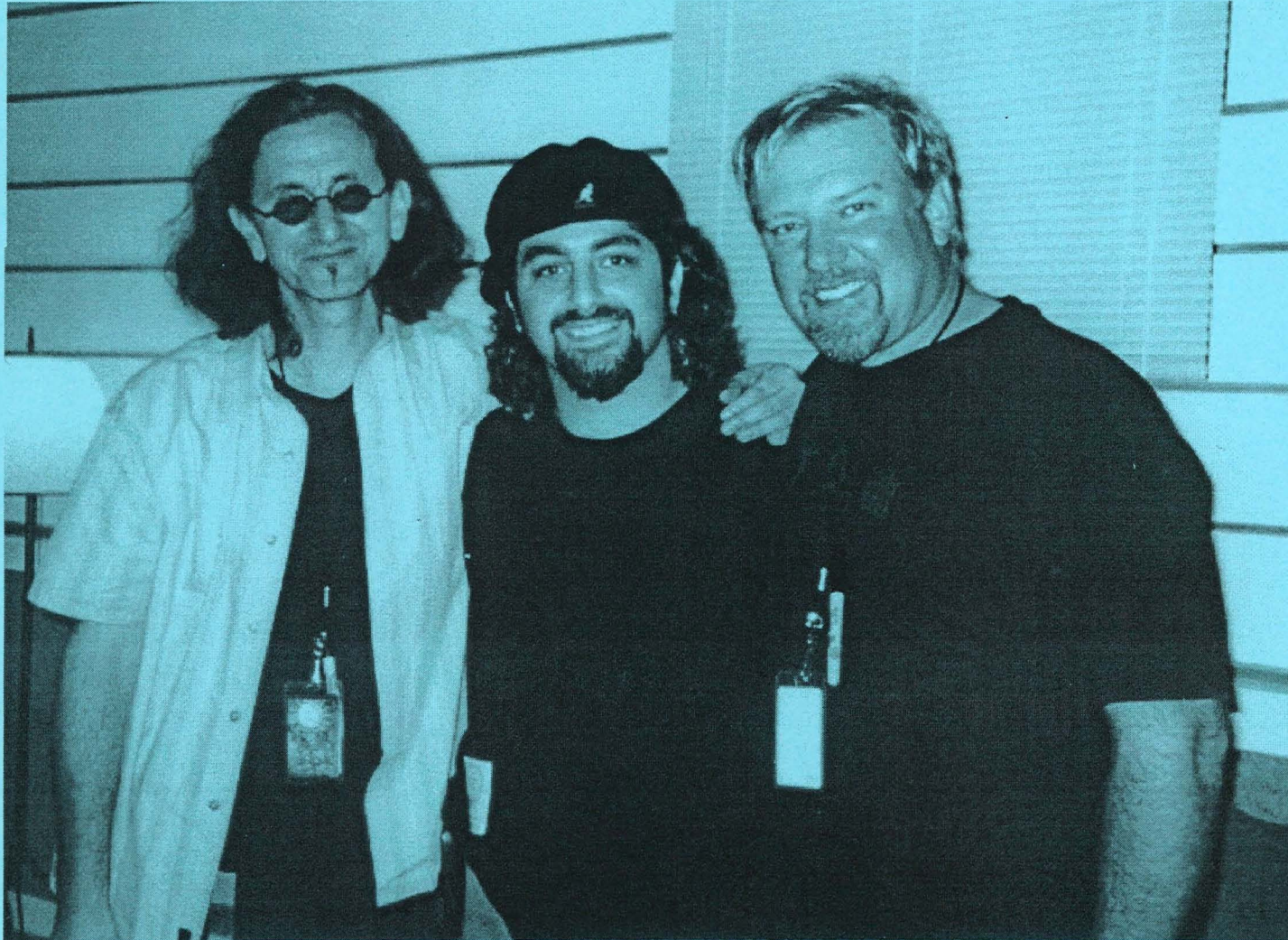
Howard-Hollywood, Florida sticks out during Moving Pictures. The band caught a late flight from the Bahamas and by the time they arrived people had been waiting hours and it was raining outside in a hit and miss thunderstorm. Then tear gas from helicopters and riot police and news trucks and on and on and on. You would never think it was Rush playing that night. We have had some nights where the band was being followed on some of the tours in the 1990s. Their tour busses were followed from venue to hotel and hundreds of miles to next venue. Now the band is flying to all of the shows basically except for Neil who does his own means of traveling. He meets up with them down the road.

One last question Howard...I just asked Alex this and maybe I can get a technical answer on this. Is there going to be a DVD filmed for this tour..yes or no?

Howard-Absolutely. Our ideal situation would be to do it in an indoor venue and we are looking at the MSG show to do that. Maybe Toronto. I would like to get the band to do some of the Brazil shows and consider them. But we will have to see how we can set all of that up down there and film it. So many great moments and songs on this tour not to have a DVD for it. This tour still has life to it and with that many people attending...I would want to own it just to see the sea of people going nuts for the entire show.

It will be good times.





Geddy and Alex with Mike Portnoy backstage at Jones Beach