Fleetwood Mac - Behind The Mask (1990)

A1 Skies The Limit A2 Love Is Dangerous A3 In The Back Of My Mind A4 Do You Know A5 Save Me A6 Affairs Of The Heart A7 When The Sun Goes Down B1 Behind The Mask B2 Stand On The Rock B3 Hard Feelings B4 Freedom B5 When It Comes To Love B6 The Second Time Stevie Nicks – vocals Billy Burnette – guitar, vocals Rick Vito – guitar, vocals Christine McVie – keyboards, synthesizer, vocals John McVie – bass guitar Mick Fleetwood – drums, percussion + Lindsey Buckingham – acoustic guitar on "Behind the Mask" Asanté – percussion on "Freedom" Stephen Croes – Synclavier, synthesizer, keyboards, percussion

Fleetwood Mac's only full-length album with a lineup of Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Christine McVie, Stevie Nicks, Billy Burnette, and Rick Vito proved an artistic and commercial disappointment not so much because Lindsey Buckingham was missing as songwriter/guitarist/singer/ producer as because the group's other writers, Nicks and Christine McVie, didn't pick up the slack, relying on Burnette and Vito to come up with material. They tried: Burnette's "Hard Feelings," written with Jeff Silbar, was a worthy effort. But Nicks's four contributions (three of them co-written) weren't up to her usual standard, and while McVie proved more dependable, turning in the Top 40 pop hit "Save Me" and the Top Ten Adult Contemporary hit "Skies The Limit," her light, romantic efforts needed sturdier work to play off of. Behind The Mask was never less than pleasant, but never of the calibre of the work of the previous lineup, either. Though it went gold, it was Fleetwood Mac's least successful new album in 15 years. --- William Ruhlmann, Rovi

The joke goes something like this: Lindsey Buckingham was such an integral part of Fleetwood Mac that the band needed two guitarists to fill his space. What's really funny, though, is that the

addition of Rick Vito and Billy Burnette is the best thing to ever happen to Fleetwood Mac. On Behind the Mask, the band doesn't surrender an inch of the territory it staked out in the Seventies. This notoriously unstable family keeps its center still for once, using the same slow-push melodies, thudding drums and endlessly repeated refrains. And right up front, Vito and Burnette play those slides and solos that leap out of a song, have their say and sink back into the ensemble.

Vito and Burnette's presence is one of the reasons Behind the Mask doesn't sound like a supergroup's last stand. The songs they wrote or co-wrote fit in fine, and their vocals are manly and unremarkable. More impressive is the growth in song-writing the women show. Stevie Nicks's last solo album had enough moments of grown-up honesty to forgive her juniorgrade mysticism. On this album, all of her tunes sound thought out and still rock hard, especially "Love Is Dangerous," a funky romp that keeps the imagery to a bare minimum and lets her voice communicate the title's message.

Audiences always expect more from Christine McVie; on Behind the Mask she comes through with sensitivity and style, keeping high hopes grounded on "Skies the Limit," backing off and giving in on "Save Me." But it's the title song that puts Fleetwood's past – both on record and in scandal sheets – in perspective. It catches McVie still reeling, deciding a trip to the moon isn't worth the gas, because "you can make the darkness mean more than it ever did." Not since Rumours has Fleetwood Mac recorded pain so unwaveringly and sounded this together.
---Arion Berger, rollingstone.com

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