

Head East

The Best Of Head East 20th Century Masters The Millennium Collection

(CD Folder)

Let us now travel back to another time, a mythic era in which guitar power chords and soaring harmonies filled the air, when hair was feathered and jeans were skintight, when "rock" was still a verb (as in, "Are you ready" to rock? "), and when sports arenas around the world were regularly filled with throngs of fans wearing three-quarter-sleeve baseball tees and holding their lighters aloft, clamoring for just one more searing solo.

The time was the '70s, and the music was arena rock. Bands like Styx, REO Speedwagon and Boston ruled the roost back then. One band that endeavored to achieve such fame is Head East. They just missed that one breakthrough hit that would catapult them to household word status. But in their heyday, in the mid- and late-'70s, they were among the best hard rock bands in the States, with a large and devoted coterie of fans that still flock to see them today, over three decades after their formation.

Formed in 1969, in south central Illinois, Head East went through several lineups and musical evolutions before settling on the five-man lineup and prog-influenced, hard rock sound that would take them from local stars to national players in the mid-'70s. Roger Boyd, John Schlitt, Dan Birney, Steve Huston and Mike Somerville recorded their debut album, *Flat As A Pancake*, without the benefit of a record contract in 1974, and early the next year released it on their own Pyramid Records label, even choosing to manage themselves. Thanks to nonstop touring throughout the Midwest, the buzz about them started growing. Once the album track "Never Been Any Reason" became the most requested song on an FM radio station in Kansas City, MO, A&M Records signed the band to a multi-album contract and re-released *Flat As A Pancake*. It's a testament to the band's artistic vision that the label didn't send them back into the studio to polish the album, choosing to leave it as it was.

And it was a good choice-*Flat As A Pancake* remains Head East's most well-known album, and the first single it spawned, "Never Been Any Reason," became one of their biggest hits, a staple on album rock radio for years and a minor pop crossover as well. All the hallmarks of the Head East sound are there: powerful, bluesy guitars and strong, 4/4 drumming combined with keyboard playing reminiscent of bands like Genesis and harmonies equal to anything Queen or Styx put on record. Their combination of straight-ahead rock with art-rock flourishes helped make *Flat As A Pancake* a steady seller-it eventually went gold-and made Head East regional stars.

Head East kept touring relentlessly throughout the '70s while building up a devoted following, especially in the Midwest. They kept busy in the studio as well, recording four albums from 1976-79-*Get Yourself Up*, *Gettin' Lucky*, *Head East* and *A Different Kind Of Crazy*. Those albums showcased two sides of the band: their studio musicianship and ability to write originals such as fist-pumpers like "Get Up And Enjoy Yourself" that showed what a great party band they were.

It almost seemed like a tradition for touring hard rock bands in the '70s to release live double albums. Head East's contribution, released in 1979, is among the best of the genre. It was also a commercial success, becoming their highest charting album at #65. *Head East Live!* shows that, in addition to being masters of the studio, the band was also able to replicate that sound onstage with jaw-dropping success. Check out the perfect harmonizing on "Take A Hand" and it's easy to understand why they were such a hot concert draw.

After A Different Kind Of Crazy was released in late 1979, the classic Head East lineup split up, leaving only original members Roger Boyd and Steve Huston. The band soldiered on, however, continuing to release new studio albums throughout the '80s, and have kept touring into the new millennium. The '70s are just a distant memory now, but Head East still prove, with every show and with these classic recordings, that great music played by talented musicians never goes out of style.

Tony Sachs
July 2001

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1) Never Been Any Reason
(Mike Somerville)
Produced by Roger Boyd
from the A&M album Flat As A Pancake (1975)

2) Jefftown Creek
(Steve Huston)
Produced by Roger Boyd
from the A&M album Flat As A Pancake (1975)

3) City Of Gold
(Steve Huston)
Produced by Roger Boyd
from the A&M album Flat As A Pancake (1975)

4) Love Me Tonight
(Mike Somerville)
Produced by Roger Boyd
from the A&M album Flat As A Pancake (1975)

5) Monkey Shine
(Dan Birney)
Produced by Roger Boyd
from the A&M album Get Yourself Up (1976)

6) Gettin' Lucky
(Steve Huston - Mike Somerville)
Produced by Richard Podolor
from Gettin' Lucky (1977)

7) Every Little Bit Of My Heart
(Roger Boyd - John Schlitt)
Produced by Richard Podolor
from Gettin' Lucky (1977)

8) Get Up And Enjoy Yourself
(John Schlitt)

Produced by Jeffrey Lesser
from the A&M album Head East (1978)

9) Man I Wanna Be
(Mike Somerville)

Produced by Jeffrey Lesser
from the A&M album Head East (1978)

10) Since You Been Gone
(Russ Ballard)

Produced by Jeffrey Lesser
from the A&M album Head East (1978)

11) Keep A Secret
(Steve Huston)

Produced by Jeff Glixman
from the A&M album A Different Kind Of Crazy (1979)

12) Take A Hand
(Rick Springfield)

Produced by Jeffrey Lesser
from the A&M album Live (1979)

Compilation Produced by Mike Ragogna

Mastered by Doug Schwartz @ Audio Mechanics, Los Angeles, CA

Production Coordination: Beth Jingles Stempel

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Licensing: Rhonda Malmund/Kelly Martinez

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Design:

Photo Research: Ryan Null

Photos:

Special Thanks to Andy McKaie, Richie Gallo, Sal Nunziato and Head East fans everywhere!

Also Available by Head East:

Flat As A Pancake (750 213 196-2/4)

The Best Of... 20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collections Also Available:

.38 Special (069 490 561-2/4)

The Flying Burrito Brothers (069 493 056-2)

Humble Pie (069 490 734-2)

Rod Stewart (314 546 331-2/4)

Joe Cocker (314 541 606-2/4)

The Tubes (069 490 766-2)

Robert Palmer (314 546 556-2/4)

Steve Winwood (314 564 791-2/4)

The Fixx (088 112 368-2)

Glenn Frey (088 112 359-2)

Joe Walsh (088 112 231-2/4)
Lynyrd Skynyrd (MCAC/D-11941)
Three Dog Night (088 112 073-2/4)
The Who (MCAC/D-11951)
Tears For Fears (314 542 492-2)

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20th Century Masters / The Millennium Collection

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(CD Inlay)

- 1) Never Been Any Reason
- 2) Jefftown Creek
- 3) City Of Gold
- 4) Love Me Tonight
- 5) Monkey Shine
- 6) Gettin' Lucky
- 7) Every Little Bit Of My Heart
- 8) Get Up And Enjoy Yourself
- 9) Man I Wanna Be
- 10) Since You Been Gone
- 11) Keep A Secret
- 12) Take A Hand

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