

## Steppenwolf – Slow Flux (1974)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Get Into The Wind* (Can Beek/Cochran) – 2:59
02. *Gang War Blues* (Edmonton/Fowley/Kay/McJohn) – 4:24
03. *Justice Don't Be Slow* (Kay/Richie) – 4:54
04. *Children Of Night* (Kay) – 5:11
05. *Jeraboah* (Conrad) – 5:39
06. *Straight Shootin' Woman* (Edmonton) – 4:04
07. *Smokey Factory Blues* (Hammond/Hazelwood) – 4:09
08. *Morning Blue* (Biondo) – 4:11
09. *A Fool's Fantasy* (McJohn) – 3:37
10. *Fishin' In The Dark* (Kay) – 5:45

### Personnel:

- George Biondo - bass, vocals
- Jerry Edmonton - drums, vocals
- Bobby Cochran - lead guitar, vocals
- John Kay - rhythm guitar, harmonica, lead vocals
- Goldy McJohn - keyboards, vocals

Steppenwolf's first album after *For Ladies Only*, their final Dunhill epic, was recorded for Mums, a CBS-distributed imprint which also was home to Albert Hammond's only two solo chart hits in 1972 and 1974. Though it may be surprising to find the labelmate's "Smokey Factory Blues" on this package, it isn't a stretch; Hammond would co-write a number one smash for Starship with "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," so you know John Kay can still find a good tune and pluck it out of the air. More impressive than the follow-up disc, *Hour of the Wolf*, this CBS debut has the look and feel of a vintage Steppenwolf product. Veterans Ed Caraeff and Tom Gundelfinger do the photos, the wolf logo is still intact (the back cover looking much like the front of *Steppenwolf Live*), and the sound has those political leanings of the group's Monster period. The album gets into gear by the fourth song, "Get Into the Wind," co-written by guitarist Bobby Cochran. With a

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little emphasis on production, the tune might actually have had a chance at some chart action; it blatantly carries the "Born to Be Wild" theme. "Jeraboah" also has its album track moments, but the three John Kay contributions which open this new era up set the tone for the band's dilemma. "Gang War Blues" isn't a bad essay; the collaboration between Kay, Kim Fowley, drummer Jerry Edmonton, and keyboardist Goldy McJohn continues the preaching initiated by earlier discs, preaching that doesn't hit the interesting vibe of a song like "The Pusher." The lyrics are enclosed and there are lots of them, though fans come to Steppenwolf for angst-fueled hard rock oozing with feedback, not lots of words and tape loops of a Richard Nixon speech. Though it's a very good performance by the group, good doesn't match the majesty of "Magic Carpet Ride." Jerry Edmonton's "Straight Shootin' Woman" has horns and solid piano from McJohn, but somehow slightly misses the mark. The Albert Hammond/Mike Hazlewood tune is a great change of pace; the direction fuses Steppenwolf's sensibilities with outside ideas. The cover surpasses Hammond's version, giving further evidence that Steppenwolf had a knack for interpretation -- a knack that Don Covay, Hoyt Axton, and Mars Bonfire all benefited from. Like their contemporaries, the Guess Who, Steppenwolf lost the fine art of crafting a song for the Top 40. Where they succeed at being very musical, much like Burton Cummings' band, they fail to create that sparkling little advertisement for the album that was the hit single. It was that vehicle which brought them fame, and both bands needed that arena. Had John Kay tackled "Star Baby," the tune released by the Guess Who off of the LP Road Food the same year, 1974, both bands could have had another dance in the sun. Still, Slow Flux has many decent moments. Bassist George Biondo's "Morning Blue" is a fine ballad; it's just that at this point in time, Steppenwolf could have given listeners so much more. ---Joe Viglione, AllMusic Review

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