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## A Rush back

Past and present come together as band rocks the Molson A

By JANE STEVENSON -- Toronto Sun

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### RUSH

Molson Amphitheatre, Toronto

Wednesday, July 17, 2002

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TORONTO -- It's been vintage Can-rock appreciation week down at the Molson Amphitheatre with Tuesday night's Guess Who show followed by another sold-out concert last night, this time by Rush.

But the appearance of the much-admired Toronto prog-rock trio of singer-bassist-keyboardist Geddy Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer Neil Peart was especially important for the hometown crowd of 16,000 given the veteran band's absence from the touring scene for the last five years.

"It's so very nice to be home," said Lee after an enthusiastic reception to New World Man and Roll The Bones, the third and fourth songs of the night. "It's been quite some time since we've been here. We appreciate being back. We can tell you that!"

The time off was to allow Peart the opportunity to grieve and heal following the loss of his daughter to a car accident and his wife to cancer.

At one point, Rush's future was a seriously a big question mark after over some 30 plus years together.

Then came Vapor Trails earlier this year -- the band's best and boldest album in years.

It seemed to propel the threesome forward to this point and with just over two weeks on the road on their latest tour, it would appear they still have farther to go yet.

Rush's straightforward first set on their stripped-down stage kicked off neatly and nicely, without any fanfare, with Tom Sawyer, but barely delved into Vapor Trails, offering up just a single new song, Earthshine.

Instead, the emphasis on other material -- dating from the mid-'80s to '90s -- seemed less than inspired, the inclusion of such a crowd pleaser as YYZ notwithstanding, which got the first standing ovation of the night.

However, Rush consists of three virtuoso players and their standards are definitely higher than most groups as Lee himself could be heard commenting "Getting there, getting there," after a nice run-through of The Big Money.

When the trio returned to the stage for their second set, following a 25-minute break, Lee introduced it as "the beefier part of the show."

It did include flames during the set opener, One Little Victory --Vapor Trails' first single -- and lots of green laser lights.

Spiritually though, the band finally hit their groove with muscular renditions of Driven, Dreamline, 2112 Overture: Temples Of Syrinx, Limelight and other decent new songs Ceiling Unlimited and Secret Touch.

Peart was simply awesome during his famous two kit drum solo which included a big band homage complete with black and white video.

Lee and Lifeson followed Peart's solo act -- which brought the audience to their feet -- with a two acoustic guitar rendition of Resist.

Then it was back to the light show, trippy video and anthem rock that only Rush can do as their delirious, second set-ending song Spirit Of Radio more than proved.

Lifeson also hammed it up vocally during La Villa Strangiato, getting smiles out of both Peart and Lee.

Rush definitely possess a dry sense of humour. What else could explain the appearance of three dryers on stage with them -- respectively containing red, white and black clothes -- that would be fed coins by a roadie whenever one finished its cycle?

A Spinal Tap moment if there every was one