



INSIDE:
the
BIG AL
Special!

VICTOR



**The Alex Lifeson
Interview**

**Bernie Dexter
Interview**



the
Dexter's

web stole many subscribers and/or they thought a printed publication un-necessary. That last issue brought a tear to my eye. It made me **MAD!** But what was I REALLY mad at? The Borg? *Yeah, I think so.*

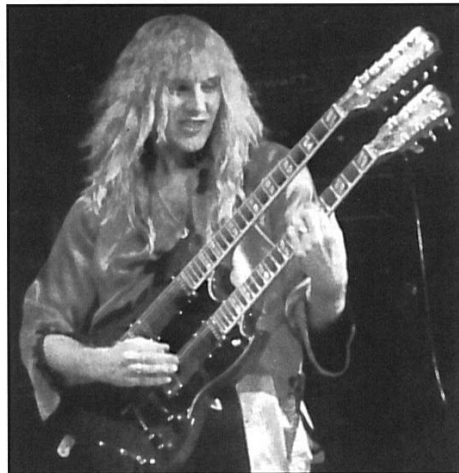
The feeling with **ASOF** is strikingly similar. Remember, even within the Borg, there was Hugh, who was a **GOOD** Borg; a freedom loving Borg you could call a friend.

We have no intentions to start a Web Page any time in the near future, frankly, there is but ONE truly worth while: **The National Midnight Star** [<http://www.cerf.net/%7Ejlang/rushfan.html>, <http://syrinx.umd.edu/rush.html>]. Jimmy Lang and Meg have done a **great** job, although the **ASOF** information is slim and appears to be a *second rate* fanzine compared to **Spirit of Rush**. *What's with that??* Even Mick Burnett (SOR editor and publisher) must be shocked by this! Come on, give us a little more space! The majority of the information is correct, and it is **about** as good as it gets. Why do another?

Where **ASOF** differs from my past associate & friend's story, is I can see that down the road print media is **NOT** going to be pared down due to the onslaught of on-line pipe dreams, but it's going to come back stronger than ever! Like the print world, the Web is littered with trash. In fact, quite a bit more due to the ease of getting a Web Page. Now, with the passage of the telecommunications bill, the Internet has taken the first step toward 2112. The Priests are getting a foothold and soon **CONTROL** will happen! We have assumed control. We have assumed control!! Will the Temples of Syrinx literally be on-line? Once our cable TV merges with the Net we may start to see it all unfold.

Creating each issue of **ASOF** is not easy. It's not a pipe dream nor is it cheap. Our goal first and foremost is to present a credible, approved by Anthem and Rush, publication with the utmost integrity. Secondly, we take great pains in putting together as much **ORIGINAL** material as we can muster and leave out the rumors, flames (I **DESPISE** THAT TERM! Must have been coined by some ten year old!), and endless lists of favorite this and that.

The bottom line is that the Web and on-line services HAVE hurt **SOME** printed publications. But *mark my word*, the printed page will never die. Ten years from now you may grab **ASOF#3** (yep, that is a rare one folks!) and page through it thinking how happy you are to have been a part of the Rush hard-core fandom. You will see before you a tangible piece of history. On the flip-side, you may grab a floppy disk with some GIF files and some text files and basically say: so what. **I know I will. One likes to**



believe in the freedom of the printed page! SALESMEN!

Still More Alex news: Guitars That Rule The World Vol. 2 (out on Metal Blade Records) hits stores sometime around April/May 1996. Alex plays on one song. Others include: Ace Frehley, Billy Sheehan and Kim Thayil among others.

Tom Cochran's "**Ragged Ass Road**" album (on the Capitol label), released in November 1995 features Alex on **Will of the Gun** and **Crawl** with a solo on **Just Scream**.

Spirit of Rush is going strong. This is a fine British Rush fanzine we **HIGHLY** recommend. THE European Rush connection. Write **SOR** c/o Mick Burnett, 23 Garden Close, Chinbrook Road, Grove Park, London, SE 12-9TG, England. *Drop them a line if you haven't already!*

The Rush Backstage Club is another source you will want to get hooked up with. A mere \$12.00 gets you going with some merchandise and newsletters which mostly come out around tour time! A great place to pick up that tour merchandise you may have missed! Write them at: **Rush Backstage Club**, 2250 E. Tropicana Ave., #19-228, Las Vegas, NV 89119.

Don't forget your questions for Big Al! We'll need those right away in order to keep **Ask Big Al** going. Congratulations Jerry Brown for getting through to speak with Alex on **Rockline!** It was good to hear a familiar voice ask a probing precise question like Jerry can. Jerry asked about Adrian's part in **Victor** and if he might do a solo project himself. Good going Jerry!

Our **Bring RUSH to Rockford** petition drive is going very well (see Mike Arbisi's article on page 24). We have received much help with collecting sign-up sheets! For those who we send out petitions to, please get them back to us as soon as you can. We are assembling the names right **NOW!** *Yep ... we fully expect RUSH to come to Rockford in 1996/97!*

Have you noticed all the radio airplay **Victor** has received? *Pretty amazing!* I think through the *exposure* of **Victor**, we can no doubt see an influx of new Rush fans. Obviously, we all want to see Alex **in** Rush and play **with** Rush. That's a **GIVEN!** We surely can expect a **WHOLE** lot of *new material* out of **RUSH**. *That's a given.* In turn, we can expect a whole lot of **TOURING** to come! *That's a given.* Rush is a life experience. Over **twenty years** in MY life and counting. *That my friends is a long time.* The experience of Rush has done nothing but brought me success in my career. A good example, brings good fortune. Rush breeds **excellence.**



the FOUNTAIN

Steve Streeter

Victor Victorious!

**Now . . . Make Way
for the
Next RUSH Album!**

**The Explosion
Arrives This Summer!**



Photo by Pete Koza

This is it folks! The Alex Lifeson show-off issue. Alex ham-a-rama! I suppose it IS quite appropriate. Alex is just plain **BUSY, BUSY, BUSY!** There have been dozens of interviews and reviews (ours is pretty good, eh?) and the consensus on VICTOR is all thumbs up! Wow! That has got to make Alex feel **GREAT!** He set out on a mission as convicted as The Blues Brothers, this mission was an absolute success! This is not to say Geddy or Neil are not busy. Geddy must have HIS hands full with his beautiful new daughter and I'm sure Neil has been reading WHO KNOWS WHAT to fuel the fire for the next RUSH album/extravaganza/EXPLOSION! I can feel it, can't you? The energy is building toward a **GREAT RUSH** album. It looks like we may be hearing at least the single by early this summer! Release date tentatively scheduled for August '96.

PROMISE "the video" has been completed and is getting steady rotation on MuchMusic, Canada's MTV. We're not sure what MTV is doing with it here in the states, as we tend not to watch **EMPTYTV!** The video is more of a concept piece. We will try to get more on it next issue.

We also are featuring The Orbit Room and The Dexters quite extensively this issue. Whether they like it or not, The Dexters are part of the **RUSH** extended family. Bernie Dexter was of stellar help getting to us the four pictures, including the great cover shot, not to mention a wonderful interview which I'm sure you will all enjoy!

Next issue will be heating up for the next **RUSH** platter. We need your contributions in artwork, photos and articles **ASAP!** Yes, we are still trying to get back on track, somehow, someday. We are committed in more ways than ONE!

This issue also includes a last minute entry from Jerry "Broom Jr." Brown, who pretty much caught exactly what I was trying to say last issue regarding the 1001001 Web/Net media. Actually, Eric Ross also caught on this independently. You may pick up subtle hints in his last column in #12.

Along these same lines I have a story to relate to you. An old friend, who I was helping publish a similar fanzine dedicated to an artist/musician recently decided to cease publication. Her reasons were many, however, the main reason was the wide-spread **DOMINANCE** of on-line services and the Web. The argument being: refuse to join [SUBMIT] or perish. The analogy quite poignant; Captain Picard's (**Star Trek: TNG**) arch enemy, The Borg (being the Net), commanding all to surrender and **SUBMIT** to the Web of the Borg. If you do not surrender, you will be assimilated. Read: banished from existence! So my friend decided to fold rather than climb aboard the on-line caravan, feeling that the

ASK BIG AL



Yep, you heard it right. We actually got up the nerve to ask King Lerxst if we could do the question column **thing** – and as the saying goes ... ask and you shall receive! If all goes well (and we don't see why it won't) **Ask Big Al** will be a regular feature in the pages of **ASOF**.

What we need from you are the questions. Come up with your best handful of questions and we will

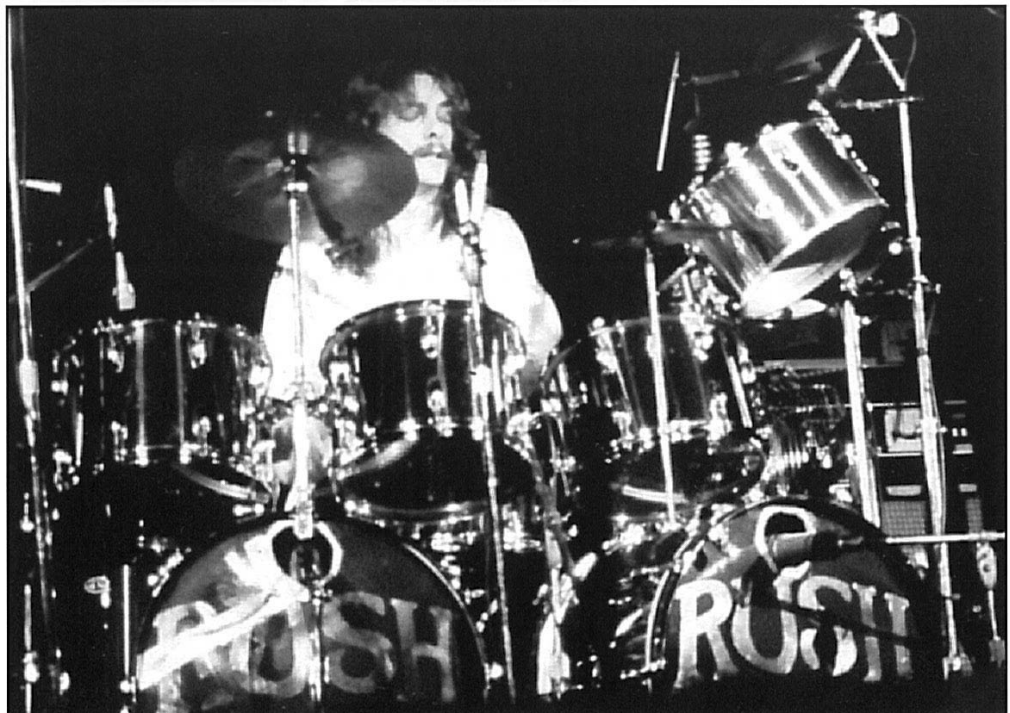
forward the best five or so to Alex directly for his attention. We want this to be fun for you (that goes without saying) **AND** Alex. So start sending in questions now to:

ASK BIG AL
ASOF

5411 E. State St., Suite 309
Rockford, IL 61108



Shut Up!
Shut Up!
Shut Up
Shuttin Up!
I am the great
Cornholio and I
command you to
Shut Up!
Hee Hee Brrrr Blll
Hee Hee!
Shut Up!
Shut Up!
Cornholio says to
Shut Up!
I need Victor for
my earholio!
Shut Up!
Hee Hee Hey
Charlene
pull my
finger!





the Alex Lifeson INTERVIEW

The Snowdog Raps with CyberSteve

Steve: Hello?

Alex: Hi Steve, Hi it's Alex.

S: Hi Alex!

A: How ya doing? I know I'm a little early is that okay?

S: Oh, that's alright.

A: I have to get out and do my Christmas shopping.

(laughter) We just finished working last night at about midnight. I'm trying to catch up on the last ten weeks of missed opportunities to get my Christmas shopping done.

S: You've been so busy in the studio now working on the new project...

A: Yeah.

S: Well, so good to hear from you. I have a bunch of questions for you and I want to focus on **Victor**. It's a great album. **We love it!**

A: Oh great! Thanks!

S: After all these years, how does it feel to have such a great solo project under your belt? We've been hearing rumors since **Signals**...

A: Yeah, well it's great to have finally done it. It's been difficult. You know what it's been like for us, on the road or in the studio almost

constantly for the last twenty years. And to have a couple months, or a few months off or even a long break like we did after **A Show of Hands** - I think we had about seven months off before we started working on **Presto**. That was the longest break we'd ever had and it still wasn't long enough to do a solo project, as I've learned. I spent ten months working on **Victor** and I worked on it almost every day of that period, certainly the last three months I did work on it every day. So that was the kind of time requirement involved.

S: Did you lay down all the guitars, bass, keys and drums also for the demos?

A: For the demos I did, yeah. I just used the drum machine,

programming, etc. and completed the record that way. I had somebody local come in and do some vocals on a few of the songs just to get an idea of how they'd work. But other than that I did demos of everything and once I completed the record in demo stage I started re-recording everything.

S: Neat. Were you using your **PRS** on this album?

A: I used a lot of guitars, but primarily the **PRS**.

S: Cool. **Bernie Dexter** told me you really cranked it up at the listening party ... *(laughter from Alex)* ... did you break any eardrums?

A: Well, those guys all came by the studio one night after they finished work and I was mixing at the time, coming to the end of the mixing stage. They dropped by with some Tequila and some beer and we sat around just gabbing for awhile. Then I played for them what I had the pre-mastered mixes for. We went into one of the other studios at McClear and cranked it. I mean it was **WAY** too loud.

S: Bernie said it was **eleven**...*(more laughter)*

A: Naw, it was on like, **14**... It was **too** loud. It wasn't even enjoyable to listen to but we were kind of vibed up and we had fun anyway.

S: Sounds like the first Rush show I saw back in '78, that loud...

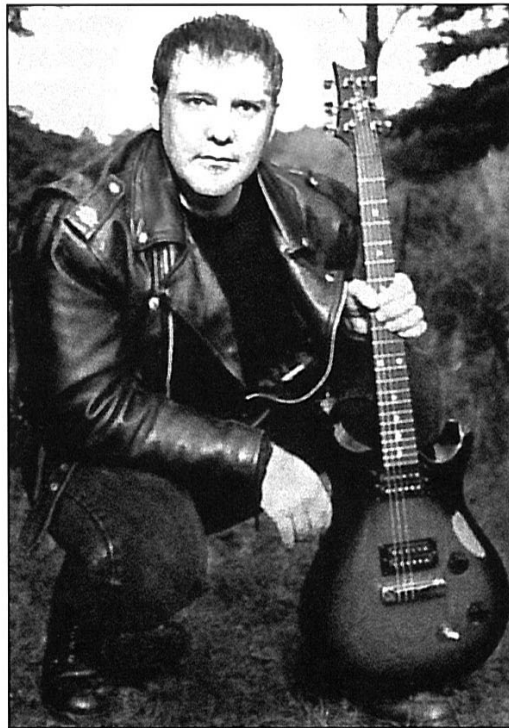
A: Yeah, close to that!

S: I hear a lot of influences, **Soundgarden**, even some distant **Cure** to **Ultravox** especially on **Mr. X** and **Victor**...

A: Yeah..

S: What was your inspiration for **Victor**? It's a very dark, gloomy story. What is that based on?

A: Well, first of all, I thought it would be fun to do a song where I actually didn't play guitar. I was in the studio just



messing around with some keyboard stuff, in a groove, and musically wrote the song fairly quickly. I thought it would be interesting to do spoken word over it and perhaps read a poem. I have a book of **W. H. Auden's** collected poems and I opened the book to Victor just by accident. I read through the poem, which is actually quite long, I've condensed it for the song. I thought that it suited the record perfectly. It really took what I was talking about lyrically to an extreme. That of, having fallen in love and having this deep wonderful feeling and turning it into something that brings you to murder.

S: **At the End** had a very similar feel to it...

A: **At the End** deals more with the loss of wanting to live because of loneliness. It just occurred to me with **At the End**, you know I'm at an age now where my parents are getting older, certainly, obviously, and a lot of my friends, their parents are dying, and I just thought that you're with a person your whole life and you make such a deep connection with that person and suddenly they're gone, how do you deal with that? Some people move on and others never really get out of it and it painted such a sad picture to me. The music, which actually my son and I co-wrote...

S: Really?...

A: Yeah, Adrian had already written the basic melody of that song or at least the chordal progression...

S: Was he playing on any of it?

A: Yeah, oh yeah, it's his programming on it. Then I just added some more keyboards and obviously guitars. But there was a really sad, haunting quality to that song musically and I thought that dealing with the issue of loneliness really suited that sound.

S: Interesting. Dalbello's vocals on **Start Today** are just phenomenal, please comment on that...

A: Oh she's *fantastic!* When I had just started mixing, I had earmarked **Start Today** for a female's voice and she was in the studio finishing up her record and we bumped into each other and I asked her if she'd come in and have a listen to a track and consider singing on it. She came in, had a listen, we went over lyrics, and said "Well, yeah, sure I'll do it. I'll be back next week, I've got a couple things to do here and I'll come in and do it then." She came in and said, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" I said, "Just sing, you've got a great voice, just sing!" She said, "No, no, I want more specific direction. Do you want me to put the emphasis on this word, do you want me to backphrase this syllable, what is the character saying? Is she angry, plaintive, what is it exactly that you want?" Of course then I said, "Okay, well, this **IS** what I want." We went through every line and she gave me a couple of variables to choose from. But her performance on that is great and she really translated the essence of that song...

S: She certainly did, and I can't help but say and we've heard this from various people that have heard the advance that there's this striking similarity in a couple of lines to early

Geddy circa 1975...

A: Yeah, well, I never really noticed that...

S: Is it something that maybe as a fan, or out here in the public hearing it, is it something we're noticing more...

A: Well, I make the connection of her face singing those words so every time I hear it I can picture Lisa in the studio. That's my connection. Afterwards, a lot of people did mention that there are certain lines that she delivers in the same range that Ged used to years ago. Of course I do hear that similarity now. It certainly wasn't something... I mean I didn't say "Oh, try to sing like Ged" I would never do something like that. But I do see that *similarity* now.

S: Obviously, most of the album is aggressive and has this gothic, moodiness throughout, until you get to **Shut Up Shuttin' Up**... then it's just this crazy tune! Did Charlene write the lines to that song?

A: Well, Charlene and her friend Esther. Esther, ahhh, like any conversation you have with Esther, takes the dominant stance. I wanted the record to be dark right from the beginning before there were even any lyrics. I wanted to create a dark, moody record. I just thought at some point I needed to lighten it up a little bit. The song itself is very quirky, that funky sort of feel to it and quirkiness with the parts that are in it. Then I got the girls to come down and start blabbing away about silly little things about men and really what the song ends up doing is, we had fun with it, but it's important to the whole album in that it highlights the silly little arguments and resentments and little stupid things that go on in a relationship that add up and culminate into a big problem and cause tension and stress even though they seem so obtuse. But it was tough getting them to do that. They were very, very nervous. I had to crack open a couple bottles of wine and get them a little lubricated before they could really let it flow and we spent about seven hours on that song with them going through just tossing ideas out and trying to come up with something that worked...

S: Yeah, it's hilarious!

A: Yeah, by the end of seven hours I *couldn't* get them to shut up!

S: You were **REALLY** yelling...

A: Yeah, I **MEANT** it! (laughter)

S: I think my favorite track is the single **Promise**, it's the perfect single and I hear a lot of the **Rush blend** in there. How did that track come about?

A: Bill Bell and I, both worked on that track. We co-wrote that track. Like anything, you just start playing and it starts to take shape and develops into something. Of course in the middle section, yes, it is structurally quite Rush-like and even some of the melodies are quite Rush-like, but those are elements that I bring to Rush so I think when you listen to a song like **Promise**, I think that's more me than it is Rush.

S: *Right.* This album is really going to show to a lot of

people what you do bring to Rush, as if they don't already know, obviously. But it's a great track, a shining tune on the album, I love it. Has this album created more excitement for the eminent return to the Rush collective?

A: I'm not sure. The record doesn't come out for a few more weeks, the single was released to radio a couple weeks ago. It was the most added track to radio in America in the last two weeks. So it's taken off in a way that I never, ever, ever expected. I was hoping to get a decent response to it and that it would provide a good lead in to the album. But I didn't expect this kind of response. It's been very strong and very positive.

S: It's gotten quite a bit of airplay, so I've heard...

A: Yeah, we haven't had anything from **Rush** in awhile because of this long break and the relative shortness of the last tour perhaps it does fill a void in some ways for that but I hadn't really considered that.

S: What were Geddy and Neil's reactions to **Victor**?

A: Ummmm, also very positive. You know we talked a little bit about it. They gave me a pat on the back and said "Well done." But we've moved on to the current project, which is the new Rush record. So we didn't get into it much, probably about as much as I talked to Neil about his **Burning For Buddy** experience.

S: Right.

A: I did this for myself, I didn't feel a dissatisfaction with what was happening in **Rush**. This was just an opportunity for me to do something to set a goal and a challenge for myself and to see it through.

S: And you had the time, which is great...

A: I had the time and you know, that is important but, not solely. I tend to be a bit of a lazy person. I start a lot of projects and I don't finish them. With this I thought that if I start this, I'm going to have to finish it. I was probably most proud when I did complete it. I knew I had achieved this goal that I set for myself. It was a lot harder than I expected it to be. There were a lot of responsibilities that I didn't experience before. You know with Rush we all share certain aspects of making a record. For instance, Neil will work on the cover and get that all together and Ged will work on the videos. He likes doing that sort of thing. So we all take on different jobs. But with **Victor**, I did everything. I recorded it, I mixed it, I flew down to Portland for the mastering. I flew down myself. I worked on the cover...

S: So this is a baby for you...

A: Yeah, very much so. It was very good for me. It was a maturing experience and I'm really proud of it.

S: It's been a long time coming.

A: If I finished the record and didn't get a deal and it wasn't going to be released, it wouldn't have bothered me. I paid for the whole thing. I paid all the guys that played on it. I paid for everything. It was **ALL MINE!** And I did it. So if it

wasn't released and no one heard it, it wouldn't have bothered me.

S: It wouldn't have changed anything.

A: No, it wouldn't have.

S: That's neat. Did you purposely intend to make each song different? I noticed that it goes in and out of *different styles*...

A: I suppose subconsciously I did. With this record, and with the way I do things generally, I'm not a good planner in the long term. I knew that I wanted to have eleven or twelve songs on the record and I knew I wanted them to be good. So that was really my criteria there. Depending on the day or the mood, things happened.

S: How was it working with **Les Claypool**?

A: Well, I called Les because I thought when I started the project that I would like to have people come in and do whole sections of the record. So I talked to Les about coming in to play bass on the whole record. I was going to send him tapes. They had just finished their record and were going on the road, off to Australia, then back to America. He said he'd love to do it if we could organize the scheduling. He could come up for four or five days if he had it and we could go through the songs. I said 'Great!' and we left it at that. Once I started recording and got the drums on, I redid the guide bass guitar parts and I had fun playing bass. I thought, "Well, I'm going to play bass! It's my record, I'm gonna do whatever I want. Nyah!" So I ended up playing bass on a lot of the record but I had earmarked **Big Dance** for Les, definitely. I knew that he would take it outside of where the song was going. My bass parts were pretty pedestrian. They were only guides and I knew he'd come in and do something totally different. And he did just that. He really did take the song outside, melodically and rhythmically.

S: Yeah, it's a phenomenal song.

A: We basically ran through the song three times and he said, "Well, that's good for me!" (Alex mimics Les) And that was it. But we'd gotten what I wanted to get. He's a very spontaneous player and it's those early ideas for him that I think really shine.

S: **Primus** was a great opening band for as many shows as we saw them. They do a great version of **YYZ** that was really kind of neat seeing them do.

A: Well, it was them that got us to bring back parts from **Hemispheres**.

S: Is that so ?

A: Yeah, they would jam at soundcheck with all this stuff and we'd stand at the side of the stage and laugh. We got very close with them and hung out a lot and they said, "You know, you should bring some of that stuff back, it was so cool, it's what we grew up with..." So we figured, "Yeah, ok!" We started messing around in sound check with bits and pieces from **Hemispheres** and then brought it back on the last tour.

S: So that was it...

A: It was from them.

S: That was the little mouse that started it..

A: They talked us into it.

S: That's neat. Hey, the **Orbit Room**, how did all that come about? That's been quite a little attraction as far as the buzz among Rush fans. It's become almost a must stop for everybody that visits Toronto.

A: (chuckle) Well, I've known Tim for about 25 years. We go way back to when the band was playing bars in Toronto. Tim and I always had this dream about getting together and opening a place and doing something with it. He's been in that end of that industry for a long time. Probably as long as Rush has been going. At the end of the last tour I had, for my own friends, a little end of tour party at Tim's place. His place was real small, capacity about 35 people. We had it packed in there. We had a really good time and I didn't get out of there until about six in the morning. I came back the next day to help out with some of the mess we left. (Laughter) We started talking about looking for a place and doing something. He had another club for a couple of years and was quite happy with it but I kind of talked him into expanding. We started looking at some properties and found a restaurant that was closing down in what we felt was a really good location. We opened up, renovated, did a bunch of stuff and we just celebrated our first anniversary about three or four weeks ago.

S: Yeah, our friend Kevin up in Toronto told us about that.

A: Yeah, he's there all the time.

S: He's our connection there. He tries to keep us in touch with all the late breaking news.

A: Well then you know that I was playing with the **Dexters** primarily on Thursday nights when I had the time.

S: Correct.

A: When things got really busy in the summer with my record I didn't go down to the club for a couple of months probably...

S: Oh really? Well you were all consumed...

A: I was, absolutely. Every waking moment of the day had something to do with my record. So I sort of got out of that habit until I finished in September, then went down and played a few more Thursdays and then we started this new Rush record. But it's really a great thing. I love going down there. The vibe in the club is really good. We have live music every night. Actually, we just changed Mondays to a DJ, just for some variety for awhile. But other than that it's live music and there aren't too many places here where you can hear live music every night. The **Dexters** are a fabulous band. They're all great players and they have a lot of fun. They're all brilliant musicians in their own right. They go down and play at the **Orbit** because they want to and they like to. So it's a real fun thing and I never get up and jam or do that sort of thing and with the **Dexters**, I can't wait to do it.

S: That is really neat. Oh, and by the way, we're going to

try to distribute the **Dexter** CD that's coming out.

A: Oh great!

S: Yeah, we've been talking to Bernie about that. You know, in the press release it says you do a version of the **Jackie Gleason Show** song? Do you play on that?

A: I don't play on it, Bernie plays on it and it's one of the *best songs* that Bernie does.

S: I love that song!

A: Bernie,... Bernie is my hero. Bernie is a great, great guitarist. He's so variable in his playing. He can play anything and he loves playing. He's such a wonderful person to be around. There's such a great energy to that guy.

S: He's really been helpful. Like I said, we want to help distribute it here and he's been a great help.

A: Yeah, he's wonderful. He's one of my favorite people.

S: The song selection on the CD is really neat. I mean, **Green Onions**,...

A: It's a lot of fun stuff.

S: There's some really fun songs on there, I can't wait to see it. There's also some CD-ROM on there I hear...

A: Yeah, um hmm, my little contribution to it is we do a tour of the **Orbit Room** and talk a little bit about it.

S: We're looking forward to it.

A: Yeah, me too. Actually I think they finished it last week and it's all ready to go.

S: Hey, **Edwin** is quite the talent. His voice almost reminds me of a **Metallica** type voice. I'm not that familiar with **I Mother Earth** but now that I've heard Victor I want to go check it out. How did you end up picking Edwin? Is he a friend?

A: I Mother Earth opened the Toronto show, which was the last show of the last tour. As I was working on the project, at a certain point, I began thinking of people I wanted to get on the record. I had a listen to I Mother Earth's last record and I thought that his voice would really suit it well. Actually, Bill brought it up. He said, "You know, what about Edwin?" I thought that it would work out great and I knew that Edwin was a fan of the band and he'd grown up with Rush's music. I know that they enjoyed playing with us as nervous as they were that night. They were writing their new record so Edwin was working all day till about 7:00 at night then he'd come up here about 8:00, and we'd work till 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. Then he'd be back with I Mother Earth the next day. So he really put in a great effort for the week and a half that we were together. We've become actually quite close since then. He's a very interesting person. I sense a particular moodiness to him but at the same time, a very definite sense of direction. When he came in he was open to ideas and suggestions. I think he was a little bit nervous when we started the project. I think he was afraid he couldn't live up to what my demands would be. But I'm a very easy going person and I think I made him feel quite relaxed early on. We ended up having a lot of fun. His takes varied from as many as three to as little as one.

Big Dance he sang through once and I was happy with it.

S: That's it, one take? Wow.

A: **Don't Care** was the same thing. A couple of takes and he got all the nastiness that I wanted in that song.

S: That's a very strong song. For the first song on the album it's great and has that 'nastiness' as you say. I've heard rumors that you're picking up the double-neck again. Is this true?

A: I think I might have picked it up to put it in it's case. (Laughter) Ummm, no not really.

S: Okay, okay...

A: I brought it out for the last tour...

S: Okay, I won't pursue that. Can we expect the next Rush album to carry over some of this more aggressive energy? It seems there's been a progression since **Presto** to go in that direction. In interviews throughout the past five years you've stated that's been kind of what you've been wanting to do and you keep on taking it further and further. Do you anticipate it going even further? More guitar to the forefront?

A: Well yeah. I'd like to. We've experimented a lot with keyboards, since they were first available, but over the last couple of records, certainly the last one, the guitar has come back to the forefront. Not only the guitar but there's more of a three piece feel to what we're writing.

S: Correct.

A: With the material we've written now, with this new record, to me, it's hard to tell because it's very subjective. I'm so inside these songs right now it's hard for me to separate them and think of them individually. There are some very, very strong melodies and there are some very, very strong, heavy, riffy parts. I also think we've locked in on a particular feel. There's a swing to this record and a groove to the stuff that we've written. I shouldn't say record, it's not recorded yet. It's very promising at this point. I hope that we're going to be very happy and I think that we will be happy. I sound tentative only because it's the safe thing to do. In a lot of ways I think we have some of the best material we've ever written.

S: Oh that sounds great! I hear you're going back to the way you used to do it. Are you recording out of your home? Are you doing a lot of things there?

A: Well, no. I did my stuff out of the home but the Rush stuff wouldn't work out of my home. We're not going back to the way we did things so much as just looking at a different approach to putting it together. I don't really see the point in going back to something we did before, whether it's a musical thing or a technique of recording. We still set ourselves up for recording the same way we have over the last few records which is a technique that I think we're developing and making more efficient.. With two Virgos in the band we can't help that. We have to be organized and always try to be more organized. (Laughter) But we're looking at working at it a little bit differently and putting the emphasis more on certain aspects. You know over the years we've tended to be quite surgical

about the way we put records together. We would spend hours, and hours, and hours on very short 15-20 second parts making sure every note was dead on the beat and everything was very, very tight and that became a trademark of Rush's music. We're a lot more relaxed now. I think there's a new maturity in our writing and the way we approach working. Especially after taking this long break with everyone having the opportunity to go out and do other things and to live life outside of Rush for a short period of time. It was very good for us. We came back with a great enthusiasm for this record we're working on now. I think it's really going to show. We're not so concerned with that tightness that we've always strived for in the past. I think the record's going to be a lot looser. Consequently, it's going to feel like it's got a better groove and swing to it.

S: That leads me to this next question. I've always known that you've had this **phenomenal** sense of humor before it was apparent or even visible in your performance. One thing I've noticed that didn't really start until **Presto**, well, actually **Signals**, with some of the multimedia, but it seems that you're always the ice breaker on stage as far as some of your antics. Where did all of this start? Suddenly there's a vacuum on stage, or arrows flying about....

A: I guess you get older and you feel a little more confident, a little looser and you take things less seriously in some ways. Other things, more seriously. I've always been an outgoing person. I like to have fun. I like to laugh and I like to make other people laugh. Geddy and Neil both have great senses of humor as well. Together, we spend most of our time laughing. That's the key I think to our longevity. We like to be together because we have fun together. Perhaps more recently those things have come out on stage because after years of looking at it very seriously and projecting a particular kind of image, not that I think Rush has an image, but being serious on stage....

S: That is a perception, I think, among some sections of your fandom and admirers that I sense....

A: Yeah, well, in a lot of cases most of the audience is too far away to see what really goes on on stage.

S: This is true.

A: Every night we have a good time and we have fun in sometimes quite subtle ways that maybe the audience doesn't pick up on. Over the years you just feel more relaxed with it and you want to just spice it up a little bit. Our music is restrictive in a lot of ways. We set a standard for ourselves and we try to aim for that level with each show. That can make things kind of stiff and stale after awhile, in some respects. We like to think that a bad night for us is a good night for most other bands. That's what we strive for and we really want to put on a great performance. We want to keep it true to our records. We want to keep it consistent from one night to the next. But you've got to mix it up a little bit and have some fun with it oth-

erwise you become very, very bored with the whole thing. Increasingly, on the road it's more and more difficult. It's boring as hell. In the early years it was the most exciting thing I could imagine but later on you're away from the people you want to be with most, for most of your life. You have this terrific release of energy for 2 hours and the other 22 hours are spent waiting for those 2 hours. So it's as good or as bad as you make it.

S: So it helps to loosen up on stage. I did notice on the **Counterparts** tour that a lot of songs did vary from show to show. A little more solo here, or Neil would go on a couple more rolls...

A: That's right..

S: The reaction I got was that it made everybody more happy. It was fun and the nuances made every show different.

A: It makes it more interesting and therefore you enjoy it more and the audience feels that. If you're up there and you're bored, people are going to notice that right away. Then you come off the stage feeling guilty that you didn't put on the kind of performance you should have. People are paying good money to come and see you and if you're not putting out 100% then you've disappointed them and in turn disappointed yourself. We've always been aware of that and been very careful not to do that. We really put full effort in every show that we do. Even if you're not feeling good or for whatever reason, physically or emotionally, you get on stage and you still do your best, always.

S: This is true. As a matter of fact, I recall when I guess all three of you had colds, was it **Roll the Bones**? Out on the East Coast. *You were all troopers.* You just went through it...

A: Oh, I remember some shows where we had the flu! Both Neil and I threw up during the course of the set.

S: Oh geez...

A: We were so sick. I mean, I could barely stand.

S: You had to cancel one of the shows on that swing because of it, as I recall. It was amazing. It was apparent from my vantage point that you were going over and blowing your nose, agghhh!

A: Ahh, that's nothin'.

S: But the show didn't suffer.

A: No, lots of people work when they're sick. Yeah, the only time it's going to put us down is if you can't actually stand up or if it affects Geddy's throat. That's the only time we've cancelled shows is when he physically can't sing. Where he's got laryngitis...He went through a bout a number of years ago when he had a lot of throat problems. He had an infection that he just couldn't shake. You stay in one hotel room that's too humid, the next hotel room is too dry, it's cold outside, it's hot inside. It's tough on you physically sometimes.

S: You know, on the **Counterparts** tour, I noticed a lot more families. It's a very interesting new phase. I guess it's a phenomenon that's ultimately going to happen. What do you

think of that? It's neat that the Gen Xers are into Rush just as much as the Baby Boomers.

A: It's very gratifying. To look out at the audience and see kids in their early teens as well as adults in their early or mid forties. A Rush audience is a very broad audience. We've been very lucky in that our audience has really been inside the band. We've done stuff on records that wasn't right. But we've learned from it and that's the important thing. There are songs that I cringe when I hear them. The great thing is that our audience let's us know that too. People listen to our, when I say people, I mean Rush fans, listen to our records and dissect them and they'll say, "Yeah, this is great, this is good, this sucks. But I'm gonna get the next record and see where you guys go." And that's the way it's always been with us. I think there are very few, if any, other bands that have that kind of relationship with their audience.

S: **True.** As a collective I think Rush is the longest running band with the same line-up in history.

A: Yeah...

S: It's so phenomenal because as Neil has said, it's been the soundtrack to our lives, for a lot of us. Definitely an inspiration. Ahhh, I do have a question here which is a little off the track...You know Neil has been answering a lot of questions for the backstage club for many years and we've been working with them for awhile. I was wondering if we could start an "**Ask Big Al**" column in **A Show of Fans**?

A: (pause) Ummm...

S: Basically what we want to do is ask four or five questions an issue.

A: Yeah sure, I could do that.

S: We'll send it to **Anthem** of course.

A: Yeah.

S: I don't know how you feel about it. We don't want to impose and obviously we want to exist by the fans and for the fans, independently. That's been our whole motivation. But I think it would be kind of neat to have a little thing like that in there. How would you feel about that?

A: Yeah, I don't mind the idea of it. I don't want to say that I'm too busy to do something like that because it probably won't take too much time. *Let's give it a whirl and see how it goes.*

S: Well, we will. Obviously I'm not going to send you fifty questions but okay I'll send that with the next issue.

A: **Okay.**

S: Excellent. I don't have too many more questions. I'm about ready to wrap it up. I really appreciate all this time you're giving me.

A: Oh sure...

S: Did you get the new issue of **A Show of Fans**?

A: I haven't seen the new one, no.

S: You can either get it at the **Orbit Room** or at **Anthem**.

A: When it comes to the office I always get them.

S: Oh excellent...

A: It's just a busy time of year so maybe they just didn't get around to it. Do they have the issue there?

S: Yes. Kim has them.

A: Okay, well I'm stopping by the office today so maybe I'll pop in and have a look.

S: Hey, kind of a similar question, it's going to be twenty years since **2112**. I'm predicting that the next Rush album is going to be this explosion type of thing...

A: Wow, I hope you're right. (Laughter)

S: I'm really looking forward to that. Hey, we're also starting a petition drive to get you guys to come to Rockford. I don't think you've been to Rockford since...

A: Rockford, Illinois?

S: Yeah--for a long time..

A: A long, long time.

S: So we've got a petition going so hopefully the powers that be can schedule it in.

A: Well we haven't discussed touring yet. We want to get this record done...

S: It is eminent though, is it not?

A: Well, yeah, I think it's a given. We just haven't talked about how we want to do it or when. I think the days of us going on the road for eight or ten months are gone.

S: Were you pleased with the way the **Counterparts Tour** schedule was segmented?

A: In terms of scheduling, yeah, it was easy. I thought that we were just getting on a roll by the time the tour ended. We were playing our best by the end of that tour. That's usually the case. I think it takes us a couple months where we feel the band is playing at it's peak. We'll run on that peak for a few months and then the curve starts to go down after that as you get tired and worn out from the rigors of touring. Four months, I think is too short. I think we need to do a longer tour than that. We can't get to enough places in four months. But I'd like to think that, and we haven't discussed anything, but I'd like to think that we'll do the next tour in segments where we'll go out for a few months and maybe take a month or two off, go out for a couple more months, take a month or two off, go out for a couple more months and do it that way. The last tour we recorded, I don't know, forty shows or something. Our intention is to go out on the next tour and record that tour as well, then follow up this next studio album with a live album.

S: Oh excellent!

A: That's again, that's not written in stone. That's just a tentative plan.

S: Tentative, yes. Would there be a video in store possibly?

A: Quite possibly, sure. We haven't really discussed these things and I really want you to **underline** that it's tentative. I made the mistake of saying that we were thinking about doing a Twentieth Anniversary Special...

S: Yes, we heard all about that. It was a big, publicized

thing.

A: I shouldn't have said that cause then I started hearing it all over the place. When is this thing coming out? What are you doing exactly? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.... And after we discussed where we were going, we decided, why play up this nostalgia? Rush is not a band that's finished and wants to mark a chronological period by something. We're still an active band. We're still working. We're still planning for the future. So until we decide to pack it in, I don't think we would do anything like that.

S: That's so great to hear because I know on the Counterparts tour you were so active on stage that it seemed like a flashback to ten years ago. You had so much energy.

A: Well, I had fun. It was the first time I said anything on stage in twenty years.

S: Yes, Mr. Fabio...

A: Yeah, I just felt a lot more relaxed. Knowing that the tour was as short as it was and we were going to survive it in pretty good shape it made everything more fun really.

S: It was a great tour and we're really looking forward to the next. That's about it. I guess I'll wrap it up. I appreciate all your time. I really enjoyed speaking with you, Alex.

A: Thanks, Steve.

S: We'll be plugging **Victor** here, and we look forward to the **Dexter's CD**.

A: Great!

S: And of course, the next Rush...Hey, say "Hi" to Ged and Neil and tell them they're **next** on our hit list!

A: Okay, have a merry Christmas!

S: Have a great holiday!

A: Thanks!

S: Bye, bye!

A: Bye.



**No, that's not Jay Leno . . .
it's Mr. Brain Al!**



the Oracle

By Eric Ross
Chanhassen, MN

Al's Heimer

A Love Story

Love is a tough topic. Sometimes it brings with it tough times and the demand for tough talk. Mostly because each of us has a different view of what love really is. Perhaps Tina Turner is right when she asks, "What's love got to do with it?" The radical painter Robert Williams simplifies the existence of man to liken him to little more than a tube (our digestive system) which must consume, (we are what we eat and think about), avoid being consumed, and reproduce. Robert goes on to recognize that we all have a sense of self which is complicated by this desire to feed, to avoid being food and the drive to copulate. These drives and desires, although very real, reside in the mind as an abstraction, and to some, therefore, as art. And since art and abstraction are very subjective, everyone ends up with a different assortment of needs and expectations from the objects of our desires. This has led to much pain and disappointment.

Our fantasies and illusions, borne from loneliness and the need for compassion and companionship, can add tremendous strain to our lives. Our visions of the perfect partner, or soul mate, become greater than the reality, and sometimes even greater than the possibility. Romantic notions can inflate simple needs into all consuming passions. Chemistry and biology motivates us to enact unwritten mating rituals as if we were experts by instinct. We go to the limit, push the envelope, run the marathon until we drop. All for love.

Love can bring us great joy. Sometimes all we need is love. But, sometimes we fail. Illusions are painfully shattered right where reality starts. Lust, greed, jealousy, fear, and a slippery grasp of the truth are all poisons to our sense of self. Occasionally we are led to do the unthinkable. Think the undo-able. Here enters Victor.

Alpha and Omega

Victor is the first solo recording by any of the members of Rush. A project recorded at Lerxt Sound, which is basically the studio at Alex Lifeson's house, came about for a variety of reasons. Obviously, Alex is much more than a simple tube. He is one of the world's most original and innovative guitarists and musical artists. The need to create is still a flame that roars like the sun within Alex. During 1995, the friendship between Bill Bell, (also an accomplished guitarist working most

recently with Tom Cochran), and Alex grew stronger. During a jam session these two guitarists created what would later be polished up as the song "Strip And Go Naked." These jams were so satisfying, that the relationship grew to the point where Bill was invited to work with Alex on his Victor project. Vocalist Edwin, from I Mother Earth, and drummer Blake Manning complete the core of the band Victor.

The topic of love has inspired more poetry, music and art than perhaps any other. Victor, the band, came together as any friends might to share a bonding task and have some fun along the way. Victor, the album, is the result of Alex wishing to express musically and lyrically the sides of love that we rarely see. These are not all happy stories. These are stories that are told countless times daily, but which remain hidden by our self-inflicted blindness. "What I don't know won't hurt me." These songs are not biographical for Alex, but were instead inspired by Victor, a character in the 1940 poem of the same name written by W. H. Auden. Victor, the album, tells many tales of the dark side of love. (Don't you find this name "Victor" becoming a bit Peart-esc in it's multiplicity of meaning?) Victor is potentially any one of us and perhaps within us all.

Fragments Of A Dream

The album blasts off with the song "Don't Care". A killer riff-rocker that drips of pubescent fantasy. The lustful drive to copulate. "Do it hard - make me free." The power struggle between rapist and victim. This in-your-face and kick-your-butt monster reveals the animal in us all. Here is where we are reduced to that tube without a conscience. It's a wet dream without love. The hard-taken freedom slips between the fingers like grains of sand. It's spit in the sink swirling down the drain. It's blood in the gutter washed out with the rain. Love is about giving, not taking. Freedom is not ever free. Who's really the victim here? The mindless perpetrator feeding on fear and fighting his absent self-esteem? Will the mental bruises ever really heal?

The album's first single and video "Promise" follows with a very Rush/Counterparts-like sound. The guitar riff actually germinated from an idea of Bill Bell's and then was added to by Alex. The rhythm guitar run is played by both Bill and Alex in sequence. Bill starts the riff, and Alex adds the finishing four (or so) notes. Bill was supposedly a little nervous about suggesting such a Rush sound alike, but Alex seemed to love it. He simply added to it to give it that odd time signature. The Black Hole guitar played by Bill during the bridge/solo combined with the amazing solo work of Alex is just mind blowing! Fantastic sonics that send chills up the spine. This is what we've all been waiting for and can't seem to get enough of. Lyrically, someone seems to have had enough of someone else. Is it a song about leaving a destructive marriage and breaking those original vows? Is it a song about vowing never to be the victim again? It is both and then some. It is the promise of breaking the chain of dependence on anyone but one's self. Again, a case where love is about giving and not taking. Make a promise to yourself to find peace with yourself. Leave those who disrespect that peace. Now.

One of the more powerful songs on this collection of love stories is "Start Today", sung by the amazing Lisa Dalbello. Some may point out the musical tip-o-the-hat to Led Zeppelin (Four Sticks), and mention the vocal similarities to some of Geddy's early Rush singing. But these are really shallow

observations. The strength of the song is empowerment. Sung by a woman, this uplifting anthem is a reflection of a powerful positive feminism. Not the feminism that attempts to unbalance the sexes in favor of women, but more the humanism that expresses strength through cooperation. Not "I am woman hear me roar", but "I am human, I am strong, and I expect strength in you as well." That is, strength of character, commitment, and compassion. Give up on the old master/servant fantasies. The future begins now. Shoulder to shoulder, an equal life of love can start today.

With it's orchestrated flatulence opening, Alex throws in some of his patented goofiness on "Mr. X". With guest Peter Cardinali on bass, this rock-steady piece soon evolves into an instrumental that is great ear candy. The guitar and rhythm evokes scenes of wide open spaces. Freedom. If you just let go you can fly! Imagine cruising in a Lear jet along a beautiful Australian coastline. A mind movie of great triumph, sailing along in the bright sunshine. If only every day of love could be as glorious as the first...

With music co-written by Alex's son Adrian, "At the End" is a heartbreaker. What happens when a true love lasts into old age? The tragic truth is that there may be a lonely, depressed, heartbroken survivor after a partner dies. How sad to know the day when your wife and friends are all in their grave. Sadness that is amplified by the memories of love and laughing that can never be again. Life as it was is over. Life becomes empty. Time to give up? We are left only with the haunting lines written by Alex, "One last look up at the sun, As he picks up the gun, As he steadies the gun, As he finally aims the gun..." So chilling that Edgar Allen Poe would be proud.

Another tragic truth is told in the fuse-blowing, amp-crusher "Sending Out A Warning." A powerfully angry song reveals the war of abuse that happens far too frequently. Verbal gymnastics meets brute force. Control freak and greased pig. Two people who know each other well also know exactly where the pressure points lie. They know exactly where to insert the knives to inflict maximum pain. They know the war-games are foolish and destructive. Pride and revenge are the real enemies. "Cross too many lines and be prepared to pay the price." Alex has just sent a warning to us all.

"Shut Up Shuttin' Up" is one of the coolest songs on the album musically speaking. Ohmygod the guitar solo is from heaven. Peter Cardinali's bass playing is just incredible. The clouds open and warm golden rays stream forth. The Gods smile with bright shining eyes. I just wish Alex's wife Charlene and her friend Esther would just shut up so we can hear Alex and Bill and Peter and Blake work their musical magic. (Are women REALLY that concerned about the location of the toilet seat?) I nearly jumped out of my chair with joy when Alex came in screaming the song's punchline for all men, "Shut UP!" (And yes, it really IS that heavy.) Moral: Familiarity breeds contempt?

"Strip And Go Naked", the song that started it all has a big surprise. The slide guitar is played by Bill Bell but sounds just like something Alex would do. The sonic soundscapes are a reminder of why Alex is such an amazing artist. Listen to that wall of sound guitar tone in the main theme. Geez! There are just so many guitar voices in this instrumental, it's like a complete orchestra with endless stamina. It's like dancing through a thunderstorm (naked, of course). Surrounded by mosquitos of melancholy and soaking wet with sweat, still glad

to be alive and letting the world know. Time to live with vigor.

Primus' main man Les Claypool joins in with his percussive bazooka blaster bass on "The Big Dance." Another rocker co-written by Adrian (Alex Jr.) Zivojinovich. (Say that five times fast!) With artillery fire guitars, and chainsaws ripping through giant Sitka Spruce, this tune will blow the speakers out of 100 more stereo systems by the time you finish reading this sentence. It's the comet that killed the dinosaurs. It's the power of passion in a nitro-fueled locomotive steaming into the cave. It's the old rich woman pursuing the gigolo on the other side of the tracks. Or, maybe someone's tied to the tracks. But which one is it? The rich woman or the young stud? We can fool ourselves with immortality, but only for a limited time.

Victor = Victorious

The centerpiece of the album is "Victor", read by Alex and with guest Colleen Allen on horns. The backdrop music has a nice balanced feel between the horns and synth. This is a tragic tale of a young man faced with the loss of his father and therefore his guide early in life. Never reaching psychological maturity and confidence he falls in love with a woman who seems too good for him. She agrees to marry, but his lack of self-esteem creates a neurotic jealousy of the other men who wish to possess his Anna. Unfortunately, he uncorks the bottled up rage from his childhood. The only way he can truly prevent them from stealing her away is by extinguishing her life. In his delirium, he externalizes his motives on to the spirits of the mountains, trees, wind and river. Ultimately, he succeeds in keeping her from his fellow competitors, and also succeeds in losing all touch with reality. "I am Alpha and Omega" His life is no longer plain and boring. "I shall come to judge the Earth one day." His life is now a dream. His life is no longer his.

"I Am The Spirit" closes the album with a triumphant and self-affirming note. "Live for yourself, there's no one more worth living for. Begging hands and bleeding hearts will only cry out for more." Everyone creates their own reality. Be strong. Be a deep well of creative waters. Build a life. Make Memories. You can't have freedom for free, but the price is the determination to believe in yourself. Help others to see this in themselves. "All that I make is all there is." Love is what you make it. Love and life are deep.

Rinal Day

Alex Lifeson's album Victor is superb both musically and lyrically. It's refreshing to hear a guitarist who places the song first, and leaves the "show-off" licks to those who are trying to prove something. Alex has nothing to prove. But instead, he has put in this release much love and hard work. He brought along some friends and family and had fun. The concepts are deep and thought provoking. The music is well balanced and stimulating. One listen is not enough! And there are more than a few surprises and shocks along the way. This comedy/tragedy album deserves to be heard and thought about and discussed by all creatures who consider themselves more than mere tubes.

What's love got to do with it?
Everything — that's what.



DEXTERS BIO

Collectively and individually, The Dexters have performed or recorded with the likes of Blood, Sweat, and Tears, Tower of Power, Long John Baldry, Bruce Cockburn, John Sebastian, Teena Marie, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Ben E. King, Dr. John, Etta James, and countless others. But their influences are quite unique.

Lou Dexter discovered Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Groove Holmes, Booker T. and all the other Hammond hotshots at a very early age, and has mastered the genre. But his greatest influence is keyboard wizard Lou Pomanti. In fact, they are often mistaken for one another.

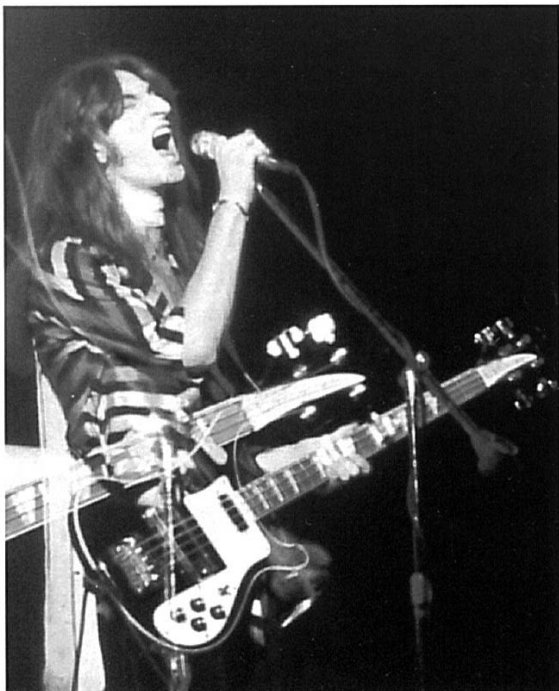
Mike Dexter's incredible versatility on drums comes from years of hammering it out in the bars and concert stages of the world. But his mentor, teacher, and fountain of inspiration is a drummer named Michael Sloski. Their playing styles are virtually identical.

Pete Dexter is one of the most accomplished and in-demand bass players on the planet. However, he'd be the first to admit that he's getting a little tired of being compared to Peter Cardinali, bassist extraordinaire, whom he not only sounds like, but resembles to an amazing degree.

Bernie Dexter spent most of his youth holed up in his parents' basement, ear to the hi-fi, copping licks from Steve Cropper, Hendrix, Clapton et al, but when anyone asks Bernie to name his major influence, he will say "Bernie LaBarge" without hesitation, regardless of LaBarge's smaller cult following.

With over 100 years of playing under their collective belts, The Dexters are definitely a force to be reckoned with. Enjoy.

Photo Submitted by Jerry Brown, Photographer unknown.



The Dexters at The Orbit Room

Well **ASOF** Readers, I'm sure by now you all know about the Orbit Room. I thought however, I would write this little piece to shed some light on the music and atmosphere of the place.

The house band, as you know, is The Dexters. They are a four piece (sometimes five) band consisting of, Bernie Dexter - guitar, Lou Dexter - keyboards, Pete Dexter - bass, Mike Dexter - drums, and of course sitting in with them from time to time on guitar, HRH King Lerxst, er, should I say, Big Al Dexter, as he's referred to at the Orbit Room. The Dexters play nothing but the best in R&B, soul and classic rock music. From Booker T & The MG's to Rick Derringer, and all stops in between. Whether you're hearing the sharp guitar playing of Bernie, the pounding rhythm section from Pete and Mike to the wizardry of Lou on the keys, the Dexters kick out the jams loud and clear and better than most bands that play the clubs of today.

The Dexters, not only fine musicians, but also down to earth and humorous guys as well. Often, between songs, a quick joke or humorous one liner will be heard from either Lou or Bernie. Where's Big Al? Well, he sits in on occasion. Watching the dueling guitars of Big Al and Bernie is just amazing! However, what is more amazing to watch, is the antics Big Al engages in with the rest of the band. A lot of tongue in cheek moments are displayed as each of the band members play off each other in a joking fashion. It makes for a great round of evening entertainment!

I could go on telling you more about Alex's humorous antics, his great guitar playing, the fabulous musicianship of the Dexters, but you really must experience it for yourself. Not only are the Dexters a fun band to see, but the Orbit Room staff go out of their way to make you feel comfortable. It's a very relaxed "no bullshit" atmosphere. If you get a chance to come to the Toronto area, check out the Dexters at the Orbit Room. You'll be checking out a great show!!

Kevin Bontius
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

ORBIT ROOM INFO

The Orbit Room is located at 580 College St. in Toronto, Canada. Phone 416-535-0613

THE DEXTERS PRESS RELEASE

The Dexters LIVE at THE ORBIT ROOM HIP TO THE TIP

Alma Records is proud to announce the release of "The Dexters Live at The Orbit Room—Hip To The Tip" ENHANCED CD+ interactive CD-ROM. Included are classic renditions of R&B standards ranging from the immortal "Green Onions" by Booker T. and The M.G.s to space-age bachelor pad anthem "Melancholy Serenade", better known as the theme from The Jackie Gleason Show. The CD features stellar performances by The Dexters, whose members include Lou Pomanti (Hammond B-3), Bernie LaBarge (guitar), Peter Cardinali (bass guitar), and Michael Sloski (drums).

Special guests on the CD include Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson, vocalist Katalin Kiss, and Phil Dwyer on sax.

The Orbit Room was founded by Tim Notter, Pam Fenton and Alex Lifeson in November 1994 with the idea of recreating the atmosphere of the blues and soul clubs of the '60's, such as Toronto's Le Coq D'Or, The Colonial, and Club Bluenote, where patrons could enjoy an evening listening to cutting-edge R&B centred around the hypnotizing sounds of the Hammond B-3 organ. Lou Pomanti was asked to add his expertise by putting together a band of self-confessed R&B addicts. The Dexters premiered to SRO crowds, and continue to do so every weekend as the official Orbit house band. The result of this effort is "The Dexters Live at The Orbit Room—Hip To The Tip", a fifteen track compilation of rhythm and blues, psychedelia, and originals.

Classic R&B takes a quantum leap into the '90's with the ENHANCED CD+ interactive CD-ROM features of "Hip To The Tip". Play the CD on your home stereo and listen to The Dexters putting their unmistakable mark on songs you may not have heard in some time, but that have been part of you since you first heard them. However, by playing the same CD in a Windows-compatible multimedia computer, you will enjoy a guided video tour of The Orbit Room by Alex, Tim and Pam, personal info on Lou, Mike, Bernie and Pete

Dexter, background info on the songs, and various appearances and sound bites from musical and entertainment luminaries such as Tom Cochrane, Colin James, Kim Mitchell, members of Bonnie Raitt's band, actor Graham Greene, and many others.

"The Dexters Live at The Orbit Room—Hip To The Tip" will delight all of your senses, whether you are a baby-boomer who wants to reminisce about more innocent times, or whether you are a net-surfing child of the '90's with an insatiable desire to expand your horizons. Either way, this CD is a must for your collection.

The CD is available at selected **HMV** and **SAM'S** throughout Canada or you can order directly from **ALMA RECORDS**, 260 Adelaide St. E., Suite 10, Toronto, Ontario M5A 1N1. Phone orders (416) 494-2562. Better still, pick one up at The Orbit Room and spend an evening with The Dexters. The Orbit Room is located at 580 College St. in Toronto. Phone (416) 535-0613.

October 1994. Another new bar opens in Toronto. Big deal. One more watering hole. Probably will last a few months and then fold like so many others. However, this story is unlike most. This story harks back to the mid '60's when clubs like Le Coq D'Or, the Colonial, Club Bluenote and others hosted live entertainment that had its own sound, its own vibe, and its faithful followers.

The Orbit Room is a special place. Founded by Tim Notter, Pam Fenton and Alex Lifeson (of Rush fame), The Orbit has been the breeding ground of the resurgence of Maximum R & B, and a band known simply as The Dexters.

The Dexters were formed by keyboardist Lou Dexter in the fall of '94. Tim, Pam and Alex wanted to create an atmosphere similar to the blues and soul clubs of the '60's, and asked Lou to form the house band at The Orbit. Not just any band, but one with its feet planted firmly in the roots of R & B, and capable of communicating that feeling with a '90's sensibility. Lots of instrumentals featuring the Hammond B-3 organ, guitar, bass, and drums. Lou enlisted three of his friends and longtime session partners Pete Dexter on bass, Mike Dexter on drums, and Bernie Dexter on guitar to form the band. After several weeks of intense rehearsal and research into their mutual memory banks, The Dexters premiered at The Orbit to standing-room-only crowds. Through word of mouth, The Internet, along with surprise appearances by Alex "Big Al" Dexter (hmmm...I wonder?) on guitar as well as other notable notables, The Orbit took off immediately.

In the summer of 1995, The Dexters were recorded live at The Orbit by Mike Duncan and Joe Rossi. The result is "Hip To The Tip," a fifteen-song compilation of classic R&B, psychedelia, and originals. It just doesn't get any better than this!

A Chat With Big Al's Hero...

Bernie Dexter of

the Dexters

Interviewed by Steve Streeter ~ Transcribed by Mandy Streeter

Steve: Well, I've whipped up some questions for you, so let's get to it!

Bernie: Sure.

S: First and foremost, I think the CD is **excellent!** We love it. Where did the idea for cutting the CD come about?

B: Well, we were just enjoying playing in the club so much and the band was sounding so good in it that we just decided to make a live recording. Originally we were just going to make a cassette up and sell it to friends at the bar. Then we started thinking of what we could do to make it extra special and the CD-ROM idea came up and we decided to do it cause we figured that, more than anything, Rush fans in particular would love to see Alex playing with us and also just to get a vibe of the club. So that's basically how that happened.

S: Who's idea was the CD-ROM portion then?

B: I think Peter brought it up originally.

S: Yeah, he seems to be the technical head.

B: Uh-huh...I think he had dabbled in it with some other project and liked the results. He had some friends that were starting their own company compiling CD-ROMs. They were anxious to try a multi-media format and offered their services and we decided to take them up on it. We all learned a whole bunch of stuff along the way, that's for sure.

S: Cool. Had you all individually known Alex before the Dexters were formed?

B: I had met Alex a couple of times just playing at festivals around Toronto, like the **Kumbaya** festival...

S: Oh yes, we're familiar with that.

B: Yeah, I'd met Alex there a few times and we talked a bit. I don't know if anybody in the band knew him better than that really. When Tim decided to open up the club, he and Lou had been friends for a long time and he asked Lou to put this band together. Then Alex started showing up and

Tim said Alex wanted to come down on Thursdays and jam with us. We were definitely up for that.

S: You had no problems with that huh?

B: Yeah! So he came in, I guess we had played there a month or so before he showed up. I just ran down some songs with him in the back room there and he got up and we've been having a great time ever since. We don't see him enough though cause he's real busy with his solo project and Rush.

S: Were you Rush fans before this? I'm assuming you grew up in Toronto or that area...

B: I knew about Rush. I didn't know a lot about them other than I had met the guys and I used to be managed by Vic Wilson who was one of their original managers. So

I was familiar with them and I had some of their stuff and always liked what they did. I can't speak for anyone else in the band but they were certainly aware of them, that's for sure. I knew that they were nice guys just from meeting them. They're not on any sort of rock star trip. They're really down to earth.

S: That's always sort of come across. Just talking to Alex for the first time last month at length I felt very comfortable and that's very rare....

B: Oh yeah, it's true...

S: It's rare for people of their stature that have reached that pinnacle to be that way.

B: Yeah, yeah, he has every reason to be a "rock star" if he wanted to be and none of those guys are like that. They're all family people and just great guys.

S: How are the Dexters going over locally?

B: The club is packed every night that we play there. The CD is selling like hot cakes....

S: That's good! You'll have to knock out a wall...

B: I hope so, but I don't want to get rid of this little intimacy that we've got going. Tim was even talking about moving to a bigger place at some point but we just love it the way it is right now. It's just like going home when we play there. There's so many regulars. We know half the people by name now.

S: That's really neat...

B: Uh-huh...

S: With the Rush connection, I'm sure you're getting a lot more exposure, especially with people coming up hoping to see Alex. Do you have a lot of people come up and ask if you will play **Freewill** or something? Does it ever get that crazy?

B: (laughs) Well, it happened more at the beginning. I guess the buzz was getting around that Alex had this club...We had guys driving up from, well, a couple of guys

from California, some guys from Philadelphia....They had heard about it from the Internet. They would ask where Alex was and there were a couple times where he wasn't going to show up because he was working on his solo project but they stayed for the night and ended up loving us anyway.

S: I'm sure they enjoyed it never the less. I think that's the proof of the purchase.

B: I've got a great story and this is the God's truth. It actually happened to me about a month ago. I think it was Mike and Pete and I were in the hallway by the washrooms at the end of the night and this guy came up to us and he said, "I just love you guys and I've been in here a million times, and I think you're getting better every time I hear you." Then he went into the washroom. About a minute later, I went in there too and when we were washing up it was just the two of us in the bathroom and he says, "Can I be perfectly honest with you for a minute?" I said, "Sure, go ahead, what is it?" He says, "Well, I don't know how to tell you this but I've never been a huge Rush fan and I don't own any of your albums but I think you're a great guitar player." He thought I was **Alex!** (Laughter from Steve and Bernie) And he'd been in there a hundred times so he must go tell his friends, "Geez, I went and saw Rush play in this little club and they're playing R&B music"....

S: That's funny! He was clueless...

B: It was unbelievable! I should've played him a little longer and given him an autograph.

S: That's extremely funny! You know, one of the first things that hits me on the CD is the sound of the Hammond organ. It's such a rich sound. It's not the type of sound you hear a lot these days and it's really fresh. I'm glad to hear it back.

B: Me too. There's a lot of people that walk up to it not even quite sure what it is because everybody is so used to seeing synthesizers.

S: Oh there's nothing like it! Like when Keith Emerson lugged around his old boards...There's nothing like analog.

B: Yeah, exactly. They're looking at this big piece of furniture there and it freaks them out, what is this thing spinning around inside this box? We explain that it's for the vibrato and all that. It probably seems so archaic to half the kids that come down to the club. They've never actually seen anything with wires and tubes...they're just used to synthesizers. It's really amazing. It makes me feel old sometimes. The very first band I was in when I was eleven had a B3 in it. I've been lugging those things around for years...

S: Yeah, it's a huge piece. How did you select all the songs on the CD? Obviously, there's many others...

B: Oh yeah, we recorded for three nights.

S: Yeah, I keep waiting to hear **Secret Agent Man** by Johnny Rivers... What other tunes do you cover?

B: *That's a good idea...*Let's see, we know at least 150 songs so we shake things up a bit every night. We just

brought the tapes in to the mixing studio and listened to everything and picked our favorite ones. We knew we'd only get 13 or 14 on the record so we wanted to get a variety but at the same time have some sort of string that would be recognizable as to a particular sound. But, we wanted to throw in a bit of our louder stuff that we do towards the end of the night and some swing stuff that we do earlier on in the evening.

S: Yeah, it has a good flow. The song **1967 Again**, with Alex, is that an original thing?

B: Yeah, that was just a jam we got into.

S: That sounds like something that could go on for ten minutes...

B: Probably went on longer than that... We were just jamming and when we played back the tapes we listened to everything through, even us tuning up between songs, just to see if there were any little gems and this thing came on and we were just talking amongst ourselves and it just kept going on and on... We thought, geez, there's probably a bit of this we should put on the record. It was really hypnotic and Alex does some great little spacey, whammy bar things on there.

S: Oh it's wonderful! I wish I could hear it for another ten minutes. I guess I'll just have to come up there...

B: Yeah, we'll get you the bootleg version of it.

S: Yeah, right! Have you had a lot of guest stars stop by? Like Kim Mitchell or Rik Emmett?

B: Yes, well when you get the CD-ROM portion of it working you'll see there's video of these guys on the CD-ROM. Off hand, Kim Mitchell, Tom Cochran, Colin James, Graham Greene the actor, who Mike (our drummer) and I have known for 25 years. Graham used to be a roadie for bands around Ontario. He was a roadie for a couple of bands Mike and I were in. He dropped out of the business, got tired of making 50 bucks a week, started acting, and next thing I know he's in **Dances With Wolves**, and being nominated for an Oscar. He comes in all the time. We have a great time seeing him. A couple of bands, after they've done a gig at the Gardens will come in...

S: How about Mo Berg?

B: Mo's been in, sure. I don't think he lives too far from the club actually.

S: He's a great guy. **Pursuit of Happiness** is a fine band.

B: Oh, they're a great band! Here's a bit of trivia in case you don't know, Rachel Oldfield who sings in the band, her sister Megan was the one who did the graphics on Victor.

S: **Wow!** What a connection. It's like a big extended family.

B: Yep. There were some bands that came in, I can't think who, Motley Crue or White Zombie or something like that... Alex knows so many people...

S: Probably Sebastian Bach.

B: Oh, I wouldn't doubt it. But he'd have to walk up to



Alex & Bernie burst into a jam!

me and introduce himself, you know...

S: Right, long hair, *whatever...*

B: Another long haired guy, exactly! There's so many guys that know Alex and they've heard about his club and Tim and Pam make up a nice spread for them and feed them after the show. There's always something going on.

S: That's neat. Another one of my favorite songs is the **Melancholy Serenade**. What a great rendition! I'm a big Jackie Gleason fan...It's a **BANG ZOOM** version!

B: (Laughter) Well, a friend of mine just gave me a compilation tape. He's a huge Danny Gatten fan, I don't know if you know who Danny is, but he's sort of like a cult guitar player. A really good guitar player, along the lines of Roy Buchanan or something. He played a Telecaster and had a lot of great sound effects. He died just a few years ago. He used to do wacky TV theme songs and he did a version of **Melancholy Serenade** and I listened to it on this tape and just suggested that we attack it in our own right. People love that song when we play it!

S: Oh, and of course a little **James Bond** thrown in there too...

B: Yes, (chuckle) that doesn't hurt. Well a lot of the songs we play, it's sort of a catch-22. Some of the ones I would think people wouldn't have a clue what they are, mainly because of our age versus the age of some of the people that come to see us, I'm amazed at how many know these old tunes. Like old **Booker T**, Green Onions and stuff. Then you hit a song like **Melancholy Serenade**, geez,

The Jackie Gleason Show, you've gotta be over 35 to remember that show.

S: Well, I'm almost there but I do remember it **vividly...**

B: Well, I mean through your parents, older brothers or sisters or something... We were driving ourselves nuts when we recorded it because I thought it was the Honeymooners theme song.

S: Yeah, me too.

B: But it's not. It's from the actual Jackie Gleason Show, the one from Miami Beach.

S: Right, right, it was like a variety show.

B: That's right!

S: Yeah, I went back and watched old episodes of

Honeymooners to listen to the theme and it's different.

B: There you go. It's totally different! So we're thinking of making a rendition of that one up too so when people ask us to play the Honeymooners song then we'll actually do that one.

S: That's great. That'll be a nice little addition. Has Geddy or Neil ever stopped in?

B: I've seen Geddy in a few times but I've never seen Neil.

S: Has Geddy given you the **thumbs up**?

B: **Oh yes!** But he's very quiet! He likes to keep to himself. I think he came in with his wife a couple of times and I just went over to say "Hi" and he said he loved the band and that was about it.

S: That's a good reaction.

B: (Laughs) Oh very good! But he was sitting next to Al and Al owns the club so what do you say? You want a guitar player for your band, or what?

S: Right! But no sign of Neil, huh?

B: I haven't seen Neil...

S: Unless he came in disguise...

B: Yeah, really. He wasn't on his bicycle...

S: With the hooded jacket... (laughter from Steve and Bernie)

B: But that's not to say he hasn't been in, but I haven't personally seen him.

S: Oh well, hopefully he's busy writing those songs!

up full and we were both enjoying it immensely and I looked over at Lou and he's just grimacing looking at my guitar which was only a couple of months old at that point. Alex was just hammering away and we ended up breaking a string, he was hitting it so hard, so that was the end of that. The next day I took it out of the case to put the strings on it and tried bending a couple of strings and about the last five frets on my guitar were just bent out of shape from hitting them with the drumstick. Neither Alex or I had noticed it or even considered that when he was doing it. So I had to run down to the music store and have the guy file off all my frets and everything, cause it wasn't even playable the next day. We both had a good chuckle about that. I phoned him up and gave him a hard time about trying to wreck my guitar, just joking with him like that and I said, "You know, I'm going to have to send you the bill for this." He says, "Oh geez, yeah, what is it?" I said "Oh yeah, probably three or four thousand bucks, you know..." Then he hung up on me. So that was the end of that. (Laughter from Steve and Bernie)

S: Couldn't even get a **PRS** guitar out of him?

B: No, couldn't get a **PRS**, no. But it's just non-stop when he's in the club. He's like a stand up comic. When I'm singing a ballad or something he'll come down to the front of the stage kneel down in front of me and cradle his head in his hands and bat his eyelashes at me and I sing the love song to him. (Steve snickers...) You know, people are just rolling in the aisles. And he gets behind the bar and plays bartender...

S: I hear he's a heck of a bartender!

B: Oh, he's a great bartender. It's a one for me, one for you kind of thing...It's so funny. He's a major part of the CD-ROM thing and he and Tim take you on a tour through the Orbit and he's so spontaneous with this mini-cam going. None of this was rehearsed and some of the **ridiculous** things he comes up with, it's like listening to Steven Wright or something. It's just hilarious.

S: He must've been a comic in his past life.

B: Oh! Or he's about to be one in his next! But yeah, he comes down with his wife and Justin his son comes down there all the time. Justin is a photographer and he shot all of our promo pictures that hang at the front of the club. He just got engaged a couple weeks ago. The whole family is down there a lot. I can't wait for you to get up there. How come Mandy showed up without you that time? How did she manage to get all the way up there?

S: (Grumbles...) Good question...Someone's gotta KEEP



Lou can't believe what Big Al is doing!

WORKING! I'm one of those stupid workaholics...

B: Ahhh, well okay, you've got to take some holidays to get up here.

S: I know, I really do. Well, I've got some coming up...

B: You know Kevin and Ken, eh? The guys up here who are big Rush fans...

S: Yeah, I met Kevin on the streets of New York City on a Rush tour.

B: Those guys are absolute princes, you know.

S: They're such great guys...

B: Oh, they're fantastic guys and they really help us out and they're such die hard fans. They initially started coming because of Alex and now they just come all the time anyway, whether Al's there or not. They just love the Dexters and we've become really good friends and I'm happy that I've met those guys.

S: They're a good example of the Rush fans that are out there. I think most of us are that sincere but they're a couple of great guys.

B: Yeah, these are not wacko fans so it's great!

(Okay guys, don't be getting the big heads now! Ed. note)

B: Did you know about the time Alex and us went up to Cold Lake, Alberta to the Air Force Base and played up there?

S: With the Dexters?

B: Yeah, it was hot, so it was in the summer sometime...We took the entire Dexters, Big Al and Tim Notter (he came as our manager). The Canadian Air Force flew us up to a base in Cold Lake, Alberta which is, if you look on your

map, I don't even know if your map would go that far north. It's way, way, way, way up there. They were closing down one of the squadrons due to government cutbacks so Alex knew some of the pilots there, I think he had flown with a few of them before so we all went up there on a Hercules aircraft, which is about the size of Rockford, Illinois on the inside of it, you know, it's huge! A big Army transport planes... So we flew up there and played two gigs. One night we played in the officers' mess hall and the next night we played in this great big airplane hanger. Alex played with us both nights. Then he flew in one of the F-18's, I guess he was a passenger, during one of the big ceremonies for the closing of the squadron and they buzzed the crowd at about a hundred feet going 35,000 miles an hour, you know. He ended up getting an honorary...whatever you call a pilot, like a captain thing or whatever. It was really nice. They gave him a plaque and everything. It was very, very nice. I wish I could remember exactly what they called him, like a Squadron Commander, or Major, or...

S: So he kind of stepped up a level there on the flying thing. I know he's been flying for quite awhile.

B: Oh yeah! He was just very emotional about that. It was a big, big thing for him and I can't remember what they called him. It was, Honorary...cause we were calling him something... shoot! It was so long ago now...but, was it Major Al? Major Lifeson? I forget. But it was good whatever it was.

S: (chuckles) **Major Lifeson** sounds good.

B: Sure! Then we flew back home and lived to tell about it.

S: So that's the only time you've played outside the Orbit Room?

B: No, but it's the only time we've had Alex with us. We played at the opening of the Toronto Film Festival, the Toronto Jazz Festival....

S: Would you consider opening for Rush?

B: (Laughs) I'd consider tuning his guitar strings for Rush, you know!

S: Well, you know, I don't see **any** incompatibility. Once people hear the CD, they'll **realize** it's good music and that's what Rush is **all** about.

B: Oh, for sure! No, I did mention that to him one time. I think once I threatened to him that I wouldn't let him on stage unless he said we could open for Rush on their tour...

S: I think you **should**.

B: We're always laughing about it. I mean, they'll probably play Toronto and they might bring us in to open.

S: Why not?! We would **have** to be there.

B: We'd love to! We'd love to do anything associated with Big Al cause he's so fun. We'll see what happens there. Next week we're going up to play some great big ski bonanza way up in Northern Ontario here for these wealthy ski bums somewhere.

S: So this has been a very successful thing for you guys,

obviously...There might even be future releases, then?

B: Oh, without a doubt!

S: Do you have a lot of original material?

B: No, we haven't got too many originals at this point but we're definitely working on it. Lou and I have a couple of ideas that we've been trying to work on.

S: There are a couple little mini jams I noticed...

B: That's right. Every time we play there's jams that come out...

S: Sure, that's the way new things come about.

B: Exactly! Especially with instrumentals.

S: I think that's another thing I love about the CD is that I **love** instrumentals...

B: I do too.

S: ...There's basically just the one song with strong vocals, **Drown In My Own Tears**...

B: That's Katalin Kiss, yes.

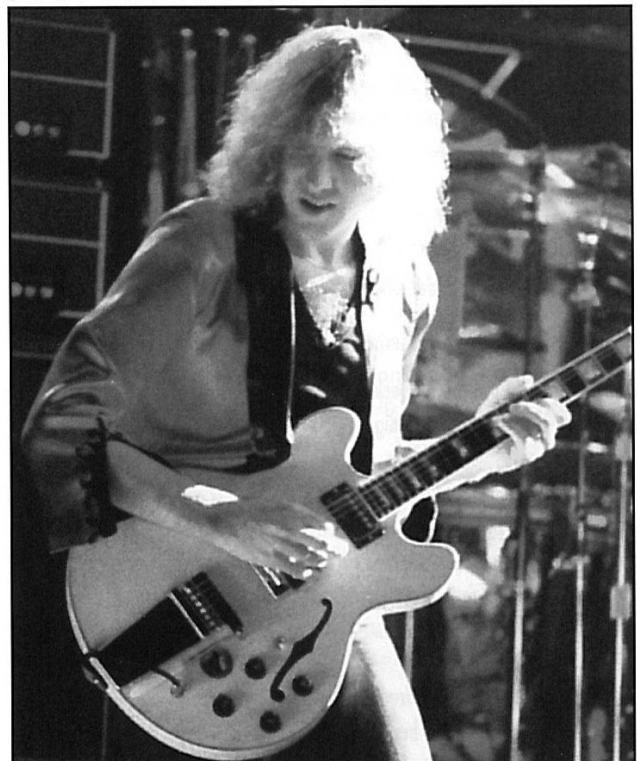
S: Right. Strong selection no doubt about it.

B: Yeah, we did have the choice of adding some vocal tunes, Lou and I are both lead singers but we just wanted to do an instrumental thing with this band. That was Louie's and Tim's idea, we wanted to do a cocktail type of vibe and we're just loving it to death. Maybe there will be something on the next release but we had so much to choose from here and the playing was so good on it that, geez, we'll sing some other time!

S: That's great! Well, that pretty much wraps up my questions. **Thanks!**

B: Well, I'm **happy** you phoned!

See ya! Bye-bye!



PASS THE BREW

(Sung to Roll The Bones)
Thank you very much NMS.

Well you can drink some juice
they say good health's the key to good fortune
Joggers like to run
Drinkers seldom leave their home
But we don't like that juice
and sometimes we need something more
We reach into the fridge
Grab another cold draft brew
We go out to the store and take our chances
Beer is just the fear of many parents
That's why we drink beer called Narragansett
Pass the Brew
Why are we here?
Because there's beer.
Pass the brew.
Why does it foam?
We don't really know.
Pass the brew.
Beer should be cold as ice-
Why do long necks taste better than cans?
What more could be finer
than one cold as ice.
Well who would pay the price
for beers that are much too expensive.
If there's some way we can drink
and just control our vice.
We come in from the cold and take our chances.
Beer is just the fear of many parents.
That is why we drink beer called Narragansett!
Pass the Brew....

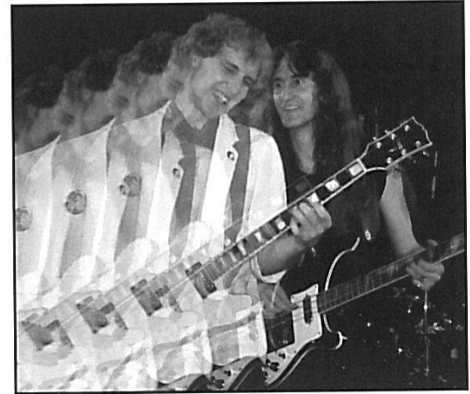


Jack, pound two.
Get busy with some brew.
No drinking hats or wooden bats
No cognac in big oak vats
Just the brew
Gonna drink till I'm on my back.
I'm seein' three of you- you dig?
I move around.
I can't talk straight. I take a swig.
Its hops, barley
Lots of carbo Charlie.
So who's afraid of getting real tardy.
Can't get a buzz from just a few.
Better drink homeboy
a brew's a brew from your freezer to your glude.
What's the deal? No more beer.
If the beer is hot- make it not



Drink some more, show us what you got.
What your holding
If the beers are cold
Don't get molding
It makes your hand smell golden;
It takes some time, to make it cold.
Stop drinking Boones.
The stores have a thousands different brands.
So get out there and drink
and pass the brew.

Get Dizzy!



The forest is quiet; no birds are singing, no squirrels rustling, no wolf howling through the night. They have all but disappeared. Where have they gone, you ask? Surely not to Middletown or Lanneth, maybe to Rivendell or possibly to Lakeside Park, if the Subdivisions haven't encroached upon them. What little animal life is left will be decimated by the rain burning the forest floor. The Trees are no longer kept equal by hatchet, ax, and saw, but by bulldozer, development, and acid rain. The Maples and the Oaks must stop their incessant quarreling and ban together for their survival.
Human beings have made Permanent Waves throughout the worlds' wildlands. The Natural Science and ecology of wilderness must be preserved, not only for all species of plants

and animals, endangered or not, but for mankind as well. "In wildness is the salvation of the worlds, Thoreau claimed. "All things are connected," Chief Seattle once attested. "Now's the time to turn the tide, now's the time to fight," avowed Peart. **RED ALERT RED ALERT RED ALERT RED ALERT RED ALERT!!!!!!!**
Let's not be fools enough to; lose our wilderness areas. Remember, the men who hold high places must be the ones who start. Maybe our attitude will get better in time. I feel the sense of possibilities.

ABSALOM
ABSALOM
ABSALOM.



Mark Menzel, Tacoma, WA

A HIGHWAY OUT OF YESTERDAY – THAT TOMORROW WILL BRING

By Jerry 'Broon Jr.' Brown
Jacksonville, Fl.

The word spread quickly around the world: 'Critical Mass' would be the name of the next Rush album, one of the tracks will be called 'Lucy & Desi,' Terry Brown is now producing children's videos and the dreaded rumor Neil Peart is dying or has died of cancer. The only problem was that the word was **wrong** [dead wrong!]. The truth is that the album was 'Counterparts,' there was never such a song title, Terry is busy producing other bands and Neil still walks the earth as well as **Cain in Kung Fu**. And another Rush-related rumor that has been disproven by a recent interview with Alex: There is **no** Rush tribute album in the works *as of this writing!* [SRO/Anthem confirms this as of 2/96 - Eds.]

Steve's last editorial in 'The Fountain' from ASOF #12, when talking about the cyber/on-line information highway, inspired me to write about the rumors and misinformation that has always been a part of the Rush world. What makes these untruths notable is the way they

were spread (**most**, not all): over the Internet. Vaunted as the Net is as an information source, it's got a major flaw - its information is somewhere between newsprint and a rumor heard on the street. Rush fans can post just like newspapers can publish, but that individual may not have a personal reputation for quality in the way say 'ASOF' does. On the Net, rumors can circulate with more ease and speed than ever before.

These kinds of rumors don't really hurt anyone, but it's easy to see how something more damaging could quickly get around. Similar inaccuracies exist on Rush Web sites, which brings up questions about the Internet being the quintessential fact-finding tool. Disclaimers that the Web sites have no affiliation with Rush management aren't reassuring; in fact, they should flash a **red alert** that the site may **lack** credibility.

What can you do to make sure the information you are getting is accurate? Unfortunately, not much. It's advisable to be **wary** of usenet groups. They are the easiest place to start folklore, misinformation and rumors about the band. The technically savvy can make themselves look more credible by using upscale fonts, addresses and sparkling presentations, changing their name, header, or posting anonymously. Yet if someone goes to such efforts not to be traced or identified, how credible can they be?

Also, you should understand the limitations of mailing lists and newsgroups (which, when unmoderated, are simply individuals sending unedited material to a central place). Web sites at least have a system operator who controls the site, much like the editor-in-chief supervises the outflow of a magazine's content. When information is published as Web pages, the publisher must become an information engineer, taking responsibility for accuracy.

Another way to solve the problem of Internet misinformation is to participate in Web sites' interactive forums, where other readers online can and will question and correct misinformation. Some Web sites, after all, are used by Rush fans and professionals – Atlantic Records and Neil Peart, for instance. If a rumor starts, the misinformation will eventually be squelched. A safe bet for improving accuracy is to find a site with a well known and good reputation such as '**National Midnight Star**.' There are no regulated *checks and balances* on the Net, but there are real people behind the technology. In time you will find Rush fans whose opinions you can trust.

Remember: protect yourself as a reader and user of the Net. Check the sites' sources. Verify "**facts**" any way you can. In this brave new world, you can't believe everything you read in electronic print. Like Steve says, "*It is a fun resource, but the printed page, the book, the magazine is where I want to read about things, not on a CRT screen.*"

Jerry Brown's Fly By Night guitar. Painted by Sharon Folger, guitar built by Jim Combra of "Custom Built Guitars," Portsmouth, RI



The Pass

FOCUS POINT

By Mike Arbisi, Rockford, IL

Hello Rush fans! Allow me to introduce myself - my name is Mike Arbisi. I've been a Rush fan since 1981. It's been one heck of a ride since then! For me to tell you how much their music has meant to me throughout the years would take a whole issue of **ASOF!** I've decided to share with you several of the turning points in my life in which Rush has been there for me.

Let's begin in the spring of 1990. **Presto** was their new album at the time. I'm really rocking to songs like '**Show Don't Tell**' and '**Scars**.' The setting is in a doctor's office, warm and comfortable. Outside the weather is overcast at best, wet, and cold! I had been seeing this "doctor" for quite some time for what I thought was an "anger" problem.

I remember feeling very nervous. Something very strange happens this session as I find myself, for the first time in years, being totally honest with this man. I've just revealed to him my real downfall - DRUGS and ALCOHOL. Before we end our session, he makes a phone call down to the local treatment center and my road to recovery has been laid out for me. So where does Rush fit in with this?

I remember being totally amazed at what had just taken place. The last thing on my mind was going in to this doctor's office and coming out knowing that my whole life was about to **change!** I got into my car and proceeded to drive home to my wife to tell her what had just happened. As usual, I started to listen to **Presto** again. If there's ever been a time in my life when I felt totally 'numb,' this was that time. My mood was sullen as Geddy's voice broke the solitary silence of the inner chambers of my cold car. My emotions begin to stir.

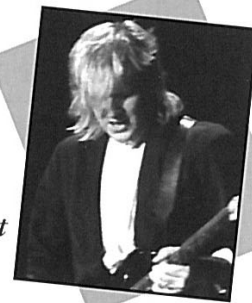
*and now you're trembling on a rocky ledge
staring down into a heartless sea
can't face life on a razor's edge
nothing's what you thought it would be....*

How true. I was on the threshold of starting the greatest journey of my life, about to face my greatest monster, and the song that captures that whole moment was '**The Pass**.' No other Rush song could have captured the moment or the feelings better than that one did. I momentarily lose track of

where I am. Suddenly —

*it's not as if this barricade
blocks the only road
it's not as if you're all alone
in wanting to explode*

*someone set a bad example
made surrender seem all right
the act of a noble warrior
who lost the will to fight....*



By this point, I remember being in *absolute tears*. Never before had a song moved me like '**The Pass**' did at that moment. Whenever I hear it played at Rush concerts my mind drifts back to that day back in April of 1990 and I can't help my eyes getting a bit misty. '**The Pass**' is a very personal song to me and has meaning in my life even today. I'm not crediting Rush for getting (or keeping) me clean and sober today (I'm in my **fifth** year now). What I'm saying is that their music has always been a **positive** influence in my life. Listening to Rush has **never** left me feeling depressed or disappointed. I've always considered their music to be an **uplifting** listening experience.

I've played guitar since the age of seven (that's 19 years now folks!). Rush has been one of my **biggest** influences as a musician. The way Alex can make his guitar sing and "*cry out like a sad heart*" simply **astounds** me. I've even gone as far as naming my only son, you guessed it, Alex! He already shows a strong interest in playing guitar. He's only three. Watch out world!

Many Rush songs have driven me in my life. In 1991, I launched a petition drive to get the band to play here **AGAIN** (see **ASOF#12**, page 3 for the poster reproduction of **RUSH** backing up **KISS** here in Rockford!) in Rockford. It was successful. However, because of a change in touring dates, Rush never graced our stage. Now, four years later, another petition drive has begun to bring the best band in the Universe **here** to Rockford. (Being that **ASOF** is located here, how can Rush resist?) [They'll be here! - *By hook or by crook!* - Editor.]

I'll be submitting articles to **ASOF** regularly, trying to cover such topics of interest as.....

- How does Alex get that sound to happen?
(experience, my friend, experience!)
- What effects should be used for certain songs?
- What's the difference in sound between Alex's Les Paul and PRS guitars?

Having been an "**experienced**" musician for these past several years, I'd consider it an honor to be able to share some of my knowledge of these fine tricks of the trade. I'll try to keep the column interesting for all readers of **ASOF** and also keep my information as accurate as possible.

Until next time, I'll leave you with this thought - How much has Rush music influenced your life today?

RUSH ON!!!

Photo Submitted by Jerry Brown, Photographer unknown.



**beware the
thorns of the
black rose of love,
lest your soul
they prick**

RUSH Cover Band UPDATE

A Tribute to Rush: 2112 is a Daytona, FL based tribute band that started in 1994. The line-up is George McGrew (Geddy), Fred Wendland (Neil) and Jeff Bazemore (Alex). They cover songs from the first album up to Grace Under Pressure.

ASOF Staffer Jerry Brown reported that they're quite good and are definitely worth seeing! You can contact 2112 by writing: Fred Wendland, 792 Temple Ave., Orange City, FL 32763 or give them a ring at (904) 774-2152. Tell 'em **ASOF** sent ya! We always try to plug any Rush tribute band in hopes that in return they will help out our cause by passing out flyers! We appreciate this immensely!!

RUSH

Massey Hall, Toronto

There was nothing half baked about the Rush concert in Toronto. Days before their appearance all tickets were sold. A night hot enough to fry eggs on the well travelled pavements proved an electric stimulus for the over 2,700 high-strung fans who poured through the old concert hall's main doors. With a milky cloud of rich and potent air sizzling just atop of the audience's heads, and the clink of cool spirits being sucked back below the seats, the glory that Rush were to accept with a "Thanks for a wonderful feeling" to the audience was at a high that Massey Hall has not seen in many, many a year.

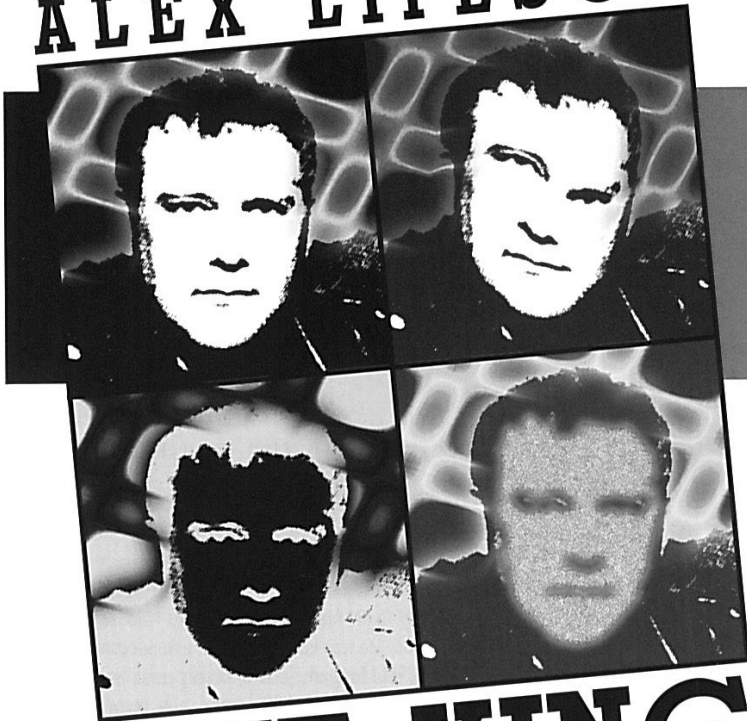
With a flick of the lights and a snappy bass pedal intro, Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee ran to the front-stage mikes, strapping on their guitars as they did so, and launched into a decibel range that shot the audience onto its feet. Lifeson, the blonde stallion who rears and prances with the flow of his licks, started a foot shuffle with Geddy Lee. The two stretched but the meat of their material, interspersing with finger quick improvisations that bore the stamp of pure, high inspiration and uniqueness. High up on a mock-stage, Neil Peart battered skins with the agility and muscle power of a thousand percussionists in unison. He was later to take an extended solo that contained rolls, subliminal beat changes and some effective electronic distortions, which earned him standing applause, whistles, cheers and flying frisbees.

Taking the majority of the material played from their second highly successful album, "Fly By Night," Rush showed that they had it in them to be superstars of stud rock. On numbers such as "By-Tor & the Snow Dog," the trio slowed the pace enough to display satisfying and comprehensible music that singled out their flair for innovative musicianship. Another song to be heard live is "Anthem." Derivative of early Zeppelin, the choppy piece gives them ample excuse to deliver their stage presence, as well as established players. Geddy, in his own high pitched voice, pushes the lyrics hard edged over the switchblade playing of Alex, laying off for moments of restraint to roll off some deep rumbling bass lines.

For the audience, it was a couple of hours of pure, unabashed kicks listening to the power trio. Most everybody seemed to know the material, some singing along. Only a couple of numbers in, the audience tried rushing the stage but were held at bay by some understanding security guards. Given a couple of years, Rush will be playing the major halls such as Maple Leaf Gardens, as headliners. (D. Farrell)

CHICAGO, JULY 3, 1975: After touring together for three months, Kiss decided to say goodbye to Mercury's Rush on their last date. During Rush's performance members of Kiss slammed the group with whip cream pies. Geddy Lee, pictured here, didn't stop playing bass or singing the entire time, although both performances were somewhat muffled. Two weeks later, backstage at Chicago's Aragon Ballroom, Randy California of Spirit greeted his manager, Marshall Berle, with a shaving cream pie. Marshall's answer is pictured here, all over Randy. [Editors note: unfortunately the picture is not reproducible. Take our word for it ... Geddy is getting CREAMED!]

ALEX LIFESON



THE KING

ASOF would like to take the space to recommend two bands that are both subscribers and **OBVIOUSLY** big fans whose music has been influenced by Rush and stands strong on it's own merits. We thank them both for the CDs and information. Please do check these bands out! Don't forget to tell them **ASOF** sent ya!! Thanks.

T I L E S

Tiles is an excellent band that blends progressive sounds. Gene Simmons of **KISS** calls their music "...a unique style...kind of a new-wave sounding RUSH..." Tiles first album is excellent. Check it out. Contact: **TILES** c/o Standing Pavement Entertainment, P.O. Box 75, Trenton, MI 48183 or phone them at (313) 676-8504.

Ten Ton Tide

TTT is an original band that is also overlaps into a RUSH tribute band called **Power Windows**. **TTT** is also, in the tradition of Rush, very progressive and intelligent. Well thought out songs, indeed. We highly recommend this CD. Contact: Ten Ton Tide c/o Dan Gibson, 60 E. 12th Street, #2J-C, New York, NY 10003 or call Dan at (212) 460-8416.

ODE to RUSH

By Dakotah C. Hewitt • Warwick, NY

In a world where hate is the dominant force,
Where manslaughter is on a wrathful course,
Fear and prejudice are accomplices to a crime,
and my ability to sense honor is wandering all the times
Where ignorance is the enemy left unseen
How does one justify being a moral being?
Just like the moon is covered by clouds,
We find ourselves walking clothed in death shrouds.
However, there is a light that guides all who can feel it,
The power of Rush. Who can conceal it?
Immortal words that you can never erase,
Alex ~ guitar, Neil ~ drums, and Geddy on the bass.
Masters of the trade, they are,

Music and lyrics no one can mar.
Sit back and embrace the strength,
Talent that is exhilarating to an amazing length.
The beauty of poetry written like no one else can,
Just like "Between Sun and Moon" and "Cinderella Man"
So much truth there is in what you speak,
That between grace, rhythm, guitar, and words, one can
grow weak
Tell me you can't feel the primeval breeze blow over you
When you hear the introduction to "Xanadu."
"Nobody's Hero;" the one that often stands aloof,
I can be this person, your songs have shown me proof.
Others can have their heavy metal, rap, and such
But I for one, feel much more graced by the existence of
Rush
"No matter what they say."
"Color and culture, language and race". . . .
History had shown that some of us are judged on our
faces.
"Witch Hunt" makes the feeling so visible.
Fear and tension, but I still will not swallow the poison .
As fans we all have something in common, a bond that
can never be destroyed.

SEE AND HEAR ALEX LIFESON UNRUSHED!

As you are probably aware, Alex Lifeson co-owns **The Orbit Room** in Toronto.

It is home to The Dexters, Canada's premier R&B combo. **Alma Records** is proud to announce the release of

THE DEXTERS LIVE AT THE ORBIT ROOM HIP TO THE TIP

ENHANCED CD+ interactive CD-ROM, featuring Alex jamming on tunes such as "Born Under A Bad Sign" and others. The CD features The Dexters performing their most requested R&B classics, and the Windows-compatible CD-ROM section features over forty video and audio clips including:

- ❖ Video tour of The Orbit Room hosted by Alex Lifeson
- ❖ Alex on stage with The Dexters
- ❖ Video clips of Tom Cochrane, Colin James, Rik Emmett and others at The Orbit Room
- ❖ Tons of pictures
- ❖ Lots of surprises

This is a **MUST** for every Alex Lifeson fan (and who isn't?). By the way, Alex is affectionately referred to as "Big Al" Dexter!

"**The Dexters Live At The Orbit Room—Hip To The Tip**" is available from **ALMA RECORDS** for \$19.99 (U.S. funds) plus \$4.00 S & H. Ontario residents please add applicable taxes. Send payment (certified cheque, money order, V, MC) to **ALMA RECORDS**, 260 Adelaide St. E., Suite 10, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 1N1. Phone orders (416) 494-2562 or (800) 458-ALMA (where available). Fax us at (416) 494-2030.

ATTENTION RUSH FANS

How would you like your CD autographed by The Dexters **AND** Alex "Big Al Dexter" Lifeson? A limited number of autographed CDs will be made available for \$29.99 U.S. plus \$4.00 S & H. Canadian residents please add applicable taxes.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

Please send me ___ copies of **Hip to the Tip** @\$19.99 each.

Please send me an autographed copy of **Hip to the Tip** at \$29.99. *Limited quantities, one copy per person please. Allow 2-4 weeks.*

Include \$4.00 for postage, U.S. funds only!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

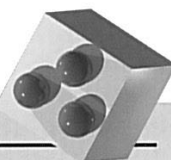
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Best
Alex Lifer
Best Wishes
- from Rust
Joe

IN THE END



ASOF STAFF

1001 Thanks yous go out to all who have stuck with **ASOF**, renewing or donating money to help out on printing costs. Thank you Alex, **SRO/Anthem** (we'll miss you Kim!), Bernie, **Atlantic Records**, The Dexters and The Orbit Room, Kevin & Ken Bontius, John Beazley, Eric Ross (Where did you say you were calling from?), Jeff Cavuoto, Mike Arbisi, Kevin McAllister, **WXRX** Rockford & Sky, Jerry Brown (For that **RUSH** shot in the **ASOF** arm!!), and many, many others who contributed stamps or money and helped tremendously to get this issue out! We thank you all!!

As tour time approaches, we will be putting together a tour hook-up list and a list of those who would like to be a **ASOF** representative in your local town – or the nearest city to you that Rush plays. We will have NEW **1996 ASOF** flyers to hand out. Your help is **VITAL** for our survival. Thanks again!

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