

Fleetwood Mac - Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac (1968)

Written by bluesever

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A1 My Heart Beat Like A Hammer 2:55 A2 Merry Go Round 4:05 A3 Long Grey Mare 2:15 A4 Hellhound On My Trail 2:00 A5 Shake Your Moneymaker 2:55 A6 Looking For Somebody 2:50 B1 No Place To Go 3:20 B2 My Baby's Good To Me 2:50 B3 I Loved Another Woman 2:55 B4 Cold Black Night 3:15 B5 The World Keep On Turning 2:30 B6 Got To Move 3:20 Bass – Bob Brunning (tracks: A3), John McVie Drums – Mick Fleetwood Vocals, Guitar, Harmonica – Peter Green Vocals, Slide Guitar, Piano – Jeremy Spencer

Fleetwood Mac began when Peter Green, guitarist of British blues band John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers, replaced their drummer Asynsley Dunbar with his friend Mick Fleetwood. Green became dissatisfied with the Bluesbreakers and formed a new band with Fleetwood, naming the band Fleetwood Mac after the rhythm section of their old band (McVie and Fleetwood). Soon after, the band recruited slide guitar player Jeremy Spencer, and they eventually released their first, eponymously titled studio album, in February of 1968. The record was largely a commercial success in Britain, where it stayed on the charts for nearly a year, though it barely made a mark in the United States.

Fleetwood Mac is a straight-up blues album, miles away from their later, more famous work with Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, and Lindsey Buckingham. With that being said, that doesn't mean the band's work here should be discredited, as they played their music with just enough originality and plenty of driving intensity. Three of the twelve songs on the album are old blues standards, but Green and Spencer clearly had a talent for songwriting, as their originals are often above the level of the cover songs. In fact, much of the appeal of the record would be lost if not for Peter Green, who has an oddly Hendrix-esque quality to his voice that accompanies the music quite well. He's also a superb songwriter as well, better than slide guitarist Spencer, even, though his songs blend well enough into the overall flow of the album.

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The best song on the record may be “Long Grey Mare,” which has a galloping guitar riff unlike any other and harmonica sections that are actually used in a way that compliment the song. The variety of the album is pretty much split into two categories; fast and aggressive like the aforementioned song, and slow and glum like “Looking for Somebody,” another Green song which gets the somber part of blues just right, driven by piano and a slow, heavy bass beat. “Hellhound On My Trail” is another song that belongs in the latter category, a Robert Johnson song played solely on the piano by Green. You’d expect the two dynamics to get old, but being an older album, Fleetwood Mac is just over a half-hour long, perfectly fitted to its running-time as there is little, if any, filler.

Fleetwood Mac may not have been a landmark record, but it’s a rock-solid debut from a fresh-faced band who were playing blues rock the way that it should have been. It can be recommended to anyone with a passing interest in blues or ‘Mac, and it’s easily one of the highpoints of their long, tumultuous career. Take it for what it is and you’ll have a very enjoyable album in your hands. ---Lakes, sputnikmusic.com

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