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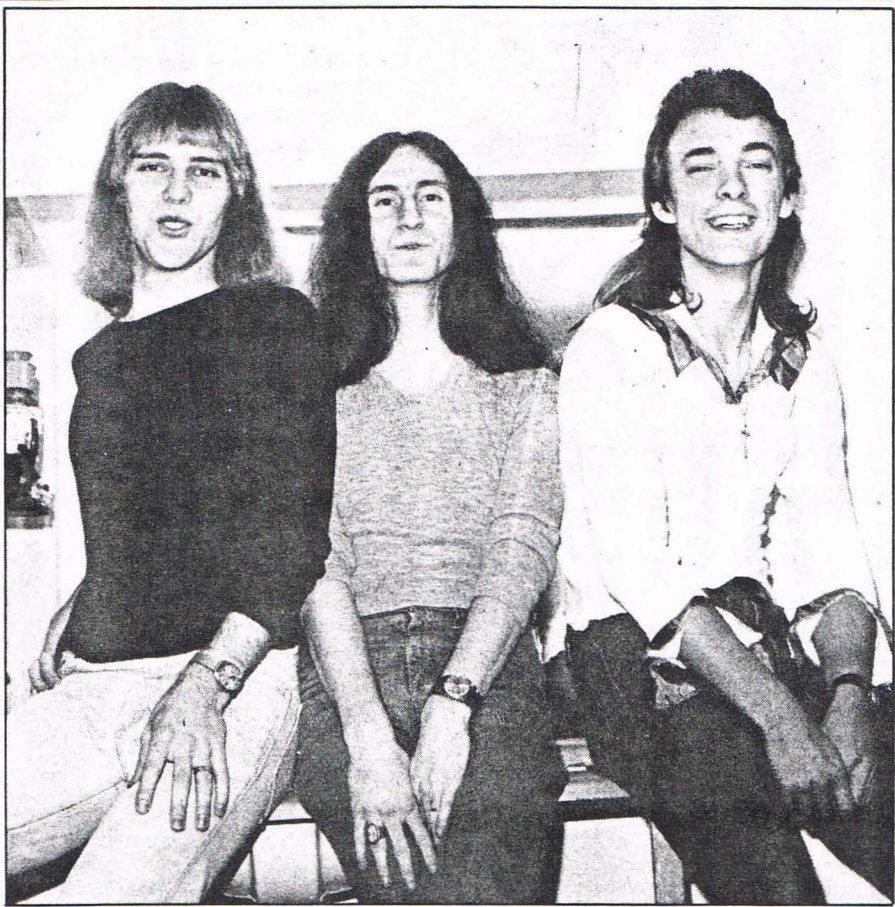
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THE FACES
Did They Exist?
The Last Chapter



RUSH



Michael N. Marks

Pebbles & Bam-Bam In Alphaville

by Rick Johnson

The first thing you notice about Rush, according to one observer, is that they're not as gross-looking as Bachman-Turner Overdrive and they have a somewhat lower thud weight than most other Canadian bands. True enough — Canuck rockers do seem to have some sort of an uglier-than-thou competition going among themselves along with a tendency to pounce on unsuspecting ears like a carnivorous dumptruck.

But Rush isn't exactly a bunch of Joni Mitchell cupcakes either, as anyone who's caught one of their numerous appearances with Kiss or increasing number of headlining gigs can attest to.

Mistaken assumptions and bent comparisons have confounded the

band from the very beginning. "We've been compared to everybody from the New York Dolls to Led Zeppelin and Humble Pie, but all those comparisons are just superficial," asserts vocalist Geddy Lee, who along with guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer Neil Peart make up one of the few remaining classic power trios. "Like Robert Plant and I both have high voices so they expect us to play 'Whole Lotta Love.'"

"It's not like we're suffering from The Dreaded Led Zep Stigma," explains Neil in his best imitation of a foot-odor commercial. "We're essentially pursuing the same idea as them — playing rock & roll but saying something too." Two mints in one.

It indeed would appear that Rush, who are the number two group in Canada after the late BTO and very big as well in the northern half of this country, aren't just after terrorist audiences playing frisbee with plastic explosives and taking hostages at random. "We get frustrated when they're just out for a good time and we're not getting through," Neil complains. "Our favorite audiences are the ones that sit and listen to the song and go wild afterwards."

Seeing the band's main thrust as rezoning the elusive progressive artisms of bands like Yes and Genesis for a three-piece formula, he doesn't think that heavy metal as a strict jungle doctrine will be staying around much longer. "It was great for a while, but no type of music can stay in that embryonic stage for long. I mean, why just do teenage my-period-is-late tunes when you can put some meaning behind it? We like to tell stories and hide things in our songs for people to figure out."

Their latest project is an epic science fiction slab called *2112*, which will take up an entire side of their next album, due this month. Set in the city of Megadon on another planet (Earth having been snuffed in 2062) in the cartoon light of the future, it concerns a society where everything is controlled by quasi-religious Priests who take all their orders from gigantic banks of computers called Temples. All individuality and creativity have been stamped out and everyone treadmills out their lives in a cathode palsy of day-to-day nullness.

"The Temples totally control everything — work, education, even entertainment," says Neil, who came up with the entire conceptual whoopee cushion and wrote all the lyrics. "All their music has been taken to the final limits of the average. It's total commercialism that's put out strictly for people to like."

Luckily enough for the Megadunces, a curious young punk accidentally stumbles upon the ruins of a great university one day. He starts digging around in the rubble and comes across a room of perfectly preserved artifacts he's never seen before. Books, magazines, WIN buttons, hula hoops, records, the home version of Match Game '84 — all kinds of things that don't exist in 2112. He keeps it a secret and goes back every night to sort through the cheese of the past.

Then one night he makes the fateful discovery — an electric guitar — and eventually sets out to change the world. What finally happens is a "double surprise ending" according to Neil, who declined to fill in the details but assured me it's "a real Hitchcock killer."

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RUSH

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Does he see the city of Megadon as a parallel of the tedious fear-fridge of 1976? "Well, things aren't all that bad now, but it's a logical progression from some of the things that are going on. All of the best science fiction is a warning. We want to let people know what's going on so they at least have a chance to change it."

But does he really think they can change anyone? After all, the "Eve Of Destruction" school of pop propaganda sounded OK on the radio but didn't exactly alter the course of Western civilization. "Well, it's not going to change anybody's life or anything, but if you just put the germ of an idea in someone's head, then you've done your job."

Grim-globed hippies of the future or not, Rush's music is still very loudly in the present. Unlike some concept pieces that get bogged down in their own stray dogma, *2112* is still going to come under the Rush stage hammer on their next tour.

"Believe me, we'd never short-change the music for lyrics," promised Geddy. "It still rocks." And Pebbles and Bam-Bam too, no doubt. 

PETER FRAMPTON

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with David between classes). His father, also a musician, immersed Peter in jazz records. His first record was a Django Reinhardt. Peter was so obsessed with his piece of electrified wood that he banged away at it from the moment he got home from school until his parents literally pulled the plug out on him at midnight. At the age of fifteen he quit grammar school (in England, the breeding ground for college material. John Lennon went to grammar school. So did Paul. Ringo did not) to move to London and play rhythm guitar for a group called the Herd.

Happenings, acid, Eric Clapton with an afro, pills, the Marquee Club, marijuana busts, screaming girls, flowered Rolls Royces... "Their Satanic Majesties Request" indeed. Free-flowing liquor... all with the Yardbirds' screaming guitars in the background. What can be a pubescent Sixties rock star do to a sixteen-year-old's head, you ask?

"I was an alcoholic by the age of 18." Peter tells me. "I used to get absolutely smashed before I went onstage. And then I gave it up. So when you asked me about my favorite drink for the booze article [October CREEM] I had nothing to say because I hadn't drunk

in such a long time. That was serious drinking, *every night...*"

Funny, there's no evidence of teenage depravity in this guy's face (unless he's got a picture in the attic that's taking all the abuse...).

At any rate, it wasn't long before Peter tired of this Mini-Mod existence—walking alligators along Carnaby Street is all right, but even that can get to be a bore. Enter at this point in time a slight young man (you may call him elfin, but I won't), late of the *premier* Mini-Mod group, the Small Faces. Steve Marriott and Peter Frampton — a marriage charted in heaven. The Small Faces' forte had been reflective, whimsical lyrics packed into lilting little melodies. Frampton also is/was no slouch at the catchy melody line and — although it's a matter of taste — he can turn a shapely phrase upon demand. For a time Humble Pie steered a "progressive Small Faces" course, but when Marriott started pushing a harder, soul-flavored rock 'n' roll line, Frampton wanted out. Strange, too, because he wrote some of the Pie's better workingman's blues type of riffs.

Which reminds me to ask him who his musical faves were as a kid.

"Oh, Eddie Cochran, Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers —"

Hey, back up. Is this 25-year-old trying to pull a scam? *How old* was he then?

"Eight. I was *into* it! Buddy Holly — I'd never seen anything like it. And the Shadows — Cliff Richard's group — they were my *idols*. Then I got into American jazz for a long time, which was refreshing for me because it's far more melodic than rock 'n' roll or blues. Trio jazz.

"I never got into blues. When everybody else was listening to blues and Eric Clapton I was listening to jazz. It's not that I don't find his style attractive — he's a beautiful player. But nobody came off like Clapton, because he was the originator of that style. He did so much for guitar, and then Hendrix came along and took it a step further."

Facts, facts, facts... Here's one more. Peter Frampton is a resident of these States. An *alien* in our midst. Some time after splitting Humble Pie, he chose to break off from the isle of his birth. New home (upstate New York), new lady, new solo career — you can bet he probably threw out all of his old underwear, too.

"I don't want to say anything against my country. Just say that I feel sorry for England and the economic state she's in.

"I love America because there's so much music. Radio, TV —" he motions as if he's being bombarded with transmissions from the surrounding ozone. "Especially radio, it's unbelievable. In