

Jeff Beck - There And Back 1980

Written by bluesever

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1. *Star Cycle* 2. *Too Much to Lose* [play](#) 3. *You Never Know* 4. *Pump* 5. *El Becko* 6. *Golden Road* 7. *Space Boogie* 8. *Final Peace*
[play](#)

Musicians: Jeff Beck - Guitars Jan Hammer - Keyboards Tony Hymas - Keyboards Mo Foster - Bass Simon Phillips – Drums

There and Back, Jeff Beck's first new studio album in four years, found him moving from old keyboard partner Jan Hammer (three tracks) to new one Tony Hymas (five), which turned out to be the difference between competition and support. Hence, the second side of this instrumental album is more engaging and less of a funk-fusion extravaganza than most of the first. If it were anybody else, you'd say that this was a transitional album, but this was the only studio album Beck released between 1976 and 1985, which makes it more like an unexpected Christmas letter from an old friend: "Everything's fine, still playing guitar." ---William Ruhlmann, AMG

Released in June 1980 on Epic Records, the problem with There and Back is immediately apparent and understood. The three tracks with Jan Hammer go one way while the five tracks with Tony Hymas, Simon Phillips, and Mo Foster go another. As William Ruhlmann notes in his review on allmusicguide, it is a mixed bag recording — the tracks with Hammer are heavily into a kind of funk meets fusion setting, while the second half boasts a more straightforward instrumental rock vibe.

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The album doesn't rise to the level of *Blow by Blow* (1975) or *Wired* (1976), but it still remains one of my favorite Beck albums, as the timing of its release matched milestones in my life and remains with me to this day. It's one of my summer music arsenal must haves, a welcome companion whenever I'm tooling somewhere with the top down.

There and Back had some success too, reaching #21 on the U.S. charts (#11 on the Jazz chart). More than a few of the tracks have remained concert staples for Beck's groups over the years as well. The three Jan Hammer tracks have their moments but they mostly find him and Beck in competition with each other a bit too much, which takes away from the cohesion of the other tracks. (The drum sound on the Hammer tracks seems weirdly off as well.) Still, Beck manages some nifty solos, especially on *Star Cycle* where he burns bright and colorful leads and phrases over Hammer's cacophony of sound. *You Never Know* boasts some eventful exchanges between Beck and Hammer.

The Hymas/Phillips/Foster trio suits Beck's guitar shapes better in my opinion. Hymas/Phillips give Beck more support and collaboration than that heard with Hammer. The album changes in tone as well, becoming more rock focused with added nuance and sonic support from the bass and keyboard effects. Phillips is solid on drums throughout.

The two most celebrated tracks remain *El Becko* (a play on Beck's *Bolero* from his debut solo album perhaps), which boasts a "torn flesh" solo from Beck, and *Space Boogie*, with its nuanced keyboard and straight ahead piano elements, coupled with a rolling drum track and some raucous Beck solos in the mix.

Beck ends the album with one of his signature mood pieces, *The Final Peace*, which highlights his ability to play beautifully nuanced and atmospheric solos with understated grace while retaining the guitar's power.

Even with its faults and somewhat dated synthesizer effects, *There and Back* remains a solid album, with enough Beck guitar zen moments on it to make it worth a listen now and again. ---
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