

# Prolific Rush Surprises Lee

BY STEVE GETT

**NEW YORK** The new Rush Mercury/PolyGram album, "Hold Your Fire," represents the Canadian trio's 12th studio release in 13 years. And no one is more surprised that the band has enjoyed such a long and prolific career than vocalist-bassist-keyboardist Geddy Lee.

"In some respects, I am actually surprised we're still going," says Lee. "I'm also surprised that we've been able to maintain the strong audience that we have for this long."

Lee jovially suggests that the band's vast legion of fans has remained loyal because of "blind ignorance." On a more serious note, he says, "I guess regardless of what changes we go through, it's our conviction or level of quality that keeps satisfying or interesting them."

A key factor behind the band members' ability to work together for so long is the comfortable balance that has been created between their professional and personal lives. "When we're not touring or recording, we go our separate ways and are very pri-

vate," says Lee. "That way, everybody always comes back to it feeling fresh and not sick of each other."

Rush started the new "Hold Your Fire" album in September 1986, working with Peter Collins, who had produced the band's last album, "Power Windows." Says Lee, "We liked what went down on that album, and, to us, Peter represented the classic type of producer—one that keeps the focus on the band and its sound. While he was helping us make our arrangements more interesting, he didn't do stuff to play down our musicality. He always encouraged us to stretch out and had respect for what we did well and exploited it."

Rush worked on "Hold Your Fire" at studios in Canada, France, Britain, and the Caribbean, with sessions spread out over a relatively long period of time. "At this stage of the game, to keep ourselves interested and in touch with our families and home life it's important to break the recording sessions up into three-week periods, taking a week off in between," says Lee. "And we can afford the luxury of every three weeks

moving to a different studio, a different environment, and even to get a little exotic in our choices. It makes the whole recording experience a lot more entertaining and interesting."

Though Rush has a platinum-plus sales base and is able to draw strong box-office trade on arena tours, the band's progressive rock style has never garnered widespread, top 40 acceptance.

"I don't think we're capable of it," says Lee. "Nor have we ever learned how. So at this stage of the game, it would be really funny if I turned to Neil [Peart, the band's drummer-lyricist] and said, 'How about writing a hit?' We wouldn't know what to do."

"What I do think is underestimated is the fact that we are an accessible band to begin with. It's not like we're playing jazz or we're abstract. We're more abstract than the average hard rock band, yes, but it's still hard rock, and there's almost always an audience for that."

Rush will begin an extensive tour Oct. 26 in Canada, with U.S. dates to follow.



# Rush, Floyd Back In Top 20; Smokey No Longer One Heartbeat Away From Top 10

LONG-AWAITED albums by two top rock bands leap into the top 20 in their second week on the Top Pop Albums chart. Pink Floyd's "A Momentary Lapse of Reason," the band's first studio album since "The Final Cut" in early 1983, jumps from No. 43 to No. 14, and Rush's "Hold Your Fire," its first album since "Grace Under Pressure" in mid-1984, leaps from No. 52 to No. 19.

As a result, both bands are almost certain to continue long top 10 streaks. This would be Rush's sixth consecutive top 10 album, which is its entire output in the '80s. The Canadian trio first cracked the top 10 in February 1980 with "Permanent Waves" and has since returned with "Moving Pictures," "Exit... Stage Left," "Signals," and "Grace Under Pressure."

"A Momentary Lapse" would be Pink Floyd's fifth consecutive studio album to reach the top 10—discounting reissues, compilations, and a greatest-hits album. The English band first cracked the top 10 in April 1973 with "Dark Side Of The Moon" and has made it back with "Wish You Were Here," "Animals," "The Wall," and "The Final Cut."

We might add that "Dark Side Of The Moon" is still on the chart. The album jumps 12 notches to No. 169—in its 696th week on the survey. That's by far the longest that any album has been listed. In fact, "Dark Side" took that record away from Johnny Mathis' "Johnny's Greatest Hits" four years ago this month.

**SMOKEY ROBINSON'S** "One Heartbeat" jumps six notches to No. 10 on this week's Hot 100, three months after "Just To See Her" peaked at No. 8. Amazingly, this marks the first time in Robinson's 28-year chart career—dating back to the *Miracles* days—that he has had back-to-back top 10 hits. (Maybe the fact that he's never been a "saturation artist" is one reason he's had such a long career: He's never worn out his welcome with radio or the public.)

ABC's salute to Robinson, "When Smokey Sings," is listed at No. 8 this week, marking the first time that a song about an artist has appeared in the top 10 at the same time as a song by that artist.

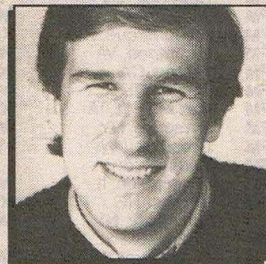
**FAST FACTS:** Bruce Springsteen's "Brilliant Disguise," the first single from his upcoming "Tunnel Of Love" album, debuts at No. 40 on this week's Hot 100. It's the third time that the first single from a Springsteen album has debuted in the top 40. "Dancing In The Dark," the first single from "Born In The

U.S.A.," entered at No. 36; "Hungry Heart," the first single from "The River," bowed at No. 30.

Whitney Houston's "Didn't We Almost Have It All" holds at No. 1 on the Hot 100 for the second straight week. This is the third year in a row that Michael Masser has composed and produced a No. 1 pop hit. He did the honors on Houston's "Saving All My Love For You" in 1985 and "Greatest Love Of All" in 1986. The only other songwriters to land No. 1 hits in each of the last three years are Billy Steinberg &

Tom Kelly, who topped the chart with Madonna's "Like A Virgin" in 1985, Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors" in 1986, and Heart's "Alone" earlier this year.

Whitesnake this week wins the Joni Mitchell award for peaking at No. 2 behind three different No. 1 albums. The "Whitesnake" album was



by Paul Grein

runner-up to U2's "The Joshua Tree" in June, to Whitney Houston's "Whitney" in August, and now to Michael Jackson's "Bad." If it doesn't reach No. 1, it will be the first album to be stopped at No. 2 by three different No. 1 albums since Mitchell's "Court And Spark" in 1974, which played second fiddle to Bob Dylan's "Planet Waves," Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were," and "John Denver's Greatest Hits."

Four soundtracks are listed in the top 15 this week: "La Bamba" dips to No. 4, "Who's That Girl" holds at No. 11, "Dirty Dancing" leaps to No. 12, and "Lost Boys" jumps to No. 15.

Clients of Michael Lippman/Rob Kahane Management were involved in producing four of the top seven albums on this week's chart. Don Gehman produced John Cougar Mellencamp and one track on "La Bamba," Keith Olsen produced "Whitesnake," and Ron Nevison produced Heart.

**WE GET LETTERS:** Collin Daniel of Decatur, Ill., notes that Michael Jackson & Siedah Garrett's "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" was the first song without a video to reach No. 1 since Boston's "Amanda" in November. And the hit that replaced Jackson at No. 1, Whitney Houston's "Didn't We Almost Have It All," didn't have a video either until Arista circulated the clip of Houston performing the song at the MTV Awards.

Dan Magazu of Rotterdam notes that the top two hits on last week's Hot Black Singles chart were L.L. Cool J's "I Need Love" and Lisa Lisa & Cult Jam's "Lost In Emotion." Adds Magazu: "I wonder how often it has happened that two acts with the same four initials have occupied the top two positions."

