



Joe Jackson „Live At Rockpalast“



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There are very few documents on film that present rock artists at the zenith of their career – and even fewer that cast a light on the beginning. In the run-up to DVD there were merely promotion videos, clips of concerts and video recordings. Of all things it was the much maligned television that captured these unique moments – with the WDR “Rockpalast” leading the way. Apart from only BBC’s “Old Grey Whistle Test” this series established during the seventies a forum for contemporary artists some of which are forgotten today, others obscure – and several legendary.

Joe Jackson is one of these legends but a highly industrious one. He continues to record albums, surprises with concerts in shifting line-ups, is living some time in Berlin, another time on the Isle of Wight and one suitcase he left in New York. He already had a career before 1979 when his debut album “Look



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"Look Sharp!" was released: In his retrospective book "A Cure for Gravity" you can read how Jackson and his band travelled through England and played in pubs to indifferent audiences songs by David Bowie.

Glam and punk went by and now Joe Jackson's time had finally come: Within a few days he penned a dozen songs for his trio, borrowed the snotty attitude from the hip New Wave geezers and fed the press with slogans like "I hate the crappy trees". The back cover photo of "Look Sharp!" is showing a skinny troublemaker in a pinstripe suit, while above the pale face of a child the hair is already receding.

His songs are about the lies of love, the lies of the Sunday papers, the lies of couples and the lies of fashion, the tone being cynical: "Sunday Papers", "One More Time", "Fools in Love", "Is She Really Going out with Him?"

In the same year Jackson performed the bigmouth again: For the album "I'm The Man" he posed as a black market peddler and kept singing tunes of anger and revenge, this time added by wonderful ballads like "It's Different for Girls" and "Amateur Hour". This period shows the first "Rockpalast" performance in March 1980. The audience stays inconceivably seated during the whole show while Joe Jackson sneered and poured out his heart being accompanied by Graham Maby (bass), Dave Houghton (drums) und Gary Sandford (guitar): the Joe Jackson Band. Like in the two later shows he starts with "On Your Radio": "Don't you know you can't get near me/ You can only hope to hear me on your radio" – the retaliation of the whimsical outsider and talented orchestral student on the tormentors of his youth.

Later on, Jackson dissociated himself from these songs (that are among his best) because they had been mere attitude. At that point he was already composing symphonies and orchestral music. In 1980 he recorded the album "Beat Crazy" (the title song was he only one he played live in concert), followed by the nostalgic jazz album "Jumpin' Jive" in 1981 that had nearly cost his career (the only live example from this being "Tuxedo Junction"). 1982 saw the release of "Night And Day", to day Jackson's most famous work, and the hit single "Steppin' Out" was on heavy rotation on the radio: Joe's phantasy had become reality.

The show at Hamburg Markthalle in February 1983 presents the artist at the height of his possibilities: The Latin rhythms of "Target", "TV Age" and "Another World" delighted spectators when nobody thought about something like "world music". Sue Hadjopoulos swirled around congas, bongos and xylophone, Joy Askew and Ed Rynesdal played keyboards.

Wide horizons of beauty and cosmopolitanism, big city fever and heated nights: Philip Burke's cover sketch for "Night And Day" had indicated the symbiosis of Cole Porter and Duke Ellington – and the music delivered.

The triumphant performance at the Grugahalle Essen in April 1983 ended Jackson's most successful period. The 60's Motown medley of the show - "Tears of a Clown", "Uptight", "Heatwave" - was presented a quarter of a century before everybody (and Phil Collins) dabbled at this great heritage.

Joe Jackson modestly referred to himself as "student of style". He was more: the tyke from



the last row in school, the class clown – and the genius who dared “Steppin’ Out”, across the borders of rock music.

Arne Willander

Tracklisting:

CD 1:

12. Rocknacht - Grugahalle, Essen April 1983

1. On Your Radio
2. Another World
3. Sunday Papers
4. Look Sharp!
5. Breaking Us In Two
6. Is She Really Going Out With Him
7. Target
8. TV Age
9. Tuxedo Junction
10. Steppin’ Out
11. Beat Crazy
12. One More Time
13. A Slow Song
14. Uptight
15. The Tears Of A Clown
16. I’m Gonna Make You Love Me
17. How Sweet It Is To Be ;Loved
18. Heatwave
19. Uptight
20. I’m The Man

CD 2:

WDR Studio,, Köln 1980.

1. Friday
2. Mad At You
3. Kinda Kute
4. Out Of Style
5. The Harder They Come
6. Fools In Love
7. Is She Really Going Out With Him
8. Don’t Wanna Be Like That

Markthalle, Hamburg 1983

9. Cancer
10. Real Man
11. Is She Really Going Out With Him
12. Cosmopolitan
13. Beat Crazy
14. Motown Medley: Uptight/Tears Of A Clown/I’m Gonna Make You Love Me/How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You/Heatwave/Uptight



Due to time restriction, on CD 2 you will hear the essential tracks of the concerts of WDR Studio, Köln and Markthalle, Hamburg.

The complete concerts can be seen and heard on the DVD Joe Jackson “Live At Rockpalast.”