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SUPERTRAMP: BREAKFAST IN AMERICA

B*reakfast in America* (the second Supertramp album since the band relocated in America) partly reflects the openness, energy and flowing quality of the American lifestyle. It is also a major evolutionary step in the collaborative efforts of five gifted musicians whose experience in working together began with the epic *Crime Of The Century*, was sustained through *Crisis? What Crisis?*, expanded with the worldwide success of *Even In The Quietest Moments* . . . , and culminates now in the strongest group effort the band has ever created.

Supertramp makes its music for itself, and in doing so, the band serves both as artist and critic as it chases the perfection that has become its trademark. They have devoted more time to this album than any other, and the multiple contributions of reedman John A. Helliwell, drummer Bob C. Benberg, and bassist Dougie Thomson in terms of playing, arranging and mixing to the songs of Roger Hodgson and Rick Davies make *Breakfast In America* a startling achievement.

Work began in April '78, when English engineer Peter Henderson, who had worked closely with the band on *Quietest Moments*, flew over to L.A. from London the day after he was married. As his personal involvement with *Breakfast In America* increased through each stage of development, he became progressively involved in the production side and ended as co-producer (with Supertramp) of the album. The rehearsals took place at Southcombe, their own demo studio in Burbank (affectionately named after the cottage in the English countryside where *Crime* was conceived). The album was recorded in Los Angeles at the Village Recorder, and mixed at Crystal Sound.

The patience of Supertramp in discovering the right balance between the new rhythmic gusto of *Breakfast In America* and the clarity, space and intricate textures that have always characterized the band is more than rewarded. Their fans around the world—in the U.S. where their quiet intensity and overall excellence has earned them a potent cult following along with a certain aura of mystery, in Canada where Supertramp competes as one of the biggest selling recording groups in Canadian history, in Europe, where they received eight gold albums last year, in Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, and in Spain, where *Quietest Moments* is still running high in the charts after more than a year—has reached a peak of expectation that only *Breakfast In America* will satisfy.

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The ingenuity, energy, humor and radiance associated in the past with Supertramp are all present on "Gone Hollywood", a song Rick Davies calls "the last link to *Crime Of The Century* because it's very much a structured song and a group effort. The other songs are very much more open and flowing." His opening keyboard work is a clarion call that suggests the melody to come, while the lyrics comically and slyly bemoan the fact that there are "so many creeps in Hollywood". Rock pundits have called Supertramp geniuses of evolved rock, and on "Gone Hollywood" they deliver the goods.

"Logical Song", according to Roger Hodgson, "is another angle on the way we were brought up and taught all these things, how to function outwardly but not told who we are inwardly, and no one explains it to us."

"Goodbye Stranger" is a tune with a haunting quality, with a tinge of R&B powerfully assisted by a strong performance by drummer Bob C. Benberg, a song with a 50's quality to it, and a certain unnameable element that makes you want to hear it over and over again.

The title track is a young English boy's dream of what breakfast in America with the right girl in hand might be like, and "Oh Darling" is, according to Rick, "a very simple boy/girl song—I wrote it while I was trying to get a middle for "Gone Hollywood"—and its charm is really coming through the band. It's also another indication that Rick, not a prolific songwriter in the past, has broken through creative barriers and found new voice.

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But the banquet has yet begun; side two is rounded out with two more of Rick's songs, "Casual Conversations", an uncharacteristically gentle tune with a lovely melody and a superb sax solo by John A. Helliwell, and "Just Another Nervous Wreck", which he describes as "just about the way we all feel sometimes when everything's going wrong. It's probably the best lyric for me as far as evoking pictures and images."

It also includes three songs that underscore the natural evolution of Roger's songwriting: "Take The Long Way Home" is a bright, uptempo song laced with humor "about a guy who thinks he's a real dandy, but he's the only guy in the world who does." "Lord Is It Mine" revolves around the theme of the longing for inner peace. "Child Of Vision" brings *Breakfast In America* to a perfect conclusion in a song which criticizes certain elements of the current lifestyle with defending answers by Rick Davies which, in a way, reflects the totally different attitudes of these two writers. It is this difference, when compounded by the energy, humor and superb playing of the band that makes Supertramp what it is today.

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The seeds of today's Supertramp were sown in London in 1970 when Rick Davies recruited Roger Hodgson, and along with Richard Palmer and Bob Millar, the band issued its first self-titled album on A&M. The elegance and originality of *Supertramp* (the band selected its name from a book called "The Autobiography Of A Supertramp", published by R.H. Davis in 1910) hinted at things to come. 1971 saw the release of *Indelibly Stamped*, a lighthearted excursion into the mainstream of British rock.

A couple of very lean years followed and a major revamping of the band with the addition of Dougie Thomson, John Anthony Helliwell and Bob C. Benberg, a drummer from Glendale, California. The new aggregate settled into a communal English cottage—Southcombe—to begin work on their next album.

Crime Of The Century (1974) proved to be a blockbuster success that put the band on the map worldwide. The album shot to the #1 spot in the English charts, and as the band began extensive touring, both fans and the rock press the world over acclaimed the extraordinary quality and originality of their work. *Crime* settled in for an eight-month stay on the U.S. charts.

With *Crisis? What Crisis?*, released the following year, the storm of celebration continued. The band set out on a mammoth ten-month tour through Europe, the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan—along with its own massive sound system—and it became increasingly clear that contemporary music has a new and marvelous source of inspiration.

Following the tour, the band moved its base of operation from England to Southern California, and, at the Caribou Studios in Colorado, recorded *Even In The Quietest Moments . . .*, set out on a year-long world tour and began breaking records phenomenally all over the world. They played to well over 600,000 enthralled fans.

There were riots in Vermont, New Brunswick, Geneva, Barcelona; they sold two million records in Europe in six weeks; *Crime Of The Century* went platinum eight times over in Canada. Supertramp had become one of the world's premier rock bands.

But it's the period following nearly a year of intensive touring that proved to be the most important creatively for the band. They were able again to touch base with their creative centers, experience their own separate individuality—and Supertramp is above all a band of five individuals who pursue significantly different lifestyles—and regroup on common ground to launch into the new work. And as Supertramp graphically demonstrates on *Breakfast In America* they have come together stronger than before and become, in every sense, a band playing its music—devoid of paranoia and hesitation, achieving new highs of breathtaking excitement.

For *Breakfast In America* is the best of Supertramp and Supertramp at its best.

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DISCOGRAPHY

Supertramp (SP 4665)

Indelibly Stamped (SP 4311)

Crime Of The Century (SP 3647)

Crisis? What Crisis? (SP 4560)

Even In The Quietest Moments . . . (SP 4634)

Breakfast In America (SP 3708)

