

Fleetwood Mac

Konserthuset
Stockholm, Sweden
March 23, 1969

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03/23/1969
Tracks: 11
Total Time: 1:15:57

Mick Fleetwood - drums, percussion
Peter Green - vocals, guitar, six-string bass
Danny Kirwan - vocals, guitar
John McVie - bass
Jeremy Spencer - vocals, slide guitar, congas, percussion

After distinguishing himself and achieving a level of recognition in Europe, like Eric Clapton before him, Peter Green departed John Mayall's Bluesbreakers in 1967, freeing himself of employment and artistic restrictions. However, unlike most of the British guitar greats, Green was never concerned with flash or becoming a guitar superstar. This humble attitude and his approach to music made him one of the most compelling of all the British guitar players of the '60s. His style was highly nuanced without ever relying on clichés. Green was the chief architect of Fleetwood Mac's music, providing the bulk of their original and pure blues material. His playing could be wonderfully restrained one minute and powerfully explosive the next, marked by a distinctive vibrato and economy of style. His haunting, sweet-yet-melancholy tone was quite distinctive and he had an inherent human touch that other British guitarists struggled for. Initially, Jeremy Spencer was the band's other faction. Spencer could authentically recreate Elmore James onstage and this novel ability, along with a ribald sense of humor (that the entire band shared), helped fuel the band's early stage shows.

In 1968, Green recruited Boilerhouse guitarist Danny Kirwan into the band, expanding the lineup to a quintet. Kirwan too, had a guitar style that was utterly unique and his presence dramatically changed the sound of the band. Kirwan's presence increased the band's dynamic and Green's creativity level soared as a result. Over the course of the next two years, Green's playing would reach stratospheric heights as the group began exploring music outside the traditional blues format. Green's innate apprehension toward the business side of the music industry and his obsessive nature regarding his music paralleled the musical vibe of many San Francisco bands and they soon became friends with the Grateful Dead and were exposed to the hippie culture of San Francisco. The musical and cultural vibe in San

Francisco and his first exposure to LSD had a profound impact on Green, and as a result his songwriting became far more diverse and creative. The group's live performances became more open ended and Green and Kirwan began embracing heavy improvisation. When they entered the studio in mid-1969 to record the groundbreaking *Then Play On* album, Spencer was no longer involved, but both Green and Kirwan were armed with an abundance of exciting new material that was far more progressive than anything the band had done before.

This incendiary Fleetwood Mac performance, recorded at Stockholm's Konserthuset in March of 1969, shortly before they began the sessions for *Then Play On*, captures this magic moment in time perfectly. Right off the bat, Green pulverizes the audience with a rip roaring "Rattlesnake Shake." It's a fierce and forceful version that soon ventures off into a blazing jam featuring extremely impressive guitar interplay between Kirwan and Green. This is no warm up exercise as they go at it for nearly 10 minutes. When this initial blaze of creativity begins waning, they transition directly into Green's instrumental, "Underway." Unlike the rather brief, under three-minute, studio version soon to be recorded, this thrilling composition cooks for 14 solid minutes and clearly demonstrates what a crucial catalyst Kirwan had become. The much shorter Kirwan instrumental, "World in Harmony," follows. Here, the influence of Jerry Garcia is apparent with both guitarists harmonizing soulfully and featuring a hot little jam in the middle. It perfectly captures just how close the two guitarists had grown musically, now capable of soloing in unison as well as triggering off each other.

The next two songs provide Jeremy Spencer a showcase for his celebrated Elmore James-style workouts. Here, the band provides solid support while Spencer sizzles on slide guitar, first sinking his

teeth into a ripping "Red Hot Mama" before settling into the tasty relaxing groove of "Got To Move." Although Spencer's role in the band was diminishing by this point, these are both exciting performances that bring diversity to the bands repertoire. Following Spencer's showcase, Green is ready for more experimentation and the group begins improvising. This next piece of music has never been heard before, not even on circulating live recordings of this era. It unquestionably has the sound of the Then Play On era sessions, but is utterly unique and may have been a work in progress that was ultimately abandoned. This features a wonderful call and response section between Green and Kirwin and another fascinating performance. Green's more introspective side is also on display here and his guitar playing is wonderfully expressive.

Kirwan's "Coming Your Way," the bluesy track that would open the forthcoming album, is up next. Here it is extended to nearly three times the length of the studio recording. Fleetwood and McVie, along with Spencer adding additional rhythmic support on congas, provide a propulsive backing that inspires yet another heavy rhythmic jam from Green and Kirwan. Spencer then steps back up to change the set's texture with his spot on reconstruction of Elmore James "Stranger Blues." Following this Peter Green addresses the audience directly and introduces "Albatross" by stating "This song always brings great peace to everybody, including me." On this spiritual note, the band delivers a lovely version of this classic Green instrumental. His restraint combined with Kirwan's perfect unison lead lines make this performance even more touching than the original.

With merely a second of downtime afterwards, they close the set with a brand new Green composition, one that would soon go on to be a defining moment in Green's career, "Oh Well." Hearing this incredibly innovative song when it was this fresh is an absolute revelation.

Here, it has not yet become the nine-minute opus that it would become on Then Play On, but what it lacks in length is more than made up for in sheer ferocious energy. It's hard to imagine any band that has ever squeezed such wide dynamics and pulverizing intensity into a mere three minutes. This performance is blazing with so much tight compressed energy that words cannot accurately describe it. It isn't surprising that this song would become one of the most imitated blues/rock workouts in modern music.

If there's any downside to the remarkable recording, it's that only an incomplete 10 minute excerpt of the "Green Manalishi" encore was captured and it begins and ends in progress. The recording resumes past the actual vocal section of the song, with the band into another ferocious jam. It stays at full intensity for the first several minutes, before everyone but Green and Fleetwood drops out, giving Green an opportunity to solo on six-string bass. The tape unfortunately runs out shortly afterwards.

Regardless of the incomplete encore, this recording captures the classic Peter Green-era of Fleetwood Mac at what was arguably the most intensely creative and focused time of their all too brief career. The telepathic communication between Kirwan and Green was elevating the music to incredible levels. It was performances like this one that devastated audiences and established Peter Green as one of the most original and compelling guitar players on the planet.

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1. Rattlesnake Shake 9:43
2. Underway 14:19
3. World In Harmony 3:32
4. Red Hot Mamma 3:24
5. Got To Move 3:32
6. Improvisation 8:46
7. Coming Your Way 10:33
8. Stranger Blues 5:50
9. Albatross 3:41
10. Oh Well
11. The Green Manalishi (Outtake)

Naughty Dog

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Naughty Dog



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