

Yardbirds - Roger the Engineer (1966)

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01. *Lost Woman* – 3:12
 02. *Over, Under, Sideways, Down* – 2:21
 03. *The Nazz Are Blue* – 3:00
 04. *I Can't Make Your Way* – 2:22
 05. *Rack My Mind* – 3:11
 06. *Farewell* – 1:27
 07. *Hot House Of Omagarashid* – 2:41
 08. *Jeff's Boogie* – 2:21
 09. *He's Always There* – 2:12
 10. *Turn Into Earth* – 3:03
 11. *What Do You Want* – 3:20
 12. *Ever Since The World Began* – 2:02
- Bonuses:
13. *Psycho Daisies (Bonus Single)* - 1:47
 14. *Happenings Ten Years Time Ago (Bonus Single)* - 2:54

Personnel:

- Keith Relf – lead vocals, harmonica
 - Jeff Beck – lead guitar, bass (2), vocals (3, 13)
 - Chris Dreja – rhythm guitar
 - Paul Samwell-Smith – bass
 - Jim McCarty – drums, percussion
- +
- Jimmy Page - guitar (14), bass (13)
 - John Paul Jones - bass (14)

Once Jeff Beck joined the Yardbirds, the group began to explore uncharted territory, expanding their blues-rock into wild sonic permutations of psychedelia, Indian music, and avant-garde

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white noise. Each subsequent single displayed a new direction, one that expanded on the ideas of the previous single, so it would seem that Roger the Engineer -- Beck's first full album with the group and the band's first album of all-original material -- would have offered them the opportunity to fully explore their adventurous inclinations. Despite a handful of brilliant moments, Roger the Engineer falls short of expectations, partially because the band is reluctant to leave their blues roots behind and partially because they simply can't write a consistent set of songs. At their best on Roger, the Yardbirds strike a kinetic balance of blues-rock form and explosive psychedelia ("Lost Woman," "Over, Under Sideways, Down," "The Nazz Are Blue," "He's Always There," "Psycho Daisies"), but they can also bog down in silly Eastern drones (although "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" is a classic piece of menacing psychedelia) or blues tradition ("Jeff's Boogie" is a pointless guitar workout that doesn't even showcase Beck at his most imaginative). The result is an unfocused record that careens between the great and the merely adequate, but the Yardbirds always had a problem with consistency -- none of their early albums had the impact of the singles, and Roger the Engineer suffers from the same problem. Nevertheless, it is the Yardbirds' best individual studio album, offering some of their very best psychedelia, even if it doesn't rank among the great albums of its era. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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