



Live at The Whisky 1977
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"The whole feel of the Whisky shows was Cheap Trick transitioning from the rockin' bar band we were into a theater act. Once At Budokan got recorded the next spring and released - these tapes ended up in storage. The Whisky shows capture a hungry band. It's right before we went on tour with KISS and became much more famous than we were at this point. It was two nights where we did all our cool stuff from our first couple of records and it's chock-full of goodies. It's great; there's not a lot of good recordings of us in 1977. I stand by all the tracks on this release."-- Bun E. Carlos.

Picture the scene...8901 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. Situated on the swinging Sunset Strip, the Whisky a Go Go club opened in January of 1964 and was the nexus for a cavalcade of legendary artists that appeared over the decades. Whether it was Led Zeppelin, The Doors, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Van Halen, Guns 'N Roses, and countless others, showing off your wares at the Whisky a Go Go was a life changing "we have arrived" moment and often served as a launching pad for a galley of future Rock and Roll Hall of Famers.

Long before Cheap Trick became CHEAP TRICK, the Rockford, Illinois quartet spent years honing their chops and fine tuning their performing prowess in every crummy dive and bar dotted throughout the Midwest. Signed to Epic Records in 1976, the group issued their



debut self-titled album in February of 1977. Produced by Jack Douglas, the album was a firecracker of primal power and melodic muscle and containing a flurry of signature Cheap Trick classics, many still performed by the band today. In support of the album, the band hit the road...hard, playing club gigs across the country and accruing road experience in the big leagues opening arena shows for Queen, Journey, the Kinks, Styx, and Kansas. "We knew after we cut our first record and were getting ready to hit the road, we had to go out and blow the headliner off the stage," reveals Bun E. Carlos. "We had to kick it from the first to the last moment we were onstage. Get right in people's faces and sell them the record. That's something the band carried on throughout our career - whether we were opening or headlining shows."

Midway into 1977, major commercial success for Cheap Trick was still a distant pipe dream. The group's global breakthrough with *At Budokan* was still a year and a half away. Despite being one of the strongest debut albums in rock history, Cheap Trick's first release garnered minimal radio airplay and was met with modest success. By contrast, their powerhouse live performances began to garner them national attention - signaling the emergence of a band destined for world domination.

Flash forward to the summer of 1977: Cheap Trick were ensconced in Los Angeles working with producer Tom Werman on their second album, *In Color*. The band played hooky from the sessions on the



weekend of June 3rd, 4th and 5th - performing five shows at the Whisky a Go Go. Bun E. Carlos: "Two months before we were in L.A. and sold out the Starwood and the Santa Monica Civic playing with The Runaways. Robin hadn't sung for two weeks since we'd been cutting basic tracks for the record. So let's book a couple nights at the Whisky so he could get his voice in shape for vocal tracks"

Cheap Trick were introduced each night by renowned KROQ radio disc jockey and rock scene maker Rodney Bingenheimer, the first DJ to play the band on the radio in L.A. When the band stepped onto the stage of the Whisky, it was shut up and deliver time. "It was cool to play where all our heroes had played in the previous years," recalled Bun E. Carlos. Assembled onto the Whisky's tiny stage, the Rockford quartet came armed for battle with guitars-a-blazing.

"What set us apart from other groups is our band had a twisted sense of everything, twisted sense of humor, twisted sense of music that we liked," asserts Rick Nielsen. "It seemed the best way to put something across was NOT do the normal thing - even though we were playing the same 12 notes as every other rock band."

As the mighty sonic evidence demonstrates, the band's "go for the throat," tour-de-force performances left jaws collectively on the floor - as well as help foster increased industry buzz and excitement over these rising rock and roll heroes. Rodney Bingenheimer witnessed all five shows and remembers that "The





Whisky was packed for every show. A lot of girls showed up. It was like the 'new' Beatles had arrived." The fortunate fans, label industry vets and music writers who managed to score entry saw first-hand that Cheap Trick was fast tracked for the BIG leagues. They were a band built to headline 20,000 seat arenas. That notion was catching on to the rest of the world as well. Two and half years after their Whisky engagement, the band would make an Olympian jump from the Sunset Strip to headlining a sold out New Year's Eve 1979 show at the LA Forum (as documented on 2019's archival live album *Are You Ready?*) cementing their status as arena rock kings.

Live at The Whisky gathers four complete shows over two nights in the summer of '77. Essaying eight songs from the first album, seven plucked from the as yet to be released *In Color* album, "High Roller" and "Auf Wiedersehen" culled from 1978's *Heaven Tonight* alongside outliers like "Oh Boy," "Loser," "Can't Hold On," and "Goodnight." While the studio versions of the songs that would fill out their sets for the Whisky shows were impressive, their live counterparts were another beast altogether. Listen as Cheap Trick attack the songs with supersonic fury, flexing their dazzling vocal and instrumental virtuosity. "It was fun to get out and show off our new tunes," said Bun E. Carlos. "What you're getting on here are different arrangements and different versions. Some of the new songs we played have non-LP arrangements, some of the old songs have shorter arrangements and there's songs that never went on any of the records. I think 'Elo Kiddies' is a lot harder than it is on

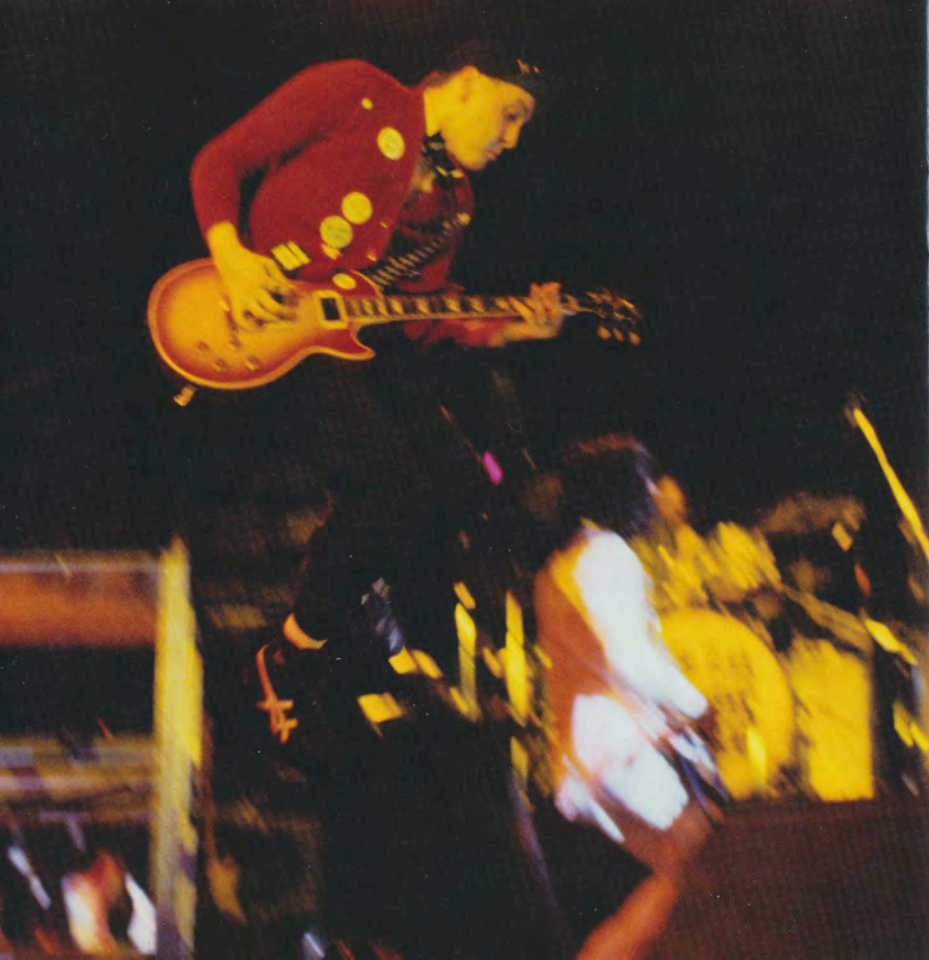


the first album There's goofy stuff like 'Loser' and 'Oh Boy,' which is a song full of riffs - but they were bar and club songs. Look at some of the songs we didn't play. There's no 'I Want You to Want Me,' 'Surrender,' or 'Dream Police.' It's a cool time capsule from June of '77." "Musically there was a connection between all of us," adds Robin Zander. "The bottom line is the music. If the music you make together is right and you're all excited about it - that's really where everything else stems from."

While only a few hundred Cheap Trick fans were on hand each night to witness these intimate club shows, thankfully the tapes were rolling courtesy of the Record Plant's Mobile Unit One. Now 40-something years later with *Live at The Whisky*, you too can experience the magic and majesty, glorious bombast, and pummeling power of these historic performances.

A wise man once said, "the more things change, the more they stay the same." That ethos perfectly epitomizes Cheap Trick's career arc. Navigating over four decades in the rock and roll trenches, there's one consistent thread in the story of Cheap Trick. From 1977 to the present day, the band continue to prove their merit every night on the concert stage earning their Rock & Roll Hall of Fame stripes, with fans and pundits alike championing them one of the most exciting and explosive live outfits in rock and roll history.

--Ken Sharp



CHEAP TRICK:

Robin Zander – lead vocals, rhythm guitar
Rick Nielsen – lead guitar, backing vocals
Tom Petersson – bass guitar, backing vocals
Bun E. Carlos – drums, percussion

All songs written by Rick Nielsen
Except

Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace
Written by Terry Reid

Southern Girls
You're All Talk
Auf Wiedersehen
Written by Rick Nielsen, Tom Petersson

Cry Cry
High Roller
Written by Rick Nielsen, Robin Zander,
Tom Petersson

Ain't That a Shame
Written by Fats Domino and
Dave Bartholomew

Down On The Bay
Written by Jeff Lynne

Mrs. Henry
Written By Bob Dylan

Thanks to everyone at Sony Music Entertainment

Band Introductions by Rodney Bingenheimer

Produced by Timothy J. Smith

Executive Producer: Gordon Anderson

Engineered by Ray Thompson for
Wally Heider Recording

Mixes by Guy Massey, London, UK – July/
August 2018

Mastered by Mike Piacentini at Battery
Studios, NYC August 2022

Tape Research: Matt Kelly, Mike Kull,
Don Siebka

Layout and Design by Tom D. Kline

www.cheaptrick.com
www.realgonemusic.com

Management: Kevin Spellman and
Ken Levitan for Vector

Recorded LIVE over 4 performances at the
Whisky a Go Go, West Hollywood, CA
June 3rd & 4th 1977 via the Record Plant
Mobile Unit 1



DISC 1: 06/03/1977 - Early Show

1. Rodney Bingenheimer Intro
2. Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace
3. Elo Kiddies
4. Set Break 1
5. High Roller
6. Southern Girls
7. Cry, Cry
8. Big Eyes
9. Can't Hold On
10. Oh Boy
11. You're All Talk
12. Set Break 2
13. He's a Whore
14. The Ballad of T.V. Violence (I'm Not the Only Boy)
15. Down On The Bay
16. Goodnight

DISC 2: 06/03/1977 - Late Show

1. Hello There
2. Come On, Come On
3. Set Break 1
4. Oh Candy
5. Daddy Should Have Stayed In High School
6. Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace
7. Elo Kiddies
8. Loser
9. Taxman, Mr Thief
10. Clock Strikes Ten
11. Set Break 2
12. Big Eyes
13. He's a Whore
14. You're All Talk
15. Auf Wiedersehen

DISC 3: 06/04/1977 - Early Show

1. Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace
2. Elo Kiddies
3. Set Break 1
4. Hot Love
5. Southern Girls
6. Cry, Cry
7. Big Eyes
8. Set Break 2
9. Ain't That a Shame
10. Oh Caroline
11. Oh Boy
12. You're All Talk
13. Set Break 3
14. He's a Whore
15. The Ballad of T.V. Violence (I'm Not the Only Boy)
16. Down On The Bay
17. Goodnight

DISC 4: 06/04/1977 - Late Show

1. Hello There
2. Come On, Come On
3. Set Break 1
4. Oh Candy
5. Daddy Should Have Stayed In High School
6. Mrs. Henry
7. Set Break 2
8. Violins
9. Taxman, Mr Thief
10. Clock Strikes Ten
11. Set Break 3
12. Big Eyes
13. He's a Whore
14. You're All Talk
15. Auf Wiedersehen
16. Encore Break
17. Goodnight



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