a-ha - Hunting High and On These Roads (2018)

01. Hunting High And Low (Special Club Remix) 8:26 02. Stay On These Roads (Special Extended 12" Remix) 8:32 03. I've Been Losing You (Special Extended 12" Remix) 10:12 04. Take On Me (Special Extended 12" Remix) 7:55 05. Cry Wolf (Special Extended 12" Remix) 8:49 06. The Blood That Moves The Body (Special Extended 12" Remix) 8:50 07. The Sun Always Shines On TV (Special Club Remix) 8:32 08. Manhattan Skyline (Special Extended 12" Remix) 10:23 09. You Are The One (Special Extended 12" Remix) 9:13 10. Train Of Thought (Special Club Remix) 9:21 11. Out Of The Blue Comes Green (Special Extended 12" Remix) 13:16 12. Hunting High And Low (Special Extended 12" Remix) 8:57 13. The Living Daylights (Special Extended 12" Remix) 8:46 14. The Sun Always Shines On TV (Special Extended 12" Remix) 9:54 15. Touchy! (Special Extended Mix) 6:50 16. Train Of Thought (Special Extended 12" Remix) 9:48 17. The Blood That Moves The Body (Special Club Remix) 9:43 18. Recycled (Medley) 7:38 19. Take On Me (Extended UltraTraxx Retro Version) 9:06 20. Stay On These Roads (Darkest Star Piano Edit) 4:35

Pal Waaktaar and Magne Furuholmen, formerly of Bridges, formed Norwegian synth pop group a-ha in the early '80s. Nimble vocalist Morten Harket joined the duo, and they left for the now "legendary London flat" (so called because of its state of disrepair) to make it. By late 1983 they had achieved part of that goal by signing to WEA. Their debut single, "Take On Me," went through three versions before becoming a hit in the U.K., eventually reaching number two in November 1985. It went one better in the U.S., mainly due to the wide exposure of its stunning video on MTV, which fused animation with real-life action. They returned to the charts with "The Sun Always Shines on T.V." which became a U.K. number one in early 1986, helping take the album Hunting High and Low to the Top Ten. The song hit the Top 20 in the U.S., where the album reached number 15.

With a-ha's debut album mainly consisting of romantic synth pop, the press were quick to dismiss them as a teeny bop sensation; however, there was more than met the ear at first impression in Waaktaar's writing, and a more mature effort, Scoundrel Days, was released in

October 1986. More focused, it had a stronger band feel thanks to its live drumming evident on "The Swing of Things" and lead single "I've Been Losing You," which surprised critics at the time. Further striking imagery accompanied "Cry Wolf." The album landed in the Top 30 in Norway and cracked the top half of the Billboard 200 in the U.S. After a world tour, a-ha provided the theme to the James Bond flick The Living Daylights. A remix appeared on their third album, Stay on These Roads, in 1988.

In 1990, a-ha were commended by the Everly Brothers for their rendition of "Crying in the Rain" from their fourth album, East of the Sun, West of the Moon, which was largely ignored in the U.K. due to a shift in interests toward dance and the Manchester scene. The year 1993 heralded some much needed new blood in the U2 terrain of "Dark Is the Night" from the Memorial Beach album. Following the unfortunate lack of success following Memorial Beach, Furuholmen retreated into the art world while Waaktaar released the album Mary Is Coming with his new band Savoy. Seven years after the release of Memorial Beach, a-ha issued Minor Earth Major Sky in summer 2000. Released in 2002, Lifelines sold well in Europe and was followed by a lengthy tour, documented on the live album How Can I Sleep with Your Voice in My Head, issued in 2003.

A year later a-ha celebrated their 20th anniversary by releasing Singles 1984-2004, a collection that would put them back in the U.K. Top 20. In July of 2005, the band performed in Berlin as part of the massive worldwide event Live8, and in November they released the album Analogue. It was supported by a worldwide tour that included gigs in Russia and a festival in Chile. In 2009, upon issuing their ninth studio album, Foot of the Mountain, a-ha announced that they would be retiring. However, they returned in 2015 with Cast in Steel, which was followed by a world tour.

Coinciding with the 2017 summer solstice, the group headed to the remote island of Giske off of Norway's west coast to record their first ever acoustic concerts, for MTV Unplugged. With arrangements by producer Lars Horntveth, the, by then, perennial arena band played a career-spanning set with guests Ian McCulloch (Echo & the Bunnymen), Alison Moyet, Lissie, and Ingrid Helene Håvik (Highasakite) for an audience of only 250. That October, the show was released in seven different versions under the title MTV Unplugged: Summer Solstice, along with an abbreviated, single-disc Acoustic Hits: MTV Unplugged. Summer Solstice debuted at number three on the album chart in Germany, number six in the U.K., and number 11 in their home country, and was followed by another world tour in 2018. ---Kelvin Hayes, allmusic.com

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