

Shakin' Stevens - Rockin' & Shakin' (1972)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Roll Over Beethoven* 2. *White Lightning* 3. *One Night With You* 4. *Hi-Heel Sneakers*
5. *Tallahassie Lassie* 6. *Yakety Yak* 7. *Maybellene* 8. *Hearts Made Of Stone* 9. *Good Rockin'*
Tonight 10. *At The Hop* 11. *Walking On The Water* 12. *Rip It* Shakin' Stevens - Primary
Artist, Vocals Mike Barrett - Vocals Sunsets - Primary Artist

Born Michael Barratt, 4 March 1948, Ely, South Glamorgan, Wales, the youngest of 12 children. A rock 'n' roll singer in the style of the early Elvis Presley, Stevens brought this 50s spirit to a long series of pop hits during the 80s. In the late 60s, he teamed up with a Welsh rock revival group, the Backbeats, who immediately changed their name to Shakin' Stevens And The Sunsets. During the early 70s, the band, with Stevens as lead singer, recorded unsuccessful albums for Parlophone Records, CBS Records and Dureco Records in Holland, where the Sunsets had a large following. In 1976, they recorded a cover version of the Hank Mizell hit "Jungle Rock" before disbanding.

Shakin' Stevens now began a solo career, and his debut single was "Never", in March 1977. He appeared on stage in Jack Good's West End musical *Elvis*, which won a number of awards. He also appeared on Good's stage revival of his pioneering television series *Oh Boy!*, and had further exposure on television with the same revival, which was later known as *Let's Rock*. His recording career still did not take off, and following the disappointing *Shakin' Stevens for Track Records* he signed a more lucrative contract with Epic Records under the guidance of his new manager Freya Miller. Three singles followed; Roy Head's "Treat Her Right", Jody Reynolds' death song "Endless Sleep", in the style of 50s UK rocker Marty Wilde, and "Spooky", produced by ex-Springfields member Mike Hurst, but there was still no chart action. A change of producer to Stuart Colman in 1980 brought Stevens' first Top 20 hit, "Marie Marie", first recorded by the Blasters, and the following year Colman's infectious rockabilly arrangement of the 1954 Rosemary Clooney number 1 "This Ole House" topped the UK chart and became a huge international success.

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Over the next seven years, Stevens had 32 Top 40 hits in the UK, and similar popularity followed in Europe and beyond (he was the first artist to go double platinum in Sweden), although he made almost no impact in the USA. Among his hits were three further chart-toppers - a revival, of Jim Lowe's 1956 song "Green Door" (1981), Stevens' own composition "Oh Julie" (1982), and "Merry Christmas Everyone" (1985). With an audience equally divided between young children and the middle-aged, his other recordings included brief excursions into soul (the Supremes' "Come See About Me" in 1987) and MOR ballads (the Bing Crosby/Grace Kelly film theme "True Love", 1988). He duetted with fellow Welsh artist Bonnie Tyler on "A Rockin' Good Way (To Mess Around And Fall In Love)" (1984), which was first recorded in 1960 by Dinah Washington and Brook Benton.

At the dawn of the 90s, even though he was hugely popular in Europe, there were signs that Stevens' hold over his UK audiences was faltering. Although the Pete Hammond-produced "I Might" reached the UK Top 20, his subsequent records in 1990/1 made little impact. A promotion campaign for the compilation The Epic Years (billed as "Shaky") failed to dent the UK Top 50. 1993 started badly for Stevens, as litigation with his former band the Sunsets was resolved, it was alleged that Dave Edmunds and Shaky had to pay out £500,000 in back royalties. In 1995, he decided to take some time out, to review his career and business affairs. He returned to touring in 1999 and to the recording studio the following year, although no album has yet been forthcoming. --- music.us

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