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- typical 70’s band (formed in 1968 actually)
- solid, timeless rock band – one of their initial inspirations: Led Zeppelin (example: What You’re Doing)
- well-known songs include: Limelight, Tom Sawyer, (maybe 2112, Subdivisions)
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In Pop Culture

- some pretty weird dudes: sort of nerdy, outcast
  - lyrics: *Subdivisions, The Body Electric*
  - tour with Kiss (interview with Gene Simmons)
- not mainstream, but has a huge cult following: quoted as “the most successful cult band next to Kiss”
- featured in: Family Guy, *South Park*, Futurama, an episode of *Trailer Park Boys*, and in the movie “I Love you Man”
- great documentary on the band – *Rush: Beyond the Lighted Stage*
Rush is a Canadian rock band formed in August 1968, in the Willowdale neighbourhood of Toronto, Ontario. The band is composed of bassist, keyboardist, and lead vocalist Geddy Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson, and drummer and lyricist Neil Peart. The band and its membership went through a number of re-configurations between 1968 and 1974, achieving their current form when Peart replaced original drummer John Rutsey in July 1974, two weeks before the group’s first United States tour.

Since the release of the band’s self-titled debut album in March 1974, Rush has become known for its musicianship, complex compositions, and eclectic lyrical motifs drawing heavily on science fiction, fantasy, and philosophy, as well as addressing humanitarian, social, emotional, and environmental concerns. Rush’s music style has changed over the years, beginning with blues-inspired heavy metal on their first album, then encompassing hard rock, progressive rock, and a period with heavy use of synthesizers.
The Band

Geddy Lee

- **Born**: July 29, 1953 in North York, Ontario, Canada as Gary Lee Weinrib ("Getty", from mother)

- Lee’s parents were Jewish refugees from Poland (survivors of Dachau and Bergen-Belsen) (Red Sector A)
The Band

Geddy Lee

- **Born**: July 29, 1953 in North York, Ontario, Canada as Gary Lee Weinrib ("Getty", from mother)
- Lee’s parents were Jewish refugees from Poland (survivors of Dachau and Bergen-Belsen) (Red Sector A)
- lead vocals and general front man for the band, known for his “high-pitched screech”
- also plays bass, keyboards, etc., often simultaneously (Tom Sawyer (Live: Rush in Rio) (3:30))
The Band

Alex Lifeson

- **Born**: August 27, 1953 in Fernie, BC, Canada as Aleksandar Živojinović ("son of life") to Serbian immigrants, and raised in Toronto, Ontario

- Geddy Lee was his school classmate and good friend (John Rutsey was his neighbor)

- Lifeson is a solid, perhaps virtuoso guitarist (self-taught, since before age 12) *(La Villa Strangiato (Live: Rush in Rio) 3:00)*
Neil Peart

- **Born**: September 12, 1952 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada as Neil Elwood Peart and grew up in Port Dalhousie, Ontario (now part of St. Catherines)
- A.K.A. “The Professor”, Neil Peart is considered one of the top 5 drummers in the world *(Drum Solo ⟨0:25,1:50⟩)* *(Family Guy* tribute)
- also the band’s principal lyricist, an avid traveller and writer
The Early Years (1968–1976)

- started in Willowdale in Toronto, Ontario by Lifeson, Jeff Jones and John Rutsey. Lee Replaced Jones several weeks after 1974 self-titled album. Took off when picked up by WMMS in Cleveland, Ohio for Working Man
- after the release of debut album, Rutsey left the band and Peart joined on July 29, 1974, two weeks before the group’s first U.S. tour
- 1975 Fly by Night: with Fly By Night, epic mini-tale By-Tor and the Snow Dog and Anthem (Ayn Rand)
- 1975 Caress of Steel: with Bastille Day, and back-to-back The Necromancer and The Fountain of Lamneth – atmospheric, story-telling, major deviation from Fly by Night – highly unpopular
- 1976 2112: with 20-min title track divided into seven sections (2112). Despite this, 2112 went platinum in Canada (others songs on album: Passage to Bangkok and Something for Nothing)
- 1976 All the World’s Stage: live album

1977  **A Farewell to Kings**: with *Xanadu* and *Closer to the Heart*

1978  **Hemispheres**: with *The Trees* and *La Villa Strangiato* – both recorded at *Rockfield Studios* in *Wales, UK*. More progressive and experimental: increased usage of synthesizers, 12-string and classical guitars, triangles, glockenspiel, cowbells, etc.

1980  **Permanent Waves**: with *Spirit of the Radio*, *Freewill*, *Entre Nous* and *Different Strings* (which uses string harmonics). Musical shift towards reggae and new wave elements. Lyrical shift away from sci-fi/fantasy to more humanistic, social and emotional elements.

1981  **Moving Pictures**: pinnacle album, with *Tom Sawyer* and *Limelight* as well as *YYZ*, *Witch Hunt* and *Vital Signs*. Became even more synthesizer heavy

1981  **Exit...Stage Left**: live album (forshadows next phase?)

1982 **Signals**: kicked off the period with Subdivisions, Chemistry, The Weapon and Countdown, where keyboards were suddenly shifted from the contrapuntal background to the melodic front-lines

▶ Creative differences between Rush and long-time producer Terry Brown began to emerge, with them parting ways in 1983 (quote from documentary) (next album title is in words of Hemingway)

1984 **Grace Under Pressure**: with Distant Early Warning, Afterimage, Red Sector A, The Enemy Within, The Body Electric and Between the Wheels – Peart adds Simmons synthetic drums

1985 **Power Windows**: with Grand Designs, Manhattan Project, Territories and Emotion Detector

1987 **Hold Your Fire**: with Time Stand Still, Open Secrets, Prime Mover, Mission and Tai Shan – more prominence to Lee’s multi-layered synthesizer work; critics note Lifeson’s diminished guitar work

1989 **A Show of Hands**: live album
Return to Guitar-Oriented Sound (1989–1997)

1989 **Presto**: with The Pass, War Paint, Scars, Superconductor, Red Tide and Available Light – synthesizers still used, but pushed more to the background again

1991 **Roll the Bones**: with Dreamline, Roll the Bones, Ghost of a Chance and Neurotica – even more of a departure from synthesizers, using more of the standard three-instrument approach

1993 **Counterparts**: with Animate, Cut to the Chase, Nobody’s Hero, Alien Shore, The Speed of Love, Leave That Thing Alone and Cold Fire – kicks off a real guitar-driven phase – one of the first time lyrics are related to love and relationships (and most of the album is dedicated to this subject)

1996 **Test for Echo**: with Test for Echo, Driven, Half the World, The Color of Right, Virtuality, Resist, Limbo (search “Rush Limbo”), Carve Away the Stone – ventures almost completely from love theme – it and **Counterparts** two of Rush’s most guitar-driven
The Later Years (1997–present)

- hiatus: in August 1997 Peart’s daughter died in a car accident, followed by his wife’s death from cancer in June 1998. Peart tells Lee and Lifeson “consider me retired” and goes on an extensive trip throughout North America on his motorcycle.

2002 **Vapor Trails**: they’re back! with One Little Victory, Ghost Rider (hommage to Peart’s book), The Stars Look Down, How It Is, Out of the Cradle – the first studio recording not to include a single synthesizer, organ or keyboard part since the early 1970s.

2004 **Feedback**: cover of songs that were influential to them during the 1960s – includes Summertime Blues by Cochran/Capehart, Heart Full of Soul by Graham Gouldman (Yardbirds), Mr. Soul by Neil Young and Crossroads by Robert Johnson (Cream).

Thanks!

Any Questions or Comments?