

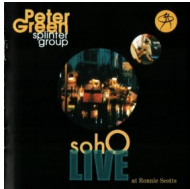
## Peter Green Splinter Group - Soho Live At Ronnie Scotts (1999)

Wpisany przez bluesever

Wtorek, 23 Sierpień 2011 17:09 - Zmieniony Środa, 12 Czerwiec 2013 21:31

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CD 1 1 *It Takes Time* - Otis Rush 5:18 2 *Homework* - Otis Rush 3:45 3 *Black Magic Woman* - Peter Green 7:07 4 *Hey Mama Keep Your Big Mouth Shut* - Ellis McDaniel 6:18 5 *The Supernatural* - Peter Green 3:36 6 *Rattlesnake Shake* - Peter Green 4:59 [play](#)  
7 *Shake Your Hips* - James Moore 5:15 8 *Albatross* - Peter Green 3:30

CD 2

1 *Travelling Riverside Blues* - Robert Johnson 3:59

[play](#)

2 *Steady Rollin' Man* - Robert Johnson 3:13 3 *Honeymoon Blues* - Robert Johnson 3:03 4 *Last Fair Deal Gone Down* - Robert Johnson 3:19 5 *If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day* - Robert Johnson 4:27 6 *Green Manalishi* - Peter Green 5:37 7 *Goin' Down* - Don Nix 7:35 8 *Help Me* - Ralph Bass; Sonny Boy Williamson; Willie Dixon 4:48 9 *Look on Yonder Wall* - Elmore James; Marshall Sehorn 6:46

Peter Green - (vocals, lead guitar, slide guitar, harmonica) Nigel Watson - (vocals, lead guitar, rhythm guitar) Roger Cotton - (piano, Hammond C3, rhythm guitar) Neil Murray - (bass) Larry Tolfree - (drums, percussion) Milton Brown, Debra Lewis, Ray Shell, Charita Thomas [The Street Angels] - backing vocals

With just one week to go to the Splinter Group's showcase at Ronnie Scott's club in London Soho, Peter Green's Jaguar is cruising on the M4 motorway en route to a Sunday night gig at the Cardiff Coal Exchange. In the car cassette-player is an important tape the first mixes of four tracks from the Robert Johnson Songbook album by Green and co-guitarist Nigel Watson. As they listen, both musicians agree that there is still some work to be done on the mixing in order to bring out the jazz lounge vibe, which they accompanied by the band on certain numbers - were trying to recreate. One exception though is Watson's arrangement of 'Honeymoon Blues' with Neil Murray's walking bass lines, Larry Tolfree's brushes and Roger Cotton's relaxed lounge piano. "Ronnie Scott's, here we come," said Peter as the song ends, obviously relishing the prospect The Splinter Group are ready for their debut at the world famous Jazz venue. "Our record company" Nigel explains "was looking to promote the release of our Robert Johnson album, and so we incorporated the Splinter Group into the show.

In the middle of the set we did a medley of Robert Johnson songs with the 'Street Angels' (A gospel vocal quartet), this gave the gig a freshness that everyone enjoyed". Adrenalin was really flowing during soundcheck on Sunday, April 5th 1998. Sound engineer Arthur Anderson, had to balance the sound at much lower volume levels than usual, in order to suit a venue designed for acoustic 'unplugged' acts, and not amplified electric blues bands. "We had to be careful", Peter recalls, "because it's a perfect sized Jazz club with acoustics that are incredible - so you don't need to be loud. I really enjoyed having to play quietly". After half an hour of opening the club was packed to the rafters. The crowd included many music biz people and journalists who proved to be enthusiastically attentive through the whole set (which lasted over two hours). That the band went down a storm playing for their London fans comes as no great surprise; but more objective confirmation that this was an especially successful performance was to be found in press write-ups published the following week.

The Independent's James McNair was reminded - as he listened to Splinter Group's version of "Rattlesnake Shake" of Peter Green's legendary status as an innovator of guitar sounds during the 1960s; sounds which subsequently were adopted by acts such as ZZ Top. This same critic was also impressed by Green's true blues voice and the contemporary dance groove that the band nailed down as they performed R&B classics such as Bo Diddley's 'Mama, keep your big mouth shut'. What's more, Nigel Watson's crucial role in Green's 'miraculous comeback' over the past few years was very obvious, McNair asserted. Watson's mastery of Robert Johnson's often complex guitar style got a mention, as did the variety of styles that the band obviously felt comfortable playing - ranging from updates of the old Fleetwood Mac hits, to very 1990's gospel interpretations of Robert Johnson classics. For the Splinter Group, Soho Session (An Evening at Ronnie Scott's) is another milestone; for the listener it is also a yardstick charting the musical progress of a band now completing its third year in various line-ups (five so far, to be precise), A two year chunk separates the recording of the bands first live album Peter Green Splinter Group and this one. During that time the band gigned extensively in Europe, Ireland and the U.K. Most notably, in November 1997 the band did six high-profile support slots in Britain for the BB King Blues Band. When the tour reached the Fairfield Halls at Croydon the audience got an unexpected bonus - B.B. King, Peter Green and Nigel Watson on stage together for an impromptu jam. Listening to this album, Splinter Group aficionados naturally will have their own opinion on the band's development. But the chances are that anyone who caught them on the B.B. King tour, and then saw them once more just three months later on their Spring '98 UK concert hall tour will have noticed a surge in the band's confidence and attitude.

So, what happened in those intervening months? Nigel Watson explains "We spent a month touring Germany and working on our sound. On several nights our tour manager Arthur recorded the gig at the sound desk and we'd listen to it afterwards back at the hotel, and on the tour bus travelling to the next gig, Larry and Roger pitched in with ideas about improving our sound and performance with the result that we came back from the tour a much tighter band". A

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tighter band, yes, but one which was now also defining its own unique groove for the first time. An in-your-face groove on numbers added to the set list over in Germany, these were: Slim Harpo's "Shake Your Hips", Bo Diddley's "Mama, Keep Your Big Mouth Shut" and Robert Johnson's "Terraplane Blues", along with a jazz flavoured version of Green's classic instrumental "The Supernatural". On the Harpo, Diddley and Johnson songs the Tolfree/Cotton effect is especially noticeable. Certainly, the 19 tracks on this album - 7 blues standards; 5 Peter Green classics; 6 songs from the Green/Watson Robert Johnson album; and one Watson original - confirm the band's versatility in their choice of blues-based material.

But the critical acclaim and celebrations in the aftermath of Splinter Group's Ronnie Scott's gig, soon were tinged with a note of real sadness, which rings on today. Namely, that on that same night the colourful life of Cozy Powell Splinter Group's original drummer in every sense of that word - came to a tragically early end at the age of 50. Powell's car spun out of control in the small hours of Monday morning on the M4 near Bristol. So this album, as well as being a manifesto outlining the band's future (n.b. after it was recorded, Pete Stroud took over on bass last summer in time for their successful tour of the U.S.) is also a small eulogy for the supreme musician and brilliant star who played a vital role in Splinter Group's past. "We played at Ronnie Scott's" said Nigel Watson, "on the same night that Cozy was killed on the motorway, and because he was a founder member, we'd like to dedicate some of this recording to him. We will always be very grateful for his contribution in helping us start this band up". Peter Green adds: "Cozy was a very nice bloke one of the nicest people I've ever met. There were no troubles from him when he was travelling with us...a super bloke...that's all I can say.

---www.fleetwoodmac.net

Recorded live at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in Soho, London, this two-disc set captures much of the essence of Green with the Splinter Group, his backing outfit for the last several years. And it's an interesting mix of material they come out with, from blues covers, a set of Robert Johnson material, as well as a trawl through the old Fleetwood Mac songbook -- which might well be the big draw here. However, welcome as it is to have Green back as a regular performer, he's not the man he once was, and it's notable the guitar solos aren't defined -- you can never tell who's playing, as colleague Nigel Watson has his tone and style down perfectly. In many ways, the most satisfying segment comes with six Robert Johnson tracks, which arrive without Green baggage or expectation, and really do satisfy, while the addition of the Street Angels, a gospel group, on vocals, strengthens the sound, which already has plenty of backbone. "The Supernatural," once one of Green's most incisive instrumentals, seems to have lost its bite -- but that's true of all the old material. "Green Manalishi" was heavy as lead when it originally appeared, and now it's weightless, while the subtleties of "Albatross" have vanished, and "Black Magic Woman" seems oddly formless. This isn't to say it's a bad album by any

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means. It's perhaps unfortunate that Green has to deal with his own history. There are moments when the old genius shines, but they're few and far between. He's lived the blues, but his ability to transform that into music has mostly vanished. Satisfying if you take it on its own terms and don't expect the god-like playing that once defined Peter Green, the Soho Session is a British blues outfit with taste, chops, and occasional transcendent moments. ---Chris Nickson

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