

## Cat Stevens - Buddha And The Chocolate Box (1974)

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01. *Music* – 4:18
02. *Oh Very Young* – 2:33
03. *Sun/C79* – 4:35
04. *Ghost Town* – 3:08
05. *Jesus* – 2:11
06. *Ready* – 3:13
07. *King Of Trees* – 5:07
08. *A Bad Penny* – 3:19
09. *Home In The Sky* – 3:30

### Personnel:

- Cat Stevens - vocals, synthesizer, guitar, keyboards, producer, design, concept, illustrations
- Barry, Brigitte, Clifford, Danny, Jacqui, Suzanne Cox, Jimmy, Joanne, Joy, Judy, Larry, Rick McCollum, Ruby, Sunny - vocals, singer, chorus
- Gerry Conway - drums, vocals
- Alun Davies - acoustic guitar, vocals
- Roland Harker - banjo
- Bruce Lynch - bass
- Del Newman - strings, arranger, string arrangements
- Jean Roussel - strings, arranger, keyboards, string arrangements
- Jim Ryan, Mark Warner – gitar

While *Foreigner* was Cat Stevens' fifth consecutive gold album and his fourth straight Top Ten hit, it actually marked a small drop commercially and encountered critical resistance for the lengthy suite that took up all of side one. Eight months later, *Buddha and the Chocolate Box* found Stevens back in England and back with producer Paul Samwell-Smith and second guitarist Alun Davies. It also marked a return to the simpler style of earlier albums. No song ran much over five minutes, the arrangements were sparer and featured more acoustic guitar, and

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the lyrics did not take off into discursive ruminations about the state of the universe. It was very much as if Stevens was deliberately trying to make an album like Teaser and the Firecat, his commercial and artistic apex. Having begun the album with an ode to "Music" and its potential for reforming the world, he ended with "Home in the Sky," in which he sang, "Music is a lady that I still love." Such statements of renewed commitment added to the sense that the album was consciously crafted as an attempted second wind for the singer, who had been recording and performing at a torrid pace since returning to the music business full-time four years before. But that was not to say that he had abandoned the spiritual nature of his creative quest, and the songs were, as usual, littered with religious imagery. Stevens' fans responded warmly to Buddha and the Chocolate Box's stylistic return to form. "Oh Very Young" became his first Top Ten hit in two years, and the album was held out of number one only by The Sting. The album's tone, however, suggested that Stevens was once again wearying of being a pop star, even as he delivered a record that maintained that status. ---William Ruhlmann, Rovi

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