Subject: Rush - Moving Pictures
Posted by Wayne Parham on Mon, 28 Mar 2005 23:15:22 GMT
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It's been a while since I listened to this one, but the warm weather today made me feel like getting out. With my wanderlust comes an adrenaline for torque that is barely tempered by today's gas prices. Too impulsive to keep my foot out of it, but it costs a hell of a lot more these days. But one thing that doesn't cost, is to listen to Rush's song "Red barchetta," which speaks to these times and to those in the not so distant future.There was another thing that sparked my interest in hearing this album today. The bass drum and bass guitar are recorded very well on all Rush albums from about "A Farewell to Kings" onward. A Rush album can really point out the strengths or weaknesses in the bass. I like to listen to Neil Peart jump on the bass drums and Geddy Lee thump his bass guitar. It's sure to let you know how tight and powerful your system is. But within about two measures, attention wanders from any sort of critiquing and into the music for its own sake, feeling full of energy.I've been listening to a lot of music lately that is excellent in the vocals but the bass isn't as tight. I have a suspicion that many of these recordings are much more popular played on systems that don't have a lot of bass capability, so if the bass is a little bloated, no one would be the wiser. It gives a bit of "warmth" to the sound too, so maybe they like it that way. But I want to hear the difference in a stand-up bass with plucked strings as opposed to being played with a bow. Ironically, a lot of the jazz and classical music that is popular with most audiophiles doesn't really have much in the way of clearly percussive bass sounds. So you don't hear as much difference between woofers of widely differing capabilities and quality levels.That's where Rush's Neil Peart and Geddy Lee come in. One of the things I noticed way back was that a low distortion woofer sounded much different when Peart struck the bass drum than when played on a decent but not great ferrite woofer. The flux-stabilized woofer produces a sharp impact, whereas the ferrite magnet version sounded more like a pillow was in the drum. Both at the same volume, both make the same note and both sound pretty good. But the woofer with the shorting ring provides impact that the other just can't.I wondered if a tube amp might mitigate this. I have wondered it for a long time but never actually checked it out. Too busy listening to polite music that doesn't really show it. To tell the truth, I've grown to enjoy some of this music a lot, but not much of it has the same kind of percussive bass sounds that I could use for comparison.So I

watt Heart Audio tube amp. This was the sound that made me love flux-stabilized woofers back in the early eighties. It is like night and day, overwhelmingly impressive, to tell the truth. The tube amp didn't take anything away. There was no loss of control, no need for a plate amp or more power. Absolutely powerful, tight and controlled. It's a good litmus test for bass clarity.Moving Pictures takes me back a few years. The album is so powerful, it makes you want to jump in the car and go be a teenager all over again. And it reminds me that things are always changing. Listen to Red barchetta and you'll see what I mean.