2
Barenaked Death Metal Trip-Hopping on Industrial Strings

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A complex ideological field of "musicians' music" explains how artists from an extremely wide range of genres have created tribute versions of the music of the Canadian progressive/hard rock band Rush. From 1996 to 2005, recorded versions of Rush's music comprised fifty-four adaptations of thirty of the band's 167 songs on four tribute albums and in a number of additional tracks. Forty-nine (91 percent) of the fifty-four tribute recordings of Rush songs come from the band's "classic" period of 1975 to 1982. The most frequently covered Rush songs are "The Spirit of Radio" (with four versions), which is the opening song of the first album released in the 1980s (*Permanent Waves*, 1980), and "Tom Sawyer" (with six versions), which is the opening song of Rush's best-selling album (*Moving Pictures*, 1981).

Selected features from within Rush's original recordings of "The Spirit of Radio" and "Tom Sawyer" contextualize the manner in which specific tribute projects have later reworked these elements into vastly different genres of music, such as by the Barenaked Ladies (pop-rock), DJ Z-Trip (trip-hop), Disarray (death metal), Deadsy (alternative/industrial), the String Quartet Tribute to Rush (classical chamber music), and my own "scholarly meta-remix" that interleaves these versions alongside Rush's original into yet a further version of "Tom Sawyer." As Robert Walser reminds us, "musical meanings are always grounded socially and historically, and they operate on an ideological field of conflicting interests, institutions, and memories."[1] Rush

[1] Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Wesleyan University Press, 1993), p. 29.

tribute projects have explored a peculiarly-grounded, social/historical context for meaning (the band is an "acquired taste"), but the actual results certainly also conflict in terms of their specific genre interests, institutions, and memories.

Rush's continuing, "adaptive/evolutionary" interest in fusing progressive rock with hard rock, heavy metal, and other genres has conflicted with the "reactive/revolutionary" interests of rock critics, who have presented an assortment of negative evaluations concerning the band and its music, such as:

> Rush's music is one gigantic mistake. It has absolutely nothing to do with rock'n'roll, or even crossing the street against the light. . . . Alpo [dog food] . . . pretentious boredom . . . about as dangerous as getting shampoo in your eye.[2]

Many rock fans, however, disagreed[3] and described the band's music as, for example:

> food for ears, heart, mind, and soul. (male, 35, motorcycle shop worker, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter)
>
> thought-provoking lyrics sung with intensity. (female, 39, homemaker, poet)

Others referred to Rush's:

> professional image, work ethic, good role model. (male, 34, consulting engineer)
>
> sensibility of not conforming only to popular trends. (male, 22, college student, drummer)
>
> ability to reproduce studio sound live. (male, 32, truck driver, guitarist-singer)

In 1999, Rush first met the criteria for induction into the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame, but *Rolling Stone* senior editor, rock critic, and Hall of Fame adviser David Wild said (in the summer of 2000):

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[2] J. Kordosh, "Rush," *Creem*, June 1981, p. 32.

[3] All fan responses appearing in excerpts here are from my surveys taken in 1996 in Los Angeles, 2000 in Toronto, and 2001 in St. Catharines, Ontario.

> It ain't ever going to happen. Regardless of their success, Rush has never achieved critical acclaim and no one will ever vote for them. . . . most of it gives me a headache. . . . Technical proficiency is not a valid reason to induct an artist, and Rush really hasn't done anything unique.[4]

The problem with Wild's opinion is that Rush *has* achieved "critical acclaim" (but among other musicians, not rock critics), the band's music is quite diverse stylistically (by no means entirely technical and "headache"-inducing), and it is decidedly "unique" (at least by 1976 it was).

Rush charted only one moderately successful US Hot 100 hit, 1982's "New World Man" (at #21), and it's telling that not one of the fifty-four recorded Rush tributes engaged with that song. The song focuses stylistically on music technology and other influences from early-1980s new wave, and it contains no unusual time signatures, no guitar solo, and no virtuosic instrumental segments. It was written very quickly (in the studio) as a "toss-off," and Rush did not include the song on its "anthologizing" live albums of 1989 and 1998, although it does appear on 2003's *Rush in Rio*. Thus, I find it very strange that Katherine Charlton chose this song to represent Rush in *Rock Music Styles: A History*.[5] In any case, a Top Forty hit is certainly not always the best choice to indicate the most important aspects of an artist's work.

In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, a wide variety of professional musicians musically, verbally, or visually acknowledged an interest in Rush's music. Such artists have included the Canadian rock bands Barenaked Ladies and Rheostatics; alternative rock musicians Beck and Kim Deal (the latter of the Pixies and the Breeders); members of the eclectic alternative rock bands Living Colour, Primus, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Smashing Pumpkins, Pavement, and Deadsy; the heavy metal and hard alternative artists Dream Theater, Korn, Marilyn Manson, Metallica, Soundgarden, and Death Organ; the progressive- and thrash-metal bands Slayer, Sepultura (from Brazil), and Meshuggah (from Sweden); and even piano-based songwriters, such as Billy Joel and Randy Newman.

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[4] Quoted at <http://inthe00s.com/archive/inthe90s/bbs0/webBBS_450.shtml>.

[5] Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, fourth edition (McGraw Hill, 2003), pp. 248–49.

Presumably, many of these artists would generally foster mutually exclusive ("conflicting") fan communities. For example, most Randy Newman fans probably dislike Marilyn Manson's music, and most Beck fans probably don't much care for Meshuggah. Seemingly even further afield, classical string players (such as violinist Rachel Barton and cellist Todd Mark Rubenstein, the latter of the diverse "String Tribute" series), a number of death metal bands (including Disarray), and at least one trip-hop artist (DJ Z-Trip) have also engaged with Rush's music. The band's music appeals across these diverse genres partly because of the esteem in which various types of musicians hold Lee, Lifeson, and Peart as musicians' music "role models." This type of admiration has partly derived from the band's songwriting, performing, recording, and touring "work ethic" and partly from its enduring ability to distill elements of hard rock, heavy metal, progressive rock, and various secondary styles into something that keeps sounding like Rush.

The Pair of Most-Often-Covered Rush Songs

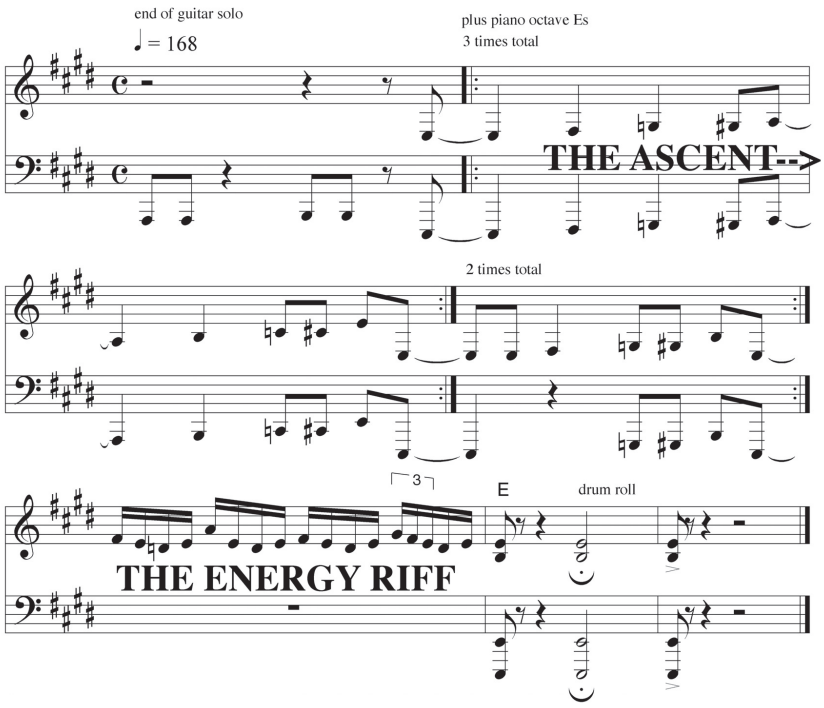
Rush's first song of the 1980s opens the album *Permanent Waves*, which was released on January 1st, 1980. "The Spirit of Radio" (see Table 2.1) inscribes an open-minded approach both to modern rock radio and to music technology. Many of the song's recurring gestures display a raw, backbeat energy that fits with the aesthetic of late-1970s post-punk, such as music by the Police. In this song, Rush consistently combines such energy with the band's ongoing progressive/hard rock tendencies. 1970s hard rock tends towards modal constructions, whereas post-punk tends towards major/minor diatonicism. In this song, Rush combines these contrasting tendencies.

Table 2.1. "The Spirit of Radio" (*Permanent Waves*, 1980)

energy riff, circular, mixolydian (0–0:17)	unison ascent (3:32–3:49)
unison ascent, semi-chromatic (0:17–0:27)	reggae insert 1, major (3:49–3:58)
verse 1 and verse 2, major (0:27–1:24)	unison ascent (3:58–4:05)
chorus, synth-laden, hybrid (1:24–1:52)	reggae insert 2, ". . . salesmen" (4:05–4:11)
verse 3, hard rock, major (1:52–2:27)	unison ascent (4:11–4:18)
chorus (2:27–2:53)	guitar solo, "chattering" (4:18–4:36)
middle section, modal, 7/4 (2:53–3:18)	ascent (+ piano), riff, cadence (4:36–4:56)
verse interlude, instrumental (3:18–3:32)	

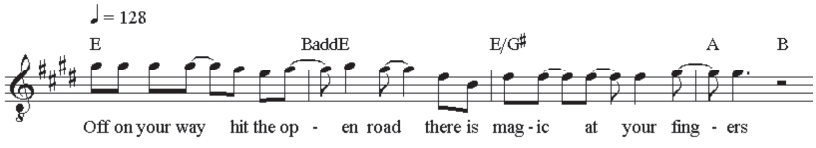
The song's circular energy riff and its repeated, syncopated, semi-chromatic, unison ascent (see Example 2.1) inscribe minor/modal and minor constructions, though with thirds "weakened."

Example 2.1. Rush, "The Spirit of Radio," ending



The ascending passage rises through a chromatically-inflected E-based mode, but flexibly including elements of Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian. By comparison, the song's verses (see Example 2.2) inscribe major-mode constructions (though with prominent suspended pitches), including IV and V chords and prominent thirds-of-chords within the vocal melody.

Example 2.2. Rush, "The Spirit of Radio," beginning of Verse 2



The lyrics of the first two verses recount one's favorite modern rock disc jockey being an "unobtrusive companion" who plays "magic music" to "make your morning mood." Verse 2 encourages you to go "off on your way" in the "happy solitude" of your car. The music's rhythmic anticipations provide a lilting joy, as though driving while listening to the "modern rock" radio of 1979–80 (such as post-punk and the Police) is a ritual to be anxiously savored.

After Verse 2, Lee adds a simple, staccato gesture on a synthesizer, and Lifeson reprises the song's energy riff. Lee's synthesizer parts, which include slow-moving string-like elements, build in intensity as the accompaniment for the song's chorus. Peart's lyrics enthuse about: "invisible airwaves," "antennas," "bristling energy," and "emotional feedback." The following verse, exclusively in hard rock style, then explains the stylistic compromise: "All this machinery making modern music can still be openhearted." However, the lyrics also provide the caveat that "glittering prizes and endless compromises shatter the illusion of integrity." Indeed, by using 7/4 time and 1970s-style cross-relations, flat-VII "hard rock" chords (instead of V chords), and a return to the modal energy riff, the song's later middle section seems to remind the listener that this really still is Rush. The band then follows the song's recurring energy riff "marker" with a reprise of its earlier virtuosic ensemble music. This middle section does not sound very much like the early 1980s, and the band might very well have ended the song after it. However, Rush wished to further its point about not compromising its integrity despite its simultaneous interest in exploring certain new approaches.

The peculiar ending of "The Spirit of Radio" functions as a conflicted meditation on the necessity of musical and cultural change, and the band included this meditation within the opening song on the first album of the 1980s. Rush twice shifts the song's ending into an unexpected, out-of-character musical style. In his lyrics, Neil Peart parodies part of the lyrics of Simon and Garfunkel's 1965 song "The Sounds of Silence." Peart accuses the music industry of focusing too narrowly on "the words of the prof*its*." Thus, according to Rush, music industry executives certainly fail to live up to Paul Simon's subway/tenement "proph*ets*." Geddy Lee sings in his baritone (natural chest) voice, thus contrasting his normal (at the time), higher, countertenor style. This contributes a laid-back vocal quality, coded as complacent or inevitable.

In its music, the band conforms more to a "stripped down" (less busy) aesthetic, featuring stylized back-beats and including pseudo-

reggae/post-punk steel-drum sounds. The band quickly inserts a hard rock "concert hall moment," with clapping, whistling, and ascending instrumental music from earlier in the song. Then, as the pseudo-reggae returns and reminds us of the music industry, Lee sarcastically spits out the word "salesmen" and Lifeson's bluesy, angry guitar solo emerges over aggressive hard rock elements. The solo, in its use of voice-like, wah-wah guitar pedal effects, evokes a chattering argument about an artist's apparent stylistic misdirection.

After this fast/active/angry caricature, the band incorporates a more substantial reprise of the song's main unison, hard rock ascent. However, a comparatively simple "rock'n'roll" piano part joins in to further heighten the stylistic ambiguity. Rush *did* sometimes use keyboards in the mid- to late-1970s, but almost always for occasional melodic, timbral, or textural reasons, as in the chorus of this song. "The Spirit of Radio" ends with Lifeson restating the energy riff and with an energetic cadence featuring Peart's virtuosic drumming. These closing gestures may suggest that Rush wishes to assert a hard rock victory over the other styles with which it just engaged. However, it seems just as likely, given Rush's stylistic direction after 1980, that the band meant to suggest that post-punk, hard rock, progressive rock, and other elements should be combined.

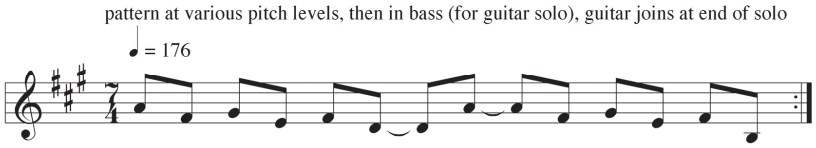
In "Tom Sawyer" (see Table 2.2) from *Moving Pictures* (1981), Rush wishes to position itself as a kind of musical updating of Mark Twain's famous young misfit.

Table 2.2. "Tom Sawyer" (*Moving Pictures*, 1981)

synth & drums (0:00–0:05)	instrumental section, 7/4 (1:33–2:32)
vocal introduction (0:05–0:11)	expanded main "swagger" intro (2:32–2:43)
main "swagger" introduction (0:11–0:22)	Verse 2 (2:43–2:56)
Verse 1, with "swagger" (0:22–0:36)	instrumental verse (2:56–3:08)
instrumental verse (0:36–0:47)	bridge (3:08–3:29)
bridge (0:47–1:08)	"chorus" (3:29–3:48)
"chorus" (1:08–1:28)	expanded vocal introduction (3:48–3:57)
new vocal introduction (1:28–1:33)	coda, faded (3:57–4:33)

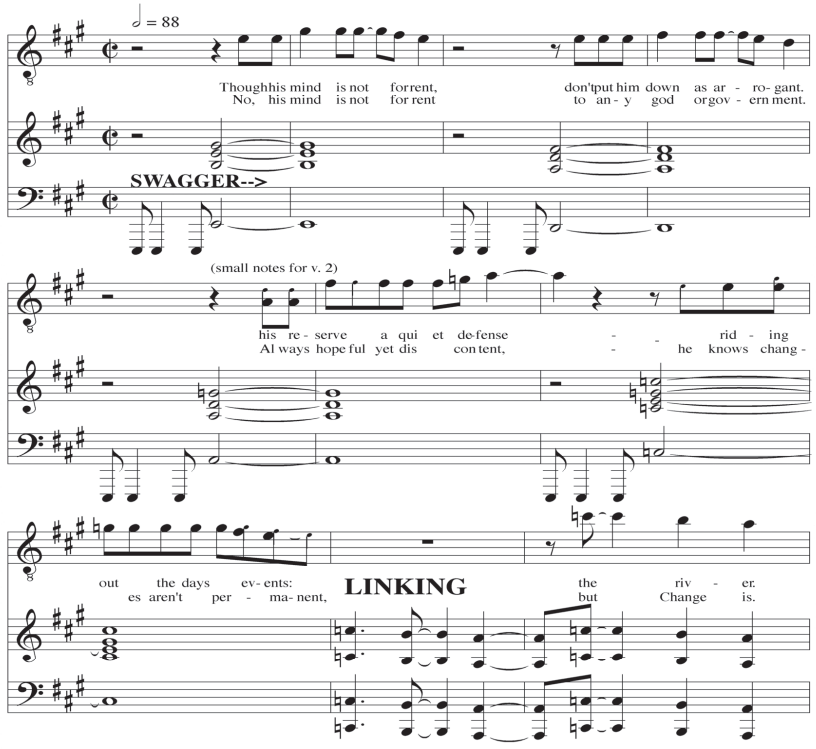
The song's instrumental section (see Example 2.3) again features the band's characteristic, asymmetrical time signature: 7/4, including a descending chain of thirds on a Minimoog synthesizer.

Example 2.3: Rush, "Tom Sawyer," 7/4 instrumental pattern



The section, however, soon becomes "traditional Rush," with Lee taking over his own synthesizer patterns on bass guitar in order to support Lifeson's guitar solo. The solo ends with Lifeson re-joining the pattern in one of the band's characteristic virtuosic unisons. To get back to the song's earlier music, the band restates the eight-bar, four-chord "swagger" riff that also underscores the song's verses. This returns the time signature to "cut time" (with a half-note pulse), although the music in this case now also features Peart's drumming prowess more prominently, as a substitute for a drum solo. Verse 2 (see Example 2.4) then refers to the libertarian, "post-countercultural" notion of neither god nor government being worthy of one's mind.

Example 2.4. Rush, "Tom Sawyer," Verses 1 and 2



The same verse also refers self-reflexively to change as a permanent strategy. The underlying swagger riff revolves around a "short-long-short-long" gesture that reaches fully-voiced chords from previously-established low pitches.

Tribute Versions of "The Spirit of Radio" and "Tom Sawyer"

Eventually, new versions of Rush's "musicians' rock" appeared within tribute activities by other artists. For example, in "Grade 9" (*Gordon*, 1992), the band's Toronto compatriots the Barenaked Ladies include "mini tributes" not only to the swagger riff of Rush's "Tom Sawyer" but also to the energy riff of "The Spirit of Radio." In addition, the song musically references Vince Guaraldi's piano-based theme music for the 1960s–1970s "Peanuts" TV specials and lyrically references Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" (1971).

The Barenaked Ladies include such references to address the socially awkward early years of high school for "geeky" aspiring musicians such as themselves. Thus, the references function not as broad comedic parody (as in "Weird" Al Yankovic) or as critical/destructive parody (as in Frank Zappa) but, rather, to acknowledge and celebrate selected aspects—even geeky, teenaged ones—of one's background as a musician. Perhaps to prove his commitment to this background, during early 2005's post-tsunami TV charity concert *Canada for Asia*, Ed Robertson of the Barenaked Ladies joined Rush (and "Bubbles," from the Canadian TV comedy series *Trailer Park Boys*) in a five-person performance of the trio's 1977 song "Closer to the Heart." Similarly, Rush's "The Spirit of Radio" had appeared on 1990's *The Earthquake Album: Rock Aid Armenia*, a fundraising album.

In 1998, Rush's "Tom Sawyer" appeared in three major motion pictures. *The Waterboy* (an Adam Sandler comedy) uses it to underscore a football game, *Whatever* (a suburban, teenaged "pothead" film, set in the year of the song's release) uses it to introduce a party scene, and *Small Soldiers* (an action-adventure film) includes a scene in which a teenaged girl (played by Kirsten Dunst) listens to it. The song also appears in Rob Zombie's 2007 version of *Halloween* (and on its CD soundtrack), in 2009's *Fanboys* and *I Love You*, *Man*, and on such TV shows as *Chuck*, *Family Guy*, *Freaks and Geeks*, and *Futurama*. Rush also played the song live on a July 2008 episode of *The Colbert Report*.

The CD soundtrack of *Small Soldiers* includes DJ Z-Trip's trip-hop remix of "Tom Sawyer." The remix leaves out many of the original song's more overt progressive rock elements, especially most of Peart's more elaborate drumming. Instead, it incorporates various sectional and chord re-sequencings, turntable scratching and other percussion elements, studio effects on Lee's voice, overt panning effects, and new spoken material. For his version of the original's 7/4 middle section, Z-Trip considerably abbreviates it and also erases its guitar solo in favour of more extensive synthesizer-based sounds. Notably, he also gives the 7/4 Minimoog pattern two extra 8th-notes in order to make it conform to the much more normal time signature 4/4. Disarray's death metal adaptation of "Tom Sawyer" appears on *Red Star: Tribute to Rush* (Dwell, 1999), and it includes the sub-genre's characteristic "demonic," grunted vocals. Although Disarray's version is quite different stylistically from the slightly earlier trip-hop remix, it also modifies Rush's instrumental section by adding two 8th-notes to the repeating pattern and by removing the guitar solo. Moreover, although Disarray generally takes the song at a somewhat faster tempo than Rush's original, it also slows down the instrumental section considerably.

Oddly, the original Rush tribute album, *Working Man* (Magna Carta, 1996), excludes versions of "The Spirit of Radio" and "Tom Sawyer." The album changes Rush's original songs rather little, but it does include minor modifications to certain bass lines, as well as other relatively "cosmetic" differences. The project, led by Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy and mixed by former Rush co-producer Terry Brown, for the most part treats selected 1974–87 Rush songs as canonic precursors of late-1980s and 1990s progressive metal. Musicians within this particular sub-genre venerate Rush as the godfathers of such music, but they also seem content to make the band's songs slightly more virtuosic within their original idiom, rather than finding anything new about them. *Red Star: Tribute to Rush* (Dwell, 1999), including Disarray's version of "Tom Sawyer," also treats selected 1974–82 Rush songs as canonic precursors, but within the much-less-expected sub-genre of late-1990s hardcore and death metal. The third Rush tribute album, *Exit . . . Stage Right: The String Quartet Tribute to Rush* (Vitamin, 2002) similarly takes the band's music into a rather unexpected genre area: classical chamber music. The fourth Rush tribute album, *Subdivisions: A Tribute to the Music of Rush* (Magna Carta, 2005), then returns to the progressive heavy metal aesthetic of the same record com-

pany's *Working Man*, but it does not duplicate any of the songs already adapted on the earlier album.

Billy Joel suggested, in a 1980 appropriation of and homage to post-punk music, that "It's Still Rock'n'Roll to Me." Rush's musical undercoding, or at least ambiguous coding, in "The Spirit of Radio" and "Tom Sawyer" led to an ongoing engagement with those songs long after Billy Joel's genre-overcoded, new wave-influenced, pop song (US Top 40 #1) ceased to appeal to many of its original mainstream, casual fans. Rush's "The Spirit of Radio" (US Hot 100 #51) and "Tom Sawyer" (US Hot 100 #44) quickly became staples of album-oriented rock and remained so nearly thirty years later. Regarding "The Spirit of Radio," other than the Barenaked Ladies' reference to the song's energy riff, from 1994 to 2002 Catherine Wheel (British, alternative rock), Rachel Barton (US, classical violinist), Premonition (US, heavy metal, also on *Red Star*), St. Etienne (British, alternative rock), Rosetta Stone (British, industrial-goth), and additional US classical string musicians (on 2002's *Exit . . . Stage Right*) also engaged with that song. Regarding "Tom Sawyer," other than the Barenaked Ladies' reference to the song's swagger riff and the trip-hop remix and death metal versions just discussed, in the early 2000s instrumental variations of "Tom Sawyer" underscored a Nissan Maxima TV ad and Deadsy released an alternative/industrial version. The tribute album *Subdivisions* (2005) also includes progressive metal versions of both songs. By comparison, I could only find information about one non-Billy Joel recording of "It's Still Rock'n'Roll to Me," a 1997 punk version by 30 Foot Tall.

David Brackett discusses a similar dichotomy between Gary Lewis and the Playboys' hit song "This Diamond Ring" (1965, US Top 40 #1) and Wilson Pickett's rhythm-and-blues/soul song "In the Midnight Hour" (also 1965, US Top 40 #21). The latter song, although it did not chart especially high as a pop song on its release, quickly became a widely acknowledged classic. The former song, although ridiculously popular on its release, is much less highly thought of in retrospect, at least by rock historians and critics. Brackett cautions, however, that applying Mikhail Bakhtin's preference for polyvocal/dialogic texts (arguably, the Pickett and Rush songs) over univocal/monologic texts (arguably, the Lewis and Joel songs) "runs the risk of oversimplification."[6] As had been

[6] David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 17.

the case fifteen years earlier vis-à-vis Lewis and Pickett, many young rock fans in 1980–81 found Billy Joel's music at least as meaningful as Rush's. Like Paul McCartney and Joe Jackson in the 1990s, Billy Joel dabbled in the world of "light classical music" in the early 2000s. By comparison, Rush continued to make new *rock* music throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. The band used relatively subtle classical elements in a few songs in 1985, 1987, and 1993, including a wordless choir, a brass section, and several string sections. However, Rush's more elaborate, progressive-oriented music from 1975 to 1981 then lent itself to wholesale classical treatments by others.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Finnish four-cello ensemble Apocalyptica spearheaded the trend of fully translating hard rock songs into something more like classical music. This produces something quite different, stylistically *and* ideologically, from incorporating classical instruments or classical music *into* rock music. From 1965 to 1977, various British rock bands sometimes attempted fusions of classical instruments or actual classical music along with rock instruments and rock music. Procol Harum recorded its 1972 US #5 live album with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Da Camera Singers. After that early period, however, it took quite a while until mainstream rock musicians revisited the large-scale fusion of classical instruments with rock instrumentation. Metallica's *S&M* ("Symphony and Metallica," 1999) features performances by the band with the San Francisco Symphony, arranged and conducted by Michael Kamen, a film composer and former contributor to music by David Bowie, Kate Bush, and (on 1993's *Counterparts*) Rush.

As far as I know, the first recorded instance of translating a Rush song entirely into classical instrumentation appears on Chicago-based classical violinist Rachel Barton's Stringendo album *Storming the Citadel* (1997–98). In her liner notes, Barton raises the question:

> Crossover is hot. . . . As our tastes become increasingly multi-cultural and eclectic, the lines between high art and pop art are becoming increasingly blurred. But isn't playing heavy metal on an acoustic violin going a bit too far?
>
> From a historical perspective, I would have to say no. Classical music through the centuries has always drawn heavily upon the rhythmic and harmonic elements of the folk and popular music of its day .

> . . . In turn, the great violin soloists have been known to arrange some of their favorite non-classical tunes. . . . This project continues in that tradition.
>
> . . . the structures of tunes like [Rush's] "The Spirit of Radio" and [Metallica's] "One" are quite sophisticated, much more so than in a typical pop tune.

Barton wishes to hedge her bets by historicizing her project in these terms. Unlike Procol Harum and Metallica's symphonic albums—and most of her own examples—this is not about "crossover" exactly. Toronto's Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band aside, klezmer is hardly "popular music," exactly, and Paganini presumably never had to contend with commercial mediation in quite the same way as popular musicians have in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Barton's project also has nothing to do with newly-composed classical music drawing on elements from popular music. The real truth of it must be that she grew up listening to rock music, still liked some of it, and wanted to play it.

In her string trio translation of "The Spirit of Radio," Barton effectively uses pizzicato technique to convey the stripped-down, reggae-influenced elements of the original song's ending. She aborts Lifeson's guitar solo, however, and goes directly into the song's originally pseudo-rock'n'roll ending, including textural variations of the percussive piano part. Barton recorded the album live at a radio station, and she incorporates additional bet-hedging by including her solo violin version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as well as classical works by Paganini and Handel. Tellingly, she picked difficult classical works that sometimes sound like aspects of the complex rock songs she selected, *not* classical works based on folk songs.

Exit . . . Stage Right: The String Quartet Tribute to Rush (Vitamin, 2002) references the title, cover, and song order of Rush's second live album, *Exit . . . Stage Left* (1981). Nashville-based producer-musician Todd Mark Rubenstein initiated the arduous task of translating almost an entire album's worth of Rush's music into something quite far removed from the band's "native tongue" of electric guitars, effects pedals, electric bass guitars, electronic bass pedals, a large array of drums and percussion, electronic keyboards, lyrics, and vocals. According to the album's liner notes, Rubenstein began by entering suitable tracks for each song into a

keyboard music sequencer. Next, he produced MIDI files and converted them into traditional musical notation using the computer program Finale. Copyists then prepared string parts. Rubenstein (cello/bass), Patricia and Paul Tobias (who both play violin and viola on all tracks), and cellist Andre Janovich used multi-track recording, sampling technology, and so on to create versions of the original guitar, bass, keyboard, and vocal elements. The opening track provides a classical version of "The Spirit of Radio" to compete with Barton's. Unlike Barton's version, it includes an approximation of Lifeson's chattering guitar solo, but electric guitars facilitate many things that acoustic violins cannot. Barton's version of "The Spirit of Radio" also succeeds better than the one on *Exit . . . Stage Right* for the reason that she arranged for live string trio what Rush plays with a live rock trio. In a related vein, the version of "Tom Sawyer" that ends *Exit . . . Stage Right* also incorporates sampled sounds obviously played by a sequencer. Indeed, Rubenstein's website later somewhat guiltily referred to the album as a "string tribute" and to a "10-piece orchestra." Ironically, the album also excludes the closing work of Rush's *Exit . . . Stage Left*, the large-scale instrumental "La Villa Strangiato," much of which (largely because it is lacking lyrics and vocals) one can certainly imagine working very well "transliterated" for classical strings. The US Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences allowed a first-round nomination of *Exit . . . Stage Right* for a 2002 Grammy for Best Instrumental Pop Album. (It did not make the final round of nominations.) This is somewhat ironic given that Rush itself never won a Grammy, despite five nominations for Best Rock Instrumental from 1982 to 2009.

Unlike all rock-oriented Rush tributes, Barton's arrangement of "The Spirit of Radio" and the dozen Rush arrangements on *Exit . . . Stage Right* present nothing equivalent to Neil Peart's drumming *or* lyrics. However, even without those seemingly central elements, Rush's music from 1975-81 still translates quite well into the classical medium. This results from the band's "classic" period of especially progressive-oriented influences, elaborate solos and instrumental sections, and varied textures, rhythms, time signatures, instrumentations, and dynamics. This also inadvertently expands my contention that aspects of progressive rock functioned as "substitute classical music" for many working class and lower-middle-class rock fans in the 1980s.

Vitamin Records, which released *Exit . . . Stage Right: The String Quartet Tribute to Rush*, has also covered a wide variety of addi-

tional popular music artists in this way. Thus, certain types of popular music may still function as substitute classical music for some people, and string tribute albums of rock songs may cater to this. Conversely, it is also slightly possible that fans of classical music who do not otherwise much care for the sounds of "real" rock music may find elements of value within such albums.

A "Meta-Remix" of Rush's "Tom Sawyer"

It occurred to me that it would be a useful exercise to combine several different versions of the same Rush song in order to highlight the diversity of "genre artists" who have engaged with the band's progressive/hard rock music. I have termed this approach the "scholarly meta-remix," and it has proven similarly useful for bringing together different songs by comparable artists in order to show their similarities. My version of "Tom Sawyer" is just slightly shorter than the original (4:26 versus 4:33), and it includes the following six versions of the song (in the order I introduce them):

1. Rush's original recording (1981)
2. the Barenaked Ladies' incorporation of its swagger riff into their pop-rock song "Grade 9" (1992)
3. aspects of the versions by DJ Z-Trip (trip-hop, 1998)
4. Todd Mark Rubenstein ("string quartet," 2002)
5. Disarray (death metal, 1999)
6. Deadsy (alternative/industrial, 2002)

Table 2.3. "Toms Sawyer" (Meta-Remix, Durrell Bowman, 2003 at <http://durrellbowman.com/recordings.php>

synth & drums (0:00–0:05)	Rush
vocal introduction (0:05–0:11)	
main "swagger" introduction (0:11–0:22)	
Verse 1, with "swagger" (0:22–0:36)	0:34, a cut to the Barenaked Ladies reference
instrumental verse (0:36–0:47)	
bridge (0:47–1:08)	0:47–0:50, a cross-fade back to Rush
"chorus" (1:08–1:28)	0:57, a combination of Rush with DJ Z-Trip
new vocal introduction (1:28–1:33)	

Table 2.3. (cont'd.)

instrumental section, 7/4 (1:33–2:30)	1:11, Rush with strings added 1:33, just strings, then just Rush,
expanded "swagger" intro (2:30–2:42)	1:45, the onset of "chaos:"
Verse 2 (2:42–2:53)	Rush +Disarray (in D) +DJ Z-Trip +strings
instrumental verse (2:53–3:02)	Disarray gradually takes over the texture
bridge (3:02–3:22)	Disarray
"chorus" (3:22–3:36)	
expanded vocal introduction (3:36–3:49)	3:07, cross-fade to Deadsy (in B)
coda, faded (3:49–4:26)	Deadsy Deadsy + strings (in E)

I begin (see Table 2.3) with the Rush (in the key of E), but right at the end of Verse 1 (at 0:34), I cut directly to the Barenaked Ladies' version of the swagger riff (also in E, with hard-rock drumming actually more similar to Peart's elaborate drumming later in the original song), and one can also hear the "Grade 9" words: "this is me" and, at the end of the reference (at 0:46), a transition back to the ska-like drumming and the vocal line of the Barenaked Ladies' own chorus: "This is me in Grade 9, baby, yeah, this is me." During that, I cross-fade (at 0:50) back to Rush's "instrumental verse," and in the second half of the sung bridge (at 0:58), I combine Rush's original version with the vocal effects, "urban"-sounding drumming, and guitar-chord re-sequencings of Z-Trip's remix. At the beginning of the instrumental section (originally in 7/4, see Example 3), I start with the strings (1:33), but then switch to the original (1:38).

At 1:45, "chaos" ensues, as I add Disarray's instrumental section (which is slower, including a noticeable hi-hat pattern, in 4/4, and a tone lower, in D), and one can also hear the string version of the guitar solo and Z-Trip turntable-scratching effects and vocal samples ("he's kind of lost his mind") near the beginning of the peak section of Lifeson's original solo. During the post-solo return to the original song's unison statement of the 7/4 pattern and Peart's original "mini drum solo" (at 2:25) I allow Disarray's death metal version (in D) to emerge, and that version alone (with its grunted, "demonic" vocals) provides Verse 2. During the bridge (at 3:07), I cross-fade to Deadsy's version (in B), and that version alone pro-

vides the instrumental ending of the bridge and the chorus. For the transition to the final vocal "introduction" (at 3:38), I add the strings (in the song's original key of E) to the Deadsy, and the contrasting keys (a perfect fourth apart) provide an oddly "medieval" sound, with the 7/4 synthesizer pattern temporally spaced in order to highlight its positioning within two different key areas.

Coda

Musicians' magazines and related pedagogical contexts cater to musician-fans by providing article-interviews, technique columns, song transcriptions, and equipment reviews instead of album/concert reviews and opinion pieces. In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s magazines such as *Modern Drummer*, *Guitar for the Practicing Musician*, and *Bass Player* regularly featured one or more members of Rush, placing Neil Peart, Alex Lifeson, and Geddy Lee in "Honor Rolls" or "Halls of Fame." In a related development concerning amateur and semi-professional musicians, dozens of Rush tribute bands performed the group's music for small, local audiences in a number of countries. In addition, numerous future professional musicians learned to play some of Rush's songs. Not surprisingly, for most of Rush's own first five years (1968–73, at ages fifteen to twenty), the band mainly functioned as a hard-working, part-time cover band, playing British and North American psychedelic rock and blues-rock by other groups. Neil Peart similarly played in the mainly cover band Hush, in between an early career attempt in London, England around 1970–72 and replacing John Rutsey in Rush in the late summer of 1974.

Rush's music demonstrates that individualist musicians can pursue a successful career path that continuously problematizes ideology, genre, style, technology, the music industry, *and* fan communities. Robert Walser, in discussing the appropriations of classical music by heavy metal musicians, suggests:

> Heavy metal musicians . . . draw upon the resources of the past that have been made available to them through mass mediation and their own historical study. But it is precisely such predations that the musical academy is supposed to prevent. Bach's contemporary meanings are produced in tandem by musicologists and the marketing departments of record companies and symphony orchestras, and the Bach they construct has little to do with the dramatic, noisy meanings found

> by metal musicians and fans and everything to do with aesthetics, order, and cultural hegemony . . . . The drive to enforce preferred ideological meanings is . . . "nondialogic." It is oppressive, authoritative, and absolute.[7]

Rock tribute artists similarly draw upon mass-mediated resources and their own historical study to find variable, refractive, distorted, and disruptive meaning in the much more recent past. In an unexpected breadth of dialogue, Rush tribute artists hail from a field of activities that itself inscribes considerable ideological—and literal—noise. As we have seen, this includes the electronic sounds and digital manipulations of trip-hop, the demonic vocals of death metal, and even the bows-on-strings noise of classical chamber music.

[7] Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Wesleyan University Press: Hanover, NH, 1993), 105.