



RUSH FROM

Andy Curran knows Rush better than almost anyone, having played in **Coney Hatch** when the band was in the Rush management stable, and then having worked as the group's A&R man. He gives *Howard Johnson* a highly personal interview about operating in the Rush hemisphere...

ANDY CURRAN IS IN a unique position to offer genuine insight into the minds of Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson, and Neil Peart – the three component parts of the Rush jigsaw. Andy's relationship with the band goes back to 1982 when his hard rock group, Coney Hatch, was signed to top Canadian independent label Anthem Records. The label had been formed in 1977 by Ray Danniels and his business partner Vic Wilson. Danniels had been Rush's manager (and, at first, their booking agent) since way back in 1971, and Anthem was launched in part to give Rush more business and artistic control in their native Canada than their worldwide major label Mercury Records might allow. Danniels decided that having a 360-degree proposition that included record label, management, publishing, and even merchandising would help him attract other emerging Canadian talent, and Toronto's Coney Hatch was one of the bands he chose to work with.

Curran played bass and sang in that band, whose eponymous 1982 debut album was well received by rock critics. The group supported Iron Maiden at a number of

shows on the English group's 1983 World Piece Tour, but split in 1985 after three albums. Like many other '80s hard rock acts, Coney Hatch have reformed sporadically over the years, and even released another album, 'Four', in 2013. By that time, though, Andy was wearing two hats, continuing as a musician while also working closely with Ray Danniels as Rush's A&R man at SRO. His experiences, both as a musician and as a business associate, gave Andy a unique position in the Rush camp, and eventually led to him working alongside Alex Lifeson as a musician in the post-Rush band Envy Of None, whose debut album of the same name was released in 2022. It would seem that there's no one better qualified to give you *Rock Candy Mag* readers a deeply personal insight into the world of Rush than Andy Curran...

ANDY, WE KNOW JUST HOW CLOSE YOU'VE BEEN TO RUSH OVER YOUR 40-YEAR-PLUS MUSIC BUSINESS CAREER. BUT WERE YOU A FAN OF THE BAND IN YOUR YOUTH?

"I definitely was. The first time I heard Rush would have



THE INSIDE

Alex Lifeson (right) and Andy Curran. Musicians, workmates, bandmates...

been in 1975 when I was in high school. I would have been maybe 15 or 16 and a neighbour played me the first Rush album. He was a bass player and he introduced me to another guy who subsequently gave me some lessons. And guess what the very first bass line I ever learnt was? 'What You're Doing' from that first Rush album! The first part of it was pretty easy, but then it went off into a much more difficult proggy bit. I remember thinking, 'Damn, this is going to take me a while to learn!'"

YOU WERE HOOKED ON THE BAND PRETTY EARLY DOORS, THEN...

"Absolutely. I became a die-hard Rush fan straight after that and wanted to know everything about them. I bought the next album, [1975's] 'Fly By Night' and then

'Caress Of Steel' [also from 1975], and then by the time I was fully into the band I was also starting going to concerts. Probably the pivotal Rush moment for me was when I saw them at Massey Hall in Toronto in 1976 on

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one of the nights when they recorded the 'All The World's A Stage' double-live album [11-13 June 1976]. Massey Hall is probably the oldest soft-seat music venue in Toronto, if not Canada, because it was built way back in the 1800s. It's one of those gorgeous wraparound, double-tiered

venues, and I was in the upper balcony for the Rush show, no doubt wearing skinny jeans and a jean jacket with a Rush patch sewn on! I remember looking down on this white shagpile carpeting they'd put on the stage, and I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen. It blew my little mind!"

Alex photo: Richard Sibbald. Andy photo: Jaden D