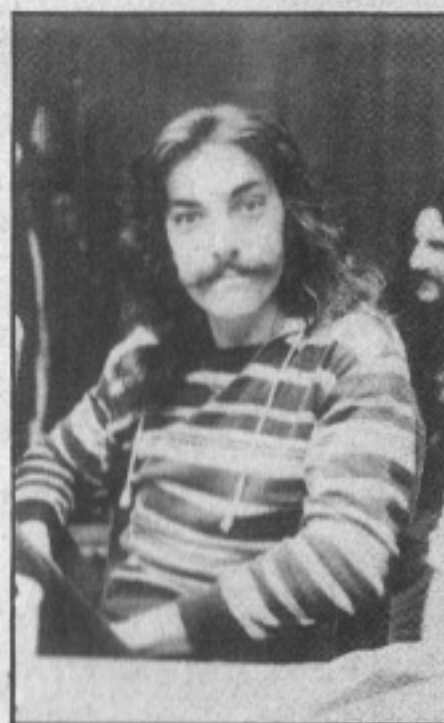
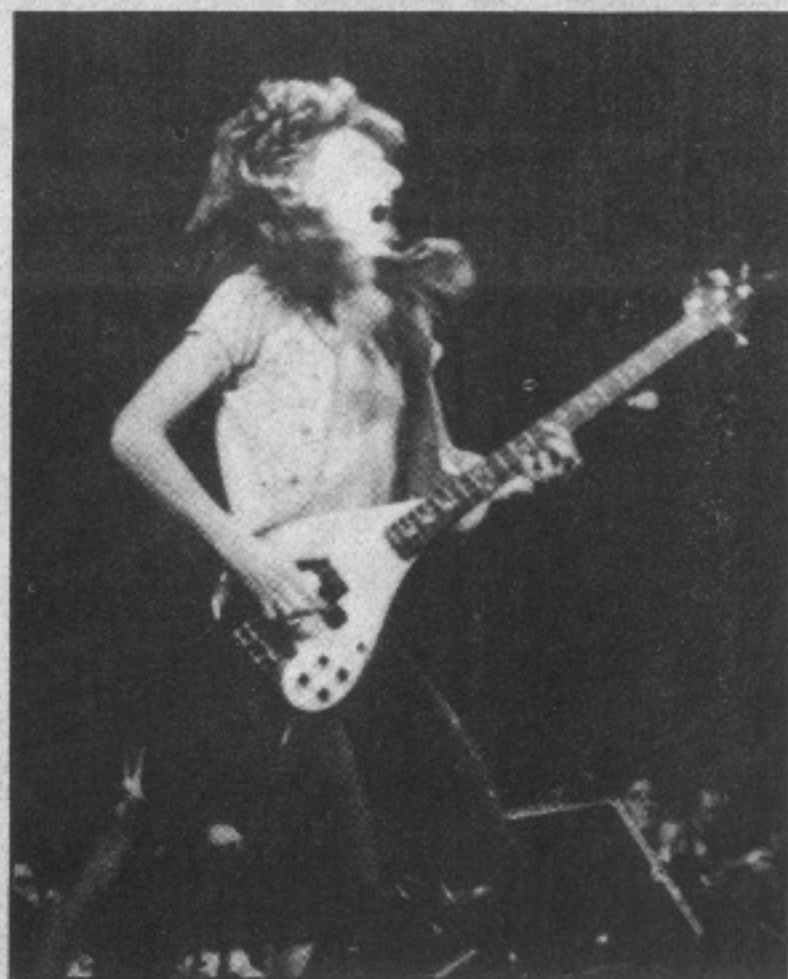


EARTH BIRTH

By Paul Brett



Pix by IAN 'Click' DICKSON

*'Attention all planets of the Solar Federation
Attention all planets of the Solar Federation.
We have assumed control
We have assumed control
We have assumed control . . .'*

Hello! How're you doing, England?" Rush bass player Geddy Lee shrieks a greeting above the dying echoes of the opening number, 'Bastille Day'.

The reply comes, a loud, riotous, raucous roar. England is doing alright and Rush are doing better still.

Sheffield is the town, June 1st is the date, a red letter day for the band, representing the first date of their British tour. Also representing, coincidentally, Rush's premier overseas performance, their debut gig outside of America and their native Canada.

And you know what? They went down the proverbial storm.

A momentous occasion for me, seeing the band at last take to a British stage, an occasion to which I'd looked forward for so long. I'd seen them once, just once, before, hardly in the most ideal of settings. In Montreal it was,

supporting Aerosmith. Literally, we'd just disembarked from a heavy-duty transatlantic flight and were seriously contemplating not going to the night's concert, tired and wasted as we were. But, in the end, we made it — and who should be supporting, lo and behold, than Rush. Obey, did that get the adrenalin running.

See, at that time, (around Christmas last year), the band were still much of a mystery to me. I'd got all their albums and enjoyed each one, from the straight ahead 'Rush' platter to the complex '2112' conceptual opus, but the prospect of seeing them live had never really entered into my head. I'd never really thought seriously about whether they'd be able to cut ice onstage or not.

And could they? Well, judging by the 20 minutes or so I saw of them at Montreal, probably. But I had doubts, I seem to recall, in my jet-lag-addled mind. Were they perhaps a little mechanical musically? Were they, with their sci-fi slanted heavy rock music, truly able to generate real excitement? Weren't the stage versions of their songs rather too close to the recorded originals. Jeez, when

a band's half a mile away in a vast Canadian auditorium, how can you really tell?

In the end, in an article in SOUNDS not so long ago I tipped the scales in Rush's favour, most definitely. But now, backstage at Sheffield City Hall, doubts began to assail me, like they always do.

Back in the SOUNDS office, I always get ribbed for going over the top on bands like Kiss, Judas Priest, and — yes — Rush. No matter how much effort you may put into shrugging off the jibes, some of them are still going to stick. Some of them are going to nag away at the back of your mind and worry you, just a bit.

AND I WAS worried, backstage, for Rush. And Rush were worried too. With lots of special effects and lighting equipment languishing at Customs at Heathrow, plus apparent difficulties with the difference between American and British electrical voltage, they were going to be unable to present their full show tonight.

First night nerves added considerably to the problem. All three of them, Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart,

were solemn and relatively silent, gearing themselves up to the gig.

"The stage is so small," groaned Geddy.

"I'm having trouble with my guitars," remarked Alex.

"Gnnn . . ." a despairing noise from Neil, coming from deep down inside his throat.

Fingers crossed, I left the dressing-room for the hall proper. Small, quite congenial, the kids were tightly packed around the

stage, hard core fans each one. At least I hoped so.

Just after 9.00 the main lights went out, applause started, cheering began, a voice boomed from the P.A. 'From Toronto, Canada, will you please welcome — RUSH!' and —

Nothing happened.

Problems from the outset, not guitar sound, r roadie dashed offstage tiddled about, the PA buzzed and hummed then went silent,

It'll shake you
to the core.

PL 25080

RCA



ASSUMED CONTROL'

'Heavy Metal Lives' thunders GEOFF 'Keraannng' BARTON (again) as the Priests Of The Temple Of Syrinx, alias RUSH, lay waste to Planet Earth (well, Sheffield).



and a hush fell over the hall, a painfully long hush that was only broken by an abrupt —

KER-ANNNG!

Suddenly, Lifeson's guitar was back in action, the riff to 'Bastille Day' began. Suddenly, the crowd went bananas. Suddenly, I knew I shouldn't have been so sceptical. Suddenly the storm began.

UNCERTAINTIES

Forgotten, Rush exude on-stage confidence. Lifeson, on the left, young and blond-haired, dressed in black, plays his guitar vigorously, viciously. Drummer Neil Peart twirls his sticks with the same precision as his moustache and hits those skins hard. Geddy Lee's bass growls like a gorilla on heat. Gods, throw all doubts to the wind, Rush are some band.

After his 'how're you doing England?' rap, Lee introduces 'Anthem' which in turn superceded by 'Lakeside Park'. Rush gain impetus and the kids lap it up — Lee and Lifeson, the front men, sweep their guitar necks up and around in unison, good and posey without being pretentious, while music hits top gear and then smoothly slips into overdrive.

For a three-man band, Rush make a lot of noise. As a guitarist, Lifeson is everywhere, riffing, licking, soloing, plucking and strumming all within the space of scant seconds.

Lee, as well as playing a mean, dirty sounding bass and singing, also contributes mini Moog passages, playing the instrument's floor-keyboard with his feet. Peart is a flashy, powerful drummer with an amazing amount of equipment at his disposal. It all amounts to, as I say, a lot of noise.

'2112' is next up, along with cheers from the audience. Great stuff this, and not without its subtleties, the effect of a dazzling flash-bulb being more than counteracted by some extraordinarily mellow sequences. '2112', as you know, is Rush's tour de force, a science fiction tale set to music, all about life in the future when the world has buckled under the dictatorial rule of the Priests of the Temple Of Syrinx.

Live, it comes to life, so to speak, even more so than on album. Whenever the presence of the Priests is announced, lights glare out from the stage into the

audience, highlighting the menace in the words. And after Lee sings 'my lifeblood spills over', when the hero of the story dies, all hell breaks loose, the guitar-bass-drums triumvirate create a well-nigh solid wall of sound.

'Xanadu' follows, a brand new number which has both Lee and Lifeson playing double-necked guitars, an amazing sight. Multi-faceted, immaculately constructed, with an abundance of Moog swirlings, it's a potential classic. Can't wait to hear it on the new album (which, if you're interested, will also include a fifteen-minute song about black holes in space).

'You Don't Get Something For Nothing', more direct heavy metal, hits hard and low and prepares us for 'By-Tor And The Snow Dog', also leading into 'The Necromancer' somewhere along the way. A fearsome rendition of this, you can almost hear the gnashing of teeth and the slashing of claws.

'Working Man' and 'Finding My Way' conclude the set in good time rock 'n' rolling fashion and the encore, 'Fly By Night'/'In The Mood' caps it all nicely.

Enjoyable? I'll say,

although the band themselves were not altogether happy with the gig, mainly because of the equipment problems — but problems, certainly, which didn't manifest themselves to any great extent as far as I was concerned.

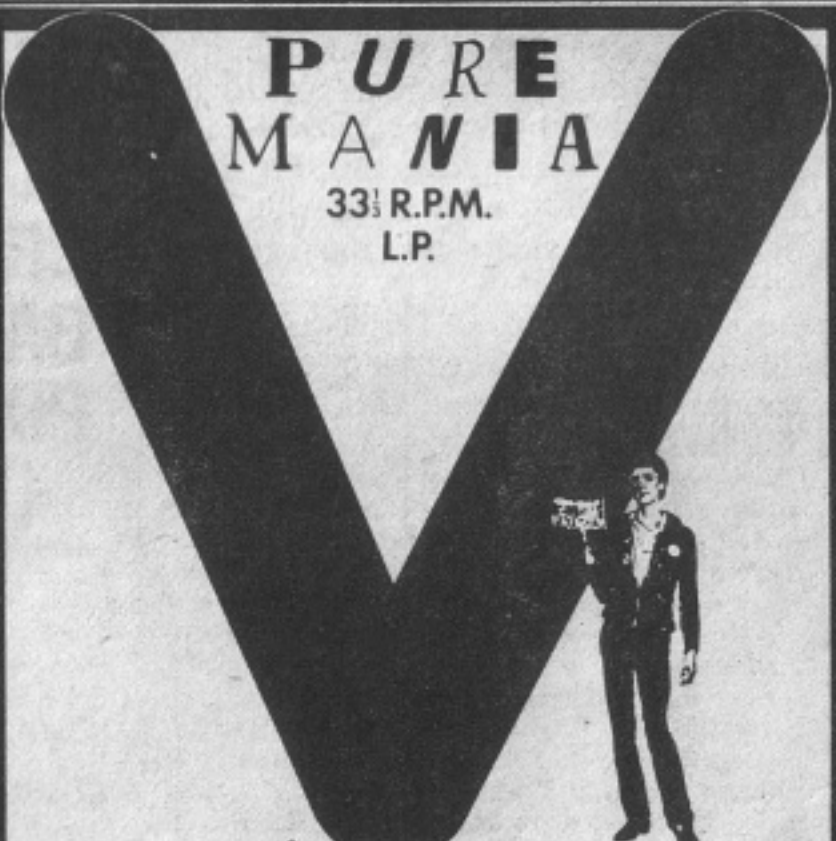
Rush released is an experience, one that I am looking forward to repeating over the weekend when the band play London. As a heavy rock group they're up there with the front runners, you'd be foolish to miss them, miss the shrill, piercing vocals of Geddy Lee, the virtuoso metal guitar playing of Alex Lifeson and the drumkit thunderings of Neil Peart.

Don't know about the planets of the Solar Federation, but Rush have certainly assumed control of me.

How about you?

'Attention all planets of the Solar Federation
Attention all planets of the Solar Federation,
We have assumed control
We have assumed control
We have assumed control . . .'

**PURE
MANIA**
33 1/3 R.P.M.
L.P.



**the
Vibrators**
on tour with Ian Hunter

June 8 Manchester Free Trade Hall	June 10 Cardiff Top Rank
June 9 Leicester De Montfort Hall	June 11 Aylesbury Vale Hall
	June 12 THE ODEON HAMMERSMITH