

Jeff Beck's 'Guitar Shop' re-establishes status as guitar great but surprisingly frivolous, flighty

by Jim Titus
Editor-in-Chief

There is hardly ever a discussion of rock guitar greats that does not include ex-Yardbird Jeff Beck. A product of the English blues adoration period that occurred in the 60's, Beck is still considered one of the world's premiere rock/blues guitarists.

Beck's latest album, **Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop**, re-establishes his status as a guitar great, but it isn't by far his best.

Beck manages to release an album about once every four years. For fans of great guitar playing every release is an event. But **Guitar Shop** is surprisingly frivolous. The record seems more like a master guitarist playing around in the studio than a classic Beck album.

Several of the tracks are just plain silly. Savoy, with its slurry of cute commercial-like overdubs, seems out of place on an instrumental guitar album. Other songs leave the impression that Beck was just trying to see what sort of bizarre sounds he could make with an old Stratocaster.



There are some high points on the album, however. Where Were You contains an astounding tremolo-bar solo in true Beckian style. Big Block fits the bill for a good bluesy sound.

Of course **Guitar Shop** is not just Jeff Beck. It also features some competent back-up by drummer Terry Bozzio and keyboardist Tony Hymas. Hymas is a veteran of other Beck albums, while Bozzio originally played with Frank Zappa and later his own band, Missing Persons.

Instrumental albums don't generally do well in the charts, and this one loses even more appeal with its flighty offering. It isn't a bad album (even Jeff Beck's worst is better than the boring but technically perfect pseudo-classical speed metal that seems so prevalent today), but it isn't Beck's best either. Beck would have done his patient fans a better service by taking this album more seriously.

For those who have heard a lot of big talk about master guitarist Jeff Beck but haven't ever heard him play, here's a bit of advice: pass up **Guitar Shop** for now. If you want a good instrumental Jeff Beck album, pick up his 1976 release **Wired** instead.

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- 1969: *Take the Money and Run* (co-screenwriter)
- 1971: *Bananas* (co-screenwriter)
- 1971: *Everything you Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask**
- 1971: *Play It Again, Sam* (screenwriter/actor only)
- 1973: *Sleeper* (co-screenwriter)
- 1975: *Love and Death*
- 1976: *The Front* (actor only)
- 1977: *Annie Hall* (co-screenwriter)
- 1978: *Interiors* (director/screenwriter only)
- 1979: *Manhattan* (co-screenwriter)
- 1980: *Stardust Memories*
- 1982: *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*
- 1983: *Zelig*
- 1984: *Broadway Danny Rose*
- 1985: *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (director/screenwriter only)
- 1986: *Hannah and Her Sisters*
- 1987: *Radio Days* (director/screenwriter only)
- 1987: *September* (director/screenwriter only)
- 1988: *Another Woman* (director/screenwriter)
- 1989: *New York Stories: "Oedipus Wrecks"*
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