

MARCH 1975

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MOJO

- Myles & Lenny ■
- Ray Materick ■
- Michal Hasek ■
- Huggett Family ■
- Lighthouse ■
- Rush ■

music canada quarterly magazine

NORTH AMERICA'S FIRST AND ONLY 2-IN-1 MUSIC MAGAZINE



MYLES AND LENNY

A

RUSH

OF SOUND!

By Cliff Lorimer

Rush is a young, dynamic hard driving rock and roll trio from Toronto. They have been together for over six years, but have only recently come to the forefront of the North American music scene. They selected the name Rush as it clearly represented the high energy rock sound which they were performing. Occasionally the name becomes confusing to many American audiences since there are a number of small rather unsuccessful bar bands playing the U.S. who are also named Rush, and are trios. Similarly, Mahogany Rush of Montreal are occasionally confused with Toronto's Rush among people who are totally unfamiliar with either group. The point is that both groups are Canadian, and both are extremely successful in their own right at what they do.

During the Summer of 1974 Rush underwent a personnel change. Drummer John Rutsy, who appeared on their first album and singles was replaced by Neil Peart.

Neil, the newest member of Rush had some formal musical training as a child, but is basically a self-taught musician. At twenty-two years of age Neil is hoping to add that extra dimension to the future sound and development of Rush.

Seven and a half years of guitar playing by twenty-one-year-old Alex Lifeson is now paying off with the success of Rush. When you begin to examine a rock band in depth today, you will likely find a musician within the group who has had some classical music and formal training.

The third member of the group, and the focal point of Rush, twenty-one-year-old lead vocalist and bass player Geddy Lee began playing around the same time as Alex. He was originally a singer, and began playing bass later in his career. Geddy decided to combine these two talents into the culmination of Rush's full sound.

Neil has spent most of his life in the St. Catharines, Ontario area, spending two years in London, Ontario, and now living on a farm near the small town of Beamsville. Geddy and Alex are Torontonians. Educationally, Geddy found that school tended to be boring, and occupied too much of his time, taking away from his musical interest. Finally at Grade Eleven he decided to leave school and join Rush as a full time career, little knowing the group

would achieve the success they have to date. His only regret is that he didn't continue his studies of English and History, two subjects in which he was most interested. Alex was a Grade Twelve honour graduate. Neil like Geddy, left school around the same time prior to graduation for much the same reasons. He has since become "self educated". While in school he found he was not paying attention to anything around him and instead was writing the names of his favorite bands, artists and songs rather than his school work. His entire life was surrounded by a world of music.

Rush are a rather young group to have attained the recognition and success they now hold. The road has not been an easy one for them and they, like any successful group, have had to pay their dues in dingy bars and night clubs.

Geddy recalled his first recording session as a member of Rush. At the time the group were performing the nightclub circuit in downtown Toronto, and following their last set of one such performance, they rushed over to a Toronto recording studio where they were to work all night on their first single "Not Fade Away". This, unfortunately, does not appear on their first album as they felt it was poorly produced. The tapes of these sessions were taken to the renowned recording engineer, Terry Brown, of Toronto Sound Studios, and were arranged and mixed by him. He was able to achieve the sound they were looking for. They were extremely pleased with Terry's work. As Geddy put it "he's a marvelous engineer."

"Not Fade Away" and "You Can't Fight It," were simple boogie tunes. The band were uncertain of their musical direction at this point in their career, and merely wanted to make a single of the loudest rock possible. When I asked the group whether or not the single's failure to climb the charts in Canada was a disappointment to them Alex replied, "not at all," but Geddy took a different viewpoint. He was rather disappointed as he had been led to believe that this was a top selling single, and he felt that the music and arrangements were good but the production was not up to scratch. They also credit its failure to their lack of recording experience at that time. Now that Neil has joined the band, Rush have no plans of ever recording these tunes



Appearing on a new television show on CITY-TV in Toronto, members of Rush returned from a US tour to be interviewed by CHUM-FM personality Brian Master (right). From left to right are Rush members Neil Peart, with composer-musicians Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee.

again, so for Rush fans this original single will become a collector's item in the years ahead. The group noted that the style of their music is definitely changing and developing since those early days, with all three members contributing to the writing and arranging of new material. Most of their writing is done here in Toronto although ideas are formulated on the road in hotel rooms. It is almost impossible to write loud metallic rock music using acoustic guitars in a hotel room.

The group's first album simply entitled *Rush*, first came out in Canada in the early part of 1974, but up until over six months ago the album was not released in the U.S. At this point the group, along with manager Vic Wilson signed a contract for American distribution with Mercury Records. Now all future Rush albums will be distributed in Canada through Polydor Records, although they will still appear on their own Moon Record label.

When the album and singles were first released, many people felt that Rush, and especially lead vocalist Geddy was simply emulating the style and sound of Robert Plant lead vocalist with England's Led Zeppelin. Geddy explained this situation, and attempted to clear it up once and for all. "It seems when anybody has a voice that is high, or can sing in a high range, using a screaming style, people automatically compare you to Robert Plant." Geddy regards his style of music as being his own, and not a direct copy of Zeppelin. It upsets him to hear people say that he is trying to copy these British groups when he is merely attempting to sing good rock and roll in the Geddy Lee style. When the members of Rush were young and getting into the writing of music, Led Zeppelin were one of the top bands in that style of music during the mid-sixties, and obviously some of this influence was bound to rub off on Rush. Geddy believes that these influences will become less obvious when you hear the music contained in their second album which they hope will be available sometime in March.

The group are surprising and overwhelming audiences throughout the U.S. as they appear as an opening act giving them a musical rush of sound which they had not expected from this rather unknown Canadian trio. During their young career

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RUSH . . . Continued

Rush have appeared with some of the top names in the music business today both from the U.S. and Great Britain. Rounding out the Fall season Rush have performed on most of the Canadian dates with Nazareth, to sell out crowds. They have also spent a week at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in Los Angeles.

Christmas for the group was spent at home in Toronto, but come the New Year they wasted no time in getting back to the business at hand. Recording sessions of the latest album took place in January, and then it was back out on the road again touring the U.S.

Rush have released their first album in England where it is expected to be a big hit among British audiences due to its heavy loud British rock feel in the music. The group have also had record releases in Germany, which is to be followed at some point by Holland, Europe, and ultimately Japan and the countries of the Far East. No doubt in time they will have full worldwide record distribution as each country begins to feel the rush. As deals are completed for album releases throughout the various countries, promotional tours are a natural follow-up for the band.

Rush were enthralled over their recent sold out Toronto Massey Hall performance, opening the show for Scotland's Nazareth. To Geddy this was the culmination of seven years of hard work and paying dues. All members of the group were pleased with the audience acceptance, being a home town crowd.

Future plans call for the group to perhaps record a live album and Massey Hall would be the ideal setting for such a venture. Two special aspects of their concert performances include a superb drum solo by Neil using a phaser, and panning the sound back and forth across the stage through the stereo speakers. Alex is not left out and does an excellent shrieking high energy guitar solo with all intensity and volume imaginable to the point where the audience is totally engulfed in sound. Geddy's mike is hooked up to an echoplex unit turned up to full echo and the high volume causes the echo to repeat and move at various speeds making the time between echos a lot shorter thus achieving the shrieking travelling affect. These would be excellent source materials for a future live recording.

In the recording and sound quality of a studio Rush like to have an excellent monitor and play back system. Perfect clarity is of vital importance to the group allowing them to have a clear crisp beat, or a punchy bass line combined with a thin or fat guitar sound dictated by the tune. The new album will also contain more background vocal work from Alex, although he and John did some of this on the first album with Geddy doing a great deal of double tracking.

All three members of Rush plan to remain in Toronto, as their homes are in Canada and they are proud of it, and have no intention of leaving this country. They have proven that Canadian artists do not have to leave Canada to become successful. Rush are already successful, and they did it virtually on their own.

MICHAL HASEK



by Grant McIntyre

Michal Hasek released his first album by himself. One might assume that this was because no record companies wanted to sign him on, but actually, offers have been made to Hasek in the past by established companies with contracts which held little or no promise, over a long period. Releasing his own album was perhaps the only thing he could have done at the time in order to get the album he wanted out, and the songs published adequately.

"Bernie Finkelstein once told me that the only person you should sign your publishing over to is your manager, or somebody who has some direct interest and enthusiasm toward you and your songs."

A good piece of advice. This way, the songs will be in the hands of someone who will be working with you to promote you and your music. Any publisher can make a lot of money from a song even if he isn't responsible for its success. He receives fifty percent of a song's performing rights royalties, which is the same as what the writer is entitled to. Many writers find themselves paying this royalty to someone who did nothing for the artist after signing his name to a lead-sheet.

Michal signed his publishing over to himself; someone who wasn't going to skip town on him. Now he is working through Daffodil Records, a company that finally offered what Michal feels is a reasonable proposition. Daffodil handles Michal's promotion. His second album, which I anxiously await, will be on this label.

But Michal still likes to handle some affairs on his own. Still publishing his own music, Michal's company is called Five Sun. Despite the positive results of his own management ventures which succeeded in getting the first album off the ground, it is apparent that a responsible record company was needed to handle the business end of undertakings. The pressure was too great, too much time, energy and money was being drained from him when his first company, NAJA was operating as a one-man record company. Now Daffodil handles promotion, while Michal is able to spend his time as an artist.

The first album, called *Michal Hasek* has a simple, earthy quality to it, with a folksy bluesy feel in many of the tunes. All of the songs are Hasek's except for "More Often Than Not" which was written by David

Wiffen and "Horses" by Ron Nigrini. Featured on the disc are some of the favourite Canadian musicians. With Tom Kosinec on tablas, Ron Nigrini playing guitar and strings by Ian Guenther (of Lighthouse) the instrumentation is excellent. Michal also shines as a brilliant soloist with his fine dobro playing, as well as the graceful fluency of "Naja" which is entirely an acoustic guitar solo. Adding Michal's vocals are Mitchell Lewis, Jessi Boraski, Gairey Richardson, Caryne Chapman, Tony Kosinec, Nancy Simmonds and Ron Nigrini.

A full acoustic guitar sound prevails throughout the album, and the vocals are often very crisp and clear, yet the general sound is only clean enough. A pleasant degree of dirt leaks through, so that the meanings and feelings are believable and real. This is a fine record, one which brings about thought and involvement on the part of the listener. There is a genre of personal experience and human expression. Rather than call these love songs, one would be more correct in referring to them as life songs; stories, feelings, expressions that define people and relationships, touching upon love with poetic elegance. For example Michal will say, "You lighten my load," whereas Bearfoot deals with love lines such as, "Baby let's get it on."

The comfortable, experiential style of writing which Michal has found for himself is due to his own artistic maturity. First of all, he didn't rush into the album, even though he may have appeared ready five or six years ago, and he's been singing and playing since 1960. He was playing in Yorkville when it was referred to by the local beatniks as The Village. He had a steady gig at the Mynah Bird and remembers the tiny upstairs room where he worked; "I used to look out the window and see the police beating people up. Michal is no Johnny-come-lately."

The first album is his own undertaking. This includes everything from writing the songs to production to distribution of the discs, so he didn't have to be commercial or overly fancy or slick to impress bigshot into giving him a contract.

The final product is honesty without schmaltz. Art without pretension.