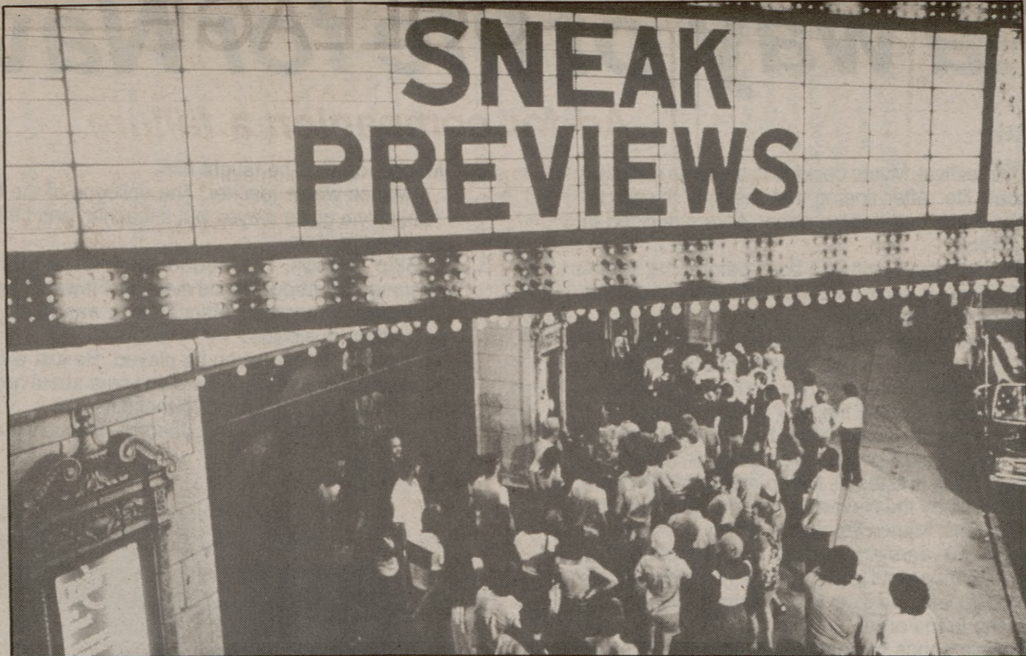


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Review

'Tusk' price doesn't reflect quality

Fleetwood Mac used to be good. Before Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham joined the group, Fleetwood Mac was known as one of the best British blues bands around. However, a lot of their best work went unnoticed in the United States. That all changed in 1975 when the new Fleetwood Mac (featuring Nicks and Buckingham) began recording. Along with bassist John McVie, keyboardist Christine McVie and drummer Mick Fleetwood, the new Fleetwood Mac set sales records as an easy-going, laid-back vocal group. In 1976 they released "Rumours" and sat on the charts for almost two years. Since then they have not released a new album.

That was true until December 1979 when Fleetwood Mac's long awaited double album set "Tusk" was released. With a list price of \$15.95, "Tusk" was the most expensive record ever released. The price does not reflect the quality.

"Tusk" contains 25 songs, an impressive number by anyone's standards, but at least half of them should have been re-mixed, re-arranged, re-recorded or just scrapped. The best way to look at this album is one side at a time.

Side one opens with "Over and Over," a Christine McVie song. The lyrics are typical, about loving and leaving, etc. But the drums and bass plod along, seemingly with no direction.

Two of the cuts on side one are penned by Lindsey Buckingham, and are probably the lowest points of the album. Before "Tusk" was released, there was a lot of press about Buckingham recording some of his parts at his home. If "The Ledge" and "Save Me a Place"

are examples of Buckingham's in-home production, he should stick to the studio. The drums sound as if they're being beaten with a wet newspaper and the entire recording has a hiss in it like a \$2 tape recorder.

Side one rounds out with "Sara," the Stevie Nicks song that was released as a single. Now, this song is good. Stevie's voice is strong and the recording is clear and crisp. It's no wonder this song was released as the single, because "Sara" is probably the high point of the album. It's pretty much downhill from here.

The second side of the first record is probably less erratic but not necessarily any better. There are three Buckingham and two Nicks songs on side two, but only the Nicks songs stand out.

Stevie's "Storms" and "Sisters of the Moon" are interesting cuts that should remind the listener of "Rhiannon" from the 1975 album "Fleetwood Mac." Both are listenable ballads and make great background music. The only complaint I have is that Stevie should learn to sing in something other than a monotone.

The other three songs are Buckingham's "What Makes You Think You're the One," "That's All for Everyone" and "Not That Funny." Of these three, the only one that is remotely interesting is "That's All for Everyone," a song that reminds me of Bob Welch. While the lyrics are not great, Lindsey's voice doesn't sound better anywhere on the album.

Side three. By this time the listener is growing weary. But three of the five cuts provide a little bit of hope. But not enough. "That's Enough for Me" (I won't touch that with a 10-foot pole) and "I Know I'm not Wrong" provide a good listen to Buckingham's acoustic guitar.

Maybe Lindsey should stick with the instrument and leave the producing alone. "Angel," "Brown Eyes" and "Never Make Me Cry" are just re-hashed from "Rumours."

Side Four. (Almost through.) The first three songs plod and drag. If you are planning to listen to "Tusk" all the way through, "Honey Hi" may force you to remove the album from your turntable. The same goes for "Beautiful Child" or "Walk a Thin Line." These songs go absolutely nowhere.

However, "Tusk" does close on a more listenable note. The title track is fun and Mick Fleetwood is provided a bit of a showcase.

The USC Marching Band is featured on "Tusk," its part recorded live at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. Like I said, it's fun. Christine McVie's "Never Forget" closes the album and this song sounds tighter than anything else on the album.

"Tusk" has been compared to the Beatles "White Album." This album could have been made a lot shorter by cutting away some of the deadwood songs that permeate the record. A possible explanation for the poor quality of "Tusk" lies in the expectations of the record-buying public. Many people were expecting another "Rumours" and the band may have felt pressure to change their already successful formula.

This is all speculation, of course, but I doubt that anything could have followed the success of "Rumours." Until the next album we'll have to wait and see how "Tusk" fares. Don't hold your breath.

— Geoff Hackett

Albums

KANM — 99.9 FM Hits

Pink Floyd — The Wall (Columbia)
Led Zeppelin — In Through the Out Door (Swan Song)
ZZ Top — Deguello (Warner Bros.)
Weather Report — 8:30 (Arc/Columbia)
Steve Forbert — Jackrabbit Slim (Nemperor)
Tom Scott — Street Beat (Columbia)
Fleetwood Mac — Tusk (Warner Bros.)
Dan Fogelberg — Phoenix (Full Moon/Epic)
Eagles — The Long Run (Asylum)
Little Feat — Down on the Farm (Warner Bros.)

Risers

Journey — Evolution (Columbia)
Stevie Wonder — Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants (Tamla/Motown)
Soundtrack — The Rose (Atlantic)
Ian McLagan — Trouble Maker (Mercury)
Steve Walsh — Schemer-Dreamer (Kirshner)
Clash — London Calling (Epic)
Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers — Damn the Torpedoes (MCA)
Frank Zappa — Joe's Garage, Acts II & III (Zappa)
Electric Light Orchestra — Greatest Hits (Columbia)
Bruce Cockburn — Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws (Millenium)

Faders

Bob James and Earl Klugh — One on One (Tappan Zee)
Pat Benatar — In the Heat of the Night (Chrysalis)
Molly Hatchet — Flirtin' With Disaster (Epic)
Neil Young and Crazy Horse — Live Rust (Warner Bros.)
Jean-Luc Ponty — A Taste for Passion (Atlantic)
Aerosmith — A Night In the Ruts (Columbia)
Gamma — Gamma 1 (Elektra)
Emerson, Lake, and Palmer — In Concert (Atlantic)
Jefferson Starship — Freedom At Point Zero (Grunt)

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