

MC5 “Live” at the Grande

A. Freek

1968

Detroit's friendly neighborhood rock and roll band, the MC5, recorded their first album under their new contract with Elektra Records at the Grande Ballroom last month, and it was a killer affair. The festivities took place on the First International Zenta New Year, October 30 and 31, and what went down was an all-American Dionysian stomp-down rock and roll religious experience in the best Zenta tradition.

The MC5 arranged with Elektra President Jac Holzman, who personally produced the 5's album, and Russ Gibb, one of the partners in the Grande Ballroom and an old friend of the band, to open the session to the public and let everyone in free. The powers-that-be could dig it, the doors were thrown open (up to a point), and with the special help of WABX radio the ballroom was packed both nights. The band also had Elektra issue a special commemorative poster, which was passed out to the guests both nights.

The recording itself was under the direction of Holzman and MC5 manager John Sinclair, with Bruce Botnick at the controls. The sound crew working with Botnick included Wally Heider of Los Angeles, who has recorded 'the Cream ("Wheels of Fire's" Fillmore sides) among others. The tapes are presently being mixed down by Botnick at Elektra's LA studio, with a rough version scheduled to be sent to the band within a week. Maybe we can hew- it on WABX if the Company gives the OK.

The 5 recorded the same set both nights: "Ramblin' Rose," "Kick Out the Jams," "Come Together," "I Put a Spell On You," "Rocket Reducer No. 62," "Borderline," "The Motor City's Burning," "I Want You, Starship," "I Believe To My Soul," and "Black to Comm." They also recorded Thursday afternoon before the concert for contrast, including a radio version of "Kick out the Jams, Brothers & Sisters!" The album version will contain the familiar "MOTHERFUCKER" however, according to Elektra's Holzman, who would just as soon put it on the single if the stations would play it.

The album release is scheduled for January 15th or earlier, with the single set for January 1st. Advance copies will be printed up and distributed freely to the audience at the Fillmore East December 26th, when Elektra will present the MC5 in their first New York appearance. The concert will be free too.

The 5's current plans include dates in Michigan through December 7th, a week at the Boston Tea Party, back to Detroit for an Arthur Brown-MC5 concert December 23rd, and to New York City Christmas day. Following the Fillmore concert is a date at The Ballroom in Stratford, Conn. and a projected East Coast stay into late January. For information on the MC5's itinerary call Genie at 769-2017 in Ann Arbor.



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