



The Move In Concert: Fresh, Alive and Rocking Madly

In the annals of rock and roll, there are certain identity-defining performances that made (or almost broke) some very influential artists:

- The Who *Live at Leeds*
- The Rolling Stones' *Get Yer Ya Ya's Out!*
- James Brown at the Apollo
- Jimi Hendrix at Monterey
- Santana at Woodstock
- Allman Brothers at Fillmore East
- Sex Pistols at Winterland
- Springsteen at Hammersmith Odeon
- Elvis Costello on *Saturday Night Live*, 1978

The key thing is the buying public got to hear (or in the case of Elvis, see) these amazing performances and then were inspired to go see the band perform live next time they came to town.

If the recently unearthed and released recording of *The Move Live at the Fillmore 1969* had been released in the year of its recording, I think rock and roll history might have been very different. Lets have a little fun and imagine "what if..."

- Roger McGuinn had joined the Move as his second incarnation of the Byrds waned post-Chestnut Mare?
- The Electric Light Orchestra never came into existence?
- The Move had played Woodstock and Isle of Wight instead of Sha Na Na and Leonard Cohen, respectively?
- Led Zeppelin had opened for The Move at Madison Square Garden in 1972?
- George Harrison and Ravi Shankar had collaborated with The Move on a 45 minute raga called "Black & Blue Berry Jay Way"?
- Alan Parsons established his career with the magnum opus *Dark Side of the Move* (and Pink Floyd splits up that same year, sending Roger Waters to join Three Dog Night and David Gilmour forms a new band with recently cured Syd Barrett called The X-Postles)?
- The Who had release a rock opera called *Woody* in tribute to Move co-founder Roy Wood?



The Move on the same bill with Joe Cocker and Little Richard in 1969!

Okay, so I'm having some mad fun dreaming in order to make a point that some *really great* bands that *should* have been enormous here in the U.S. *never* got their due. The Move is one of those bands, and while they eventually did morph into The Electric Light Orchestra — and became one of the biggest rock acts of the '70s — they really deserved a whole lot better treatment than they got at the time. At this point in 1969, they were huge everywhere but America and on their first (and only) tour of the States they were determined to make an impression.

For whatever reason, tapes of their shows were never released, but thankfully their lead singer held on to this remarkably great-sounding and stunningly performed soundboard-quality recording of the final shows on their sole U.S. tour, at the legendary Fillmore West in San Francisco. On a bill with Joe Cocker and Little Richard, this recording of The Move finds the band firing with every piston on and then some!

As a long time fan of The Move (and ELO), I find this recording quite amazing. The band pulls off very complex arrangements of songs that soon found their way onto their awesome



second album *Shazam* in 1970. They perform all the complex switch-ups and changes with a grace that can only come from playing hundreds of gigs together over a long stretch of time. They pull off the tight two- and three-part harmony parts nearly perfectly — a wonder given the likelihood that they didn't have great monitoring systems. They knew the material cold. This is proto prog rock, proto heavy metal, hard rock with an acoustic flair and a classical perspective evocative of Emerson, Lake and Palmer to come a year later.

Also particularly enlightening to this Move fan is the news that many of the songs they performed live on this tour were chosen specifically *for* this U.S. tour! Check out [this quote](#) from lead singer Carl Wayne (a year before his untimely death in 2004):

We'd put this set together for America because we were going to play the Fillmore West, where all the great American underground bands had played — and what were we gonna do? Forty-five minutes of our UK hits?! 'Curly'? 'Blackberry Way'? So we decided to do one Move hit, 'I Can Hear The Grass Grow', a reworked 'Cherry Blossom Clinic' plus 'Hello Susie'. The rest were all West Coast things, great songs by The Nazz like 'Open My Eyes' and 'Under The Ice', Mann & Weil's 'Don't Make My Baby Blue' — but all done Move-style! I still believe that Roy, Bev, Rick and myself were a formidable live band and we gave some of our best performances on that trip, which is why I kept the tapes all these years.

This stuff rocks a *whole* lot more than ELO did, and their sound is notable for the tight synchronized playing of Roy Wood on lead guitar and Rick Price on bass — Price is playing a highly amped-up, fuzz-toned lead bass sound that reminds me of no less than John Entwistle of The Who. It cuts through the mix like a knife. When you hear this album, don't expect to hear all the cellos and orchestrations of The Move and ELO studio recordings. But, Roy Wood does switch off guitars, fleshing out the sound remarkably with 12-string electric and sitar sounds.



By 1969, The Move had progressed from the [psychedelic power pop of their first album \(1967\)](#) to a tight hard rock power trio unit, jamming with solo flash and guitar hero bravado reminiscent of Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend, and Joe Walsh. Fuzz tones, wah wahs, and other distortions were the sonic colors of the day, and they use them so well here journeying into epic spaces, even referencing The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," "Norwegian Wood," and "A Day In The Life" along the way ([during "Under The Ice," originally on the Nazz Nazz album](#)).

In fact, possibly the most curious and eye-opening thing about this show is that it opens and closes with tunes by The Nazz — Todd Rundgren's band before he went solo and subsequently formed Utopia. Todd later covered The Move's big UK hit "Do Ya," apparently as a return thank you gesture.

There is not much else to say, except that you should get this recording if you like '60s British rock and roll or want to hear the roots of ELO. It is available [via Amazon](#) or at [the band's website](#).

Check out the absolutely killer version of their 1967 hit "[I Can Hear The Grass Grow](#)," which smokes and is arguably a whole lot tighter than The Who or Led Zeppelin from that period. They even reference Steppenwolf's "Born To Be Wild" before the drum solo, which gives you some indication as to how heavy these guys were playing. If there was a second lead guitar in the band, they might even start to [sound like Television — its that kinda rocking I'm talking about here!](#) And listen to their take on "[Goin' Back](#)," which sounds even better than the Byrds' version that it is modeled after.