



OCTOBER 1979

THE POLICE

"Giant steps are what you take
Walking on the moon."

—Sting, "Walking on the Moon," c. 1979

Since the recording of their Top Twenty debut album, *Outlandos d'Amour* with its smash hit single, "Roxanne," The Police have played close to three hundred concert and club dates. They are essentially and triumphantly a live band and it is the volatile energy of live performance that catapults their second album, *Regatta de Blanc*, into orbit. Sting, Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers (bass, drums, and guitar respectively) are each superb musicians. The difference between their performance on their first album and *Regatta de Blanc* is those three hundred-odd gigs. They have become a seamless musical unit. The lightning that flashes among them is as brilliant as the light of a carbon arc. Each extrapolates off the other two with an uncanny control that etches each detail with strobe-like clarity. With their new album, The Police simultaneously transcend the New Wave and give it an instrumental credibility it has never before enjoyed.

The central thread of The Police's music is reggae stretched to electronic translucence. They take this idyllic, sensuous rhythm and inject it with the tension and power of rock and roll. The result is depth and density without ponderousness. Their music swirls and ricochets with none of the leaden plodding that marks the dinosaur bands The Police set out to usurp when Stewart Copeland formed the group in England in 1977. He discovered Sting playing bass in a jazz band and invited him, on the basis of his magnetic stage presence, to join his burgeoning dream of a band playing a new kind of rock and roll. Andy Summers, a guitarist whose credentials stretch back to the halcyon days of The Animals and The Soft Machine, joined the force after its original guitarist, Henry Padovani bailed out.

In 1978, The Police signed a recording contract with A&M and initially released two well received singles, "Roxanne" and "Can't Stand Losing You." Both were included on their debut album which was planned for American release in March, 1979. However, A&M previewed The Police for U.S. audiences on its *No Wave* compilation album in late Fall of 1978 and by January, "Roxanne" began picking up major radio adds. In response, *Outlandos d'Amour* was rushed-released a month early and "Roxanne" went on to be a Top Twenty hit. The Police had laid the groundwork for this success with a touring strategy as lean and innovative as their music. Rather than wait for album release and record company support, the band used the profits from their British hits to finance a U.S. club tour in late 1978. Playing the New Wave venues that had been springing up around the country in the previous year and traveling in a station wagon with one roadie, they not only introduced themselves to America but also turned a small profit. They continued to tour through most of 1979, returning to many cities again and again, each time playing larger venues to accommodate their ever-growing number of fans and to display their own rapidly evolving music.

The geometric expansion of musical vision that marks *Regatta de Blanc* is matched by their song-writing. Sting, whose quirky, high-end vocals still dominate, wrote the bulk of the material for their first album. This time around the writing chores have been spread much more evenly, giving greater rein to Stewart Copeland's mordant sense of humor and Andy Summer's inventiveness on guitar. The album opens with Sting's "Message in a Bottle," a song that went to number one in England two weeks after its release. Although they have expanded their range, The Police have paid no price in cohesiveness. Their utter confidence in their approach and its innate coherency imbues each note they play and each word they sing with an undeniable "rightness."

So again, in the dark of night, The Police have come pounding on your door. Let them in. They'll bust you wide open.



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