

Joy and pain, all in a Rush

Review • Themes of loss – the emotional cornerstone of the trio's latest album – tinge its first area concert in five years.

By **ANDREW TUTTLE**
The Orange County Register

Only a Rush fan can sit through three hours of Rush.

And legions of the devoted came to watch their heroes Monday in the band's first Southern California appearance in five years and first ever at Staples Center in Los Angeles.

The near-capacity crowd of 15,000 watched Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart crank through a 28-song set with little fanfare but plenty of flair.

Rush kicked things off with the tiresome "Tom Sawyer," just about its only song played on local radio anymore. Though one of Rush's biggest tunes and arguably the one that put the band on the map, perhaps it's time to wish it well and pick up a tune long ago forgotten, even by fans. "Entre Nous"? "Jacob's Ladder"?

But not to worry: "Distant Early Warning" and "New World Man" followed, old favorites that sound as fresh as they did when first played in the early 1980s.

Perhaps the most important question of the night was whether Rush would stand the test of time. The band has been pretty much out of the limelight to allow drummer Peart to recover from the



RUSH - Geddy Lee, Neil Peart and Alex Lifeson, from left - offered up 28 songs at the Staples Center, though only four were from its latest album, 'Vapor Trails.'

deaths of his daughter in 1997 and his wife less than a year later.

In fact, most of the songs on the group's latest release, "Vapor Trails," were about Peart's plight in dealing with those tragedies. Strangely, however, the band performed only four songs from the album, perhaps its strongest in a decade.

Lifeson played beautifully during "Earthshine," a glimpse into Rush's new ma-

terial, during the first half of the concert. There was a 20-minute intermission after about 70 minutes.

"One Little Victory," the first single off the new album, was an explosive start - complete with pyrotechnics - to the second, longer set. Three songs later, Rush had played the inquisitive "Ceiling Unlimited" and rocking "Secret Touch" and the new album was merely a vapor.

Rush seemed eager to sim-

ply get the new material out of the way and get on with the show. "Vapor Trails" has many gems worth playing. But if this was the low point of the night, there wasn't much to complain about.

Because even Rush knows sometimes it's overlooked stellar songs, which is exactly how Lee introduced "Between Sun and Moon," from "Counterparts."

Lifeson played a spine-tingling solo for "Bravado,"

Rush

- **Where:** Staples Center, Los Angeles
- **When:** Sept. 23
- **Next:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, Irvine
- **How much:** \$31.75-\$91.75
- **Call:** (714) 740-2000
- **Online:** www.ticketmaster.com

something he's done since the "Roll the Bones" tour in 1990-91. "Vital Signs" was a prodigal son easily welcomed back by the crowd.

And, what would a Rush concert be without a seven-minute drum solo by the master of percussion? Peart drew upon three decades of solo work and added some new flavors that had wanna-be air drummers trying to catch up.

Giving Peart a much-deserved rest after the solo, Lee and Lifeson did something new. Seated, the two played classical guitar and sang "Resist," from "Test For Echo" - two camp leaders singing songs around a fire, but with the ability to hold 15,000 in silence and awe.

And, though Peart spent much of his "Vapor Trails" writing on his emotional recovery, the evening was summed up by the crowd and band favorite "The Pass."

"Someone set a bad example, made surrender seem all right, the act of a noble warrior who lost the will to fight," Lee sang as if talking directly to Peart.

"Don't turn your back and slam the door on me."

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TOMEI

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unbelievably sexy. She gets it.

"I've seen so many movies with leading ladies who are beautiful but have no clue. They are not in touch with their sexuality. But Marisa is a seriously sexy woman, and I think this may be the first time the audience gets to see that side of her. The audience also will see the devilish side of her, which she likes to hide from the general public."

The film also stars Ron El-

dard, Kyra Sedgwick and Marley Shelton.

Stevens, whose company produced "In the Bedroom," said he also has heard of "The Marisa Tomei Theory."

"On the one hand, you mention her name to people outside the business and they say, 'Oh, I love her; she's incredible. But she should work more.' On the other hand, people in the business know exactly how good she is, and for that reason she works all the time.

"She is one of America's great actresses, who apparently doesn't care about being

a big commercial success."

All this talk about disappointing her public has depressed the actress. It is evident in her face, which is now devoid of smiles. She seems a bit sad.

"I feel I've let people down," she says softly. "But, maybe it's not my destiny to be a big movie star. Maybe it's just not meant to be.

"But, if it makes people feel any better about me or my career, they should know that I am happy."

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