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LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

*The Sublime Return Of
A Reluctant Rock Star*
By Bill Holdship

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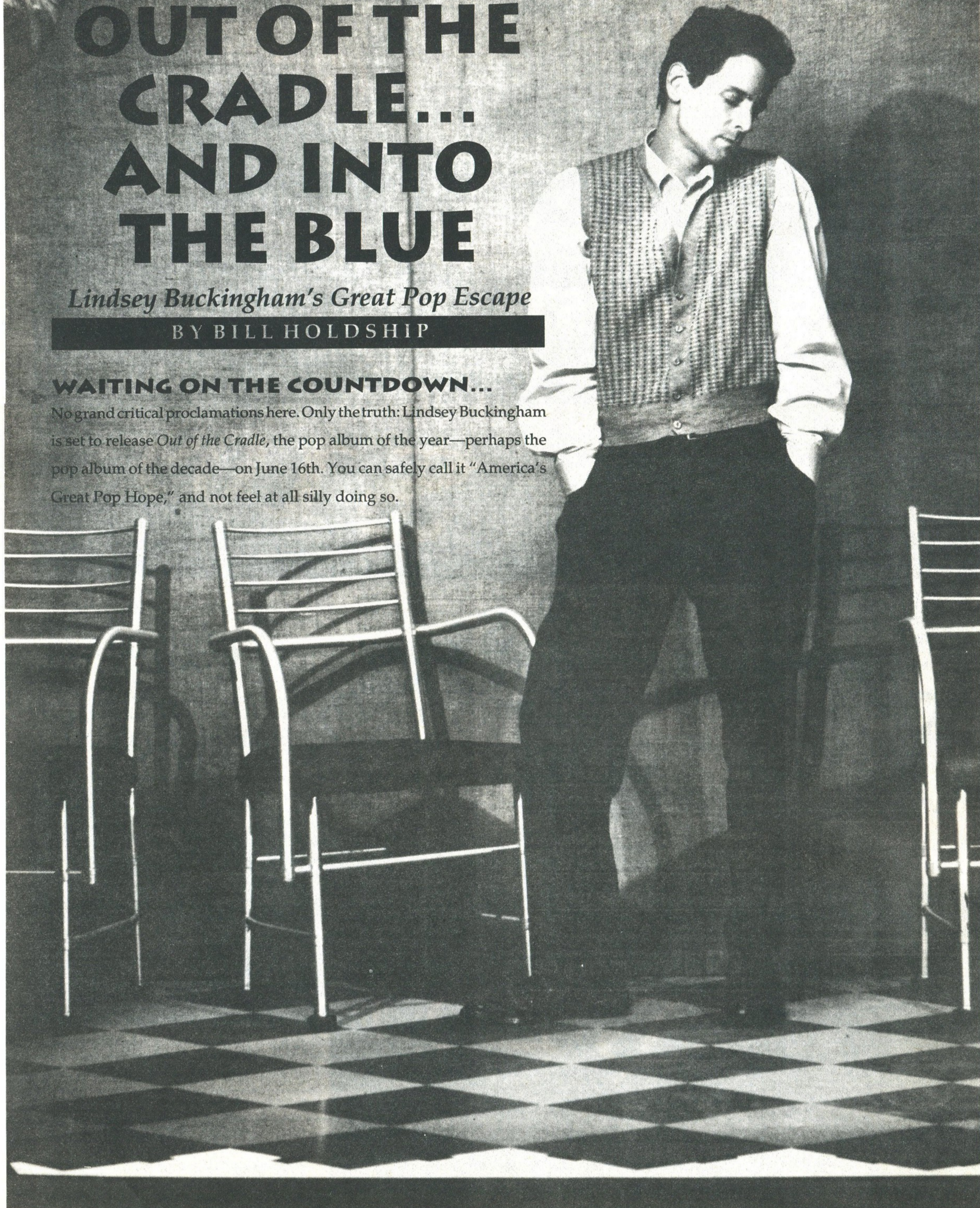
OUT OF THE CRADLE... AND INTO THE BLUE

Lindsey Buckingham's Great Pop Escape

BY BILL HOLDSHIP

WAITING ON THE COUNTDOWN...

No grand critical proclamations here. Only the truth: Lindsey Buckingham is set to release *Out of the Cradle*, the pop album of the year—perhaps the pop album of the decade—on June 16th. You can safely call it “America’s Great Pop Hope,” and not feel at all silly doing so.



The album borrows its title from "Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking," Walt Whitman's 19th century poetic ode to childhood innocence—and it doesn't take a literary scholar to see that the title (and the connection) works on many different levels. There's an innocent quality to much of *Out of the Cradle*, and this goes back to the whole pop music philosophy and tradition. It's a tradition that dates back to the earliest days of rock 'n' roll, straight through *Pet Sounds*, and right up to any number of tunes that you can remember sounding great as they blasted from an AM radio throughout the mid-'70s.

"There is an innocent quality to it," says the 42-year-old Buckingham. "Walt Whitman meant that title as the child that stays within the man as he's walking around as an adult, and the child that's still in there rocking. So that definitely appealed to me. Even the packaging has an innocent quality. It's almost bordering on precious," he laughs, "but I've got old family photos in there and all that, and the whole thing has kind of a 'Remember this?' sense to it. The songs aren't necessarily about the band [yes, he means *that* band] or about anything, really. But maybe they're about just trying to take a period of time and trying to put it into the healthiest possible perspective you can."

"LOVE IS LIKE A GRAIN OF SAND, SLOWLY SLIPPIN' THROUGH YOUR HAND..."

In 1982, by which time the band he refers to had turned into the "enemy" in the eyes of many rock 'n' roll fans, Lindsey Buckingham wrote and recorded a little pop-rock ditty called "Oh, Diane," which turned up on side two of an album called *Mirage*. The song was so innocent that it bordered on the ridiculous, although its magical, four-chord musical structure never fails to bring up emotions associated with everything from doo-wop to Buddy Holly (and, by connection, the whole British and American pop-rock explosion of the mid-'60s).

Of course, you could also add Brian Wilson to that chemistry, thanks to a pristine-sounding, modern production; spacey backup vocals; a mandolin and/or harpsichord (you can't quite tell), which might sound out of place on paper and in concept; and several instrumental bridges that come out of left-field. The song went on to become a big hit in England. At least one person—even in his now-jaded, mid-30s—still suddenly latches on to all his hopes, dreams, and desires; remembers there are beautiful things in this world; and wants to run out and *really* fall in love, each and every time he hears "Oh, Diane." All in the course of a 2 1/2-minute pop tune! Which, of course, is exactly what Jonathan Richman had in mind when he sang about "the power of the AM..." Or the power of pop. Which is sort of a long way of describing what the power of *Out of the Cradle* is all about.

SOUL DRIFTER

Not that each song on the new album is like "Oh, Diane"—although they're all just as evocative. Still, it probably needs to be explained in this age of Wilson Nelson and Mariah Bolton that "pop" music is not necessarily synonymous with "easy-listening" or "MOR." It's probably closer to what they call "Classic Rock" these days. Buckingham's roots run incredibly deep, but the first taste of *Out of the Cradle* you've probably heard is "Wrong," a wailing, dark view of classic rock stardom and the "biz," which was sent to AOR radio the middle of last month. In fact, the album is chock-full of incredible, gritty guitar solos, with its share of hard rockers.

On the other side of the coin, however, are beautiful tunes that approach the mainstream, while straddling the esoteric. Songs like "Soul Drifter," "You Do

or You Don't," "Surrender the Rain," and "Turn It On" wouldn't sound out of place on any radio format. There's a Buckingham reinterpretation of the old folk song/spiritual, "All My Sorrows," which approaches Beach Boys' territory, circa "Wind Chimes" or "Surf's Up." There's "Countdown," an anthem of hope, the single in Britain, and the cut that may lead the pack, if only by a hair. It's one of those songs you feel you've heard a thousand times before in your dreams the very first time you hear it; that is, love at first listen.

There are several thrilling, unpretentious, classical guitar interludes. The esoteric bent—including the opening "Don't Look Down" (yet another ode to

first real solo album. And not only because it's the best thing he's ever done, including his work with that other band. In reality, this is actually his third solo effort—*Law and Order* (which spawned the hit single, "Trouble") and *I Go Insane* were released in 1981 and 1984, respectively. And make no mistake about it: Every album released with the name "Lindsey Buckingham" as its sole cover credit is definitely a solo effort; besides Buckingham, *Out of the Cradle* includes only the occasional extra bassist, percussionist, or drum machine (which, he assures, "we tried to keep as human and sloppy as possible"). In other words, he serves as *the* musician, the singer, the

PHOTO: GREG GORMAN



Lindsey Buckingham (left) in 1987, with that other band: "I was kind of drifting through a mirage, and it was pretty much like that until the end with me. Suddenly, we're the biggest band in the world. How do you reconcile that with what you might feel or your own doubts about the completeness of the situation?"

hope, and the one Buckingham preferred to be the first single)—surely should appeal to an "alternative" audience. You could safely say that *Out of the Cradle* has the potential to become a commercial monster, and not feel at all silly doing so. Hell, it's hard to say where the audience for this one even begins...or ends, for that matter. After all, "You Do or You Don't" actually quotes a melodic line from "A Theme From A Summer Place." ("I always loved that song," recalls Buckingham. "It always takes me right back to 1960, and it just seemed to have the same emotional tone I was looking for")—while the final song on the album opens with an acoustic guitar interpretation of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "This Nearly Was Mine" from *South Pacific*. All of which just goes to demonstrate how deep Buckingham's roots are as a master musical craftsman.

"I don't know if you'd call them roots. But that was some of the first stuff I heard, because in the early '50s, before Elvis hit, that's exactly what parents were listening to. But those songs really were great, and they hold up so well. Writers like Rodgers & Hammerstein and George Gershwin really knew what they were doing. And really, when you get down to it, the Beatles, and maybe just a few other artists from that time, were the exception of someone who could do something on that level without having to train to do it. Everyone since then has tried to pull that off, but it's really hard to do without musical training and knowledge. I mean, I can't even write or read music, so I really don't know. But I do think there's a lot to be looked at in that type of music. I tried to get that traditional, Tin Pan Alley sort of approach when I was writing 'Soul Drifter,' so I think there's a lot of validity, just looking at that stuff and appreciating it. Especially if it's part of your background."

THIS IS THE TIME

You could call *Out of the Cradle* Lindsey Buckingham's

songwriter, and the producer on each of his albums, sharing the latter credit (as well as an occasional songwriting nod) with his longtime friend, Richard Dashutt.

"Richard's not a musician, per se, or really an engineer in the finer sense of the word," he says of the mystery man behind the scenes. "Neither one of us is that technically oriented. I'm just blessed with a fairly decent imagination, I guess, but that probably comes from years of listening to hits. It gives you a sensibility about how something could become that much more accessible, or at least that much more effective. Our philosophy has always been, turn the knobs until it sounds good."

"Stevie and I moved to Los Angeles in, probably 1973, and we met him almost immediately. He was at another studio, and then he moved over to Sound City in Van Nuys, where Stevie and I recorded the *Buckingham Nicks* album, and he second-engineered that album. By that time, the three of us were all sharing a big apartment together, and he just continued to work with us. And when we were asked to join the band, I just said, 'Hey Rich, wanna come out on the road and mix sound?'"

Of course, the last two albums by that other band—*Mirage* and *Tango in the Night*—were pretty much produced by this same team; in fact, the story goes that Buckingham's last solo effort was scratched in 1987 so that he and Dashutt could go into the studio to "save" *Tango in the Night*. Which probably explains why it was the first album by that band on which the duo got sole production credit, if not why the album was the final release by that group to reach the top of the charts and produce a slew of hit singles.

What makes *Out of the Cradle* his first real solo release, however, is that in the past, he always felt obliged to give his rockers to that other band. And since the band was obviously as close to mainstream rock as mainstream gets, he driven to immerse himself in the experimental side on those earlier solo

releases. After all, that same experimental side failed miserably on relative commercial terms when he incorporated it into the band on 1979's *Tusk*. As a result, *I Go Insane* was downright weird, including stuff like a bizarre musical suite dedicated to late Beach Boy drummer Dennis Wilson.

"I knew him pretty well—he even had an affair with my girlfriend," he laughs. "But he was a good guy. He was kind of lost, but I thought he had a big heart. I always liked him. He was crazy, just like a lot of other people, but he had a really big heart, and he was the closest thing to Brian [Wilson] there was, too. He was halfway there.

"That was a bit of a darker period," he admits. "I think *Law and Order* was more like a Lindsey Buckingham variety show. But with *Go Insane*, there were a lot of not-so-great things happening in my personal life and I really felt I had been drifting a little bit creatively. The band was getting crazy, and personal things were kind of crazed, and that was the product of a very stressful time. I remember I was back East, and some girl called me up, and said, 'Why do you have to write about such down stuff?' Because that's what was happening."

With *Out of the Cradle*, however, Buckingham has had a chance to merge all his diverse pop sides and influences into something that's totally cohesive. "After I left the group situation, I just kind of sat,

water it down to be more radio friendly. And you still want to make it somewhat challenging—make it your own and make it fresh. So if you can do all that, and still make it accessible, then I guess you're doing alright."

STREET OF DREAMS

The first thing you may notice about Lindsey Buckingham is how "normal" he seems to be for a rock star. This may be your thought, regardless of whether he's sitting in a Warner Bros. conference room in 1992, following five days of "video hell" with director Julian Temple; or in his own Bel Air home studio—dubbed "The Slope" back in 1987, feeling somewhat miserable and trapped (and perhaps not unlike Michael Jackson at the time of the *Victory* tour) because that other band *needs* him to go out on tour. (The band's namesake drummer, in fact, made no secret of the fact that he's broke.)

Perhaps the normalcy has to do with his fairly traditional upbringing in a small Northern California town called Atherton, near Palo Alto. Growing up in a middle class family (his father owned a small coffee company), Buckingham makes it sound almost like an episode of *The Adventures of Ozzy & Harriet*, with him in the Ricky Nelson role.

"I had a swell childhood—two older brothers, great

"YOU DON'T WANT TO WATER IT DOWN TO BE MORE RADIO-FRIENDLY. AND YOU STILL WANT TO MAKE IT SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING—MAKE IT YOUR OWN AND MAKE IT FRESH. SO IF YOU CAN DO ALL THAT, AND STILL MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE, THEN I GUESS YOU'RE DOING ALRIGHT."

tinkering around, letting the emotional dust settle, and then I started getting into it. It's time consuming when you're doing everything yourself, but I just felt I wanted to get some of the instincts back, and some of the things that I maybe put aside a little bit with the band—things that sort of got left by the wayside, like different guitar styles.

"I do have this little esoteric niche that helps in terms of how you're perceived, as well as giving you sort of a whole area to tinker around in and maybe grow. But then I also had that mainstream thing to fall back on. I really thought it was important to cover all the ground of what I'm about, and not just keep cultivating the little sidebar there. I mean, I really wanted to get away from too much synth, and really assert the guitar playing a little more, even to the point of being a little flashy. So, I just tried to get it all in there, as much as I could.

"And I did think that if I were to continue as a solo artist and have any sort of longevity, it would probably make sense to approach it this way...but to do it without becoming something you didn't want to become in the process. Which is a really fine line, you know?" What would be something he didn't want to become? "Just gearing your entire approach to what's going to sell. Besides, God only knows what's going to sell; that's part of the problem these days. I mean, 15 minutes is really becoming 15 minutes. When Bruce can come out with two albums, and they can hit the top immediately, and then go down just as fast. This is why he did *Saturday Night Live*, right? I mean, that's a scary thought. So God knows what my album is going to be perceived as. Also, you don't want to

parents, and lots of activities and shared quality times," he recalls. "And it was one of the older brothers who was probably responsible for me doing what I'm doing, in the sense that he was old enough to be buying the Elvis records in '56 when I was only 6. He was the one who collected all the great 45s—he still has them—and I used to just sit in his room and listen to those things over and over again.

"Of course, that wasn't an uncommon story in the '50s. I'm sure if you asked Bruce what he listened to growing up, it would be a similar situation. I mean, anyone can see how strong that image of a guy with a guitar was. And all of us, even at that age, could hear the difference between 'How Much Is That Doggie in the Window' and 'Heartbreak Hotel,' and see what a jump *that* was. Yeah, a lot of kids running out and getting guitars in 1957 and '58, I'm sure. And I was one of them. I started very, very young. No lessons, just playing and listening to the records.

"By the time Hendrix came along, he didn't have much of an effect on me. I mean, I enjoyed what he was doing, but I cut my teeth on [Elvis's lead guitarist] Scotty Moore, so that by the time Brian Jones and Keith Richards came along, I wasn't overly impressed by what they were doing as guitarists. I mean, I loved how they made their records. Obviously, I *love* that stuff, but it wasn't like I was going, 'Wow, listen to that guy!' I mean, I could already play. When the psychedelic stuff came along, I wasn't taking drugs...quite yet," he laughs, "so I would go up to the Fillmore and watch all that stuff, but I was so locked into my style as a guitar player that it didn't really influence me much.

"Plus, right about that time, I switched over to play bass [in the Bay Area band, Fritz]. It was actually the first band I was in, and I switched to bass because I didn't have a fuzz unit. In fact, all I actually had up to that point was an acoustic guitar. I had started playing young, but I had always kept it to myself. I mean, I was a swimmer in high school, and our family was very athletic. My mother was never one to say, 'Yeah, you should go into entertainment,' because she knew what a rough life it was. So she always encouraged me to be a good player, but never as a career. And then, right after high school, someone saw how well I played, and they just sort of yanked me out of my situation. That same fall, I quit the water polo team, grew my hair out, and that was it. My mom was going, 'Oh my God!' My brother's going, 'You're not going to let him grow his hair out, are you?!"

"Fritz did OK in the Bay Area. We opened shows at the Fillmore maybe once or twice, but it was not a big thing. At some point, however, Stevie and I kinda got selected out of that group as the ones who were perceived as having the most potential. We had not gotten romantically involved until that time, though, and when Fritz broke up, we kind of got together on a lot of different levels. We met [producer] Keith Olsen, who eventually brought us down here to LA to make the *Buckingham Nicks* album, and one thing led to another. It was kind of a tough time, actually. After the album went down the toilet, we had managers who were trying to get us to play steakhouses and that sort of stuff...which we figured was a dead end, so we didn't want to do that. We also had to deal with a record company that didn't seem to have any idea of what the music on the album was about.

"So, yeah, we had to deal with all that. To make money, I had to go out on the road with Don Everly's band. Which was as heartbreaking as hell, watching Don trying to do something that wasn't being received very well. Stevie was working in LA as a waitress. And yet this whole cult thing was emerging out of the South, where we were able to headline in front of 5000 people. I mean, that was just a bizarre contrast to what we were dealing with in Los Angeles, where we were starving. We weren't much a part of the scene in LA during the early '70s. We played the Starwood and a few other clubs, but not in a situation of prestige at all. One time, I was right in the middle of a song, and the club manager walked up onstage and turned down my amp. We had to deal with all that sort of stuff. But we went down south and opened for Poco, and they absolutely loved us. We never really found out what would've happened with that scene, because right about that time, Mick [Fleetwood] stepped in and asked us to join. We thought about it for a week, and then we went, 'Oh, OK. Let's do it.'

"They weren't making any money at all. Fortunately, they were on Warner Bros., which has always been an artist's label. And Mo [Ostin] had seen them through all these various incarnations and still believed in what they had going. And Mick was defiant in terms of seeing something through, believing in what he had to offer, and what certain aspects of that band had to offer."

"HEY, MR. ROCKCOCK, WHERE DO YOU BELONG...?"

"I think that Fleetwood Mac's success probably did hurt the work after a while. After *Rumours*—which was a mega, mega, Michael Jackson of its time kind of thing—the music was secondary to the phenomenon itself. It's kind of a dangerous position for an artist to be in, at least as far as keeping yourself honest. So my reaction to that at the time was to say, 'OK, I'm going to work in my house for a while with one mic and nothing else.' My stuff that ended up on *Tusk* was kind of a reaction to all that. I didn't want to make *Rumours II* or be put in the position of repeating ourselves for the wrong reasons. I was probably overreacting a little bit, you know, but in retrospect,

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I'm glad we did it. But from that point on, I think the work did start to suffer a little bit. There was a certain wind taken out of all our sails, and I think you can also add personal stories to that one. Stevie was getting more and more drawn into her own things, and I think the moment and the unity that the group had—which was from the first album through *Rumours*—started to just dwindle. And I'm sure that did have an effect on the work as a whole.

"But *Tusk* was sort of liberating, because I saw this whole machine gearing up for *Rumours II*, and I saw people frothing at the mouth for what I perceived to be all the wrong reasons. And I saw the record company, to some degree, expecting us to. ... You know, I tend to say these things, and then I think, 'Well, gee, Lenny [Waronker]'s going to see this in print, and it's not a nice thing to say about the company, but...' Buckingham is reminded that, in 1987, he recalled delivering *Tusk* to the label, and someone then telling him that everyone sat there watching their Christmas bonus check flying out the window. He laughs. "I shouldn't say stuff like that. But I did see the machine gearing up, and I saw the whole focus not being on the music, but on this musical soap opera, if you will. Of course, right around the same time, a lot of new music started coming out of both England and America. It wasn't an influence so much as it was a validation of the sense that it was OK to maybe look into some other things that had very little to do with what *Rumours* was all about.

"So, personally, I didn't feel hampered by Fleetwood Mac at that time, because I'd go home, and tinker around in the bathroom with a mic on the floor, and I'd be banging Kleenex boxes, and that was very liberating for me. It was only afterwards—when it became clear that there was either a little bit of a backlash, or maybe I'd just overestimated what the public wants to hear. And that's when it started for me. I was sort of left not knowing exactly what course to chart. I was kind of drifting through a mirage, and it was pretty much like that until the end with me.

"And, of course, by that point, everybody in the band had their own manager." He laughs. "Which was pretty funny. It really got to be comical. Sometimes I'm surprised it lasted as long as it did with a group like that. Compare it to someone like the Buffalo Springfield, where you have just so many distinct forces going on that it can't last. And there are times I wonder what would have happened if, say, Stevie and I had continued on whatever path we were on, with that little cult thing going on down south. Joining Fleetwood Mac wasn't really a clear-cut choice for me. I remember saying to Stevie, when we had finished that first *Fleetwood Mac* album, 'God, this sounds kind of soft, doesn't it?' And she's going, 'Oh, no, it's going to be great!' She was right, but it still was something I was a little more ambivalent about all the way through. I think Stevie's tendencies were more toward that softer thing, anyway. But I decided to go with it and to see what would happen—and, suddenly, we're the biggest band in the world. How do you reconcile that with what you might feel or your own doubts about the completeness of the situation? You don't. You just sorta just go along with it. And you say, 'OK, here I am. I have a very clear cut role in this band, aside from being a writer and guitar player. I'm the one who takes this stuff and fashions it into records.'

"There was a lot of dependence on what I was doing at the time, both in the studio and the touring. It got to be very repetitive, and of course, the whole lifestyle on the road just got to be more and more decadent in many ways. Not just in terms of habits or anything, but the huge jets and spending way more money than we needed to spend, and all that. It was the classic kind of rock thing. That went along with the whole *Rumours* vibe, though. It was the machine. It's geared up. 'This is what we are, so...' Unfortunately, it doesn't really reinforce the work ethic very much, or the sense that if you're any good, you can be better. Or that you should be working solely for the work, and trying to improve what you're doing,

rather than for the perks and all that. So it was a very complex situation. But I have no complaints. I wouldn't have missed it. But you do find yourself in situations that maybe weren't that ideal.

"I think that Stevie's selection by the masses as the focal point was the first thing that became known. I think slowly it became understood what my contribution was behind the scenes, and that seemed to manifest itself in the press, and even the way I was presenting myself onstage later on. But you have to remember, there was also a very unhealthy emotional situation going on between two couples who had broken up, and were trying to say, 'OK, we don't want to see each other, but we're going to have to do this anyway. You stay way over there, and I'll stay way over here.' So it was kind of a mess from the beginning, at least emotionally. I think that professional jealousies were probably actually less of a problem than just the inherent dynamics between two ex-couples. Which never really went away. I mean, *Rumours* truly was the musical soap opera on vinyl."

GO YOUR OWN WAY

"Knowing Mick and how many incarnations he'd been through, there was no doubt in my mind that they'd go on without me. So I guess you could say in a way that I was let go when they decided to do that last tour." He laughs. "Whether or not I would have done another album, I don't know. I initially had thought about leaving after *Tusk*. I don't think it would have been a good idea, because it was important to do it at a time that was not just good for yourself, but maybe wasn't going to be too hurtful to everybody else involved. After *Tango in the Night*, I thought, 'Well, OK, I've done the album. If I don't tour, it's not going to be a huge blow to them,' if you want to think of it karmically or whatever.

"I didn't see the last tour. The only thing I saw was...in fact I didn't see that, either! During the last two shows in San Francisco and LA, I got up and did 'Go Your Own Way' with them. Which was a lot of fun. It's easy to look good in that situation—coming in and doing one song that you know really well, and know you can do better than whoever's been doing it. So there's no way that could have been anything but a positive experience for me. It was also just a totally nostalgic thing to do. Even then, though, I didn't actually go out and watch the show." He laughs. "I didn't want to. I don't know why. So I can't comment on what they were like without me."

And then there was Mick Fleetwood's "tell-all" autobiography, which kind of transferred the band into something out of the pages of a national tabloid. "I skimmed Mick's book," he says. "I found there were a few things in there that weren't accurate. Everyone was very hurt by that. Not by any facts in particular, which I definitely was hurt by, but just the tone of it in general. Just the fact that it was so trashy. Fleetwood Mac may have wound down, but it's a shame to have things come out that sort of add a lack of dignity to it. It doesn't have to be that way. I was very unhappy with a couple of very specific incidents described in there, which were totally untrue. I never responded to it. I didn't think there was any reason to dignify it. But there was one story that had me slapping Stevie when I said I was leaving the band. The next time I saw Stevie after that, she came up to me, and said, 'God, I'm really sorry he wrote that.' She was apologizing to me for something he wrote... So, I don't know. I think that was the product of a lot of late nights Mick spent with a writer, and maybe not keeping as much control over what was said, or certainly what was edited, as should have been. I really don't know. I'm fairly sure that he's sorry he did that. It was unfortunate. But, once again...that's show biz!" He laughs.

"But they're going to put together a 25-year Fleetwood Mac retrospective, which will probably be out at Christmas. They want to put a couple of new tracks on it, so I'll probably do one and produce it for

them. There's no reason not to. I don't really see anyone very much. But it's not like there's any hard feelings involved. I think there may have been some from their end when I first left the group, and they were going, 'Yeah, we don't need him!' and all of that. But now things have just kind of wound down all around..."

EITHER YOU DO OR YOU DON'T

There's one final element in that long chain of pop music, *a la* Holly, Wilson, Lennon & McCartney, and Buckingham, that we've been talking about throughout this article, and that's the element of *integrity*—be it being true to yourself and your art; or discussing how the darkest song on *Out of the Cradle*, "This Is the Time," could be seen as a cynical political statement, and then reflecting, "It's terrible right now, you know. People are thinking, 'How can we exploit the riots?'" or mentioning that a specific song on the album is about a family tragedy (no, it isn't "Street of Dreams," which has a line about his "daddy's grave" in it), and then quickly adding, "But that's off the record—I don't want to exploit that, either"; or simply refusing to go on the road with your old band because you realize it's being done for no other reason than to make money. And *lots* of money at that.

"The irony is that I really want to get back together with musicians now, and get back on the road," claims Buckingham, who, in 1987, said his desire was to put together a stage show that fell somewhere between Frank Sinatra and Laurie Anderson. "I'd especially love to find a bass player and a drummer with whom I could create a core to develop the guitar sound—almost in a jazz way, but not necessarily with a jazz sound. It seems to me that I should really just go out and play—not as a mechanism to support the record, but just because it seems like the other side of the coin in terms of growing as a musician and getting out of the garage." He laughs. "I've been in my garage for four years! I have no idea of whether I'll play clubs or small theaters. Everyone is a little pessimistic about that. But there may be a whole grassroots sort of audience out there that's invisible to agents and managers and people who would assume you can only play small places. But I will play *anywhere*. It's a must. It's part of a survival move, just like leaving Fleetwood Mac was."

Finally, Buckingham reflects on what some people have termed "disposable California pop," even though it's a sound that counts art as wonderful as the Beach Boys, the Byrds, and even the Mamas & the Papas among its cultural antecedents. "Obviously, there's going to be some sort of a backlash against a band that was as popular as Fleetwood Mac was," he concludes. "I think part of the reason Fleetwood Mac got some flak was because we were so popular in 1977. I mean, the biggest band in the world, and we probably sold more albums than anyone ever sold, and all of that. And it was a real thing. If you listen to that album, it's not bad. There's a lot of great playing on there and stuff. *Tusk* is still my favorite thing. But because of our visibility, we were always a target for criticism. I can't feel bad about any of that. I mean, I'm doing what I do. I've always felt that, on some level, I was trying to create a niche that was somewhat outside of that target. But beyond that, there's nothing that I can do. I am what I am, and you're always going to find somebody trying to knock you down.

"Again, I think Fleetwood Mac as an entity would get more of that than I would, personally. But it's inevitable, yeah. I've lived in California my whole life, so... About a year and a half ago, when there were only a few songs mixed for the album, I listened to it, and I said to Richard, 'Well, it sounds very California.' I looked at him, and he said, 'But I guess you wouldn't want it to sound like the Cure.' 'No, I don't think so.' So what are you going to do? Within that framework, I've still created some kind of a sound that's mine. What else *can* you do?" ■