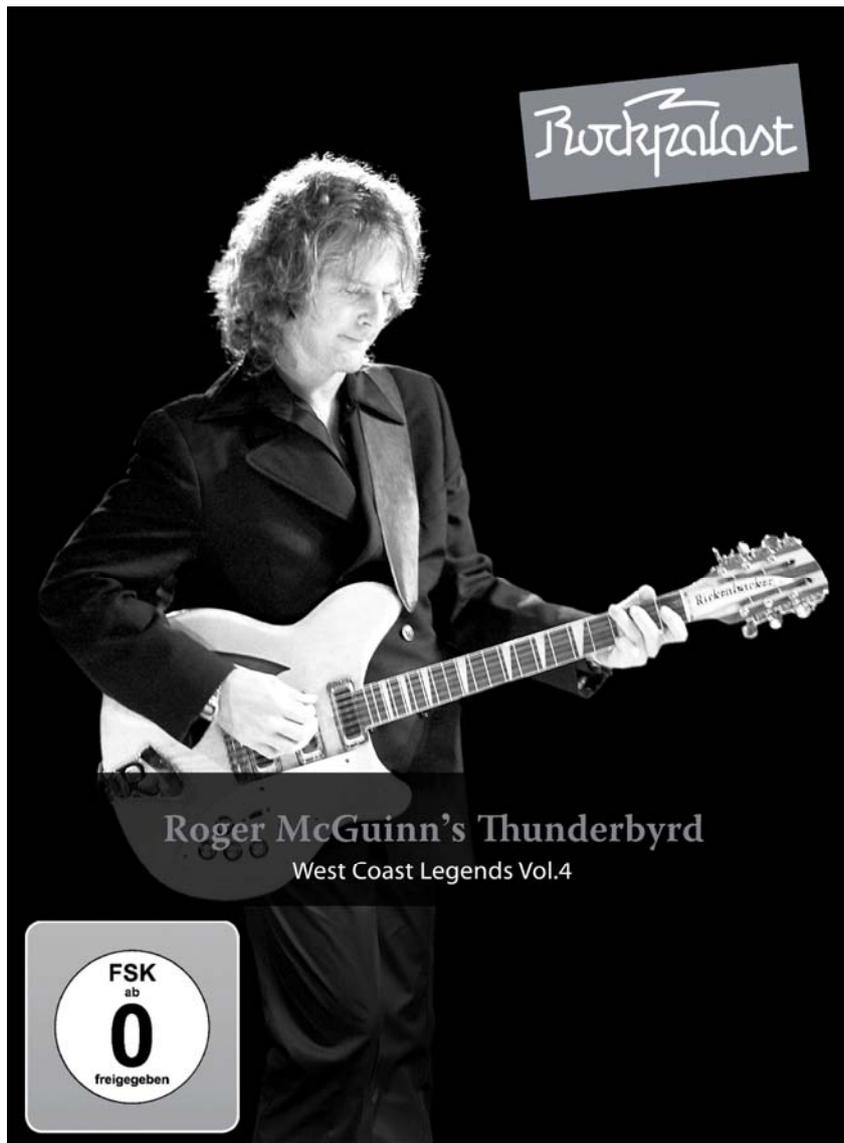


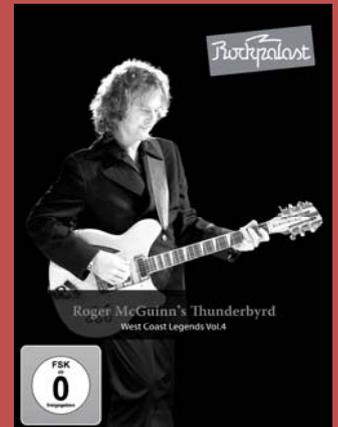
Roger McGuinn's Thunderbyrd „Rockpalast: Westcoast Legends Vol. 4“



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EIGHT MILES HIGH

The historical date: On the night of the 23rd until the dawn of the



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24th of July, 1977. The first Rockpalast took place on stage at the Grugahalle in Essen, Germany.

The sensation: The concert was broadcasted live on ARD (Germany's Channel 1), and further to 7 European countries who had also already agreed to transmit this new program.

They did not know what to expect, however they were endeared to the idea of presenting one special night with a concert of live rock music. This enthusiasm remained, and Rockpalast became a running platform for the next ten years and seventeen nights.

Twice a year was the rule: News, weather report, "Wort zum Sonntag" (Words on Sunday), Eurovision fanfare, Rockpalast. Primetime live open end including parallel stereo audio on the radio.

This was when the TV-transmitters were still very few, and only the West German broadcasting company (WDR) made it possible.

The choice was programmatic: The guideline would not be "charts" oriented, but „music that reaches the heart“, no matter in which way this music was “placed”.

Together with Rory Gallagher's brother Dónal, I originally had the the idea to do a show similar to Bob Dylan's, whose „Rolling Thunder Revue“ – a tour with friends (in 1975/1976) sparked our imagination. Our idea was to create a European counterpart to this with RORY in the centre.

In the end, it didn't quite turn out as initially planned, but out of this idea arose the invitation to ROGER McGUINN. He had taken part on DYLAN's tour, and the name of his own group was evocative of DYLAN's with its combination of ROLLING THUNDER and BYRDS.

We found ourselves in the middle of a tradition that would determine the whole story of Rockpalast. With his 12-string Rickenbacker guitar – the fret scalloped from playing Dylan-songs in D (as director Christian Wagner noted) – he brought the „Jingle, Jangle“ - sound of the BYRDS on the stage of the Grugahalle. And of course "Mr. Tambourine Man" (the Dylan song which the BYRDS had made a hit) was not to be missed.

Each of the three groups had their own day for soundcheck and rehearsal. ROGER rehearsed on Wednesday before the broadcasting. As we also stayed in the same hotel, we had the opportunity to become so well acquainted with him, that we could say „WE are on the air“ as on the Saturday, 23rd of July, 1977 when the Rockpalast introduction was thundering through the hall to open the live broadcast. It lasted more than five hours till the early morning.

The first night began with two full shows performed by RORY GALLAGHER and LITTLE FEAT.

And then – at the dead of night – it happened, the truly astounding concert of ROGER McGUINN'S "THUNDERBYRD" took place.

With ROGER McGUINN, a musical legend entered the Rockpalast stage. Memories of the BYRDS, which he had cofounded arose with the 3-vocal harmonies of this group which was seen by some as the „American answer to the BEATLES“. Various musical relations came to the fore, and became audible throughout the broadcast. "American Girl" recalled the original



version from TOM PETTY in which Petty had produced like a BYRDS song.

PETE SEEGER's „Turn, Turn Turn“. ... „Eight Miles High“ which we had also filmed earlier in the Rockpalast studio with LEO KOTTKE – on his 12-string acoustic guitar.

Personal favorites were played: "Chestnut Mare", at that time a favorite song of director Christian Wagner.

It was a magic night. We could hardly imagine that this unusual format had really gone on air throughout Europe. Not without reason „Eight Miles High“ was the last song of the night. This song which describes – according to interpretation – a flight of the BYRDS over the Atlantic to England and, or drug experiences (DAVID CROSBY had later confessed this intention), also reflected our mood.

Overwhelmed, we fell out of the broadcast vehicle, the pale crescent stood still in the sky over Essen, and we had tears in our eyes.

The tension which had compelled us from the beginning of the planning for this big event up to this moment, now resolved in incredulous amazement about the fact that we had made it! The next day I didn't have the nerve to go to the office, I was beyond responding to anything. But when I finally came down to earth, I was welcomed at the WDR with: „Peter, we have to do this more often“. I asked for two broadcasting dates per year – in the spring and in autumn. The dates were confirmed, and with that, the Rockpalast maintained its position as a beloved program for just over the next ten years.

Peter Rüchel
Rockpalast

TRACKLISTING:

1. Lover Of The Bayou
2. American Girl
3. Mr. Spaceman
4. Why Baby Why/Tiffany Queen
5. Golden Loom
6. Juice Head
7. Chestnut Mare
8. Midnight Dew
9. Dixie Highway (feat. Sam Clayton/Little Feet)
10. We Can Do It All Over Again
11. Shoot Him
12. Feel A Whole Lot Better
13. Turn, Turn, Turn
14. Mr. Tambourine Man
15. Eight Miles High