

JOE COCKER Mad Dogs & Englishmen

"Zee Mad Dogs and zee Englishmen . . . and Joe Cock-air!"

TAKE A HUGE, PULSATING, JUGGERNAUT OF A BAND WITH THREE DRUMMERS AND TWO PERCUSSIONISTS, A LETHAL HORN SECTION AND TEN-STRONG SPACE CHOIR; ADD A PIANO-PLAYING, GUITAR-WIELDING RINGMASTER COMPLETE WITH TOP HAT; MIX WITH DRUGS, ALCOHOL, LOVE, JEALOUSY, PHENOMENAL TALENT AND MASSIVE EGOS - AND ADD JOE COCKER. RESULT? THE CRAZIEST, LOUDEST, LONGEST ROCK AND ROLL CIRCUS TO HAVE EVER HIT AMERICA: FIFTY EIGHT NIGHTS IN FORTY EIGHT CITIES; THE TOUR THAT CATAPULTED COCKER INTO ROCK LEGEND; THE TOUR THAT ALMOST FINISHED HIM.

In March 1970 touring the States was the last thing on Joe Cocker's mind. He was tired of the road, he needed a rest and time to think about his musical direction. He had sacked the Grease Band, was on holiday in Jamaica and felt no urgency at all to cash in on the success achieved over the previous year. But Cocker's career was no longer in his control. A tour was fixed and the message was clear - if he didn't do it he would never work in America again.

Joe turned to Leon Russell. Perhaps, with Chris Stainton, they could pull a another couple of musicians in to form a band and do the tour? Leon agreed to help - but only if he could put the band together. He had many friends in the L.A. studios - and a lot of them became Mad Dogs & Englishmen. Rehearsals ran twelve hours a day for four days and a rare tape of the proceedings reveals Cocker in amazing voice, arrangements jazzier than ever before or since. But from having no band whatsoever, Joe now had a huge band that was growing out of hand. His producer, Denny Cordell, had become concerned. He told Leon Russell, "This

is great, we've pulled it out of the frying pan, but we can't have three drummers, any one of them will do!" Russell replied in his Oklahoma drawl "Well who's gonna tell the other two they can't come?" By now Joe had begun to realise that Leon saw himself as the star of this particular show.

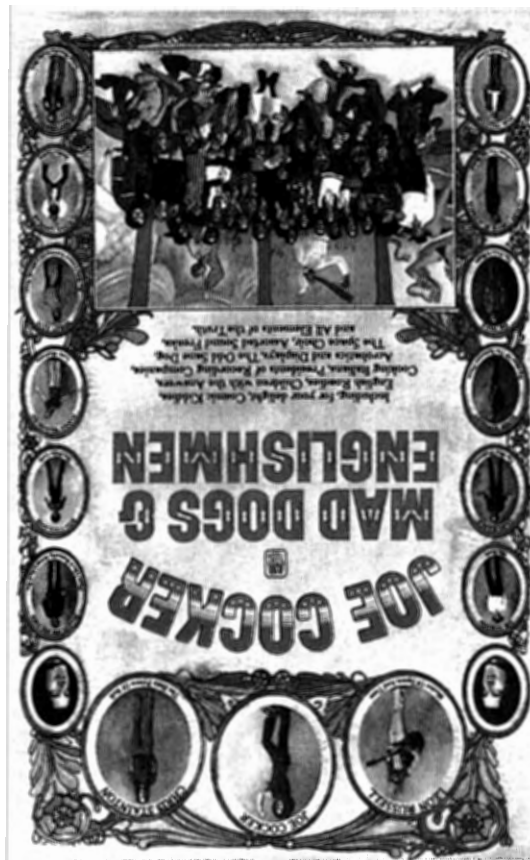
The Mad Dogs' repertoire was put together in these four frantic days on the A&M Studios. Joe liked the recent Rolling Stones' hit *Honky Tonk Women*, so they decided that would open the show. Russell suggested *Cry Me A River*, an old torch ballad that he had long visualised in a gospel vein. A Box Tops song, *The Letter*, was rehearsed and recorded, as was *Space Captain*, written by Matthew Moore, one of the people who turned up at the rehearsals and went along as a member of the Space Choir. Superstar came out of Russell's earlier sojourn with Delaney and Bonnie, *Let's Go Get Stoned* dated back to Joe's heady days of '68 on the British club and festival circuit. *Sticks and Stones* was a song Joe had no difficulty making his own in the weeks to come and *Blue Medley* gets to the essence of

Cocker's soul, while the frenetic, repetitive *Give Peace A Chance* shows clearly why Joe, who, in the words of Denny Cordell, has always been "a man of great finesse", became disillusioned with the whole venture.

Mad Dogs & Englishmen opened in Detroit on 19 March, 1970. Four shows later they hit New York's Fillmore East. Everywhere, audience response and press reviews were ecstatic, the tour seemed, as drummer Jim Keltner said "one big, wild party". But within a couple of weeks the party spirit was crumbling. As the relationship between Cocker and Russell deteriorated, the band looked to Leon while Joe felt the tour was turning into a monster. For years after he refused to talk about it - when he eventually did he said, of Leon Russell: "I'd revered the man, but we fell out pretty badly . . . a big ego clash." The last show came on 16 May in San Bernadino. Joe looked tired and deathly pale as he walked on stage but when the band struck up he did what he had done in every show, in every major city in America for eight weeks - he sang his heart out for the people.

The Mad Dogs & Englishmen tour was to have a profound effect on Joe that would take a long time to shake off. Many years later he said "It was an experience . . . It was something else. We all thought we were off to Venus, heading for Outer Space, but it didn't evolve that way. I ended up in a heap in Los Angeles, very disillusioned with the whole rock business." But this live album shows Joe Cocker in his prime, driven on by probably the hottest and most powerful band he has ever had. Recorded during the first week on the road, at Fillmore East, it reveals all the excitement and exhilaration of the tour, before the bad vibes seeped in. On release in September 1970, Mad Dogs & Englishmen reached #2 in the U.S. album charts, selling over a million copies, besides riding high in the charts in Britain and Europe. A&M Records loved it - and not just because it had been a hit. As co-founder Jerry Moss would later say "It's an extraordinary record, one of the greatest records we've ever put out - and we've had some nice live albums."

J.P.Bean / Sheffield 1999



THE BAND

Leon Russell - guitar, piano
Chris Stainton - piano, organ
Don Preston - rhythm guitar
Carl Radle - bass
Jim Gordon - drums
Jim Keltner - drums
Chuck Blackwell - percussion and drums
Sandy Konikoff - percussion
Bobby Torres - congas
Jim Price - trumpet
Bobby Keys - tenor sax

THE CHOIR

Don Preston, Rita Coolidge, Claudia Lennear, Daniel Moore, Donna Weiss, Pamela Pollard, Matthew Moore, Donna Washburn, Nicole Barclay, and Bobby Jones
Musical Arrangements: Leon Russell and Chris Stainton

PRODUCED BY DENNY CORDELL AND LEON RUSSELL FOR TARANTULA PRODUCTIONS LIMITED
Recorded on March 27-28, 1970 at Fillmore East, New York
Location Engineer: Edwin Kramer
Mixdown and Master Engineer: Glyn Johns, M.B.E.

Design: Tom Wilkes
Photography: Jim McCrory, Cosmina Andee Cohen
Packaging Concept: Craig Braun
Illustration: Ron Wolin

Leon Russell appears with love from Shelter Records
Don Preston courtesy of Stax Records

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