

Jefferson Airplane - Crown Of Creation (1968)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Lather* (Grace Slick) - 2:57 02. *In Time* (Paul Kantner, Marty Balin) - 4:13 03. *Triad* (David Crosby) - 4:54 04. *Star Track* (Jorma Kaukonen) - 3:09 05. *Share A Little Joke* (Marty Balin) - 3:06 06. *Chushingura* (Spencer Dryden) - 1:18 07. *If You Feel* (Marty Balin, Gary Blackman) - 3:20 08. *Crown Of Creation* (Paul Kantner) - 2:53 09. *Ice Cream Phoenix* (Jorma Kaukonen, Charles Cockey) - 3:00 10. *Greasy Heart* (Grace Slick) - 3:24 11. *The House at Pooneil Corners* (Paul Kantner, Marty Balin) - 5:49 Personnel: - Grace Slick - piano, organ, female vocals - Marty Balin - rhythm guitar, vocals - Paul Kantner - rhythm guitar, vocals - Jorma Kaukonen - lead guitar, electric chicken, vocals - Spencer Dryden - steel balls, piano, organ, vocals - Jack Casady - bass + - Charles Cockey - guitar, vocals - Gary Blackman - nose solo - David Crosby - guitar - Tim Davis - congas - Bill Goodwin - talking drums - Dan Woody - bongos

The group's fourth album, appearing ten months following *After Bathing at Baxter's*, isn't the same kind of leap forward that *Baxter's* represented from *Surrealistic Pillow*. Indeed, in many ways, *Crown of Creation* is a more conservative album stylistically, opening with "Lather," a Grace Slick original that was one of the group's very last forays (and certainly their last prominent one) into a folk idiom. Much of what follows is a lot more based in electric rock, as well as steeped in elements of science fiction (specifically author John Wyndham's book *The Chrysalids*) in several places, but *Crown of Creation* was still deliberately more accessible musically than its predecessor, even as the playing became more bold and daring within more traditional song structures. Jack Casady by this time had developed one of the most prominent and distinctive bass sounds in American rock, as identifiable (if not quite as bracing) as John Entwistle's was with the Who, as demonstrated on "In Time," "Star Track," "Share a Little Joke," "If You Feel," (where he's practically a second lead instrument), and the title song, and Jorma Kaukonen's slashing, angular guitar attack was continually surprising as his snaking lead guitar parts wended their way through "Star Track" and "Share a Little Joke." The album also reflected the shifting landscape of West Coast music with its inclusion of "Triad," a David Crosby song that Crosby's own group, the Byrds, had refused to release -- its presence (the only extant version of the song for a number of years) was a forerunner of the sound that would later be heard on Crosby's own debut solo album, *If I Could Only Remember My Name* (on which Slick,

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Paul Kantner, and Casady would appear). The overall album captured the group's rapidly evolving, very heavy live sound within the confines of some fairly traditional song structures, and left ample room for Slick and Marty Balin to express themselves vocally, with Balin turning in one of his most heartfelt and moving performances on "If You Feel." "Ice Cream Phoenix" pulses with energy and "Greasy Heart" became a concert standard for the group -- the studio original of the latter is notable for Slick's most powerful vocal performance since "Somebody to Love." And the album's big finish, "The House at Pooneil Corners," seemed to fire on all cylinders, their amps cranked up to ten (maybe 11 for Casady), and Balin, Slick, and Kantner stretching out on the disjointed yet oddly compelling tune and lyrics. It didn't work 100 percent, but it made for a shattering finish to the album. Crown of Creation has been reissued on CD several times, including a Mobile Fidelity audiophile edition at the start of the '90s, but in 2003, RCA released a remastered edition with four bonus tracks from the same sessions including the mono single mix of "Share a Little Joke," the previously unreleased 8 minute "The Saga of Sydney Spacepig," Spencer Dryden's co-authored "Ribump Ba Bap Dum Dum," which is a spaced-out assembly of noises, effects, and pop-culture catch-phrases, and the more accessible "Would You Like a Snack?," an atonal piece of musical scatology featuring Grace Slick and co-authored by Slick and Frank Zappa. ---Bruce Eder, allmusic.com

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