

# Artists & Music

## Rushing Back To The Limelight Power Trio Returns With 'Counterparts'

■ BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—With a 19-year career spanning several major music upheavals, Rush has remained regarded as a vital, relevant band.

The Toronto-based power trio is likely to find even more acclaim with its 17th album, "Counterparts," released Oct. 19 by Atlantic Records and co-produced by band members guitarist Alex Lifeson, drummer Neil Peart, and bassist/singer Geddy Lee with British producer Peter Collins.

"The last record was phenomenal—this record is even better," says Jason Sniderman, VP of Roblan Distributors Ltd., which operates Canada's leading retail outlet, the 100-store Sam The Record Man chain.

Though Rush's star status in the States can't be denied, in Canada, as Sniderman's comments attest, the band practically takes on mythic proportions. "Tell me one band that Rush can be compared to. Nobody. There's not another band in the world

that plays like this," Sniderman says. "It's not heavy metal, and they're not a dinosaur band. It's progressive, but it's not progressive like Marillion or Genesis. It's just hard-rockin' music."

Explaining the band's longevity in the rock world, its long-time manager Ray Danniels says, "Rush is like three athletes. Every season they've showed up to play. They've never retired and tried to come back, or re-



**RUSH:** Geddy Lee, Neil Peart, and Alex Lifeson.

leased a record and not toured. They haven't released a record in the States that hasn't been [certified gold or] platinum since 1976. They made their first record before they were 20 years old, which puts them 10 years younger than half the icon acts."

"We're not cynical or trying to design anything from a marketing point of view," says Peart. "We truly are bringing that naive teen-ager's response to the music. Do we like it? Let's do it. That's what protects the freshness of our music."

While Rush's sales have been pretty consistent, Val Azzoli, Atlantic

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## RUSH RETURNS

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Records executive VP/GM, says that with such a strong album as "Counterparts," coupled with the momentum provided by the band's previous "Roll The Bones" album in 1991, the timing for a Rush resurgence is perfect.

"The group lost some marketshare a few years back, but they built it back in recent years," he says. "Their fans, who mostly are male, have been tremendously loyal, and there's so many bands around today that owe a musical debt to them."

While agreeing that Rush's audience is dominated by young males, Danniels says the band also draws strong female numbers at concerts in some U.S. markets. "When they hit the West, they have a much higher percentage of women than in the Northeast," he says. "In the Northeast a lot of guys seem to buy tickets as a social thing, to go with their friends."

"Counterparts," mostly recorded at Le Studio in Morin Heights, Quebec, last spring, features powerful, often intense, lyrics by Peart and imaginatively diverse music by Lee and Lifeson. On "Between Sun And Moon," former Max Webster lyricist Pye Dubois collaborated on lyrics.

As with the band's previous two albums, prior to recording, Rush worked initially at the Chalet Studio in Claremont, 40 miles outside Toronto. Working Mondays to Fridays, the band tested out musical ideas at an unhurried pace in an idyllic country environment before commuting home on the weekends.



"It's a careful combination of having a home life as a very concentrated body of work gets done,' says Peart. "We'd have five days of complete isolation, focusing on the job without dealing with traffic or other normal life things. Going home for the weekend kept everything amazingly fresh. We'd come back with a fresh perspective on the work we were doing."

Peart says the band has benefited greatly from setting aside specific time periods for songwriting. "Ten years ago, we could finally say, 'OK, we're going to take some time to write this record before we make it.' We were then on a circuit of being on the road, then right to the studio to try to come up with songs, and then record them. Finally, we realized it'd be more productive to set aside a period of time and do it as a separate job.

"Since that time, the only rule is that there are no rules," he says. "It's the same guys and the same working patterns might become comfortable, but that's not to say they won't be overturned the next time. Nothing is allowed to become a formula."

Next month, Rush starts rehearsals for a North American tour that begins Jan. 22 in Pensacola, Fla.

So far no dates have been slated for Europe, where Rush has sold well over the years. "We'd be much stronger if we got there more often," admits Danniels. "We're trying to address that but we have a big show and a big responsibilities, and it pays for itself by cranking out those 70 or 80 North American dates. If we don't go [to Europe] this time, we'll go for the next album."



# Single Revi

EDITED BY LARRY FLIC

## POP

### ► **COLOR ME BADD** *Time & Chance* (4:20)

PRODUCER: DJ Pooh

WRITERS: M. Jordan, M. Denard, Color Me Badd

PUBLISHERS: Brittolesse/Me Good, ASCAP

**Giant/Reprise 18339** (c/o Warner Bros.) (cassette single)

One of the originators of the doo-hop movement returns with wildly infectious pop/hip-hop number that weaves deeply soulful vocals into a smoldering, sexy groove. Watch for producer DJ Pooh to become the red-hot studio entity of 1994; he has crafted a hip but accessible musical foundation that showcases CMB perfectly. First taste of act's new album of the same name should do wonders in establishing a comfy niche at top 40 for a long time to come. Single of the week.

### ► **MICHAEL BOLTON** *Said I Loved You...But I*

**Lied** (no timing listed)

PRODUCERS: Michael Bolton, Robert John "Mutt" Lange

WRITERS: M. Bolton, R.J. Lange

PUBLISHER:

**Columbia 5508** (c/o Sony) (cassette single)

On this promising peek into "The One Thing," Bolton tones down his natural bravado and delivers a nicely shaded, well-measured vocal. Easy-going shuffle rhythms are enhanced by lushly ambient

### ★ **CYNDI LAUPER** *That's What I Think* (no timing listed)

PRODUCERS: Cyndi Lauper, Junior Vasquez

WRITERS: C. Lauper, R. Hyman, A. Willis, E. Bazilian

PUBLISHERS: Rella/Warner-Tamerlane/Streamline

Moderne, BMI; Dub Notes/Human Boy, ASCAP

REMIXER: Tommy Musto

**Epic 77233** (c/o Sony) (cassette single)

With this funk-injected pop shuffler, Lauper offers what may be her most accessible and charming single in a long time. A husky vocal is framed by wriggling guitars and flourishing horns, seeping into a neat, muscular bassline. And the cute chorus is a fun sing-along. CD format also has a hearty live version and a sparkling house remix by Tommy Musto.

### **RUSH** *Stick It Out* (4:30)

PRODUCERS: Peter Collins, Rush

WRITERS: G. Lee, A. Lifeson, N. Peart

PUBLISHER: Core Music, SOCAN

**Atlantic 5314** (cassette single)

Rush returns to its solid guitar sound with plenty of ominous melody and some discordant chording as well. A recent No. 1 hit at album rock radio, it sounds a lot more threatening than it actually is, as the message here is one promoting self-esteem. Will today's Tom Sawyers swallow that? Wrapped in a sound like this, they will.