

Mick Taylor - Stanhope House Review

11-14-2003

Taylor and Karp Bring House Down in Stanhope!

by Bill Coughlin

Peter Karp and the Roadshow with special guest Mick Taylor brought down the house -- The Stanhope House, that is -- at a live show last Friday night in Stanhope, New Jersey, USA. I had the opportunity to see the second show from a seat that was literally pushed up against the stage, about two feet away from Mick Taylor. As a lifelong Stones fan and a huge fan of Taylor's solo outings since his eponymous album in 1979, this was a musical thrill that will be tough to beat.

The lanky, cowboy hat and boots-sporting Karp handled vocals and rhythm-guitar duties, as well as some serious struttin' both on stage and off. He occasionally carried his axe into the audience to the appreciative hootin' and hollerin' of everyone in the house. His band solidly backed him up, laying down a blues-rock beat that served as a solid foundation for Taylor's soaring guitar leads and classy filigrees.

Having seen Taylor in concert a number of times over the years, I was struck by how happy and comfortable he seemed on-stage. Perhaps it was because he did not have to worry about leading a band and was just able to kick back and let his guitar do the talking. In any event, he sounded great, whether performing his own or Karp's compositions. He definitely appeared to be "in the zone," as they say, as he delivered solid, scorching lead after solid, scorching lead throughout the two-hour performance.

Taylor played "Alabama," off the aforementioned solo album, as well as the Stones' "No Expectations," which he transformed into a Delta blues extravaganza. One of the highlights of the night, surprisingly, was Mick's guitar work on a Karp-penned tune called "The Turning Point." The crowd gave both performers a lengthy round of applause after that rousing blues-rock number (Taylor appears on three numbers on Karp's latest CD, including "The Turning Point").

After wrapping things up, Karp, Taylor and the Roadshow received a standing-ovation and some football stadium-like syncopated clapping and foot-stomping that brought them all back to the stage for a few encores. The last number of the night was a jam session-like take on the Stones' "Can't You Hear Me Knockin'," with Taylor wielding his axe like a man afire. He even took a break from his guitar work in the middle of the song to play keyboards before returning to his guitar soloing! The appreciative crowd gave the entire band a tremendous round of applause as they exited the room.

Taylor and Karp graciously signed CDs, album covers and photos after the show. It was one of the most memorable evenings of great music that I've ever enjoyed.