

‘70S CLASSIC ROCK FAVORITES AND MIDWEST HEROES HEAD EAST CELEBRATED WITH NEW “BEST OF” COLLECTION

In the heartland of America in the ‘70s, arena rock ruled the stage and a hometown band with a hit would become a hero throughout the Midwest. These powerful live acts would draw an enormous and loyal fandom, no matter if there were few chart hits thereafter, and many continue today to bring out crowds anxious to hear fist-pumpin’ classic rock. Head East, from downstate Illinois, was just such a band, and its “Never Been Any Reason” just such an album rock radio hit.

Enjoying a recent rise in popularity thanks to the resurgence of classic rock, Head East has been performing dozens of shows each year, mainly in the Midwest, and has been heard with two live albums since 1999. Now **The Best Of Head East** edition of **20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collection** (A&M/UME), released September 25, 2001, brings together 12 of the group’s best-loved tracks, each digitally remastered from the band’s late ‘70s run on A&M Records, for its first “best of” album.

Though Head East played its first gig in 1969, numerous lineups and musical evolutions led to its 1973 roster of University of Illinois students Roger Boyd (keyboards), Steve Huston (drums) and John Schlitt (vocals) joined by Dan Birney (bass) and Mike Somerville (guitar). In 1974, they recorded their debut album, Flat As A Pancake, and released it on their own label. Thanks to nonstop touring throughout the Midwest, the buzz grew. When “Never Been Any Reason” became the most requested song on an FM station in Kansas City, MO, A&M signed the band and re-released the album. Flat As A Pancake, which also featured “Jefftown Creek,” “City Of Gold” and the Top 100 charting “Love Me Tonight,” eventually went gold.

Further success was heard live as the band became a huge headlining concert draw. The studio albums Get Yourself Up (1976, with “Monkey Shine”), Gettin’ Lucky (1977, “Every Little Bit Of My Heart” and the title track), Head East (1978, “Get Up And Enjoy Yourself,” “Man I Wanna Be” and Top 100 “Since You Been Gone”) and A Different Kind Of Crazy (1979, “Keep A Secret”) were regional favorites before the band was swamped, along with others, by punk and New Wave. Still, the double album Head East Live! (1979, with the Rick Springfield-penned “Take A Hand”) is among the era’s best live hard rock twin-LPs.

The original lineup then disbanded but albums and tours continued for Head East. Today, led by Boyd, Head East remains a concert favorite throughout the heartland.

The series **20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collection** features new “best of” albums from the most significant music artists of the past century.

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