

The Rolling Stones



The Rolling Stones of early 1970s vintage could be a ramshackle bunch on stage. That's the judgement not of some hard-bitten media cynic, but of one of the harshest taskmasters of these titanic legends. Name of Jagger.

So if Mick himself hails the return of the concert film 'Ladies & Gentlemen: The Rolling Stones,' and adjudges the band's performance in it to be top-drawer, you know we're in business.

"It's a full-on performance and energy levels are really high," he told me for the Q&A interview contained in this release. "Everyone's very together and on, you know. I can remember the Rolling Stones being, sometimes, very lackadaisical, a very sloppy band on stage, at this period. But that was obviously not the case on this day."

Unseen by two, if not three, generations of music fans, this historic and invaluable document depicts the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world at the height of their supremacy. The film is an energisingly unvarnished, no-frills portrait that shows the band getting back into the office, playing live in America for the first time in three years.

In the process, they were putting the nightmarish memories of Altamont behind them, and relaunching their premiership with a set imbued with the epic new album they had just completed. The tour was a 100% sellout of massive new proportions. This, in every sense, is the Rolling Stones coming out of 'Exile'.

The competition to deliver the most audacious eulogy about the band's supernatural allure was perhaps won by promoter Bill Graham. He said at the time that the only person who could come close to the Stones as a box-office draw was Gandhi.

The expedition during which the 'Ladies & Gentlemen' movie was filmed marked the group's public re-emergence after one of the most challenging periods in their lives. The story of the film is bound up in the saga of the record that preceded it.

In the spring of 1971, the band's finances were in such poor health that they'd reluctantly accepted that they must leave the UK altogether and live abroad, to earn the money to settle a potentially crippling tax debt. No band had ever become tax exiles in such parlous pecuniary circumstances.

When they embarked on a nine-city, 16-date British tour in March of '71, having announced their plans to leave the UK, the media reviewed the shows as if they would never see the Stones again. The Financial Times almost seemed to be consigning them to a museum as they described the group, albeit admiringly, as a "piece of social history." For The Listener, they were "as tight, raw and unsentimental as ever."

Then, with almost indecent haste as the tax year turned, they departed for France, on a search for recording locations that would take them to Keith Richards' Nellcote villa. Back home and around the world, the pot kept boiling, with the appearance in April of the brilliantly vital 'Brown Sugar' and then the parent album 'Sticky Fingers', which introduced their own Rolling Stones imprint via Atlantic Records.

This time, though, the automatic appointment with another road, another tour, was singularly absent. The band settled in France, but "settled" was hardly the word. Everything was changing. With their personal effects barely delivered from the old country, Bill Wyman sent for fresh supplies of PG Tips, Mick Jagger married Bianca Pérez-Mora Macías, and the Stones carved history from adversity.

A hedonistic, often shambolic summer was fuelled but ultimately fettered by drugs and hangers-on. Sometimes it felt like the recording sessions, contrived against all logic in Keith's sweaty, humid basement where the guitars kept bending out of tune, would never reach a conclusion. As autumn struggled to keep the winter out, a band decision was reached. It was time to abandon the Nellcote sessions and decamp to Los Angeles with the tapes in tow.

Producer Jimmy Miller and engineer Andy Johns came too, and in defiance of all odds, those mixing and overdubbing sessions at Sunset Recorders delivered to the world the 18-track, double vinyl 'Exile On Main St' epic. Its place in Stones' folklore was soon established, and recently reaffirmed.

Previewed by the swaggering 'Tumbling Dice' in April 1972, 'Exile' emerged a month later, topping the charts transatlantically and around the world. 38 years on, it happened all over again. The reissued and augmented album went back to No. 1 in the UK, with new sales at this writing of more than half a million copies worldwide, almost four decades later. 'Tumbling Dice' and all the other 'Exile' calling cards, from 'Happy' and 'Rocks Off' to 'Sweet Virginia' and 'Shine A Light', had clearly lost none of their allure.

But just imagine the excitement of being there first time around, in the audience as the Rolling Stones of 1972 prepared to take the American stage again. They had a whole new consignment of great rock 'n' roll, blues, R&B, country and gospel ingredients burning a hole in their pockets, not to mention a plane-load of classic material.

"It makes it all worthwhile and real," Jagger told me during interviews for the 'Exile' reissue. "You know, to get out of the basement, you get out in front of people and see what they think of it."

Rehearsals took place at Warner Brothers Studios just days after 'Exile' hit the streets. With three vital components of the album sessions in the live line-up, in pianist Nicky Hopkins and horn players Bobby Keys and Jim Price, an opening date of June 3 was set at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver.

Mick Taylor, now fully established in the band, was no mere second-lead to Keith's dangerous, unpredictable bravura but often the lead player. With Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts providing a rock-solid backline as ever, the stage was set for Jagger to consolidate his standing as the quintessential rock frontman, down to the jumpsuit and sash and glitter in his hair.

After a three-year absence from the US concert arena, the 'STP' tour, as it was sometimes known as shorthand for 'Stones' Touring Party,' was wound up fit to explode. Tour manager Peter Rudge summed up the mood with admirable good humour when he avowed that the impending schedule felt less like a rock 'n' roll tour and more like a military assault.

'Ladies & Gentlemen' chronicles exactly how that new American invasion happened, on a tour played at a rate of knots over 51 gigs at 32 venues for three quarters of a million people over the following seven weeks. In a resonant reminder of their early days, there would be no fewer than a dozen occasions on which the Stones would play two shows a night.

The shows were opened by Stevie Wonder in electrifying form. Bob Freeze and Steve Gebhardt's cameras rolled at the Fort Worth and Houston shows in Texas, and the party rolled across America, backstage guests including everyone from Neil Young, Bob Dylan and the Jefferson Airplane to Truman Capote, Woody Allen and Zsa Zsa Gabor.

The shows were recorded "in spectacular QuadraSound," and, instead of lighting the gig from the front and above, director Rollin Binzer chose to erect a huge mirror over the stage and bounce lights off it. The overall effect is almost eerie, very different to a modern-day documentary and all the better for that.

Chip Monck's lighting and stage production took the stage temperature past boiling point, and even Mick's make-up was on the run. "The sparkly, beady, eye shadow stuff," he laughs, "throughout the show, gets sweatier and sweatier and starts to peel off. Rather uncomfortable, if I remember."

The tour culminated in four shows over three nights at Madison Square Garden, where at the closing gig, the New York crowd got to share in Mick's 29th birthday, with cakes and cream pies flying in all directions. Atlantic poobah Ahmet Ertegun hosted a more private celebration afterwards, with music by the great Count Basie.

What makes this 21st century release so exciting is that the film did not appear at all until 1974, and even then had only a limited theatrical run; it never appeared even on video except in Australia, and never on DVD.

As Richards told me, to have the live set fortified by new material was really exciting. "I knew that 'Tumbling Dice' was a killer live, and 'Happy' and suddenly it gave you an enormous backlog, an enormous wealth of material, 'Hey, let's do that tonight.'

"And of course at that same time, live music was changing too. By the early '70s, suddenly you're learning how to work with monitors — wow, this is like going to the moon or something, you could actually hear yourself. So there was a lot of learning going on, and also shows were getting bigger and bigger."

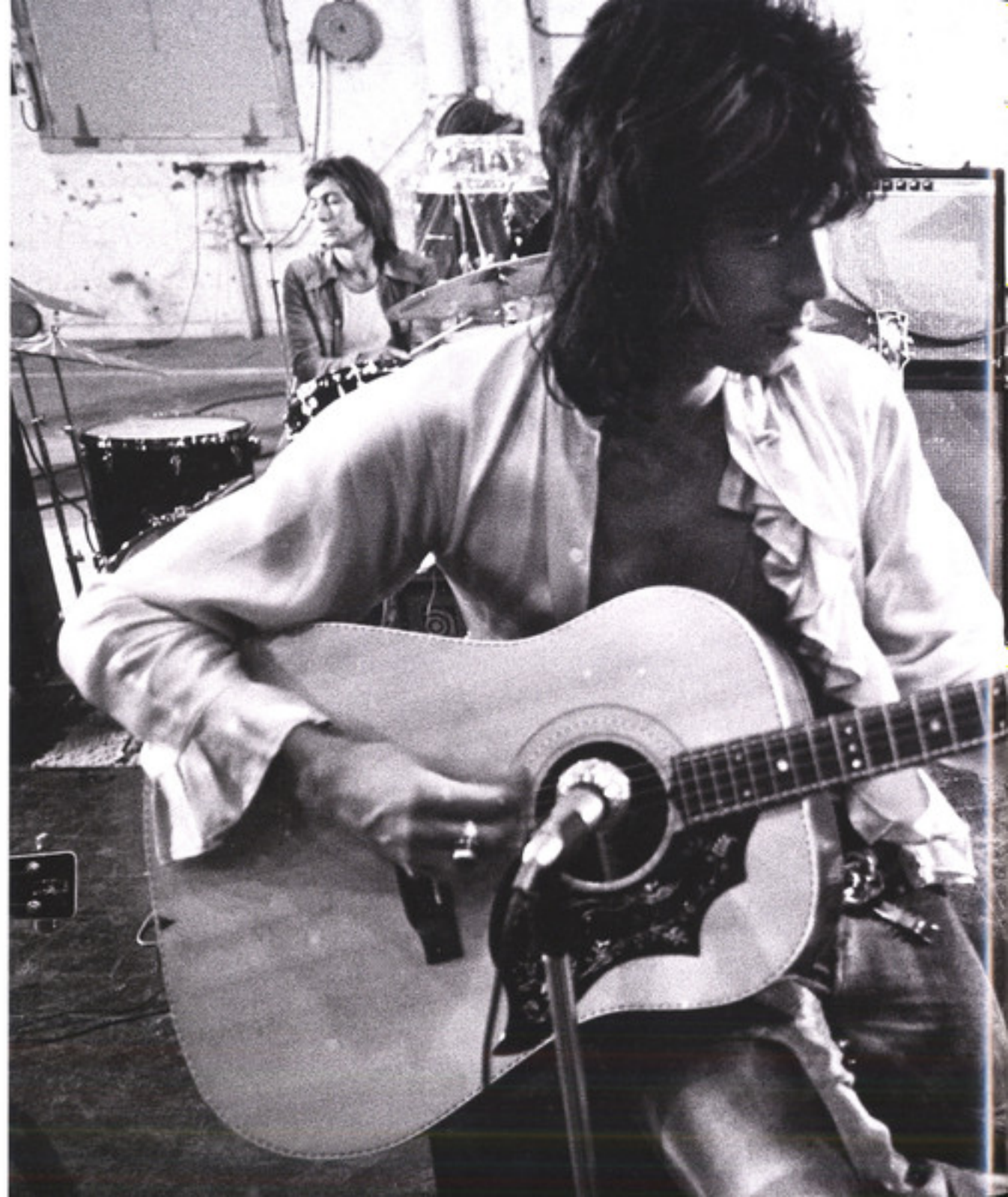
From there, after a few pitstops around the world, it was next stop Jamaica, with 'Goats Head Soup' on the menu. The shows would indeed continue to enlarge, and the itineraries got ever more expansive. But they couldn't have happened with the event that you, ladies and gentlemen, are about to experience.

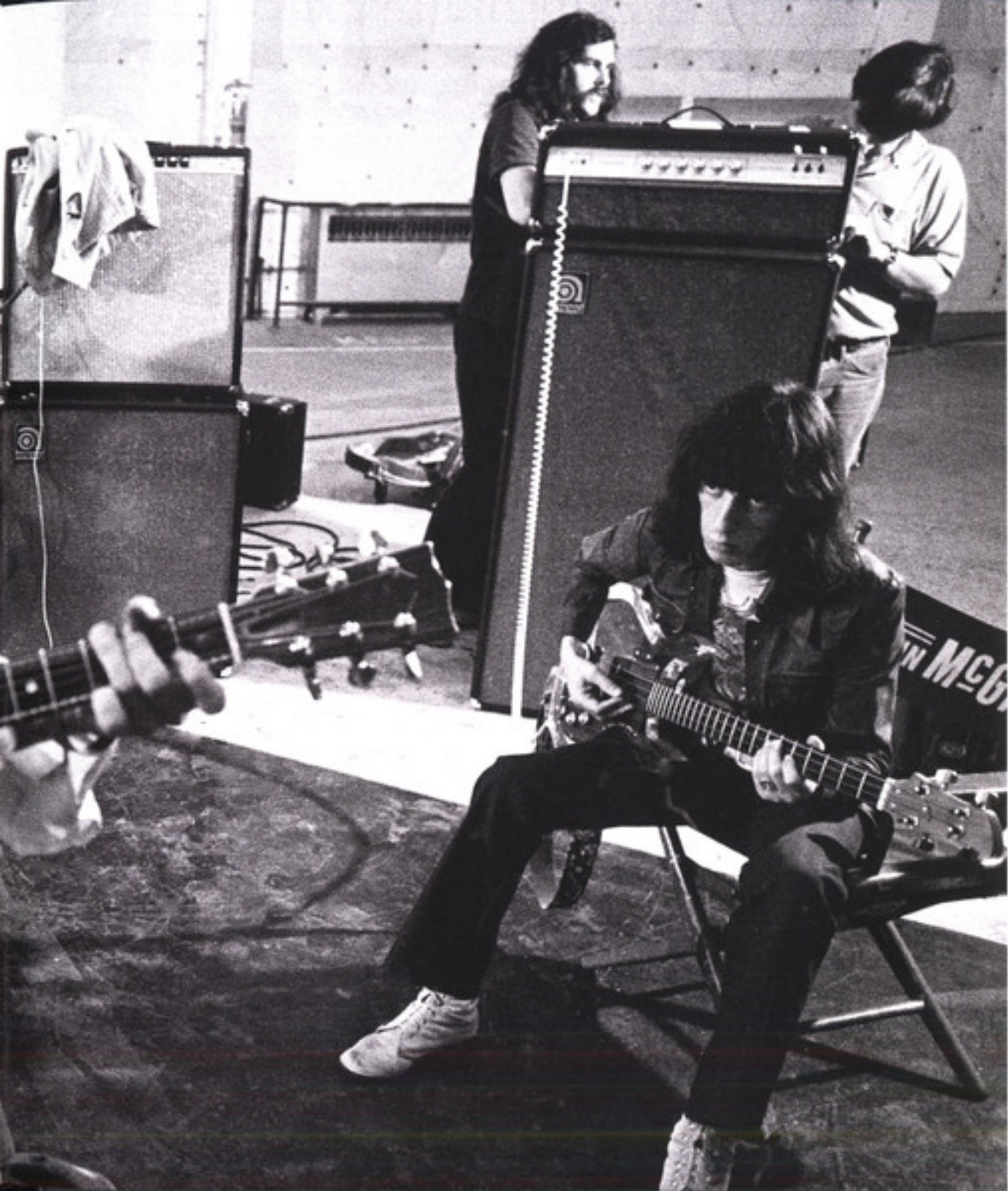
"It's very much of the period, that's how people shot films in the '70s," says Jagger. "It's us doing Exile for the first time, so I'm very pleased to see it out again."

Paul Sexton, August 2010



















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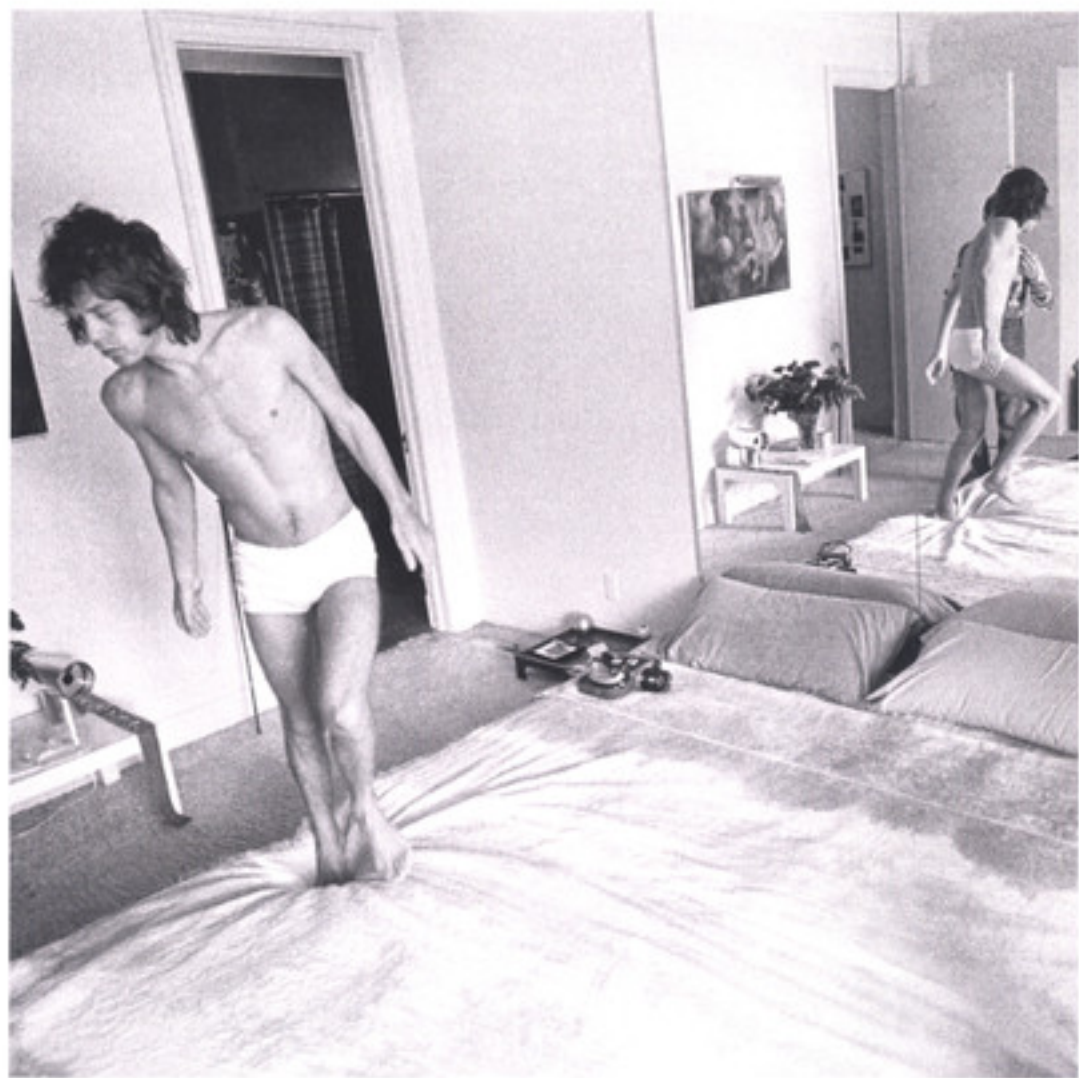
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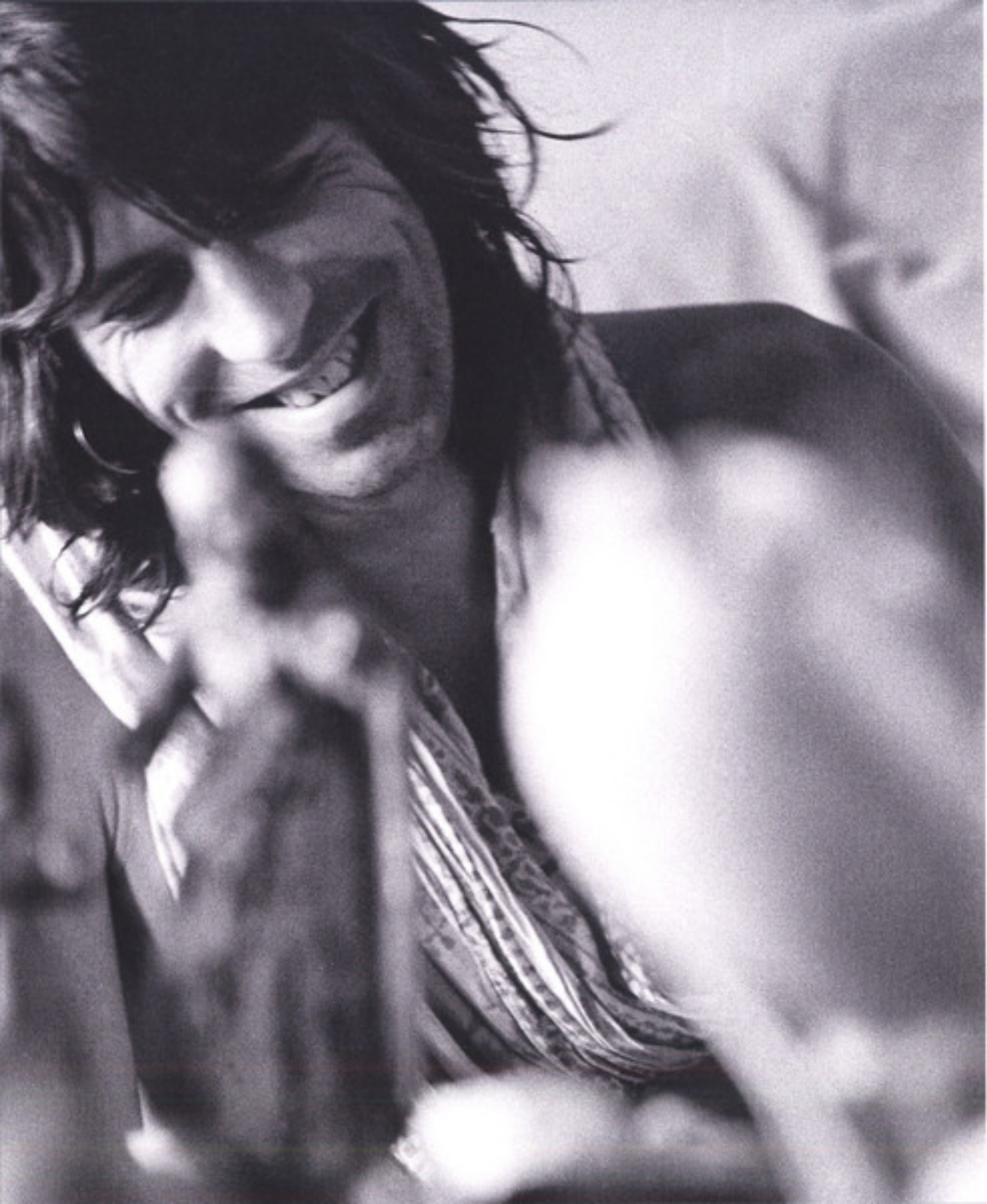
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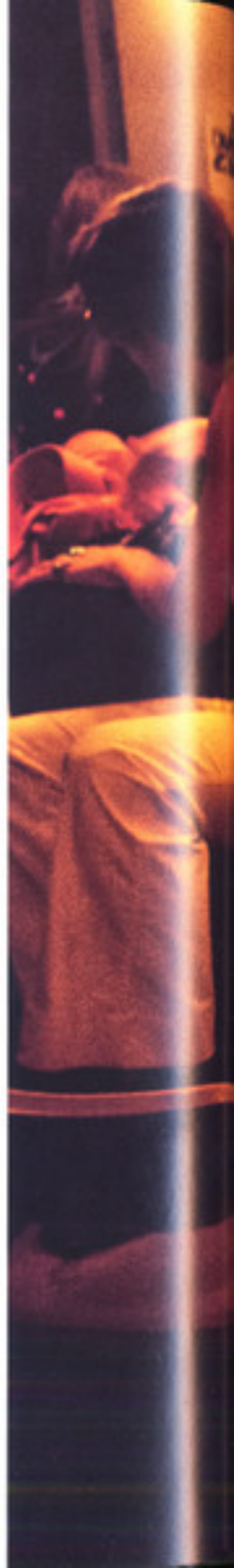




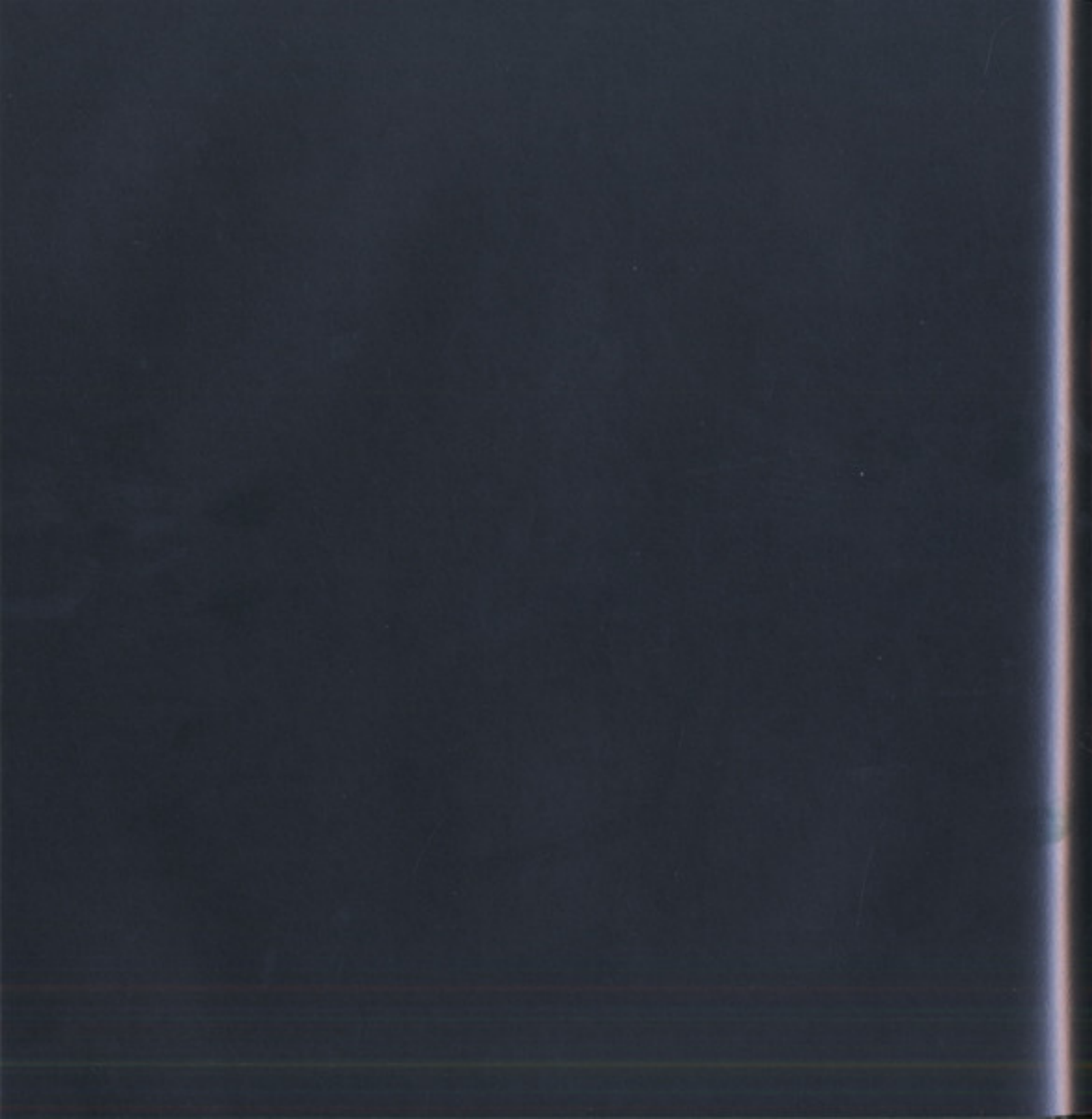
ROLLING STONES:

EXILE ON MAIN









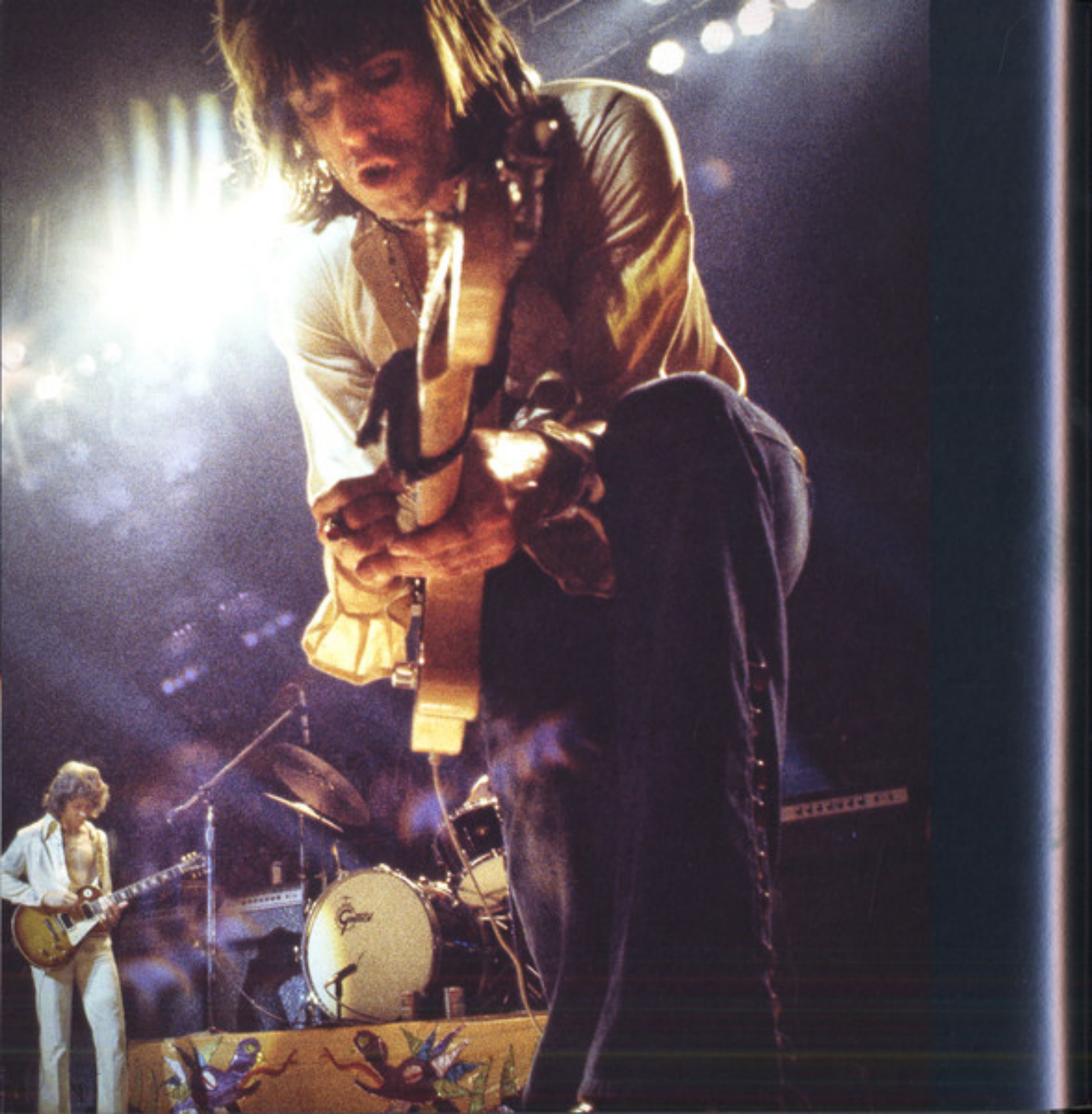




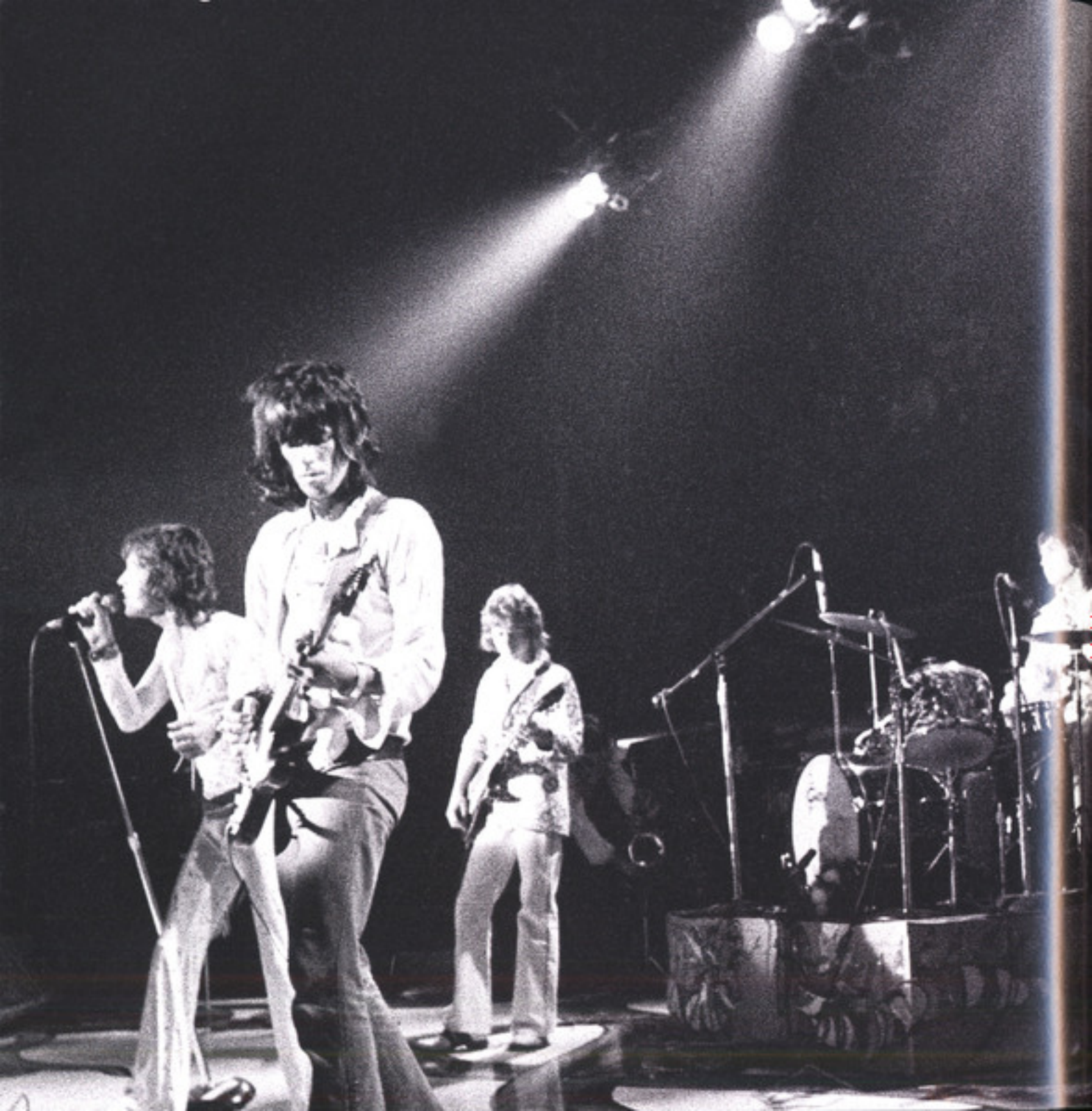


















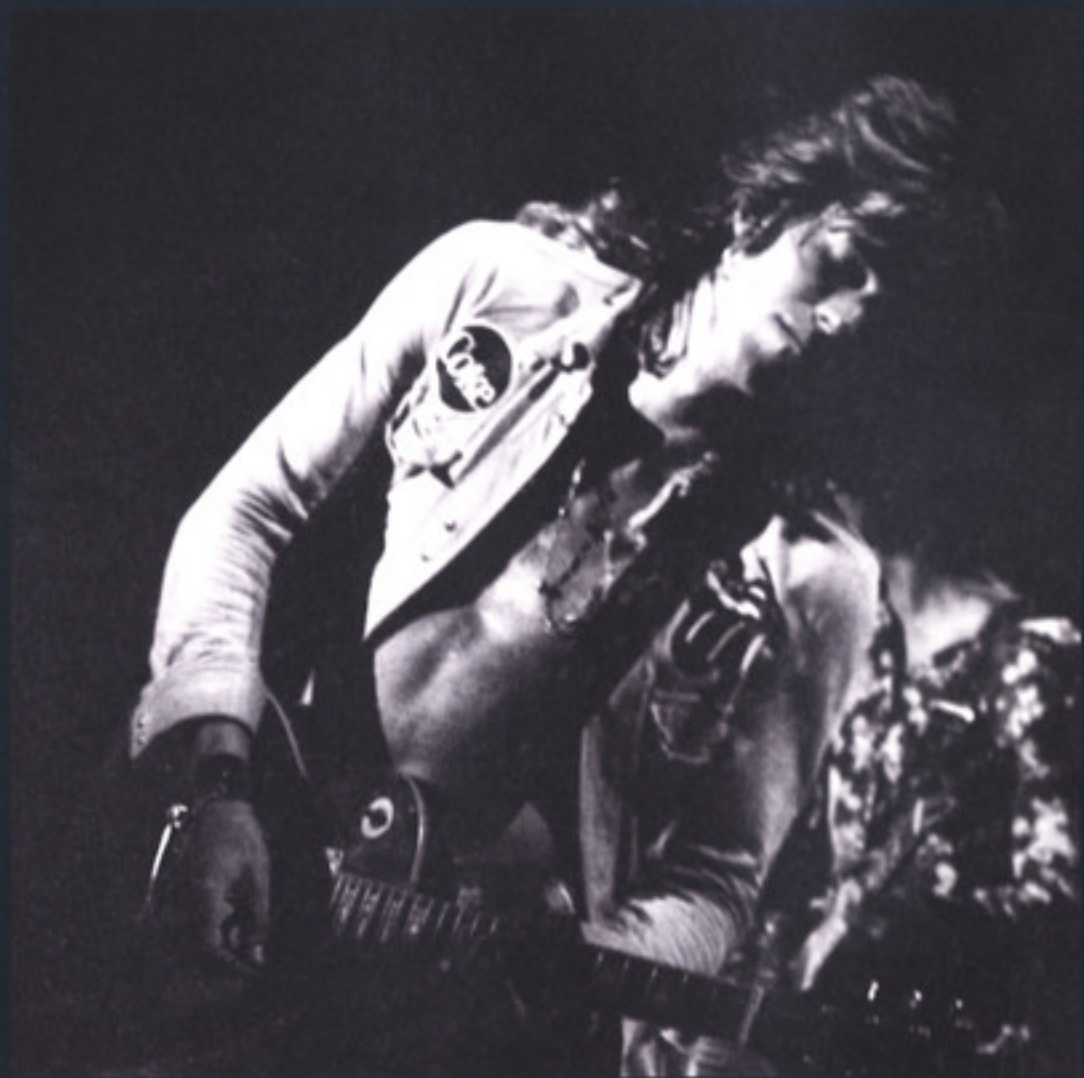




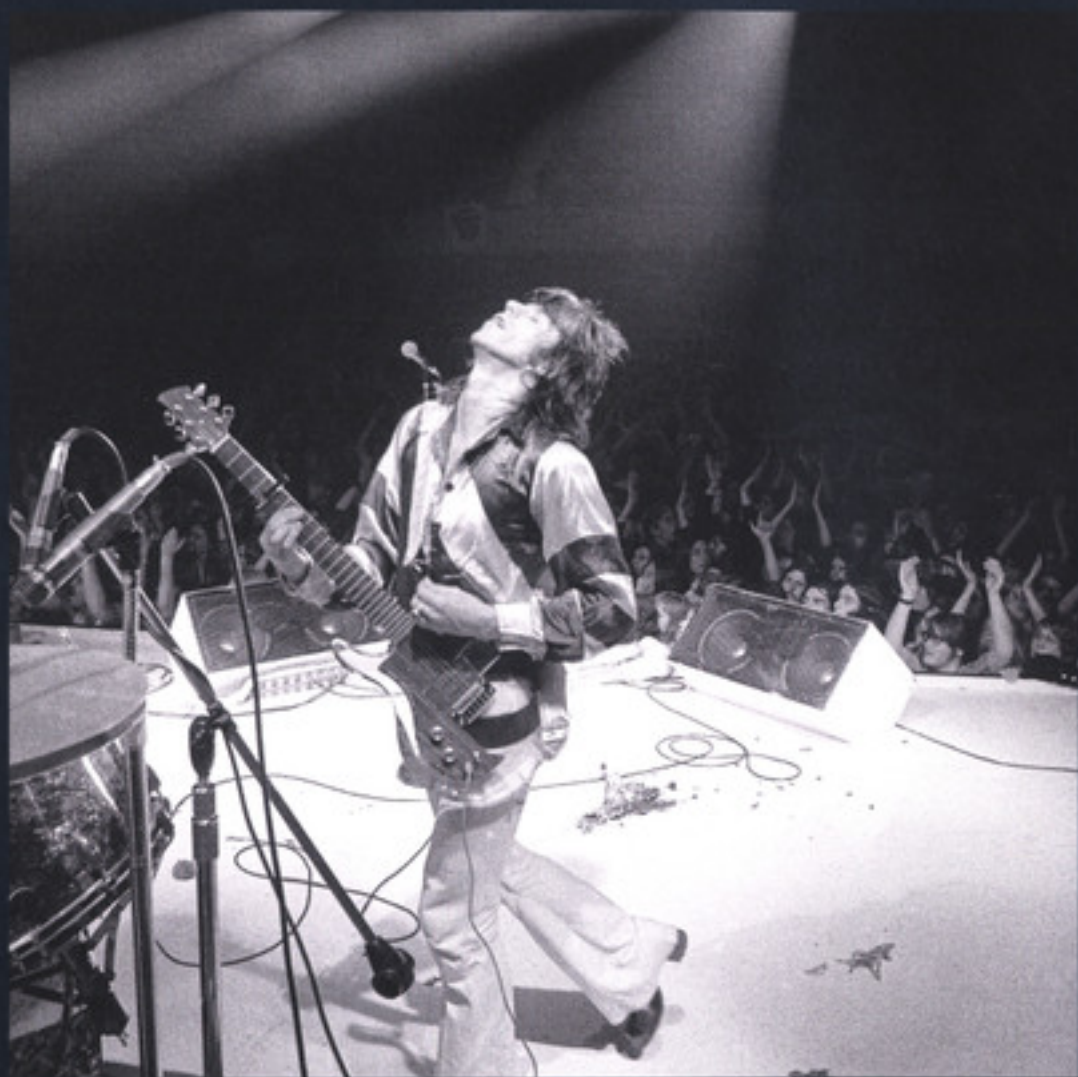






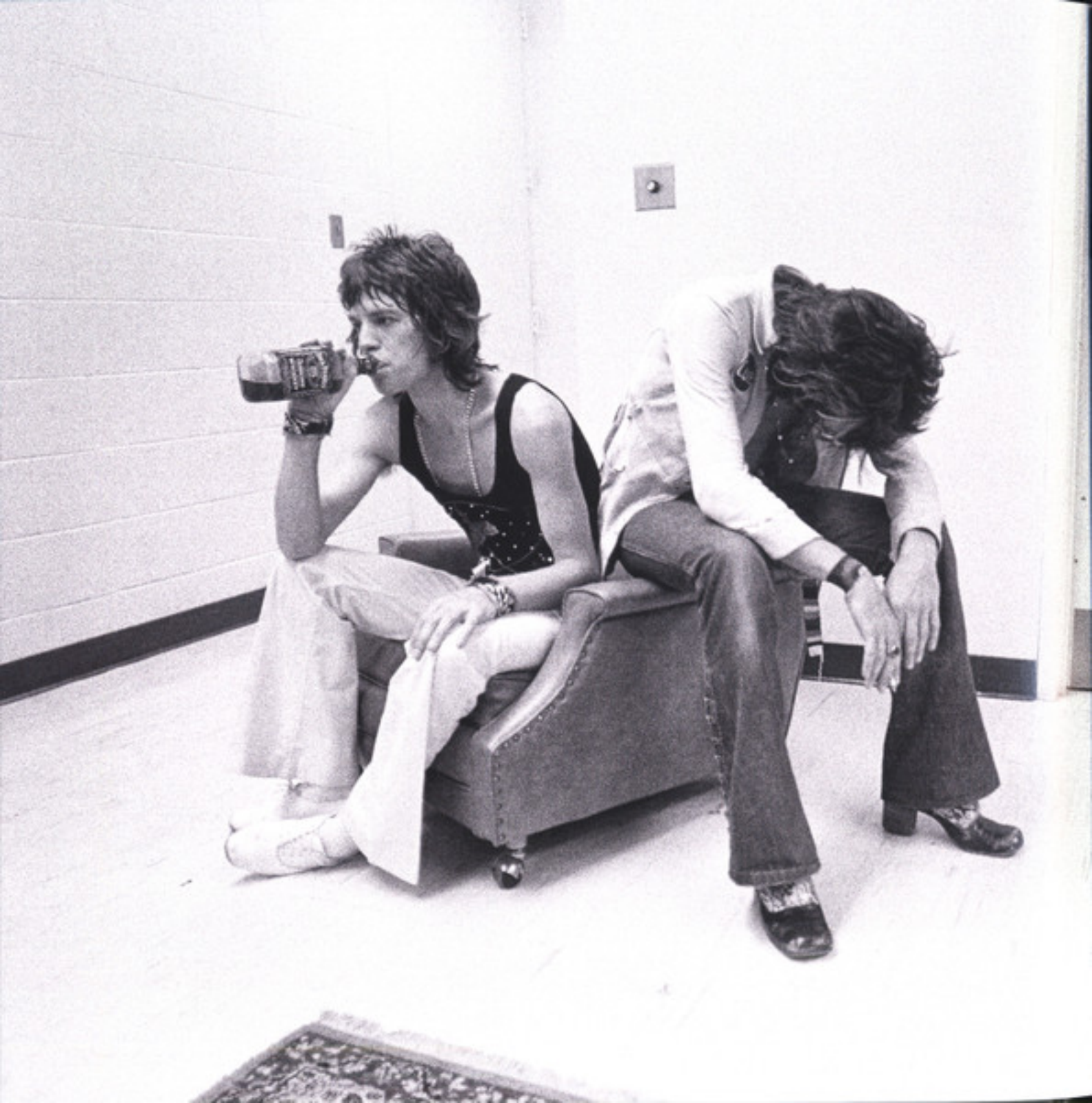














DISC 1
LADIES & GENTLEMEN

"Ladies And Gentlemen... The Rolling Stones" finally comes to DVD. This legendary Rolling Stones concert film, shot over four nights in Texas during the "Exile On Main Street" tour in 1972, was released in cinemas for limited engagements in 1974 and has remained largely unseen since. Now, restored and remastered, "Ladies And Gentlemen" makes its first authorised appearance on DVD. This is one of the finest Rolling Stones concerts ever captured on film and features outstanding performances of classic tracks from the late sixties and early seventies. Also included as a bonus is previously unreleased rehearsal footage for the tour filmed in Switzerland and interviews with Mick Jagger from 1972 and 2010.

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BITCH
GYMNE SHELTER
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HAPPY
TUMBLING DICE
LOVE IN VAIN
SWEET VIRGINIA
YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT
ALL DOWN THE LINE
MIDNIGHT RAMBLER
BYE BYE JOHNNY
RIP THIS JOINT
JUMPIN' JACK FLASH
STREET FIGHTING MAN

BONUS FEATURES
TOUR REHEARSAL
(SHARE YOUR HIPS / TUMBLING DICE /
BLUESBERRY JAM)
OLD GREY WHISTLE TEST INTERVIEW
MICK JAGGER INTERVIEW 2010

DIRECTED BY ROLLIN SINZER

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MICK JAGGER INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD WILLIAMS
RECORDED FOR BBC TELEVISION'S OLD GREY
WHISTLE TEST, FIRST TRANSMISSION DATE 24TH
MARCH 1972. COURTESY BBC MOTION GALLERY.

MICK JAGGER INTERVIEW WITH PAUL SEXTON
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DISC 2
STONES IN EXILE

In the spring of 1971, the Rolling Stones reluctantly departed the UK to take up residence in France. Keith Richards settled at a villa called Nellcôte in Villefranche-sur-Mer and this became the venue for the recording of much of the band's classic Exile On Main Street. Stones In Exile tells the story in the band's own words and through extensive archive footage of their time away from England and the creation of this extraordinary double album, which many regard as the Rolling Stones' finest achievement.

BONUS FEATURES
EXTENDED INTERVIEWS
RETURN TO STARGROVES AND
OLYMPIC STUDIOS
EXILE FANS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
MICK JAGGER
KEITH RICHARDS
CHARLIE WATTS

DIRECTED BY STEPHEN KRAK

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DISC 3
THE DICK CAVETT INTERVIEWS
AUSTRALIAN TOUR INTERVIEWS 1973

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INTERVIEW WITH KEITH RICHARDS ON "ROLLING
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INTERVIEWS WITH CHARLIE WATTS AND MICK TAYLOR
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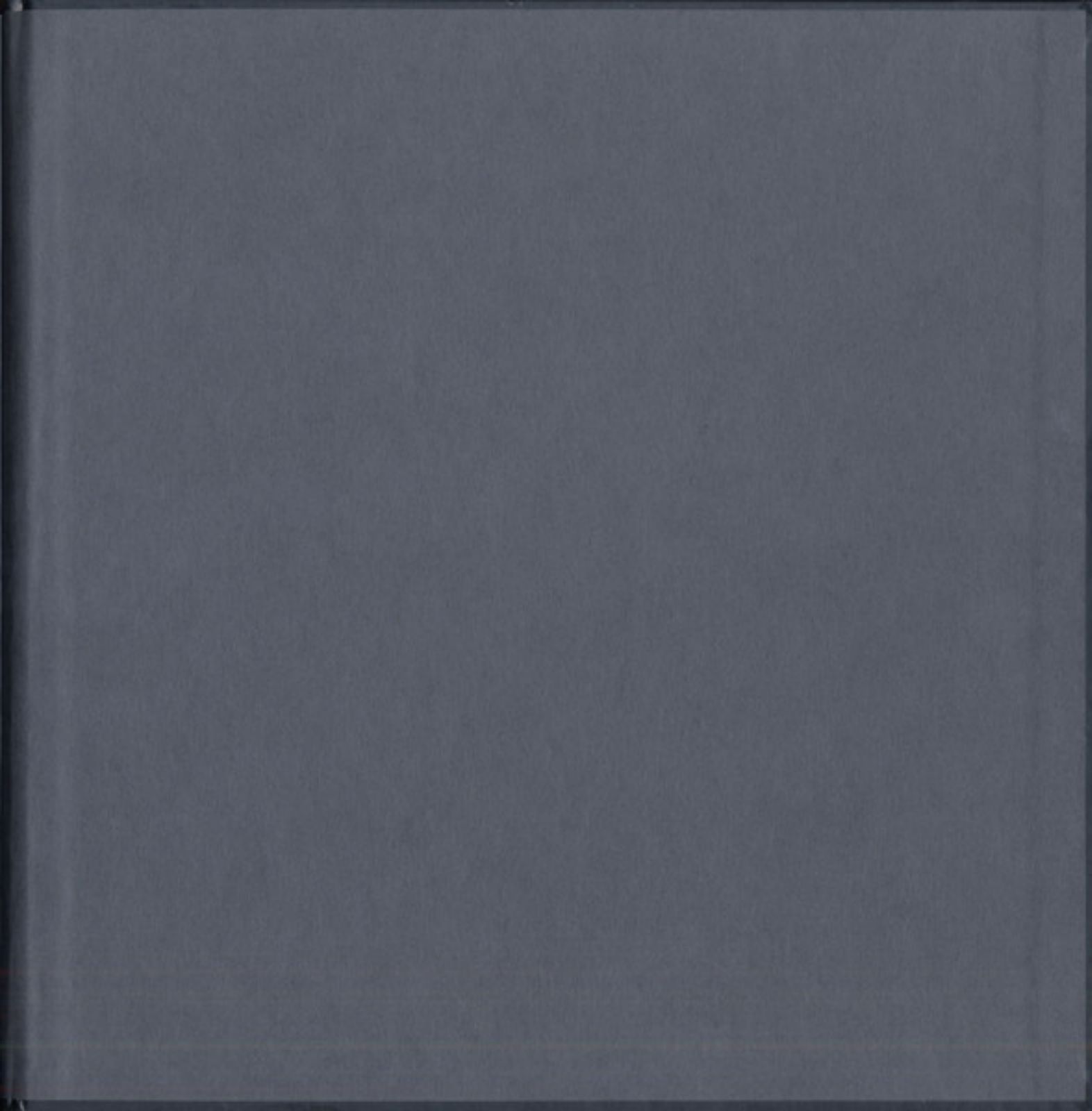
LADIES & GENTLEMEN
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The Rolling Stones





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