MARQUEE RECORDS/READING FESTIVAL 1973

The Reading Rock Festival, Britain's longest running event of its kind, continues today. Originally known as the National Jazz & Blues Festival when it was first held in 1961 at Richmond, the Festival went through various changes of site (to Windsor, Kempton Park racecourse and Plumpton) before settling at Reading in 1971.

In 1963, the jazz element of the Festival began to be diluted when The Rolling Stones appeared. This opened the R&B floodgates, and during the 1960s, stars like The Who, Cream, Pink Floyd, Traffic, Yes, Deep Purple and many others played the Festival. Live recordings of these acts at Reading would be priceless, but in 1973, such a recording actually happened.

By then, the organisation of the event was in the hands of the world famous Marquee Club, and on that year's bill were many acts who had first broken through by playing at the club, such as Irish blues hero *Rory Gallagher*, who had played the Festival in 1968 at Kempton Park when he was leader of Taste, and *Status Quo*, who had re-emerged very strongly in 1973 as a world-class boogie band. Their performance at Reading made them one of the hits of that Festival, but its historical highlight was the farewell appearance of *The Faces*. In 1967, Fleetwood Mac's first public appearance was at the Festival, but 1973 saw the last show by Rod Stewart, Ronnie Wood, Ian McLagan, Kenney Jones and Tetsu Yamauchi, whose great performance of '(I Know) I'm Losing You', once a hit for The Temptations, is included here.

As well as star names, the Festival always booked promising new acts. In 1973, these included *Strider*, whose lead guitarist, Gary Grainger, went on to play on two of Rod Stewart's biggest solo albums, keyboard star *Dave Greenslade*, who had just launched his own band, *Andy Bown*, who achieved fame as a member of The Herd with Peter Frampton and later joined Status Quo and *Lesley Duncan*, whose wonderful voice and songwriting talent have never received their just deserts. Legendary American singer/songwriter *Tim Hardin* also contributed a set which included one of his finest songs, 'Hang On To A Dream'.

1973 was the first year that the famous Reading Festival was recorded. This is how it sounded.