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## Mountain - Live in Paris 1985 Review

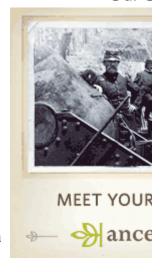
by Kevin Wierzbicki

Mountain was one of the first American hard rock groups to hit big at radio and their song "Mississippi Queen" remains a staple at classic rock and oldies stations today. Despite that hit, an appearance at (the original) Woodstock and a die-hard following on the east coast, the group never made it to the upper echelon of stardom. They hung in for a long time though, weathering line-up changes including one precipitated by the death of original member Felix Pappalardi.

This show features the other two core members of the power trio, guitarist Leslie West and drummer Corky Laing with the addition of Mark Clarke on bass and keyboards. Clarke has some vocal turns but the show rightfully belongs to West and his stellar guitar playing. There are some problems with the sound as the show kicks off with "Why Dontcha" but the soundman settles down by the second song, "Never in My Life."

There is an amusing moment during "Never" when Laing apparently misses his cue and West unceremoniously picks up a cymbal stand and hurls it at the drummer. Laing is unfazed, like this goes on all the time, and merely readjusts his kit and carries on. West dedicates "Theme For an Imaginary Western" to Pappalardi and

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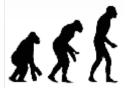


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then turns the spotlight over to Clarke for a new (at the time) tune called "Spark;" a keys-heavy tune that sounds like something that could have been on a Survivor album.

The set is only six songs long but before they close with "Mississippi Queen" Mountain play an extended version of "Nantucket Sleighride," the group's most famous underground track. The song is a guitar workout for West and sort of the "Free Bird" of its day, changing gears a couple of times and building in intensity as it goes along. Curiously, West has another run-in with Laing during the song, this time really sending his cymbals flying. Laing once again takes the temper tantrum in stride but this time it takes a roadie to come on and straighten out the array. A giant cowbell prop is wheeled onto the stage for "Mississippi Queen;" the prop actually has a real cowbell attached to its reverse side and Laing comes out and smacks it with a giant drumstick like he's playing the oversized fake, at least until West decides to kick it over, too. This film starts off a little ho-hum but proves to be a fun viewing after all.

## **CD Info and Links**

Mountain - Live in Paris 1985 Rating: ♥♥♥

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