



THE MICK FLEETWOOD BAND

*****DEBUT ALBUM 'SOMETHING BIG' RELEASED SEPTEMBER 27TH ON SANCTUARY RECORDS*****

For decades, Mick Fleetwood has proven to be not only one of rock's greatest drummers but also an astute discoverer of great talent. "It's basically what I've been doing with Fleetwood Mac for 35 years," the Rock and Roll Hall-of-Famer says. Fleetwood, co-founder of the legendary rock group Fleetwood Mac, continues his stellar track record in his newest venture, The Mick Fleetwood Band.

On their debut album, 'Something Big', the band manages to come off as both timeless and contemporary, rocking and eloquent, thanks in large measure to Fleetwood's ability to bring out the best in everyone he plays with and his love for the production process. "I love percussion, but I'm most deeply fulfilled when I'm working on the music coming together, in editing, in creating the sound. Producing offers those levels of creativity." Working with Fleetwood to craft the new sound of The Mick Fleetwood Band was co-producer/writer/singer/guitarist Todd Smallwood, the latest member in a distinguished line of Fleetwood finds. "I'm somewhat of a vicarious creature creatively," Fleetwood acknowledges. "I'm a drummer - I don't play other instruments, but I sure do have a lot of ideas about what's right and what's wrong, nuances and the like. I've been able to do that through Fleetwood Mac, and it's what I now find so gratifying about working with Todd."

While regularly appearing on stage, Emmy-nominated Smallwood has spent much of his career behind the scenes (working with the likes of Jackson Browne, Gregg Allman, Gladys Knight and Chaka Khan). On 'Something Big', Smallwood shines as both artist and songwriter, providing a commanding presence throughout the album. He wrote or co-wrote every one of the album's songs other than the band's rendition of "Looking Into You" from Jackson Browne's self-titled debut album. He sang lead vocals, played guitar and a variety of other instruments, and he co-produced 'Something Big' at his farmhouse studio in Santa Paula, California with Fleetwood by his side. Smallwood calls the studio "The Groves" because it sits in the midst of an avocado orchard on the ranch he calls home. The album cover, featuring an old Chevy weighed down by a giant avocado, pays homage to the duo's creative inspiration at "The Groves."

"I'm hoping the Mick Fleetwood Band will be an evolving, creative entity," Mick explains. Once again, Fleetwood has dipped into the talent pool and found another gem in Lauren Evans who lends her great voice to this debut album. Already nominated for two Emmy awards, Evans is present on nine of the 11 tracks. Other players include classical pianist and Hammond B-3 specialist Oleg Schramm and bassist Chris Golden. Cameos are turned in by Lee Sklar, who reprises the bass line he played on the original version of Browne's "Looking Into You" (Jackson himself shows up in the final portion of this new interpretation), guitarist Matt Andes of Jo Jo Gunne fame and percussionist Oliver Brown, best known for his work with K.C. and the Sunshine Band. *Additionally, Fleetwood reunites with onetime Fleetwood Mac guitarist/singer Jeremy Spencer for the first time in more than three decades and brings in his lifelong professional rhythm partner John McVie (Fleetwood Mac bassist) for "No Borders."*

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Despite the guests and contributors, the weave that unifies the fabric of this record is the Fleetwood/Smallwood connection. Fleetwood and Smallwood were introduced over 9 years ago by a mutual friend. In 1999, Smallwood suggested Fleetwood join him on a musical excursion to Havana, Cuba for the cross-cultural event 'Music Bridges', whose participants included Burt Bacharach, Bonnie Raitt, Gladys Knight and Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland of the Police, among some 40 other superstars. Mick accepted the invitation and the resulting record, 'Bridge To Havana', has already climbed to #4 on the Billboard World Chart.

"After Havana, I started spending time at Todd's place," Fleetwood recalls, "which led to conversations about a vision of creating something else together." At that point Fleetwood already had aspirations of starting his own boutique record label and he became excited at the prospect of his work with Todd becoming the first release on Fleetwood's TallMan Records, a joint venture with the Sanctuary Records Group.

"Much of what Todd was writing struck a personal chord with me." Fleetwood continues. "Without getting on a soapbox, I do think about what's happening in the world, and there are gentle reminders about things in this album that I have a total affinity with. He wrote a song on there for my twin daughters called 'Watching Over You.' Todd has children of his own and was remembering what it was like for him when they were young, and thought about me starting another family later on in life. He said, 'I've been thinking about the girls, and this song is for them.'"

The song Fleetwood co-wrote with Smallwood is the propulsive "Passion," which arose out of jam sessions between the two players. "It was just a jungle fever thing - no words, no nothing," Fleetwood says with a laugh. "And afterward, Todd said, 'We've got to do something with all this.' So I handed him the masters and two days later he comes back with a melody and lyrics fitting the drum work...and a whole new song is born."

In a similar creative spurt, returning on a flight from a recording session, Smallwood spotted a poster containing some lines of inspirational poetry written by Carlos Santana. Inspired by Santana's words - particularly the line, "The only passport will be the heart" - Smallwood expanded them into a song entitled "No Borders," completing it by the time the plane landed in L.A. He sent the song to Santana, who readily endorsed it. "No Borders" imagines a better world than the one we live in; it's the most overtly life-affirming song on an album whose underlying theme is affirmation.

'Something Big' is the flagship release on Fleetwood's TallMan Records, and it appears to be a perfect fit with Sanctuary. "It's all about putting heart and soul on the line in terms of believing in someone's talent, which is increasingly hard to do these days the way the music business is set up," Mick asserts. "And finding this relationship with Sanctuary, they seem to be really open and very trusting of me, and they have an artist-surviving philosophy. Right now, it's all about how people feel about this record, Something Big. We'll see what happens."

Big Boy – Roland Hyams on 020 86787 8466 / 8769 6713. roland@workhardpr.com
24th August 2004.