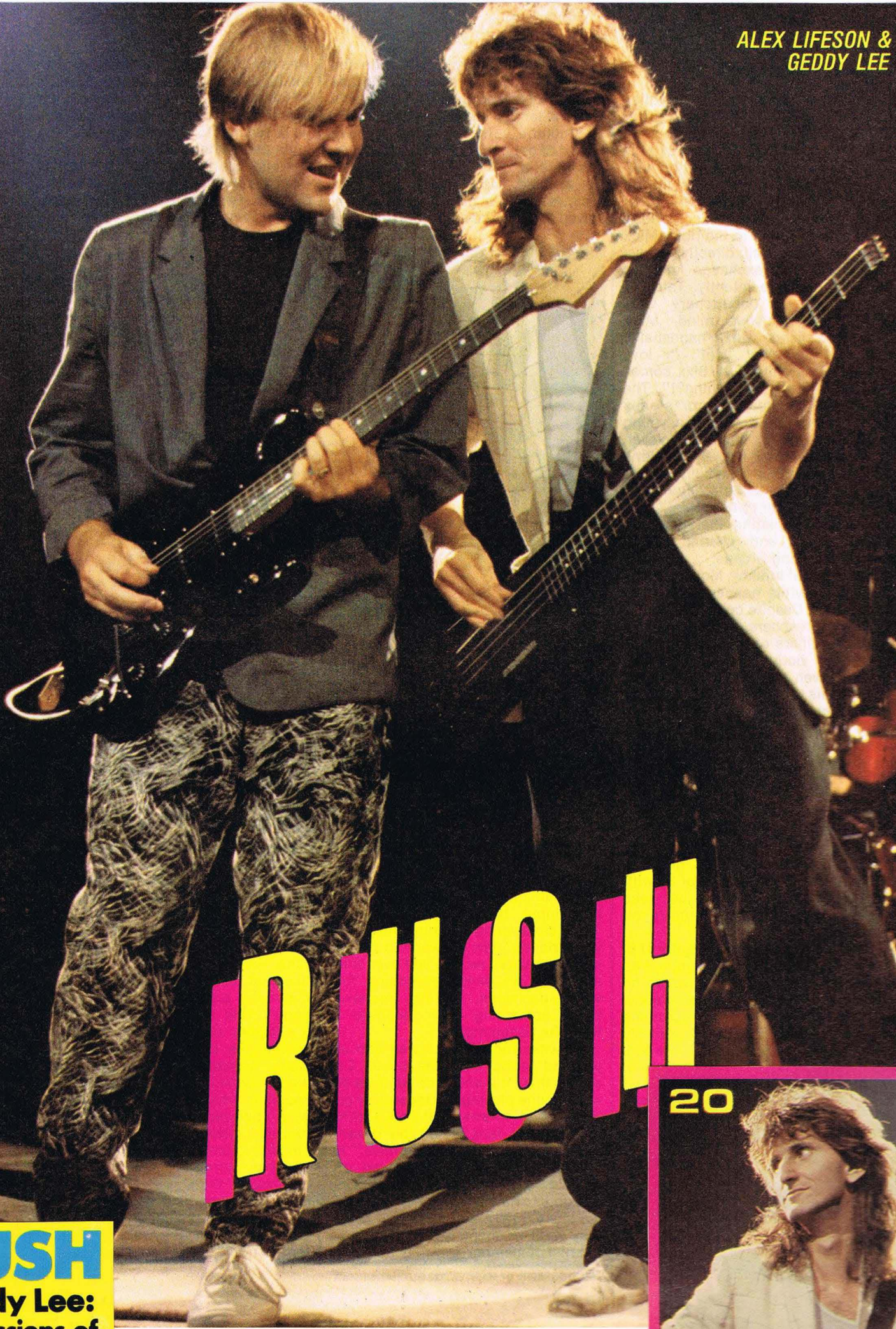


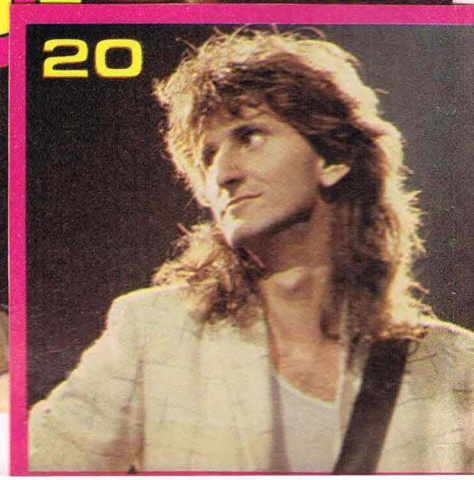
ALEX LIFESON &
GEDDY LEE



RUSH

20

RUSH
Geddy Lee:
Confessions of
Power Rocker



Geddy Lee on "the world's most popular underground band"

By LISA LAMPUGNALE

Never let it be said that I am a stranger to the occasional attack of writer's block. In two years of delivering treatises on rock musicians, great and usually small, I've been known to agonize over a blank, tattered piece of paper for weeks at a time, with nary a word written.

In this case the dreaded block is even worse, considering I am supposed to be writing a story on Rush. Not only is Rush one of my all-time faves in the Pretentious Rock Dept., lead singer/bassist Geddy Lee gave me one helluvan hour's worth of the spoken word the day after the band's latest LP, *Power Windows*, was released. But no matter how badly I wanted to translate the Ged-man into words, I found myself staring at that ever-present blank sheet. Hell, even an hour of near-perfect Rush renditions from my boyfriend's bass failed to inspire.

So, here goes. Here's Geddy in his own words—the *only* words that could do such a gracious and talented interviewee justice.

On the event of *Power Windows*:

"I'm real pleased with this record. This is the most satisfied I've been after making a record in a few years now. I feel we gave it our best effort, and I'm satisfied that we accomplished what we set out to do. I'm proud of the song, the production, and the performances. Everyone worked really hard, and I felt the songs had been given every opportunity to suc-

"It's tough to have three strong musical personalities always apparent."

ceed. I didn't feel that way with *Grace Under Pressure* (Rush's previous LP). I felt, in the end, that it could have been a better record."

Can't Get No Dissatisfaction:

"Neil (Peart, drummer), Alex (Lifeson, guitarist) and I, as a band, wanted to update and stretch out our production, and make this album have more variety and be more contemporary. I think we accomplished that. We also wanted it to be a more positive-sounding record, from a production point of view. We accomplished that. From a musical point of view, we wanted to inject more melody and I think we accomplished that as well. Everything else is a bonus. It's really hard to feel dissatisfied."

Grace Notes . . .

"I've had very mixed feelings about our last few records after we finished them, so they were frustrating experiences to an extent. *Grace Under Pressure* was a very difficult record to make and, in the end, I wasn't happy with it. The last record I was really proud of was *Moving Pictures*.

"With *Grace Under Pressure*, we tried to apply new ideas we'd gotten from inside ourselves, and tried to make it a very contemporary record. We couldn't understand why our sound didn't always gel with it. This record is approached from a natural and more intelligent point of view, and it seemed to come together more logically. The things we wanted *Grace* to be, this became easier."

. . . Pressure Points

"I was a little disappointed with our last tour, but proud of it in other ways. We'd been together for a long time and we'd just finished recording a record that was very difficult to make, and we honestly started asking ourselves, 'How long can I keep doing this? Is this fun anymore?' Those are questions you ask yourselves, and you have to keep asking yourselves or you're trapped on a merry-go-round that won't stop unless you jump off it. Those questions were on everybody's mind last year, and had this album been a negative experience, it would have been time to evaluate whether we were coming to the point to do that. But today is a much brighter day."

The Album As a 43-minute-50-second Commercial:

"We don't have much control over the commercialism of our records. All we can do is put forward our best effort in the direction that comes out of us. Our band isn't a contrived thing. We don't know what we're going to write until it comes out of us. All we can do is be true to our musical values and make sure that there's quality in every department. Then we just hope for the best."

Studio Talk:

"We never ask ourselves, 'Is it commercial enough?' We say, 'Is it good? Can it be better? How good can it be? Am I playing my best? Is it moving? Is it powerful enough?' That's the way we talk in the studio."

Picky, Picky, Picky:

"The recording experience was good. It was tough, don't get me wrong. It wasn't a breeze. It took a long time, longer than we'd anticipated. We started writing in February, and the actual studio recording time

was four months.

"The mixing was particularly tough, but with a band as fussy as we are, it always will be. I'm dreaming if I think it's gonna be easy, but it's like 'Be realistic.' The error was not that it took longer than it was supposed to, it's that we thought it would take shorter than it should have. Remember, it's tough to have three strong musical personalities always apparent."

The Whole-y Trinity:

"Ever since *Signals* we've been experimenting with the balance of the band. *Moving Pictures* was pretty much a trio statement. It was the definitive Rush three-piece record. With *Signals*, we wanted to make a four-piece record and, in the end, that wasn't very satisfying. It felt wrong. The next record (*Grace Under Pressure*), we went back too much to the guitar. It killed some of the dynamics, and the material suffered. On this record, we emphasized the keyboards and the guitar when it was necessary, and we weren't afraid to be very bold. No pussy-footing at all."

It's Not Over 'Til the Fat Lady Sings:

"Using a choir on a few of the tracks seemed important at the time. We were attempting to bring out a part of a song that deserved to be brought out and developed musically as far as we could take it without falling over the overproduced line. I think we kept it in check pretty well.

"We wanted to check it out, and see what it would be like to see all those pregnant ladies and bearded men and young women and old men, people from all walks of life, singing something we conceived in a little, farmhouse in Ontario. We said, 'Let's do it!'"

Before and After-image:

"Rush doesn't have an obvious image. I think we're surprisingly unknown to a lot of people. They don't really associate our names with our faces. I look at us as the world's largest underground band, the world's most popular underground band.

"I'm always surprised though. I'll go to some town and someone will come up to me and say, 'Aren't you . . . ' and I always feel like they shouldn't know who I am. So maybe I'm wrong. Maybe we're better known than I think." ■

Now fully recovered from her bout with writer's block, Lisa Lampugnale will have yet another segment of her conversation with the one and only Geddy Lee in the July '86 edition of *FACES*, on sale in May!