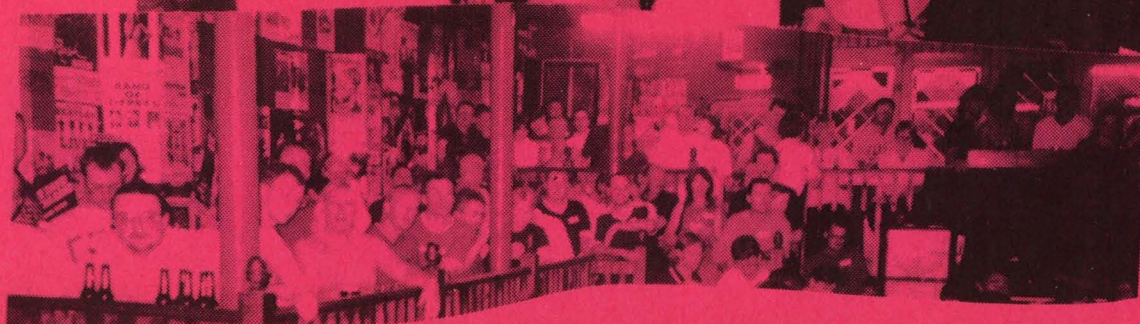


THE SPIRIT OF

Issue No. 49 Autumn 1999

Post-Convention Issue





Editorial

This Issue Is Dedicated To Ray and Lisa

Hello and welcome to 'Spirit' No' 49. Anna at Anthem has confirmed that the band are still in a state of hiatus and that they are NOT working on a video release for Different Stages. Bad news, huh!

Many people have enquired about the classical album which we mentioned last issue. SOR is unable to find any details of this album, so it would appear to be just another internet rumour, we're afraid.

Thank you to everybody who came to the convention in Crewe. As you can read in this very issue, everyone had a blast. YYY played a stormer of a set to close the day. My thanks to them all. Thanks to everyone who spent loads of money on the day (raffle etc.). The future of 'Spirit' is assured for another year at least. Our next issue will be our milestone 50th which should be with you just prior to Christmas. If anyone had told me 13 years ago that we would reach 50 I would have laughed - but here we are. We are planning something special to celebrate, so make sure you re-subscribe quickly so you don't miss out. As a small bribe to all of you who DO need to re-subscribe, the first person to get their subscription form back to me will win a Different Stages t-shirt as seen at the convention. Well worth having, so come on.

Congratulations to Ray Wawrzyniak and Lisa on the birth of their first child back in July. Nice one.

Many people have been asking us to supply the Different Stages t-shirts that we had at the convention. We have looked into this and we can do it, but they will cost £30.00 each due to

import duties and P&P which we cannot avoid since they have to be shipped over from Canada. Would anyone who is still interested please send us an SAE and I'll let them know if we plan to go ahead. We need a certain amount of orders to make it worthwhile doing it.

We have news of some of the guest contributions Rush have made on some recent CD releases..... Firstly, Alex and Geddy contribute 'O Canada' to the 'South Park' movie soundtrack CD which is currently available in the shops. There is also a CD out at the moment called 'Euphoria' by 'Euphoria', on which Geddy co-wrote and played on one track. The CD is available on import on the Six Degrees label, Cat no. 1015. Finally, Canadian band 'I Mother Earth' have a new release called 'Blue Green Orange' on which Geddy plays bass on one song. This one is available on import too- Cat no' IMC542872.

The editors of a new fanzine for unsigned Welsh band 'Mindfire' have contacted us regarding the launch of their publication 'Mindfire' (!) If you are interested, copies can be obtained from:

Miss S Jones and Miss F Thomas
32 Margaret Road
Llandybïe, Ammanford
Carmarthenshire SA18 3YA

Next year's convention will once again take place at the Limelight in Crewe. The date for your diary is Saturday 9th September 2000. Tickets are not on sale yet so don't send any money. Make a note on your calendar - you have a full year's notice so no excuses, right!

Regards, Mick

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Thanks : Tom Cornell, James Broad, Neil Elliott, Craig Murray, Simon Fraser-Clarke & YYY, Malcolm

Cheryl, Sue Burnett, Chris Loydall, Kevin Owen
Kevin Henry, Steve McNally

Photos: Mick and various other contributors
Printers: Blue Print

Signals

Dear Mick,

My wife Karen & I, through the pages of the 'Spirit of Rush' fanzine, would like to thank you and the rest of your dedicated & hard working colleagues for a super day at the Limelight Club, last July, on the occasion of the 4th annual Rush Convention. Apart from a most enjoyable (and tiring) day we would also like to pass on our thanks to all the Rush fans in attendance who were extremely well behaved, were polite & very friendly to the Limelight's locals and were a credit to your fan club.

We have spoken to you since the convention and we are delighted to hear that the day was a great success for the 'Spirit of Rush' both financially and socially. We are also delighted to hear that you wish to hold next year's convention at the Limelight club and we can't wait for another enjoyable day, on Saturday Sept' 9th, 2000. Thanks to all involved in the day & for making it such a success. Keep up the great work,

RAY & KAREN BISPHAM
(LIMELIGHT & 2112 CLUB OWNERS)

Signals

Dear Mick,

I've never written to you before with a view to you printing it, but 2 letters in Issue 48 have got me thinking. Firstly, Peter Graham writes about how he can remember individual occasions he has heard Rush broadcast and The Mad Jock mentions 3 pubs across the UK who have them on their juke boxes. I'm the same. I can remember the half a dozen or so times I've ever heard Rush on the radio or seen them on TV, very clearly.

Surely though this is lunacy. What other big selling western music act in the last 50 years have been so poorly represented by the media? If a Simply Red fan or Phil Collins fan could remember every time they'd heard their favourites on the radio they'd need brains the size of my car to store all that info'. Whilst I accept that Rush's music is not as radio-friendly as those acts, and that if Rush were played as much they certainly wouldn't sell as many singles, I've got to say that if Simply Red had





Rush's level of airplay, they would never have sold any records at all, as no-one would have heard them.

The incident I recall most clearly regarding Rush and radio play happened around the time of the Signals UK tour. Bear in mind just how successful they still were here then: very high album chart placings and 3 or 4 night stands at the NEC or Wembley Arena, at a time, pre Live Aid, when pop/rock concerts of that size were relatively rare in this country.

They'd just released New World Man as a single and I was listening to Radio One, the Gary Davies Show I think, on a Tuesday afternoon when the new singles charts were issued. The format of the show was the same each week. The hugely talented Mr Davies (!) would read the chart out from No. 40 down to No. 1 and then play all the high climbers and new entries. He had told us in the chart run-down that No. 36 was a new entry by Rush - New World Man.

'Good', I thought, he's going to have to stop playing Culture Club and Bananarama and play something a bit better. Well, as you've guessed, he didn't. In fact I never heard it that week on

Radio One at all and as usual, it dropped out of the chart the next week. If they'd played it a few times it might have got into the Top 30 or 20, or who knows.

It's quite a catchy song and for the time, pretty contemporary (what do you mean 'Police rip-off'?). I could have understood them not playing By-Tor... or something. The point is, if people don't hear of it they'll never like it. It would never have got to No. 1 with saturation play but some people would have heard it and liked it.

It's almost as if Rush have been banned by radio and most of the music press, presumably because of the NME interview in the late 70's which came to the strange conclusion that they espouse fascist ideologies. If they did, I certainly wouldn't be a fan. In fact, I find it hard to think of many songs by any 'right on' bands which are as eloquently politically correct as, say Red Tide, Alien Shore or Territories, let alone Nobody's Hero.

The sad fact is that there are many people out there who probably would like Rush if they'd ever had the chance. Those people are split into 2 camps; those who have never even heard the

name Rush and those who think they're some crap, dumb, heavy metal band who probably sound like Spinal Tap and split up 15 years ago.

I realise that most records by most acts never get mainstream airplay but I can't think of any act who that applies to who've sold anything like so many albums or played to so many people.

The other side of the coin is, of course, that having been so successful in the face of such mainstream indifference is a unique achievement and that Rush are as big as an 'alternative' band can get (I use the word 'alternative' in it's true sense rather than the one where bands such as REM and Oasis sell 10 million copies of their albums and are never out of 'Q' magazine or off MTV). I'm not slagging off those groups. I particularly like REM, but think that if it were any kind of level playing field, Rush would sell just as many albums.

I think that I've got that point off my chest now and so will turn to another much briefer one. Now, I'm nobody's sculptor, but that one of Neil is surely really of Sir John Gielgud..... Oh well, what do I know? Yours sincerely,

**GRAHAM WHITTINGHAM
BURY**

P.S. Sorry I can't make the convention. I will try to be off work for next year's.

Dear Mick,

Hello there, just a few belated lines to say a major thank you for another great day out. I'm sorry I missed you at the end. I think Stevie, Kevin and myself were totally shattered at the end of the day (previous night's skin-full I think). Anyway, I was really glad I was able to help out during the day, made the day even more special. I would be more than willing to help out again next year if you want. I know Stevie and Kev would help as well. Anyway, once again, many thanks again - your dedication and loyalty needs to be applauded and is greatly appreciated. Until next time.

**KEVIN OWEN
PENZANCE**

P.S. Bit of Rush trivia for you. There was a question about the band on Channel 5's 100% Quiz Show. Q. What was the band's second live LP called. Only one contestant got it right.....

Dear Mick,

Please find enclosed a subscription renewal for 'Spirit'. Thanks for No. 48 which I have just finished reading. Seems that a fair few readers value the fanzine and will almost blindly support it. Hopefully we'll continue to see the power of this come July 31st. (*We did, we did - ED*) I just want to pledge my support for you and your work, because just like the other Rush anoraks, I feel I need this regular celebration and news service. I think you believe in it too; this subscription form goes up to 52!!



I must admit that my dedication, though not my enthusiasm, has diminished some over the last couple of years while I've been trying to make a go of my band. However, that has come to an untimely demise, and you'll no doubt understand that I've dived headlong back into the Rush phenomenon for solace. I'm very pumped for the convention, as a consequence. This will be my third (why oh why did I miss the first one?) and from all the hype, promises to supercede previous gatherings.

There have been so many debating points in the fanzine since I last contributed, and I get to discuss these with Dave Lythgoe once in a while. This talk of the very existence of 'SOR' overshadows the whole gamut. Sure, Different Stages is a fantastic package and sure, some of the tracklisting would be different if it was up to me, sure, Dream Theater are a terrific band and sure, their contribution to progressive rock/metal is vastly overrated.....etc. etc. All in all though, I love knowing that 'Spirit' exists and with each issue the promise of some new information. All the best,

**SHANE COUNTER
HEAVER, DERBYSHIRE**

Dear Mick and S.O.R.

Just a quickie to say thanks to everyone for making Saturday a great fun day out. Despite the almost intolerable heat, and subsequent gallons of alcohol imbibed, we all managed to get along without serious incident, which I think is a great credit to all.

Having missed last year's convention, I was amazed at how many people recognised and greeted me as soon as I got in the Limelight Club, and made me feel instantly at home. Thanks guys - have a virtual hug! ;-) I think that this year's convention was the best yet, Steve and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Once again YYZ were tight, I may just have to hire them for my next birthday party - I couldn't get them this year due to some gig at Crewe they were doing for some reprobates.....

By the way, I managed to raise over £50 in sponsorship money for Radio Nightingale by getting up on that stage, I thought I better tell everyone who suffered my singing that it was worthwhile!! Also, a big round of applause to

everyone who got up to sing, it takes a lot of guts. When will you be singing Mick? (*As long as it's La Villa or YYZ, that's fine by me! - Janet*).

Thanks to everyone who organised the event, I know a lot of hard work goes into organising these things.

Lastly, my apologies for not being able to say goodbye to everybody before leaving, but I was asleep on my feet!

**ANGELA
(E-MAIL)**

Just writing to say we had a great day. The Limelight is an excellent venue and we are glad the convention for 2000 will also be held there. This year a friend came with my wife and myself and he enjoyed his first convention so much he said he would go next year as well. YYZ were superb, make sure you book them for next year! Thanks again for a great day even though we were caught in a 13 mile tailback on the M6 on the Friday and when we arrived at our hotel they had double booked!

**JOHN CARROLL
STANFORD-LE-HOPE, ESSEX**



Hi Mick

Just a wee note to say thanks for organising another brilliant Rush Convention. The venue was tailor-made and YYZ were excellent. It was also great to see old friends again. Stuart and I are already planning for next years (actually it can't come quick enough for me) and look forward to seeing everyone again. Thanks to the girls as well - they were really pleasant and helpful. A huge "Cheers" must also go to the Mad Jock - how he managed to keep wearing our national dress in heat like that I do not know.

Bye for now,

LORI
GLASGOW

Hi Mick and a jolly "G'day" Skippy!

Only kidding "babe".... I know you're from Sunderland - onesself is from Monkwearmouth. Good part of the world eh!

Comments about the convention are welcomed I hope! Well, I've been to all four and to be honest I'm now finding it hard to decide which one is "the best up to now". I enjoyed each one very much at the Uni' in Leicester. I'm not knocking Crewe but I felt the venue wasn't big enough!! Don't tell me to "get stuffed" all you out there. But, if we want more people to get involved and continue to carry on this great "SHOW FOR FANZ" we need a bigger place. All of you look



around and suggest places and let's hit the "big 5" it may be our last. "Bollocks", it won't be I'm sure! I hope it won't be..... I'm sure you're all nodding and agreeing (if you are reading this). YYZ - the only comment I have for you guys is: YOU'RE GOOD! YOU'RE F***IN' GOOD! To do two hours of probably the hardest music to copy in the history of rock you must be F***in' good! Hello to the The Mad Jock from Deb. Sorry she couldn't make it, she'll see you at the next one! XXXXXX

Who was the guy from Canada with the camera? He came up to me and asked to take a photo of the back of my shirt! I was made up, considering I designed it. Cheers mate. Hope to be in touch. Do you a shirt if you want!!!

A big "thanks" to the manageress/owner of the Limelight club, she kindly let me take some Rush posters off the wall. Oh, and thanks to Jock for the orange neck strap for my backstage pass that I was given: "Cheers". I have given it to my son

Matthew – he's made up with the great souvenir and posters.

Regards to John from Newcastle and his mates and it was lovely to see Pete, his wife and daughter (all in their shirts). You looked good you guys.

Regards to all you FANZ out there and thanks Mick and Skippy – you're diamonds. Cheers.

**STEVE
WARRINGTON**

Dear SOR,

Many thanks for a fun day in Crewe! My old school-mate John and I enjoyed a really good fix of Rush, not to mention about 15 pints of 'Stones' bitter.....John did a fine karaoke rendition of Subdivisions. As for my interpretation of Freewill, all I can say is that I did try very hard to hit those high notes!!! At any rate, it was a good laugh to have a go at it!

a richer man so that I could have chosen more goodies.... Still, the Hemispheres tour programme which I now possess is a highly treasured item. Yours faithfully,

**DAN HUDSON
WINCHMORE HILL, LONDON**

Dear Mick,

First things first. Thank you a million times over for the convention. It's been a long time since I've enjoyed myself so much. The music, the people, the weather and the beer (of which I consumed too much, although I'm sure I was not the only one) all added up to a fantastic day. I hadn't realised how much work you and the others put into, not only the convention, by also the fanzine. I hope you realise how much I, and I would imagine all the others at the convention,



It was great to see live footage of the T4E tour and YYZ, of course, did a brilliant set to round off the day. I hope the event turned out to be a positive one for the future of SOR. I bought a few items of memorabilia – I only wish that I was

appreciate what you do. So, many thanks once again and I'm already looking forward to next year's convention.

**MICHAEL KERR
NORTH BERWICK, EAST LOTHIAN**

Dear Spirit,

Just a few lines to say what a great time I had at my first Rush convention (how did I miss the other three?). The highlight of the evening for me must have been wotsisname singing 'Anthem' at the karaoke, great fun - a very brave lad! Speaking from a drummer's point of view, how about drum karaoke? You could set up a kit, stick some silencers on it and let us do our 'thing' to the backing tracks. Just looking around the venue during a Rush tune I could see dozens of hands beating out those Peart chops in a frenzied blur, and probably every one of them (me included) were hoping YYYZ's drummer wouldn't show up so they could stand in for him. As we all know, he did turn up and did a first rate job along with the rest of the band. I would like to shake him by the hand, even though I'm jealous as f**k!

Thanks to Tom for a wonderful prize draw, even though I won nowt and girls by the name of Jackie seemed to win everything! I'm really looking forward to next year's convention.

**DAVID MCBRIDE
HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS**

Dear Spirit,

Well, five days later my head was still buzzing from the brilliant day out at the 4th annual Rush convention. This year's convention has got to have been the best one so far. The Limelight Club was a superb venue.

I'd like to thank my mate Dave once again for driving us back home and enabling me to have a few drinks, which gave me the courage to have a go at the karaoke, singing Tears. I know I didn't do very well, but maybe next year I'll try and sing something a bit more upbeat and keep up with the music. I'd like to say again that that was the first time I have ever sung through a mike (I know it showed).

Anyway, to go on, the live set by YYYZ was brilliant, they really got the crowd rocking and it was great to see the video of Geddy and Alex with their names in the paving stone.

For the first time in the 3 years of conventions that I have attended, I finally won a prize, two in fact - Neil's book 'The Masked Rider' which I really wanted, and the CD single 'Driven'. Well

that's all for now. Thanks again for a brilliant day.

**MARK V. LILLEY
DONCASTER**

Dear SOR,

This is just a short note to express my sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this year's convention such a superb and memorable event. First, special thanks to you Mick and your 'team' for all your hard work. The venue was just the right size and I thoroughly enjoyed YYYZ's performance. I must also thank Rob, Nick and Steve for keeping me company throughout the day.

Of course my personal highlight was winning the 'Different Stages' platinum award. I know everyone reading this will probably be green with envy, but rest assured, nobody could have been more delighted to have won such a fantastic prize.



Once again, thanks to everybody for making it a tremendous day and I hope to see you all next year. Sincerely,

**STEPHEN 'GROG' O'GRADY
BINLEY, COVENTRY**

Dear Mick et al,

Sorry it's taken so long to write. I can't believe the convention was three weeks ago. Hope this reaches you in time for the next mag!

Once again, thanks to everyone involved in organising the convention...when's the next one? (*Saturday, 9th September, 2000* – ED). We've got some fantastic memories of the first three in Leicester, and aside from a minor heart-stopping few minutes when we arrived and it seemed as if the UK licensing laws would not allow us entry with Iona (4 years 11 months), Crewe continued the tradition.

The bar area with its stalls, the garden with its barbecue (including veggie burgers – yum!) and the band room with its.....well, band. All

excellent, and we were resplendent in our matching t-shirts made by Steve Carne (thanks). Plenty of old friends to catch up with.... hello Steve, Simon, Tom (MJ) Cornell and for the first time ever we actually won a raffle prize...two in fact, hallelujah! Unfortunately the excitement was all so much that we didn't make it to the 2112 disco.

YYZ were once again, superb - where can we get those t-shirts? (*Try their website – details later – ED*). Its always fun to get a small taste of what we've been missing out on for the last god knows how many years.

I know that I've already said this but I think it bears repeating.....thanks. Best wishes,

**PETE, EVE & IONA
ILFORD, ESSEX**

Dear Mick,

I have not written to Spirit of Rush since the third issue. I've bought every issue but haven't felt the urge to write until now. Whilst then I



was a naïve teenager who had only just started listening to Rush, I have now had the pleasure of their company for over 12 years and, quite honestly, they are still unsurpassed.

I am now a qualified solicitor and they still have just as much impact on my life as they did then. I might not listen to them as much as I did – with a CD collection of 250 albums who can blame me – but I still rate them way ahead of everyone else. The impact they had on me (and still do), the lyrics, the music, there are no words.....

As I write this I have just returned from a hectic day at the office, I've poured myself a glass (several, actually) of whiskey and have treated myself to a Rush evening – the first in a long time. I've just let my feelings go with the music and have listened to, amongst others; the whole of A Farewell To Kings, Territories, Second Nature, Tai Shan and The Pass. I intend listening to a lot more!!

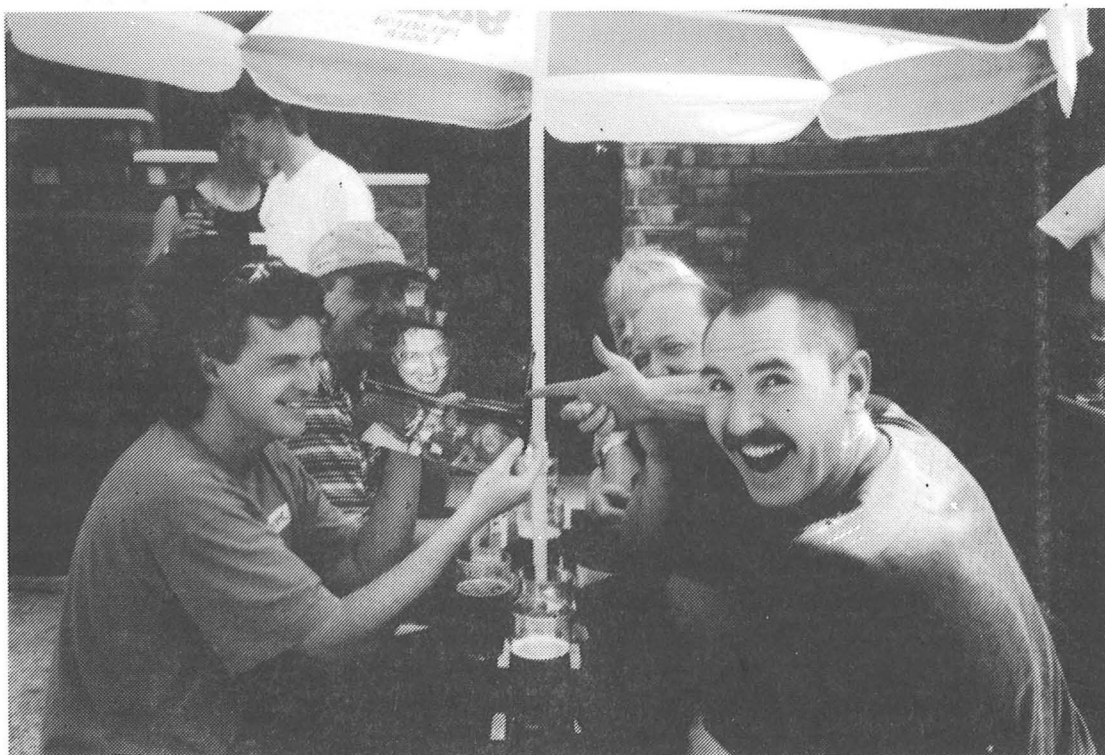
A strange selection, some people might say, but that as far as I am concerned, is the sheer beauty of Rush. Everyone has their personal favourites (mine is Xanadu) and no-one is in complete agreement with the next. Brilliant!! What other group produces such radical differences of opinion?

Rush are a central point of my life and they always will be, whatever abuse I get from people who either don't like Geddy's voice or just ridicule me because they can't be bothered to sit down to listen to Rush properly. That's their problem not mine. I found them and they're mine forever!!

This may sound like a glowing endorsement of Rush, which generally it is, but there are tracks I don't like and I would be surprised if there weren't. What's important is that I can understand where Rush are coming from and what they are trying to do – how many bands can you say that about?

The last studio album was a disappointment to me, but it may still grow on me and certainly the versions on Different Stages half convince me. The live album is great whatever anyone says – that's how they want us to hear them.

I hope there's more to come, but I'm not going to hold my breath. Neil has suffered more than most people deserve to and, whilst any new lyrics from him will be from the heart, I can fully understand why he might not want to return. I don't blame him and can only rest easy in the knowledge that if we have heard the last of



Rush, I did get to see them 4 times in 12 years and they are (were?) the greatest.

RICHARD GORE

Dear Mick and everyone at Spirit,
Thanks for an excellent convention in Crewe at a superb venue, the best ever! The atmosphere was so relaxed and friendly, among like-minded people from all corners of the country. The Limelight club is a Rush/rock music fan's dream. See you in 2000 for the 5th SORC. Unique mag. Keep it going.

**M LEE
HYTHE**

Hi Mick,
Just a quickie to let you know that everything seems OK with us for the 9/9/2000, so it's a go-er!
At the moment our gig diary is looking a little sparse but we have the following dates.... which would be cool if you could plug them for us.

**30/9/99 – Robin 2, Mount Pleasant, Bilston
10/10/99 – Riddles Wine Bar, Stoke on Trent
23/10/99 – The Railway, Curzon Street, Birmingham
18/11/99 – Robin 1, Merry Hill, Birmingham
2/12/99 – Limelight Club, Crewe**

We are looking to move further afield gig wise, so if you could put something in the mag asking people if they know of venues in their area that we could play at if they could contact us via the web site (more later) or via the mag, then that would be very cool.

The web site is up and running now and is looking cool. The address is:

<http://wkweb5.cableinet.co.uk/speedboat/>

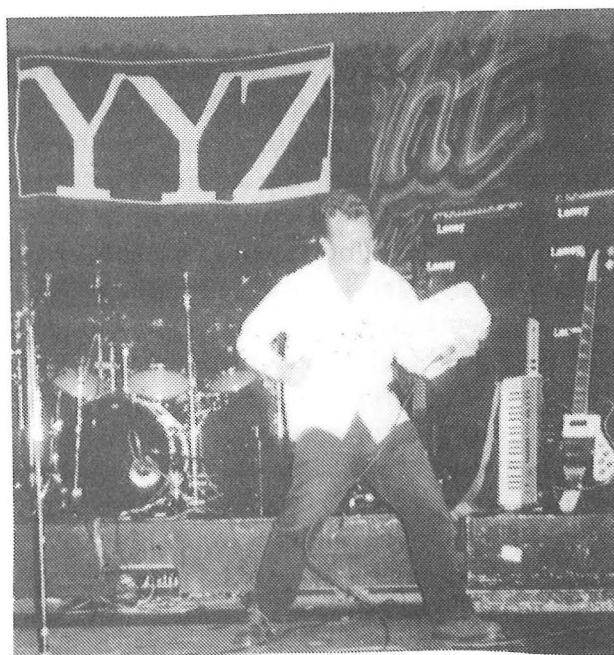
If you could put this in the mag as well then we can keep people up to date with everything that's going on.

Cheers,

**SIMON FRASER-CLARKE (YYZ)
E-MAIL**

Dear SOR,

I am writing as a new subscriber having just received issue No. 48. I would like to say how impressed I am with the magazine, I wish I had



subscribed earlier so I could have attended the Rush convention. It was a good report on the Walk Of Fame – I already knew about this by checking out the Midnight Star web site. It is nice to see recent photos of Alex and Geddy. I was a little bit concerned about Neil's absence but I suppose this is only to be expected at the moment.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the new live album and the future of Rush in general. It is obvious listening to the live album that Rush are playing as good, if not better than they have ever done. I would have loved to have seen them on the Counterparts tour or the T4E tour, both of which must have been brilliant. I have seen Rush live twice in the UK – on the Hold Your Fire tour and the 'Bones tour. On both occasions I had very good tickets near the front at Wembley in front of Geddy. I have seen many top rock bands live, but Rush seem to be the best. Their concerts really stick in your memory. I would love to see them play 2112 in

the UK again as on the live album. It is awesome to listen to.

There is the constant question being raised by fans as to whether Rush will ever play in the UK again. The band seem to be of the opinion that it would not be viable as venues could not be filled of a sufficient size. I would like to cast people's minds back to the 'Bones tour, 1992. I remember at that time that there was a certain American band by the name of Metallica that were on a massive world tour with huge promotion in the UK, whereas Rush, to my knowledge, only had a very small ad in Kerrang! magazine. The point I am trying to make is that Rush sold out the same venues and the same number of nights as Metallica, with next to no promotion. I don't know how this would work now because it was some years ago. Maybe Anthem could release the sales records of their albums in the UK to give us an indication of how popular Rush are in the UK.....

As to the idea of a back-to-basics tour in smaller



venues the size of, say, Shepherd's Bush Empire, or Brixton Academy, the Brighton Centre etc. with a basic show. I would personally walk over broken glass barefoot to see a tour like that from Rush. Rush. It's not the effects that count, just the music.

I would like to pass my best wishes to the band and say that any decision you make about the venues the size of, say, Shepherd's Bush Empire, or Brixton Academy, the Brighton Centre etc. with a basic show. I would personally walk over broken glass barefoot to see a tour like that from band's future we will have to live with, but try not to forget you have some very loyal fans in the UK. I would also like to pass on my best wishes to Neil. I hope you are keeping well - take as long as you need and take care.

Also, can anyone tell me where I can buy Rush tour shirts new and old (I have managed to get hold of T4E tour shirts from the States via the net). I am also interested in tour books and bootleg CDs or rare radio shows discs. If anyone can help I give my address below.

Mr Patrick De-La-Mare
Flat 7
St George's Court
Hillside road
Dover
Kent CT17 0UT

Any correspondence regarding Rush very welcome.

Dear SOR,

I was interested to see on the Web recently an interview with the Irish rock band 'The Corrs'. One person asked the Corrs' drummer, Caroline, who her main influences were when learning the drums. Below is the answer as told by the lady herself in reply to the question.

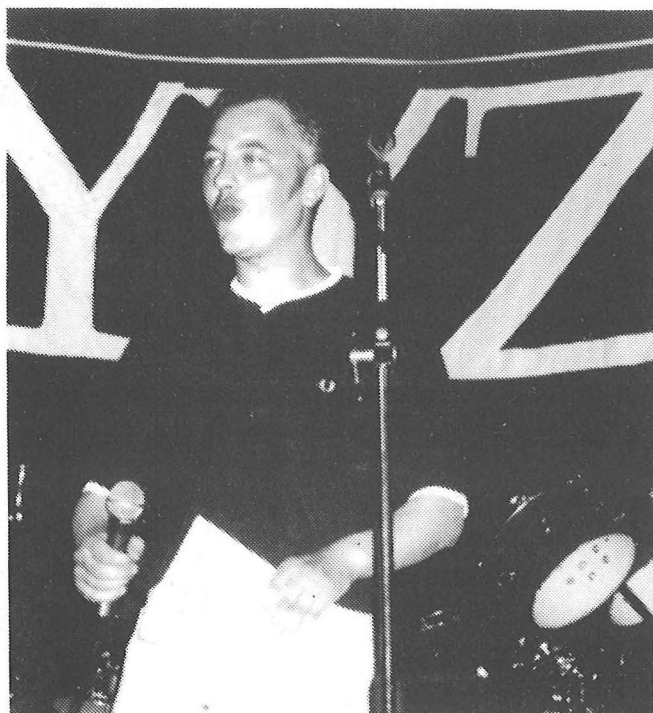
"Although I respect many drummers, my main influence was Neil Peart of Canadian rock band Rush. I am sure that listening to his amazing drum loops, especially from their eighties material, has made me a more unique and better drummer. His stamina is amazing and the speed that he performs complex. 'Tom drum loops' is beyond belief. I would even arguably state that Neil is the greatest percussionist either human or machine that has ever lived".

She also goes on to state that Andrea (the singer

and main lyric writer of the Corrs) has also been influenced by his incredible lyrical ability. I also know that Caroline is well respected in the drum world, with various people rating her as one of the top female drummers in the world today.

Before you all start laughing, I think the Corrs are one of the few bands that you can actually appreciate from this current poor music era. They write their own songs and if you bother to listen to the albums (don't bother with the poxy dance remixes of their singles) then it is hard not to appreciate the quality of this band. Like many Rush albums, it sometimes takes a lot of listens to appreciate the full extent of someone's work.

To add to the debate regarding their albums, I agree that their later albums (from RTB onwards) are not as good as the era that produced HS, MP and Signals. But what we must all remember is that, as with most Rush albums, it takes many plays to appreciate each song in its entirety. I was not a great fan of Counterparts when it was released, but after many hearings over a period of months, each song became part of me. My favourite on this album is Everyday Glory. It sends a shiver down my back when I play it and it takes many plays to understand fully what Neil is trying to get over in the lyrics.



The Different Stages CD is superb - from Neil's amazing drumming on Xanadu in '78, to Geddy's unbelievable bass solo on Driven nearly 20 years later. My only disappointment was that Virtuality was not included. Some also say that all 3 CDs should have been from the T4E tour. My own view is that it should have been made into a 4 CD package with the complete T4E concert reproduced. Only Rush fans will buy Rush records so whether they made a 3, 5 or 10 CD package, it would still have sold the same. Anyway, I think I have said enough and at moments when I feel like being critical of Rush I remember the motto "RUSH DON'T HAVE TO PROVE ANYTHING TO ANYONE ANYMORE".

**JOHN
LONDON**

P.S. For all you drum boffins out there (especially Andy), what is the difference between electric and acoustic drums? I understand the 'net effect' but how do they differ technically?

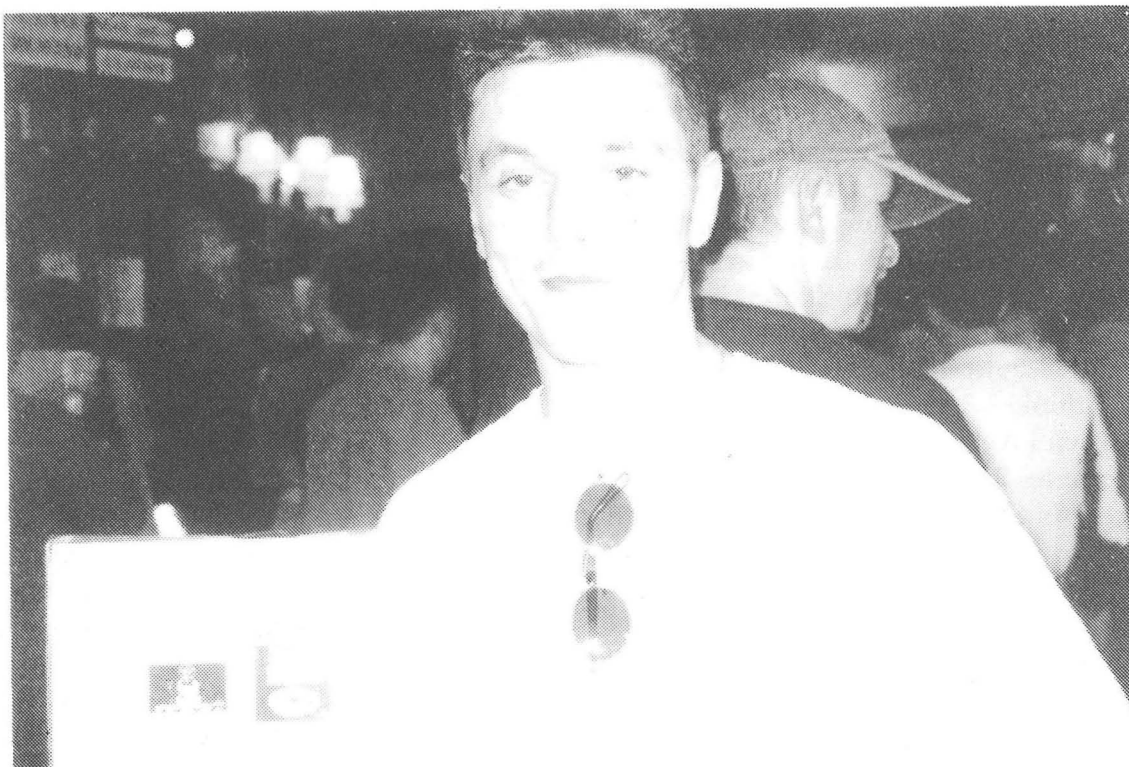
YYZ were great. I am a little biased, as after I saw them last year in Dudley I was convinced they were the best tribute band I've seen so far, and Simon who has come on so well after Tom Sawyer last year fitted in so well. A really good set. It was obvious they loved playing the music Hi Mick,

Every year it seems, I write to say thanks for a great convention and every year it seems to get better. But I'm sure I'm not alone in saying this year's was brilliant and the best yet. Well worth the long trek up the M1 and 6.

of Rush and it reflected on the audience. The singing, the atmosphere, was electric.... the best night since R the B '92. Please pass on my thanks to everyone involved. To YYZ, Simon and ? was that mad Jock dressed to kill in the jacket etc? Well, there's hope for us yet! Thanks again Mick for a great convention.

**MICK MURRAY
LAINDON, ESSEX**





Dear Spirit,

Well what can I say? What a great day the convention was. Without any doubt that was the best one yet. From the moment that I walked into the Limelight club at ten past one in the afternoon until the moment that I staggered out of the 2112 club at ten past two in the morning, there wasn't a moment that I didn't enjoy and, judging by their faces, neither did anyone else.

The Limelight was a perfect venue, don't you agree? Once again it was nice to see some old familiar faces and one or two new ones. Being a local lad, I managed to persuade some of my RUSH friendly mates to come along for this one (about time too!) and they all agreed that it was a great day and also regretted not going to any previous conventions.

As ever, it was fascinating to browse through the merchandise stalls in search of collectibles. There were a couple of items I saw that I was going to buy. However, when I went to buy them it was too late! The stalls had packed up. Are any of the people who had items on sale contactable? *(Try again next year Dave - ED)*.

The Different Stages T-shirts were excellent. Looking at them made me wonder what would be the possibility of producing replicas of old tour shirts like the grey Permanent Waves or the

Exit or Signals baseball jerseys and selling them through the fanzine? Or even a Spirit of Rush t-shirt? *(We may do it for you next year)*.

YYZ played a blinder! I've stated before that I'm not a big fan of tribute bands, but these boys did RUSH proud. The whole place was rocking, they were so brilliant that I had to wear shades to watch them!!

And so to the 2112 club! The fact that it was sub-tropical in there didn't stop us all partying away to RUSH, Zeppelin, Sabbath and a million other bands. I think that headbanging to Temples just about finished me and my neck off - but hey, it was worth it!

All in all, a truly fantastic day, it's just a shame that it's another year to the next one. How about a mini convention/get-together next time YYZ play at the Limelight. Anyone up for it? Until next year (at least). *(YYZ play the Limelight on 2*

Dec if you want to go - ED).

DAVE LYTHGOE STOKE ON TRENT

P.S. RUSH on TV - it wasn't Subdivisions it was Red Barchetta. Does anyone remember the advert on Channel 4 for Grace Under Pressure? As I remember, it was promoting an offer in 'Sounds' for 'Grace' and Pyromania by Def Leppard and featured clips from the videos for Distant Early Warning and The Body Electric. I think it was shown during a late night edition of The Tube. Also, check out the first series of the Young Ones - Vyvyan (Ade Edmondson) wears a Farewell To Kings t-shirt in a couple of episodes and the film Gregory's Girl: the character of Gregory (John Gordon Sinclair) has an Archives poster above his bed and a poster of the band live (circa '78/'79) behind the drum kit in his room. Anybody got any other TV moments (or am I the only person sad enough to remember this crap)?

Dear Mick,

Well, what can be said. A great convention. I was a virgin, so this was my first SOR outing, and I can't wait for the next. I was so impressed with the LIMELIGHT CLUB that further visits are already planned in order to see other bands.

The YYY lads turned in a great set, and I was wondering if maybe they'd be including dates for gigs in the pages of SOR? Might be a good idea (*see letter from Simon Fraser-Clarke in this issue - Ed*). Either way, if you're reading this, thanks guys.

Who was the fella running the stall in the little separate area at the back, sort of above the stairwell. He had some items for sale that I couldn't afford at the time, but now I can I realise I should have taken some details. Can you help? (*See ad following this letter - Ed*).

On another note, I missed the last tour mainly due to a lack of info' rather than than any other reason. I wasn't an SOR member at the time and found out all too late about the dates and lack of UK leg. So, assuming that the band is going to continue and consequently tour again (I can live in hope, can't I?), is there anybody else out there who'd consider a journey to, say, Toronto or wherever? If the numbers were enough I'm sure a deal at a Lunn Poly or other such place for

quantity of heads could be scored, so to speak. I'm certainly up for it, but realise that a certain amount of planning and forethought would be good. Waiting for Sony, Anthem or whoever to spill the beans could leave things all too late. You could imagine the promotion....."Rush have just finished their latest tour with dates in Chicago....blah, blah, blah,..." Anyway, just an idea. Any replies through these pages and we can then set up communications.



Any drummers out there? At the beginning of Neil's drum solo on Different Stages, is that 'The Drum Also Waltzes' by Pat Roach, coz I've got a Bill Bruford album where he does the said piece and it's just about the same to my bass player ears. Any replies!!!! It'd be the sort of thing that The Prof would do after all.

Last thing and then I'm off. I'm after a copy of the GUP video. Seems it has been deleted. I've managed to get a hold of the other ones at boot sales and stuff but GUP remains illusive. Any help appreciated.

Anyway, Mick, Janet, the Mad Jock and everyone else that enabled the convention to go off with such a bang, a big thanks.

KEN WYNNE
WISBECH
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Rush to judgment - Readers back aging rockers

Jim DeRogatis

Hell hath no fury like a Rush fan scorned.

A few weeks ago I wrote a Sunday Showcase review of "Different Stages" (Atlantic), the new triple live album by the long-running Canadian art-rockers Rush. My contention was that the album - recorded in large part at the New World Music Theatre on the band's 1997 tour - attempted to make the case for the cold digital rockers of the '90s equaling vintage sonic explorations such as "Anthem" and "2112."

Rush tried to make this argument by offering a mix of new tunes, new versions of old songs and a third disc containing an entire older show from London in 1978. I thought it had only mixed success - the old stuff sounded great, while the new stuff was still disappointing - and I gave the album 2 1/2 stars out of four.

A reader named Gary Flick wrote to say that my review let him down. I responded with a wisecrack about how Rush has basically let me down since its brilliant 1978 album "Hemispheres." Oh, boy, was I asking for it. In addition to the dozen e-mails that I received basically calling me a boob (Wrote Ron Nigro: "You are a very bad critic!")

Added Susie Hyden: "Your review is totally uncool. Those who can't do review") were a number of fairly well-reasoned arguments taking exception with my basic thesis. Since these readers took the time to write and ask me what the heck I was thinking, I thought I'd devote this column to a bit of back and forth on the issue. (And, hey, there's not much else is going on this New Year's weekend.)

Jim: Can you honestly say with a straight face that it's been downhill for Rush after "Hemispheres?" Do the album names "Permanent Waves," "Moving Pictures," "Signals," "Grace Under Pressure," "Hold Your Fire," "Presto," "Roll The Bones" and "Test for Echo" mean anything to you? C'mon, you're ignoring half the fine work of a very accomplished band - a band that has improved much since "Hemispheres." Dennis J. Healy

Jim: Would you please explain why you think all of Rush's songs after those on "Hemispheres" are letdowns? Granted, many would argue that their "epic period" of "2112"/"A Farewell to Kings"/"Hemispheres" was their most adventurous and experimental, but how can you ignore "Moving Pictures" or "Signals" or (to my personal amazement) "Grace Under Pressure?" If you like their longer pieces, you should give "The Camera Eye" from "Moving Pictures" a second chance. Or "Jacob's Ladder" and "Natural Science" from "Permanent Waves." If Geddy Lee's "helium squawk," as you put it, was more tolerable for you prior to and during "Hemispheres," then it could not have been so bad for you after all. Unless you actually never liked Rush. James Rodger

Well, boys, the way I see it, there have essentially been three Rushes since the band's inception in Toronto in 1974. From its self-titled debut through 1978's "Hemispheres," it broke real ground by merging the romantic vision and extreme musical invention of progressive rockers such as King Crimson and Yes with an unrelenting rock edge derived from more hard-driving heavy-metal bands like Deep Purple and Black Sabbath. Songs such as "2112," "Bastille Day" and "Working Man" were extremely smart and sophisticated, but they also kicked serious butt.

With 1980's "Permanent Waves" and 1981's "Moving Pictures," we began to hear Rush Mach II: a group that retained elements of its earlier sound but honed them into tight, catchy, accessible packages destined to win the favor of FM radio. On songs such as the aptly titled "Spirit of the Radio," "Limelight" and "Tom Sawyer," drummer-lyricist Neil Peart wrote in a much more direct, less metaphorical, less philosophical style, and bassist-vocalist Geddy Lee began to sing in a lower register, abandoning his unique "helium squawk." (That was a sound you either loved or hated, and though I made fun of it, I fell in the former category.) James Rodger is right: I sold this era short, but primarily because I love the earlier music even more. I'd consider taking the 1976 live album "All the World's a Stage" to a desert island with me (if I could bring 400 or 500 albums), but I can't say the same of anything from Rush's middle period. Of course, many fans only came in at this point, so this is their favorite Rush.

Dear Jimmy boy: You're an idiot! Everything Rush has ever done is good. It all holds true to Rush's ethic of keeping their music as a medium for communication between the performer and the listener, and their ideas have always come across effectively, be it a comment on society, humanity or pure instrumental ability for entertainment value that musicians can appreciate. "Different Stages" is a landmark achievement for Rush in that it is arguably the best representation of their desire to accurately reproduce their studio work live, and real Rush fans can appreciate all of this. John Sullivan

Clearly I disagree with John, and that brings me to Rush Mach III. For convenience sake I'll say that began with the band's move from Mercury to Atlantic. The last time I interviewed the band members, after the release of "Counterparts," even they seemed anxious to write off 1989's "Presto" and 1991's "Roll the Bones."

"They suffered from a drastic change in writing at the same time we changed production teams," Lee told me. "We only got it right part of the time." Added Peart: "Rush by design is a very uneven band. No way are we going to create a perfectly crafted record in which every song comes out the same because it would mean mediocrity."

I have a couple of problems with the '90s material. One is another shift in Peart's lyrics toward a pompous, pedantic faux-intellectualism. For the muddled relationship songs on "Counterparts," he claimed to have immersed himself in the writings of Carl Jung and Camille Paglia, as well as scientific studies of the chemistry of what draws human beings together. If so, surely he could have written more illuminating lyrics than "Goddess in my garden/Sister in my soul/Angel in my armor/Actress in my role" from "Animate." For my money, "Closer to the Heart" said a lot more, and approached genuine poetry.

The other big problem is musical. In place of genuinely strange and involving soundscapes, I believe the band has been relying on a sort of geeky musician's ego, trying to impress its peers by showing off its chops. One of the reasons I fell in love with Rush was that as a young drummer, Peart consistently blew my mind. I used to buy tickets behind the stage so I could watch what he was playing, then go home and try to imitate it. But flashy musicianship for its own sake is hollow when it isn't in the service of a good song. And on this point I got some support.

Jim: I read a piece of one of your articles on how Rush was a better band before "Hemispheres." Well, let me sort of back your claim. With new technologies coming along in the studio for guitar and vocals, it's easy for a musician to lose some natural ability to produce some of the tones they could before this technology. Their newest album, "Different Stages," was a disappointment, Alex Lifeson being the biggest disappointment. His playing was very sloppy. I mean, he trashed some of the songs! He clowns around. Neil Peart was the only one it seemed that was dedicated to remaining loyal to the "tight" Rush sound. Geddy Lee on this album is throwing in bass licks that absolutely don't belong, and in some cases are way out of time with everyone else.

This is where I'll agree with you: CD 3 is a recording from a show in 1978. The musicianship is very tight and "taken seriously." I'm beginning to think my guitar god Alex Lifeson is really a slob on the guitar and isn't much without his 48-track digital recording studio backing him up. I'm sorry I have to say that, being the Rush fan I am. snowdog@altavista.net

Thanks, snowdog. Disc 3 is the reason I gave the album 2 ½ stars, and it's the one that I'll keep playing. Just as James Rodger convinced me to dust off my vinyl copies of the albums by Rush Mach II - and I came away reminded of how powerful some of that stuff is - I'd ask fans of "Counterparts" and "Test for Echo" to compare and contrast disc three of "Different Stages" with the Rush they like and see what conclusions they might draw.

Do I think this exercise will change anybody's mind? Heck, no. But rock 'n' roll sure is fun to argue about, ain't it? And if we stop, we all might as well be listening to Celine Dion.

The many "Stages" of Rush: Mach I with its groundbreaking merging of romantic vision and musical invention; Mach II (when the group honed its sound for FM radio), and Mach III, characterized by a pompous faux-intellectualism.

The Songs Remain The Same?

Part 3 - From Presto to Test For Echo

By Neil Elliott

A CHRONICLE OF THE SONGS THE BAND HAVE PLAYED LIVE ON TOUR

Part 3? Yes, Part 3. For those of you who may have missed Parts 1 & 2, they were back in the dark old days of issue's #9 & #10 (which are now sold out!), what is now 10 years ago! Is it really that long ago that I started this little project? Anyway, Part 2 closed with the question as to what the band would play live in the new set, for the impending kick off of the 'Presto' tour, which was due to start in February 1990.

"If I Could Wave My Magic Wand..."

'PRESTO' - After days of rehearsal at the Memorial Coliseum in Greenville, South Carolina, of which there exists a short tape of one of those rehearsal days, Feb. 15th, the tour officially kicked off at that same venue two days later, the 17th

Only five of the new 'Presto' songs were included in the new set of: Force Ten, Freewill, Distant Early Warning, Time Stand Still, Subdivisions, Marathon, Red Barchetta, Superconductor, Show Don't Tell, The Pass, Closer To The Heart, Manhattan Project, Xanadu, YYZ, The Rhythm Method, Scars, War Paint, Mission, Tom Sawyer, The Big Money, Medley: Overture, La Villa Strangiato and In The Mood.

This is how things stayed until March 31st, at the second of two nights at the Oakland Coliseum, California, when The Big Money was dropped in favour of The Spirit Of Radio. Quite a surprise that Spirit was not included in there from the start; knowing how often the band have included it since its release! Like, every time! Anyway, The Big Money came back in and reclaimed the spot on April 3rd in San Diego, but from then on, until the close of the tour at the end of June, it was Spirit that stayed in.

This is the only tour to date, to feature Scars and War Paint, and it is probably unlikely that they'll ever be played live again! There is only one live CD of this tour that I am aware of, called 'Scissors, Paper, Stone' - Sacramento on March 8th 1990, unless anyone knows of any others? It is quite possible that there are others out there though, what with the recent glut of CD-R releases coming out of the woodwork!

One other piece of 'Presto' related trivia, was the rumour of the existence of an extended mix of Scars I believe it was, but it never surfaced or has been confirmed! Perhaps when that extensive box set gets released somewhere down the line with all this rare material, we'll possibly find out! We can live in hope and dream I suppose?

"Why Are We Here?... Because We're Here"

'ROLL THE BONES' - After the release of 'Bones' in late '91, the band returned to 'treading the boards' on October 25th, in Hamilton, Ontario and proceeded through North America, Europe, and finishing off back in the states at the end of June '92. This tour had

a few changes to the set-list, but these were in the main only on the final leg of the tour after returning to the States following the European shows.

The initial set was: Force Ten, Limelight, Freewill, Distant Early Warning, Time Stand Still, Dreamline, Bravado, Roll The Bones, Show Don't Tell, The Big Money, Subdivisions, The Pass, Where's My Thing?, The Rhythm Method, Closer To The Heart, Xanadu, Superconductor, Tom Sawyer, Medley: Overture, Finding My Way, La Villa Strangiato, Anthem, Red Barchetta, The Spirit Of Radio.

By early December, Ghost Of A Chance was brought into the set, immediately before Subdivisions. Nothing was taken out to accommodate it, and therefore, extending the set even further. Also during the tour, the final few bars of Cygnus X-1 were added to close out the medley of the encore. Things stayed this way until mid-June, when the final leg of the tour saw Subdivisions, and The Pass omitted from the line-up and were replaced by Vital Signs, The Analog Kid, and The Trees.

This is the first tour to really be heavily featured on boot CD, with around a dozen shows appearing. The better ones of which are probably 'Rush 'n' Roulette', 'Atmospheric', and 'Cold Flames.'

"Where Would You Rather Be?"

COUNTERPARTS - The album was recorded at Morin Heights Studio April - June of 1993 and released later that year. The tour opened in the following January of '94, in the warmth of Pensacola, Florida on the 22nd, at which Mick and Janet from your editorial team, and I, had the dubious pleasure of attending. Quite frankly, those first two shows were nowhere near the best that I have seen them play in all the years that I have seen them live since 1977. Even taking into account that it was the start of a tour; and the band not yet in full swing, it just lacked something. And listening to the CD of that show, 'Northern Heroes', this still holds true. It was good to hear the six new songs live for the first time, even if the arrangement of Cold Fire did leave me a bit, er ... cold, but the way they were generally all lumped together in the first half of the set, detracted somehow. The stage show, visual effects and the back projection were all top notch once again, as usual.

The set-list, which I thought at the time could have been a bit more inspiring, does, upon reflection, looking at the following list, appear better than I initially felt at the time. It was: Dreamline, The Spirit Of Radio, The Analog Kid, Cold Fire, Time Stand Still, Nobody's Hero, Roll The Bones, Animate, Stick It Out, Double Agent, Limelight, Mystic Rhythms, Closer To The Heart, Show Don't Tell, Leave That Thing Alone, The Rhythm Method, The Trees, Xanadu, Prelude, Tom Sawyer, Force Ten, and YYZ.

The only change to the above was the return of Bravado, which was added between Limelight and Mystic Rhythms sometime mid-April, with nothing coming out. This carried on until the tour wound down in Toronto on May 7th.

Two quality CD's of this tour are 'Critical Mass' and the outstanding 'Animated', which is a soundboard show. The other very important 'Counterparts' related thing that needs a mention, is the disc called 'Déjà Vu' - This contains seven alternate studio recordings from those sessions, becoming the first and only known genuine 'different' recordings of any Rush songs to exist! The tracks are: Cut To The Chase, Double Agent, Animate, Stick It Out, Everyday Glory, Cold Fire, and Between Sun And Moon. Great they are too!

"Driven To The Edge Of A Deep, Dark Hole"

TEST FOR ECHO - Nearly two and a half years after the last 'Counterparts' show, the T4E stint commenced on October 19th 1996 in Albany, New York. The shows, billed as 'An Evening With...', were to see the guys cover 3 hours of entertainment, with no support act, a brief intermission with video footage on the screen, and the reincarnation of a couple of old favourites that had not seen the light of day for some time. Including a complete 20 minutes of 2112, which had Oracle: The Dream, the piece that they had never played live before, and also Natural Science. Six of the new songs appeared throughout the tour between October and July of '97, but not always all in the same show!

Those early shows ran thus: Set 1: Dreamline, The Big Money, Driven, Half The World, Red Barchetta, Animate, Limbo, The Trees, Red Sector A, Virtuality, Nobody's Hero, Closer To The Heart, 2112. Set 2: Test For Echo, Subdivisions, Freewill, Roll The Bones, Resist, Leave That Thing Alone, The Rhythm Method, Natural Science, Force Ten, Time And Motion, The Spirit Of Radio, Tom Sawyer, and YYZ.

In Dayton, Ohio on October 22nd, Time And Motion was dropped. The following night in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Resist was missing and Time And Motion filled its slot earlier up the second set. On the 25th in Detroit, Resist was once again in place and Time was out again! But in Minneapolis on the 29th, T/M took the berth again! St. Louis on the 31st saw Resist, Cleveland on November 4th had T/M. From then on it was Resist in the set through until the leg closed just prior to Xmas, and no more airings for T/M.

The final stretch from May to early July lost The Big Money from Set 1, and was replaced by two tracks! Limelight and Stick It Out. Set 2 lost Subdivisions, with Freewill moving up one place in the set, and was then followed by new entrant Red Sector A.

The talk at the time was of the band wanting to include both tracks, but that they felt Time And Motion just didn't cut it live!

On the CD front for this tour, I have heard only two, both being triple disc releases, one being 'Virtual Songs' from Phoenix, and the other, which was superior in sound and packaging overall, 'Dances With The Moon.' This latter disc also included an alternate take of Limbo, the track 'Momo's Dance Party' - A Peart percussion piece from the soundtrack of his instructional drum video's, and also a live version of Time And motion. There are another couple of private CD-R discs from the tour, though I have not heard either, or know what the packaging or quality is, they are 'The Other Half' from New Jersey, and 'Stretch Drive' from Toronto.

Well, that's as far as I can take it for now. Any or all imperfections are mine and any corrections or amendments that need to be raised, and I expect that there are some, can be sent in via the editorial address.

No one knows for sure as to whether I will have the chance to add to this feature for future tours or not. That is basically all in the hands of the man at the kit; whether or not he sees any light at the end of that deep dark hole of despair he must have been in for the last couple of years due to family bereavements. We can only wish him the best and hope that out of adversity he sees a way forward for himself and the band; even if we only get just one more chance to see him Wave His Magic Wands!

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BROAD OF SILVERSON

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

JAMES: I got into Rush Like I got into Zappa. First I hated it, then I really loved it, so it went on and on from there. Although I haven't got the new one yet as it's quite expensive and with there being 3 live albums already, I wondered whether it was worthwhile buying....

SOR: Can't you blag it?

JAMES: (laughing) No!

SOR: It's worth buying just for the Hammersmith stuff. That's really great.

JAMES: I thought that might be so, but I do have everything else – event the one with Max Webster ...

SOR: Battlescar!

JAMES: I absolutely LOVE that. It's got the best cover of any album. A terrible jumpsuit thing (laughs).

SOR: Apparently it was recorded in an electric storm which is where the energy came from. Glass windows, electric storm and two bands.

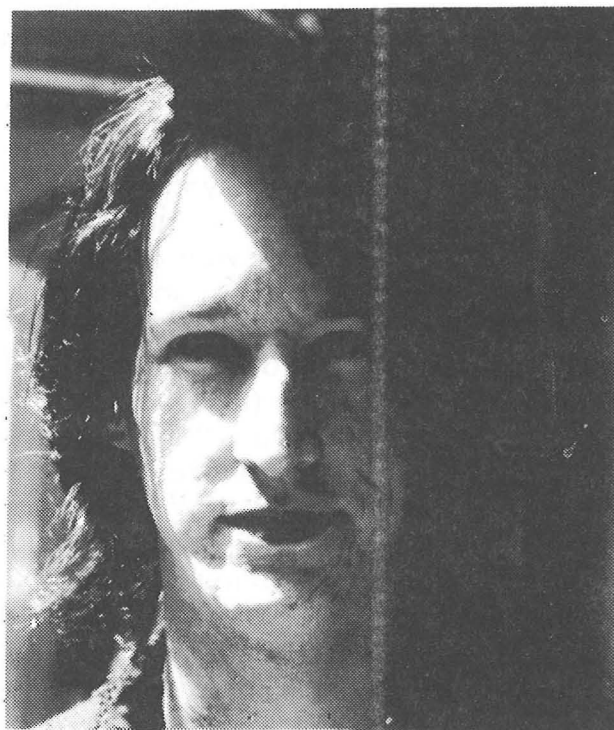
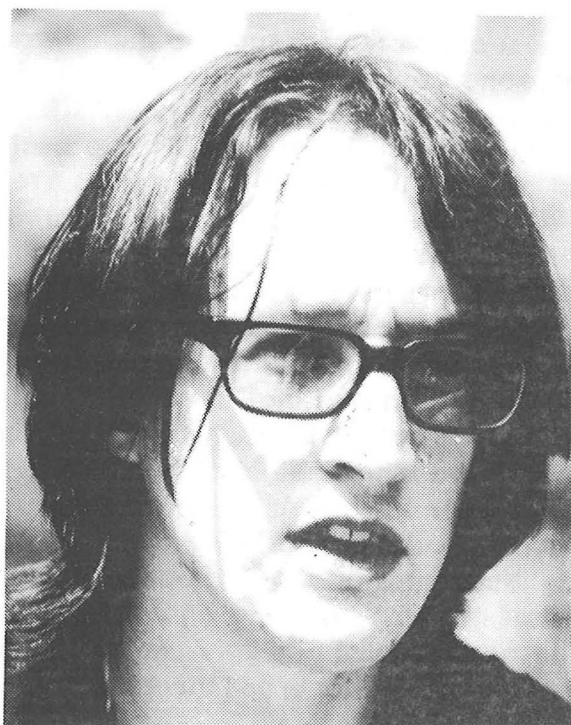
JAMES: Max Webster said they enjoyed playing it and they did it live loads of times.

SOR: Is the rest of the band into Rush or just you?

JAMES: No. However, Richard our bass player loves King Crimson, lots of proggy as well as other stuff, so I did a tape with 2112, Cygnus X-1 etc....and he thought it was quite amusing and he got into it by that. He's not a big fan but he quite liked the stuff I put on the tape – he liked Tom Sawyer.

SOR: It's like Zappa. There are SO many albums, there has to be something someone will like.

JAMES: Yeah, exactly. But I like every single song on every single album. I have them all on tape.



SOR: Zappa or Rush?

JAMES: Both!

SOR (MICK): Presto and Signals are the weak albums for me. I'm not a big fan of those.

JAMES: Too....erm.... too soft a production. I really like the second song on Signals – you know, Analog Kid. I also like Losing It as well, but the album's a bit crappy in other ways.

SOR: What do you think of Neil's lyrics?

JAMES: Sometimes I like them, although sometimes now when he's writing about loss of innocence, I kinda feel he's a bit too old to be doing it.....and sometimes he's just TOO serious. On T4E there's something about the lyrics that doesn't quite stick. I like Limelight. Oh, Moving Pictures does it for me – REALLY good lyrics....and Freewill's really good.

SOR: A lot of people and the band say The Pass.

JAMES: I really like that, it's got good lyrics and it's really simple. It's only about 2 chords, but the bass is good. I wish Geddy would use Rickenbackers all the time. Shove all that wanky LA-type session stuff into the background and go back to using Marshalls (laughing).

SOR: Geddy says it's no longer the sound he wants.

JAMES: I don't think any album sounds as good as Moving Pictures. That's the best quality sound. It's so...FAT...the Rickenbacker, the drums, and as for the synths....so analogued.....good chimey sound (makes various sound effect noises). I also like Power Windows. What's that one...erm...."office door closes early – hidden bottle came out.."?

SOR: Middletown Dreams.

JAMES: I really like that. I don't know why, it's really different to everything else.

SOR: You're not a drunk on the quiet are you?.. "Hidden bottle came out"?

JAMES: (laughing) No, well ...something!

SOR: Can you isolate what it is that you like about Rush?

JAMES: I liked them because I liked any band that can go... (fast widdly sound effects), but then I got into like, Neil Young, but I'd always go back, as that was always understated. Rush don't have to show off, they do it 'cos it's natural for them to do it. I like them 'cos... it's completely mad!!! (laughs). All the early ones, you know(high pitch) "spinning whirling", I thought, what's all this stuff about then? People on the train whilst I was coming back from school looking and going, 'WHAT are you listening to?' (everyone laughs). I just love stuff that's completely mad. I enjoy listening to, like, Sepultura or Captain Beefheart, you know – bonkers! The new Rush stuff I like too but it doesn't have that, you know – 'let's go a bit too far.' It's a bit antiseptic sometimes, but it's still good. Not the same as A Farewell To Kings...acoustic guitars, bird sounds and then into a totally heavy bit. That's why I like them.

SOR: You said you'd seen them on the Hold Your Fire tour?

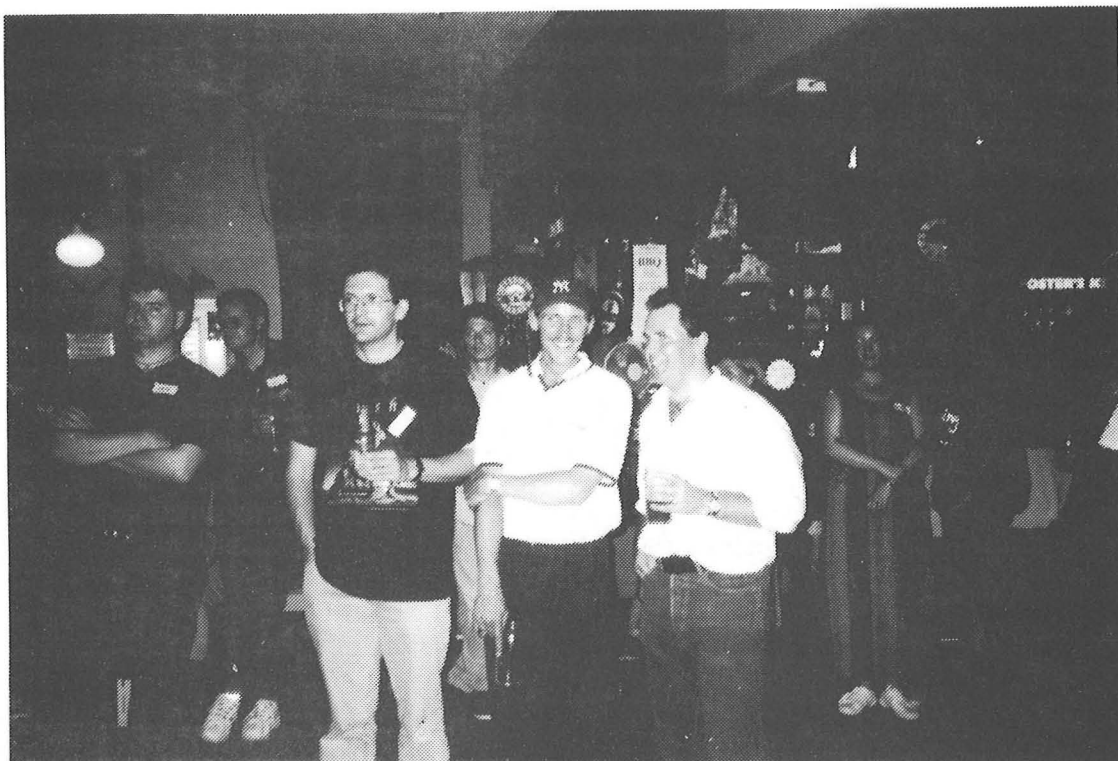
JAMES: Yeah, and Birmingham on Roll The Bones. The second one was much better. I was at college in Coventry and I had a spare ticket as someone couldn't go, so I asked this girl in my class who was into rock music to come along and watch it. She thought it was BRILLIANT. She had never heard anything by them at all. She thought the drum solo was the best bit (laughing)...never met anyone who said THAT – most people go out during drum solos. Yeah! It was excellent.

SOR (MICK): It's funny, I've taken quite a few people through the years to Rush gigs that hadn't seen or heard them and they have all come out saying 'it was brilliant'.

JAMES: Especially with the stage show and everything. They could be a bit boring to watch at times because of doing a lot of stuff, but the show and the songs are REALLY good. It's funny, on the last tour (RTB) they did quite a medley at the end and that annoyed me 'cos I couldn't get into what they were playing. I'd be going 'I know this one.....which song/album...?' and then they were on to the next one. I thought it quite strange...

SOR: You were talking before of how you were the main Rush fan in the band. Would you say Rush's music is an influence on your music?

JAMES: It must be, but not directly. Nobody would listen to us and say, 'God, THAT sounds like Rush'. Not even in the slightest. There are some bits.....the first song on our first album Golden Skin...erm.... I eh, tried to make that like the beginning of Limelight. I was trying to get a good riff on it. Otherwise, I don't know....the energy, the power in it. I haven't thought '



that chord change is good – must use it'...it's what I feel when I hear it. If I can do something that makes someone else FEEL that way – the power/energy, whatever, it's all you can do.

SOR: That's a nice way to put it.When you were interviewed by NME/Melody Maker last year they seemed to ask you about Rush and why you did this song (Xanadu) in a piss-take kind of a way.

JAMES: That's them for you.

SOR: You didn't seem to give them a straight answer. Was that because you couldn't be bothered with the way you were asked?

JAMES: I can't comment, I mean I can't stand all that anyway.

SOR: Promotion.....a necessary evil, kind of?

JAMES: EXACTLY. A lot of journalists of big mags already have an agenda. It's just them and not music. That annoys me a bit. It makes for good reading I suppose sometimes, but it's not so good when you are on the end of it (laughs).

SOR: Who else would you say influenced your music?

JAMES: That's really easy I suppose. Lots of things – 70's style raspberry bands, cheesy Cheap Trick, Beatles, Slade, lots of pop. I like a lot of 'pop rock' - you know, 3 minute songs. An American band called The Muffs I REALLY loved. We did one of their songs on the EP. All their songs are short – two, three minutes something. Their last album wasn't released over here – I had to buy it in Japan. It's disgraceful as they are a really brilliant band....not in the same way as Rush.....more like The Ramones or something. They are not throw-away crappy. Quality songs like. They influenced a lot of our early stuff.

SOR: Do you like some of the REAL heavy stuff?

JAMES: OH YEAH! Slayer, Metallica, Sepultura, Pantera. I like all that 'cos it makes me laugh!

SOR: Very diverse tastes! Can you explain how the cover of Xanadu came about?

JAMES: It came about when I spent a night, bored. Just, just couldn't manage to write any songs, so I started trying to learn to play some Rush songs. The only ones I could play or knew how to, were ...like (starts mouthing riff) "Hey Baby it's a quarter to eight"(altogether – "In The Mood"!). I thought I'd try to, learn some of the harder stuff, you know, like work out Xanadu and also Limelight. I think I got it right. I was quite happy 'cos I'm not that good at playing other people's songs.....and I thought, 'Hey, I could play along to the records now!' (laughs). I've never been good at coversnormal stuff like, Led Zep, Hendrix.....the rest of the band would do and I'd be going 'Oh, I don't really know what you're playing'. So, because of that we did Xanadu. However, I thought it would be quite funny to do a condensed version without the bird song and long middle bits. I got Paul to do the 'doo, doo doooo' (vocal impression) 'cos I got really annoyed in the studio as I couldn't get it. It was almost played live. We dubbed one guitar afterwards and a bit of vocal. We had never done anything like that before – we hadn't felt comfortable enough. It's quite fast and when we do it live it's sometimes even faster.

SOR: The drumming's really fast. You also put on the little synth bit at the end (laughter).

JAMES: We did that live as well. That's the best bit of the song for me – really heavy.

SOR: You didn't copy it or do it exactly the same. That was intentional, your interpretation?

JAMES: Yeah, that's 'cos my attention span is too short and you couldn't fit it on an EP. I don't often like long songs. Ok, if it's Rush or Yes. I thought we'd do it as a normal type of song – first chorus, mid eight, verse, repeat, the end....whatever.

SOR: When we bought it we saw 3 minutes and thought, what(!) have they done, what have they left out? It's going to be appalling. But what a surprise....

JAMES: I can't think what we left out.

SOR: We think you covered all the basics.

JAMES: I think on the original they do it twice, almost..... it's like playing the whole song again – but we just play it once.

SOR: A damn fine job.

JAMES: Mind you, we don't tend to do any acoustic guitar solos (laughing).

SOR: So no double-necks ...?

JAMES: No. Unfortunately not. It was all very basic stuff. We did it in a studio called 'Chapel' in Lincolnshire – like an old church....really nice. We set up our stuff and just did it. We didn't want to spend hours mucking around with it.

SOR: Was this a monetary consideration?

JAMES: What! No! the EP cost a bloody fortune. It was a great place – really in the middle of nowhere. They'd buy in really nice food. Doughnuts all day... God, got so fat... it's a hard life (laughs).

SOR: What about a new album?

JAMES: Not at the moment. We're waiting on Geffen America. If we can get a deal there we'd push for there rather than here. I think it's worth getting away from England for a while 'cos the market's so small. You get bored and want to explore elsewhere. None of us are fussed about always being here. Even half a year at a time sounds good to us. It'll be hard work but I don't give a toss about that really.

SOR: You've been to Japan?

JAMES: Yeah, been there a few times – Hong Kong as well. We seemed to go down very well. It's a brilliant place. They love their rock music over there – Morrissey and Oasis on the one hand and stuff like Kiss on the other.

Thanks once again to James for taking the time and to Simon for setting it up – Mick & Janet



