

late night

Rush rocks crowd with unfailing unity

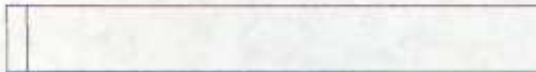
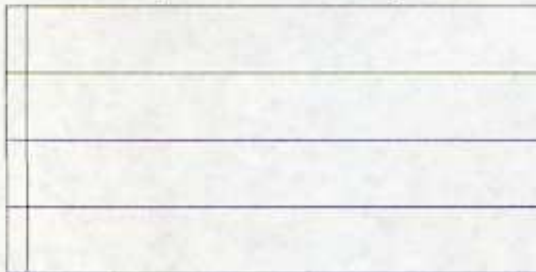
By David Lindquist

david.lindquist@indystar.com <<mailto:david.lindquist@indystar.com>>

August 10, 2002

As human proof of a triangle's strength, the members of Rush thrilled an audience of 8,200 Friday night at Verizon Wireless Music Center.

This came as no surprise. Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart are long-running pros whose composite musicianship stands essentially without peer.



There's added satisfaction, though, when veteran players tour in support of a strong album.

The band's current recording, "Vapor Trails," belongs largely to guitarist Lifeson, who bashes away at fresh and logical riffs.

While an occasional detour into metallic shredding or Texas blues placed Lifeson in peril Friday, his well-honed approach to progressive rock never let him down.

The concert's second half began with the "Vapor Trails" track "One Little Victory," a propulsive romp that hints at Aaron Copland as an influence.

Lifeson exerted brute force during "Earthshine," a tune that gave way to its flashy instrumental cousin "YYZ."

On the topic of wordless compositions, Peart debunked the theory that no drum solo is a good drum solo.

A blistering march cadence launched his all-kit clinic. From there, he rumbled mid-tones against holiday bells and segued a snare roll to a xylophone solo.

After his riser rotated to present a different array of drums, Peart played low, full beats usually associated with world music.

Following a return rotation, he glided from a cross-handed flurry of notes to a swinging approximation of Gene Krupa or Buddy Rich -- sizable Big Band sample included.

Vocalist Lee impressed from the outset, as a smartly arcing suite of "Tom Sawyer," "Distant Early Warning" and "New World Man" opened the show.

Rush, a band that's mined the pitfalls of progress for decades, rightfully recognizes these three songs as classics.

There's a certain nostalgia, of course, to the Cold War gamesmanship of "Distant Early Warning." These days, clues don't arrive before catastrophes.

At the same time, there's nothing more current than "New World Man" and his feeble grasps at adaptation.

Onstage, Lee played his bass in front of a curious backdrop of three commercial clothes dryers. Loaded with souvenir T-shirts, they spun throughout, thanks to a roadie who added quarters when needed (pants-free on his second trip).

Because Lee, Lifeson and Peart wear in-ear monitors to hear their performance, there's no need for stacks of speakers behind each player.

Why laundry?

Why not?